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**Models of (Un)Changing State-Society Relationships:
Urban Participatory Governance and the Deepening of Democracy in
Mexico and Brazil**

By
Françoise Montambeault

Department of Political Science
Faculty of Arts

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Urban Participatory Governance and the Deepening of Democracy in
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Presented by:
Françoise Montambeault

Was evaluated by a committee composed of the following examiners:

Dr. Philip Oxhorn
internal examiner / supervisor

Dr. Brian Wampler
external examiner

Dr. Juliet Johnson
committee member

Dr. T.V. Paul
committee member

Dr. Kathleen Fallon
committee member (external)

ABSTRACT

How can institutional change aimed at including civil society contribute to the quality of democracy? More specifically, what is the impact of participatory decentralization on the prospects for democratic deepening at the local level? How do these newly created participatory public spaces affect the nature of state-society relationships? The dissertation first proposes that, if the indicators of success are redefined to account for the complexity of the state-society relationships, we find that current participatory decentralization experiences have various levels of success at sustaining a deep transformation of traditional clientelistic relationships in practice. This variation is observed on two dimensions: the nature of mobilization processes participatory institutions encourage and, more importantly, the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in their interactions with the state partners within these institutions. Four types of relationships can emerge, all having a differentiated impact on the ability of civil society to enter the social construction of a more inclusive citizenship regime with an accountable local state: clientelism, disempowering co-option, fragmented inclusion and 'democratizing' cooperation. Drawing from the comparative case study of participatory budgeting in Belo Horizonte and Recife (Brazil), and of participatory planning in León and Nezahualcóyotl (Mexico), I argue that state-society cooperation has more potential than the other types to facilitate social inclusion patterns, greater state accountability and, consequently, the deepening of democracy. State-society cooperation entails collective grassroots mobilization patterns that contribute to empowering civil society actors who are autonomously organized to mediate between the state and society in order to formulate collective demands on the state through the formal channels of participation.

After establishing the range of possible outcomes for the implementation of participatory decentralization reforms in Latin America, this dissertation undertakes to understand the sociopolitical conditions necessary for local participatory governance institutions to have a positive impact on the social construction of inclusive citizenship rights (social, civil and political) through the development of cooperative interactions between society and the local state. What are the conditions sustaining the development of collective social mobilization and higher autonomy, and thereby of cooperative relationships? My findings first show that in contexts where the historical patterns of mobilization have generally been dominated by individualism and the particularistic nature of demands, the design of participatory institutions is central as it can provide the incentives for collective forms of mobilization to emerge. Second, and more importantly, my findings highlight the importance of going beyond a mere institutional analysis to look at the local sociopolitical context. The level of political competition, the balance of powers within civil society, and the perceptions state and social actors have of their own role in the participatory process are all factors that constrain and influence actors' practices and underlying strategies in appropriating participatory mechanisms, thereby determining the level of autonomy participants enjoy within these institutions.

Keywords: Democracy, participatory decentralization, citizenship, accountability, state-society relationships, mobilization, autonomy, Latin America, Mexico, Brazil.

RÉSUMÉ

De quelle manière les réformes institutionnelles visant à l'inclusion de la société civile peuvent-elles contribuer à la qualité de la démocratie en Amérique latine? Plus précisément, quel est l'impact des réformes de décentralisation participative sur la nature des rapports État-société et l'approfondissement de la démocratie locale? La thèse suggère que lorsque les indicateurs de succès sont redéfinis afin de tenir compte de la complexité des rapports État-société, les expériences actuelles de décentralisation participative visant à promouvoir une transformation profonde des rapports clientélistes traditionnels présentent, dans la pratique, des degrés de réussite variables. Cette variation s'observe sur deux fronts : d'une part, la nature des processus de mobilisation encouragés par les institutions participatives et, d'autre part, le degré d'autonomie dont les participants jouissent dans leurs interactions avec les partenaires étatiques au sein de ces institutions. Quatre types de rapports peuvent émerger, ayant tous des conséquences différentes sur la capacité de la société civile de s'engager avec un état imputable dans la construction sociale de régimes de citoyenneté inclusifs : le clientélisme, la cooptation désengagée, l'inclusion fragmentée et la coopération 'démocratisante'. À partir de l'étude comparative du budget participatif de Belo Horizonte et Recife (Brésil) et de la planification urbaine participative de Nezahualcóyotl et León (Mexique), la thèse affirme que la coopération État-société est plus à même de faciliter l'inclusion sociale, d'améliorer l'imputabilité gouvernementale et, conséquemment, de contribuer à l'approfondissement de la démocratie. En effet, la coopération État-société est définie par des processus de mobilisation collective qui donnent du pouvoir à une société civile organisée et autonome afin de lui permettre d'agir comme médiateur d'intérêts entre l'État et les citoyens et de formuler des demandes collectives par l'intermédiaire des canaux formels de représentation et de participation.

Après avoir établi les possibles résultats de l'implantation de réformes de décentralisation participative, cette thèse vise à identifier les conditions sociopolitiques nécessaires afin que ces réformes aient un impact positif sur la construction sociale des droits de la citoyenneté. Quelles sont les conditions favorisant le développement de relations coopératives au sein des institutions participatives, c'est-à-dire de processus de mobilisation collective et d'une plus grande autonomie pour les acteurs sociaux? Mes conclusions démontrent tout d'abord que, dans un contexte où les processus de mobilisation ont traditionnellement été définis par leur individualisme et leurs demandes particularistes, le design des institutions participatives est central puisqu'il peut offrir les incitatifs à l'émergence de mobilisations collectives. Par ailleurs, mes conclusions soulignent l'importance d'aller au-delà de l'analyse institutionnelle et de s'intéresser au contexte sociopolitique local. En effet, le degré de compétition politique, l'équilibre des pouvoirs au sein de la société civile et les perceptions entretenues par les acteurs au sujet de leurs rôles respectifs dans le processus participatif sont tous des facteurs agissant sur les stratégies et les comportements des acteurs sociaux et politiques au sein des institutions participatives et la prise en compte de ces facteurs permet de mesurer le degré d'autonomie dont jouissent les citoyens dans le processus de participation.

Mots-clés : Démocratie, décentralisation participative, citoyenneté, imputabilité, relations État-société, mobilisation, autonomie, Amérique latine, Mexique, Brésil.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABM	*Associação Brasileira dos Municipios* (Brazilian Municipalities Association)
ABONG	*Associação Brasileira das Organizações Não-Governamentais* (Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organizations)
ADC	*Associações de Defesa Coletiva* (Collective Defense Associations)
ANC	*Assembléia Nacional Constituinte* (Constituent National Assembly)
AMMAC	*Associación de Municipios de México*, A.C. (Association of Mexican Municipalities)
ARENA	*Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (Alliance for National Renewal)
CDS	*Convenio de Desarrollo Social* (Social Development Agreement)
CDP	*Comités Democráticos e Populares de Bairros* (Popular and Democratic Neighborhood Committees)
CEB	*Communidades Eclesiáticas de Base* (Basic Ecclesiastic Communities)
CNC	*Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Peasants Confederation)
CNOP	*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares* (National Confederation of Popular Organizations)
COCEOM	*Central the Comercientes y Colonos Estabelecidos* (Central of Established Businesses and Residents)
CODEMUN	*Consejo de Desarrollo Municipal* (Municipal Development Council)
COMFORÇA	*Comissão de Fiscalização Orçamentaria* (Commission of Budget Oversight and Monitoring)
COMUL	*Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização da Posse da Terra* (Local Commission for the Tenure Regularization and Urbanization)
CONADEP	*Consejo Nacional de Acción Popular* (National Council for Popular Action)
COP	*Conselho do Orçamento Participativo* (Participatory budgeting Council)
COPACI	*Consejos de Participación Ciudadana* (Citizen Participation Councils)
COPLADE	*Comité para la Planeación del Desarrollo Estatal* (State Development Planning Committee)
COPLADEM/ COPLADEMUN	*Comité para la Planeación del Desarrollo Municipal (*Municipal Planning and Development Committee)
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTM	*Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos* (Confederation of Mexican Workers)
CUD	*Convenio Unico de Desarrollo* (Unique Development Agreement)
DEM	*Partido Democráta* (Democratic Party)
DF	*Distrito Federal* (Federal district)

EZLN	*Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation)
FAISM	*Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Social Municipal* (Grant Fund for Municipal Social Infrastructure)
FOCCEM	*Federación de Organizaciones de Colonos y Comerciantes del Estado de México* (Federation of Neighbors and Business Organizations of the State of Mexico)
FORTAMUN	*Fondo de Aportaciones para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios* (Grant Fund for Municipal Strengthening)
FPI	*Frente Popular Independiente* (Independent Popular Front)
FUN	*Frente Unico de Neza* (Unique Front of Neza)
IBAM	*Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal* (Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPLAN	*Instituto Municipal de Planeación* (Municipal Planning Institute)
INAFED	*Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal* (National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development)
INDESOL	*Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Social* (National Institute for Social Development)
INEGI	*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía y Informática* (National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Information)
IQVU	*Indice de Qualidade de Vida Urbana* (Urban Quality of Life Indicator)
MDB	*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement)
MLN	*Movimiento de Lucha en Nezahualcóyotl* (Movement for the Struggle in Nezahualcóyotl)
MOVIDIG	*Movimiento Vida Digna* (Movement for a Worthy Life)
MRC	*Movimiento Restorador de Colonos* (Residents' Restauration Movement)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	*Núcleos de Planejamento Comúnitario* (Community Planning Units)
OP/PB	*Orçamento Participativo* (Participatory Budgeting)
PAN	*Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party)
PCdoB	*Partido Comunista do Brasil* (Communist Party of Brazil)
PDM	*Partido Democráta Mexicano* (Mexican Democratic Party)
PDS	*Partido Democrático Social* (Democratic Social Party)
PFL	*Partido da Frente Liberal* (Party of the Liberal Front)
PMDB	*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party)
PMR	*Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (Party of the Mexican Revolution)
PMS	*Partido Mexicano Socialista* (Mexican Socialist Party)
PMDB	*Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party)

PND	*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* (National Development Plan)
PRD	*Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolution Party)
PNR	*Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party)
PPA	*Plano Plurianual* (Plurianual plan)
PPAG	*Plano Plurianual da Ação Governamental* (Governmental Action Plurianual plan)
PPB/PB	*Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* (Program City Hall in the Neighborhoods)
PREZEIS	*Programa da Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (Program for the Regularization of the Special Zones of Social Interest)
PRI	*Partido Revolucionario Institucional (*Party of the Institutionalized Revolution)
PRODECOM	*Programa de Desenvolvimento de Comunidades* (Community Development Program)
PRONASOL	*Programa Nacional de Solidaridad* (National Solidarity Program)
PROPAR	*Programa participativo de Obras Prioritarias* (Participatory program for priority works)
PSB	*Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Socialist Party)
PSC	*Partido Social Cristão* (Social Christian Party)
PSDB	*Partido Social Democrático Brasileiro* (Brazilian Social Democratic Party)
PT	*Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party)
PV	*Partido Verde* (Green Party)
PVEM	*Partido Verde Ecologista de México* (Green Ecologist Party of Mexico)
RPA	*Região político-administativa* (Politico-administrative Region)
SEDESOL	*Secretariat de Desarrollo Social* (Secretary of Social Development)
SEGOB	*Secretaria de Gobierno* (Secretary of Government)
SNDP	*Sistema Nacional de Planeación Democrática* (National System of Democratic Planning)
SNTSS	*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Seguro Social* (National Union of Social Security Workers)
UCL	*Unión Cívica de León* (León Civic Union)
UNS	*Unión Nacional Sinarquísta* (National Sinarquist Union)
UPREZ	*Unión Popular Revolucionario Emiliano Zapata* (Emiliano Zapata Popular Revolutionary Union)

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À Victor et Phil,
les deux hommes de ma vie.

INTRODUCTION

"Even the most well-intentioned government is unlikely to meet collective needs if it doesn't know what many of those needs are."
- World Bank Report, 1997

Democracy has certainly been one of the political innovations that have attracted the most interest and attention in Latin American countries in recent decades. Indeed, the so-called 'Third Wave', coined by Samuel Huntington (1991) to qualify the democratizing trends in Southern Europe, Africa and Latin America in the late 1970's and 1980's, and its various challenges have claimed a central place in academic and policy debates in the field of comparative politics ever since. In the aftermath of these transitions and the academic enthusiasm they provoked concerning the prospects for democracy to become 'consolidated' as the 'only game in town' (Linz & Stepan, 1996), many scholars have begun to express doubts about the quality of the new Latin American democracies, adding adjectives such as 'delegative', 'hybrid' or 'electoral' to more accurately describe the type of regime that has emerged out of the transition process (Diamond, 2002; O'Donnell, 1994, 1996). Though the vitality of democratically organized and regulated electoral cycles generally remained unquestioned, scholars began to suggest that democracy was not simply a mode for selecting political leaders, but rather a more complex system of governance founded on the principle of liberty and sustained by an effective rule of law applied equally to all (Diamond, 1999; O'Donnell, 2005) that should also be evaluated according to the quality of its procedures, content and results (Diamond & Morlino, 2005).

Characterized by weak accountability mechanisms (O'Donnell, 1998) and differentiated access to citizenship rights fostering social inequalities (Oxhorn, 2003), Latin American democracies, including Mexico and Brazil, have not generally been described as high-quality democracies. For many, the solution relied on the strengthening of an autonomous civil society able to channel social demands to the state and to contribute to making the state accountable to its citizens. Yet, achieving this in Latin America poses several

challenges. Foremost among these challenges is the fact that it is not clear how the strengthening and active participation of civil society as a central actor of the social construction of citizenship can actually be achieved in practice. To address this question, this research will draw on larger theoretical discussions in comparative politics about the relationship between institutional change, civil society and democracy. More specifically, how can institutional change aimed at including civil society contribute to the quality of democracy? To what extent can institutional reforms foster the development of a 'democratizing' relationship between the state and society?

In attempting to answer this question, the dissertation focuses on one type of institutional change: democratic decentralization reforms including an institutionalized participatory dimension, which I call *participatory decentralization*. Such reforms can include participatory budgeting, citizen-based urban-planning councils, policy-advising councils (e.g. health, education, environment, culture, etc.), citizen-based oversight mechanisms, co-governance mechanisms, among others, and they have generally been implemented at the municipal level, where most citizens' demands are usually addressed and the point of greatest proximity between the state and citizens (Dilla Alfonso, 1997; Schönwälder, 1997). These associated institutional reforms, entailing a formal interaction between the state and society, arguably have the potential to make local politicians more accountable, citizens more participative, and local government more responsive to local needs. As such, they would become one basis for the social construction of citizenship rights and contribute to the deepening of democracy, even when democratization was not necessarily the driving force behind the reforms[1]. The formal participation of all sectors of the population in decentralized governance processes, including traditionally marginalized groups such as the poor, is often associated in the literature with making local governments more responsive and accountable to citizens' needs, by making citizens' input and oversight function more central to the policy-making process. Institutionalized citizen-participation, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, is often

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[1] It has been observed that decentralization was often motivated by objectives such as increasing policy and economic efficiency, shrinking the size of the central state, decreasing governmental expenditures (Manor, 1999), or coping with the central-state legitimacy problem by giving more power to local governments (e.g. (Grindle, 2000; Montero & Samuels, 2004). Therefore, democratization is one goal driving decentralization reforms, but in many cases, it was overshadowed by economic and policy efficiency aspirations.

viewed as an important aspect of the development of civil society and is also seen as a crucial dimension of furthering democratization in countries with traditionally low levels of autonomous civic engagement. The introduction of participatory mechanisms may have an impact on the revitalization of civil society and on its interactions with the state, which may in turn influence the potential for the social construction of citizenship to occur at the local level (Avritzer, 2002a; Dagnino, Olvera, & Panfichi, 2006; de Sousa Santos, 2004; Jelin & Herschberg, 1996). But is this assumed potential for deepening democracy actually realized in practice through real-world experiences in participatory decentralization?

While the factors explaining the emergence of such 'innovative experiences' of institutional change have been identified (Grindle, 2000; Montero & Samuels, 2004), the concrete consequences of those reforms for the deepening of democracy are still neglected by most of the literature. The current literature suggests that participatory decentralization reforms can have indirect consequences on the exercise of citizenship and participation at the local level by providing civil society actors with new formal and informal spaces for channeling their demands and interacting with local decision-makers (Avritzer, 2002a; Roberts, 2001). At the same time, decentralization is not a panacea, and there are some authors who argue that it can even reinforce old patterns of clientelism and undemocratic state-civil society relationships (Garcia-Guadilla & Perez, 2002; Schönwälder, 1997) by helping local elites strengthening their control over society within the decentralized institutions. More generally, several years after their implementation, institutionalized participatory mechanisms have had mixed results at the municipal level, even within a single country.

One reason for these inconclusive findings is that the definition of success remains unclear across the literature. For this reason, the first question this dissertation addresses is *how do we assess success?* Going further than the current literature, which tends to focus on the mere existence of participation institutions, and borrowing from the social construction of citizenship theoretical framework, I argue that the type of interactions between the local state and civil society emerging within decentralized institutions has an

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impact on the potential for participatory decentralization reforms to become a means towards the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms. My assumption is that in order to uncover the paths toward the social construction of citizenship though participatory decentralization initiatives, the focus of analysis should be on how this relationship between the state and civil society emerges and develops rather than exclusively on the institutions themselves. Such a redefinition of success not only assumes that it is not a given, but also allows that there might be different degrees of success. There is important variation among cases across Latin America, including the strengthening of clientelism. This suggests that the traditional dichotomy between clientelism and citizenship cannot sufficiently address the issue of state-society relationships. In fact, as Latin American countries have generally transitioned toward a democratic regime favoring pluralism, social relations are more complex than the reality this dualistic spectrum can capture.

In sum, what is the impact of participatory decentralization on the prospects for democratic deepening at the local level? How do these newly created participatory public spaces affect state-society relationships? The main argument of this dissertation is that participatory decentralization experiences have several consequences on local state-society relationships according to the different types of mobilization patterns they encourage, but more importantly, according to the level of autonomy observed in the practice of participation within these institutions. Four types of relationships can emerge: *clientelism*, *disempowering co-option*, *fragmented inclusion* and *'democratizing' cooperation*. I argue that state-society cooperation has more potential than the other types to facilitate social inclusion patterns, greater state accountability and, consequently, the deepening of democracy because it entails collective grassroots mobilization patterns that contribute to empowering civil society actors who are autonomously organized to mediate between the state and society in order to formulate collective demands on the state through the formal channels of participation. Drawing from the comparative case study of participatory budgeting experiences in Belo Horizonte and Recife, in Brazil, and of participatory urban planning experiences in León and Nezahualcóyotl, in Mexico (see maps), I argue that the observed variations in the type of state-society relationships that

emerge from the implementation of decentralized participatory mechanisms in municipal governance models can be explained by a combination of structural, institutional and rational variables. Institutional change alone does not guarantee democratic success when measured in terms of (un)changing state-society relationships: the way these institutional changes are enacted by both political and social actors is even more important as it conditions the potential for an autonomous civil society to emerge and actively engage with the local state in the social construction of an inclusive citizenship regime.

MAP 1   MEXICAN CASES – LEÓN AND NEZAHUALCÓYOTL

MAP 2   BRAZILIAN CASES – BELO HORIZONTE AND RECIFE

CHAPTER ONE

PARTICIPATORY DECENTRALIZATION AND THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY: THE CITY AS A SPACE FOR THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZENSHIP?

> *The health of a democracy can be measured*
> *by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.*
> - Alexis de Tocqueville

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An emphasis on decentralization and institutionalized citizen participation in the political arena for sustaining development and democracy in the developing world has been on the scholarly and policy agendas for more than 20 years now, counting among its proponents many international organizations and scholars studying democracy. Citizens' participation in municipal governance models as a means to deepening democracy from the local level is now central to improving the quality of what has been qualified as the 'incomplete', 'electoral', or 'delegative' democracies of Latin America by a number of authors writing on the subject of democratic consolidation (Diamond, 2002; O'Donnell, 1996; Schedler, 1998). Following such policy prescriptions, a variety of institutional reforms aimed at including formal participation mechanisms in local decision-making processes have been implemented in Latin America, including participatory budgeting, urban and policy planning councils, citizen-participation councils, etc. Yet, the current literature on the consequences of such reforms suggests that they have had mixed results in terms of poverty-reduction, social inclusion or democratization, emphasizing different indicators according to the understanding of success. After more than a decade of participatory decentralization experiments, we still do not have a clear understanding of what success means in terms of deepening democracy. The aim of this chapter is therefore to address this gap and provide a theoretical framework for the study of participatory decentralization reforms' relations to the deepening of democracy, deriving from the social construction of citizenship theoretical framework.

Because it is embedded in such a theoretical framework, the present dissertation focuses on democratic decentralization experiences including an institutionalized participatory dimension and/or objective from the outset. As argued earlier, institutionalized citizen participation, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, is an important aspect of the development of civil society and is also a crucial dimension of furthering democratization in countries with traditionally low levels of autonomous civic engagement. In fact, the introduction of participatory mechanisms may have an impact on the revitalization of civil society and on its interactions with the state, which may, in turn, influence the potential for the social construction of citizenship to occur at the local level. How do these newly created local spaces affect state-civil society relationships? Although the strengthening of clientelist relationships may be a common outcome (Garcia-Guadilla & Perez, 2002; Schönwälder, 1997, p. 755), there is variation among cases across Latin America, and the traditional dichotomy between clientelism and cooperation/citizenship is not sufficient to address the issue of state-civil society relations. In fact, as Latin American countries have generally transitioned toward a democratic regime favoring pluralism, social relations are more complex than the reality this categorical dualism can capture.

As I have stated in my introduction, the objective of this dissertation is to provide a theoretical framework in order to understand better the types of relationships that have emerged through institutional innovation, as well as the sociopolitical conditions under which these relationships between civil society and the state are likely to emerge. The theoretical model developed in the last section therefore attempts at understanding two complex phenomena – participatory decentralization and the deepening of democracy – in relation to one another, developing an alternative approach that can account for the importance of actors, their preferences and strategic calculations, placing them in the context of specific institutional constraints. Thus, I develop a typology to assess the variety of state-society relationships that can emerge from participatory governance institutions, which will in turn help to uncover the sociopolitical conditions necessary to make participatory decentralization reforms work in Mexico and Brazil.

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1.2 ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

The Third Wave of transitions to democracy that occurred after 1974 in many developing regions has changed the face of governance in most Latin American countries, providing new mechanisms to periodically select and replace political representatives through free and fair elections (Huntington, 1991; Schumpeter, 1942). Vigorous debates over the nature of democracy have since ensued, with different perspectives on how democracy should be defined, operationalized and evaluated. The question of the impact of participatory mechanisms derives from those debates, and as a central concept of this study it is important to clarify the notion of democracy as understood here, as well as its various theoretical implications.

1.2.1 The Quality of Democracy: What is this all About?

A recent trend in the literature on democracy in Latin American countries has been to focus on deepening democracy: on the quality of democracy rather than only the institutional 'rules of the game' around which the early consolidation literature centered (Huntington, 1991; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Schedler, 1998). Those procedural rules refer to a minimalist definition of democracy *à la* Schumpeter based on indicators such as free, fair and regularly held elections (Huntington, 1991), the institutionalization of uncertainty (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Przeworski, 1986) or the establishment of institutional guarantees for participation and contestation (Dahl, 1971). According to this early literature, a democratic regime is consolidated when there is no other alternative to democracy for the purposes of electoral procedures.

These conditions, however, are not sufficient when democracy is evaluated in terms of the quality of its *procedures*, *content* and *results* (Diamond & Morlino, 2005), and the recent literature illustrates the resulting shift in the understanding of democracy. At a minimum, democracy is a governance system that should entail regularly held, competitive, free and fair elections for the selection of representatives (Huntington, 1991). In order for this minimal requirement to be achieved, other procedural conditions have been added by scholars, mostly following Robert Dahl's commonly accepted

definition of *polyarchy*: universal suffrage, alternative sources of information, right of association and freedom of speech (Dahl, 1971; Schmitter & Karl, 1991). The Third Wave democracies' experiences have proven, however, that such a definition of democracy, inherited from the transition literature and focusing primarily on institutional guarantees and procedures, leaves space to include what have been described as 'hybrid regimes', 'electoral democracies', 'illiberal democracies', 'delegative democracies' or 'gray zones democracies'[2]. States falling into this category, while having democratically elected representatives, cannot qualify as using an institutionalized and consolidated democratic, accountable and representative process for political decision-making (O'Donnell, 1994).

The recent literature on democracy has not only shown that the Third Wave of transitions to electoral democracies have seen the emergence of various types of regimes (Carothers, 2002; Foweraker & Krznaric, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2002), but also that if good governance and the development of 'high quality' democracy were to be sustained, a reconceptualization of democracy was needed. Beyond the 'operational' definition, democracy is a model of governance that is founded on the principles of liberty and equality and is upheld by an effective rule of law applied equally and indistinctly to all citizens (Diamond, 1999; Held, 2006). Evaluating and fostering democracy should not exclusively involve implementing formal *procedures* that sustain these two principles, but should also be concerned with the *content* and the *results* of the governance process. In fact, free, fair and regularly held elections do not guarantee a model of democracy that "provide[s] its citizens a high degree of freedom, political equality and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions" (Diamond & Morlino, 2005, p. xi). Moreover, and against the common wisdom of the consolidation literature (Linz & Stepan, 1996), electoral democracies can survive and become 'the only game in town' even in the absence of an

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[2] There is an important literature that arose in the aftermath of the Third Wave of transitions to democracy, which proposed to understand the emergence in comparative politics of democracies 'with adjectives', or of various concepts to identify the democracies that, for a while, combined democratic rules with elements of authoritarian governance (Collier & Levitsky, 1997). Those 'illiberal', 'electoral, 'delegative', 'semi' or 'hybrid' democracies were conceived as such to recognize the intrinsic limits of electoral democracies as found in Latin American countries (Carothers, 2002; Diamond, 2002; O'Donnell, 1994, 1996).

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effective rule of law, as the post-transitions regimes in Latin American countries have shown (Foweraker & Krznaric, 2002, p. 47).

1.2.2 Accountability and Inclusiveness of Citizenship Regimes: Indicators of the Quality of Democracy

As suggested, electoral democracy is not an end in itself, and the indicators of democracy should be considered in terms of a continuum along which one could evaluate democratic quality according to the performance of democratic institutions. As highlighted by Altman and Peréz-Liñán (2002, p. 87), evaluating the quality of democracy therefore consists in analyzing in which countries democracy performs better according to a set of normative standards. Most debates in the literature thus revolve around defining the normative standards used to evaluate the quality of democratic regimes, and there is still no consensus on the appropriate and operational indicators that can be used to 'measure' the quality of democracy (Altman & Pérez-Liñán, 2002).

Several indicators – both qualitative and quantitative – are identified in the existing literature on the quality of democracy. I argue, however, that our focus on the substance of democracy, on the state-society relationships underlying democratic governance, requires that we look at two intertwined qualitative indicators: the extension of citizenship rights to all citizens (Marshall, 1950) for which the existence of effective vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms sustains the rule of law (O'Donnell, 1998, 2005; Schedler, 1998) and an autonomous and inclusive civil society able to organize collectively and press demands on the state is essential (Oxhorn, 2001).

Inclusive Citizenship Rights & Civil Society
The definition of citizenship remains a controversial issue in social sciences as the underlying definition of the 'individual' and the 'community' varies from one field to another. Nevertheless, the philosophical bases for the concept of the citizen provide an interesting starting point for the study of citizenship in a sociopolitical context. The term citizen refers to a connection between the state and individuals, encompasses a certain sense of being a community member, and constitutes a social status that allows

individuals to make demands to the state (Dwyer, 2004). According to T.H Marshall, "those who possess citizenship status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Marshall, 1950). Being a citizen indeed implies possessing civic, political and social rights, as well as duties, but for Marshall, it should not involve bargaining among social actors; it is an undifferentiated status. This status, however, cannot be considered as undifferentiated, and there is bargaining negotiation between the state and society involved in the process of the construction of citizenship (Tilly, 1998). In fact, this status is generally related to citizens' power resources. Individual rights associated with citizenship are not automatically granted by the state; they are most often achieved through different forms of collective struggle, the result of cooperation and conflict between the state and society (Foweraker & Landman, 1997). Therefore, as Held (1992) argues, citizenship results from the efforts of different groups, movements and classes to gain more autonomy and control over their lives in the face of various forms of stratification, hierarchy and political oppression.

The concept of a citizenship regime, developed by Jenson (2001), is useful to capture the idea that the social status of citizenship is closely tied to the state, its institutions and its relationships with societal actors. Her definition of citizenship regimes includes institutional arrangements, rules and understandings that establish the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of a political community through the formal recognition of particular rights (civil, political, social, and cultural; individual and collective). There are therefore three dimensions of citizenship, which not only tie the state and its citizens together in a reciprocal relationship within the political community, but also link the citizens among themselves: rights and responsibilities, access and belonging[3] (Jenson & Papillon, 2001).

These state-civil society interactions and the struggle of civil society, demanding equal

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[3] According to their definition, the first dimension of citizenship, *rights and responsibilities* includes what the state owes to its citizens, what they owe the state and to each other in terms of civil, political and social rights and the associated responsibilities. The second dimension, *access*, is closely tied to the first one: citizens need concrete means to access those rights, to exercise those rights. The third dimension, *belonging,* relates to the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion within the political community: the state is crucial in determining those boundaries, contributing to the development of a political identity among members (citizens) of the same community (Jenson & Papillon, 2001).

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citizenship rights and social inclusion while resisting subordination to the state, have also been defined as the 'social construction of citizenship' (Oxhorn, 2003), which entails dimensions of negotiation and bargaining where civil society is a crucial actor. In fact, civil society organizations "serve the main function of instilling citizenship, the participation in social life that takes a person […] to a recognition of what promotes the common good" (Hudson, 2003). Civil society is not conceived here as being in opposition to or in constant conflict with the state as suggested by the liberal-individual perspective (Diamond, 1999). It is rather defined with a collectivist perspective, following Oxhorn's terms, as:

> the social fabric formed by a multiplicity of self-constituted territorially
> –and functionally-based units which peacefully coexist and collectively
> resist subordination to the state, at the same time they demand inclusion
> into the national political structures (Oxhorn, 1995).

This definition includes all types of social groups, associations, neighborhood committees, social movements and even ethnic groups. It is important to emphasize, however, that civil society is by no means an homogeneous category: it is composed of a variety of groups with distinct strategies and interests. Moreover, although civil society as a whole plays a role in supporting democracy, the organizations within civil society themselves do not need to be explicitly democratic. The definition of civil society I use, however, explicitly excludes business groups whose activities are mainly profit-seeking, and 'uncivil' criminal groups using violent means to achieve their goals, acting in without regard for the rule of law and outside of the political process. In fact, groups within an inclusive and democratic civil society should be able to peacefully co-exist, which means that its groups should agree upon the idea that violence is an unacceptable type of social interaction.

Because the inclusiveness of a citizenship regime rests on the ability of the state to provide citizens with political, social and civil rights; its improvement is closely linked to the development of a strong and inclusive civil society that engages in a cooperative relationship with the state. As Jenson noted, the boundaries of citizenship are determined by the reciprocal relationship between the state and individuals within the political community (Jenson & Papillon, 2001), to which the development of a strong and

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inclusive civil society is crucial. In fact, citizenship regimes, because they include this type of state-society relationship, encompass more than rights: they involve not only rights and responsibilities from both parties, but also access and belonging, to which an organized civil society can be the key. For instance, citizenship regimes were historically not fully achieved and remained limited to certain segments of the population (often on the basis of favoritism and political privileges) in most Latin American countries; civic and political rights were nonexistent for the majority of the population, and social rights were not extended to all citizens. In today's young Latin American democracies, the extent to which citizenship is fully granted is one of the main evaluation criteria for the quality of these new regimes, which often inherited weak civil societies and strong political elites perpetuating clientelistic state-society relationships that have adapted to democratic change. This precludes the further deepening and consolidation of democracy, as we shall see later in this chapter.

State Accountability and the Rule of Law

One of the central elements considered by the literature on the quality of democracy is the notion of accountability. The many 'deficiencies' of accountability mechanisms are often visible in new democracies, challenging the development of inclusive democratic citizenship regimes, and of higher quality democracies (Mainwairing & Welna, 2003; Schedler, Diamond, & Plattner, 1999). As illustrated by O'Donnell (1998, 2005), the absence of or deficiencies in accountability mechanisms present a challenge to the effectiveness of the rule of law (the fact that no one, including the powerholders, is above the law), which is necessary to guarantee a certain level of responsiveness from the state and, more importantly, the universal application of and the undifferentiated access to the fundamental rights of citizenship for all citizens.

To begin, what is accountability in politics? Simply put, accountability is "the process of holding [political] actors responsible for their actions" (Fox, 2007, p. 28). In politics, the concept of accountability refers more specifically to three important underlying ideas: answerability, as the obligation for politicians to inform the public about the nature of their actions and to explain them, responsibility of public officials with regards to their

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actions, and enforcement, as the capacity for the 'accountability agents' to sanction the powerholders' wrongdoings (Mainwairing, 2003; Schedler, 1999). Accountability therefore entails a relationship among the state, politicians and society with multi-directional linkages establishing an array of vertical (connecting citizens to their representatives) and horizontal (checks and balances) mechanisms established to foster the vitality of democracy and the effectiveness of the rule of law. In fact, public trust in government and support for democracies are closely associated with the capacity of electors to hold their government responsible and to sanction the wrongdoings and abuses of power of politicians (Diamond, 2008). Three main 'agents of accountability' have been identified in the literature, complementing each other in fomenting the development of efficient vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms necessary to sustain the well-functioning of the rule of law: voters, state agencies, and civil society actors.

Accountability can be embodied in a variety of mechanisms 'restraining the state' and allowing the various accountability agents to play their respective role and to oversee, monitor and control the actions of the state's powerholders. The first important source of accountability in democracies is elections. In fact, the existence of free and fair electoral procedures guarantees a certain degree of 'vertical accountability', as a direct mechanism linking the elected representatives to citizens. According to the common understanding of vertical accountability, elections constitute the primary mechanism that allows citizens to sanction or reward the actions and decisions of their politicians. It has, however, been argued that vertical (or political) accountability faces an intrinsic problem due to the imperfect nature of elections as a mechanism of accountability, for both structural and contextual reasons. First, most powerholders and decision-makers are not elected: the elected representatives, who are directly accountable to the voters, appoint them. Second, because elections are only held every few years and attempt to grasp a variety of unorganized interests and opinions, it is practically impossible for elections to send clear signals to individual politicians (Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 1999). Contextual factors must also be taken into account, because even in a case where sanctions could be imposed on an individual basis, elections are held in the context of imperfect information about the working of government, as well as particularly poor public information

available on the individual behaviors of politicians (J. Ackerman, 2003). Though they are problematic as a vertical accountability mechanism in general, the shortcomings of this role for elections are exacerbated in Latin America and other new democracies as the critiques of the minimalist definitions of democracy have highlighted, notably because they are not complemented by other strong sources of accountability, as we will see next. Moreover, several factors contribute to weaken the power of elections as a vertical accountability mechanism in these newly democratic countries, as analysts of electoral politics have noted. The 'unequal' nature of the relationships between the electorate and their representatives who represent their values and preferences; the non-reelection principle existing in many countries, making the imposition of sanctions more difficult for voters; and the generalized mistrust generated by poorly institutionalized party systems and the volatility of voters, politicians and political parties are all factors characterizing Latin American countries electoral politics that may hinder the effective exercise of voters' accountability (Mainwairing, 2003; Moreno, Crisp, & Shugart, 2003; O'Donnell, 1998; Schedler, 1999).

The newly elected democratic regimes of Latin America often still lacked an important source of accountability that would sustain the effectiveness of the rule of law and of vertical accountability mechanisms: 'horizontal accountability'. Referring to an array of organizations and checks and balances within the state, horizontal accountability was defined by O'Donnell as:

> the existence of state agencies legally enabled and empowered, and factually willing and able, to take actions that span from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state that may be qualified as unlawful (1998, p. 117).

Horizontal accountability is central to the quality of the democratic governance process because it codifies the idea that the different branches of the state – generally the judiciary, the legislative and the executive – should 'restrain' one another through a series of institutional checks and balances (Schedler et al., 1999). Horizontal (or legal) accountability, however, faces the problem of the historical weakness of institutions in most recent democracies (Peruzzoti & Smulovitz, 2006). In fact, to be effective,

horizontal accountability should be the product of "networks of [state] agencies (up to and including high courts) committed to upholding the rule of law" (O'Donnell, 1998, p. 119) and that secure each other's autonomy. Depending on specific constitutional arrangements and division of powers, horizontal accountability could be argued, theoretically at least, to be upheld by bodies such as the legislative (the parliament or the Congress) and the judiciary. In Latin America, however, the 'delegative' central executives have traditionally been the most powerful branch of government where decision-making powers were centralized, ignoring other central agencies and, in turn, curtailing their autonomy and undermining horizontal accountability (O'Donnell, 1994). Yet another important source of horizontal accountability is what Moreno et al. (2003) have called the superintendence agencies − non-electoral and independent institutions such as the ombudsman, controller general or general prosecutor, for example − created to oversee the actions of the executive. Because the executive creates them, however, they are dependent upon it for their own survival and existence, thus not enjoying the genuine autonomy that they would need to impose sanctions on central authorities when needed (Moreno et al., 2003). This is especially true in presidential models such as the ones found in several Latin American countries like Mexico and Brazil, where the central executive has kept the lion's share of powers after the transition to democratic regimes at all levels of government. This historical weakness of horizontal accountability mechanisms, because it challenges democracy, still constitutes an important limit to the quality of democratic governance in Latin America.

More recently, however, scholars have begun to question the relevance of such a state-centered definition of accountability to the debates on the quality of democracy. In fact, because the quality of a democracy does not rest uniquely on electoral procedures and state institutions, a consensus based on a wide agreement on the democratic nature of rules of the game at the institutional level without any counterbalance in the social realm remains insufficient. There is therefore an idea gaining strength among scholars suggesting that strengthening and mobilizing civil society is essential for stimulating both types of accountability mechanisms and 'making democracy work', even if this dimension has been largely ignored by the early debates on accountability (Diamond,

2008, p. 310; Schmitter, 1999; Smulovitz & Peruzzoti, 2000). Recent work on the quality of democracy has developed the concept of 'social/societal accountability', which incorporates the role of civil society as an important dimension of accountability. In fact, it was critics of the traditional conception who introduced the notion of social accountability (or the politics of accountability) as a third crucial type of accountability, complementing the existing ones, in order to hold politicians responsible for their decisions and, in turn, ensure both vertical and horizontal accountability (J. Ackerman, 2003; Fox, 2006, 2007; Peruzzoti & Smulovitz, 2006). This dimension entails not only the existence of effective vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms, but also the involvement of an active and autonomous civil society that can hold the government responsible for its actions and decisions. Recent debates on the meaning of accountability in democratization processes thus tend to focus on the role citizens have to play in monitoring the government, demanding transparency and responsiveness in policy decision-making and the implementation processes (Gaventa, 2002). As Smulovitz and Peruzzotti put it:

> through a multitude of monitoring and agenda-setting activities, civil society adds to the classic repertoire of electoral and constitutional institutions for controlling government […] bringing into the analysis a realm of previously ignored activities that may compensate for many of the built-in deficits of traditional mechanisms (2000, p. 149).

Social accountability is thus defined as a mechanism that "rests on the actions of a multiple array of citizens' associations and movements" that, via the media and public action, are able to set the agenda and expose the wrongdoings of their representatives (Smulovitz & Peruzzoti, 2000). Consequently, one can argue that social accountability is a mechanism for improving the quality of democracy from the perspective of social action, the effectiveness of which rests upon "organized civil society able to exert influence on the political system and on public bureaucracies" (2000, p. 150). This is generally an important weakness of recent Latin American democracies such as Mexico and Brazil and poses a challenge to the development of inclusive citizenship regimes and the improvement of governments' accountability, as we shall see in the next section.

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1.2.3 Deepening Democracy in Latin America: State-Society Relationships and the Challenge of Clientelism

As the discussion on the quality of democracy highlighted, both indicators – accountability and the inclusiveness of citizenship regimes – reflect the inherent relational nature of democracy and its institutions. Deepening democracy therefore refers in essence to a profound transformation of the state-society relationships sustaining the functioning of democratic institutions, to which the strengthening of civil society is central. In fact, in Latin America, the quality of democracy is mostly threatened by three associated and mutually reinforcing structural factors: the historical weakness of civil society (Oxhorn, 2003), the elitist nature of the transition processes (Hagopian, 1990, 1996), and the persisting structural inequalities (Karl, 2003). Combined, all three contribute to the preservation of traditional political interactions and the persistence of clientelistic relationships, which curtail the development of more inclusive citizenship regimes sustained by strong and effective accountability mechanisms.

In fact, it is the exclusionary nature of state-society relationships that curtails the deepening of democracy. Political clientelism, which is primarily a mode of interaction between politicians and citizens that involves an unequal social exchange − one based upon power and resources − can become an important obstacle to deepening democracy, creating or fostering social exclusion and particularistic state-society relationships. It relies on mutual benefits, such as providing support and legitimacy in exchange for targeted material and welfare benefits (Lemarchand, 1981, p. 15; Roniger, 1994), and entails unequal and privileged-based resource-redistribution. The benefits are mutual but fundamentally unequal; the clients (citizens) are dependent upon the patron (state) since the latter controls the distribution of resources. This has negative consequences for democracy in that it creates patterns of dependency and social exclusion. In fact, this model of state-society relationships contains a pervasive element of control, that "help[s] both to legitimate and mask structures of domination" and of social exclusion (Lemarchand, 1981, p. 10). In Latin America, the elitist and exclusionary transitions to democratic rule where civil society only had a marginal space to develop into a fully

active and autonomous actor in the political space[4] did not mean the disappearance of clientelistic ties and patron-client relationships, contrary to what the modernization theorists would have predicted[5]. In fact, clientelism is not static and could therefore survive a transition to democracy: it can take different forms and functions, and it can adapt to the new context of machine politics where parties become clientelistic machines (Eisenstadt & Roniger, 1981; Roniger, 1994). Here, traditional patron-client ties are incorporated into a broader institutional framework, usually the political parties (Lemarchand, 1981, p. 21). Clientelism can be sustained as a strategic response to growing popular participation in order to secure votes at the local level and to increase political influence at the center, a classic strategy employed by political entrepreneurs to gain power within state institutions. The exchange is, then, less understood in terms of a personal relationship between two individuals, it is rather defined by political parties and included within the activities of the elected governments, through targeted programs and policies that aim to secure the support of certain social groups.

The persistence beyond transition of state-society relationships primarily defined by clientelistic exchanges mediated by political brokers rather than channeled through the state by an inclusive civil society has important consequences on the prospects for deepening democracy in Latin America, challenging both dimensions of the quality of democracy. On the one hand, it contributes to maintaining civil society in a weak position *vis-à-vis* the state, curtailing its groups' ability to collectively mobilize and engage in the social construction of citizenship. This, in turn, creates different classes of citizens: those who are clients and have access to the state and those who are not and are consequently

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[4] In their seminal work on transitions from authoritarian rule, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) have highlighted the elitist nature of the transition process as it occurred in most Latin American countries, generally conducted from above (within the ruling elite) and excluding civil society, which appears to be absent (Levine, 1988). In many cases across Latin America, *pacted* transitions and *imposed* transitions brought electoral democratic stability (Karl & Schmitter, 1991). These pacts consist of a negotiation between the opposed elites who agree on certain rules for the new regime to be instituted, guaranteeing each other some privileges and rights. These agreements are conducted among elites: the hard liners, the soft liners and the opponents. Neither is civil society ever included in the negotiations, nor is it considered as a 'politically significant actor' in the process. As a consequence, traditional institutional and cultural features of the authoritarian regimes remain present in the newly democratic countries. Among other things, there is a tendency for civil society to be a weak actor in the governance process (Hagopian, 1990).
[5] Modernization theorists considered democracy as the desirable end to a sequence of political developments entailing social mobilizations, which translates into greater political participation, the transformation of the political elite and the improved quality of the governmental services (Deutsch, 1961).

excluded from citizenship rights. On the other hand, clientelism and the associated weakness of civil society also limit the prospects for making vertical and social accountability more effective. Clientelism does this by curtailing the autonomy of citizens participating in the political community, which is a crucial element of both democracy and the strengthening of social accountability mechanisms (Fox, 1994). Autonomy allows citizens to express dissent and organize independently in order to actually hold politicians and their officials accountable, responsible for their decisions and actions. Clientelism, however, limits autonomy because it creates groups of clients who participate in the political community as beneficiaries of the patrons' unequal access to power and resources, in a relationship of control, where political support for the incumbents is the prerequisite for receiving necessary state resources. Given that accountability rests on the capacity of citizens to evaluate politicians' decisions and to impose sanctions on them, their lack of autonomy in clientelistic relationships hinders their ability to do so, thereby undermining social accountability mechanisms and, in turn, the quality of democracy.

Under these circumstances, how can the patterns of clientelism and social exclusion in democratizing Latin American countries be overcome? As previously argued, transforming the way citizens are linked to the state and politicians is a central aspect of improving the quality of Third Wave democratic regimes. Following our discussion of the nature and quality of the democratic governing *process*, two main dimensions must be improved in order to sustain the transformation of state-society relationships and, in turn, to promote the deepening of democracy in Latin America: strengthening civil society and its relationship to the state in order to sustain accountability and fostering the development of inclusive citizenship regimes. Today's struggle for citizenship rights is therefore closely related to the historical weaknesses of civil society in the region. In fact, in Latin America, civil society has not traditionally been organized outside of the state apparatus, and it was therefore unable to claim for universal citizenship rights. Since the struggles of civil society and its relationships with the state are at the core of the development of an inclusive citizenship regime and of the efficiency of vertical and horizontal accountability, civil society needs to be both autonomously organized and

inclusive of all sectors of the population. Indeed, democratic relations between actors within civil society, formulating their demands in a context of plurality, as well as those between the state and civil society, are more likely to lead the state to fulfill demands for citizenship rights (Oxhorn, 2003). This dissertation therefore focuses on decentralized state-sponsored institutional mechanisms aimed at transforming those state-society relationships from the local level through the participation and inclusion of civil society in the governance process as one way of sustaining social inclusion and improving accountability mechanisms.

1.3 THE DEMOCRATIZING EFFECT OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE: A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA

Decentralization has often been associated with democratizing objectives. In fact, the city has become an increasingly important element of the social construction of citizenship in recently democratized countries. The question of decentralization has been on international agencies' agendas for about 20 years now. There is therefore a relatively substantial body of literature on the topic, although it is still incomplete and mostly policy-oriented. Before looking at the state of the current literature on decentralization, its origins, the various types of reforms it entails and its consequences for development and democracy, it is important to define the concept itself.

1.3.1 Defining Democratic Decentralization

Decentralization is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in various ways over the past two decades. The concept of decentralization literally refers to the territorial distribution of powers, and, more precisely, to a reversal of the concentration of administration at the central level of government by conferring power on local governments (Smith, 1895, p. 1). There is no unique model of decentralization. The central administration can transfer any of its powers (fiscal, administrative or political) to the administrative units it creates or recognizes as such, including subnational states, provinces, municipalities or neighborhoods.

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Dennis A. Rondinelli (1981) was among the first scholars to talk about the concept of decentralization in the context of developing and democratizing countries. In a 1983 study, Rondinelli and his colleagues identify four types of decentralization corresponding to the different degrees to which powers are transferred from the central government to lower instances: 1) *deconcentration*, when the state retains policy-making powers while redistributing administrative functions to lower levels within the central government, 2) *delegation*, that is the transfer of very specific decision-making functions to para-governmental organizations, 3) *devolution*, when the central state creates new autonomous governmental authorities at the local level with decision-making and implementation powers, and 4) *privatization*, when the state gives public functions to private (lucrative or not) entities (Rondinelli, Nellis, & Cheema, 1983). The four types of decentralization have different implications for policy-making and for development, but their main goal is to increase service-provision efficiency and responsiveness at the municipal or regional levels in cases where bottlenecks in decision-making and policy implementation have been created by centralized government planning (Rondinelli, 1990). All these forms do not equally achieve the efficiency, accountability and responsiveness objectives underlying decentralization reforms. Though devolution seems to be the more complete form of decentralization with regards to these objectives, it does not guarantee that powers are decentralized to democratically elected local and regional governments. In all cases, the decentralization mechanisms and processes are relatively insulated from citizen input and are therefore not necessarily intended to increase responsiveness to citizens' needs and demands, which means that decentralization could be implemented by and become effective in both democratic and undemocratic governments/institutions (Manor, 1999; Oxhorn, Tulchin, & Selee, 2004).

Many scholars also followed this approach to defining decentralization, addressing its weaknesses by focusing more on 'democratic' or 'effective' decentralization (Heller, 2001; Manor, 1999; O'Neill, 2005). According to James Manor (1999), who wrote one of the most extensive reports on decentralization in developing countries, decentralization refers to a change in the distribution of responsibilities between central, regional and local government. Consequently, his definition excludes privatization and 'delegation' to

nongovernmental organizations[6]. According to him, privatization should be excluded, as it is unlikely to lead to further democratization. In fact, it is not a transfer of powers between different levels of democratically elected governments, but to private partners who often have highly centralized decision-making and to non-governmental organizations who are not accountable to the public. This reinterpretation of Rondinelli's typology leaves him with only three types of decentralization[7], which he identifies as being: *deconcentration*, *fiscal decentralization* and *democratic decentralization* (or devolution)[8]. All those three can occur simultaneously or in isolation, but he argues that only decentralizing reforms including some elements of democratization can lead to effective results when the goal is to make governance efficient and responsive to local needs[9]. Focusing only on these three types, Manor brings decentralization to its political essence, defining it as an inherently political process involving the state.

Both of these approaches to defining decentralization are limiting, however, because each implies that decentralization is an irreversible process, although it is not the case. There have been different degrees of centralization/decentralization throughout history, with periods of decentralized governance followed by periods of high centralization of power. In addition, these approaches also present conceptual challenges for the study of decentralization's impact on the deepening of democracy, as they implicitly suggest that

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[6] Manor (1999) is referring here to the transfer of powers to private enterprises, which is not a transfer of powers between levels of government, as well as to the delegation of responsibilities to nongovernmental agencies because, following Parker's findings, it has only rarely been attempted or has failed (Parker, 1995).

[7] Manor's three types of decentralization are: 1) *deconcentration*, referring to the dispersal of agents of the central government into lower levels of government, 2) *fiscal decentralization*, or downwards fiscal transfers where the central government cedes some influence over budgets and financial decisions to lower levels, and 3) *democratic decentralization, or devolution*, where there is a transfer or both resources and powers to local level instances which have a certain autonomy from central authorities and are democratic in some way (Manor, 1999).

[8] Manor is inclusive when identifying the ways by which local authorities can be considered as being democratic, at least to a certain extent. He includes here cases where the local authorities are elected by secret ballots, but also more unconventional arrangements such as cases of local projects with community supervision and influence where participation is informal but still injects some democratic elements into the system. In fact, even half-measures are better than nothing, since they open the space for civil society to emerge and then pressure the local state for more democratization and accountability (see Manor, 1999, p. 10-11).

[9] That was also the approach taken by the World Bank when promoting decentralization reforms in Colombia, its analysts arguing that decentralization without democratizing reforms would be incomplete and would hardly have socially effective results (WorldBank, 1995).

decentralization is a way to achieve better democratic practices at the local level, equating decentralization with 'democratic practices' or 'efficiency'. Indeed, these approaches indirectly propose a teleological path from low levels of decentralization to democratic decentralization, or devolution. Decentralization, therefore, becomes a means toward the opening of new participation spaces, greater accountability from local governments and greater citizens' participation. In reality, this is not the case. In fact, it is not clear that the goal of decentralization is explicitly democratization[10], even in the case of devolution, decentralization's most extensive form. More recently, another approach to defining decentralization has been proposed by the literature on Latin America to address this constraint, arguing that the nature of the decentralized power matters, accounting for the goals of the implemented reforms (Faletti, 2005; Gomá & Jordana, 2004; Montero & Samuels, 2004; Willis et al., 1999). Along with *administrative* (or *policy)* *decentralization*, which is the relative authority that local state representatives have to make decisions on the goals, resources, administration and implementation of public policies, Montero and Samuels also identify two other types: *political decentralization*, which refers to the direct election of state/provincial and/or local political offices, and *fiscal decentralization* (or *fiscal federalism*), referring to both revenues and expenditures and is relative to the extent to which subnational levels of government control these two

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[10] According to various scholars inspired by new institutionalist perspectives, the motives of politicians adopting decentralization reforms are not necessarily democratic: it would be irrational for political leaders to give away their own powers. Politicians and policy-makers' choices are better explained by electoral strategies, which are constrained by different structures and contexts. According to O'Neill, electoral politics is the main factor helping to explore the causes of the *a priori* unlikely decentralization reforms in the Andes (Bolivia and Peru). She argues that this type of reform is the result of a reasoned act by political parties' representatives (policy-makers) seeking future access to elected offices since it can provide long-term access power to weak national parties with strong subnational branches doubting their re-election prospects (O'Neill, 2005, p. 46). According to Grindle, however, context matters, and the presence of an institutional crisis challenging the state's legitimacy is a determining factor explaining why politicians decided to decentralize (at least in Venezuela, Bolivia and Argentina). In the same vein, Montero and Samuels (2004) suggest that decentralization should be understood as the result of the political incentives and electoral strategies of political leaders, taken within a structural context that might have path-dependent consequences on the politics of centralization/decentralization since they constrain political incentives and the strategies of politicians towards the distribution of powers within a country. In that sense, they agree with Willis, Ganger and Haggard (1999) who attempted to explain the variations in the nature and scope of the decentralization reforms across Latin America. The latter also argued that decentralization answered to a political logic, and that this logic differs from one country to another since it is rooted in the constitutional, electoral and party system (Willis et al., 1999, p. 8). According to them, the variation is therefore explained by the fact the decentralization is very closely related to the localization of party brokers in a system, focusing on the relation between central and subnational political leaders and their interactions to explain the nature of decentralized reforms.

dimensions of fiscal policy (Montero & Samuels, 2004, p. 7-8). These three forms are all parts of the larger process that constitutes decentralization, a multidimensional concept that has a variety of combinations that may or may not occur at the same time, with the more complete stage of decentralization being when all three dimensions of decentralization are present. Thus, their findings show that decentralization *per se* does not mean democracy (Grindle, 2007; Montero & Samuels, 2004), since the motives of politicians undertaking these reforms and the way they are implemented are not necessarily democratic, in contexts where citizens cannot count on effective accountability mechanisms.

Despite the various criticisms that can be formulated against the current approaches to defining decentralization and dubious attempts at linking it to democratization in the literature, some of their theoretical insights contribute to our understanding of democratic decentralization reforms. First, Manor's addition to Rondinelli's typology is interesting because by focusing on democracy as a characteristic of devolution, he implicitly suggests that decentralization reforms should not be understood in isolation from the power dynamics if we want to address their democratizing potential. The idea of decentralization as a dynamic phenomenon is reinforced by Montero and Samuels (2004, p. 8), who argue that decentralization is a *political process* that is not irreversible and involves political decision-making. It is thus crucial to understand the consequences of decentralization's dynamism because the process involves not only local governance but also the relationships between local and central states. This, in turn, affects the extent and nature of decentralization. This highlights the importance of focusing on the nature of decentralization processes. In fact, though devolution of powers may be the most extensive form of decentralization, allowing a certain form of autonomy to subnational entities to which new powers are devolved, the nature of these powers is no less central to define their real capacity for action. Montero and Samuels' work proves to be enlightening on this matter, suggesting that the most advanced forms of decentralization, meaning those through which subnational entities enjoy more authority, are those where they have the administrative, political and financial resources necessary to actually engage in significant local decision-making processes. Third, it is clear that the

democratic element of decentralization reforms cannot be restricted to the way people are elected, as our earlier discussion on the limits of elections as an indicator of democracy and an accountability mechanism highlighted. In fact, as we have seen, the deepening of democracy is closely related to the strengthening of civil society in countries where its traditional weakness has been reinforced by the pervasiveness of clientelism surviving the transition to electoral democracy. Thus, to become 'democratizing', decentralized policy-making processes need not only to be accompanied by consequently decentralized fiscal and political resources, but also to include a participatory dimension, aimed at genuinely including citizens' input on policy. In fact, decentralized institutions should become spaces for effective social accountability to be exercised and for empowering civil society as a central agent of the social construction of citizenship.

Therefore, where the traditional definitions of decentralization were unable to provide the conceptual tools necessary for the study of its relation to the deepening of democracy, introducing another type of decentralization – participatory decentralization – could complement them. As we shall see in the next section, participatory decentralization reforms indeed constitute a clear attempt at bringing democratization back to the center of decentralization reforms, including the participation of ordinary citizens in dynamic local policy-making processes.

1.3.2 Linking Decentralization and Democracy: Introducing the Concept of Participatory Decentralization

If decentralization *per se* does not necessarily lead to greater democratization, what are the mechanisms favoring the deepening of democracy at the local level through decentralizing reforms? Inspired by both the literature on participatory democracy and on decentralization, one of the policy solutions that has been recently explored in scholarly literature and adopted by many countries is the introduction of participatory governance mechanisms at the local level, a solution for which a certain level of administrative, political and financial decentralization is necessary (Fung & Wright, 2001; Goldfrank, 2007; Selee, 2004). As a political project aimed at bringing citizens into the decentralized and democratic decision-making process, participatory decentralization, it is argued,

contributes to filling the gap in the literature linking democracy and decentralization, both empowering civil society from below and strengthening state accountability.

First, the idea of citizen participation as a corollary to democracy, while recently reintroduced in the current democratization debates in developing countries, has long been a concern for philosophers and scholars of the older democracies of industrialized countries. More recently, authors focusing on the notion of citizen-empowerment and the strengthening of civil society have brought back the idea of participatory democracy as an attempt at bringing citizens back to the center of the democratization project in developing countries, through direct public deliberation and participation in civic associations. As highlighted by Pateman (1970), classical political theorists such as John Stuart Mill and Rousseau were among the first who, long before modern conceptions of minimalist democracy were developed, conceptualized democracy as participatory and fundamentally deliberative, with citizen participation as a core element of the functioning of democratic representative political systems[11]. Rousseau is probably among the most important precursors, as his theory is based on the idea that to be acceptable, political decisions should be based upon citizen participation. In fact, Rousseau's ideal of democracy is based upon the idea that "the only policy that is acceptable to all is the one where any benefits and burdens are equally shared; the participatory process ensures that political equality is made in the decision-making assembly" (Pateman, 1970, p. 23). Participation is, according to him, the way for citizens to protect their own interests while pursuing the public good and ensuring good government. The argument is therefore that, through the edifying experience of participation in decision-making, citizens learn to be both private and public citizens in the public sphere, participating collectively as interdependent individuals belonging to a shared political community and therefore exercising and securing their own citizenship rights (Rousseau, 1968 [1762]). Mill's theory of democracy is also fundamental to understanding the roots of modern

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[11] According to Pateman's argument, contemporary democracy theories *à la* Schumpeter developed by authors such as Schumpeter (1942), Sartori (1962) and Dahl (1971) have mischaracterized the work of their predecessors, dismissing citizen participation as a constitutive element of a viable and stable theory of democracy. While classical theorists have developed democratic theories that included a strong dimension of citizen participation, their contemporaries have rather suggested that participation was a source of democratic instability and that it should be kept minimal. For a complete discussion on the place of participation in democratic theory, see Carole Pateman's *Participation and Democratic Theory* (1970).

participatory governance theories, as it privileges local-level citizen participation as a central feature of the large-scale democratic processes inherent to representative governments. Like Rousseau, Mill sees in participation an educative function for self-interested men to collectively pursue the public good. Following Tocqueville's lessons, he maintains that this educative function of participation is particularly important at the local level: "It is only by practicing popular government on a limited scale that the people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger" (Mill, 1963). Moreover, as Rousseau, Mill suggests that through political participation and, especially, discussion – deliberation – the individual "becomes consciously a member of a great community" (Mill, 1910, p. 279), enacting and standing for his citizenship status.

Second, and despite the problematic association between decentralization and democracy, the common wisdom in the 1990's dictated that city-based institutions were ideal vehicles to achieve the project of deepening democratic practices in democratizing countries. The recent wave of decentralization toward the municipal level might have opened the space for a revitalization of civil society in many developing countries, and especially in Latin America (Manor, 1999). In fact, city based-institutions were seen as offering an opportunity to link the emerging civil society to the political system, given their proximity to the population and their perceived bridging function (Schönwälder, 1997, p. 754). The 1997 World Bank report on the state also contributed to strengthen this argument about decentralization and democracy, endorsing the reforms of the state and encouraging developing countries' pursuits in that direction (WorldBank, 1997). The state and its institutions indeed have an important role to play in relation to society, shaping the modes of social organization and mobilization. In fact, as some scholars have argued, the state plays an important role in sustaining the creation of civil society actors (Skocpol, 1985) and is consequently at the core of the revitalization of civil society in democratizing countries. As Jelin emphasized:

> political and institutional will can encourage the practice of collective citizenship responsibility, and can establish the mechanisms for the expression of demands for rights, by fostering the legitimacy of public spaces for such expression (1996, p. 109).

It has therefore been argued that the decentralization of decision-making powers at the city level can foster popular participation and the revitalization of an autonomous civil society, formally or informally strengthening its links with the state. In fact, "by placing more responsibility for social and economic welfare onto the populace, states, both directly and indirectly, promoted the independent organization of citizens" (Roberts, 1996, p. 57). First, the decentralized state has the potential to directly promote social organization, as it expects people to take an active part in the implementation of welfare reforms and the management of social policies. In fact, local forms of participation not only enable citizens to solve social problems, but they also "stimulate communication and socializing and create preconditions for the formation of a group identity within local communities, which can extend to broader social institutions" (Pethukov, 2005, p. 22). To use the social movements literature's language, decentralization at the local level can become a change in the "structure of political opportunities" for social organization to emerge and mobilize (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). Second, interactions between the state and civil society are also enhanced through the creation of formal institutions for participation and the expression of these collective priorities. Although such a democratic outcome is only one possibility among others, it has been argued that local states contribute to fostering their links with civil society by both giving their citizens more responsibility for public policy decision-making and implementation and by creating formal participative institutions to collectively organize to define and defend the population's priorities.

The current literature on participatory (or deliberative) decentralization experiences in democratizing countries generally argues along these lines, suggesting that, associated to a broader democratic political project, citizen participation in decentralized decision-making processes often has the potential to become 'transformative' in democratization contexts (de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2004; Hickey & Mohan, 2005). As we have seen earlier, strengthening and empowering civil society is an important dimension of the deepening of democracy, as it constitutes a central accountability mechanism and a pillar of the social construction of citizenship in democratic systems. Thus, democratic deepening rests on the construction of public spaces as venues for the state and civil

society to work with one another (Avritzer, 2002a; Baiocchi, 2003; Dagnino, 2002; Dagnino et al., 2006). As the institutional expression of the will to construct such public spaces at the municipal level, the various reforms toward participatory decentralized governance experimented in Latin America – such as participatory budgeting, urban planning citizen councils, citizen oversight councils, etc. – constitute the main object of this study. But first, we shall shed light on how citizen participation has been problematized in the literature in relation to the deepening of recent democracies and, more specifically, to the notions of empowerment and accountability.

1.3.3 The 'Democratizing Effect' of Participatory Decentralization: Toward a Virtuous Cycle?

The political project of participatory decentralization − a term often used interchangeably with local participatory governance or local participatory democracy in the literature − is generally associated with the idea of strengthening civil society as the main locus for participation, the formulation of collective demands and the peaceful mediation of conflicts through its discussions and deliberations with the state. According to this literature, institutionalized citizen participation in local governance processes is necessary for decentralization to become 'democratizing'. In fact, citizen participation is generally considered as an empowerment and a social accountability mechanism in democratizing countries such as Brazil and Mexico, which have historically had only limited experience with citizen participation, traditionally repressed or channeled through elitist corporatist networks. Moreover, their transitions to democracy, undertaken from above and without including civil society in the process, led to elitist and delegative forms of democratic regimes which reinforced the traditional weakness of civil society (O'Donnell, 1994; O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986) Therefore, participatory democracy is considered an alternative to the elitist democracies that have developed in Latin America, whose founding principle consists of the

> broadening of the concept of politics through citizen participation and deliberation in the public space and from which is derived a conception of democracy as a system of instances articulated for citizens to be involved in decisions of interest to them and to oversee the governments' activities (Dagnino et al., 2006, p. 19).

Although taking different foci for understanding that relationship, the following approaches, focusing on deliberation, co-management or more largely on participatory governance all share the idea that participatory forums

> open up more effective channels for communication and negotiation between the state and citizens serve to enhance democracy, create new forms of citizenship and improve the effectiveness and equity of public policy (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p. 5).

As some scholars have pointed out, in the aftermath of the elite-driven democratic transitions, there has been a "need to pay closer attention to channels and strategies that increase non-elite access to policymaking and implementation" (Alvarez, 1993, p. 212) and create new 'participatory publics' (Avritzer, 2002a). Because the municipality is the component of the political system where most citizens' demands are usually addressed (Dilla Alfonso, 1997), this study will focus on decentralization towards the municipal level, including an institutionalized element of citizen participation in urban governance processes. As we will see next, the current literature generally suggests the existence of a positive association between the creation of such public spaces and the deepening of democracy, assessing it via two different yet complementary angles: the empowerment and the accountability arguments.

Participatory Governance and Empowerment: Deliberative Democracy and the Strengthening of Civil Society

Inspired by classical political theorists' reflections on the virtue of democratic participation, current studies on participatory governance as a social inclusion mechanism in developing societies emerged in the 1990's. Scholars such as Fung and Wright, who have studied what they have called 'empowered participatory governance', contend that the presence of local participatory institutions designed to sustain empowered deliberation lead to democratic outcomes and, more specifically, to a type of state action that is effective, equitable and inviting of broad, deep and sustained participation (Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 25). Building on the insights of the literature on social capital, associations and civic engagement in sustaining strong democracies[12], they argue that

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[12] Following Tocqueville's footsteps, an important trend in the literature on citizen participation and democracy has focused on the importance of civic engagement in second-level associations and organized

"formal state institutions can stimulate democratic engagement in civil society, and so form a virtuous circle of reciprocal reinforcement" (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 15). In particular, the inclusion of formal participation and deliberation in state institutions at the local level is seen to have the potential for empowering traditionally excluded and marginalized social groups (Fung & Wright, 2001; Park, 2003), which is a requisite condition for civil society to become inclusive as well as to reflect and express the general interests of citizens in a relatively autonomous relationship with the state (Rueschemeyer, 1998). It can give a voice to a plurality of interests and create formal spaces for the state to interact with citizens, generating a 'regulated' dynamic of deliberation and discussion of policy priorities, orientations, and all the other questions that affect citizens' everyday lives.

To be effective and empowering, local participatory governance innovations should, however, follow certain fundamental principles (Fung & Wright, 2001, 2003; Goldfrank, 2007; Harbers, 2007). First, they need to be institutionalized, included in the 'routine' of the local government's decision-making processes over specific and tangible public policy issues. In fact, the decision-making process should formally involve 'ordinary' citizens and officials in the process of finding collectively acceptable solutions to public policy problems. Second, to be 'empowering', local participatory mechanisms should sustain and encourage deliberation in public spheres over these policy issues to generate solutions. The question of deliberation has long been a central one in democracy debates, with some political theorists suggesting deliberative democracy models in order to sustain the principle of face-to-face societies composed of citizens talking to one-another to achieve the public good in the spirit of discussion, reason and compromises (Dryzek, 2000; Fishkin & Laslett, 2003; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Held, 2006). According to its tenets, open and free deliberation is central to the development of inclusive citizenship regimes, since it allows citizens to "rise above self-interest and take seriously the nature of the public good" in decision-making processes (B. Ackerman & Fishkin, 2003, p. 21).

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civic groups to "make democracy work", suggesting that citizen involvement in associations is a condition for the building of reciprocal relationships and trust within a society, a fundamental condition for democracy to develop as a vigorous political system serving the public good. For more on this literature see, for example, Tocqueville (1981 [1835]), Putnam (1993, 2000), Cohen and Roberts (1992, 1995), Hirst and Bader (2001) and Warren (2001), among others.

Genuine deliberation does not necessarily mean consensus; there are generally winners and losers. It rather means that "participants find reasons that they can accept in collective actions, not necessarily ones that they completely endorse or find maximally advantageous" (Fung & Wright, 2003, p. 17), which the simple rule of the majority does not provide. As a consequence of the deliberative nature of its institutions, the participatory governance model engages citizens to participate as members of a political community interested in the common good, as opposed to simply as individuals through whose support the government hopes to gain legitimacy. Participatory governance institutions include community assemblies, neighborhood committees, citizen-based watchdog committees, participatory budgeting committees, consultative committees, planning committees, and the like, excluding more massive mechanisms targeting individuals, such as plebiscites or referenda.

In sum, the local participatory governance model − inspired by both the classical participatory theories of democracy and the more recent theories of civic engagement and democracy − begins with the assumption that participation empowers the powerless, the traditionally marginalized sectors of the population, thereby strengthening civil society (Nylen, 2002). As Hagopian (2007) puts it, participation has an 'agglutinative' role in society, bringing citizens together with the state in the public sphere for them to negotiate their access to the rights of citizenship. More concretely, participatory governance initiatives are argued to translate into an increase in the number of civic organizations participating in the public sphere (Baiocchi, 2005), resulting in a more inclusive civil society that represents all sectors of society, and not exclusively the more powerful interests that are traditionally able to organize and access the state.

Local Participation, Civil Society and Accountability

An important body of current literature on citizen participation addresses its link with democratization through the lenses of accountability and government-responsiveness, focusing on the institutional participatory mechanisms at the local level that become a means for deepening democracy and strengthening existing accountability mechanisms (J. Ackerman, 2003; Avritzer, 2002a; Fung & Wright, 2001; Goetz & Jenkins, 2001;

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Heller, 2001; Manor, 1999). According to this approach, participatory democracy constitutes a social accountability mechanism that helps reinforcing vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms and is measured by the citizens' institutional capacity to monitor governments' decisions and, eventually, impose sanctions on the wrongdoings of the government.

As we have seen earlier, strengthening accountability mechanisms is a crucial dimension of the deepening of democracy in Latin America. It is generally from the perspective of social accountability that the literature on participatory democracy associates citizen participation and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms. In fact, local participatory mechanisms are considered as an alternative to traditional models of centralized governance, making democratic governments more responsive and accountable to the citizens they represent and serve (Beetham, 1996; Blair, 2000; Ziccardi, 1998). Called more precisely 'co-governance' accountability mechanisms (J. Ackerman, 2003), 'transversal accountability' (Insunza Vera, 2003), or hybrid accountability mechanisms (Goetz & Jenkins, 2001), these conceptions of social accountability go beyond the isolated actions of civil society actors identified by the first social accountability proponents. In fact, critics of the social accountability arguments have argued that isolated public demonstrations and media exposure, while efficiently exposing the misdeeds of the governments, are inefficient in themselves since they "envision and defend an arms-length relationship between the state and society" (J. Ackerman, 2003, p. 450). They therefore create a disjunction and a conflictual relationship between the state and civil society actors, whereas 'co-governance' participatory initiatives tend to bring them together in a deliberative process over a diversity of political projects, both types of actors playing central roles at all stages of the decision-making, policy implementation and monitoring processes (J. Ackerman, 2003). This 'interactive approach' to state-society relationships proposes an accountability model that entails the participation of society in the 'core functions of government' (Fox, 2000), creating formal and direct ties between the local state and participating civil society organizations. According to this approach to accountability, social participation in the governance process has, at least theoretically, a real potential for sustaining the

development of an organized civil society that has the means to act upon the state and hold politicians responsible. According to Goetz and Jenkins, the particular character of this type of participation comes from the fact that it:

> represents a shift toward augmenting the limited effectiveness of civil society's watchdog function by breaking the state's monopoly over the responsibility for executive oversight (Goetz & Jenkins, 2001, p. 365).

According to the literature, civil society participation needs to be embedded in the state to become an instrument for increasing accountability, it has to be institutionalized as an integral part of the local governance process (J. Ackerman, 2003; Avritzer, 2002a; Fung & Wright, 2001). These authors generally approach the question of participation from an institutional perspective, trying to identify formal institutional features and mechanisms that would allow citizen participation to grow and become inclusive and institutionalized into the state's mechanisms. These participatory institutions therefore become a means for deepening democracy through the strengthening of existing horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms.

1.3.4 The Ambiguous Link Between Decentralization, Participation and Democracy: Unanticipated Effects of Participatory Decentralization

As we have seen, though necessary for decentralized participatory initiatives to become potentially 'democratizing', decentralization *per se* is not a panacea for strengthening democratization at the local level. Although it was commonly interpreted as such, there is no guarantee that decentralization will lead to greater democratization, as many have already argued (Manor, 1999; Oxhorn, 2004). Decentralization does not mean democratization, even when decentralizing reforms include democratic elements (Crook & Manor, 1994). In the same manner, the recent empirical literature addressing the relationship among decentralization, participation and democratization has also warned against establishing a *de facto* positive causal relationship between the equation's three components.

Participatory democracy mechanisms have been implemented at the local level in many countries in recent decades, institutionalizing different types of citizen involvement

practices in the public decision-making process at the municipal level. Second-level institutions at the local level have been created in order to link civil society more directly to the state (Chalmers, 2000), creating conditions favorable to the social construction of citizenship and to deepening democracy, at least at the local level. Grindle goes even further and argues that the participatory decentralization reforms introduced in Latin America were intrinsically 'democratizing' reforms and that the relationship between what she calls institutional innovation and further democratization is relatively direct (Grindle, 2000). As we have seen in the last section, it has been argued that institutionalized participatory mechanisms can open up new opportunities for deepening democracy since they sustain increased citizen participation, create spaces for civil society to organize and increase the efficiency of both vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms. Well-known examples such as the *Orçamento Participativo* (participatory budgeting) in Porto Alegre (Brazil) or the *Panchayat Raj* in Kerala (India), have often been studied as different but exemplary cases of institutionalized and democratizing participation (Fung & Wright, 2001; Heller, 2001). Following these purported success stories, many other countries and municipalities have also adopted a variety of measures aimed at fostering citizen participation in the formal governance process at the local level.

That said, the record of participatory decentralization is not perfect. As many empirical studies have observed, the gap between the normative expectations underlying the arguments linking social participation to democratization, assuming that citizens are willing to participate actively when given the opportunity, and the reality of actual citizen participation is quite important (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007). In fact, participatory decentralization may also have unexpected effects. Rather than sustaining the creation of new democratic spaces, decentralization initiatives may contribute to the strengthening of traditional local elites who have no interest in furthering popular participation. According to Smith, in many cases across developing countries, "local institutions have simply provided yet more resources and power to be commandeered by already powerful elites and propertied interests" (Smith, 1895, p. 5). It can even strengthen non-democratic practices such as corruption, clientelism and patronage since it empowers local elites that

might not support democracy themselves (Garcia-Guadilla & Perez, 2002; Oxhorn, 2004). Moreover, several studies have questioned the validity of the empowerment thesis, arguing that only a handful of new associations and civic organizations have resulted from participatory innovations, and that local decision-making processes remain quite elitist as a result (Nylen, 2002, 2003). Moreover, it has been shown that in many cases, old practices of clientelism are likely to co-exist with the new practices introduced through the process (Garcia-Guadilla & Perez, 2002, p. 91), reinforcing the weakness of accountability mechanisms, the organizational capacity of civil society and the exclusion patterns that have traditionally characterized state-society relationships.

How does current literature address the ambiguous relationship between local participatory governance institutions and democratization processes and the unevenness of the results observed in practice? First, many approaches to participatory governance focus on the design of the participatory institutions themselves (Fung & Wright, 2003; Harbers, 2007), identifying a variety of institutional features that can explain both the successes and failures of local participatory initiatives at sustaining good governance and increasing citizen participation and social inclusion. These approaches, drawing great inspiration from neo-institutionalist theories (Hall & Taylor, 1996; March & Olsen, 1984; Thelen, 1999), start from the assumption that formal institutions shape actors' decision-making processes by structuring the realm of the possible choices available to them, thereby constraining the range of possible strategies and behaviors. Thus, they argue that participatory governance institutions, to be empowering, need to be institutionalized in the structure of governance and present certain basic characteristics such as the idea that they should transform formal decision-making processes and allow ordinary citizens to "colonize" state power. Then, they should be granted enough decentralized responsibilities and resources by the central and the municipal states (Goldfrank, 2007; Wampler, 2007). Moreover, they should not be isolated units: they should rather be integrated under a centralized coordination that brings decentralized efforts together to the state as the central interlocutor (Fung & Wright, 2003). As we will see, however, these approaches have been highly criticized for ignoring contextual factors and the role

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of agency, as well as being unable to explain variations in results among cases of participatory governance with similar institutional designs.

Another, second, trend in the literature, mostly developed to explain the unexpected success of the case of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (Brazil), associates success with a previous culture of participation and associationalism defining local communities. In fact, the political culture argument has been presented by many analysts of the Brazilian case, who have argued that the history of civic engagement observed in a local community was determinant in understanding the success of the implementation of participatory democracy initiatives. According to their findings, societies that have been traditionally characterized by more civic engagement have better chances of successfully implementing participatory institutions capable of generating increased participation and sustaining empowerment (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004). Moreover, the presence of experienced activists and community leaders is generally considered as a factor enabling 'quality' public deliberation in the newly created public spaces for participation (Baiocchi, 2003). Several studies, however, have questioned the relationship between political culture and the success of participatory governance, suggesting that the political culture argument was deterministic as it overlooked the possibility for change. Moreover, it was also argued that such an argument could not account for the cases where, even when there was low previous civic activism, state-sponsored initiatives were able to create new local leaderships and increase community involvement through participatory governance institutions (Abers, 1998).

A third explanation arises from the current literature on decentralized participatory governance, focusing on the idea that to function properly, participatory institutions need to be supported by a strong political will and ideological commitment to include citizens in the democratization process (Canel, 2001). As we have seen, the emergence and nature of participatory decentralization in Latin America are intrinsically dynamic and political, which may consequently affect the post-implementation phase of reforms. The political logic behind the implementation of decentralization reforms remains mostly elitist given the top-down nature of the reforms themselves (Montero & Samuels, 2004). This may, in

part, be a reflection of the fact that decentralization was mostly an elite process, not the result of grassroots pressures (Manor, 1999; Oxhorn, 2004). Criticisms of such an approach acknowledge that political will should be considered as an important dimension of the introduction of local participatory governance institutions. If political will can explain institutional differences among models of participatory governance and is a good indicator of success measured in terms of sustainability and institutionalization, it cannot, however, explain change or continuity in state-society relationships when taken separately from civil society.

Therefore, as we shall see in greater details in the following section, these explanations taken individually are unsatisfactory to explain the variety of outcomes, which brings me to propose an alternative and more integrative approach to understanding the relationship between local participatory governance and the deepening of democracy, focusing on the nature of state-society relationships as the main indicator of success.

1.4 EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS OF LOCAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

This dissertation attempts to go further than the current literature and specifically assess the consequences of state-sponsored participatory governance reforms on the deepening of democracy at the local level, focusing on the (un)changing nature of state-society relationships as the outcome of these reforms. To do so, I propose first a new lecture of the concept of success based on both the mobilization and the autonomy dimensions of state-society relationships. This approach accounts for the complexity of state-society relationships, allowing the introduction of some nuances into the definition of successful and 'democratizing' local participatory mechanisms. Then, in order to explain the variations among the different cases, I develop an approach that not only accounts for institutional design or cultural arguments, but also combines the different lessons of these arguments into an integrated typological approach to uncovering the sociopolitical determinants of success.

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1.4.1 A Relational Understanding of Institutionalized Citizen Participation and Local Democracy

As the previous sections have highlighted, the literature on participatory governance institutions has proposed some explanations to account for the variety of outcomes observed and, in turn, to understand the (pre)conditions of success. However, all the previous explanations are only partially able to address the problem, leaving a great deal unknown for students of participatory governance. Why are these explanations unsatisfactory?

First, as current studies tend to demonstrate, the introduction of formal participatory institutions do not do it all. Even if the nature of the institutional design makes it a necessary element in defining participatory democracy initiatives, critics have argued that these initiatives themselves are not sufficient to explain the variety of outcomes that have been observed empirically in terms of democratization. In fact, such an argument tends to overlook both state and societal actors' capacity to enact these institutions through their formal and informal practices. An exclusive focus on institutional innovation actually tends to underestimate the importance of informal institutions − defined by Helmke and Levitsky as the "socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (2004, p. 727) − even though these informal rules can help uncover the strategies and behaviors of the actors involved in the participatory institutions. Though formal institutions may be implemented, the way they are actually designed and used (or bypassed) by political elites, which is closely related to their level of political will (Wampler, 2007) and the level of institutionalization of opposition parties (Goldfrank, 2007), is central, as these elites can still use informal channels in order to undermine their accountability and control functions. Moreover, entrenched informal practices preventing genuine collective mobilization and limiting the autonomy of participants can remain an obstacle to the deepening of democratic practices. Thus, looking at the formal dynamics of participation of the different actors involved in the process is necessary but potentially misleading if not accompanied by an in-depth understanding of the informal practices that are also associated with them, a lacuna this dissertation aims at starting to address.

Second, as we have seen, the essence of the literature on local participatory governance is the idea that citizen participation matters in deepening democracy, an idea that is central to the definition of the concept itself. Nonetheless, the nature of participation and mobilization also matters: it is not just the quantitative but also the qualitative aspect of citizen participation that needs to be taken into account, a task that the literature tends to overlook. In fact, it seems that not only does participation matter in terms of the number of participants that enter the governance process, but that the outcome of such a process also mostly depends on which groups enter the spaces of participation, and on how they do it (Chandoke, 2003). On the one hand, there is a need to unpack the concept of citizen participation, looking more critically at it while keeping in mind that what matters is not only that civic organizations and individuals participate, but also "who comes to represent citizens in the participatory spheres and the role that civil society organizations might play in enhancing access and democratizing decision-making in this arena" (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p. 6). On the other hand, there is also a need to look at citizen participation in relation to the state, its institutions and its members, including elected politicians, because their goals and strategies toward participation can − in some instances − contribute to the fact that old practices of clientelism are likely to co-exist with the new practices introduced through the process of participatory governance (Garcia-Guadilla & Perez, 2002, p. 91).

Third, most of the current studies of participatory democracy evaluate success either in terms of sustainability over time, in terms of the quantitative empowerment of civil society or in terms of the state's increased responsiveness and accountability, never bringing these three defining elements together under a more comprehensive indicator of success. These three types of definition for success, however, entail a common characteristic: each implicitly presupposes a transformation in state-society relationships that should tend towards a more cooperative relationship leading to citizenship rather than clientelism. It is therefore this (un)changing relationship that should be the main indicator of success. In fact, what makes these particular participatory governance initiatives different from previous approaches to participation is that they explicitly

conceive of participation as the exercise of *citizenship*, as "the practice though which individuals and groups formulate and claim for new rights of struggle to expand or maintain existing rights" (Isin & Wood, 1999, p. 4). This conception of participation means that participatory governance initiatives not only seek

> to bring people together into the political process, but also to transform and democratize the political process in ways that progressively alter the immanent processes of inclusion and exclusion that operate within particular political communities, and which govern the opportunities for individuals and groups to claim their rights to participation and resources (Hickey & Mohan, 2005, p. 251)

Therefore, these mechanisms include governance reforms seeking "citizen participation as an alternative form of inclusion to patron-client relations" (Hickey & Mohan, 2005, p. 251), a form of inclusion in the political community that is based on an inclusive conception of citizenship regimes embraced by both the state and an empowered civil society. Citizenship should be measured not only through the extent of and access to political, social and civil rights, but also more generally in terms of social inclusion and civil society empowerment and relationship to the state given that the nature of citizenship rights reflects the capacity of an autonomous civil society to collectively interact and press demands upon the state.

1.4.2 Redefining Success: Democratic Citizenship as the Result of Cooperative State-Society Relationship

As we have seen, the literature on local participatory institutions generally measures its impact upon the quality of democracy along the axis either of the efficiency of accountability mechanisms or of the idea of citizenship and belonging to a political community, taking these two indicators separately. The definition of success, either in terms of local government's efficiency or in terms of increased participation rates, is not sufficient to assess the democratizing potential of participatory decentralization because it does not account for the inherent relational nature of democracy and the social construction of citizenship. This limited focus has led to incomplete conclusions on the actual consequences of implementing participatory mechanisms in municipal decision-making processes, a task this dissertation aims at tackling.

Here, I argue that both indicators of the quality of democracy are closely tied together and cannot be understood separately, since both essentially reflect the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society. Even though democratic decentralization in Latin America is very much a top-down process and that the state is crucial in influencing its outcomes, understanding its impact on the quality of democracy requires that we also consider the process in relation to civil society. With Oxhorn (2004), I argue that democratic decentralization should be conceived as one part of the larger process of the social construction of citizenship, which allows us to look at the interactions between the state and civil society that are central to both accountability and citizenship. Most of the current literature on participatory decentralization reforms have, as we have seen, focused on indicators such as increased mobilization, empowerment and civil society organizational capacity to assess the their impact on the deepening of democracy. The relationship between the state and society is, however, more complex what these indicators can capture. In fact, the democratizing power of participatory decentralization comes from its inclusion of an autonomous civil society in the process of governance, from the creation of a 'synergy' that "[connects] citizens to public officials across the public-private sphere" (Evans, 1996, p. 1120) and sustains the development of a cooperative relationship between the state and society. As the literature on the notion of the quality of democracy has highlighted, sustaining a high-quality democracy in Latin America entails a conceptualization of citizenship and of the rule of law that is inclusive of all sectors of the society in relation to an accountable state granting equal social, civil and political rights. Democratic deepening therefore involves more than a mere institutional change but rather a deep transformation of state-society relationships that comprises both increased mobilization and organizational capacity for civil society, but also a higher level of autonomy from the state in its formal participatory structures.

In order to overcome these limits of the literature, it is precisely the (un)changing nature of these relationships between the local state and civil society which should be the central focus of the analysis of participatory decentralized mechanisms aimed at including civil society in the governance process. Therefore, I propose to look at whether these

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institutions have contributed to changing the nature of state-society relationships, as an important step of the process towards the deepening of democracy at the local level, observable through greater accountability and the construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes. In fact, as argued, both accountability mechanisms and citizenship regimes are closely linked to the existence of a cooperative relationship between the state and civil society.

1.4.3 Mapping Successes: A Typology of State-Society Relationships

To explain such a complex phenomenon as state-society relationships, which constitutes the dependent variable of this study, I develop a typological theory (George & Bennett, 2004) to first establish the variation in the dependent variable. This typological theory will then allow us to grasp the multiple independent institutional and agency variables that, according to their configurations and interactions, can affect the outcome of participatory governance institutions. Uncovering the causal mechanisms behind each type necessitates that that we first look at the defining characteristics of state-society relationships in the context of participatory governance, organized along two dimensions: the nature of mobilization and the participants' level of autonomy. In fact, the type of state-society relationship that emerges out of the interactions taking place in these institutions varies along these two dimensions, creating four ideal-types of relationships, as table 1 illustrates[13].

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[13] We use the term ideal-type, borrowed from Weber's work, to emphasize the idea that the four types identified here are ideals: they represent the purest form of each relationship, which are unlikely to exist as such in reality. They allow, however, for a clearer classification and understanding of the differences between the different cases encountered in reality.

Autonomous Participation

Fragmented Inclusion	'Democratizing' Cooperation
Individual	*Collective*
Clientelism	Disempowering Co-option

Vertical axis: Level of Autonomy

Controlled Participation

Horizontal axis: Nature of mobilization
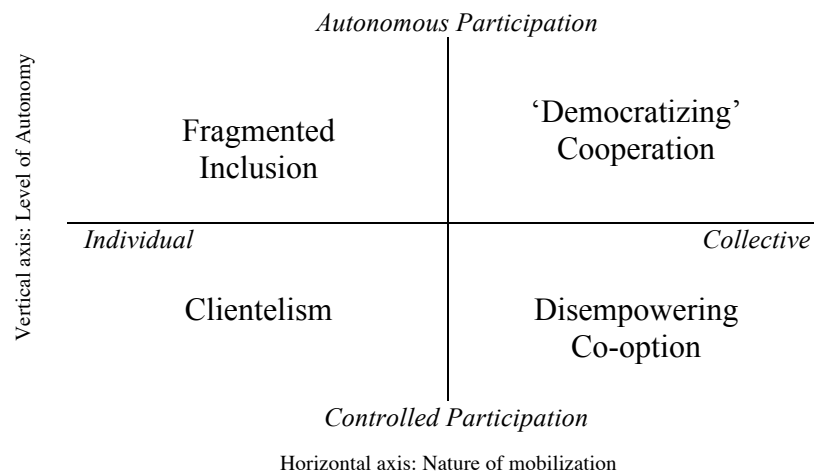
The Nature of Mobilization: From Collective Action to Individual Mobilization

Citizen mobilization in participatory processes can be either an individual or a collective and organized process. Classical theorists such as Rousseau (1968 [1762]) argued that participatory forms of democracy, to reflect the common good, should mobilize individuals, assuming that both the state and individual participants were equal members of a society. This concept of participation, however, does not hold when tested against contemporary democratizing societies, plagued with growing social inequalities and characterized by high levels of social exclusion articulated from the state. As the product of the struggle and cooperation patterns characterizing state-society relationships, the deepening of democracy is not an exception and should therefore entail a specific concern for the notion of mobilization patterns, which are constitutive of the strength of civil society.

I argue that for local participatory institutions to lead to the deepening of democracy, they need to enable and sustain collective forms of social action, collective mobilizations that nurture civil society's organizational capacity. In fact, "organization is the most important power resource of those who lack disproportionate influence and power based on coercion, economic resources, cultural hegemony and/or individual or collective prestige" (Rueschemeyer, 1998, p. 9), such as the marginalized groups targeted by local participatory governance initiatives. Shared collective interests are not a given, they are

socially constructed. They are, in fact, "defined by the very process of [collective] organization […], their interests are shaped and consolidated in the context of participation in formal and informal groups and organizations" (Rueschemeyer, 1998, p. 11) that make their expression more powerful.

Mobilization patterns can be envisaged as a spectrum, ranging from the more organized and structured forms of collective action, where individuals participate as members of groups organized around a variety of interests, to the most fragmented and individual forms of citizen participation. The more mobilization is individual, the less impact formal mechanisms of participation at the local level have on enabling participants to develop into a partner for the state and, in turn, on transforming traditional patterns of clientelistic state-society relationships to become effective accountability mechanisms and to foster inclusive citizenship. In contrast, the more mobilization is collective, the more formal mechanisms can become a space for developing a strong civil society that can interact with the state in a more co-operative and democratic relationship, thereby contributing to strengthening accountability and deepening democracy at the local level.

The Participants' Level of Autonomy: From Autonomous to Controlled Participation

Although citizen participation should be understood as a process involving both the state and society, an important dimension to consider in defining the nature of participatory schemes underlying the relationship between the state and society is the level of autonomy citizens have in the mechanisms of participation provided by the local governance arrangements. In fact, even if mobilization is important to the strengthening of civil society, the level of autonomy citizens and CSOs enjoy in their interactions with the local government is even more crucial in defining the possibilities for citizens to actually influence the course of the local governance process in a meaningful way. Autonomy *within* state channels is very distinct from autonomy *from* the state. According to the early observers of participatory mechanisms in developing countries, one of the main problems was that their introduction into local governance institutions involved the state, which was itself the source of power inequalities in the first place. They argue that participatory mechanisms should only involve direct and independent participation of all

citizens, of the entire community (MacPherson, 1982; Midgley, 1986). This conception, however, fails to consider the fact that the state is central for enacting the participatory reforms, which is an important omission since the state is the main actor involved in power and resource redistribution and from which civil society cannot be isolated (Dagnino, 2002; Dagnino et al., 2006). The state is also the central actor in the formulation and implementation of policies that affect the community (Mejía Líra, 1999). Isolating the community from the state would not maximize the democratizing potential of citizen participation, as the direct interlocutor of participatory processes and citizens. To fully understand how participation interacts with the deepening of democratic processes, we have to consider the role of the state in the relationship that ties it to citizens/participants.

I argue that for local citizen participation to become a means toward deepening democracy, not only does it need to be institutionalized, but it also has to be autonomous. In fact, participation *per se* remains an ambiguous ideal that needs to be qualified to make more sense in decision-making processes (de Sousa Santos & Avritzer, 2004). Autonomy refers to the ability of citizens to participate by formulating preferences and defending their own interests within different channels of the political system without being overly influenced by already organized and represented political forces. Autonomous participation is not a given, however, as participants and institutional mechanisms can be controlled and co-opted by leading and influential traditional actors such as political parties and their civil society affiliates, politicians or the bureaucracy. To measure the level of autonomy citizens enjoy, the degree of involvement of political parties in the various steps of the societal representatives' selection and of their decision-making process is therefore an important indicator. This is because party members – elected representatives, non-elected members of the parties, and party-affiliated organizations – may capture participatory mechanisms and control them or their main representatives through informal mechanisms in order to influence and guide the decision-making process in a way that serves the party and/or the governing elites' interests, undermining social accountability mechanisms.

Citizen autonomy can be understood as a spectrum ranging from completely autonomous forms of citizen participation in which all actors are engaged in the mechanisms of participation as equal partners with the state officials, to 'controlled' forms of participation where the participatory mechanisms are captured by the political elite and political parties through informal practices and methods that preclude the autonomous participation of citizens. The more 'controlled' participation is, the less impact formal mechanisms of participation at the local level have in transforming traditional patterns of clientelistic state-society relationships and, in turn, becoming effective accountability mechanisms and fostering inclusive citizenship. In contrast, the more participation is autonomous, the more formal mechanisms can become a space for developing a more co-operative and democratic relationship, thereby contributing to strengthening accountability and deepening democracy.

The Four Ideal-types Defined

Based upon a relational understanding of democratic success, the first objective of this study is to answer the question of the impact of participatory decentralization initiatives on the deepening of democracy. To this end, I have identified four different combinations of the nature of mobilization/level of autonomy that represent the four ideal-types of state-society relationships that can develop within decentralized participatory governance mechanisms to which the different cases compared in the context of this dissertation correspond. It is indeed the position of the studied experiences on these two axes that determines the type of state-society relationship one observes in reality, as our comparative case study of five experiences with participatory decentralization in two Brazilian and two Mexican municipalities will demonstrate (chapters 3-6).

The four types are the following:
- Clientelism: A combination of high levels of political control over participatory mechanisms and participants and of individually based mobilization processes based upon the formulation and direct channeling of particularistic demands tends to sustain clientelism as an unequal way for the state and society to relate to one

another based upon the exchange of material or symbolic resources in return for political support and legitimacy.

- Disempowering co-option: A combination of high levels of political control over participatory institutional mechanisms and participants and of collective mobilization processes empowering civil society organizations and citizens as communities formulating collective demands tends to sustain the development of disempowering co-option, an unequal type of relationship between the state and society, disempowering the civil society organizations engaged with the local state by curtailing their accountability role and making them political brokers.

- Fragmented inclusion: A combination of high levels of autonomy for participants within participatory mechanisms and of individually-based mobilization patterns based upon particularistic demands tends to sustain the development of fragmented inclusion, a type of relationship that widens the access to citizenship rights by opening the channels for autonomous demand formulation but that remains limited by the fact that such demands are still channeled by fragmented groups and individuals and not by the community.

- 'Democratizing' cooperation: A combination of high levels of autonomy for participants in the formal channels provided by municipal participatory institutions and of the activation of collective mobilization processes at the grassroots tends to sustain the development of a 'democratizing' cooperation between the state and society, empowering and strengthening civil society in a way by which its organizations can enter the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes and become more effective accountability agents.

Addressing the link between the nature of state-society relationships and the deepening of democracy, I formulate the general theoretical proposition that a cooperative relationship between an inclusive and responsive local state and a strong and autonomous civil society within decentralized institutions allowing for collective mobilization processes to the grassroots is more likely to become 'democratizing', i.e. leading to the social construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms. On the contrary, the sustainability of clientelistic state-

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society relationships within participatory mechanisms tends to hinder their potential for becoming 'democratizing' public spaces, sustaining unequal exchanges, the prevalence of informal ties and personal connections in resource-redistribution and, consequently, social exclusion and inefficient accountability mechanisms. Intermediary outcomes can also arise, such as fragmented inclusion and disempowering co-option, both with ambiguous consequences for the deepening of democracy and the social construction of citizenship, as we will see throughout the case analyses.

In contexts where clientelism is the traditional mode for the state to connect with society, the development of such a cooperative and democratizing relationship cannot be explained exclusively by the existence of participatory institutions, which is the basic common feature of all the selected cases. In fact, I establish that such a relationship is more likely to develop when the institutional change is undertaken in the presence of a combination of structural, institutional and rational variables that, together, foster collective mobilization processes at the grassroots and autonomous forms of participation by civil society actors with the state. Such a theoretical proposition, as it entails the observation of variation across cases along the two dimensions of the typology – mobilization and autonomy – needs to be documented and explained further, a task to which we shall turn.

1.4.4 Uncovering the Conditions to "Make Local Participatory Democracy Work": Theoretical Argument and Hypotheses

Identifying types of relationships is an important first step in better understanding the complexity of the link between local participatory governance and the deepening of democracy, but in order to offer a more compelling theoretical contribution, one needs to uncover the sociopolitical conditions that explain both the nature of mobilization and the nature of participation. The study of various hypotheses, notably drawn from the literature on the impact of institutional change in comparative politics, will allow us to determine what factors and/or combination of factors have the potential to explain the observed variation across the selected cases. After assessing the nature of state-society relationships in the selected case studies, I therefore suggest looking at the several

theoretical hypotheses that possibly explain why the outcomes of participatory mechanisms in terms of state-society relationships vary. I argue that, in order to explain the variation along these two defining dimensions of state-society relationships, one needs to look at a series of **independent structural, institutional and rational variables, their combinations and their interaction effects,** a task that our comparison of four municipalities in Mexico and Brazil will undertake in the following chapters.

Explaining the Nature of Mobilization: Structural and Institutional Variables
The first dimension of our typology – the nature of mobilization – can be explained by two main factors already identified in the literature and their interaction effects. As suggested by recent studies, and as our own comparative case study demonstrate, participatory decentralization has an unequal and often limited potential at sustaining the capacity of civil society to self-organize and collectively mobilize (Baiocchi, Heller, & Kunrath Silva, 2008). What explain the observed variation? First, as some authors have argued, the previous *history of mobilization and civic engagement* may play a role in determining the capacity of civil society to organize at the grassroots level as this shapes the development of a culture of mobilization and, consequently, can affect the nature of the mobilization patterns that take place within local participatory institutions (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004). Assuming that, the hypothesis formulated by the current literature is that the nature of civil society mobilization patterns at the grassroots level is path-dependent, as historically embedded patterns of social mobilization and demand-formulation influence the nature of mobilization processes beyond institutional innovation. To test the validity of this hypothesis, the analysis of indicators such as the continuity over time in levels and structure of associationalism in the municipality/neighborhoods, in the way demands are formulated by citizens and channeled to the local state will be undertaken.

Path dependency, however, is a contested concept in the study of institutional change and its impact on democracy. In fact, several authors in comparative politics contend that cultural/historical factors are not deterministic and institutional change can become a critical juncture leading to a transformation in traditional patterns of mobilization, as the

design of institutions can create either incentives or disincentives for collective mobilization strategies to be used by local social leaders (Abers, 2000). The *design of the local participatory institutions* can therefore influence the structure of mobilization within the channels they provide, even in cases where there was only limited capacity to organize, and vice-versa. In fact, certain participatory institutional features tend to sustain collective forms of mobilization whereas other ones tend to reinforce traditional patterns and encourage individual mobilization based upon particularistic demands. The hypothesis to be validated throughout this comparative case study is therefore that, in contexts where mobilization is traditionally defined by its individualistic and particularistic nature, institutional features for deliberation among citizens and requiring collective organization to formulate demands are more likely to create incentives for collective mobilization organized around the definition of the common good and to occur within decentralized participatory institutions. To test this hypothesis, I will look at indicators related to the institutional rules surrounding individuals' and groups' participation in local participatory institutions, the nature of incentives they provide, the existence of formal deliberative mechanisms to collectively define the common good, the institutional requirements for demands-formulation within the participatory framework, and the presence of institutional mechanisms favoring horizontal cooperation and/or conflict among participating citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Explaining the Level of Autonomy: Sociopolitical Variables

The second dimension of our typology – the participants' level of autonomy – mostly revolves around the actors who are involved in the process, their ideas, interests and strategies, which, together, influence both their formal and informal interactions. The level of autonomy enjoyed by societal actors in urban participatory governance institutions is best explained by the way these institutions are enacted and appropriated by the actors, which relates to local contextual variables more than to more technical ones (Canel, 2001). The important questions to answer, therefore, are which, how and why state and society actors participate in the urban governance process. A series of variables defining both state and society actors' ideas and strategies are therefore the key to explaining the nature of participation that one observes in urban participatory institutions.

On the one hand, there's a need to explore a series factors for grasping the inherent complexity of both types of actors (state and society) and that shape state and society actors' interests, strategies and behaviors toward one another while contributing to an explanation of both the formal and informal practices that underlie the decision-making processes and the definition of policy priorities within and outside of participatory governance institutions. These variables are not isolated from one another. In fact, as we will see throughout the case studies, it is not only these three variables but also their interaction effect that, together, influence the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in urban governance participatory institutions.

First, the *level of competition* among state elites (both among and within political parties/coalitions and among the different branches of the local government) is an important variable to consider, since high levels of competition between political elites with different interests might sustain a variety of strategies aimed at seeking political support in society and explain the level of formal and informal involvement of political parties and politicians in the nomination of participants and the deliberation processes, which is an important indicator of the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants. The hypothesis is that high levels of political competition lead to greater needs for popular support, in turn providing incentives to politicians who privilege informal practices in the way they participate and address the demands received through formal participatory channels, using and co-opting its participants as a mechanism to reach the population and secure their own legitimacy and political survival at the expense of their political adversaries. Indicators of political competition include the level of support achieved by the parties/coalitions in local election, the internal and external legitimacy of the governing team/party, the level of conflict within the governing coalition/parties and the nature of legislative/executive relationships.

Second, the *balance of power within societal participants* is also an important element to consider as it has an impact on the way societal participants actually engage in the governance process, as actors, passive observers or opponents, as well as on the nature of the struggles relating to the definition of the common good and, as a consequence, of

policy priorities. In fact, the way civil society is internally organized and the way its organizations enter or not as actors of the participatory structure may interact with the past mobilization patterns, as the new structures of citizen-participation do not necessarily respect and accommodate the traditional organization of civil society. The hypothesis here is that a pluralistic civil society united behind the ideal of participatory governance and reflecting the various sectors of society in a participatory context that accommodates both old and new forms of social organization and that does not create unequal access to the state, leads to more inclusive, coordinated and integrated participation patterns which, in turn, are more likely to sustain the autonomy of organized civil society within the participatory mechanisms.

Third, the *actors' perception of their own and of their counterpart's role in the participatory governance process* is another element that might affect the all actors' strategies and behaviors, and, in turn, the level of autonomy enjoyed by societal actors in the process. As argued by North, behavior is not only influenced by an actors' rational interests, but also by his perceptions of these interests that constrain the range of possible actions: "the key to the choices that individuals make is their perceptions, which are a function of the way the mind interprets the information that it receives" (North, 1995, p. 17). The first dimension of looking at actors' perceptions is surely the state representatives' (both bureaucrats and politicians) understanding of the role of participation in the governance process, and of their own role in guiding or not citizen participation, as both of these perceptions influence the level of resources invested in fostering autonomous civil society organization and participation, particularly in terms of the training and formation of participants. Another, complementary dimension to consider in assessing this third variable is the perception the participants have of the participatory mechanisms and of their own roles in the governing process, as either agents representing the government in the community or, on the opposite end of the spectrum, as community representatives to the government. This perception reflects their actual capacity to autonomously organize and influence the decision-making process and monitor the government's actions. The hypothesis is that the autonomy of citizens participating is more likely to be strengthened when state representatives value citizen-

participation as a governing principle and when citizens see themselves as the guarantors of their neighbors' and fellow citizens' interests and demands, as both actors enter in the participatory decision-making process as equal partners.

In sum, I propose that the variation of cases along the two dimensions of our typology of state-society relationships *together* – nature of mobilization and level of autonomy – contributes to explain the variety of effects urban participatory governance institutions appear to have on the deepening of democracy sustained by the development of cooperative/citizenship-oriented state society relationships. Drawing from the similarities and differences found during the comparison within and across the Mexican and Brazilian cases, I then argue that certain sociopolitical conditions, namely a combination of institutional, cultural and agency factors and their interactions, tend to sustain successful experiments as they foster collective forms of mobilization of a society enjoying high levels of autonomy to define the common good while being embedded in the activities of the local state.

CHAPTER TWO

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN MEXICO AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN BRAZIL: COMPARING MODELS OF PARTICIPATORY DECENTRALIZATION

"Civil society participation has been and is fundamental for strengthening democracy and broadening the social agenda of the government and of the society itself."[14]

-- Felipe Calderón, President of Mexico.

" We need a political system able to account for our rich social diversity. Our institutions need to be more permeable to the streets' voices. We need to strengthen a public space able to manage new rights and producing an active citizenry. Participatory democracy does not stand in opposition to representative democracy: they complement each other."[15]

-- Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter first presents the general context of democratic decentralization reforms in Mexico and Brazil, arguing that even if the unit of analysis of this study remains the municipality, one cannot dismiss the central importance of the national context in understanding the nature of local institutions and dynamics. Starting from a tradition of centralist federalism, these two countries have recently followed interesting paths leading to democratic decentralization toward the municipal level and to the introduction of innovative institutional mechanisms sustaining citizen participation in the local governance process. Are these two Latin American countries comparable? As this chapter will emphasize, in both cases, participatory decentralization was a general federal policy prescription, but its actual format remained underspecified, leaving a great room to maneuver to local governments themselves. Nevertheless, there are in both countries

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[14] Discourse pronounced by Felipe Calderón, president of Mexico, on July 20th, 2007 at the event *Sociedad y Gobierno Trabajando por el Desarrollo*. Free translation of "La participación de la sociedad civil ha sido y es fundamental para fortalecer democracia y para ampliar la agenda social de gobierno y de la sociedad misma". http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/prensa/?contenido=30702 [consulted on 29/01/08].

[15] Inauguration discourse pronounced by Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, on January 1st, 2007, at the start of his second mandate. Free translation of: "Precisamos de um sistema político capaz de dar conta da rica diversidade de nossa vida social. Nossas instituições têm de ser mais permeáveis à voz das ruas. Precisamos fortalecer um espaço público capaz de gerar novos direitos e produzir uma cidadania ativa. As formas de democracia participativa não são opostas às da democracia representativa. Elas se complementam". http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u88185.shtml [consulted on 29/01/08].

enduring, yet different, participatory innovations for urban governance coming from various urban centers, sustained and institutionalized by political parties and politicians whose discourse tends to emphasize the need for greater democracy and government-responsiveness at the local level. In Mexico, the new form of participatory governance that has emerged at the local level revolves around the general issues of urban planning and urban development, with citizen committees acting as the 'voice' of the population to inform city hall's decision-making processes. In Brazil, participatory budgeting is the most important aspect of participatory democracy that has appeared with the *Partido de Trabalhadores* (PT) in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul) in 1988 and has since spread throughout the country and even beyond.

It is those municipal experiences with institutionalized participatory decentralization that constitute the primary focus of this study. More specifically, it draws from a comparative case study of five experiences located in four municipalities: Nezahualcóyotl (Estado México) and León (Estado Guanajuato) in Mexico, and Recife (Pernambuco) and Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais) in Brazil. After briefly presenting the four municipalities' national contexts, this chapter will address the issue of comparability: what can we learn from the comparison of cases located in Mexico and Brazil? More specifically, how are the four selected municipalities comparable? Why is this type comparison relevant to the study of participatory democracy and of state-society relationships? After explaining in greater detail the comparative method used and the cases selected in this study, the methodological steps and tools that were taken for conducting this research are presented, highlighting the prospects for generalizations as well as the potential limits of my findings.

2.2 MEXICO: PARTICIPATORY URBAN PLANNING

Mexico's federal system has historically been highly centralized, with the federal executive retaining most of the powers, concentrated more precisely in the hands of the president himself. Nevertheless, in response to the growing dissatisfaction expressed by both opposition parties and social movements at the local level, the Mexican political

system was decentralized, empowering municipalities and opening the political arena to greater popular participation in 1983, when the first reform of Article 115 of the Constitution was adopted by then-president de la Madrid's *priista* administration. Along with the 1999 reform, which complemented the 1983 reform by adding specific competencies to municipalities, it extended the salience of the 2438 municipal governments in the Mexican federation, made the official *ayuntamiento* (city hall) local government directly elected, and clarified the municipalities' responsibilities for the provision of public services[16], as well as their sources of revenues (Guillén López & Ziccardi, 2004). Moreover, it included an obligation for the municipalities to decentralize from within, creating the *Consejo de Planeación y Desarrollo Municipal* (COPLADEM – Municipal Planning and Development Council) as an institutionalized participatory mechanism for urban planning.

2.2.1 The Making of Federalism *a la Mexicana*: *Presidencialismo*, Centralism and Clientelism

Although organized as a *de jure* decentralized federation, the Mexican federal model is *de facto* very centralized and organized around the executive branch of the central government, specifically around the presidential figure. Since the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the establishment of the corporatist structure of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI – Institutional Revolutionary Party), powers have become more and more centralized in the hands of the president and taken away from both other branches (legislative and judiciary) and other levels (states and municipalities) of government.

A History of Presidencialismo and Centralism

To begin with, the Mexican system is characterized as one of *presidencialismo,* a concept that describes the inequalities of the distribution of horizontal powers among the three branches of the federal system and that reflects a tendency to privilege the executive at the expense of the legislative and the judiciary. As Acosta Romero puts it, "Mexican

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[16] Art. 115 of the Constitution gives municipalities the following responsibilities: potable water, sewage and residual water, street lighting, residuals, markets, signalization, cemeteries, streets, parks and gardens and infrastructure, public security (in accordance with art. 21), municipal police and traffic (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1917 [2005], art. 115-3).

federalism is an aspiration punctuated by the reality of an undeniable centralism which is characterized by an increasingly pervasive presidency" (Acosta Romero, 1982, p. 402). In fact, in addition to the powers that are conferred to him by the Constitution, the president enjoys a series of 'metaconstitutional' powers that ensure his supremacy over the political system and that dramatically weaken the institutional system of checks and balances. Those metaconstitutional powers include the power to amend the constitution, to act as chief legislator, to become the authority in electoral matters and to nominate and remove governors and municipal presidents (Garrido, 1989, p. 424). Those powers, combined with the constitutional presidential prerogatives, confer upon the president an extremely important and central role in the Mexican federation, especially since the establishment of the PRI, the single ruling party based on a corporatist structure that also centralized power at the top of the party apparatus. The structure of centralism that prevails between the three horizontal branches of government at the federal level is also at work at the local level: the governor and municipal president, who represent the subnational executive branch, are dominant at the state/local level. As we will see, however, those two levels of government also work following the logic of centralism: rather than being autonomous levels of governments as they are in other federal models, states and local authorities have very few powers and resources in reality.

As many historians have suggested, this strong tradition of centralism originated during Spanish colonial times in Mexico as a way to unify increasingly autonomous provinces. The then 32 provinces all had local deputies, who were directly accountable to the central authority in Spain (Benson, 1958). After Independence, and especially under the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1877-1911), the dependent and unequal relationship between the center and local authorities in the federal system was reinforced. In fact, Diaz strengthened the president's regional control and, in turn, his regime's stability, by sharing wealth and resources with the local *caciques* (local bosses) who were willing to give up their autonomy to get their share of the country's resources (Benson, 1958; Meyer, 1986). After the Revolution, centralism took a different turn as it was used as a strategy to fight the domination of the local *caciques* who had been empowered under Diaz. This pattern of federal-state-local relationships crystallized with the formation of

the highly centralized and hierarchical *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR – National Revolutionary Party) in the 1930's, which eventually transformed into the PRI, the hegemonic single-party that ruled Mexico from 1929 to 2000.

Clientelism and Municipal Governance

Mexican *municipios* (municipalities) were no exception to this centralist rule, being an integral part and constituting one of the important pillars of the corporatist system established and embodied by the PRI. Both its structure and functioning reflect the important role played by the party elites and local political brokers, as mediators of state-society relationships mostly using clientelistic channels.

There is a general agreement that, throughout the 20th century – despite the Constitution of 1917, which stipulates that municipalities are the main locus of local administration as the *municipio libre*[17] – municipalities have actually enjoyed a very low level of autonomy from the states, which were in turn very dependent on the central government in Mexico City (Cabrero Mendoza, 1995; Fagen & Tuohy, 1972; Merino, 1994; Rodriguez, 1997). As Rodriguez highlights, starting with Lazáro Cárdenas (1934-1940), the PRI leaders:

> acknowledged local interests and autonomy only to the extent that they did not interfere with the interests of the central power […] it was an established fact of political life that no state governors or local bosses could go against the president's wishes (1997, p. 19).

Therefore, municipalities were at the bottom of the federal-state-local relationships and power-sharing arrangements, with "each level of government [being] weaker, more dependent and more impoverished than the level above" (Fagen & Tuohy, 1972, p. 20). Moreover, the structure of the municipalities, governed by a municipal president, reproduced the highly centralized presidentialist structure of the federal government, with most of the decision-making power left in the hands of the municipal president. The members of the municipal council were in fact generally appointed by the municipal

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[17] The *municipio libre* (free municipality), which was originally defined as the basis of the political organization and the public administration of the 32 Mexican states, is the concept that lies at the heart of the municipality since the adoption of the 1917 Constitution (Ramírez Chavero, 2007). The *distrito federal* (DF – federal district) is however organized differently, divided into 16 administrative districts, called *delegaciones*, with their own governmental functions.

president, who needed these local support networks to assert his role as the local boss, maintain his position as a political broker within the PRI corporatist structure, and eventually be able to improve his professional status in the ranks of the party.

Mexico's national political system has historically been characterized by very fluid clientelistic ties that adapted easily to change but which were supported by a strong corporatist system of elite circulation within the PRI that included the local 'strongman' (Kaufman Purcell, 1981). To wit, the political tradition for elite nominations was that the President, via the channels of the PRI, appointed the state governors, who then appointed local officials and municipal presidents. The population then ratified the nominations through an election, where the opposition stood no real chances of winning, at least until the early 1980's. Local and regional political actors were therefore tied to the center "through clientelistic and family ties, economic incentives, partisan loyalties, and coercion", organized around the corporatist and centralized structure of the PRI (Cornelius, 1999, p. 4). This political dependency was furthered by the clientelistic and discretionary nature of resource-distribution among the lower levels of government. In fact, municipalities did not have the power to collect taxes, and were therefore highly dependent on transfers from the federal level. Clientelism, as an important pillar of the corporatist regime of the PRI, allowed the governing elite's supremacy over the political system through both the system of elite-circulation and the discretionary redistribution of economic resources, which in turn contributed to the long-term political hegemony of the party.

Clientelistic linkages have been an important characteristic defining not only intergovernmental relations but also state-society relationships at the municipal level, which were an important building block of the party's sustainability. Urbanization helped local politicians and bureaucrats to build their support base, thanks to the distribution of urban services and resources. In fact, it was mostly machine-style political brokers who "mediate[d] state-society relations, both within and without the corporatist apparatus" (Fox, 1994, p. 159). Municipal services such as sewer and water lines, electricity, pavement, or street lighting became the basis for exchange at the local level, giving the

local politicians and bureaucrats a resource to redistribute along clientelistic lines to different groups and neighborhoods to reward their political support (Shefner, 2001). As Grindle pointed out, those patron-client alliances were based on "informal norms of reciprocity and loyalty" (Grindle, 1977, p. 38), where certain social groups were incorporated into the corporatist structure of support and loyalty in exchange for social programs and policies. Therefore, patron-clients relationships at the local level were entirely part of the national party corporatist system, with the local patrons getting support from their local base without challenging the highly centralized national organization and system of power and resource distribution. Knowing a PRI official personally and guaranteeing him or her the support of one's community was, according to many citizens and federal public officers I interviewed, the best way to get those basic services installed in a given street or neighborhood[18].

This structure of local governance did not completely exclude the participation of constituents. Neighborhood councils and organizations affiliated with the PRI local party committees or incorporated into the party structure were encouraged as a conduit for making demands on the local government. Social organization and participation were therefore important for accessing services, but access was organized on the basis of an unequal and clientelistic exchange and often channeled by the party political brokers (also called *caciques*). Citizens used those channels to make demands, and local government officials used them to mobilize votes and support (Selee & Santin del Rio, 2006). Yet, "clientelism weakens potential bonds of solidarity by fomenting competition among groups, thus precluding the forging of unity among organizational peers" (Shefner, 2001, p. 596). In fact, social organizations' demands were channeled into the state-party apparatus, and the scarcity of available resources allowed the patrons to divide and co-opt the potentially organized social forces. In this way, state-society relationships were traditionally of the patron-client type in the Mexican local arena, and citizen participation was used as a tool to reinforce this as a crucial axis of the articulation of this

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[18] This observation about the traditional '*priista*' patterns for distributing resources among its supporters and via political brokers was expressed in most of the interviews I have conducted during my fieldwork in Mexico, especially by the citizens when asked about how they had access to urban goods and services before the implementation of participatory channels. This is equally true for citizens met in Nezahualcóyotl and in León, and will be covered in greater details in chapters three and four.

relationship. These prevalent clientelistic linkages characterizing state-society relationships as reinforcing personalistic and individualistic ties were indeed hindering the development of horizontal linkages between citizens, thereby challenging their capacities to organize and to hold the governing elite responsible for their decisions. In fact, Mexicans were never invited to actively participate outside the channels offered by the dominant party, the PRI, before the mid-1990's, when the opposition gained electoral strength, especially at the municipal level[19].

More recently, however, the local level has become a space aiming at including citizens in political processes. Formal participatory mechanisms have been introduced in municipal planning and decision-making processes in several Mexican cities as part of the democratic decentralization process that has occurred since the early 1980's, a process to which we turn in the next sections.

2.2.2 Democratic Decentralization: A Response to the PRI's Crises of Legitimacy

Starting with de la Madrid's presidency in 1982, decentralization and the need for a renewed federalism became important elements of the political discourse in the ranks of both the PRI and the growing opposition parties. As a result, important waves of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization reforms have been pushed forward by the three Mexican presidencies between 1982 and 2000, creating openings for a genuine practice of federalism. As pointed out by Rodríguez, however, the "political reform[s] and opening were designed to counteract that growing resentment and to give the federal government, led by the PRI, greater legitimacy" (1998, p. 241). In a context of economic and political crises affecting the legitimacy of the single-party regime, the rationale behind decentralization reforms was not democratization *per se* but rather a re-legitimization of the PRI's authority. The party leaders saw in decentralization a way to accommodate the rising opposition from both the right and the left, thereby consolidating the PRI's local support bases by bringing the government and its resources closer to the

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[19] The municipal level was crucial in the process of democratizing Mexico, with the first non-PRI political leaders being elected in the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's. In fact, municipalities were the first level of government where the PRI liberalized the electoral process and started accepting electoral defeats (Rodriguez, 1997).

population. These reforms were not necessarily articulated in an integrated way by de la Madrid, Salinas and Zedillo (Cabrero Mendoza, 1998), but they have, altogether, contributed to the revalorization of the 'local government' in Mexico and have opened the municipal public sphere to greater citizen participation. As we shall see, however, context has affected the outcome of the various waves of decentralization reforms, which generally supported participatory decentralization reforms in an environment of centralization and an increased fiscal dependency of municipalities to the states.

The de la Madrid Years (1982-1988): National Planning and Municipal Reform
Inheriting many of the political and economic problems left unresolved by his predecessors, President de la Madrid took office in 1982 in the context of a severe economic and debt crisis that was undermining the prospects for further development and fostering social distrust, undermining the party legitimacy. His main task was therefore to rebuild the PRI's legitimacy, restructuring the economy, the party and the state in a way that would generate renewed support from the electorate. To do so, de la Madrid first launched a vast decentralization program, whose focus on economic and urban planning was influenced by the need for economic restructuring. Under the label of the *Sistema Nacional de Planeación Democrática* (SNDP – National Democratic Planning System), the program promoted the participation of both the states and municipalities in regional development and planning. In order to accommodate demands for autonomy emerging from municipalities throughout the country, the de la Madrid administration also undertook an important reform of the article 115 of the Constitution, strengthening the role of municipalities as a proper level of government in the Mexican federation.

Articulated around the SNDP established in 1983 by an amendment to the Constitution, the decentralization program's objective was to empower both the states and municipalities by strengthening their role in the development planning process, giving them more responsibilities and autonomy to define to their own economic development priorities and needs in a more coordinated way. As de la Madrid explained in a discourse pronounced during the presidential campaign in 1982: "I reiterate, national planning, both democratic and participatory, is the fundamental instrument of decentralization" (de la

Madrid, 1982b). National planning not only had to be decentralized and coordinated, but it also had to become both 'democratic and participatory', since

> state action needs planning as the coherent product of the proposals, desires and expectations of the majority. The plans, to be democratic, have to incorporate the vitality and creative participation of civil society, as well as foster the fruitful and enthusiastic participation of all Mexicans in the big national projects that have to be more than only governmental (de la Madrid, 1982a).

De la Madrid's intention was therefore to formally include popular participation in the planning system where "Mexicans should identify the principal problems of the nation and, especially, they should attempt to identify the most appropriate solutions" (Cantú Segovia, Medina Aguiar, & Basave Benitez, 1982, p. 409). After 1983, de la Madrid's intentions were crystallized in an amended version of the article 26 of the Mexican Constitution, which now stipulates that:

> The state will organize a system of democratic planning of the national development […]. Planning will be democratic. Through the participation of the diverse social sectors, it will gather the aspirations and demands of the society to incorporate them to the development plan and programs (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1917 [2005], art. 26).

Therefore, and in accordance with article 26, the *Ley de Planeación's* principles reassert that the SNPD and its corresponding institutions aims at the

> consolidation of democracy as the life system, based on the constant economic, social and cultural improvement of the people, giving an impulse to its active participation in the planning and execution of governmental activities ("Ley de Planeación", 1983, art. 2-2).

It was under this new system of planning in 1983 that the objectives of the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 1983-1988* (PND – National Development Plan) were discussed and approved through the adoption of the *Convenios Unicos de Desarrollo* (CUD – Unique Development Agreements), a process in which all three levels of government were involved. The adoption of the SNPD laid the legal foundations for the participatory mechanisms that have been implemented in Mexican municipalities since 1983 and explains the focus on urban planning – rather than on budgeting, as in Brazil – taken by participatory decentralization reforms in the country. In order to assist governors in the making of the states' CUDs, the institutional participatory framework included the

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creation of the *Comités para la Planeación del Desarrollo Estatal* (COPLADE – State Development Planning Committees) *y Municipal (Coordinadora de procesos COPLADEM)*, composed of representatives of the state/local governments and of all sectors of the society. The participation of these committees in the planning process constituted the condition with which states had to comply in order to receive the federal transfers associated to the adoption of their CUD. Nonetheless, as we will see, the participation of civil society at both the municipal and the state levels remained quite limited in the first years of the SNPD's existence, which mostly empowered state governors, who were in great majority from the PRI.

The second and complementary step undertaken by de la Madrid in 1983 was the reform of the article 115 of the Mexican Constitution, which decentralized fiscal and administrative power to the municipal level, thereby addressing a central desire for more municipal autonomy expressed by local leaders during the pre-electoral *consultas populares* (popular consultations) he conducted throughout the country during the 1982 presidential campaign. As President de la Madrid emphasized in his inaugural address in December 1982:

> We will advance in the consolidation of the free municipality: political autonomy depends upon economic autonomy. We will initiate reforms of the article 115 of the Constitution, proposing the assignment of untouchable and proper sources of revenues for municipalities for them to be able to offer their own public services (de la Madrid, 1982a).

In fact, administrative and fiscal decentralization was among the principal demands expressed by local leaders in the *consultas* and became the corner stone of de la Madrid's discourses during his entire mandate. Only five days after taking office, the new president sent a reform initiative to the Congress, emphasizing the importance of returning autonomy to the municipalities, both politically and financially. As he argued in his discourse to the *Cámara de Diputados* (Deputees' Chamber),

> Changes in the article 115 are aimed at strengthening the municipality's finances, its political autonomy and all those faculties that have somehow been constantly absorbed by the states and the federal government (Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de la Unión, 1983).

Accordingly, the constitutional amendment adopted by the Congress in February 1983 became effective in January 1984. The main sections that were reformed clearly established the autonomous status of the municipalities, stating that "all municipalities will be granted juridical personality" (art. 115-2), defined their areas of jurisdiction as being "potable water, public lighting, cleaning, markets, cemeteries, garbage collection, streets parks and gardens as well as public security and transit" (115-3), clarified their sources of funding by establishing that "municipalities will freely administer their finances, formed by both their own revenues and the contributions of the other levels of government" (115-4), and "[enabled] municipalities to make agreements with states and the federation for the delivery of public services" (115-10) (Congreso de la Unión, 1983; Guerrero, 2004; Guillén López & Ziccardi, 2004). The 1983 reform, coupled with the creation of the SNDP, marked an important change in intergovernmental relationships in Mexico and became the cornerstone of the country's participatory decentralization agenda, officially making the municipality a formal level of government in the federation, the closest to the population and the one where proximity services were to be administered.

The Salinas Years (1988-1994): The Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (PRONASOL)

Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the PRI candidate in 1988, started his presidential mandate in the context of difficult political and economic crises. On the one hand, he became president in the controversy. The results of 1988 presidential elections were not as clearly in favor of the PRI as they had historically been, and Salinas won by only a small and very contested majority over his main adversary, Cuauthémoc Cárdenas from the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD – Party of the Democratic Revolution), which emerged from internal divisions within the PRI. The victory of the PRI, declared winner in spite of many electoral irregularities, caused serious political turmoil in Mexico. Many PRD militants and supporters, as well as citizens and international observers, started questioning the result of the election and the validity of the electoral processes and institutions, accusing Salinas of electoral fraud and of having 'stolen' the election.

On the other hand, Salinas also had to face grave economic challenges that provided fodder to the growing opposition parties who questioned the PRI's legitimacy in office. In fact, consolidating the neoliberal adjustments undertaken by his predecessor to respond to the debt crisis, he also had to cope with their undesirable effects. First, he had to deal with the criticisms that came from opposition parties, who campaigned on the negative effect the debt crisis had had on local governments, increasingly dependent on the diminishing federal transfers to cover their policy obligations. Second, he had to address the problems of the poorest sectors of the population, who were rendered extremely vulnerable by the orthodox economic reforms and were becoming an important source of political support for the PRD. As Salinas emphasized in his inaugural address,

> The main proposal of the Revolution, social justice, is not yet fully achieved with poverty and inequalities still plaguing many parts of the country [...]. To overcome declining life conditions, we decidedly need to act upon it (Salinas de Gortari, 1988).

It is therefore in light of the necessity to rebuild the PRI's political and economic legitimacy that Salinas implemented the *Programa Nacional de Solidaridad* (PRONASOL – National Solidarity Program) in 1988, one of his most important legacies and the cornerstone of his decentralization program, understood as a part of the larger democratization effort (as Salinas puts it: 'decentralization is democratization'). In fact, rather than following his predecessor's efforts toward administrative and fiscal decentralization, Salinas left the institutions of the SNPD aside as a planning mechanism and turned toward local communities as the principal agents of planning and policy-making, with many consequences on intergovernmental relations.

The program, which was initially designed to fight extreme poverty, had three main objectives: 1) improve the living conditions of marginalized populations, 2) promote regional development, and 3) sustain citizen- and community-participation at the local level ([Consejo Consultivo del PRONASOL, 1988] in Rodriguez, 1997, p. 77). Under the direct responsibility of the President's office at its inception, and of the *Secretaríat de Desarrollo Social* (SEDESOL – Social Development Secretary) beginning in 1991, PRONASOL quickly became the flagship program of Salinas' administration, directing social development resources from the federal executive to the local communities via the

local Solidarity officers (Cornelius, Craig, & Fox, 1994). Unlike previous regional development programs, PRONASOL was designed to involve the presidency directly with local communities (Grindle, 2007), avoiding the cumbersome regional and local bureaucracies and engaging local communities in the process. In fact, PRONASOL allowed organized local groups to formulate demands to the local Solidarity officers who, as delegates of the President and SEDESOL, studied the demands and, once approved, had them included in the regional *Convenio de Desarrollo Social* (CDS – Social Development Agreement) that succeeded to de la Madrid's CUDs. Therefore, after a *sexenio* of decentralization that reinforced the states and, to a lesser extent, the municipalities, PRONASOL changed the dynamics of resource-allocation in Mexico, directly involving the local communities in defining priorities and managing federal transfers rather than going through the traditional channels. Despite certain clear benefits associated with PRONASOL, the program has also been highly criticized for bypassing the decentralized institutional channels and recentralizing the allocation of resources, as well as for being used as support mechanism for the PRI among the poorest classes, becoming a channel for redefining the traditional clientelistic practices (Cornelius et al., 1994; Fox, 1994; Heredia, 1994).

The Zedillo Years (1994-2000): Nuevo Federalismo

Zedillo's presidency, during which most advances toward participatory decentralization were made, was also marked by an increasing need for major political and administrative reforms, coming both from the opposition and from within the ranks of the PRI. Zedillo inherited a highly re-centralized party (and a state) embroiled in a profound crisis of legitimacy, marked by the economic crisis of 1995, the assassination of both Luis Donaldo Colosio – the initial candidate for the 1994 presidential campaign – and of the PRI's Secretary General José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, and by the rise of urban and indigenous social movements such as the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN – Zapatista Army of National Liberation) challenging the party's authority and legitimacy. It is in this context that Zedillo's ambitious project of *Nuevo Federalismo* (New Federalism) emerged, both as a relegitimization strategy and as a response to governors' and mayors' demands for further decentralization (Mizrahi, 2004), especially

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those from opposition parties who had consolidated their local bases of support. The decentralization project sought by his administration was ambitious and followed the lines of de la Madrid's reforms. According to the *Programa para un Nuevo Federalismo 1995-2000* (Program for New Federalism), many areas of Mexican federalism had to be renovated, including the intergovernmental fiscal transfers and the autonomy granted to states and municipalities (Gobierno de la República, 1996). As Zedillo emphasized in his inaugural address, "time has come for a New Federalism in which local governments have the resources and decision-making power to better serve their citizens" (Zedillo Ponce de León, 1994), elements that would become the two main lines of his decentralization program.

The first important element of Zedillo's project was a deep transformation of the fiscal transfers system. In 1996, the *Fondo de Desarrollo Social Municipal* (Municipal Social Development Fund) transformed the previous Solidarity funds into direct transfers to municipalities and states, under RAMO 26 (budget line 26). As a result of increasing pressure from opposition parties on the national government[20], the system was again reformed in 1998, creating the RAMO 33 that regulated the various federal social development and infrastructure grants and subsidies to be administered directly by the municipal governments in coordination with states (Courchesne & Díaz-Cayeros, 2000). RAMO 33, including among others the *Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Social Municipal* (FAISM – Grant fund for Municipal Social Infrastructure) and the *Fondo para el Fortalecimiento Municipal* (FORTAMUN – Grant Fund for Municipal Strengthening), soon became the most important source of revenues for local governments (Grindle, 2007; Selee, 2006). Both were particularly important to strengthen the autonomy and public spending capacity of local governments while reinforcing the participatory mechanisms implemented under de la Madrid's mandate as they imposed a condition to the transfer of funds: the existence of an active COPLADEM (or

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[20] Selee (2006) argues that it is to respond to growing pressures coming from the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN – National Action Party) that Zedillo conceded a reform of the transfer system in 1998. In fact, for the first time in history, the 1997 legislative elections led to the election of an opposition coalition formed by the PAN and the PRD. During the subsequent budget negotiations, the PAN won the approval of the Congress to transform RAMO 26 into RAMO 33, which would automatically transfer resources to states and municipalities.

CODEMUN, in Nezahualcóyotl) bringing together administrators and citizen representatives to set the municipal investment priorities (Selee, 2006).

The second element of the decentralization process during that period was the 1999 Constitutional reform, which modified article 115 to officially give municipalities more autonomy in the policy-making process. This reform deepened the 1983 one, officially granting municipal governments the autonomous status of third level of government, clarifying their competencies and delimiting their power (Guerrero Amparán & Guillén López, 2000; Guillén López & Ziccardi, 2004). As the new article reads,

> All municipalities will be governed by a city hall directly elected by the population […] which ability to govern would be exercised in an exclusive manner, without intermediaries between the local and the state governments (Congreso de la Unión, 1999).

Combined with the conditional transfers included in RAMO 33, the new status gave municipalities the possibility to raise their property taxes revenues, giving them the ability to assess property values, thereby increasing their fiscal autonomy.

Top-Down Decentralization in Mexico: A Democratic Process?

Generally speaking, it can be argued that the Mexican decentralization programs did break with the previous organization of the federation but, as a consequence of the lack of democratic commitment by its proponents, who mostly sought to regain legitimacy among the PRI's ranks and the population, the actual implementation logic of these programs was much less effective. In fact, as of today, one can easily argue that decentralization has had a mixed impact in Mexico, which is generally explained by the intrinsic nature of the top-down decentralization process and by the context of economic and political crises within which it was undertaken and followed through by the three last *priista* administrations. As Grindle pointed out, giving up power is generally quite irrational from the leader's point of view, unless the political context changes the nature of the cost-benefit calculation they make (Grindle, 2000). As argued by Rodríguez, in the case of Mexico, the context of economic crisis and the lack of political legitimacy were favorable to decentralization:

the interplay between the economic crisis and political change have brought to the fore new political forces and practices in government, principally from the opposition parties, which have further intensified the presence of decentralization as a key element within the national agenda (Rodriguez, 1997, p. 39).

Therefore, although it was brought as a part of the democratization discourse by political leaders, decentralization in Mexico was not democratic in essence; it came as a top-down political strategy employed by PRI leaders to maintain the party's legitimacy and reassert its local support networks (Grindle, 2007; Mizrahi, 2004). Moreover, contrary to what happened in Brazil with the Constitutional Assembly in 1988, the Mexican transition to democracy did not contribute to the extension of the participatory decentralization efforts in practice. In fact, the election of Vicente Fox and the PAN in 2000, which was not accompanied by major constitutional change or significant popular mobilization, was marked by institutional continuity at all levels of government, and most 'functional' local participatory initiatives can still be attributed to the local authorities' will.

First, even if de la Madrid did make the decision to decentralize and to strengthen the autonomy of the municipalities, he left a great deal of the implementation of the constitutional reform in the hands of the states' governors, who retained most of the powers and planning resources allocated by the federal level for the elaboration of the CUDs (Cabrero Mendoza, 1998, p. 163). Moreover, the inclusion of participatory mechanisms did not lead to more transparent and open policy-making at the municipal level. As Cabrero noted, they quickly became 'ceremonial forums to legitimize decisions already taken by the governor and a small group of federal officials, exactly as was done before" (2000, p. 375). The lack of administrative capacity of local governments and the lack of real powers and resources actually decentralized to the municipalities largely contributed to this situation.

Second, on paper, PRONASOL could be perceived as a groundbreaking decentralization reform aimed at empowering local communities, allowing them to participate in the allocation of Solidarity funds. The program was criticized, however, for being a channel for the president to have direct access to the communities in order to sustain clientelism

(Fox, 1994). In fact, through the delegation of powers, the delegates nominated by the president became the direct interlocutors of the communities in the process of resource-allocation, and were the authority that directly channeled demands to the presidency. Moreover, the CUDs and COPLADEs were left aside as a mechanism for the definition of local priorities and resource-distribution, creating a parallel structure that fostered direct relationships between the central power and the local communities via the local PRONASOL delegates, in turn bypassing local powers and coalitions in determining governmental actions. As a result, PRONASOL clearly weakened both the municipal and the state levels of government (Cabrero Mendoza, 1998, p. 164), becoming more an enterprise of centralization than an effort towards increased decentralization and autonomous citizen participation.

Third, although being among the most important reforms toward decentralization in Mexico, Zedillo's reform had a limited impact since, once again, state governors were given a great deal of discretion over the manner in which resources were actually redistributed and the municipal reforms implemented (Grindle, 2007). After the return to democratic pluralism in 2000 with the election of Vicente Fox, the PAN candidate for the presidential election, the situation of the Mexican municipalities remains relatively stable. In fact, Fox's program for a *Federalismo Aútentico* (Authentic Federalism), followed to this day by his successor Felipe Calderón, did not bring substantial changes in the structure allocation of resources to municipalities, following with the RAMO 33 and respecting the autonomous status given to municipalities through the 1999 constitutional reform.

Decentralization programs were therefore only partly implemented by the PRI leaders in order to cope with the crisis of legitimacy they were facing throughout the 1980's, and they were not pushed further by the two subsequent PAN presidents, who mostly followed a logic of continuity in terms of intergovernmental relations and participatory decentralization reforms. As a consequence, there are still significant limits on the extent to which financial and power resources are devolved to both states and municipalities. First, fiscal decentralization is still limited, with the municipalities receiving

approximately 7% of the federal transfers in 2003 (Rojo Calzada, 2007), a very small share of the national budget considering the growing share of responsibilities they have inherited in the administrative decentralization process. Second, the unequal redistribution of resources, along with the tremendous freedom left to the states' executives in the implementation of the SNPD's recommendations towards municipalities, tend to maintain the dependency of municipalities upon state administrations and, more specifically, upon state governors themselves.

Nonetheless, as the waves of reforms illustrate, there have been important advances in terms of reorganizing intergovernmental relationships in the traditionally highly centralized Mexican federal system, which have set the stage for participatory decentralization reforms to be adopted in parallel at the municipal level. First, political decentralization is now a fact: since 1977, all municipalities hold competitive and proportional elections to elect the municipal presidents and the members of the municipal council. Second, there have been advances in administrative decentralization toward both the states and municipalities, through the creation and strengthening of the SNPD and the constitutional reforms of 1983 and 1999. Except during the Salinas presidency, where PRONASOL and its delegation mechanisms bypassed the SNPD's formal mechanisms for establishing local policy priorities, there have been constant efforts sustaining the decentralization of policy responsibilities and authority to subnational levels of government.

2.2.3 Mexican Municipalities: A Decentralized Space for Participatory Innovations?

Even if decentralization reforms have had a limited impact on a genuine redefinition of intergovernmental relationships and the allocation of resources between the three levels of government in Mexico, the role of the municipality has changed throughout the reform process. Previously mere extensions of the PRI's corporatist structure, municipalities are today a pivotal level of government and, in some cases, the space for growing levels of social activism. More importantly, the first decentralization reforms, opening the municipal arena to political pluralism and creating spaces for citizen participation, have

set the stage for participatory decentralization reforms to be implemented at the local level because opposition parties and urban social movements have used their new autonomy from the center as an opportunity to build their own legitimacy locally. Thus, even if participatory planning mechanisms comprised in the *Sistema Nacional de Planeación Democrática* have been unequally implemented across Mexican municipalities, several municipal administrations have innovated and created decentralized institutional spaces for including the participation of 'ordinary' citizens in the governance process, a recent phenomenon whose consequences on democratic governance are still overlooked.

Participatory Planning in the City: The Mechanisms

According to article 115 of the Mexican Constitution, municipalities are governed by the directly elected local *ayuntamiento* (city hall). Mirroring the division of powers in the federation, the organization of responsibilities in city hall is highly centralized in the hands of the *presidente municipal*. In fact, the latter retains most of the decision-making powers and has a great influence on the decisions made by the *cabildo* (municipal council), appointing the important officials and generally setting the agenda. Traditionally, citizens were not included in the day-to-day decision-making processes. Yet, in parallel to the political, fiscal and administrative decentralization reforms implemented by the PRI, two different types of participatory planning mechanisms were introduced by municipal administrations from all political parties to comply with the requirements of RAMO 33, constituting the centerpiece of the Mexican institutionalized participatory decentralization model.

The first mechanism is the COPLADEM, also called COPLADEMUN or CODEMUN in certain municipalities, and is directly related to the SNDP. As a citizen-based committee, its formal role is to inform and assist the local government in the definition of public investment priorities, especially in the low-income communities that benefit from the federal infrastructure funds via the FAISM. These councils are generally forums where elected or designated members of different societal sectors, including some elected politicians, participate. They are designed to address long-term issues that extend beyond

the 3-year mandate of the mayor. The second mechanism is the neighborhood councils, *comités des participación ciudadana, comités vecinales* or *comités de colonos*. Although the council's form and composition varies from one city to another, it is generally composed of a given number of elected people living in the same neighborhood and is constituted as neighbors' rights defense committee. Often used as the neighborhood-based support to the work of the COPLADEM, it assumes a consultative and deliberative role in the establishment of policy priorities for the local community, generally discussing questions such as street-pavement, sewer and water lines, street-lighting and public security.

The Mixed Record of Participatory Planning Mechanisms
The implementation results of the participatory decentralization program in Mexico have been mixed. As we will see in the case of Brazil, the fact that there is no rigid federal legal framework enforcing the efficient implementation and day-to-day functioning of the local COPLADEMs and neighborhood councils compromises the prospects for participatory mechanisms to be equally implemented or 'routinized' as part of the municipal decision-making process across the country. This renders their existence and inclusion in the local governance process highly dependent on political will.

In a survey conducted in 2002 by the national statistics institute, about 57% of mayors said that they had a COPLADEM, about 42% said they had citizen councils, and about 49% said they had neighborhood organizations active in their municipality (INDESOL-INEGI, 2002). Those numbers are consistent with the findings of my interviews with experts from the *Associación de Municipios de México*, (AMMAC – Association of Mexican Municipalities) and from the *Instituto Nacional para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal* (INAFED - National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development), who confirmed that in reality, most municipalities have implemented them to fulfill the federal government's requirements, but they are ineffective overall and are not generally institutionalized in the practice of governance (Acosta Arévalo, 2007; Fernández, 2007). In some cases, participation has increased because of a growing civic engagement with the state whereas, in others, participatory practices have been

introduced by authoritarian governments as a legitimating strategy (Guarneros-Meza, 2007) or as an empty shell to fulfill the requirements of the federal government in order to receive transfers (Acosta Arévalo, 2007)[21].

Nonetheless, in some cases, municipal authorities from the three main political parties have actually innovated and made those participatory mechanisms more efficient and institutionalized, with the reforms creating new spaces for the activation and the institutionalization of social participation in the governance process. Cabrero found that even if the strategies, styles and discourses of politicians differ according to their political allegiance, political parties are not determinant in explaining the tendency of leaders to adopt innovative reforms: PRI, PAN and PRD local governments have all introduced them in the local governance process (Cabrero Mendoza, 2000). Participatory democracy has become a central part of all political parties' rhetoric, and as a result, has been implemented in a variety of municipalities, such as León in the state of Guanajuato, and Nezahualcóyotl in the state of México. In both cities, the municipal government created and formally implemented mechanisms aimed at increasing and institutionalizing popular participation in the decision-making process on municipal investment priorities. The outcomes and success of these experiments in transforming state-society relationships remain overlooked in the literature, and the comparison between León and Nezahualcóyotl will allow us to start looking at these dynamics more systematically.

In fact, a closer look at municipal dynamics suggests that even though citizen participation at the local level has indeed increased in recent years in Mexico, it is not yet clear what this participation actually entails or whether it actually affects the nature of the relationship among citizens, politicians and bureaucrats. Even if this new model of governance is more democratic and inclusive than the previous one in essence, it can "easily evolve toward neocorporatist and clientelist or vote-catching practices" (Cabrero Mendoza, 2000, p. 382). It is this variety of outcomes that makes Mexico such an

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[21] The reason for such a difference in the implementation of participatory mechanisms is not the focus of this study since we concentrate on municipalities that actually have implemented and institutionalized such mechanisms, but many factors have been explored in the literature on decentralization and on municipal reform in Mexico (see: Ward & Rodriguez, 1999; Willis et al., 1999).

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interesting case for the analysis of participatory mechanisms in general, and particularly the cases of León and Nezahualcóyotl, to which we shall turn more specifically in the last section.

2.3 BRAZIL: MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Brazil's federal system, unlike that of Mexico, has historically oscillated between episodes of high centralization, with the federal executive retaining most of the powers, and periods of decentralization, with the state governors holding most of the influence in national politics. As in the Mexican case, however, Brazilian municipalities were not a significant level of government until more recently with the adoption of the 1988 Constitution of the Republic of Brazil. In fact, and contrary to Mexico, it is partly in response to growing pressures from the *municipalista* (municipalist) movement challenging the legitimacy of the Brazilian political system, that decentralization reforms were adopted in 1988, empowering municipalities and opening the political arena to greater popular participation. The 1988 Constitution extended the salience of the 5564 Brazilian municipalities, making city hall (*prefeitura*) the official local government directly elected, organized as a replica of the federal government with the mayor (*prefeito*) as the elected representative of the executive, and municipal councilors (*vereadores*) the elected legislative branch of local government. The 1988 Constitution also clarified the municipalities' responsibilities for the provision of public services and established their sources of revenues. Moreover, as in the case of Mexico, it included an obligation for the municipalities to decentralize from within and enshrined the principle of citizen participation in governance processes.

2.3.1 The Making of Federalism *à la Brasileira*: Centralization, Decentralization and Clientelism

The Brazilian federation has historically been organized in a relatively decentralized fashion, a constitutional model that empowered the states' traditional leaders. The actual dynamics of intergovernmental relationships between the federal government and the

governors have, however, oscillated between periods of high centralization and periods of decentralization towards the states, as under the first democratic period (1946-1964). Moreover, except where the principle of municipal autonomy had been entrenched in the Constitution since the late 19th century, municipalities have generally enjoyed very limited autonomy from the other levels of government, depending politically and financially on the states or the federal government.

A History of Centralization-Decentralization Dynamics

After Independence in 1822, Brazil was officially organized as a centralized and unitary monarchy, with most of the powers placed in the hands of the Emperor who could nominate provincial leaders (equivalent to state governors) and the members of the executive cabinet. According to Carvalho, it was pressures from regional elites outside of Rio de Janeiro (by then the capital) that called into question the relevance and efficiency of the unitary model of government, calling for "unity through decentralization" (Carvalho, 1993, p. 66). This trend toward decentralization to state governments was reinforced through the adoption of the 1891 Constitution, forming the Old Republic of Brazil (1891-1930), which took place in the context of the rise of the new political class in Brazil, mostly representing the middle class that was confronted with the interests of the traditional rural elites. The federation of Brazil, as a decentralized form of government, came into existence in an environment where opposing interests needed to be accommodated. Federalism was seen as the perfect model of state organization to accommodate both the new elite, with the increasing importance given to bureaucratic positions and the creation of the state and municipal legislative powers, and the traditional state elite, for whom the model was beneficial since it reinforced their spheres of powers as it concentrated their activities at the state level, a trend that soon became embodied by the "Politics of the Governors" of Campos Sales (Brasileiro, 1973)[22]. Under the Empire, municipalities were mostly symbolic institutions and the political system was highly centralized. The 1891 Constitution therefore constituted a novelty, since it gave

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[22] As Celina Souza explains, the politics of the governors consisted of an agreement between the powerful and wealthy states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais and the President Campos Sales, according to which each state would alternate to govern Brazil. This agreement was the result of growing conflicts between traditional elites in Congress, which prevented the President from governing effectively (Abrucio, 1998; Souza, 1997, p. 26).

municipalities an autonomous status, although vaguely defined and still subordinated to the states: "The states will organize *their* municipalities in way that will secure their autonomy in terms of their own interests" (República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil, 1891, art. 68). The definition of these interests however rested in the hands of states and not the municipalities themselves, considerably limiting their autonomy in practice. Moreover, municipal governments lacked the necessary financial resources to provide local services, which made them even more dependent upon the upper levels of government (Brasileiro, 1973).

After this episode in political and fiscal decentralization, Getulio Vargas' project of the *Estado Nôvo* (New State) (1937-1945) brought back the unitary system and centralism as a founding principle of the Brazilian state, dissolving federalism. All legislative powers were abolished and he eliminated the direct election of governors and mayors: governors were now nominated by Vargas himself, and mayors were nominated by the governors on the basis of political favors and connections (Samuels, 2004). His stated intent was to reinvigorate the central state in order to limit the powers of the dominant state governors and political interests, organized in state-based political parties and controlling most of the national state apparatus and resources, powers that were reinforced in the Old Republic with the Politics of the Governors. Yet, as Love puts it, "states conserved important powers and continued to innovate […]. Ironically, fiscal federalism continued" (Love, 1993). Therefore, despite a tendency toward centralism under Vargas, where both states and municipalities were subordinated politically to the central government, traditional elites and political alliances remained powerful in the states.

Vargas's regime was overthrown in 1945 as a result of growing pressures from the military and the liberals to democratize, sustained by mass citizen demonstrations demanding the direct election of the president. During the democratization period, from 1945 to 1964, Brazilian intergovernmental relations returned to decentralization with the introduction of the principle of intergovernmental fiscal cooperation via revenue-sharing arrangements that involved all three levels of government (Souza, 1997). On paper, the 1946 Constitution aimed at greater decentralization than the preceding ones, recognizing

some of the *municipalista* movements' demands for municipal autonomy[23]. As article 28 stipulates:

> Municipalities' autonomy will be secured by: 1) the direct election of the mayor and municipal councilors, and 2) the proper administration and everything that constitutes its concerns, especially the collection and administration of its proper taxes and the organization of local public services (Estados Unidos do Brasil, 1946, art. 28).

For the first time, mayors were directly elected by their constituents, except in the capital cities such as Belo Horizonte or Recife, where they remained appointed by state governors (Estados Unidos do Brasil, 1946, art. 28). Yet, local politicians' expectations for autonomy fell short quite soon, and in practice, municipalities remained heavily dependent on the states and the federal government who did not transfer the necessary resources for local government to carry out their responsibilities. Moreover, the 1946 Constitution was not clear on the frontiers between each level of government's responsibilities, which gave the federal level and states discretionary power. As de Mello explained, "without demarcated functional frontiers and assigned responsibilities, municipalities lacked anything beyond a purely political role" (de Mello, 1971, p. 14). Therefore, although municipalities did gain a formal status, it remained symbolic in practice because intergovernmental relationships were still characterized by the preeminence of state and federal governments in the allocation of resources and powers, limiting the autonomy of local governments.

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[23] The *municipalista* movement, bringing together the country's municipalities, emerged during the post-1945 period in Brazil, becoming an important actor of the Constitutional Assembly of 1946 and leading to the creation of the *Associação Brasileira dos Municipios* (ABM – Brazilian Municipalities Association) and to the *Campanha Municipalista* (municipal campaign). Bringing together both traditional elites (associated with the Estado Novo leaders and the modernization agrarian movement) and new political elites (associated to the liberal and intellectual circles), the movement had the particularity of treating the question of the autonomy of municipalities as a secondary one. As such, "the campaign should be understood more as a discursive strategy elaborated by the elites, and not as a social movement galvanizing local elites demands with regards to the dissatisfaction with the Estado Novo" (Melo, 2007). Later becoming a formal political party, the *Partido Municipalista Nacional*, the *municipalista* movement remained a bureaucratic association of local mayors whose objective was more to locally reform and modernize the local administrations than to demand extended autonomy from the federal government. During the 1988 Constitutional Assembly, the *municipalista* movement – led by the ABM and the *Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal* (IBAM – Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration) – played an important role in the discussions at the Brazilian Congress, using their influence with Congress members to demand more autonomy in the conduct of their daily administration, along with more resources to do so (Flávio, 2008).

After the 1964 coup, the military pursued a policy aimed at recentralizing power in the hands of the federal government and at limiting the states' and municipalities' autonomy. The 1967/69 Constitution centralized public finances and political powers in the hands of the federal government. Moreover, the military government became presidential in an unprecedented way: the adoption of the Institutional Act no. 5 in 1968 centralized powers in the hands of the presidency (Philip, 1985). Competitive elections were abolished for the state and federal executive positions, keeping mayors and legislative elections dominated by two parties: the *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (ARENA – Alliance for National Renewal), affiliated to the military, and the *Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (MDB – Brazilian Democratic Movement), which constituted the official opposition. Therefore, the military attempted to curtail the states' power by eliminating their role as an intermediary between the federal and local administrations, also limiting the municipalities' autonomy in governance processes. As Samuels highlights,

> during the dictatorship, municipal participation in planning and execution of government programs was minimal, and municipal authorities were rarely consulted prior to a program's implementation. Resources allocation also reflected central government's priorities […] and not local level needs or desires (2004, p. 81)

Nevertheless, it has been widely argued that despite this attempt at minimizing the influence of lower levels of government, subnational politicians continued to play an important role in legitimizing the regime and building locally-based coalitions to sustain the military in power and ensure their survival (Ames, 1987; de Medeiro, 1986; Souza, 1997).

Generally speaking, one can therefore argue that Brazilian intergovernmental relationships have been characterized by a dynamic of alternation between periods of high centralism and periods of relative decentralization (de Medeiro, 1994; Samuels, 2004; Skidmore, 1999), which mostly empowered states and state governors until 1988. As we have seen, this dynamic was partly explained by the origins of Brazilian federalism, which was mostly an attempt at conciliating different sectors of the elite concentrated at the state level and their diverging interests into an integrated national system. The presence of a duality of interests, and the relative weight of the traditional

versus the new elites, were reflected in the several periods of Brazil's state formation and in the corresponding constitutional episodes, particularly during the 20th century.

Clientelism and Municipal Governance

As we have seen, even if Brazil's federation oscillated between high centralism and decentralization over the 20th century, there is a general agreement that municipalities were generally the least powerful and significant of the three levels of government for policy-making and resources sharing. Though organized differently than in Mexico, Brazil's state-society relationships were characterized by the predominance of clientelistic exchanges that adapted to change and resisted over time and through the various constitutional regimes that have been established during the 19th and the 20th centuries. The traditional rural elites whose control and influence dominated the organization of the state since Independence were originally sustained by clientelistic ties with political brokers organized at the local level (Graham, 1990). As in the case of Mexico, with the modernization and the urbanization of Brazil, the nature of clientelism changed and adapted to the new social and political realities. Yet, according to most observers (Cammack, 1982; Gay, 1990, 2006; Hagopian, 1996; Mainwairing, 1999), clientelism remained an essential defining characteristic of modern state-society relationships and local governance, both at the level of intergovernmental relationships and within municipalities. Contrary to Mexico, however, Brazilian clientelism was not mediated by strongly institutionalized political parties (like the PRI), but rather by local elites and powerful political brokers who were not closely tied to any particular party but rather to the governors, as the party system in Brazil has traditionally remained fragmented and poorly institutionalized.

As we have seen, there is a wide agreement in the literature on the fact that historically, and despite the relatively decentralized nature of federalism in Brazil, municipalities were at the less powerful end of the central-state-local governments relationships. In spite of this, municipalities and local rural areas did not lack political importance: they were the main locus of political support for state politicians. In fact, Brazilian municipalities were an integral part of the traditional organization of the state, which relied on alliances and

networks of supports based at the local level in a predominantly agriculture-based society. As de Oliveira Vianna (1987[1949]) argued, "until the 1930s, and in remote rural regions into the 1970s, clientelistic networks superseded parties as bases of political organization" (cited in Mainwairing, 1999, p. 180). As Graham argued, in post-Independence Brazil, clientelistic ties played at both the local and at the national levels of government, with elections as their most obvious manifestation. Between 1889 and 1930, the phenomenon of clientelism became even more important with the growing empowerment of traditional elites as state governors and politicians, sustained by the federal 'politics of the governors'. This type of state organization was called *coronelismo*[24], as the traditional corporatist system that sustained the state governors' local support-base, and it was based on the development of clientelistic state-society relationships articulated by local political brokers (*coronels*)[25] and state elites. Nunes Leal defined *coronelismo* as "a pact, an exchange between the public power, extremely strengthened, and the declining social influence of the local bosses" (Nunes Leal, 1977 [1949], p. 20). In his seminal work, he proposed that the essence of the pact between the state and local bosses consisted of:

> on the part of the local bosses, unconditional support for the official candidates in state and federal elections, and on the part of the state government, a *carte blanche* for the local boss (preferably the leader of the local majority faction) in all issues relating to the municipality, including the nomination of state functionaries there" (Nunes Leal, 1977 [1949], p. 49-50).

The loyalty of local bosses to traditional state elites was, on the one hand, subject to the capacity of state elites to provide them with resources and private good in exchange for their support. On the other hand, local bosses, who were generally local landowners acting as both clients of state elites and elected politicians and as local patrons, used public resources, employment opportunities and other forms of privileges made available to them by their 'patrons' in order to secure the loyalty of their fellow citizens. Therefore, as Graham suggested, state and national "elections tested and displayed the local patron's

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[24] For a detailed account of *coronelismo*'s origins and functioning during Brazil's Old Republic, see Nunes Leal (1977 [1949]), de Oliveira Vianna (1987[1949]) and Cammack (1981).

[25] The term *coronelismo,* as a phenomenon emphasizing the political dominance of local landowners in the Old Republic of Brazil, comes from the fact that in Brazil, the majors landowners have historically been given the honorary rank of coronels (colonels) of the National Guard (Cammack, 1981).

leadership", meaning his capacity to secure votes through clientelistic practices and patronage (Graham, 1990).

Rather than eroding with modernization, as some scholars would have argued, clientelism proved to endure and evolve through the changes that occurred in 20th century Brazil. In fact, Brazilian 'modern' clientelism arose in the context of urbanization and changed the nature of client-patron relationships, bringing them to the center of party politics and partisan-loyalty dynamics. Modern clientelism has generally taken two forms in Brazil (Mainwaring, 1999, p. 176). First, it has transcended federal intergovernmental relationships, even under more democratic regimes, becoming the building block of the 'politics of the governors' and of their continuing domination over the Brazilian federal system. In fact, both state and federal politicians have used clientelism, as a mode of social exchange, in order to build their political careers and rise through the ranks of parties and public administration's hierarchies. Moreover, national governments and governors have used it in order to build and sustain their own legitimacy once in power, building coalitions and alliances with powerful local political brokers and local bosses through the use of public resources and patronage. This was especially true during the military period, where benefits were given to the allies and supporters of the military regimes and the members of ARENA to weaken the opposition and traditional leaders (Cammack, 1982). Second, clientelism has been used as a direct or indirect vote-buying strategy by local, state and federal politicians seeking to maintain and extend their local support bases in a party system characterized by a high number of political parties and changing loyalties, especially since redemocratization in 1985. According to Mainwaring, the pervasiveness of clientelism in Brazil is explained by the fact that actors continued to benefit from this type of state-society relationships, mainly because of the weakness of popular organizations and mass-based parties. As he points out, however,

> the institutionalization of clientelistic practices has reinforced the weakness of popular organizations because individuals and popular groups opt for clientelistic arrangements rather than broad-based movements and parties (Mainwaring, 1999, p. 182)

As Gay illustrated with his study of the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro during the redemocratization period, local social organizations were existent but their weakness came from the heavy reliance of social leaders on clientelistic networks that curtailed their capacity to organize as an autonomous civil society pressing collective demands upon the state.

Clientelistic practices therefore adapted to change in Brazil, generally benefiting traditional elites' local support networks, becoming especially important at the municipal level as local political brokers had an important role in sustaining the exchanges. Most recently, however, municipalities have been given a renewed attention in Brazil as they were officially granted an autonomous status during the redemocratization period, as the next section will discuss.

2.3.2 The 1988 Constitutional Reform and the Municipalization of Politics

As argued in the preceding section, the post-military regime Brazil inherited was marked by a relatively centralized federalism, where previous locally-based political alliances and traditional elites retained strong influence. This affected the nature of the transition to democracy that started gradually under the military as well as the political system that emerged following the transition (Hagopian, 1996). The Constitution of the New Republic of Brazil, still valid as of today, was adopted in 1988 after a series of constitutional consultations and negotiations held between 1985 and 1988, bringing the municipality to the center of the new system of intergovernmental relations and putting forward the principle of citizen participation as a crucial dimension of democratic governance processes.

The Redemocratization of Brazil (1984-1988)
The Brazilian transition to democracy started in the early 1970's, under the military regime, and officially ended in 1989 with the first popular election of the President, Fernando Collor de Mello. The military, under pressure from various sectors of the

population[26], promised a gradual return to civilian rule and initiated a long period of political liberalization through a series of constitutional amendments during an era known as the *Abertura* (Skidmore, 1989). The opening of the political regime was therefore conducted on the military's conditions and terms, involving no radical constitutional change that would alter political order.

Many authors have described the actual redemocratization period, which lasted from 1984 to 1988, as a transition pact led from above by the elite, both from the military and from opposition parties (Hagopian, 1990; Karl & Schmitter, 1991; O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Stepan, 1989), who allied to propose a 'democratic' political platform that would form the penultimate stage before complete return to civilian rule. It is the Democratic Alliance, formed by the Liberal Front (led by José Sarney, candidate for vice-president) and the *Partido Movimento Democrático do Brasil* (PMDB – Brazil Democratic Movement's Party), led by Tancredo Neves, candidate for president), that proposed to deliver a new Constitution during their presidential campaign, a promise that was delivered by Sarney, the first civilian president, when he replaced Neves as President in 1985 (Rosenn, 1990). In spite of this, the formation of the *Assembléia Nacional Constituinte (*ANC – Constituent National Assembly) reflected the elitist nature of the compromise that had led to the creation of the Democratic alliance: rather than convoking a separate assembly to write the new constitution, Sarney invested the 559 Congress members (72 senators and 487 federal deputies) to become the ANC through a constitutional amendment to the 1969 constitution, which was approved by the Congress itself (Rosenn, 1990). The ANC was therefore mostly composed of members of the two main political parties inherited from the authoritarian period, the PMDB and the Liberal front, as well as members of smaller progressive parties who had made their way to the Congress during the 1986 elections, such as the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT – Worker's Party), the *Partido Comunista do Brasil* (PCdoB – Communist Party of Brazil) and the *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (PSB – Brazilian Socialist Party). As Souza

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[26] The pressures came from, among others, the *Direita-já* movement, formed by members of many political parties and politicians (such as Ulysses Guimarães) and other sectors of the Brazilian society such as artists, journalists, union leaders, etc. It also came from the appearance of civilian leaders "willing to compromise with the military's demands furthered by the need to open up" (Souza, 1997, p. 55).

suggests, if it represented all the regions of Brazil, the ANC and, consequently, the drafting of the 1988 Constitution entailed a paradox that had an important effect on the nature of federalism under the new democratic rule, namely "the absence of the federal government from the discussions that resulted in the weakening of its political and financial power" (Souza, 1997, p. 54).

After more than a year of heated debates, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil was promulgated, on October 5th of 1988. This Constitution proposed an important break with the authoritarian past, defining the basic democratic principles under which Brazil would be governed, but also in terms of the traditional definition of intergovernmental relationships in the federation, reasserting the power of the governors but also bringing the municipality and its institutions at the center of these relationships, as the next section will highlight.

The Constitution of 1988: Municipal Autonomy and Fiscal Decentralization
Under the 1988 constitution, which contains an entire chapter devoted to defining the status and responsibilities of municipalities, neither the states nor the federal government can intervene in local government's responsibilities. As article 18 stipulates, "the politico-administrative organization of the federative entity includes the Union, the states, the federal district and the municipalities, all of them being autonomous" (República Federativa do Brasil, 1988 [2007], art. 18). This autonomous status was, according to Marcos Flavio R. Gonçalves from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal* (IBAM – Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration), granted as the result of negotiations among the various sectors represented in the ANC, and as the result of important pressures from the *municipalista* movement and its members (Gonçalves, 2008).

Since 1988, municipalities are governed by a municipal organic law that, in accordance with the State's constitution, is self-determined but has to follow the general democratic principles imposed by the Constitution. First, article 29 defines the general organization of the municipal government (division of powers within the government, electoral

system, mandates, etc.), which is politically organized as a quasi-replica of the federal government: the *prefeito* is the head of government and, along with his *vice-prefeito* (vice-mayor), is elected directly by the population every four years. In addition to having a veto on policy initiatives coming from the legislative body, the *prefeito* has the power of nominating the members of his executive, who are the secretaries of the several branches of city hall. The municipal government is also composed of an elected legislative body, which is composed of a given number (depending on the municipalities) of *vereadores* (municipal councilors) elected through a system of proportional representation, and whose role is to oversee the budget and the policy making processes. Second, and for the first time, certain democratic principles are explicitly and constitutionally established for the municipal level of government. As Guimarães puts it in the promulgation discourse, this Constitution is a "*Constituição Cidadã*" (constitution of the citizens) (Guimarães, 1988). In that spirit, the idea of citizen participation becomes an integral part of the local governance process, a concern expressed during the discussions in the constituent assembly (Altmann, 1988). In fact, the Constitution brings the idea of decentralization within the municipalities themselves, institutionalizing the idea following which "cooperation of the representative associations in municipal planning" is required (República Federativa do Brasil, 1988 [2007], art. 29, par. 12).

Through the adoption of the 1988 Constitution, and for the first time in Brazil's history, municipalities were therefore granted a legal status that gives them clear policy responsibilities and clarifies the sources of financial resources. In fact, as clarified by article 30, municipalities became responsible for many important policy areas, such as urban planning, health services, education, and historical and cultural monuments (República Federativa do Brasil, 1988 [2007], art. 30). In order to provide local services, municipalities have the capacity to collect local taxes, but they can also count on the participation of the federal government to provide health and education services to their citizens on the basis of cooperative agreements signed between each municipality and the federal government. In fact, since Fernando Henrique Cardoso's Presidency (1996-2002), local-central government fiscal arrangements have been created in the health and education policy area in order to curtail the traditional power of the states and traditional

elites in allocating resources (Dickovick, 2006). The central governments remained the provider of services in these two areas, but the municipal governments became the only executor of these public services, bringing the actual services to the population.

Top-Down Decentralization in Brazil: A Democratic Process?

Why did the 1988 constituent assembly members go in that direction? Why did decentralization favor the municipalization of politics in democratizing Brazil? In Brazil, as in the case of Mexico, decentralization was undertaken by national politicians following a rational political logic and an attempt at curtailing the powers of the state traditional elites, the so-called *Barões da Federação* (Abrucio, 1998; Samuels & Abrucio, 2000), and was therefore not democratic in essence.

As many scholars have pointed out, decentralization in Brazil dates back to the military period and, as in the Mexican case, was not the result of democratization *per se*. In fact, the first series of moves toward greater decentralization were, as argued by de Medeiro, motivated by the need for the military to secure its own legitimacy:

> in their quest of legitimacy, the center has been searching for broader political support, whereby states and municipal authorities, especially governors and mayors, have gradually ceased to be mere executants of the national state to become proper political actors (de Medeiro, 1994, p. 7).

According to Samuels, municipal decentralization "ironically resulted from the unintended consequence of two policies adopted to *limit* municipal autonomy" which, coupled with the requisites of the ongoing process of urbanization, brought municipal politicians to the center of the political scene (Samuels, 2004, p. 69). In fact, the decision of the military to first pursue the municipal election schedule and second, interact directly with the local governments in order to bypass the state as an intermediary contributed indirectly to give power and prestige to local politicians and to the members of the *municipalista* movement. Yet, this latter attempt at reducing the influence of traditional state-based political elites failed, and the transition period saw the return of the 'politics of the governors', where Brazilian states have kept considerable powers as well as their local support bases and networks (Abrucio, 1998; Hagopian, 1996; Samuels & Abrucio,

2000). As a result, during the first years of redemocratization in the 1980's – since the municipal level had become an important step into the political career path and determinant in the shaping of the structure of political opportunities (Samuels, 2003, 2004) – consolidating this local autonomy became the most interesting strategy for politicians to adopt in the process leading to the re-writing of the 1988 Constitution. Moreover, the ACN deliberations and negotiations over the definition of federalism and the intergovernmental division of powers and resources among the three levels of government were highly tainted by the influence of the state and local political brokers on the members of the Congress, elected by the states and municipalities' constituents. Therefore, the impulse for decentralization toward municipalities did not first come as a consequence of democratization, but rather as a continuity of trends that had been undertaken by the military during the last years of the dictatorship.

As we have seen, traditional state elites managed to survive the episodes of centralization in Brazil, even under the military regime, and state governors and their entourage remained highly influential, especially in terms of the power resources and personal connections they had with members of the National Congress, a phenomenon that Abrucio and Samuels (2000) have called the "New Politics of the Governors". In the years following the adoption of the 1988 Constitution, President Cardoso achieved further fiscal decentralization. Here again, a rational interest is argued to have been behind the reassertion of the municipal-central government direct relationship through the establishment of automatic fiscal transfers to fund social services. This decision was indeed motivated by the will of the federal government to curtail the power of the traditional state elites, who had close ties with members of the Congress, and reduce their fiscal autonomy. Municipalities were therefore given extended power, as a strategy used by the federal government to curb the traditional state elites' power. New automatic fund transfers going directly to the municipalities were created, with technical criteria replacing the political arrangements for resources distribution. These new automatic funds "removed from subnational politicians much discretion over social service spending" (Dickovick, 2006, p. 13), coupled with the fact that decentralization was not a conscious policy choice sustained by a plan for states and municipalities to take over the

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provision of services (Samuels, 2000), had the consequence of fostering intergovernmental conflicts and chaos (de Almeida, 1994 [cited by Samuels, 2000]) rather that contributing to develop a cooperative type of federalism.

Nonetheless, as the latest constitutional reforms illustrate, there have been important advances in terms of reorganizing intergovernmental relationships in the Brazilian federal system, where municipalities were not traditionally part of political decision-making discussions. Today, Brazil is one of the most decentralized countries in Latin America, both politically and financially. Moreover, municipalities are today an important, if not central, level of government with crucial policy-making and service providing responsibilities, which breaks with the traditional intergovernmental division of powers and which allows municipalities to propose innovative local governance processes and institutions, such as participatory budgeting and planning.

2.3.3 Including Participation in Governance Processes: Participatory Budgeting

Even if they were not originally meant to become 'democratizing' by political elites, decentralization reforms and the municipalization of politics in Brazil have become an important part of the democratization agenda after 1988, leading to local innovation in governance and policy-making processes. In fact, the ANC discussions, in which social groups took a more active part than expected by the leading political elites, included a renewed concern for democratic practices, accountability and responsiveness. As a consequence, they opened new spaces for more progressive and non-traditional actors to become involved in local governments and included citizen-participation as a formal element of governance. One of the most celebrated experiences in institutionalizing citizen participation is the creation of participatory budgeting, or PB, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul) (Abers, 1996, 1998, 2000; Baiocchi, 2005), a PT-led initiative that soon became widespread all around Brazil, adopted by both PT and non-PT administrations to include citizens in local decision making processes.

The Workers' Party's Initiative in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul)

The Brazilian participatory budget is an initiative of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT – Worker's Party), a leftist party that was formed in 1980 from an alliance of radical union leaders and a number of other 'radical' groups, such as the 'progressive' Church, urban social movements, civil and human rights activists and radical intellectuals and politicians (see Keck, 1992). This alliance, developed with people who were opposed to and who struggled against the previous authoritarian regime, was also a reaction against the lack of urban worker representation in traditional parties (Nylen, 1997).

Two factors are at the origin of participatory budgeting. First, partly due to its composition and anti-authoritarian influences, the PT cultivated a culture of mistrust toward political parties and governmental 'machines', and sought to maintain close ties with grassroots and social movements (Abers, 1996, p. 37). It has also had a powerful commitment to grassroots autonomy and direct participation. In that sense, the party wanted to promote citizen-participation, accountability of the elected officials to the grassroots and transparency of the governing process. Second, and as we have seen, the adoption of the new Constitution in 1988 also contributed to lay the foundations for the political and administrative decentralization in Brazil. As noted earlier, "for the first time, municipalities gained legal status as federal entities, which eliminates the ability of the state and federal government to interfere with municipal laws" (Samuels, 2000, p. 87). At the same time, they obtained the right to organize and provide social services, and the possibility to collect their own revenues. Thus, the 1988 Constitution contributed to pave the way for the PT's ambitions at the municipal level.

It is in such a favorable environment that the PT agenda on municipal governance was developed. In fact, the PT preparation for the 1988 municipal elections was the occasion to barely define the contours of a PT municipal administration in accord with their commitment to grassroots and democracy. Popular participation and the inversion of local government priorities became the twin pillars of the PT municipal program (Alvarez, 1993, p. 206). As noted by Abers, main themes in the PT's municipal campaign were "the decentralization of powers, government accountability to autonomous social

movements, and a reversal of priorities away from elite groups toward the poor and disadvantaged" (Abers, 1996, p. 38). After the 1988 election, the PT made the choice of participatory budgeting over other possible participatory structures because, as Abers argued, "the manipulation of city spending has historically been the backbone of local clientelistic structures" (Abers, 1996, p. 39), which they wanted to overcome. In fact, previous regimes had used public spending to secure their supporting networks and give their allies some privileges, securing in turn their legitimacy. Contrary to the Mexican experience, where long-term development planning became the target of participatory reforms as a result of the need to overcome a type of clientelism that was more organized around political parties and short-term decisions, the Brazilian model of participatory budgeting responded to the need to curtail the ability of political brokers to seize the budget process to accommodate their clientele. The PB process represented the mean to attain what the PT called the inversion of priorities (*inversão de prioridades*), which is targeting policies in favor of the traditionally excluded, while targeting fiscal reforms to tax the more advantaged (Nylen, 2003, p. 22).

Participatory Budgeting in the City: The Mechanisms

The structure of participatory budgeting is based on municipal autonomy over city revenues and expenditures. As we have seen, the 1988 Constitution allows for municipalities to accumulate their own revenues through local taxes, tariffs and federal transfers (World Bank, 2000, p. 1). In participatory budgeting cities, community representatives deliberate and decide upon the distribution of the resources through PB institutions. Given the fact that municipalities have this autonomy, the structure of the process slightly differs from city to city, although some common characteristics remain.

First, participatory budgeting involves three types of meetings: neighborhood assemblies, 'thematic' assemblies and meetings of delegates from citywide coordinating sessions. Second, an investment plan is presented by the municipal government, which is then debated in city districts. Priorities and criteria for the allocation of resources throughout the districts must be determined and publicly debated (World Bank, 2003). Many forums therefore constitute the whole PB process. Popular assemblies held in each neighborhood,

which are the cornerstone of the PB are open to all citizens and constitute the public forum to discuss sectoral priorities and development programs. Forums gather delegates from all regions to review assembly proposals and municipal administration priorities in light of widely accepted criteria. Finally, the PB Council is responsible for shaping the municipal budget, and is composed of elected officials (Inter-American Development Bank, 2003).

The Diffusion of Participatory Budgeting Initiatives in Brazilian Cities: A Mixed Record

The results of the democratic decentralization program in Brazil have been mixed in term of the actual implementation of participatory mechanisms. Since there is no rigid federal legal framework monitoring the efficient implementation and day-to-day functioning of participatory budgeting, its implementation and its institutionalization as a governance mechanism have mostly remained subject to the will of local political leaders.

Nevertheless, following the successes of the Porto Alegre's experiment, many political leaders from across the political spectrum Brazil-wide have launched similar participatory mechanisms, reforms that created new formal spaces for the activation and the institutionalization of social participation in the governance process. Even if the program originated from a PT government, today's experiments with PB are not limited to PT's administrations. In fact, Wampler and Avritzer (2004) found that a "demonstration effect" has encouraged local leaders from a diversity of political parties to implement participatory budgeting as a resource allocation mechanism empowering the traditionally marginalized urban population and sustaining efforts at 'urbanizing' the favelas. More generally, participatory democracy has become a central part of all political parties' rhetoric since redemocratization, and as a result has been implemented in a variety of municipalities, such as Recife (implemented by the PMDB, and then pursued under the PT government) in the state of Pernambuco and Belo Horizonte in the state of Minas Gerais. In both cities, the municipal government created and formally implemented mechanisms aimed at increasing and institutionalizing popular participation in the decision-making process on municipal investments priorities. Although many studies have looked at the increase in participation rates, state responsiveness to local

demands and access to municipal services and resources, the outcomes and success of these experiments in transforming state-society relationships remain overlooked in the literature, and the comparison between Recife and Belo Horizonte allows me to look at these dynamics more systematically.

As we have observed in Mexico, a closer look at Brazilian municipal dynamics suggests that even though citizen participation at the local level has indeed increased in recent years in Brazil, it is yet not clear what this participation actually entails or whether it actually affects the traditional nature of the relationship between citizens, politicians and bureaucrats (Nylen, 2003). Even if this new model of governance is more democratic and inclusive than the previous one in essence, it is not clear that it always contributes to strengthen state accountability and cooperative relationships between an informed, organized and participative citizenry and the local state (Wampler, 2007). As we have seen for Mexico, it is this variety of outcomes found within the country that makes Brazil another interesting case for the comparative analysis of participatory mechanisms, particularly the cases of Recife and Belo Horizonte, as we will see in the last section.

2.5 MEXICO AND BRAZIL: ESTABLISHING THE COMPARABILITY OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS

First, we shall specify that the unit of analysis of this study is the municipality, since it is where the state-society interactions I want to observe take place. Municipalities are, however, subnational units that are part of a larger political system: the state. Therefore, each case study has to be placed within its national context. In fact, because participatory decentralization is a local process that requires the transfer of power and resource-distribution from the center to the municipalities, the role of the central state needs to be accounted for in the comparison. For that reason, it was important to select cases in two comparable countries (Sartori, 1994a). How are the Mexican and Brazilian contexts comparable? How is this cross-country comparison useful for the general objective of this study, which is to identify the sociopolitical condition underlying successful cases of municipal participatory institutions? Mexico and Brazil are comparable cases for the

purpose of this study. Yet, the adoption context for participatory mechanisms differ in both countries, explaining the different nature of the participatory institutions implemented and making them even more interesting to compare. Contrary to what the current literature suggests, such contrasts, rather than confirming that the Brazilian model is overall better for fostering 'democratizing' participation than the Mexican one, highlight that institutional differences are not as determining as local sociopolitical contextual variables in explaining the varying level of success of local initiatives within a single country.

A Common History of State-Society Relationships: Clientelism with a Different Twist
Though they have had quite different experiences with authoritarianism and democratization, both countries share a common history of state-society relationships – where clientelism has traditionally prevailed, adapted to change and survived the transition to democracy –, a state-society relationship model that has become an important burden on improving the quality of democracy. As we have seen earlier, clientelism was particularly present at the local level, local political brokers being the foundation of the PRI's sustainability in Mexico and of the Politics of the Governors in Brazil as the intermediaries between citizens, demanding public goods, and political elites, seeking political support. Citizen participation was not completely absent at the municipal level: several Mexican municipalities had citizen committees active in the neighborhoods and several Brazilian ones had neighborhood associations. Such civil organizations were, however, generally captured by either the PRI (in Mexico) or local political brokers (in Brazil) and could not develop as an autonomous civil society able to organize collectively and press demands upon the state.

Both Mexico and Brazil have undergone a transition to democracy during the past two decades, leading to the rise of political pluralism, the opening of the local and national electoral arenas and the possibility of party alternation in power. Clientelism, however, seems to have resisted the transition to political pluralism and democracy at the local level and adapted to the new context of competitive electoral politics. In Mexico, clientelism remained a strategy pursued by highly institutionalized political parties to

gain or maintain political support among the population, most using their local social and political organization to bridge between citizens and the party and secure votes. The rise of political pluralism and of political alternation, however, generated the emergence of a new 'democratization' discourse among political parties in both countries to which the idea of citizen participation became central. Participatory decentralization reforms were therefore often associated with the democratization discourse and rhetoric, labeled by their local promoters as mechanisms able to overcome such tradition of clientelism and political privileges to allow ordinary citizens to take a formal and active part in the decision-making process without having to resort to personal connections and political brokers to channel their demands to the local state. The nature of clientelism and how it needs to be coped with and by whom is therefore an interesting element explaining the models of participatory institutions that have predominantly been adopted in both countries. Contrary to Mexico, where clientelism is often a partisan practice that needs to be curbed by long-term planning processes going beyond a party 3-year mandate, in Brazil budgeting has been an important tool for clientelistic resource distribution that needed to be circumvented.

One can therefore argue that, despite the fact that clientelism took different forms in both countries, it is clear that the resulting prevalence of such an informal practice in state-society interactions is similar. In both cases, clientelism curtailed the ability of civil society to organize collectively outside the official channels legitimized by the state. Most importantly, it also limited civil society's ability to become an autonomous actor capable of demanding social inclusion within the political system, thereby restraining the potential accountability function of society. This common characteristic is particularly interesting for our comparison as it allows to control for the 'previous associationalism' variable: though organized differently, both Mexico and Brazil share a history where local associationalism and civic activism were present but limited by the prevailing informal practices, which makes them comparable and undermines the common notion that the Brazilian case's history of associationalism explains it overarching 'success' with participatory decentralization. The institutional differences among the two models, both aimed at 'overcoming clientelism', however, bring me to the second set of contrasts that

needs to be noted for our comparison to highlight the full significance and relevance of our argument about the importance of local sociopolitical context in explaining variation in levels of success within and across countries.

Different Paths to Participatory Decentralization: Common Goals and Distinct Institutional Designs

On the general level, both Mexico and Brazil share institutional similarities that make them particularly interesting cases to compare in order to understand the impact of participatory decentralization on the deepening of democracy at the local level. First, both are federations with recent histories of high centralism under authoritarian regimes (Estado Novo and military rule in Brazil, and single-party system in Mexico) with only few controlled powers left to lower levels of government. Municipalities have not traditionally been considered and/or treated as an autonomous level of government, and were generally seen as a platform for strengthening national/regional political elites support bases through clientelistic networks organized around local bosses.

Most importantly, however, both countries have pursued political, administrative and fiscal decentralization reforms in the past years through constitutional reforms explicitly devolving powers to and empowering the municipal level. In both cases, such reforms have also been accompanied by participatory decentralization reforms with several municipalities implementing new models of local governance aimed at including citizens through programs of urban participatory planning, budgeting, policy making and implementation. Although in both cases the reform seemed to occur in parallel to the democratization process in the 1980s, it has been argued that they were not necessarily motivated by genuine democratic political interests (Grindle, 2007; Montero & Samuels, 2004; Rodriguez, 1997; Samuels, 2004). In fact, the reforms were implemented from the top-down as the unintended result of a rational calculation from political elites (the PRI in Mexico and the military in Brazil) who wanted to retain their legitimacy, rather than as the result of citizen pressure or any social movement for democratization and participation. Slight differences can be noted between the two countries, notably the fact that as of today, the Mexican federation remains more centralized than the Brazilian

federation, a fact that can be explained by the countries' different paths toward decentralization reforms. In Brazil, the empowerment of municipalities started under the military, and became more significant as the *municipalista* movement gained influence during the transition to democracy and the discussions leading to the adoption of the 1988 Constitution. In Mexico, decentralization and the reassertion of the *municipio libre* as a fundamental constitutional principle was adopted in the last stages of the 70-year PRI regime, just before what they identify as the democratization moment, in July 2000, when the PRI was defeated in the presidential election for the first time. As a consequence, the policy prescriptions favoring participatory decentralization reforms and the new status of municipalities as an official level of government were, in both cases, formally entrenched in the Constitution but only loosely institutionalized and implemented locally. It can, however, be argued that in both cases, decentralization was the consequence of elite political strategies but contributed to a dramatic increase in the level of autonomy and the resources available to the municipalities and that it has set the stage for participatory decentralization reforms to be adopted at the municipal level. In both Mexico and Brazil, these constitutional reforms have reinforced the municipality as a significant level of government and have formally opened the space for institutionalized participatory innovations to develop at the local level in the context of democratization. This also seems to have been the case in many developing countries that have experienced participatory decentralization reforms, which increases the prospects for generalization of the findings.

On a more specific level, however, participatory decentralization reforms have taken different institutional forms across and within countries, since there has not been a single model enforced upon municipalities, and participatory institutions differ from one country to another. In Mexico, participatory innovations have generally been associated with the municipal planning process, formally including citizens in the definition of policy priorities, whereas in Brazil, the most common innovation had been the creation of participatory budgeting, which allows citizens to actively participate in the definition of budget priorities for their city. As the current literature has already highlighted, these differences in the institutional design of participatory mechanisms are important to

consider while trying to grasp the different outcomes they may have on mobilization patterns in democratizing contexts, an hypothesis that will be tested through our comparative case study. They are, however, not sufficient to fully address the question at hand, as the observed variation within each country suggests. As I have argued, mobilization is only one dimension defining state-society relationships, and local context matters to fully assess variation in outcomes measured by the participants' levels of autonomy. In fact, if mobilization patterns are influenced by the institutional context within which they are taking place, actors' strategies and behaviors within these institutions are also a core element defining state-society relationships as they affect the prospects for autonomous participation to develop. There is an interaction effect between the institutional and agency factors that is captured by the two-dimensional typology developed in this study.

Thus, though Mexico and Brazil have had different historical models of governance and distinct paths toward democracy and participatory decentralization, the interest of comparing cases across and within these two countries stems from the fact that, both have experienced cases of 'relative success' and 'relative failure'. In spite of their institutional differences, the participatory models implemented in both countries share similar functions with regards to the inclusion of citizen participation and state accountability mechanisms in local governance, all including similar general deliberative and oversight mechanisms allowing citizens to participate in decision-making processes with the local government. It is, however, these differences in contexts that make the comparison even more interesting: comparing them allows me to focus on factors other than the mere institutional features' differences sustaining potential successes, and to go beyond the common wisdom suggesting that Brazil municipalities have been more successful than Mexican ones at sustaining local citizen participation and to explain why in a more balanced way, allowing for greater generalization potential.

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2.5 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY: COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

In an effort to bring the study of participatory institutions a step further than the current literature and to go beyond the current trend of proceeding through either single-case studies[27] or Mill's method of controlled comparisons[28], my aim is to combine both across and within cases comparison approaches within the same model. Because local context matters and because one cannot consider success or failure as the outcome of such a multidimensional process, the determination of a single cause explaining the variety state-society relationships that can emerge from participatory democracy institutions is most likely to be impossible. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the two-level comparison (across and within cases) is facilitated by the construction of a typological theory that allows uncovering complex causal mechanisms by integrating both types of comparison and, consequently, offering greater prospects for generalization (George & Bennett, 2004; Gerring, 2007).

The comparative case study of four municipalities located in these two Latin American countries will allow us to empirically test the hypotheses that were derived from our typological theory through controlled comparisons and process-tracing methods, making both across and within case comparisons possible. Process-tracing, which constitutes a method aimed at "finding regularities through juxtaposition of historical cases" to address the question of processes (Laitin, 2002) generally complements other comparative methods and becomes an essential tool for testing or developing theories within cases

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[27] An important trend in the literature on local governance is to focus on in-depth single case studies to uncover the conditions (independent variable) that explain the impact of participatory mechanisms on local governance processes and state-society relationships. For example, in Brazil, many studies on participatory budgeting were conducted through the study of Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), which is considered an exemplary case of successful participatory innovation (see, for example: Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2005).

[28] Accordingly with Mill's *System of Logic* (2002 [1843]), most of the current literature in the field uses either the 'method of agreement' or the 'method of difference', inspired from Mill's model of controlled comparisons. In fact, most studies try to either find the common independent variables for cases with similar outcomes, like the classical study of participatory innovations by Fung and Wright (2001) and Heller's (2001) comparison of Porto Alegre, South Africa and Kerala, or to find the diverging independent variables between cases with different outcomes, like Wampler and Arvitzer (2004) in a study of Belo Horizonte, Recife and Porto Alegre, or Andrew Selee (2006) in Mexico. One major exception is the recent work by Brian Wampler (2007), who does comparisons on both levels, which leads to interesting conclusions on the mixed results of participatory budgeting for deepening democracy. However, his work only focuses on Brazilian municipalities' experiences with participatory budgeting, which limits the scope of the study and the potential for generalization of his conclusions.

(Eckstein, 1973; George & Bennett, 2004; Lijphart, 1971). Here, it is used as a tool to develop and test our typological theory, helping to identify the various possible configurations of independent variables within cases and, more importantly, their interactions (George & Bennett, 2004; Little, 1995, p. 54), which might also have an effect on the outcome of participatory institutions on state-society relationships. Therefore, process-tracing, or historical comparative analysis, is used as an analytical tool to uncover the complex causal mechanisms within each case, generating evidence and assessing the presence and the effect of the configurations of independent variables identified in the theoretical framework (George & Bennett, 2004). As Hall interestingly stressed,

> process-tracing is a methodology well-suited to testing theories in a world marked by multiple interaction effects, where it is difficult to explain outcomes in terms of two or three independent variables (Hall, 2000, p. 14).

In this particular case, we will see how different combinations of institutional and agency variables observed in the four cases lead to various levels of civil society autonomy and collective organization capacity, which in turn explain the type of state-society relationships that develop and/or endure through the inclusion of participatory institutions as a municipal deliberation and decision-making mechanism.

The limitations intrinsic to comparative case study methods are obviously that grand generalizations about a phenomenon can hardly be made. This is, however, not the objective of this study, which aims rather at identifying the different patterns of state-civil society that can emerge from going beyond the traditional clientelism/cooperation divide to uncover the causal mechanisms underlying the development of each type of mechanism through in-depth case studies. The goal is therefore to widen the scope of possible outcomes, exemplified in the theoretical typology defined in chapter one, and to provide a middle-range theory, or contingent generalization that identifies a set of institutional and sociopolitical conditions under which a given outcome is more likely to occur. Moreover, the benefits of in-depth comparative case studies and process-tracing used together to develop a typological theory tend to supersede the limitations of both of them taken individually, since they permit the identification of complex causal

mechanisms explaining the variance in the dependent variable within the different cases, while highlighting regularities and patterns among cases, allowing them to test the hypotheses that were derived from the theoretical model.

2.5.1 Case Selection: Five Experiments in Municipal Participatory Decentralization

As I emphasized, proceeding through in-depth comparative case studies, informed by within-case process-tracing, permits the uncovering of the causal mechanisms underlying the various outcomes observed in empirical reality and the generation of conclusions about the combination of factors that is more likely to lead to each of the theorized outcomes. The unit of analysis of this study is the municipality since it is the level of government where the participatory mechanisms are implemented and where the state-society interactions over public policy matters occur and have an influence. Four municipalities were selected for this study: two in Mexico – Nezahualcóyotl and León – and two in Brazil – Recife and Belo Horizonte. For the purpose of this study, a distinction is made between the two periods of PB in Recife: prior to 2001, where the first model of PB was implemented by the conservative coalition in government (Recife I), and after 2001, when the PT took office and implemented the current model of PB (Recife II). Such a distinction between the two experiences in participatory decentralization is made as the two programs contain enough variation in both their nature and outcomes that it allows us to add an in-case comparison that significantly adds to our case selection by providing two cases with identical background conditions. How were the experiences studied here selected? Case selection is a sensitive issue in comparative case studies since it constitutes the primary terrain of theory development, theory testing and of potential generalizability, and therefore must be both relatively representative of a broader phenomenon and be comparable (Gerring, 2007). Comparable does not mean equal: it rather means that cases should share similar features and entail a certain level of variance on either the dependent or the independent variables in order to isolate the possible explanatory variables.

First, the four municipalities were chosen on the basis of the similarity of their general background conditions. In fact, the primary criterion of case selection was that all cases needed to be large urban settings (over 1 million people) having a functioning and well institutionalized local mechanism for the inclusion of citizen participation in local government decision-making processes with the characteristics of success generally identified by the literature on participatory democracy. In fact, in all cases, the mechanisms for citizen participation are relatively institutionalized (indicated by their durability over time and through administration changes), and they involve face-to-face deliberation (Fung & Wright, 2001). This similarity in the nature and functions of participatory mechanisms, as well as their relative level of institutionalization as a formal part of the local governance processes, is a central base to establish the comparability of these four cases in the particular context of this study. Conversely, it is the fact that all four municipalities present institutional feature similarities within countries but also different features across countries – with Brazil's model focusing on participatory budgeting involving the participation of ordinary citizens while Mexico's focuses on participatory planning involving mostly elected citizen representatives – that allows us to test for the institutional design variable at all levels of comparison as an alternative explanation presented in chapter one.

Second, as we will see in greater details in the following chapters, all four cities share other common characteristics that make them interesting for comparison: they all had a history of relatively active civic engagement from the citizenry predating the formal participatory mechanisms, which is seen as a precondition for participatory democracy to work as Wampler and Avritzer (2004) have suggested in their analysis of Porto Alegre. Even if often defined by their clientelistic relationships with the local state, as we will see in greater details in each case, the pre-existing networks of citizen-participation were necessary to foster the successful implementation of participatory mechanism. This relative similarity among the cases is once again an interesting criterion to ensure their comparability. Yet, the intrinsic differences in the development of the collective mobilization among the four cases, and the nature of the current organized participation

in civil society allows me to control for the other alternative explanation presented, the civic culture variable.

In addition to being 'comparable' in terms of the two previous criteria, the municipalities selected for this study, had to present a certain level of variance in terms of the unexplained outcome, state-society relationships, despite apparent institutional and background similarities. In fact, while Belo Horizonte and León are both cited as cases of success, Recife and Nezahualcóyotl are generally considered cases where the impact of introducing participatory mechanisms on levels of civic engagement and participation has remained limited. Moreover, cases of relative 'success' and relative 'failures' also seem to display different measures on both dimensions of our typology, across and within countries, which tends to confirm that there are different levels of success in real-world experiences. Therefore, as the following chapters demonstrate, each of the selected case studies corresponds to one of the theoretical ideal-types of state-society relationships previously defined, as this approach allows us to test the hypotheses about the sociopolitical conditions for participatory institutions to become 'democratizing' derived from the typological theory developed in chapter one.

2.5.2 Methodology

Comparative case study and process-tracing are methods that require an in-depth knowledge of cases, to which qualitative methods are well suited. For this reason, the study was primarily conducted based on the collection of original primary-source data in the field, where I spent 8 months between September 2007 and August 2008. An important step of the analysis consists of characterizing the types of interactions civil society and the state have within decentralized institutions according to the different dimensions of the typology of interactions I am developing. This allows me to uncover the causal mechanisms – combination of independent variables and their interactions – that are more likely to lead to one outcome or the other. This part of the dissertation is therefore mostly based on semi-structured interviews I conducted with civil society participants, bureaucrats and state officials, my observations at municipal councils and

neighborhood participatory meetings, and a review of the archives of past meetings in order to uncover the process through which these interactions have developed during the years of the implementation of the decentralized institutions.

Semi-structured Interviews

One of the most important sources of information I have for understanding the nature of state-society relationships and the linkages among local actors, institutional structures and governance processes is the actors themselves. For that reason, interviews constitute an important tool, since they "provide a way of generating empirical data about the world by asking people to talk about their lives" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 3). More than that, interviews are argued to be a necessary tool to "reveal the rules of ruling that shape local experiences", with each interview constituting one piece of an integrated view of the rules underlying complex social relationships (DeVault & McCoy, 2003). Therefore, during my fieldwork in Mexico and Brazil, I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews (Berg, 2004) with several municipal and social actors involved in participatory governance in the four cities I selected, as well as with actors of the federal governments and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on the question of local governance and citizen participation. I chose to interview all of them to reconstitute social relationship realities with a less shallow understanding of these relationships than results from an integrated view that combines the different perspectives present. In Mexico, I interviewed a total of 35 people, and in Brazil, a total of 32 people, most of them in the four selected municipalities: León, Nezahualcóyotl, Recife and Belo Horizonte. Before going into the analysis of the municipalities' experiences themselves, however, I wanted to get the bigger picture of the decentralization process and local participatory governance in both countries. To do so, I interviewed actors of the federal governments, the municipalities' national organizations and of the NGOs working on questions of municipal governance in both countries.

In all four cities, I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with three types of actors, adapting my selection to the realities of the participatory structure of each city: members of the local government, members of the local administration and citizen representatives

actively participating in the local participatory institutions. First, in Nezahualcóyotl, I interviewed the *presidente municipal* in function, Victor Bautista López, the ex-*presidente municipal* and current senator Hector Bautista López, and three *regidores* from both the PRD and the PAN. I have also conducted interviews with the responsible for the *Participación Ciudadana* branch of the administration (responsible for the citizen participatory councils, COPACI), the director of public relations and communications (who is also responsible for the relations with the participatory planning organization, the CODEMUN), as well as the city hall's secretary general. Finally, I interviewed participants of the two types of participatory mechanisms, the COPACI and the CODEMUN. I selected participants coming from the three main administrative regions of the city. I therefore met with three COPACI presidents, and three CODEMUN presidents who were also members of the city CODEMUN commission.

Second, in León, I conducted interviews with the current *presidente municipal*, Vicente Guerrero, and two *regidores*, one from the PAN and the other from the PRI. I also met with administrators, such as the Director of the social development branch of the local government (responsible for both the *consejeros ciudadanos* and the neighborhood participatory councils, *comités de colonos*), the coordinator of the COPLADEM process (participatory planning process), the leader of the organization of the *Miercoles ciudadanos* (Citizens' Wednesdays), and the director and citizen's representative of the *Instituto Municipal de Planeación* (IMPLAN – Municipal Planning Institute). As I did in Nezahualcóyotl, I interviewed various participants, coming from all the regions of the city, and involved at different levels in the participatory structure. I therefore interviewed four *comités de colonos* presidents, and three elected *consejeros ciudadanos*.

Third, in Belo Horizonte, I interviewed the mayor in office, Fernando Pimentel, who was in municipal government in different positions for the 15 years of the existence of the PB program. I also met with the Secretary of Planning, Julio Ribeiro Pires, whose division is in charge of the PB program, as well as of the budget in more general terms. From the legislative branch of the municipal government, I had the opportunity to meet with three *vereadores* from various political parties. I also interviewed both the coordinator and the

manager of the PB process in the municipality, and I had a series of more informal meetings with various regional coordinators of the program, which is territorially based (in the nine regions that divide the municipality). As for the participants, I had the possibility to interview six PB participants, coming from four regions of the city, including members of the COMFORÇA (*Comissão de Fiscalização Orçamentaria* – Budget Overseeing Commission), presidents of neighbors associations and simple delegates.

Finally, in Recife, I interviewed the mayor in office, João Paulo. I also met with several members of the municipal government, among whom the Secretary of Participatory Planning. In addition, I had the opportunity to interview one *vereadora*, from the Democrats, and the responsible for the PT's candidate for mayor's government proposal in the 2008 municipal election. As for members of the administration, I formally interviewed the coordinator of the PB program of Recife, who also helped me to meet her regional coordinators in a more informal way. I further interviewed the coordinator of decentralization. As for the participants of the PB process, I interviewed four delegates of the PB from three regions of the city, with many of them also being elected members of the PB commission, the social control branch of the participatory budgeting process in Recife.

Observations and Archival Research
As a complement to the interviews, I conducted archival and newspaper research in all of the investigated cities, scrutinizing past municipal council minutes, journals of parliamentary debates, decrees and decisions related to or involving the participatory mechanisms, as well as reports, opinion letters and newspaper articles on the subject of citizen participation, participatory mechanisms, and related topics. I also had the possibility to attend meetings of the *cabildo* in Nezahualcóyotl and León, as well as several citizens' neighborhood assemblies and participatory budgeting meetings in all four municipalities. These observations were not only rich in allowing me to better understand the rules and mechanisms underlying citizen participation, but they also gave

me the opportunity to understand better the dynamics leading the functioning of these institutions in all municipalities.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Comparing only five experiences rather than using a large-n data set obviously presents some limitations, especially in terms of generalization prospects. Yet, while comparing a large number of cases may lead to more parsimonious theories and may therefore have wider prospects for generalization (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994), it can also sacrifice some level of accuracy. Because the objective of this research is to tackle the complexity of interactions and agency, lowering the number of cases and conducting more in-depth studies of each case is the better suited strategy (George & Bennett, 2004). This is particularly important given the lack of empirical research on these dynamics once reforms are actually implemented. Moreover, the weaknesses of small-n comparison are overcome by the fact that the analysis is based on multiple levels comparisons. In fact, comparing both similar and different cities within two countries will generate findings that increase the potential for mid-range generalizations.

The next four chapters thus present the selected cases in a systematic way in order to, first, provide a diagnosis about the (un)changing nature of state-society relationships since the implementation of the five participatory decentralization reforms under study, emphasizing the variety of outcomes found in each case, both across and within countries. The comparison between the varying nature of mobilization and the level of autonomy observed in each case will allow me to classify the cases in the typology presented in chapter one (Sartori, 1994b), providing the basis for our further investigation aimed at uncovering the conditions underlying the development of a 'democratizing' relationship between a strong and autonomous civil society able to enter the social construction of citizenship with the local state and to make the latter accountable. Second, to explain the variety of outcomes among the cases, the experiences are scrutinized in-depth and compared along a series of structural, institutional and rational variables, identified earlier, in order to highlight the similarities and differences and to

uncover trends that will allow me to control for the validity of the explanatory hypotheses presented in chapter one. These findings will then be systematized into a controlled comparison of our cases presented in the conclusion of this dissertation, which will permit me to draw general theoretical lessons for the study of participatory decentralization and its relation to the deepening of democracy in Latin America, and more largely for the study of institutional change and democracy in comparative politics.

Public announcement for citizen participation to the open meeting of the Participatory Budgeting Plenary Assembly in Recife, Brazil (July 2008)

CHAPTER THREE

CIUDAD NEZAHUALCÓYOTL: PARTICIPATION AS SUSTAINED CLIENTELISM

"Comparing with what it was under PRI governments, I would say that citizen participation has improved a bit today. I would, however, also say that for the PRD governments, the COPACIs are a way to control citizens."[29]

-- COPACI Participant, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, also called Neza, is a young city located in the outskirts of the federal district of Mexico, along the Puebla-Mexico axis. Long considered a 'bedroom community' for the poorest workers of the federal district area, Nezahualcóyotl has grown into a major city of the State of Mexico, with more than 1 million inhabitants and a local economy of its own, mostly based on small businesses and entrepreneurship. Governed by the PRI since its foundation in 1963, the city has a long tradition of urban social organization and citizen participation that mostly revolved around the party structure and the main PRI-affiliated organizations. In 1996, as the combined result of a political opening of the municipal electoral arena by the Mexican federal state and of growing mobilization from the left in Nezahualcóyotl, the PRD opposition was elected and formed the majority in the city's municipal government.

Did the arrival of PRD leaders contribute to the democratization of the local governance process as their campaign promised? More precisely, did the participatory decentralization reforms the PRD government introduced contribute to transform the traditional clientelistic mechanisms that characterized state-society relationships in the city? This chapter aims at answering these questions, arguing that in Nezahualcoyótl, the introduction of formal participatory mechanisms was used as a tool to sustain clientelism rather than one to allow greater social inclusion and government transparency through autonomous and collective citizen participation.

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[29] Personal interview with a COPACI president, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, November 27, 2007 (President COPACI 2, 2007).

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: CLIENTELISM AND THE FORMATION OF A PRI-DOMINATED CITY (1940-1988)

As a relatively young city mainly populated by poor migrants coming from other states and motivated by the great promises of the quick industrialization of the City of Mexico, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl has an interesting and quite unique history, characterized by the constant interplay between social, economic and political forces. As emphasized here, two main characteristics of city formation and development are important for understanding the current governance dynamics, the political and social challenges associated with the democratization of the public space, and the patterns of social organization in the city. On the one hand, the official creation of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl was the result of the association of PRI-affiliated local political leaders and residents' groups, who collectively organized and demanded autonomy from the city of Chimaluacán-Ecatepec for the 'marginalized neighborhoods' of the Texcoco Valley in the 1960's. The City of Nezahualcóyotl was therefore created in 1963 with its own PRI-dominated local government and was characterized by the rapid growth of *colonias populares*, or slums (equivalent to the Brazilian *favelas*), irregular pieces of land located on unplanned terrains lacking basic urban services such as water and drainage and peopled with residents living under extremely precarious conditions (Connolly, 2003). This presents a challenge that still remains one of the most important ones for today's local governments in the city.

On the other hand, once independent, the municipality of Nezahualcóyotl quickly became an exemplary model of Mexican clientelism, as a pillar of the corporatist structure developed through the PRI to sustain the party's local support bases and networks and, in so doing, its hegemony all around the country. In Nezahualcóyotl, clientelism was indeed a defining characteristic of state-society relationships and of the system of resource distribution for the entire PRI period, a model that developed due in part to the close relationship established between the historical political powerholders belonging to the PRI, and the powerful private landowners (*fraccionadores*), making ordinary citizens dependent upon both actors for access to basic urban services. This system of unequal distribution and political favors contributed to fostering social inequalities in the city,

especially in the *colonias populares,* the urban development of which was highly dependent upon the local government's will to regularize them and provide them with the lacking basic urban services This process was an important pillar of the privileged position occupied by private landowners until 1969 and then PRI-affiliated urban organizations that became powerful local political brokers acting as intermediaries between disorganized citizens and PRI leaders in search for political support.

3.2.1 The Formation of Nezahualcóyotl: The Struggle for Land Tenure and the Challenges of Urbanization

The space that now constitutes Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl was once a vast lake surrounding the City of Mexico, the Lago Texcoco[30]. In the early 1900's, the Mexican government started to dry the lake in order to prevent flooding threatening the city, leaving empty and available a major piece of arable land. By 1929, the government had started selling property titles to *fraccionadores* (private settlers)[31], who then divided them into smaller pieces of land to resell them to families and individuals. Because of their affordability and of their proximity to the main economic activities of the capital city, the parcels sold by private settlers in the bed of the former Lago Texcoco were quite attractive to migrant workers coming to the capital from poorer states such as Oaxaca. From about 2 000 inhabitants in 1945, the first few *colonias* (neighborhoods) now composing Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl grew to almost 40 000 people in 1954 and have only increased since then. In fact, the growing housing problems of the center of Mexico City, coupled with the high rate of urbanization of the capital, created a critical need for alternative housing possibilities for the new comers, who either illegally occupied the federal land of the ex-Lago Texcoco or eventually bought small pieces of land from the accredited *fraccionadores*, authorized by the state government.

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[30] For a detailed account of Nezahualcóyotl's history, see the *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México* (INAFED), at: http://www.e-local.gob.mx//wb2/ELOCAL/EMM-mexico [page consulted on 09/03/03].
[31] The first revolutionary governments of Mexico, after drying the lake, had to find a project to use the arable lands that were made available to the population. They therefore started to distribute them for agricultural use, but soon realized that they were improper for such use. Starting in 1929, the government of the State of Mexico opened the possibility to sell the available land of the ex-Lago to individuals. The selling acts found in the city archives show that most of the 7 000 lots that were sold during this period by the state government were sold at very low prices to 'friends of the regime', among them many national political and military leaders (Espinosa-Castillo, 2008).

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From 1940 to 1963, the government of the State of Mexico officially recognized the creation of new neighborhoods in the Chimalhuacán-Ecatepec area on a regular basis generally delimited by the existing *fracciones* pertaining to private settlers growing from 2 in 1940 to 39 in 1959. The city expansion was, however, anarchical and disorganized: the new spaces offered on the dried Lago Texcoco were sold by private promoters to the poorest social classes as non-regularized pieces of land lacking the basic urban services such as water, sewage and electricity (Bataillon, 1971). In fact, and as Selee highlights, though some of the landowners acquired property titles through the legitimate process, in many cases that was done through "behind the scene deals through which wealthy individuals, politicians and real estate companies won the right to resell land that they had purchased through bribes or favors to state government officials" (Selee, Forthcoming). Furthermore, many private settlers also sold illegal land for which they had no property titles. In both cases, the selling acts were dubious and official property titles could not be provided to the new owners, who remained considered as illegally occupying irregular land with no possibility to legitimately demand urban services (Alonso, 1988). In their publicity, the *fraccionadores* were offering

> all urban services that a residential neighborhood should be offering its residents, including abundant potable water, adequate sewage system, electric lighting, schools and churches; but in the practice, they did not comply with what they promised (García Luna, 1992, p. 114).

Though they were obliged by the state law to provide basic services upon selling land, most *fraccionadores* failed to comply with their obligations and the promises they had made to buyers, leaving these new neighborhoods and their residents in precarious living conditions. The surrounding cities of Chimalhuacán and Ecatepec, however, did not have the capacity or the will to absorb the costs of integrating these new neighborhoods created by the State of Mexico into their urbanization plans.

By the 1950's, the question of land tenure had become one of the main challenges the PRI government of the State of Mexico had to deal with. On the one hand, the growing urbanization rates increased the already significant problem of irregular land tenure and, more importantly, of urban services accessibility for vulnerable citizens. On the other

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hand, state politicians were both financially unable to provide these services and politically unwilling to address the source of the problem: the position of *fraccionadores* in the support basis of local politicians, acting as political brokers contributing to sustain the PRI's legitimacy. Ordinary citizens, established in both the 'regularized' and the illegal *colonias populares* of the region, were therefore marginalized, lacking access to basic civil and social rights. In order to respond to the urbanization challenges and to facilitate the urbanization of the new settlements and their regularization as recognized *colonias*, the state government took two actions. First, in 1952, the Governor Sánchez Colín created the *Comité de Fraccionamientos Urbanos para el Distrito de Texcoco* (Committee for the Urban Settlements of the Texcoco District), an organization composed of three members appointed by the governor, a representative of the *fraccionadores* and a representative of the residents. This committee, under the direct authority of the governor, was responsible for "fostering the planning, authorization, control and watchdog of the *fraccionamientos* of the Texcoco district, as well as for resolving the problems for the residents of the yet existing urban neighborhoods" (García Luna, 1992, p. 60). As the Governor Sánchez Colín explained it in his government's report in 1952, the Committee was created

> to attend the problem of the urbanization of the lands of the dried Lago Texcoco, […] where proletarian neighborhoods were settled. […] The committee's finality is to protect residents, making sure that they acquired their portions of land at low price, that the neighborhoods in formation get planned and that they get access to potable water, sewage, street lighting, schools, and all the necessary public services (Sánchez Colín, 1952, p. 79-80).

Second, the state governor also promoted the creation of local resident committees in each of the 13 recognized *colonias* to contribute to their 'moral, civic and material improvement', mediating local demands for basic services through the *Junta de Mejoramiento Moral, Cívil y Material del Ex-vaso de Texcoco*, an organization that was composed of a representative from each *colonia* and whose role was to coordinate, without interfering, the activities of the local committees. These *Juntas*, created based upon private initiatives from local communities, were officially instituted in 1953 by the State of Mexico through the adoption of the Decree 110 on 'reforms and additions to the

Municipal Organic Law of the State of Mexico'[32] (García Luna, 1992). These local *Juntas*, though relatively dependent upon local politicians and often organized by the *fraccionadores* themselves, are generally considered to be the first institutionalized experience with citizen participation in the region that now forms the municipality of Nezahualcóyotl. In fact, as García Luna highlights, they were able to "intervene in all the aspects important for their collectivity, but they did not have an executive character for the elements that were legally corresponding to municipal, state or federal authorities" (1992, p. 65).

Despite the formation of such committees and the agreements for urbanization signed between the *fraccionadores* and the *Comité de fraccionamientos*, the basic urban services such as water and sewage were still lacking in most neighborhoods by 1960. The disorganized expansion of the district and the official recognition of a growing number of *colonias* lacking basic services (from 13 *colonias* in 1953, they became 33 in 1959 and 39 in 1960) generated a situation where most of the district residents were living in a precarious situation of insalubrities. As a result, the residents started to form the first urban movements, creating neighborhood groups in order to collectively ask for these services and for the regularization of their land by the state government. In the late 1950's, they created the *Federación de Colonias del Ex-Vaso de Texcoco* (Federation of the Urban Neighborhoods of the Texcoco District), an association aimed at helping solve the numerous problems of the region, especially with regards to the urbanization of the already recognized *colonias* and the regularization of land in the region. It is through this association that the residents of the Texcoco district, lacking basic services and a responsible municipal authority with which to interact at the local level, started pressing the governor of the State of Mexico, Gustavo Baz, for the creation of a new municipality for their *colonias*. From 1960 to 1963, the unsatisfied members of the *Federación* repeatedly sent the governor demands for their emancipation from the municipality of Chimalhuacán, and their integration into a new and autonomous municipal entity that would be governed by its own local government. In 1962, several local groups and

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[32] See Decreto no. 110 de la 38th Legislatura local, "Reformas y adiciones a la Ley Orgánica Municipal del Estado", *Gaceta del Gobierno*, January 13, 1954.

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associations of the district joined their voices to the *Federación*'s demands for municipal autonomy, and in 1963, Governor Baz granted the district this status with the adoption by the state congress of the decree on the creation of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl[33]. As Schteingart emphasized, however, the governor accepted to comply with this social demand mostly as a result of the *fraccionadores'* pressures, asking autonomy for the occupied lands in order to be able to continue their illegal selling activities without repercussions from Chimalhuacán's authorities (Schteingart, 1989). In fact, th*e fraccionadores*, along with PRI representatives chosen from residents, were active members of the association that was responsible for channeling demands for autonomy to the state government[34]. Mutual support and benefits were therefore at the core of this clientelistic relationship until the 1970's, when the state government took away the *fraccionadores'* economic power and started selling land directly to the population.

The creation of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in 1963 is therefore the product of a social struggle for land tenure, access to basic services and the urbanization of the neighborhoods of the Texcoco district, issues that are still at the center of local governance challenges today. The nature of this struggle, characterized by the prevalence of clientelistic state-society interactions mediated by powerful *fraccionadores* and local PRI political elites, left important marks on the further development of the city and its model of local corporatist governance. In fact, even if a certain level of social organization existed among the residents, the results of social mobilization have been mitigated because of the preeminence of corporatism and clientelism as a mode of social and political organization in the city since its foundation, particularly under the hegemony of the PRI. As we shall see next, after the creation of the municipality and until the late 1960's, the *fraccionadores* maintained these privileged relationships with the first PRI-affiliated municipal presidents of the city.

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[33] See Decree no. 93 de la 39th Legislatura, "Sobre la erección del municipio de Nezahualcóyotl", *Gaceta del Gobierno*, April 20th, 1963 (cited in García Luna, 1992, p. 178).
[34] For more on the process of city formation in Nezahualcóyotl, and the associated struggle for autonomy led by PRI leaders who managed to keep a certain level of control over the population of the newly created city, see Alba Muñiz (1976, p. 78-89)

3.2.2 Clientelism in the City: Sustaining the PRI's Political Control

In post-revolutionary Mexico, a single-party – the PRI – almost exclusively dominated the political landscape at all levels of governments, through a highly centralist federal system and a corporatist system organized around three PRI-affiliated organized social sectors: 1) labor, via unions such as the *Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos* (CTM – Confederation of Mexican Workers), 2) the peasants, organized through the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC – National Peasants Confederation), and 3) the popular sectors, organized under the banner of the *Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares* (CNOP – National Confederation of Popular Organizations). The government of the state of Mexico and its local components, including the local administration of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl after its creation in 1963, were no exception to this rule: the PRI was consistently elected at both levels of government, winning in the absence of a viable and organized opposition the governorship, most congress seats, municipal mayor offices and council positions until 1981, and against weak opposition parties until 1988. Table 2 presents the composition of the H. Ayuntamiento of Nezahualcóyotl from 1964 to 1996, showing a clear dominance of the PRI over both the mayorship and the city council from the city's foundation to the party's first electoral defeat in 1996.

Many observers who have studied this period of the PRI domination in Mexico and Nezahualcóyotl[35] have highlighted the use of clientelism and patronage as the main mechanisms for maintaining political control and party domination over the municipal state, society and their interactions in Mexico. In the particular context of Nezahualcóyotl, these mechanisms were organized around three main pillars: the close relationship of the PRI leaders with the local *fraccionadores* and their dependence to the state PRI government, the loyalty of popular sectors' organizations, and the weakness of autonomous civil society organizations.

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[35] See, among others: Alba Muñiz (1976), Duhau & Schteingart (2001), Arzaluz Solano (2002) and Selee (Forthcoming).

TABLE 2 NEZAHUALCÓYOTL MUNICIPAL PRESIDENTS & CITY COUNCIL COMPOSITION, 1964-1996

Mandate	PRI Municipal President	City Council members
1964-1966	Jorge Sánez Knoth	**PRI: 4** Opposition: 0
1967-1969	Francisco González Romero	**PRI: 6** Opposition: 0
1970-1972	Gonzalo Barquín Díaz	**PRI: 6** Opposition: 0
1973-1975	Oscar Loya Ramírez	**PRI: 6** Opposition: 0
1976-1978	Eleazar García Rodríguez	**PRI: 6** Opposition: 0
1979-1981	José Luis García García	**PRI: 9** Opposition: 0
1982-1984	Juan Alvaraldo Jacco	**PRI: 9** Opposition: 2
1985-1987	José Lucio Ramírez Ornela	**PRI: 11** Opposition: 3
1988-1990	José Salinas Navarro	**PRI: 11** Opposition: 3
1991-1993	Juan Gerardo Vizcaíno Covián	**PRI: 13** Opposition: 5
1994-1996	Carlos Viña Paredes	**PRI: 12** Opposition: 6

Note: I have included both *síndicos* and *regidores* in the total number of city council members, excluding the mayor who, as the chief representative of the majoritarian party, has a *de facto* seat on the municipal council.

Source: Moises Raúl López Laines (1989) and Emilio Alvarado Guerara (1996), cited in and reproduced from Selee (Forthcoming).

As we have seen, before 1969, one of the primary sources of support local PRI leaders could count on in Ciudad Neza was the *fraccionadores* who, as real-estate developers, were among the most important and powerful economic actors of the municipality. Before the creation of Nezahualcóyotl, the system of land attribution organized by the State of Mexico fostered the development of close ties between *fraccionadores* and the state government. They, however, remained quite powerful after the creation of the city and until 1969. As a result of their consistent support, the first local elections and the constitution of the first *ayuntamiento*, the first PRI local governments helped the *fraccionadores* to secure their illegal business in the newly constituted Nezahualcóyotl

(Schteingart, 1989). This tendency toward local corporatism and clientelism was reinforced by the important dependence of local PRI leaders on the state government and party structure. In fact, as we have seen in chapter two, intergovernmental relations in Mexico were traditionally highly centralized, and municipal governments were the least powerful level of government, being financially and often politically dependent on higher levels of government and, consequently, state and federal PRI officials. This was especially true for Nezahualcóyotl, a recent city that lacked most basic urban services since it was built in a haphazard fashion by non-accountable *fraccionadores* who were benefiting from a certain level of immunity acquired through their privileged relationship with the PRI and its political leaders and decision-makers. Moreover, as Selee observed, the State's PRI leaders used the newly created local political positions of Nezahualcóyotl as a platform to distribute patronage to politicians coming from outside the city. This observation reinforces the argument suggesting that in spite of its size, the city remained in a generally weak position vis-à-vis the state government and the PRI organization, with its local political leaders lacking negotiation power (Selee, Forthcoming). Missing the financial and power resources to bring services to the population and, more importantly, to secure political support from their constituents, the city political figures had to resort to their close but dependent relationship on state government officials to secure the urbanization of key *colonias* of the municipality. Consequently, the residents, who lacked access to the basic rights they should have been granted as citizens, were affected on a daily basis by the scarcity of resources and were therefore hostages of a clientelistic system of redistribution rooted in the way state officials redistributed resources and power to local politicians.

The second important source of support for the PRI at the local level in Nezahualcóyotl ties in with the former, as it is both the concrete local manifestation and the consequence of the corporatist mode of social organization established by the PRI at all levels of governance as a foundation for its political hegemony. In fact, the local party structure and politicians could count on a structure of alliances with the principal social organizations that were providing basic services to the local population. While the labor sector was an important ally of the PRI in many Mexican municipalities, in

Nezahualcóyotl, the most important sector was the popular sector organized through the local section of the CNOP, which brought together the associations that were the principal municipal development agents[36]. As Duhau and Schteingart underscored, the importance of the local social organizations which were active members of the CNOP for the party organization comes from the fact that they

> were connected into the population's daily-life in its social, economic and urban aspects, but they also constituted the channels of support for the leaders who held the mayor's office, the council seats and other important political positions in the municipality for several decades (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001, p. 186).

The CNOP was also composed of many regional resident and business associations, which were co-opted by the PRI on the basis of their influence among the population and of their capacity to control the diverse members of both the business and the resident groups present in the municipality. These regional groups constituted another important basis of the system of political privileges underlying their members' loyalty to the PRI. In fact, most of the political representatives elected through popular vote were selected from among the leaders of these groups (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001, p. 184) as a reward for their continuous political support to the party organization. To a lesser extent, the local PRI leaders could also count on the support of the agrarian sector, represented by the CNC, which became an important social force in the municipality in the 1970's[37]. In fact, as we have seen earlier, the struggle for land tenure remained an important focus of resistance in the municipality in the 1960's, resistance mainly represented by the *Movimiento Restorador de Colonos* (MRC – Residents' Restoration Movement) and its subcommittees. In 1971, however, the MRC leaders joined the PRI-affiliated CNC (Bolos, 2003; Selee, Forthcoming). In exchange for their support and loyalty, these

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[36] These local organizations included, among others, the *Unión de Locatarios* (Union of Renters), *the Cámara de Comercio* (Chamber of Commerce), the *Associación General de Colonos* (General Neighbors Association). Some regional groups were also active members of the CNOP, such as the *Federación de Organizaciones de Colonos y Comerciantes del Estado de México* (FOCCEM – Federation of Neighbors and Business Organizations of the State of Mexico), the *Consejo Nacional de Acción Popular* (CONADEP – National Council for Popular Action), or the *Central de Comercientes y Colonos Estabelecidos* (COCEOM – Central of Established Businesses and Residents), among others. For a detailed enumeration of the CNOP members, see Duhau and Schteingart (2001, p. 184).

[37] Due to the urban character of Nezahualcóyotl and its major socio-economic activities, which were mostly located outside the city as most of its residents were working in Mexico City, the agrarian sector (and the labor sectors) was not as important as the popular sector in the municipality.

leaders got to see some of their demands accommodated by the municipal and state party leaders, thereby sustaining their popular legitimacy, and eventually became important PRI leaders at both the local and state levels (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001). As a result, by the end of the 1970's, the PRI structure had managed to co-opt the most important social associations and groups under its corporatist structure, obtaining the leaders' loyalty and support through the development of a strongly embedded system of political privileges and exchanges, a clientelistic system that characterized state-society relationships during the entire PRI rule in the city.

A direct consequence of these two dynamics, in Mexico more generally and in Nezahualcóyotl specifically, has been the weakness and lack of autonomy of the few active civil society organizations. As highlighted by Holzner, under the PRI regime, "independent civil society organizations were few in number, faced a chronic shortage of resources, and struggled against repression and cooptation" (2006, p. 79). Nezahualcóyotl was no exception to this general understanding of Mexican civil society before the early 1980's, and autonomous organizations were relatively nonexistent in the city[38]. In fact, in order to prevent the emergence of independent organizations that could challenge the PRI's decisions, control mechanisms such as co-optation were often used, and the state explicitly excluded collaboration or agreements with organizations that were not loyal to the party (Iglesias, 1978). Nonetheless, some spaces for direct citizen participation in the governance process formally existed, since the *Ley Orgánica* provided for the creation of the neighborhood-based *Consejos de Participación Ciudadana* (COPACI – Citizen Participation Councils). Yet, these councils, rather than allowing citizens to have a space to freely formulate and collectively channel demands to the state, were generally used as political spaces for distributing benefits among PRI supporters and local organizers. As a

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[38] As Bolos' extensive research on social organizations and their history in Nezahualcóyotl has demonstrated, only few leftist groups managed to remain independent from the municipal government structure and active in the 1970s, grouped under the banner of the *Frente Popular Independiente* (FPI – Independent Popular Front), and later the *Frente Unico de Neza* (FUN – Unique Front of Neza). A characteristic of these groups was, however, their quasi absent mobilization power. In fact, Bolos' interviews and field research have shown that these organizations, unlike the MRC, were unable to mobilize their fellow residents and that in practice, they remained practically absent in the municipality (Bolos, 2003, p. 86).

PRD *regidor* highlighted, depicting the situation that prevailed before the election of the first non-PRI organization,

> Before, these institutions [participatory institutions] were serving as ornaments and vote was bought through expenses because once elected, no one was hearing about the representatives and their work anymore. As a consequence, public services were very deficient" (Primer Regidor, 2007).

While this view of participatory institutions under the PRI governments is perhaps biased because it was expressed by a PRD elected representative to the municipal council, it finds some echo in citizens' narratives about this period, as expressed several COPACI leaders I interviewed. In fact, one interviewee said that under the PRI, "there were no COPACIs" or other participatory institutions considered in decision-making processes (President COPACI 2, 2007), despite the provisions of the *Ley Orgánica* of the State of Mexico. In fact, citizen demands were mostly organized and channeled through local "*jefes* [chiefs] who were not representing a particular street or neighborhood and had no connections with the neighborhoods necessities" (President COPACI 3, 2007), as well as through the local social organizations providing services to the population and affiliated to the PRI through the CNOP. As a consequence, since the foundation of the city, it can be argued that citizen participation was highly contingent upon corporatist links between social organizations and the party, as well as upon vote-buying strategies deployed by the local PRI leaders.

Thus, as we have seen, the city's PRI structure established and sustained a particularistic system of interest mediation, organized around powerful individuals who, acting as the citizens' representatives, were closely tied into the party structure through its corporatist networks and personalistic relationships with local PRI politicians. This system, supported by clientelistic state-society relationships, was an important challenge faced by the rising leftist opposition forces in the late 1980's, who emerged with a democratization discourse emphasizing the need to transform these prevailing state-society relationships and to bring citizens back into the local governance process.

3.3 THE ELECTION OF THE PRD: A TURN TOWARD MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE?

As suggested in chapter two, as a result of President de la Madrid's decentralization reforms adopted in the early 1980's, a certain degree of political opening toward opposition parties and social organizations traditionally excluded from the political arena started in Mexican municipalities, including those of the State of Mexico. In Nezahualcóyotl, even if the opposition parties made some marginal gains starting in 1981 (see table 2), a cohesive and viable opposition only emerged in 1988 from the leftist social forces. After a few years in the opposition, the PRD first won the mayoral and city council elections in 1996, as a coalition of urban social movements led by Valentín González Bautista, the first non-PRI candidate elected mayor since the foundation of the city. Since then, the PRD has dominated the local political landscape in the municipality, winning all the subsequent local elections by increasing majorities.

TABLE 3   VOTE FOR MUNICIPAL PRESIDENT AND CITY COUNCIL IN NEZAHUALCÓYOTL, 1996-2006

Mandate	Political Parties / Elected Mayors	% Vote
1997-2000	**PRD (Valentín González Bautista, elected)**	**32.6%**
	PRI	27.7%
	PAN	22.6%
2000-2003	**PRD (Héctor Miguel Bautista López, elected)**	**37.8%**
	PRI	26.3%
	PAN	26.6%
2003-2006	**PRD (Venancio Luis Sánchez Jiménez, elected)**	**50.7%**
	PRI/PVEM (Partido Verde Ecologista de México)	26.9%
	PAN	15.0%
2006-2009	**PRD (Víctor Manuel Bautista López, elected)**	**56.3%**
	Alianza por Mexico (PRI/PVEM)	25.0%
	PAN	13.3%

Source: *Instituto Electoral del Estado de México*, http://www.ieem.org.mx/resultados_e.html
                 [page consulted 15/02/09]

Political decentralization reforms in Mexico have, as the case of Nezahualcóyotl shows, paved the way for electoral democratization and the rise of political pluralism at the local level, allowing opposition forces to organize independently from the PRI and to run for political positions. What changes the rise of political and social pluralism and, more

importantly, of the possibility for political alternation brought to the structure and practice of municipal politics in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl?

3.3.1 Political Opening and the Rise of A Sustainable Opposition from the Left

The legitimacy crisis faced by the PRI at the national level in the late 1970's created the need for a certain opening of the political system, an opening that first started at the municipal level. In the 1980's, traditional opposition parties such as the PAN and new political formations from both the right and the left started to appear at the local level, creating a new political pluralism that allowed the emergence of the PRD as a major political force in Nezahualcóyotl. The rise of the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl occurred in parallel with the rise of the left at the national level[39], culminating in the years following candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenás' campaign for president in 1988 in an alliance with the candidate of the *Partido Mexicano Socialista* (PMS – Mexican Socialist Party), Heberto Castillo. The rise of the left in the national political arena was however only marginal in terms of electoral gains in Nezahualcóyotl, at least until the mid 1990's, when divisions amongst the different factions within the PRI started to erode the local corporatist structure and, in turn, the PRI's basis for popular support. Internal disputes between the state and local party structures culminated during the preparation of the 1996 municipal election, focusing around the nomination of the candidate for mayor in Nezahualcóyotl[40].

In the aftermath of the 1988 election, the local PRD organization became stronger, able to sustain the formation of a coalition comprising the main leftist social organizations and small parties active in the municipality, and securing some popular support and grassroots organizational capacity to support the party municipal candidate and campaign during the 1996 elections. The PRD alliance built against the PRI and the so-called

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[39] For a detailed account of the history of the left, the PRD and of the transition to democracy in Mexico, see Kathleen Bruhn's *Taking on Goliath* (Bruhn, 1997).
[40] The PRI candidate for mayor in Nezahualcóyotl, Jorge Eleazar García Martínez, was imposed from above, by the state party authorities, against the will of the influential local group called *Grupo Nezahualcóyotl* who had previously agreed with local organizations to find a common candidate (Monge, 1996). This nomination only served to intensify the tensions that already existed between the different factions of the PRI, exacerbating the division between local representatives and state authorities and creating an important split within the party.

'electoral fraud' of the 1988 presidential election did bring some cohesion to the diverse left oriented political and social organizations that were relatively isolated and fragmented before that in Nezahualcóyotl. In fact, most leftist activists in the municipality, including some of the most prominent current PRD leaders, started their political involvement as members of non PRI-affiliated social organizations and not as members of a political party. These social organizations, which emerged at the local level under the PRI rule in the municipality in the late 1970's, were generally more concerned with the provision of services to the population than with politics. Discussing the history of the foundation of the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl and his involvement with MOVIDIG, current mayor Víctor Bautista López told me:

> Before 1986[41], we were only participating in the neighborhoods in order to bring them better services. Our origin [Nezahualcóyotl PRD members] is social, and not political (V. Bautista López, 2007).

As many current politicians and social activists pointed out, however, most social groups and leftist political parties joined the PRD during the late 1980's and early 1990's, either following the movement initiated by the PMS and Castillo during the presidential campaign (H. Bautista López, 2007; V. Bautista López, 2007; President COPACI 2, 2007) or joining the party for ideological reasons and lack of political representation in other political spaces (Primer Regidor, 2007).

The three main groups that came together to run under the banner of the PRD in 1996 were the *Movimiento de Lucha en Nezahualcóyotl* (MLN – Movement for the Struggle in Nezahualcóyotl), the *Movimiento Vida Digna* (MOVIDIG – Movement for a Worthy Life) and the *Unión Popular Revolucionario Emiliano Zapata* (UPREZ – Emiliano Zapata Popular Revolutionary Union). Created during the first years of political opening in the early 1980's and affiliated with the emerging and then disorganized leftist political parties, these three groups' existence was also closely tied to the urban popular movements in a city that was still largely lacking the most basic access to public services.

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[41] It was in 1986 that the PMS, to which most current PRD politicians and militants in Neza were affiliated in the mid-1980s, was recognized as an official party in Mexico. The same year, the PMS announced they would present a candidate for the 1988 presidential election, Heberto Castillo, who eventually aligned behind Cuauhtémoc Cardenás from the PRD in a leftist alliance to defeat PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

All three of them therefore had solid, yet distinct, popular bases in the municipality and contributed in an important way to the political socialization of numerous secondary associations based at the community level (Arzaluz Solano, 2002). As we have seen, however, they all came from different political groups and parties, and their association under the PRD banner was mostly pragmatic: they needed the left to become united in order to gain sufficient electoral support to get elected, but they were often in opposition in terms of the emphasis placed on ideology versus governance strategies. Indeed, in spite of the fact that they formally reached an agreement to sustain a political alliance in 1996, their respective leaders generally used to be in opposition to one another before they reached a tenuous but viable agreement in order to defeat the PRI. Rationally evaluating Nezahualcóyotl's electoral scene in the 1990's and the actual possibility for tiers parties to reach popular support, they however came to the conclusion that the PRD was the only viable option to defeat the PRI, as the better-organized and established political party at the left of the political spectrum. The party nominated a catch-all candidate for mayor, Valentin González Bautista, who was recruited from the ranks of the party's state organization and was therefore considered neutral by the members of the local coalition. Candidate González Bautista was, however, quickly recruited by MOVIDIG, which soon became the dominant group in the governing coalition, creating imbalances between its members that remain important and divisive today[42].

The results of the November 1996 election surprised many people in the city, including the members of the winning coalition. The PRD, run by Valentín González Bautista, reached the majority by a small margin, leaving the PRI in the opposition for the first time in the history of the city. Still, since none of the groups' leaders had really planned on such a decisive victory of the PRD over the well-established PRI, the weaknesses of

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[42] Following González Bautista's election in 1996, many members of the MOVIDIG faction became important members of the *ayuntamiento* based on their political affiliation with the four PRD mayors' group, either in elected positions or in key and influential administrative positions. Even though the PRD had promised to nominate the administrators on the basis of merit, it soon became clear that they would not do much different than the PRI municipal governments as they mostly named friends of MOVIDIG or family members to key positions (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001), a point to which I shall return later in the analysis. This tendency to favor MOVIDIG was even reinforced with the election of Héctor Bautista López in 2000, one of the historical leaders of the faction who ensured the movement's longevity in Nezahualcóyotl with the subsequent election of a well-know supporter, Venancio Luis Sánchez Jímenez, in 2003 and of his brother, Víctor Bautista López, in 2006.

the PRD-led coalition were reflected in the composition of the electoral slate and, consequently, of the elected municipal council. Though they tried to compose an electoral slate that would be equally representative of their diversity and that would include smaller social organizations, the members of the coalition did not assemble a strong list of candidates for municipal councilors. In fact, none of them presented their own leaders, or placed great importance on the selection of the candidate for mayor, González Bautista, who was not formally affiliated with any of these groups before the election and had been selected by the party itself as a 'neutral' candidate (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001). As they did not expect their candidate for mayor to be elected, they concentrated their efforts on making sure the first three positions of the councilors' electoral list were filled with one member of each of the groups in order for the elected citizen council members to represent equilibrium between the diverse factions of the PRD coalition. In fact, under the electoral system, the elected mayor is guaranteed the majority of the city council's members will be from his party. In the event of a PRD defeat, the proportional element of the municipal electoral system would only have allowed the election of the first two or three candidates of their electoral list[43]. Once elected, mayor González Bautista – who was already in a relatively weak position with the coalition members – therefore had to consolidate the party in order to solidify its support bases, a task that he gradually undertook as he also faced the challenges of replacing a well-established party whose stability relied upon corporatist alliances with the most important economic and social actors of the municipality.

Since then, the PRD has established its authority and party organization in Nezahualcóyotl, winning by increasing majorities all municipal elections to this day, as table 3 shows. In fact, while the party has had problems maintaining its victories in many

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[43] In Mexico, the municipal electoral system is mixed, including elements both of the majoritarian and of the proportional electoral systems. According to the article 16 of the *Ley Orgánica del Estado de México* (State of Mexico Municipal Organic Law), the elected mayor is always ensured the majority at the municipal council, and therefore, the concept of cohabitation does not exist at the municipal level. The remaining seats are then attributed to the second and third parties proportionally to their share of the popular vote, according to the electoral list they presented to the population. In Nezahualcóyotl, since the population of the city is over 1 million, the *cabildo* is composed of 22 elected members, the mayor's party gets 11 *regidores* and 2 *síndicos*. The other 8 *regidores* are proportionally distributed among the opposition parties, and the first opposition party gets the third *síndico* (Congreso del Estado de México, 2002 [1973], art. 16).

municipalities of the State of Mexico, Nezahualcóyotl remains a bastion of the party and of the *Nueva Izquierda* (New Left, to which MOVIDIG is affiliated) party faction at the national level, becoming the pride of its current local leaders and of many citizens. Some questions, however, remain largely unanswered: did the PRD fulfill his electoral promises of combating corruption and clientelism while governing more inclusively and more democratically? In the past 12 years of PRD rule in the city, what has concretely changed in the municipal governance model established by the PRI?

3.3.2 The Institutional Participatory Governance Framework under the PRD

According to the *Ley Orgánica Municipal del Estado de Mexico* (art. 64), a municipal administration can create citizen-based organs such as the elected and non-partisan COPACI to help them fulfill their public mandates. This facultative disposition has been in the *Ley Orgánica* since 1994 and formally existed in Nezahualcóyotl. As the *Bando Municipal* (Municipal Regulation) of 1994 suggested, in accordance with the *Ley Orgánica*, "in the municipality will exist citizen participation councils […] to do consultation, assessment, promotion and social management" (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, 1994, art. 31). Nevertheless, the PRI administrations in the city were not inclined toward activating this type of independent citizen participation in the municipality, and their presidents were not elected by their fellow residents but were rather selected by local party officials[44], keeping them tightly attached to the party structure in their demand-channeling function. In fact, it has been argued that under the PRI, citizen councils were mostly "used to ensure the personal success of the mayor" (Vázquez Hernández, 1999, p. 322), and were not democratically elected by the general population (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001). The election of a PRD government was therefore an important window of opportunity for change in the design of the municipal structure of governance. In fact, during the 1996 municipal elections, the local organization of the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl led a campaign that not only revolved around

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[44] The openly clientelistic use of the existing COPACI by the PRI is a characteristic that many authors who looked at the Nezahualcóyotl case and interviewed participants from the PRI period wrote about (Arzaluz Solano, 2002; Duhau & Schteingart, 2001; Selee, Forthcoming), an understanding that was also confirmed in my own interviews with COPACI members and local politicians (President COPACI 2, 2007; President COPACI 3, 2007).

the 'electoral fraud' of the PRI and the need for change, but also around the larger themes of democratization and citizen participation. In an interview with *Proceso*, the first elected PRD municipal president, Valentín González Bautista, was clear about his intentions: "I will govern with the society and with honesty" (Monge, 1996). As a direct result of such a focus on the discourse of 'democratization', the mandate, vocation and visibility of the institutions of citizen participation officially changed, becoming the center of the new system of social participation established by the new government which included 1) the *Consejos de Participación Ciudadana*, and 2) the *Consejo para el Desarrollo Municipal* (CODEMUN – Council for Municipal Development).

Consejos de Participación Ciudadana

As a community-based and institutionalized form of citizen participation created from above, the COPACI has generally been described following the terms of the *Ley Orgánica* as the "autonomous auxiliary bodies of the *ayuntamiento* established by the municipal government in the various neighborhoods of the city according to the terms of the art. 72-76 of the *Ley Orgánica*" (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, 1997, art. 33), which election and coordination fall under the responsibility of the government's *Coordinación de Participación Ciudadana* (Citizen Participation Coordination). According to the state legislation, their responsibilities include the promotion of citizen participation in the realization of municipal programs, and to do so they should assist in the efficient realization of the approved municipal plans and programs, propose actions to integrate or modify those plans and programs, participate in the supervision of public services provision and inform their electorate and the city of their activities (Congreso del Estado de México, 2002 [1973], art. 74). With the election of the PRD in 1996, an important change was made in the nature of the COPACI. In fact, in the first months of his mandate, mayor González Bautista called the first popular election meant to elect the members of the COPACIs, giving them a more democratic and popular mandate to represent the interests of the residents of their community.

The municipality is administratively divided in 82 neighborhoods, 18 in the Zona Norte and 64 in the Zona Centro. One COPACI is elected in every neighborhood, each of them

consisting of 5 volunteer elected members (and their respective replacements) – a president, a secretary, a treasurer and two *vocales* (representatives). The members of the COPACI, who must be residents of the neighborhood for which they run, are elected for a non-renewable 3-year mandate starting the 1st of December of the year following the election of the *cabildo*. Citizens who are interested in running for a position in a COPACI should form electoral slates supported by at least 100 members of the community (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, October 20, 2006). The electoral slates officially have a non-partisan status, which means that the councils are supposed to be independent forms of citizen participation external to the existing local party structures already active in the diverse neighborhoods of the municipality[45].

Their main function is to channel social demands from the population to the members of the municipal government, more often through the *Coordinación de Participación Ciudadana* and, in certain cases, directly through the mayor, who is the main actor proposing policies and programs for adoption to the municipal council. As graph 1 shows, the participatory process generally involves a series of phases through which local elected committees can consult with their fellow residents in order to address formal public works, urban services and infrastructural demands to the local authorities. They also serve as a transmission belt between the local government and its citizens, as they are the main channel used by the administration and its public officials to transmit information about its programs and policies to the population.

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[45] Although the non-partisan status of the COPACIs seem to be understood and assumed as formally defined by the convocation and the internal rules of the councils by most public officials and COPACIs participants I interviewed, the actual documents published by the municipal government in preparation of the 2006 COPACIs elections never explicitly establish or mention the non-partisan status of these local councils (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, October 20, 2006).

GRAPH 1   **COPACI PARTICIPATORY POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN NEZAHUALCÓYOTL, 1996-2008**
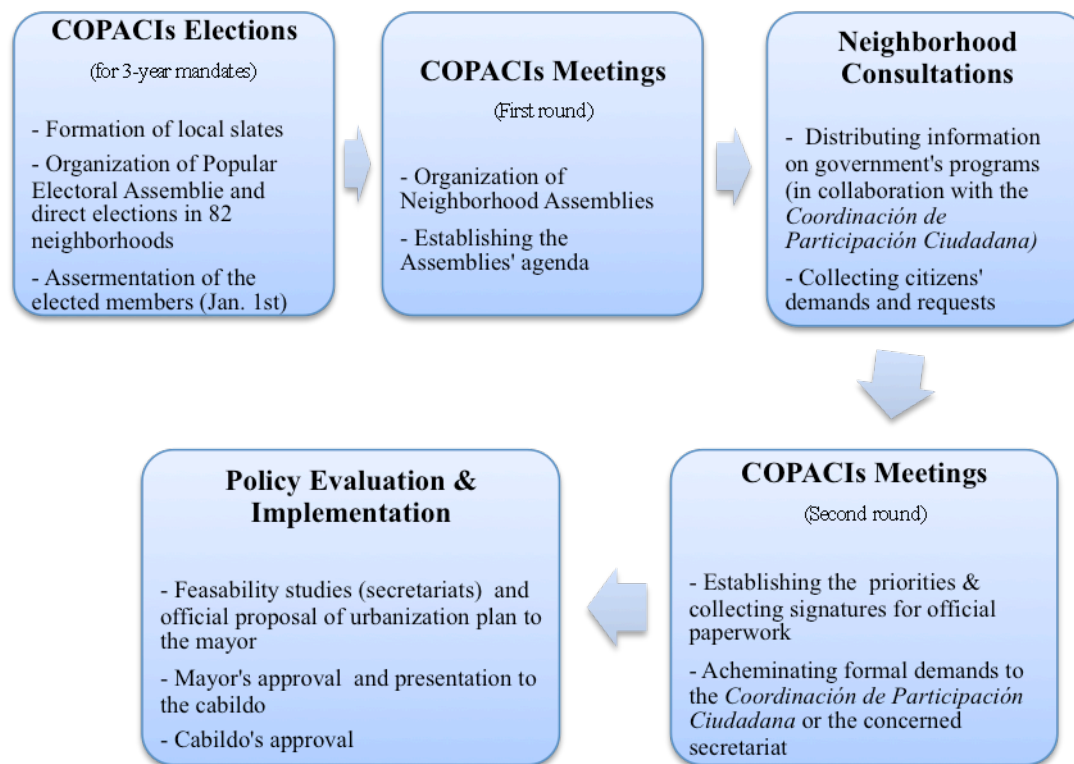
Source: Created from original data compiled by the author through interviews and observations conducted in Nezahualcóyotl in 2007 with local public administrators and participants.

Although the number of participants to the COPACIs elections has generally not been high, the constant increases in participation rates tend to suggest that since their reactivation by the PRD, the general population has become increasingly aware of the councils, their functions and their activities. In fact, from about 25 000 voters in 1997, the number grew to about 33 000 in 2000, 66 957 in 2003 and 64 638 in 2006[46]. Moreover, in the *Bando Municipal* of 2007, the administration of Víctor Bautista López changed the phrasing of their description to include the idea that they were "organs of communication and collaboration between the community and the municipal government" (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, 2007, art. 35), highlighting their bridging function in the governance process. According to municipal authorities, COPACIs are therefore meant to engage citizens to participate at the neighborhood level, to organize collectively

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[46] Numbers and estimates of popular participation in COPACIs elections compiled by the *Coordinación de Participación Ciudadana* (Coordinadora Participación Ciudadana, 2007).

and to elect representatives among themselves to become the democratic link between the *ayuntamiento* and the citizens.

Consejo para el Desarrollo Municipal

In conformity with the dispositions of the federal planning system (SPND) and of the RAMO 33 budget (municipal transfer) adopted by the federal government in 1996 (see chapter two), each city is supposed to establish a participatory planning structure to involve citizens in the urban planning decision-making process, generally called the COPLADEMUN. In Nezahualcóyotl, the COPLADEM does exist, but it is not a prominent participatory apparatus as the planning process mostly involves the municipal administration and selected distinguished citizens who represent associations of liberal professions rather than including a mechanism of popular participation (Directora Relaciones Públicas, 2007).

In 1998, the newly empowered municipal PRD authorities adopted another structure of citizen participation for the planning, attribution and oversight of infrastructure and public works expenditures, the CODEMUN and its community-based *Comités Vecinales de Desarrollo Social* (Local Social Development Committees)[47]. Every year, 25 local committees of 10 elected volunteers (a president, a secretary, a treasurer, two representatives and their respective replacements) are elected by participants in public assemblies. They are mostly responsible for organizing local public meetings, inviting the neighbors to come and discuss the urban development priorities and concerns that will be transmitted to the municipal authorities.

These local committees delegate one representative to become member of the CODEMUN, which is composed of the 25 elected delegates, the mayor – who presides – and representatives of the municipal council. Its main functions are to propose public

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[47] According to the manuals of operation of the *Fondo de Aportaciones para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios* (FORTAMUN – Grant Fund for Municipal Strengthening) and the *Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Social Municipal* (FAISM – Grant Fund for Municipal Social Infrastructure) published by the State of Mexico, which focus on the importance of formal organized citizen participation for the development of public works, municipalities can decide which of the two types of proposed mechanisms (COPLADEM or COPACI) they want to contribute to the decicion-making process and to oversight the distribution of the funds managed under these funds (RAMO 33) (Arzaluz Solano, 2002, p. 101).

works projects according to their fellow citizens' priorities, to approve the *cabildo*'s proposals and to oversee the execution of the approved public works. Once a month, the presidents of those committees meet to discuss the *ayuntamiento*'s proposals for infrastructure and public works funded by the federal transfers called the RAMO 33 and dedicated to street pavement, sewage and water lines, schools and community infrastructure, etc. This statewide committee's function is therefore to approve and oversee the expenses of the municipal government, according to the needs of constituents and to the overall situation of the municipality.

On the formal level, the new structure of citizen participation established by the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl to accompany the municipal council and administration in the urban governance process constitutes an important institutional innovation. Based on the study of the formal discourses and documents that emerged from the creation of the COPACIs and of the CODEMUN, one could conclude that these formal institutional innovations should have contributed to local democracy, sustaining a type of urban governance formally including citizen participation in decision-making processes. Though, as we have argued, to have a more precise portrait of the impact of such institutional changes on the deepening of democracy, one needs to look more carefully at the formal and informal interactions between the actors and groups involved in the process in order to uncover the nature of mobilization and participation that define state-society relationships and the prospects for the deepening of local democracy, a task to which we shall turn in the next sections.

3.4 A LOOK INTO LOCAL PARTICIPATORY DYNAMICS: PATTERNS OF MOBILIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

As a result of the rise of the left and the associated 'democratizing and participatory' discourse, it has been argued that citizens have been better included, notably by means of institutionalization of social participation through the integration of the COPACIs and of the CODEMUN as central elements of a 'participatory' governance process (Arzaluz Solano, 2002). Though social participation is today a formalized practice entrenched in

the process of local governance, much less is known about the actual nature of such participation, about the way political and societal actors have enacted the formal participatory institutions in reality. If one can argue that popular participation has increased since 1996, can Nezahualcóyotl qualify as a case of success according to our indicators? Did the inclusion of participatory mechanisms contribute to overcome the prevalence of informal practices and the traditional political control exercised by political parties over social organizations in Nezahualcóyotl? What has been the impact of the participatory measures gradually incorporated in the governance process by the PRD on state-society relationships and, more generally, on the prospects for deepening local democracy?

Going beyond traditional indicators such as participation rates and the existence of social activity at the grassroots, the following looks at more encompassing ones to evaluate the impact of the introduction of both COPACIs and CODEMUN on the deepening of democracy in Nezahualcóyotl. The transformative potential of such institutions on state-society relationships is therefore assessed, looking at how they might contribute to transform or foster existing mobilization patterns, first, but even more importantly at how they also contribute to overcoming the traditional prevalence of informal institutions and political control in order to foster autonomous forms of citizen participation. As we shall see next, the case of participatory decentralization in Nezahualcóyotl does not qualify as a process leading towards more democratic state-society relationships: on the contrary, it seems that the institutions of participation have contributed to reinforce traditional forms of clientelism, which limits the capacity of citizens to enter the social construction of citizenship in the city.

3.4.1 Mobilizing Disconnected Individuals in the City

As 'democratizing mechanisms', the official goal of both the COPACIs and the CODEMUN is to promote citizen participation and to foster collective action at the grassroots, including traditionally marginalized sectors of the population through their empowerment as collective actors able to organize and collectively press demands upon the state. Upon closer examination, however, we can see that far from fostering collective

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forms of social organization among citizens, the local participatory mechanisms implemented in Nezahualcóyotl instead tend to deal with citizens that are disconnected from one another, on an individual and particularistic basis. In fact, besides from elections, the citizen committees' work is generally disconnected from the general population and is more often done behind closed doors in each neighborhood without developing collaborations and collective action strategies with the already existing citizen networks or the elected councils and committees of other neighborhoods.

In theory, as representatives of the general population living in the neighborhood they represent, both COPACI and CODEMUN elected members should aim at including their fellow residents in the discussions over priorities and needs. In fact, their official role is to act as the transmission belt between the citizens and the municipal government, channeling citizens' collective needs and investment priorities to the authorities, organizing local assemblies and consultation process to deliberate about these priorities and informing the population of the government's decisions and policies (see graph 1). Yet, the reality of daily local citizen interactions is quite different than the general expectations, as the practice of local elected citizen councils and planning committees is generally to deal with citizens' demands on a personal level rather than organizing public assemblies that would allow people to collectively mobilize and make decisions on their neighborhoods' priorities and strategies toward the government. Describing the local consultation process in her neighborhood, a COPACI president from one of the most marginalized and still irregular neighborhoods of Nezahualcóyotl, explains that, rather than organizing local assemblies to discuss priorities with their fellow citizens, the few active members of her COPACI generally work case-by-case, dealing directly with citizens' requests and transmitting them directly to the local authorities. As she observes,

> When there is a problem in a particular street, only one person comes to me to make sure I know about the problem, but I don't know if the residents of the street have done a meeting among themselves before. I only ask them for their problem, their name and their street to make sure that they can sign the paperwork once I complete the official request (President COPACI 1, 2007).

Though they are not the norm, there are some neighborhoods where a more active consultation process is undertaken on a more or less regular basis, through the

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organization of street-based meetings or for the elected COPACI and CODEMUN members to inform and consult residents about their local problems and the status of their requests. Some citizen councils and planning committees also consult their fellow residents directly on occasion, going from door to door to ask them about potential problems and specific requests (President CODEMUN 2, 2007; President COPACI 2, 2007). Nonetheless, these sporadic local meetings or public consultations are not necessarily conducive to longer-term forms of collective organization among the residents of a community. In fact, as highlighted by the president of a particularly active COPACI in the *Zona Centro*, people who are affected by a certain problem in their own street participate together on an occasional basis and around specific problems, but they still do so on an individual basis, and not through collective action organized over longer-term common interests and issues (President COPACI 3, 2007). People from one street might indeed get together to sign off on the official request to be sent to the municipal government by the local COPACI members. Their collective endeavor, however, is generally limited to the unorganized and sporadic expression of their basic support for a particularistic and often self-interested demand rather than contributing to the common good of the community through openly deliberating and collectively demanding that the local authorities address a specific problem.

Another indicator of the sustained individualistic mobilization patterns in Nezahualcóyotl's participatory institutions is the lack of deliberation among residents about the collective needs of the neighborhood (even in communities where there is some type of popular consultation involved), which limits the organizational capacity building necessary for communities to effectively mobilize and become empowered collective actors. In fact, the priority order for the demands that are transmitted to the authorities by the COPACI and CODEMUN after the basic consultation process is generally not deliberated upon collectively. Instead, it is generally the active elected representatives of the given neighborhood – often only the president, or only few members – who, after casually meeting with the population, evaluate and prioritize demands among themselves, behind closed doors, deciding without consulting the residents which demands would be followed-up by them and brought to the municipal authorities. As suggested by most

COPACIs and CODEMUN leaders I interviewed, the committees and councils themselves do the majority of defining the neighborhood's collective interest during their committee meetings:

> Fundamentally, we make our own evaluations; we organize to see who will bring the demands to the municipal authorities, and what we will propose […]. When we meet, we try, as a committee, to reach a certain consensus over the problems that affect the most influential groups, such as the small entrepreneurs, said a COPACI president commenting on the nature of his committee meetings (President COPACI 3, 2007).

Rather than making policy proposals in accordance with the ordinary citizens' expressed will and collective interest, the elected representatives make decisions and, consequently, define the collective interest based upon their own perception of the community's needs, often influenced by the already powerful actors' demands. Furthermore, local committees' elected representatives do not necessarily formally meet to discuss the priorities among themselves before sending them to the authorities. As highlighted by a CODEMUN president, explaining the nature of the committee's activities in the neighborhood:

> Sometimes I meet the secretary or the treasurer of my committee in the street, and we discuss about what's lacking, we elaborate a request, collect the required signatures and then we make the official demand (President CODEMUN 2, 2007).

The demands-formulation process, and the relationship with state authorities, therefore remain highly dependent upon the committee's president himself and his own understanding of the community's needs. This common practice not only limits the potential for collective organization at the grassroots, but also excludes people from the community and prevents them from participating in defining the collective interest, sustaining the logic of individual-based demands that has historically weakened and marginalized civil society organizations and contributed to the prevalence of political interests in the city, reinforcing the general apathy of ordinary citizens in their relationship to local authorities.

Another interesting finding about the participatory process in Nezahualcóyotl is the atomized nature of the mobilization and demand-making process observed in the

municipality. In fact, COPACIs and CODEMUN members from the various neighborhoods of the city do not mobilize together to make demands to the state, rather concentrating their activities in their own community. My interviews with participants to both types of committees indeed revealed that most of them had never worked with their fellow residents from surrounding neighborhoods. In fact, and this is especially true for the COPACIs, they all suggested that they had no contacts with citizen councils from other neighborhoods and that, in some cases, they had never heard of the existence of any other participatory venues existing in the municipality, (President CODEMUN 1, 2007; President CODEMUN 2, 2007; President COPACI 1, 2007; President COPACI 2, 2007). Thus, there is a lack of horizontal cooperation between the elected members of the participatory bodies, which contributes to maintain the traditional fragmentation of civil society at the neighborhood level.

Therefore, my observations of mobilization patterns encouraged by the introduction of participatory institutions in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl's local governance process lead to the conclusion that such a process has generally failed at sustaining collective forms of mobilization among the originally demobilized and disorganized ordinary citizens. On the contrary, my findings show that both the COPACIs and CODEMUN participatory processes have instead contributed to reinforce the traditional logic of individual and particularistic mobilization that prevailed under the PRI, with these participatory committee members becoming the new political brokers though which individuals and influential groups could channel their specific demands.

3.4.2 'Participation is Political': The Prevalence of Informal Practices

Officially, the members of the municipal government talk about the COPACI and CODEMUN as autonomous and citizen-based organizations. Yet, observations of the actual practices of citizen participation tend to show that beyond the formal rules framing participation in these local institutions, informal practices of political control over citizen participation tend to prevail in Nezahualcóyotl. In fact, rather than being the apolitical and citizen-empowering local participatory mechanisms they are supposed to be, both the COPACI and the CODEMUN have become political tools controlled by the three main

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political parties to reach the population and to mobilize support and secure votes among local communities. More specifically, the various political parties and their affiliated social organizations use informal channels to bypass formal participatory mechanisms and maintain a certain form of control over citizens and neighborhood-based civil society organizations, sustaining the formation of electoral slates running for the COPACIs and CODEMUNs, co-opting their elected members, overseeing the electoral process and using these mechanisms as platforms for advancing partisan political interests.

Since their renewal in 1997, COPACIs have been an important arena for political disputes, both among the parties and among the factions of the PRD. As Arzaluz Solano notices, the first councils' elections were not apolitical. In fact, "political parties, basically the PRI and the PRD worked in their respective neighborhoods for their candidates and militants to be elected" (Arzaluz Solano, 2002, p. 311). Commenting on the non-partisan nature of the COPACI, the coordinator of citizen participation explains:

> As an institution, we receive candidatures from citizens, but we know that most of them are members of a political party. They register as citizens and run their campaigns as such. In the convocation, it is prohibited to register a candidate who is representing a political party, so it is not an election between parties, even if personally they do have an affiliation (Coordinadora Participación Ciudadana, 2007).

The coordinator of the *Coordinación de Participación Ciudadana* adds that "more than 80% of the councils are composed of members affiliated with the PRD", a statistic that tends to reflect the composition of the city council. In fact, as one high-ranking member of the *ayuntamiento* told me,

> The COPACIs are informally split among the political parties so that it reflects more or less the composition of the *cabildo*. Each of them then presents electoral slates constituted of political supporters who are not officially affiliated with the party and who take up the position for three years (Secretaria General del Ayuntamiento, 2007).

TABLE 4   WINNING ELECTORAL SLATES FOR COPACIS BY PARTY,
           NEZAHUALCÓYOTL, 1997 AND 2003.

	Sample	PRD	PRI	PAN	Independent	No data
1997	73 (76 %)	47 (64 %)	19 (26 %)	0 (0 %)	5 (7 %)	2 (3 %)
2003	79 (100 %)	45 (57 %)	31 (31 %)	2 (3 %)	1 (1 %)	0 (0 %)

Source: Results obtained from Gerardo Salazar, who was deputy coordinator of the municipal office of citizen participation, and compiled by Andrew Selee in "Democracy Close from Home?" (Forthcoming)

Political parties also have more subtle means of insinuating themselves into the process, through the wide array of party-affiliated social organizations that are actively participating in the COPACIs. In fact, another important finding about the composition of the citizen participation councils is that they are not only party-affiliated, but that the PRD-affiliated ones are also divided among themselves between the different factions of the governing majority, as table 5 shows.

TABLE 5   PRD COPACIS' AFFILIATIONS BY SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS,
           NEZAHUALCÓYOTL, 1997 AND 2003

	MOVIDIG	UPREZ	MLN	Others	Independent
1997	13 (28 %)	8 (17 %)	2 (4 %)	13 (28 %)	11 (23 %)
2003	11 (24 %)	4 (9 %)	3 (7 %)	16 (36 %)	11 (24 %)

Note: Others include councils that are close to leaders who are not affiliated to the major factions of the PRD, or to smaller social groups, like UGOCEM, M4, UBADEZ, etc.
Source: *Diágnostico de la Coordinación de Participación Ciudadana*, H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, 2003-2006 and reproduced in Selee (Forthcoming).

In fact, the different social organizations that compose the PRD tend to organize and form electoral slates to obtain formal representation in the structures of citizen participation[48]. This division between the various factions of the PRD is generally

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[48] The same logic seems to prevail among PRI-affiliated COPACIs and local CODEMUN, where the presence of elected delegates supported by social organizations such as CNOP is well established, as my

favorable to MOVIDIG, which has invariably obtained more elected representatives than the other movements disputing power within the party. Nonetheless, the other PRD-affiliated social organizations are also active in the COPACI, presenting electoral slates in neighborhoods where they have social bases.

The implication of political parties in the election process, directly or via their affiliated social organizations, however, is never open and formally organized as such. In fact, as the internal regulation of the citizen participation councils and the *Ley Orgánica* both consider the COPACIs as independent and citizen-based participatory institutions supplementing the action of the municipal state, the election process and the subsequent local discussions should not overtly involve any partisanship. Yet, as a COPACI president observed,

> There are indirect ways by which they [political parties] can promote the election of a group or another and they have their own electoral slates proposals, which they will use to sustain the actions of their government through the such person who has a direct potential in the neighborhood (President COPACI 3, 2007).

In fact, informal practices tend to prevail in the election process, which is organized and overseen by a political commission of the *cabildo* composed of *regidores* from the three main political parties present in the municipality. The president of the commission of citizen participation, who is also the first PRD *regidor*, explains that

> representatives are supposed to be apolitical, but it is regularly people who participate in politics, so they are some from the PRD, some from the PRI and others from the PAN. It shouldn't be like this, but we [the electoral commission] cannot verify if the candidates are militants or not (Primer Regidor, 2007).

Thus, more than only being responsible for overseeing the general election process, political parties indirectly propel the creation of electoral slates, which are composed of supporters and sympathizers and generally, every neighborhood has one from each party running for election.

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interviews and previous scholars' work have illustrated (Decioctava Regidora, 2007; President CODEMUN 1, 2007; Selee, 2006)

The same logic of political party capture also prevails in the local elected committees of the CODEMUN, where the election process is even less formally organized than it is for the COPACIs. As many scholars and local actors have observed, party-affiliated citizens tend to be participating more than independent ones, as the municipal official in charge for the institution explained:

> obviously, the more informed people, who already participate in political parties, are those who tend to be involved more naturally in such activities. […] In the CODEMUN, we have people affiliated to the PRI, the PAN and the PRD but in the end, it is exactly like it is in the municipal council: it is plural (Directora Relaciones Públicas, 2007).

In fact, even if the committees should be theoretically non-partisan and citizen-based, my observations of the current situation and reports on the last few administrations lead to the conclusion that, like Arzaluz Solano observed in his study of the first PRD administration's CODEMUN,

> Evidence shows the strong presence of all political parties but, more than anything, uncovers again the situation that characterizes citizen participation in the municipality: the struggle for the public space between the various municipal social organizations, UPREZ, MOVIDIG and MLN (Arzaluz Solano, 2002, p. 319).

My interviews with CODEMUN presidents corroborate this argument, and the role of local *regidores* and, indirectly, of their political parties is even clearer in the formation of electoral slates. As one of them explained, "the *regidora* [from the PRI] proposed various people, and I was considered. There were more slates, for which each *regidor* proposed someone" (President CODEMUN 2, 2007). Since the city CODEMUN members – who are generally the local presidents – theoretically have a more direct role in the definition of the city infrastructure spending priorities, it is in the interest of the parties to maintain close ties with them to make sure that they can gather support when it comes to approve or not some of the *cabildo*'s investment proposals.

Therefore, political parties do intervene, directly or more indirectly through social organizations, in the composition and functioning of the supposedly citizen-based and non-partisan COPACIs and CODEMUN. In this way, they capture the institutions of participation and co-opt their elected members and this, in turn, enables them to keep a

certain form of control over citizen participation. This control, along with the individualistic logic of mobilization, has important consequences on the potential for these participatory institutions to become formal public spaces for the development of more democratic and cooperative state-society relationships that contribute to the deepening of local democracy.

3.4.3 Changing State-Society Relationships?

Even if one can argue that institutionalized participatory mechanisms have had an impact on the way demands for public urban services are dealt with by the municipal authorities in Nezahuacóyotl, it also seems that the logic of state-society relationships that prevailed under the PRI – based upon informal and clientelistic channels of representation and demand-formulation – has not only survived the alternation in power and the subsequent implementation of decentralized participatory mechanisms aimed at including otherwise marginalized citizens in the governance process, but it has also been reestablished by the PRD through the process.

First, we have observed that the implementation of participatory mechanisms in Nezahualcóyotl did not contribute to transforming patterns of social mobilization for demand-making, traditionally organized around individuals' ability to formulate their particular requests through their direct access to influential politicians and political brokers. In fact, the individual and particularistic logic observed in the practice of mobilization accomplished through the existing participatory mechanisms creates a situation where, in spite of the formal intention associated with the participatory process, ordinary citizens are still not mobilized on a collective basis and never manage to collectively deliberate or discuss public policy issues and priorities in the public assemblies and forums created by the local government to include them. Disconnected council members use their alleged 'popular' legitimacy to make decisions on behalf of an atomized citizenry rather than acting as representatives of the collective interest of a local community empowered to make informed decisions through the process of democratic deliberation. Originally disorganized citizens thus remain disorganized, demobilized and dependent upon their personal connections for their interactions with the local

government. Citizens who were already marginalized therefore remain disempowered as they do not actively participate in or benefit from deliberations and discussion to learn organizing and demand-making skills, which contributes to sustaining and generating social exclusion while preventing the empowerment of the traditionally marginalized sectors of the population.

Second, and more importantly, the formal participation mechanisms created by the PRD have not been autonomous from political parties and politicians, rather being controlled by them. The control exercised by political parties and their associated social organizations over citizen participation creates participatory mechanisms that are not, in practice, a focal point of the decision-making process; they mostly serve to channel citizen mobilization in a controlled environment, allowing the elected representatives to avoid popular discontentment and to pursue with their political agenda. As stressed by Hector Bautista, a Neza ex-mayor,

> because the elections of the COPACIs and the CODEMUN involve the direct influence of political parties, these instances are, in the end, representations of the parties, and not of the citizens (H. Bautista López, 2007).

This political control over citizen participation has the consequence of dramatically limiting the potential for COPACI and CODEMUN to become tools for deepening the quality of local democracy since they generally tend to sustain the prevalence of informality and clientelistic state-society relationships in Nezahualcóyotl. As a CODEMUN president affiliated with the PRI noted,

> because the committees are generally from the PRD, they vote with the government, who directs resources in the neighborhoods where they get more support, which are more convenient for them, without taking account of the common good (President CODEMUN 1, 2007).

The controlled nature of participation and the prevalence of informal ties with political parties and politicians characterizing participation in both COPACIs and CODEMUN limit the participating citizens' autonomy while strengthening their traditional dependency upon political leaders to access resources and basic urban services. Besides limiting the autonomy of citizens, particularistic ties and the dependency fostered through

the use of informal control practices prevent citizen representatives from playing their oversight role and from holding politicians responsible for their decisions.

Thus, my observations about both mobilization patterns and the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants lead me to conclude that in Nezahualcóyotl, the combined effect of the strengthening of individual form of mobilization, sustaining the atomization and weakness of civil society, and of the political control exercised by political parties over participation all contribute to the prevalence of informal practices and clientelistic relationships between that local government, political parties and social organizations leaders. As stressed by some of the *regidores* and bureaucrats interviewed, the citizens who are close to and have face-to-face interactions with the municipal bureaucracy, or, even better, the secretary general of the *ayuntamiento* himself, do get their demands channeled and responded much more quickly (Decioctava Regidora, 2007). Hence, the state-society relationships that have emerged in Neza's participatory mechanisms, reproduce old patterns of clientelism organized around a very institutionalized local party system and limit the potential for these institutions to become means toward greater social inclusion and the deepening of democracy at the municipal level.

3.5 EXPLAINING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CLIENTELISM IN NEZAHUALCÓYOTL

In the previous section, we have observed that, according to our indicators of state-society relationships, the introduction of formal participatory mechanisms in Nezahualcóyotl by a PRD municipal government have contributed to reaffirm clientelism as the principal mode of interactions between the state and society in the municipality, with a slightly different flavor from the one that existed under the PRI. What explains the sustainability of clientelism in Nezahualcóyotl in spite of the existence of a window of opportunity formally opened by the PRD for creating new public spaces? What explains that, contrary to the initial expectations about the participatory decentralization program undertaken by the PRD local government, the newly implemented participatory institutions did not lead to a transformation of mobilization patterns in the city and to the development of an autonomous civil society? As the following section addresses, a series

of factors need to be considered to answer this question, ranging from institutional factors to actors' strategies and interests. As we will see, though institutional design may explain the nature of the mobilization process that takes place as a consequence of participatory decentralization reforms, it is not enough to fully understand the complex nature of state-society relationships emerging through the process, which is also determined by the way both social and political actors enact these institutions as a part of their own strategies and perceptions.

3.5.1 Explaining the Individual Nature of Mobilization: Historical Legacies and Institutional Limits to Collective Action

The first dimension characterizing state-society relations in Nezahualcóyotl's participatory mechanisms is the generally individualistic logic of citizen mobilization, as observed earlier. Two sets of factors contribute to explain why the introduction of formal participatory spaces for collective mobilization did not lead to the development of strong organizational capacities among the local residents, as it is generally expected to do. I begin by looking at the weight of historical mobilization patterns in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, where we observed relatively active social organizations (in comparison to other Mexican municipalities) but generally organized as intermediaries and substitutes for the state sustaining individual and particularistic forms of social mobilization. According to our hypothesis, however, the weight of historical legacies must be considered in interaction with institutional change, as the institutional design of specific participatory mechanisms can either reinforce or contribute to overcome historical legacies. As we will see in the present case, the institutional design of both the COPACIs and of the CODEMUN does not formally foster collective forms of mobilization and public deliberation but instead sustains the traditional forms of social organization inherited from the past history of mobilization.

Historical Mobilization Patterns

Unlike many cities in Mexico, Nezahuálcoyotl has a long tradition of social participation (Arzaluz Solano, 2002), built both by its residents and by its most influential economic and social actors in the 1960's. As we have seen, however, social groups have historically

been highly dependent upon their political affiliations to parties and politicians. During the rule of the PRI, most local social groups were either repressed or co-opted within the corporatist party structure via large popular sector organizations such as the CNOP. These social organizations, while being the social backbone of the official governing party, also constituted the framework for citizens claim-making. In fact, because the party was providing social services to local residents, it

> formed the crucial link between citizens and public authorities under the PRI governments, which created a vertically integrated system of interest intermediation dominated by individual leaders, caciques, who could resolve problems for ordinary citizens in return for loyalty to those leaders (Selee, Forthcoming).

Thus, a culture of particularistic claim-making based upon individual rather than collective needs has developed throughout the formation of the city, with citizens going directly to the established local political brokers to ask for particular services that should otherwise be provided by the municipal state.

With the opening of the electoral arena to opposition political forces in the early 1980's, the structure of civil society has become more plural, including new social organizations emerging from the growing leftist opposition parties and from ruptures within the PRI-affiliated organizations such as the CNOP (Bolos, 2003). Despite a certain degree of pluralism, the logic of state intervention and interest-intermediation of these social organizations has not fundamentally changed, imitating practices learned from the traditional and paternalistic ways of relating to the local government. In fact, only a few social organizations registered in the city of Nezahualcóyotl are self-declared independent from the three main political parties, with most of them affiliating to either the PRI or the PRD (Palma Galván, 2007). As Bolos suggests, "social organizations in Neza, more than governing, have become intermediaries between the government (within which they take part) and society" (2003, p. 287). Mayor Bautista López observed that, while there are more political options available in the city, people still do not participate much outside of the parties' structures (including affiliated social organizations) since "it is really difficult for a person without political affiliation to participate" (V. Bautista López, 2007). Moreover, as suggested by observers of social mobilization in the city

(Bolos, 2003; Palma Galván, 2007), today's patterns of social mobilization tend to remain heavily linked to political parties and party-affiliated social organizations established and active in local communities, directly providing basic social services that the local government fails to provide on the basis of individual demands from residents. As suggested by a COPACI president,

> Residents are thinking, when they come to you, what will they give us? They don't participate generally, they come on an individual basis or they go directly to the organizations they know [including the COPACIs] to get services (President COPACI 2, 2007).

Thus, the culture of citizens as direct beneficiaries of social group leaders' loyalty to political parties seems to have persisted over time. This culture contributes to maintain mostly individual forms of mobilization for which civil society organizations and, more recently, participatory institutions are a tool to get services on an individual basis, and not a venue for collective organization and demanding citizenship rights and social inclusion more generally. This understanding of mobilization, framed by the individualistic culture of social organization in the city, fosters the weakness of civil society organizational skills as interlocutor of the municipal state. As such, it also contributes to the sustainability of a personalistic and individual logic of demands that already existed and was a pillar of the clientelistic nature of state-society relationships prevailing in Nezahualcóyotl.

An Institutional Explanation

As we have seen in chapter one, even in cases where the culture of mobilization tends to encourage individual-based claim-making, some institutional features of participatory institutions can help overcome the legacies of the past and foment the creation of new cultural frameworks with regards to mobilization patterns. In fact, it has been argued that the design of participatory institutions matters in framing the public space and the possibilities for the emergence of collective forms of social mobilization. In Nezahualcóyotl, though the formal description of participatory mechanisms seems to encourage collective action and local deliberation over public policy and infrastructural development priorities, the reality of their implementation is quite different. In fact, the established institutional framework does not encourage collective action and deliberation

processes among members of local communities, their elected representatives and the local government, but rather tends to reinforce the historical practices of individual mobilization and particularistic claim-making organized around COPACI and CODEMUN elected members' personal connections to political parties, politicians and local social organization leaders that then channel demands to the local authorities through the new vertical and fragmented participatory structures.

A first observation about the institutional incentives for the practice of public consultation and deliberation among both COPACIs and CODEMUM members reveals an absence of a formal requirement for regular and formal public deliberative assemblies, which constitutes an important limit on the development of collective mobilization efforts in local communities. In fact, as public consultations are not a necessary step in the demand-channeling process, most COPACIs and local CODEMUN sections' members act individually, on the basis of their own interpretation and evaluation of the citizens needs or on the basis of particular requests coming directly from individual citizens facing a problem. Consultation therefore becomes a relatively random exercise that, rather than being a collective effort in face-to-face deliberations and negotiations, is unequally used by citizen representatives to legitimate their demands to the local government or to gather support and signatures for a particular demand. Moreover, and as a COPACI president suggested explaining the consultation process undertaken in his neighborhood under the auspices of his committee, local committees do enjoy total latitude in deciding which sectors of their neighborhoods deserve to be consulted about their needs and concerns. As he said,

> Certain streets don't necessitate an organization process because their public services are fine. But when there are problems in a particular street, this is when we intervene and consult the residents (President COPACI 3, 2007).

Another related feature of the consultation and demand-making processes is that although in principle it should be a bottom-up process with most requests coming directly from the residents using the committees as transmission belt to reach the municipal authorities, the reality is that the process is mostly top-down. In fact, not only do the elected councils usually fail to organize public meetings, but even when they do so, they continue to be

the main body deciding which demands will be transmitted and in what priority order. This is a direct consequence of the lack of formal requirements for actual citizen participation that accompanied the creation and the activities of the elected citizen councils, which local politicians see more as a mere formal requirement than a truly legitimate and democratic decision-making process.

Second, my observations of Nezahualcóyotl's participatory framework reveal that it comprises few institutional incentives for collective organization at both the local and city levels. In fact, there are major institutional limits to collective mobilization stemming from the participatory mechanisms structure of decision-making. On the one hand, if there is a formal requirement for committee members to present official requests supported by their fellow residents, it does not translate into organizational capacity building in the communities. In fact, rather than asking citizens to collectively organize to present demands to public assemblies whose members would then discuss, the process generally works the other way around: the elected citizen representatives gather information on the local needs, present proposals to the citizens and make sure they have enough signatures to follow through with the process. On the other hand, there are great imbalances of power between the municipal government and participants in the participatory mechanisms. As a PAN *regidora* explained, criticizing the structure of participation in the municipality, "the one who has all the powers [in the participatory forums] is the government, and citizens don't develop a real organizational capacity". She pursues explaining that, though the COPACIs and COPLADEM should be institutions sustaining citizen organization, "in reality, there is only one or two people asking questions but it doesn't go beyond conversations; in fact, the government representatives have the last word" (Decioctava Regidora, 2007). This is especially true for the CODEMUN, which as a city-based organization would have more potential for sustaining collective organization among members of civil society organizations across the municipality. In spite of this, the way the monthly meetings of the CODEMUN are organized and led by the mayor and the municipal administrators does not allow citizens to occupy the public space. In fact, the dynamics I observed in these meetings corroborate

the opinion expressed by the PAN *regidora*[49]. Thus, the structure of the decision-making process limits the ability of citizens to really consult and make concerted efforts to organize, formulate collective demands for the common good and finally contribute to make the local state representatives more accountable and responsive to local needs.

Last, we have observed an important fragmentation of the participatory model in Nezahualcóyotl, especially with the COPACI system, which does not support the greater need for building organizational capacity among civil society actors. In fact, most of the mobilization and consultation activities should be made at the neighborhood level, and this tends to divide citizens who have to fight among each other for scare resources, contributing to the already existing fragmentation of civil society. Moreover, there are no incentives for local COPACIs to work together and develop a citywide perspective of the citizens most important and pressing needs, as there is no formal instance for the COPACI leaders to meet each other and deliberate. The CODEMUN does include a forum in which all local committees' presidents participate once a month to approve the final infrastructure expenses proposed by the municipal government but, as we have seen, its influence on mobilization patterns and the building of organizational skills is curtailed by the lack of deliberation among its members. Coupled with the lack of deliberation in the neighborhoods themselves and the hegemony of both local leaders and bureaucrats over the deliberation process, this fragmentation of the participatory system not only crystallizes the tendency of local leaders to promote particularistic demands, but it also hinders the development of a unified group of citizens in the city, collectively mobilized and representing the common interest.

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[49] During my fieldwork in Nezahualcóyotl, I attended two CODEMUN meetings that took place in the offices of the municipal administration, one on October 26th and another one on November 30th of 2007. In both cases, municipal employees led the meeting, presenting the proposals to be adopted, responding to the few questions coming from citizens and arguing in favor of the proposal for infrastructure investments that had generally been pre-approved by the mayor who approved the meeting agenda prepared by the team of the coordination of public relations (Directora Relaciones Públicas, 2007). The vote for the approval was more a formality than anything else, and rather than being a participatory and deliberative forum, the CODEMUN session looked more like an information session where citizen representatives rubberstamped the administration proposals rather than a place where they could bring in concerns and particular demands coming from their communities.

Thus, if institutional design can be transformative and provide the necessary incentives for social leaders to encourage collective mobilization around the definition of the common good among citizens, my findings in Nezahualcóyotl point to the fact that their effect can be completely opposite. In reality, in this case, institutional features of the participatory mechanisms contribute to reinforce the historically embedded individual and particularistic patterns of mobilization observed in the city before the implementation. Though institutional variables are central to explain the nature of mobilization, we have seen that, in Nezahualcóyotl, the lack of autonomy of participants was an even more important factor explaining the sustainability of clientelistic state-society relationships in spite of the introduction of participatory decentralization reforms. Thus, if it is only in combination with their institutional variables that we can really measure the impact of historical legacies of the nature of mobilization processes, it is also only by understanding how these institutions are enacted and concretely used by both social and political actors that we can really measure their potential at fostering autonomous participation.

3.5.2 Explaining Political Control over Local Participatory Institutions: Actors' Strategies and Perceptions

Theoretically, participatory decentralization reforms are meant to foster the development of an autonomous civil society, able to enter the social construction of citizenship at the local level and to hold the state accountable for its actions. This corresponds to the second dimension defining state-society relationships, which measures the level of autonomy enjoyed by the actors involved in the formal participatory process. In the case of Nezahualcóyotl, however, we have seen that, in spite of the institutionalization of participatory practices in the local governance structure, political parties are highly - though indirectly - involved in the different steps of the participatory process, bypassing the formal institutions, controlling participants through informal practices of partisan co-option. What explains the prevalence of informal practices and the use of formal institutions as a political and partisan platform for politicians to gather popular support? More specifically, what explains the lack of autonomy of participatory institutions and, consequently, of their participants? The impact of three sets of sociopolitical variables is

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studied here: first, we look at the level of political competition among but also within political parties to understand politicians' and parties' strategies to gather popular support. Second, we look at the balance of power between civil society actors, and third, at the perception participants and politicians have developed about their own role in the participatory process. As we shall see next, it is these three variables, and their interactions and interrelations that together explain the controlled nature of institutionalized forms of citizen participation in Nezahualcóyotl.

Level of Political Competition

The level of political competition, among political parties but also within the ruling political party has an important influence on determining local politicians' strategies toward participatory institutions and their political practices of power resources redistribution. In the case of Nezahualcóyotl, the high level of competition between political parties, but more importantly within the ruling PRD coalition through the system of elite circulation and political nomination based on patronage, has led to a strategy of state penetration of all public spaces, including the local participatory institutions.

First, the fierce external political competition on the local electoral scene, where the PRD has dominated but has still been challenged by both the PRI and the PAN in past local elections has generally been a motive for ruling political parties to occupy as much public space as possible in Nezahualcóyotl, a strategy that has traditionally been used by the PRI to maintain its local hegemony over the city. Though the city has grown into a PRD bastion since its first election in 1996, the PRI has remained an important and well-organized political actor in the city. The PRI, and the PAN to a lesser extent, have maintained or developed strong support bases in the local communities, backed by their strong party organization at both the local and at the state levels. This context of political competition has translated into politicians' strategies toward social participation and, consequently, the formal participatory mechanisms included in the governance structure. In fact, such a context has provided the incentives for politicians to control these mechanisms, co-opting their leaders in order to secure votes and support among the local social leaders, using them as neighborhood-based political brokers. Thus, in this

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particular case, the opening of the electoral system to political pluralism has indeed increased pressures on local political leaders to develop strategies to secure popular support among the most influential local social leaders, co-opting them and giving them privileged access to the political system through the COPACIs and the CODEMUN. Moreover, the PRD has also used the structure as a way to accommodate opposition parties. As a PAN *regidora* highlighted, both the COPACIs and the COPLADEM composition reflect the fact that the PRD is in power because

> when the convocation for elections is released by the municipal government, the PRD organization already has people formed to campaign, and as a consequence people don't really participate, they only occupy positions (Decioctava Regidora, 2007).

In fact, the strategy deployed by the PRD administration to face competition and potential opposition from the ranks of the PRI and the PAN replicates in a pluralistic context the long-used PRI strategy of political co-option and institutional capture that proved to work to secure the PRI's hegemony. Since the PRD discourse has revolved around the inclusion of citizens and democratization, however, their strategy has been to formally activate the participatory mechanisms and encourage the 'pluralistic' character of their local activities, while using elected positions in citizen councils to accommodate opposition parties, ensuring them a presence at the community level in neighborhoods through their traditional social organizations. As both mayor Bautista López and his secretary mentioned, the available councils are divided proportionally among the different parties prior to their elections (V. Bautista López, 2007; Secretaria General del Ayuntamiento, 2007) so that each party can secure a more or less important support for their affiliated electoral slates in a given neighborhood. Yet, a careful observation of the PRD's ruling strategies reveals that, more than using it to please the opposition forces, they also deployed this strategy of state penetration and interest accommodation to face internal divisions and pressures coming from the various factions of the party.

The second element deserving particular attention for our analysis is the fact that, in Nezahualcóyotl, there is an important lack of unity within the PRD governing coalition, which was built with the support of local social organizations representing opposing factions within the national structure of the party. The disputes over career advancement

within the local PRD is an interesting manifestation of such internal competition, as Nezahualcóyotl's local PRD organization is notorious for being one where family relations and groups affiliations and leadership can become the best way to advance someone's political career[50]. The nature of local political competition within the PRD has a consequence on the electoral and governing strategies deployed by its politicians, because their objective is not necessarily to be re-elected by the population in the short-term. Rather they seek to advance within the ranks of the party, for which they need the party endorsement and a source of mobilized popular support, found through the formal participatory mechanisms they contributed to reactivate.

This trend toward using instances of citizen participation as a tool for partisan mobilization and to dominate the internal political competition for career advancement and influence is reinforced by the fact that the factions within the PRD are constantly disputing power with each other. The conflicts between the different PRD factions, inherited from the improbable alliance they reached to run under the banner of the PRD in 1996, affected the nature of the PRD governance in the municipality (Duhau & Schteingart, 2001). Two main strategies have been observed as a consequence. A PRD influential *regidor* I interviewed suggests that the result of his group's social work in the urban communities, along with the other social organizations involved with the PRD, is that "their members impulse other people to occupy political spaces [such as the participatory institutions], which serve to facilitate the administrative steps citizens need to go through to solve their problems" (Primer Regidor, 2007). In fact, as a COPACI president suggested, he became involved in the municipality through his activism in UPREZ and, from there,

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[50] As highlighted by René Ramón in *La Jornada*, family relations are particularly important for career advancement in Nezahualcóyotl. As he demonstrates, the family Bautista is an important one, as Hector Bautista López, who was municipal president from 2000-2003 and who is currently federal senator, his brother Víctor Bautista López, who is the current (2006-2009) municipal president, leader of the PRD state party structure and previously regidor, and their relative Valentín González Bautista, the first PRD municipal president, all played a central role in both the city and the PRD. Moreover, local members of the *ayuntamiento* nominated by the PRD administration have been noted as being close relatives to regidores or other PRD local or regional politicians (Ramon, 2005) and are still in their position, in spite of overtly denounced scandals of corruption, as the case of Julissa Mejía Guardado – a close relative of influential local PRD members and who is the current director of public relations – who was convicted for corruption when she was director of social development.

> We have received support from this social organization to be able to get more formal representation within the framework of the *Ley Orgánica*, including a more direct interaction with municipal authorities. Why? Because, as a social realization, and according to your weight in the local community, it's the entrance that they give you for interactions with the municipal government (President COPACI 3, 2007).

Moreover, participatory venues themselves can serve as launching pads to start a political career, as a CODEMUN president noted: "What happens is that many people get involved because we know it is of political interest to do so and to get a nomination within the PRD" (President CODEMUN 1, 2007). In fact, participation in either the COPACI or the CODEMUN served politically the elected councilors: they could then develop the legitimacy and deploy the necessary networks and resources to mobilize support, using their position as a first step into a political career (Arzaluz Solano, 2002).

Thus, the combined effect of an increasing political competition and of the lack of unity among the governing forces has created incentives for politicians to use participatory mechanisms as a platform for political struggles between parties and factions to secure a party's hegemony or personal career advancement mostly through political co-option. The political context, rather than allowing pluralistic and autonomous forms of participation to emerge, creates a situation where the formal mechanisms are informally captured by political parties and become informal spaces for continuing the political struggles beyond the electoral arena. The consequent lack of autonomy of participants has important consequences for the deepening of democracy, as the elected representatives of the participatory committees and the elected members of the government are more responsive to the party national/factional leaders than to their own constituency, curtailing the participants' ability to sanction them for their wrongdoings.

Balance of Power within Civil Society

The balance of power within civil society organizations active in the participatory mechanisms is also important for defining the strategies of collective action to be deployed to interact with and channel demands to the municipal government. As we have observed in Nezahualcóyotl, social organizations with greater social mobilization capacity and, in turn, political leverage, are affiliated to the governing party, which

affects the composition of citizen participation councils in the city, leaving only few space available for independent organizations to emerge. Yet, their important conflicts and power imbalances reflect on the participatory governance process and, in turn, on the possibilities of developing a strong, autonomous and organized civil society where social and civil organizations peacefully coexist in the political space in order to collectively work toward the social construction of inclusive citizenship rights in the city.

First, there are serious imbalances in terms of access to municipal authorities among the existing civil society organizations in the municipality, which prevent the development of autonomous civil society organizations. In fact, as we have seen, most PRD *presidentes municipales*, *regidores* and *sindicos* were recruited from the social organizations affiliated with the party, the faction of the PRD ruling over the city being from its grassroots activist branch with which they generally keep close ties and alliances. As highlighted by a high member of the *ayuntamiento*, who was also affiliated to the party: "There are many different groups active within the PRD, political factions, groups involved as community groups providing socio-economic assistance, or civil associations" (Secretaria General del Ayuntamiento, 2007). A PRD *regidor,* an active member of a movement called *Movimiento Cuarto Nezahualcóyotl Dos, A.C.*, expressed his commitment to the social organization he was 'representing' within the PRD saying: "My social activities in the organization are my priority […] I spend half of my time as a *regidor* there". He pursued:

> We have many programs to support the citizens of Nezahualcóyotl. Our main program consists of bringing first necessity products to the poor, who can save for other things such as education, health or housing. We also help them to deal with all the questions relative to municipal procedures (Primer Regidor, 2007).

These groups, providing assistance to the poor through diverse programs, are clearly associated with the PRD, some even openly displaying the party's logo besides theirs. The social activities of the PRD affiliates create an association between the party and the existence of services for those organizations' clienteles. This gives a direct source of support to the party in its targeted electorate, which can associate the provision of services with the party via its affiliates and indirectly placing their beneficiaries in a

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position where they become the PRD's clientele[51]. As a consequence, the PRD-affiliated civil society groups enjoy a much better, though dependent, access to municipal leaders who, in turn, need their loyalty to reach the population and gather popular support.

Second, and as a direct consequence of the political divisions between the municipality's stronger social organizations, COPACIs and CODEMUN have become spaces of power struggles among civil society groups whose divisions prevent longer-term action and organizational capacity in front of the municipal government. As the electoral process tends to involve groups affiliated with parties, it puts them in opposition to one another, and as a result intensifies and crystallizes the already existing conflicts among the different groups and factions. Moreover, since there is a single-term limit for the COPACIs, social groups attempt at disorganizing their competitors, and especially those who form the current council, so that it has

> less possibilities of pushing people of the same group to come after
> them to continue the work that is being done. There is sometimes a dirty
> war between the social groups present in a neighborhood and who fight
> to have the COPACI (President COPACI 3, 2007).

Therefore, divided civil society groups, rather than collectively organizing within the existing participatory channels, use participatory institutions to get a better and privileged access to the municipal government at the expense of the other groups and, as a result, of the citizenry's interests. Moreover, this divisive and competitive dynamic leads to a poor collaboration between the COPACIs and the CODEMUN across the various neighborhoods, because

> they are often from distinct factions or groups and they don't see you as
> part of a team, which would certainly be great to evaluate more
> generally the problems of the municipality. It is not done, however, for
> a variety of reasons, from political ideals to ways of doing things
> locally (President COPACI 3, 2007).

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[51] This type of practice is not unique to the PRD. The PRI follows a similar logic with, for example, elected members of the CODEMUN also being affiliated, along with active members of the civic association, *Integración Social Oriente* (Social Integration East), a PRI-allied group that offers public services to the population (President CODEMUN 1, 2007).

Therefore, divisions and competition within a civil society where some organizations have a privileged access to power and resources also diminish the capacity of independent citizens and groups to collectively organize and reach the local state, sustaining a model of non-autonomous civil society interacting in a corporatist and personalistic way with the municipal state and its politicians.

Perception of Actors' Roles

The third element that needs to be considered to explain the non-autonomous nature of participation in Nezahualcóyotl's formal participatory mechanisms is the perception both societal participants and government members have of their own and the others' roles and functions in the participatory process. These perceptions, which are mutually constructed and reinforced, affect the actual process in many ways, but especially in terms of the ways participants from both society and the municipal government engage with one another, enact the existing formal and informal institutions, and take part in the governance process.

First, local politicians' and bureaucrats' perception of their own roles and of the participatory mechanisms' functions is an important element to consider as it not only tends to explain how they interact with societal actors involved in the process, but more largely the extent to which they engage in making these mechanisms efficient spaces for autonomous civil society input on public policy issues. Even if, in public discourse, political leaders proudly talk about the citizen participation mechanisms as pillars of the democratic decision-making structure, in practice, local politicians do not consider the existing participatory mechanisms as being crucial to the governance process. As mayor Bautista López stressed, "many of the last municipal administrations saw the elections of those COPACIs and CODEMUN as an obligation. They do not function so well in reality […], and most participation in Neza is actually taking place through the PRD" (V. Bautista López, 2007) or the other political parties.

Second, though societal participants generally speak very positively about their role in the governance process, they generally posit themselves as having not only a

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responsibility toward their fellow citizens, but also toward the municipal government, as explained by a very active COPACI president from *Zona Centro*:

> Our role is very serious because we are the interlocutors of the community and we see as a obligation, a responsibility to sustain the municipal government to give some tranquility to the municipality (President COPACI 3, 2007).

In fact, and especially in the CODEMUN, many elected participants perceive their role as citizen delegates of the municipal government in the communities, and not as representatives of the general population making demands on the government. As a CODEMUN president explained:

> We are the municipality field workers, because I know a lot more people in the community than the people in the municipal delegation's office [in Zona Norte], they have me well located to do so (President CODEMUN 2, 2007).

They therefore conceive they own role as being to inform the local government about local needs in places where the state wouldn't have an antenna or the organizational capacity to gather the information rather than being to channel social demands and collectively demand for inclusion. Contrary to the idea that democratic civil society should aim to autonomously demand inclusion within the structure of the state conveyed by the concept of civil society, this perception sustains the idea of non-autonomous social organizations trying to become unequal and corporate partners of the state.

This type of perception and the resulting behaviors of actors involved in Nezahualcóyotl's participatory mechanisms have two main consequences on the nature of participation. First, the way elected citizen representatives engage in their function, as representatives of the municipal government rather than as representation channels for the residents, tends to reinforce the observed apathy of ordinary residents toward participatory mechanisms. In fact, many citizens do not feel that their demands and their voice as participants are really what make a difference in the elaboration of policies and programs. As one COPACI president pointed out: "We work, and nothing happens here. They do have resources, but the people's demands don't match their own priorities, and they don't have money for those" (President COPACI 2, 2007). A president who was

more cynical about the participatory function of the COPACI and who had stopped the councils' activities in his neighborhood, explained that

> The COPACIs' role is, according to me [and ordinary citizens], to organize people so that when there are elections, there are people who are mobilized to, indirectly, help a political party. There is not the written role, but there is also what is actually done (President COPACI 2, 2007).

This understanding of participatory mechanisms, conveyed by certain local leaders, tends to be generalized to ordinary citizens who generally lack information about them and tend to see them as another form of political venue rather than autonomous and citizen-based. Consequently, they do not participate actively to press the elected councils for better representation and accountable micro-governance. Second, as a consequence of the politicians' negative perceptions of existing participatory mechanisms and of their limited political will to make them more efficient, there is a lack of capacity-building initiatives that would allow participants to better understand their role as citizens and, in turn, to demand collectively better access to the rights of citizenship.

To conclude, my findings about the level of political competition, the balance of power within civil society and the perceptions actors have of their role in the process confirm the argument that in order to explain the type of state-society relationships that emerge within the institutions of participatory decentralization, institutional design is an important variable to consider but sociopolitical factors are also crucial to fully understand the strategies and behaviors of both the political and social actors who participate and enact these institutions in practice. In the case of Nezahualcóyotl, political control over the participatory mechanisms they had activated has been the strategy used by political parties. This type of strategy, influencing the way participants behave within and outside the formal institutions of participation, has important consequences for the deepening of democracy. It curtails the potential for these institutions to encourage autonomous forms of participation, reinforcing the imbalances of power within the existing civil society organizations and the perception shared by both social and political actors about the dysfunctional character of Neza's participatory structure.

3.5 SUSTAINED CLIENTELISM AND THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY

In sum, even if it has adapted to the new context of competitive elections, clientelism still characterizes state-society relationships in Nezahualcóyotl, and the politicized nature of participation has precluded the development of more effective participatory mechanisms. The daily administration of the city, in spite of public efforts to overcome the patterns of state-society relationships established during the PRI rule, sustains political privileges and clientelistic relationships organized around a strongly institutionalized party system. On the one hand, I have argued that the way the institutional space for citizen participation created by the COPACI and the CODEMUN systems was designed in Nezahualcóyotl did not foster changes in traditional patterns of social mobilization, leaving them mostly oriented toward particularistic demands formulated and channeled to the local state through political connections and privileged relationships with COPACI and CODEMUN members. On the other hand, I have also demonstrated that, even more importantly, the way both political and social actors strategize and behave within the institutions of participation have allowed their capture by political parties and their affiliated social organizations, using them as political tools through informal practices of co-option.

Together, these two defining dimensions of state-society relationships have had important consequences on the quality of democracy in Nezahualcóyotl and on the prospects for the deepening of democracy. Rather than creating new public space for collective deliberations and autonomous citizen participation, Neza's participatory decentralization reforms have reinforced the traditional model of clientelism. First, by empowering particular individuals as the legitimate channel for citizens to address their demands, the local participatory structure created new forms of privileged access to power and financial resources, strengthening the current inequalities among civil society according to their relationship with the governing party. In this manner, the participatory institutions contribute to strengthen social exclusion rather than creating opportunities to empower the traditionally marginalized. Second, the political control exercised by political elites over the participatory mechanisms prevents an autonomous civil society from emerging as an actor and equal partner of the local state, maintaining the citizen's dependency on

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the will of politicians for accessing the basic rights of citizenship. This limits the autonomy of citizens because particularistic ties fostered through these practices prevent citizens from holding politicians responsible for their decisions. Autonomy is also weakened by the lack of transparency of such a policy-making strategy, undermining the potential for citizen-participation to be integrated and channeled within the democratic structure of the state and, in turn, really hold local politicians accountable and responsive for their decisions and actions. Thus, we can conclude that, in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, participatory decentralization reforms have not contributed to the deepening of democracy at the local level. The institutional design and the sociopolitical political context within which these reforms were adopted and enacted in practice prevent civil society from emerging as a core actor of the social construction of citizenship, able to demand social inclusion and to act as an accountability agent overseeing the state and applying sanctions when necessary.

Head quarters of an important social organization active in Nezahualcóyotl, the Movimiento Nueva Vida, PRD-affiliated (H. Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, 2007).

CHAPTER FOUR

LEÓN: A MODEL OF FRAGMENTED INCLUSION

"Participatory institutions have worked as to bring citizens closer to the local government and they need to continue working and growing. The citizen committees were born out of necessity. Now, our society needs to learn how to get together and participate with the government."
-- Citizen councilor, León[52]

4.1 INTRODUCTION

León, with a population of 1 278 087 (INEGI, 2005, p. 91), is the biggest city of the State of Guanajuato, located in the central part of Mexico. Though the settlement of León dates back to colonial times, it has seen a significant growth in the last century, becoming one of the most populous urban centers of the country. This growth is mostly due to the rapid industrialization of the city, which became one of the main poles of the shoe industry in Mexico. As in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, León was governed by the PRI for most of the 20th century through a highly centralized and exclusionary model of governance, and its social organization mostly revolved around the party structure and local PRI-affiliated organizations. As in the great majority of Mexican municipalities, state-society relationships were thus organized around the PRI system, and characterized by a prevalence of clientelistic networks and exchanges that generated social exclusion in a context of unequal urban development and differentiated access to the rights of citizenship. One peculiarity of this particular case is, however, that the PRI León has always maintained a local political structure allowing the existence of a controlled political opposition that was able to compete for (but not win) local elections. During the political opening of the 1980's, its conservative background as the heart of the Catholic Church in Mexico and its economic strength based on a tradition of small entrepreneurship made León a quite unique case, as a very fertile terrain for the emergence and strengthening of the PAN as a major political force able to overcome the traditional domination of the PRI at the local level. It was indeed one of the first cities to

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[52] Personal interview with a citizen councilor, León, November 23, 2007 (Consejera ciudadana 1, 2007).

elect a non-PRI government in 1988, as a combined result of the political opening of the municipal electoral arena by the Mexican federation and of the local organization of the PAN opposition, which succeeded in forming the majority at the municipal council since then.

Did the early electoral successes of the PAN in León contribute to the democratization of the local governance process as they consistently promised since 1988? More specifically, what has been the impact of participatory decentralization reforms on the nature of state-society relationships in the local governance process? Did these participatory mechanisms overcome the clientelistic mechanisms that characterized state-society relationships and resource distribution under the PRI and that survived reform efforts in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl? This chapter aims at answering these questions, arguing that in León, contrary to what we have observed in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, local participatory institutions have been used as a mechanism to include democratically autonomous citizen participation and input in the local decision-making process. As we will see, however, this social inclusion was achieved in a fragmented way, as civil society remains poorly organized in a context where citizens are mostly mobilized on an individual basis. Though it constitutes a substantial transformation of traditional state-society relationships, the fragmented inclusion model that emerges reduces the ability for civil society to collectively engage in the definition of the common good, thereby limiting the prospects for these mechanisms to contribute to extend the scope of social inclusion and to fully deepen the democratic local governance processes.

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE FORMATION OF AN INDUSTRIAL URBAN POLE IN THE CENTER OF MEXICO

Founded in the mid-16th century, León is located in the central state of Guanajuato and was colonized by the Spanish in order to contain local conflicts among the various indigenous peoples who were present in the region. It is not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that the city emerged as an economic leader in Mexico, becoming an example of the growing industrialization of the central region of the country. While sharing common characteristics with Mexican municipalities such as Nezahualcóyotl

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with regards to the control exercised by the PRI over local politics and social organization during most of the past century, we will see that León has a quite unique and interesting history characterized by the presence of social and political opponents to the well-established PRI, more or less active according to the period. On the one hand, and unlike most Mexican regions, the State of Guanajuato and León's post-revolutionary periods were characterized by a certain degree of political and social counterrevolutionary mobilization, which tends to explain the rise of political parties opposed to the official positions of the PRM in the 1930's-40's[53]. On the other hand, and though the articulation of the local corporatist structure differed from the one observed in Nezahualcóyotl, León also qualifies as an exemplary case of the traditional clientelistic model of state-society upon which the legitimacy and local hegemony of the PRI were established. After 1946, the PRM (later the PRI) indeed succeeded at keeping both political and social opposition forces fragmented and poorly organized, consolidating its corporatist structure through co-option and clientelistic-based resource redistribution at the municipal level and even using political repression as a tool to demobilize opposition groups. The post-revolutionary background of León and the continued existence of such groups would, however, allow local opposition to resist the hegemony of the PRI. While remaining generally weak in the city until the 1980's, the PAN experienced a strong reemergence as a viable opposition party early in the 1980's, making León one of the first Mexican municipalities to elect a non-PRI local government in 1988.

4.2.1 The León Post-Revolutionary Exception? The PRI Rule, Political Repression and Clientelism

As the industrial center of the State of Guanajuato and one of the main poles of the Mexican 'Bible Belt'[54], the recent political history city of León is quite interesting since, as in the case of Nezahulcóyotl, a certain level of opposition to the PRI regime has been observed at the local level in the post-revolutionary period. While it mostly revolved

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[53] In 1929, the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) was founded at the national level, and president-elect Lazaro Cárdenas changed the party's name to *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (PRM) in 1938. It is in 1946 that the party became the current PRI, under Manuel Avila Camacho.

[54] With more than 98% of its population self-declared Catholic, León is considered to be located at the center of the Mexican Bible Belt, characterized by the deep influence of catholic values and conservatism on the organization of society and political ideologies (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a).

around an atomized and co-opted struggle for land in Nezahualcóyotl, the particularity of León's local history of contention is that it was organized around the political expression of the ideological disagreements between the PRI elites and the powerful Catholic Church's local social movements[55]. Among these movements, we can notably mention the *Unión Nacional Sinarquísta* (UNS – National Sinarquist Union) founded in León in 1937. Moreover, the local political post-revolutionary class was divided, and many dissident members of the official party were politically active (Valencia García, 2001). León could also count on the significant presence of local entrepreneurs and relatively wealthy families living off the development of the industrial sector that could remain relatively independent from political influences and co-option (Shirk, 1999). The plurality of political ideas and, most importantly, the opposition to the governing PRM, fostered the activation of social forces. These forces organized through the creation of political parties, such as the PAN in 1939, which rallied religious and economic leaders in the 1940's under the umbrella of the *Unión Cívica de León* (UCL – León Civic Union) to create a sustainable opposition to the local hegemony of the PRM. The contentious nature of the post-revolutionary period, which allowed a certain level of social and political opposition to exist during the PRI regime, is critical to understanding the peculiarity of the clientelistic state-society relationships model that developed in León. This reflects the dual nature of its society, often opposed to the local government policies while being dependent upon it through the corporatist system established by the PRI for resource distribution, which prevents social organizations from really becoming significant actors outside the channels of the official party.

The existence of a certain level of political and social organization outside the PRI party apparatus in León in the first years of the party's rule in the city makes this case unique in the post-revolutionary Mexican context. Such uniqueness cannot, however, overshadow the fact that León is also typical of the other large municipalities of the country, dominated by the PRI through the combination of political repression and of a resource-

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[55] During the post-revolutionary period, when the PRM (then the PRI) established bases of its hegemony over the country, León and the State of Guanajuato became the theater of an opposition movement led by influential catholic movements who were against the reforms of the clergy proposed by the revolutionary Mexican Constitution.

distribution model that relied on the ability of social actors to establish clientelistic links with the governing party. As a consequence, after 1946, the relatively autonomous political and social activism that was typical of the post-revolutionary years in León dramatically decreased (Shirk, 1999).

The first element that has contributed to support the PRI's electoral hegemony was the use of political repression as a tool for preventing the further development of opposition parties in the city. In fact, despite the continued existence of the PAN at the local level, the PRI (and previously the PRM) maintained a clear political domination over the municipal government of León until its first recognized electoral defeat in 1988. Political opposition forces remained fragmented and poorly organized, especially after the 1946 municipal elections, where the PRM used violent repression against PAN supporters and members of the allied opposition in León. In spite of electoral results in favor of the PAN candidate Carlos Obregón, the PMR/PRI candidate, Ignacio Quiroz, was appointed municipal president and took office on January 1, 1946. The next day, the historical city center became the scene of a massive mobilization from the UCL and the UNS, a pro-PAN coalition publicly contesting the results of the mayoral election and the 'illegitimate' recognition of the PMR/PRI candidate's victory. This demonstration was violently repressed by the military, leading to at least thirty deaths and six hundred injured. This episode not only contributed to shutting down political activity outside the PRI's ranks, but it also set the stage for decades of generally uncontested PRI rule in León. Though the PAN remained somewhat politically active as the opposition party in local elections[56], the party organization remained weak and struggled to gather support and attract interest (Shirk, 1999, 2005). Moreover, after the 1946 events, the PRI developed a strategy meant to secure its own legitimacy in power, co-opting opposition leaders through nominations within the city administrative structures (Valencia García, 2001). Therefore, the 1946 events constitute an important moment in turning both social

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[56] During the years following the 1946 events, some movements associated to the religious sections of the opposition and to the *sinarquista* leaders tried to mobilize and even form political parties to present candidates for elected positions at the local and at the state level, with only very limited success. The PAN, and to a lesser extent the PDM, remained the only salient opposition parties in the city and, despite their lack of funding and organizational capacities, periodically succeeded in getting some candidates elected in local level elections (Valencia García, 2001).

and political opposition forces into weak actors that would not be able to consistently challenge the PRI and mobilize followers until the 1980's. Nevertheless, León, and more generally the State of Guanajuato, remained a fertile arena for opposition movements to develop, which would influence period of political opening during the 1980's.

The other factor explaining the sustainability of the official party in the city was its ability to limit the development of an autonomous civil society, a consequence of the use of local level mobilization structures for political support purposes by the PRI. In León, the local party structure and successful political leaders could therefore count on the support of at least three strategic social actors: the shoe industry unions affiliated to the CTM, the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Seguro Social* (SNTSS – National Union of Social Security Workers), and the local sections of the CNOP. Due to its strategic location between the commercial poles of Guadalajara and Mexico, León soon became an important industrial center and one of the largest urban centers of the country. Yet, the making of an industrial city also relies upon the existence of a large workers sector, which composed the majority of León's urban population. Over the past century, the city has mostly grown around the local *calzados* (shoe) industry, attracting migrants from all around the country, looking for work and expanding the urban territory far beyond the original frontiers of the city. A key characteristic defining state-society relationships in the municipality was the alliance between the official party and local workers' unions which became an important source of support for the PRI and the backbone of the local corporatist structure behind the party's political hegemony. As in many other industrial municipalities of the central region of Mexico, the alliance with local unions was particularly important to the corporatist structure sustaining the PRI's hegemony, as they constituted legitimate social actors whose leaders had a significant mobilization potential among the working population. The PRI traditionally used political class renewal strategies (nominations for local deputy and municipal councilors positions) as a reward for loyal social organizations and union leaders who, in exchange, used their leadership to offer the party a captive clientele that would support the party and to organize electoral campaigns (Ortiz García, 1991, p. 26). As a result, by the early 1980's, the local PRI leaders had managed to co-opt most of the influential union leaders

within the structure of the party, obtaining their loyal support in exchange for political favors and privileged access to power resources. Clientelism therefore characterized state-society relationships during the PRI rule and contributed to weaken both the social and political opposition forces previously active in the city.

Another important source of popular support the local PRI capitalized upon was its alliance with the social sector through the local social organizations providing services to marginalized populations. As in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, the rapid expansion of the city was generally made at the expense of the new-comers who, up until today, have been buying parcels of land from *fraccionadores* who have obtained property titles for the previously collectively owned *ejidos* (collective land for farming). The growing number of residents buying these parcels of land, categorized as irregular and generally sold without access to basic urban services, has generated an important urbanization problem for municipal governments. Large parts of León indeed developed into *colonias populares* whose residents' access to basic urban services relied upon the ability of their social leaders to formulate demands upon the local authorities and establish privileged relationships with them. A certain level of social activity continued at the grassroots, but this type of social activism was far from autonomous. As observed by Ortiz García (1991), one of the PRI's favored strategies to recruit candidates for local elected positions was to seek support among the socially recognized leaders of neighborhood associations, self-help groups, professional organization, etc. Furthermore, local consulting processes were used as clientelistic tools to secure political support in the communities, appointing local leaders to neighborhood groups responsible for being the official 'non-partisan' link between the municipal government and the population's needs. As a *comité de colonos* president who was involved for more than twenty years in his neighborhood explained, with the neighbors' tables system:

> there was a lot of favoritism when the person was a friend or an acquaintance of the administration: in that case, things were done immediately whereas when you were not a friend or were from another party, things were never getting done (President comité de colonos 3, 2007).

The structure of citizen-based participation was therefore existent and officially autonomous from the PRI, but it was used as a tool for the party to reach its clientele through directed resource distribution. The party could thus retain more generalized support outside the traditional channels of the corporatist party structure, co-opting and maintaining clientelistic relationships with natural leaders recognized among and legitimized by their peers for their social activism in the city. As a consequence, residents of the numerous irregular neighborhoods of the city became heavily dependent upon local authorities for accessing basic services such as sewage, electricity, water and street pavement, keeping the population in a state both of extreme dependence to personal and political connections and of vulnerability due to their status as captive clients.

Thus, one can argue that in the case of León, though some social organization did exist at the local level, citizens remained highly reliant upon the relationships they were able to develop with the official party, undermining the development of an autonomous civil society. Hence, as in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, the PRI established a particularistic and clientelistic structure of interest intermediation through powerful local individuals who had close ties with the party. This corporatist structure not only contributed to the successes of the official (though controversial) party in León, but it also fostered the weakening and the fragmentation of political opposition forces and hindered the development of an autonomous civil society, two challenges that the PAN had to face during the opening of the municipal electoral arena in the 1980's, as we shall see next.

4.2.2 Political Opening and the Rise of Viable Opposition from the Right

As in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, the political liberalization of the municipal electoral space in Mexico opened new possibilities for the opposition forces to organize and become a sustainable political option for León's citizens. The León section of the PAN had existed and been active during local electoral cycles since 1937, but the opening of the municipal arena to political pluralism in the 1980's allowed the party to organize more effectively and emerge as a legitimate opposition challenging the ruling PRI. The empowerment of the PAN in León occurred simultaneously with the party's evolution as a national opposition during the 1980's, but it only culminated in 2000 with the election

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of Vicente Fox (an ex-governor of the State of Guanajuato) as President of the Mexican Republic[57]. As the PAN was already a registered political party in León, its ascension toward forming the municipal government and overcoming the PRI local hegemony was relatively quick. As soon as 1982, the party started to make significant electoral gains in the city at the expense of its natural opponent and, in 1988, won the mayoral election with a significant majority.

Two sets of factors have been proposed in the literature to explain the early successes of the PAN in León. First, it has been highlighted that the traditional culture of small entrepreneurship, conservatism and anti-centralism that characterizes León's population has made the city fertile ground for the reemergence and the strengthening of the PAN in the 1980's (Valencia García, 2001). The ascension of the PAN to the rank of salient political alternative to the PRI occurred over a decade, culminating with its election to the municipal government in 1988. When the municipal electoral arenas opened to political pluralism in the late 1970's, several minor political parties were registered in León, including the PAN and the PDM, both associated to the right. As the electoral results of the period tend to emphasize[58], however, the PDM was rapidly overthrown by the PAN and remained a marginal political force in a mostly bipartisan system. Why did the PAN become the rallying alternative for PRI opponents? According to Ortiz, the PAN has generally been identified as "the party opposed to, first, constitutional anticlericalism and second, more recently, to state intervention in the economy. But, moreover, the PAN appeals to citizens in terms of the historical events that happened and have left a trace in collective memories" (Ortiz García, 1991, p. 8). During the 1980's, the party therefore played on collective memories and a latent social opposition to the PRI regime, building a pro-localism, -Catholicism and -private entrepreneurship political agenda to mobilize popular support, a strategy that has led to the development of a clear bipartisan competition in the city (Valencia García, 1996).

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[57] For a detailed account of the history of the right and, more specifically, of the rise of the PAN throughout the 20th century, see David Shirk's *Mexico's New Politics* (Shirk, 2005) and Yemile Mizhrani's *From Martyrdom to Power* (Mizrahi, 2003a).

[58] From 1979 to 1991, while the PAN share of the votes in municipal elections has consistently increased and has become more and more challenging for the official party's rule, the level of popular support for the PDM has consistently decreased, going from 9.1% to 1.3% (Valencia García, 1996).

Second, contextual factors have also played a determinant role in the election of Carlos Medina Plascencia in 1988, a local entrepreneur with only few years of political experience as a PAN *regidor* elected in the previous administration[59]. In fact, both the internal divisions and crises of the local PRI organization and the larger context of political mobilization behind the candidacy of PAN member Manuel Clouthier for the presidential election contributed to foment the momentum that led to the PAN victory in León. The national economic crisis that had plagued Mexico since the mid-1980's – attributed to the mismanagement of the PRI – was already an important source of discontentment in León, where the local economic development was mostly dependent upon small and medium entrepreneurs who were affected by the crisis. It was, however, the repeated denunciations of corruption against the local PRI members that not only engendered an important internal conflict within the official party, weakening its local organization and traditional cohesion, but also raised many doubts about its already shaken legitimacy. In 1987, a group led by local entrepreneurs and PAN *regidores*[60] started a public campaign to denounce the PRI municipal president Antonio Hernández Ornelas – for his violations of the municipal budget and, consequently, of the municipal organic law – who was forced to resign (Valencia García, 1996). Internal disputes within the PRI local leadership surrounded this episode, and their traditional base of support declined[61]. Both elements played in favor of the PAN, which could then present itself as the party of social and political justice in a context of generalized distrust for PRI politicians, as well as a unified and well-structured opposition force that could take up the challenge of governance.

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[59] It is interesting to note that this local entrepreneur/businessman profile would become the distinctive profile of most PAN's candidates and elected mayors in the city of León, and more generally in the State of Guanajuato (Shirk, 1999; Valencia García, 1996). Under the PRI, this enviable position was generally given to city notables, including lawyers, doctors or entrepreneurs, according to the needs of the corporatist regime (Ortiz García, 1991). During the 1980's, as a consequence of the increasing influence of the PAN on the municipal arena in León, the PRI also started to appoint small entrepreneurs as candidates for the major elected positions of the city to be more competitive with the PAN in a context of political pluralism.
[60] Carlos Medina Plascencia, *regidor* who would become the first PAN municipal president of León after the 1988 election, was one of the group's leaders (Mora Macbeath, 2008).
[61] The 1988 municipal election in León was not only characterized by a defection of many PRI supporters who voted for the PAN, but more generally by the apathy of the electorate who decided in large part not to go to the polls. In fact, an abstention rate of about 70% was registered in 1988 (Valencia García, 1996). This rate continues to be relatively high since then in León, but also more generally in Mexican municipalities.

Yet, the decisive victory of Medina Plascencia, while conceded without much resistance, took the PRI by surprise: three years earlier, the party was still far behind the PRI in the municipal suffrages. According to many observers, this municipal victory cannot be explained without considering the 'Manuel Clouthier effect' and the mobilization buzz it engendered around the city in the months preceding the presidential election of July 1988 (Mora Macbeath, 2008; Shirk, 1999). Clouthier, who was the PAN presidential candidate in 1988, rallied important support in León during the electoral campaign, a city where he had invested a lot of energy and mobilization efforts. In the aftermath of the 'fraudulent' election of Carlos Salinas, Clouthier's supporters in León remained active at the local level, and many of them became actively involved in Medina's campaign for mayor[62]. The PAN was therefore able to benefit from the local context of distrust and crisis surrounding the PRI and to take advantage of the resulting opening of the municipal electoral arena, mobilizing voters and supporters not only from the local business class, but also from the youth movements and from the more traditional sectors of the urban population.

4.3 THE RISE OF THE RIGHT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAN IN LEÓN: A TURN TOWARD MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE?

As argued earlier, political decentralization reforms in Mexico have set the stage for the awakening of the opposition forces in the municipal arena. In León, advantage could be taken of those already in place. In this case, the prior existence of the PAN as an organized (though poorly) political actor made the transition to pluralism faster relative to other parts of the country, making it an exemplary case of an opposition government's success at the municipal level. Taking advantage of the opening of the local electoral arena to emerging political parties, the PAN could mobilize support through the reactivation of its traditional alliance with the religious movements and more conservative sectors of the economic elite, a process that started early in the 1980's.

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[62] Clouthier's political entourage in León encouraged and mainly supported the candidacy of Medina Plascencia during the internal campaign that led to his designation as the official PAN candidate by a vote of the local party convention (Mora Macbeath, 2008).

Contrary to what we have seen in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, where political pluralism first led to the rise of multiple and often opposing political forces, the rise of the right took place in a unified manner in León, under the already organized PAN as the political banner uniting all the conservative social forces. As a result, the 1988 municipal election brought several changes in the city's political landscape, with the election of the first officially recognized PAN mayor, Carlos Medina Plascencia.

TABLE 6   **VOTE FOR MUNICIPAL PRESIDENT AND CITY COUNCIL IN LEÓN, 1989-2006**

Mandate	Political Parties / Elected Mayors	% Vote
1989-1992	**PAN (Carlos Medina Plascencia, elected)**	**60.5%**
	PRI	36.6%
	PDM	1.8%
1992-1995	**PAN (Eliseo Martínez Pérez, elected)**	**62.3%**
	PRI	35.1%
	PDM	8.0%
1995-1997	**PAN (Luis M. Quirós Echegaray, elected)**	**50.9%**
	PRI	46.6%
1997-2000	**PAN (Jorge Carlos Obregón Serrano, elected)**	**57.0%**
	PRI	31.3%
	PRD/PT	6.2%
2000-2003	**PAN (Luis Ernesto Ayala Torres, elected)**	**69.8%**
	PRI	25.1%
	PRD/PT	3.2%
2003-2006	**PAN (Ricardo Alaniz Posada, elected)**	**49.3%**
	PRI	22.9%
	PVEM	20.3%
2006-2009	**PAN (Vicente Guerrero Reynoso, elected)**	**62.9%**
	PRI	21.2%
	PRD/PT	6.7%

Sources: *Instituto Electoral del Estado de Guanajuato*, http://www.ieeg.org.mx/ [page consulted 16/04/09], Guadalupe Valencia García and Enrique Cabrero Medoza's reports elaborated from IEEG and the previous State of Guanajuato Electoral Commission data (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a, p. 196; Valencia García, 1996, p. 91).

As table 6 shows, since 1988, the PAN has managed to repeatedly get elected its candidates for mayor and a majority of its candidates for *regidores* in León[63] with a more

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[63] As explained in Chapter 3, the Mexican electoral system includes elements of the majoritarian and the proportional systems, depending upon each state's political constitution. According to the *Constitución del Estado de Guanajuato*, the municipal president and the *síndicos* are elected according to majority rule, and

or less stable share of the popular vote. What changes have the rise of social and political pluralism and potential political alternation brought to the practice of local governance in León?

4.3.1 The PAN in Power: Changing the Dynamics of Local Governance

The election of Carlos Medina Plascencia in 1998 has had many consequences on the PAN itself, institutionalizing the party's organization at the local level. More importantly for this study, the possibility of political alternation in power brought by the 1988 election also had important impacts on the administrative organization of the municipality[64] and on the governance mechanisms and processes. First, holding the responsibility of the municipal government has paved the way for the professionalization of the party and for the increase in its organizational and mobilization capacities, both elements that helped the PAN become a dominant political force at the local level in the pluralistic context of democratizing Mexico (Shirk, 1999). Since 1988, the PAN has established itself as the party of government in León, winning all subsequent elections by large margins over the PRI (see table 6). Moreover, León (and the State of Guanajuato) has become an important political bastion of the PAN and the incubator of many PAN leaders over the past few years, with Vicente Fox being the best-known example. Second, and more importantly for this particular study, PAN leaders came to power with great expectations for transforming the traditional and clientelistic modes of governance established under the PRI. With the first PAN municipal administration in León, we generally speak of

> an administration which objective was to break and overcome the
> traditional corporatist and clientelistic relationship with the population

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the *regidores* are elected following the principle of proportionality (Congreso del Estado de Guanajuato, 2003[1917], art. 109). The number of elected members of the municipal council is established by the *Ley Orgánica para los Municipios* (Municipal Organic Law) according to the size of the municipality (in terms of population). In León, the *Ley Orgánica* stipulates that the *cabildo* should be formed by two *síndicos* and twelve *regidores* (Congreso del Estado de Guanajuato, 1997, art. 26).

[64] There is an abundant literature in Mexico on the 'entrepreneurial' model of governance established by PAN municipal administrations in the North and Center of the country, referring more to the actual model of public administration, the reform and the professionalization of the local bureaucracy, inspired notably by theories of new public management. For more on this see, among others, Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, David Arellano Gault and Tonatiuh Guillén Lopez's recent work (Arellano Gault, 1999; Cabrero Mendoza, 1995, 2005, 2006a; Guillén López, 1996).

and to try new types of relations based upon citizen participation in the government tasks (Valencia García, 1996, p. 82).

Similarly to the PRD's discourse in the 1996 campaign in Nezahualcóyotl, Medina Plascencia's campaign discourses and intentions were clear: he wanted to reform the local administration to make it more professionalized and to bring citizens back into the governance process. Contrary to the PRD that, as a progressive party, promoted citizen participation as an ideological element of the leftist electoral platform, the PAN pursued this participatory decentralization agenda without a real ideological commitment to it but instead for more pragmatic reasons: increasing the efficiency of the governance process and the responsiveness of the urban development policies to actual citizens' needs. The party therefore promoted the idea of a better local governance process based on citizen participation and collaboration between the state and its citizens meant to transform the traditional state-society relationships established under the PRI regime. In this context, to what extent did the election of the PAN in León change the model of local governance historically established by the PRI in the municipality? Did the PAN comply with its promises of including formal participatory mechanisms in the local decision-making process? What has been the impact of these reforms on the traditional and clientelistic ties between the local government and the Leones society?

4.3.2 The Institutional Participatory Governance Framework under the PAN

According to the *Ley Orgánica para los municipios del Estado de Guanajuato* (Organic Law for Municipalities of the State of Guanajuato), and even if citizen participation is conceived in very broad terms, municipalities should promote citizen participation for community development through "the neighborhood councils and associations, as institutions for social participation and collaboration in the administration of popular demands and of proposals of general interest" (Congreso del Estado de Guanajuato, 1997, art. 17). Their responsibilities are to participate as advisors in municipal councils, to propose ways of preserving the environment, to propose means to improve the provision of public services and the realization of public works and to inform the local government of their collective needs that require to be addressed (art. 18). This prerogative of municipal governments to refer to citizen committees and associations in the course of

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their decision-making processes has been present in the *Ley Orgánica* for many years, but as we have seen and similarly to what had been observed in Nezahualcóyotl, the PRI was not particularly inclined to activate these committees outside the controlled and organized structure of the party[65]. The election of the PAN in 1998 opened an important window of opportunity for the development of a participatory governance model, as participation has been on the local government's agenda. In his first Government's Report, mayor Medina Plascencia reaffirmed the centrality of institutionalized and autonomous forms of citizen participation for his administration:

> the common work of the administration and of the population to realize public works for the common good leaves behind the ominous patrimonialism through which it was usual to govern […]. This citizen-based organization is promoted beyond partisan interests. The city council governs for all Leones, without exception (Medina Plascencia, 1989, p. 65).

This commitment to institutionalizing participatory processes was carried out under Medina's government with the recognition and promotion of the *comités de colonos* as agents of local development, then pursued by his successors (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a; Guarneros-Meza, 2007). Two closely intertwined mechanisms compose the current participatory governance system in León: 1) the COPLADEM, the citizen-based planning process, supported by the system of the *consejeros ciudadanos* (citizen councilors) and of the *comités de colonos* (neighbors committees), and 2) the *Miércoles Ciudadano* (Citizens Wednesdays).

Comité para la Planeación y el Desarrollo Municipal, Consejeros Ciudadanos and Comités de Colonos

In conformity with the dispositions of the National Democratic Planning System adopted in 1996 in Mexico City (see chapter 2) and with the Constitution of the State of Guanajuato, León's PAN administration chose to establish a local participatory planning structure aimed at including citizens in the discussions leading to decisions regarding the annual urban development plan. In many Mexican municipalities, this participatory figure

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[65] This question has been studied in greater details by scholars such as Valencia García (1996), and was also corroborated by my own personal interviews with *comités de colonos* participants from León (Consejero ciudadano 3, 2007; President comité de colonos 3, 2007).

has become either an empty shell or a mechanism that only consults city notables. In León, the model developed by the PAN administration of Quirós Echegaray in 1998 was, however, weighted toward the inclusion of the general population in the planning process as its main function was to "foster the integral and democratic planning of the city" (Coordinadora de procesos COPLADEM, 2007; H. Ayuntamiento de León, 1996)[66]. As he highlighted in his *Informe de Gobierno* in 1998, talking about the recent implementation and achievements of the COPLADEM in the city:

> today, the society itself is the one that decides the public works that will be achieved for the common good of the local communities and of our social development through an authentic participatory democracy (Quirós Echegaray, 1998, p. 6)

Every year, the COPLADEM process (see graph 2), including an active participation of the local state's representatives, ensures that citizens will be included as a majoritarian partner in the process through two existing citizen-based mechanisms: the *comités de colonos*, active at the neighborhood level, and the elected *consejeros* that represent their respective members in the COPLADEM commissions and discussions over municipal investment priorities.

As graph 2 illustrates, the elaboration of the annual urban planning proposal is done over a year-long process divided into a series of steps involving the direct and indirect participation and input of citizens.

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[66] In León, notable citizens and representatives of professional associations such as doctors, lawyers, university professors, engineers, etc. have a central role in the longer-term planning process through their function of active members of the consultative committee of the *Instituto Municipal de Planeación* (IMPLAN – Municipal Planning Institute), a private organization working with the *cabildo* on long-term development projects. The IMPLAN, although much more technical than the COPLADEM, is also citizen-based, and has society members participating in the governing body as *consejeros*, who work with experts in the elaboration of the city development plan that is submitted every three years to the incoming *cabildo* (Amaro Hernández, 2007; President comité consultivo IMPLAN, 2007).

GRAPH 2   COPLADEM ANNUAL PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS IN LEÓN, 1996-2008

March	Capacitation (neighborhoods)	March - July	Citizen Consultation (neighborhoods)	June-August	Municipal evaluation (municipality & consejeros)	August 30th	Elaboration Development Plan (municipality & consejeros)	September	Approval & Divulgation (municipality)
	Municipal officials give documents and information about the process to the *comités de colonos* and the urban and rural *consejeros*		*Comités de colonos* organize local public assemblies to define needs Comités collect demands and prepare formal resquests		1) Technical evaluation of projects feasability If pre-approved: 2) Priorities determination in thematic commissions		Final public works plan elaborated by the COPLADEM permanent commission		Final approval of COPLADEM proposal by the municipal council Public divulgation through the *comités* and *consejeros*

Source: Compiled by the author from original data collected through interviews with municipal public officials (Coordinadora de procesos COPLADEM, 2007; Director Desarrollo Social, 2007) and from internal documents prepared by the city of León (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2006a).

The first step of the COPLADEM participatory process takes place at the grassroots level, and consists in the distribution of information on the process and the ensuing public consultation done at the neighborhood level. This first part of the process therefore directly involves citizens' active participation through their local *comités de colonos*. The *comités de colonos* are neighborhood based elected citizen committees fomented by and working hand-in-hand with the *Dirección de Desarrollo Social* (Social Development Office) of the municipality[67]. The municipality is divided in more than 900 *colonias* (neighborhoods) located in three zones (Norte, Centro, Sur), again subdivided into 11 smaller sectors. Each *colonia* can elect a *comité de colonos*, which consists of 8 members elected by popular assemblies convoked in collaboration with the *Dirección de*

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[67] Over the years and the municipal presidencies, the organization of the local administration changed, which explains that the new name of the direction responsible for the activation and the work of the *comités de colonos*. In 1989 and until 1994, they were under the *Dirección de Integración Ciudadana* (Citizen Integration Branch), which eventually became the *Dirección de Desarrollo Social*. According to the municipal organic regulation, it is the municipal social development agents who foment the creation of committees in each officially recognized neighborhood (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2006b).

Desarrollo Social. These *comités* are voluntary, and not all neighborhoods have an active committee[68]. Yet, their number has consistently increased since their institutionalization as the official entity of citizen participation in 1990[69]: from a mere 72 in 1989, there are now more than 450 *comités de colonos* active in as many neighborhoods of León (Cabrero Mendoza, 1995; Director Desarrollo Social, 2007).

TABLE 7   EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF *COMITÉS DE COLONOS* REGISTERED, LEÓN, 1989-2007

Mandates	Comités de colonos	% of Growth
1989-1991	90	-
1992-1994	200	122.2%
1995-1997	321	37.7%
1998-2000	248	-22.7%
2000-2003	450	81.5%
2003-2006	413	-8.2%
2007	432	4.6%

Source: Compilation by the author with data from the *Informes de Gobierno* (Government Reports) produced by the municipal presidents of the *H. Ayuntamiento de León* between 1989-2007.

Committee members, who must be residents of the neighborhood for which they run, are elected for three-year mandates (renewable once) by their neighbors[70]. The committees

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[68] One limit of the system of *comités de colonos* in León is that only officially regularized neighborhoods can have a *comité* recognized by the municipal government as the channel for citizen participation (Director Desarrollo Social, 2007). As a consequence, the yet non-regularized neighborhoods (generally the most vulnerable ones) do not have this privileged access to the municipal government and, in turn, to the basic urban services it provides through the demands formulated by the committees.

[69] The institutionalization of their role as the official entities for citizen participation started in 1990, when Medina Plascencia asked the 84 *comités'* presidents to form an autonomous Municipal Council in order to "maintain themselves as an active community force in relation to the municipal authorities" (AM de León, 1990, 1991). Since 2008, however, an important turn has been taken in furthering the institutionalization of such citizen committees as the officially recognized participatory channel of the municipality. In fact, for the first time since their creation in 1989, a municipal law defines their functions and attributions, as well as the democratic rules behind their formation, daily functioning and relationship to the local administration. This document defines the *comités* as "organs of citizen representation, participation and collaboration for the management of social interest demands and proposals for a neighborhood [..] that are composed of a group of citizens democratically elected in a constitutive assembly, with the objective of protecting, fostering and improving the general interest of the population through citizen participation, collaboration and solidarity, creating a direct relationship of the authorities with the citizenry, thereby reaching its development" (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2008, art. 3).

[70] According to the election rules, these assemblies should reunite 50%+1 of the neighborhood's residents and house owners to be valid. The election process can sometimes take one, two or three assemblies,

are composed of eight members (and their respective replacements): a president, a general secretary, a treasurer and five secretaries associated with thematic commissions (social development, education and culture, security and public transportation, infrastructure). Though they must follow certain rules to be recognized by the municipal government, the *comités'* formal role in the governance process has generally been loosely defined by the municipal regulations. Generally speaking, however, these neighborhood committees perform functions similar as those performed by the COPACIs in Nezahualcóyotl: they organize general assemblies in their neighborhood, gather their neighbors' demands and channel them to the local administration through the different existing mechanisms. As we have seen, one of their most important roles is to contribute to the participatory urban planning process by including citizens' input in the definition of the municipality's needs. Actively participating to the COPLADEM process, they are mandated by the local administration to organize public assemblies, receive citizens' requests and collectively identify the needs of their local communities in terms of infrastructure and urban development projects.

As shown in graph 2, the later steps of the COPLADEM participatory process still involve citizen participation, but in a more indirect manner. In fact, the role of the *comités de colonos* in the planning process is generally confined to mobilization at the grassroots level. They are, however, also actively engaged with the other neighborhoods of their city sector[71] via the election of the *consejeros ciudadanos* (citizen councilors), representatives who act as direct intermediaries between the government and the *comités de colonos* of their respective city sectors in the COPLADEM process. Every three years, the *comités de colonos* elect one *consejero* per sector (22 urban and 12 rural *consejeros*) to represent them at the municipal level. *Consejeros* are responsible not only for channeling local demands to the municipal authorities, but also for discussing and debating the broader questions of planning and public works adopting a citywide perspective. It is in this perspective that the *consejeros* are included in the third step of

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depending on whether the local committees are able to mobilize their neighbors or not in the first assembly. The third assembly is the last one to be convoked, and the 50+1 rule does not apply in such case.

[71]They are also engaged with all the *comités'* representatives through the *Consejo municipal de comités de colonos*, a municipal council formed by the *comités'* presidents, presided by the mayor and meeting every month to discuss policies and programs from a citywide perspective.

the COPLADEM process: city prioritization of the public works evaluated as feasible by the technical staff of the local government and the determination of beneficiaries among the submitted proposals. The consejeros thus become citizen representatives participating with municipal councilors and public officials in discussions over policy priorities taking place in the several thematic commissions to which the demands are transmitted. Then, the permanent commission of the COPLADEM, composed of consejeros and regidores, taking stock of the proposals made by the several thematic commissions, work on elaborating the final investment plan for urban planning to be submitted to the municipal council for final approval. The council's final decision is again overseen by the COPLADEM and publicly announced to citizens through the consejeros and comités de colonos.

The Miércoles Ciudadano

Another important participatory innovation implemented by the PAN in León is the Miércoles Ciudadano (Citizens' Wednesday), a program that offers ordinary citizens an opportunity to access city hall and administrative personnel to directly formulate their demands and express specific concerns. This innovative experiment, started in León in 1994 and generally considered successful in terms of participation rates by local politicians, has also been reproduced by several PAN administrations and implemented in about 40 urban municipalities across the country (H. Ayuntamiento de León, 2007).

The mechanism is relatively simple, as it involves direct interactions between individual citizens and members of the local government and administration. Since 1994, every Wednesday morning, city hall becomes the host of thousands of citizens who address their requests directly to the mayor and his various secretaries. Requests vary in type, but they generally concern particular needs affecting one or few citizens. Examples of typical requests formulated through the Miércoles include street repairs, street lighting, trash collection or questions regarding social programs, but they can also include very personal concerns related to unemployment and job search, contested fines, and so on. This program, meant to offer individual citizens a direct access to public administration officials, is also an important retroaction system for the local government, allowing

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authorities to get a better sense of the citizens' daily preoccupations and demands through a direct contact (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a). A year after its implementation, mayor Quirós Echegaray was explaining the rationale behind the program in his *Informe de Gobierno*:

> We know that a government that listens to its society fosters participatory democracy, and this is where we have concentrated our efforts, to build the León that we want. […] Today, the Citizens' Wednesday is one of the best indicators though which we [the government] perceive reality. It is the instrument that serves to orient the work of the municipal government (Quirós Echegaray, 1996, p. 7-8).

Thus, more than a mere participatory mechanism created in order for individual citizens to be able to bypass the traditional demand-making channels mediated by political brokers associated with the PRI, the *Miércoles Ciudadano* has been used by the local government as a way to better understand the needs and concerns of its electorate between elections.

Since its implementation, this governmental program has had tremendous success in terms of participation rates in León, as the statistics on citizen participation per year presented in table 8 show. With the exception of 2007, the number of participants to the *Miércoles* has consistently increased since its implementation in 1994. The decrease in participants' numbers observed in 2007 most likely corresponds to a major modification in the *Miércoles Ciudadano* rules adopted under mayor Guerrero Reynoso. As explained by the person responsible of the program, the *Miércoles* was becoming a space for citizens to resolve personal problems (such as fines cancellation, demands for water and tax discounts, etc.) rather than to formulate demands that would be of more general interest for their neighbors or the city. In reaction to this 'perversion' of the mechanism, mayor Guerrero Reynoso decided only to address demands qualified as being of collective interest, thereby abolishing the possibility for citizens to make requests related to personal issues, requests that were causing long waiting lines (Directora Atención Ciudadana, 2007). As table 8 suggests, the government's self-evaluation of its experiment's success does not rely exclusively upon participation rates, but upon the capacity of the local government to actually respond to those demands as well. In fact,

according to its own numbers, the León municipal administration has generally responded quite well to the population demands, though not necessarily with positive answers. It is thus interesting to note that for the local government, a 'no' corresponds to a response, giving only an aggregate response rate that does not distinguish between the positive responses rate and the negative one, which may lead to false conclusions about the actual efficiency of the mechanism to respond to citizens' demands and needs.

TABLE 8   NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS (DEMANDS) TO THE *MIÉRCOLES CIUDADANO*, LEÓN, 1994-2007

Year*	Number of Citizens	Response rate
1995	42 000	90.0%
1999	50 000	92.0%
2001	65 807	N/A
2004	100 638	92.3%
2007	31 137	98.5%

Source: Compilation by the author with data from the *Informes de Gobierno* (Government Reports) produced by the municipal presidents of the *H. Ayuntamiento de León* between 1994 and 2007.
* The statistics compiled correspond to the number of participants registered after the first year of each president's mandate since the introduction of the *Miércoles Ciudadano* in León.

The mechanism is therefore widely used not only by individual citizens, but also by *comités de colonos* representatives, who use it as another formal channel to address their neighborhood needs and concerns. This is an interesting finding, as it suggests that the individual mechanisms of participation are perceived as a legitimate and efficient way for collective actors to channel their demands to the local state, used to supplement the collective ones. Not only does this fact illustrate the perceived efficiency of collective mechanisms among the population, but – and we will see this in greater details next – it also tends to corroborate the observations about the generally individual nature of participation in León, reinforced by the type of representation channels privileged by the local government for receiving and treating citizens' demands.

Thus, the framework of citizen participation based upon the principle of co-governance established by the PAN in León constitutes an important institutional innovation not only

for the municipality, but also for Mexico more generally[72]. It is clearly a dramatic break with the past PRI model of centralized and corporatist governance, at least on the formal level. In fact, a study of institutional procedures and mechanisms implemented by the PAN for municipal decision-making would probably lead to the conclusion that new opportunities have been opened for citizens to organize collectively and participate actively in the democratic governance process, thereby contributing to the deepening of local democracy. A more accurate portrait of how state-society relationships have evolved through these new mechanisms is, however, needed to understand better this phenomenon, looking at both formal and informal interactions in order to uncover the nature of the new participation and mobilization patterns in the city.

4.4 A LOOK INTO LOCAL PARTICIPATORY DYNAMICS: PATTERNS OF MOBILIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

León is often considered by the literature as one of the 'successful' models of participatory democracy in Mexico. In fact, it has been argued that the creation of institutional opportunities for citizen participation by the PAN governments of León has extended the public space and have created "innovative forms of interactions between local government and other sectors of society that were not developed during the more centralized and authoritarian regime" (Guarneros-Meza, 2007, p. 106). According to some observers, citizens have been better included in the governance processes of León through the existence of mechanisms such as the neighborhood committees and planning councils, inclusion that is, in theory, leading to increased accountability and reduced clientelism in state-society relationships (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a; Porras, 2005). An accurate diagnosis of the participatory model in terms of its impact on the deepening of local democracy in León has, however, not yet been done, with most scholars focusing on the existence of windows of opportunities for participation without analyzing how the different actors involved have taken advantage and used of them in practice, looking at

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[72] The innovative character of León's institutional framework has been recognized all around Mexico, many of its elements being exported to other cities, but also by scholars who have looked at the changes in the governance style imposed by the PAN since 1989, influenced by efficiency and democratic principles (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a; Cabrero Mendoza & García Del Castillo, 1994; García Del Castillo & Mejia Lira, 1994; Guarneros-Meza, 2007).

the actual practice of participation beyond the institutional structure presented in the last section. What has been the actual impact of the introduction of institutional participatory mechanisms in the local governance process by the PAN on state-society relationships in León?

The transformative potential of the COPLADEM process, the *Miércoles Ciudadano* and the related participatory institutions (*consejeros* and *comités de colonos*) on state-society relationships in León is assessed here. I look at how they might contribute to transform or foster existing mobilization patterns, but even more importantly, at how they also contribute to overcoming the traditional prevalence of informal institutions and political control in order to foster autonomous forms of citizen participation. As we shall see next, and contrary to Nozahualcóyotl, the case of participatory decentralization in León does qualify as a transformative one in the Mexican context. In fact, as we shall see, while it has not led to a dramatic change in traditional patterns of individual mobilization, the participatory framework has generated autonomous forms of citizen participation, expanding social inclusion through a better access to citizenship rights while remaining fragmented and limiting the capacity of citizens to collectively mobilize to make the state more accountable.

4.4.1 Mobilizing Individuals in the City Micro-Planning Process

According to most PAN elected officials and León public administrators I interviewed, the goal of the participatory model implemented in the city was not only to achieve more efficient service delivery, but also to foster social organization and collective mobilization capacities from the bottom-up. Yet, a closer examination of the actual functioning of participatory mechanisms tends to reveal a tendency for the participatory governance model developed in León to mobilize individuals on the basis of specific and particularistic needs. In fact, the *comités de colonos'* and *consejeros'* work in the COPLADEM process and beyond, while dedicated to urban and social development needs, is generally accomplished without much efforts at organizing the disconnected and disorganized populations and without including the already organized civic associations. This observation of the predominance of individual mobilization processes is exacerbated

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by the local government's tendency to privilege demands coming through the *Miércoles Ciudadano*, which curtails the role of institutional collective mobilization processes by giving more importance to individual mobilization and demand-making processes.

The idea behind the creation of *comités de colonos* as citizen-based agents of community development and as the transmission belt between citizens and local government officials is that ordinary citizens should be included in the decision-making activities over issues affecting them on a daily basis. As new citizen-based mechanisms implemented in a context where society has traditionally been poorly organized, they are also supposed to include citizens locally and to contribute to strengthen collective organizational capacity at the grassroots levels through public deliberation and consultation processes. Yet, as we have seen in Nezahualcóyotl, the reality and practice of citizen mobilization realized by the *comités de colonos* and the *consejeros* in the context of the COPLADEM process is quite distinct from the stated expectations. Moreover, the daily work of the *comités de colonos's* members, while involving the occasional organization of some collective meetings to hear citizens' demands, centers around the channeling of individual demands coming from particular citizens to the local authorities through the privileged access they have. In fact, though some demands get to their attention through the annual general assemblies held for the COPLADEM process, they are generally carried by individuals who directly contact the *comités* members to expose their particular need or problem, which is then transmitted to the corresponding branch of the local government for an appropriate follow-up (President comité de colonos 2, 2007; President comité de colonos 3, 2007). Commenting on the consultation process established for committee members to know their neighbors' needs and common concerns, a president told me: " They come or they reach me directly, by phone" (President comité de colonos 3, 2007). Thus, rather than systematically attending neighborhood meetings and collectively discuss the community members' common priorities, ordinary citizens who are affected by a particular urban development problem, like a street lighting problem in their street, resort personally to the *comités'* members hoping that they will be able to address their concern through their direct ties with the local public administration, or to help them use the direct channels of the *Miércoles Ciudadano* in a more effective way.

As we have observed in the case of Nezahualcóyotl's COPACIs and CODEMUNs, public deliberation is not necessarily the preferred means to discuss the neighborhoods' priorities in the early phases of the COPLADEM process, which limits the prospects for such a mechanism to encourage organizational capacity building and the empowerment of local communities. In fact, citizen committees' members tend to discuss most of the local issues behind closed doors, during their monthly meetings, only going to the population to gather support and signatures validating and backing their demands. As a president was explaining:

> As a committee, we meet once a month with the social development coordinator and then we pass the information. If there is something, I go to people's houses and ask them 'hey, there's this going on, so do you support me?'(President comité de colonos 4, 2007).

Besides the mandatory electoral assemblies held to elect committee members, my interviews with their leaders confirmed that the *comités de colonos* tend only to organize public assemblies with the community upon necessity, for example when they need to distribute widely the information about new governmental programs or decisions affecting the community. Most of the time, public assemblies are thus one-way (from top to bottom) channels meant to deliver public information about neighborhood preoccupations, not allowing the 'ordinary citizen' to be included in a dialogue over these collective preoccupations. Moreover, when committee monthly meetings are open to citizens, it still follows a logic where representatives receive individual demands for particular services and not one of public and collective deliberation over the common good. As explained by a president: "We meet once or twice a month with the committee members, and we organize an open assembly when some citizens come with complaints, commentaries or to solicit a particular service" (President comité de colonos 3, 2007). Likewise, the consultation phase of the COPLADEM process does not really involve deliberation among citizens from a given community over their neighborhood investment priorities for the committee to be able to then present them in a concerted way to the local authorities for further evaluation, as the process suggests in theory. In fact, following the testimonies of most *comités de colonos* interviewed, the consultation phase mostly is an exercise of collecting a series of non-discussed individual demands for urban services

such as street pavement and lighting, water supplies or parks and green areas, services that might affect the entire community or not. Commenting about the *comités'* participation to the COPLADEM consultation process, a president was explaining: "We participate. If we want, for example, water or street pavement, then we prioritize this as something that urges for the neighborhood. We are the ones who decide what is the most urgent" (President comité de colonos 4, 2007). The decision on the priority order of demands to be sent to the second and third phases of the process is therefore generally not made by the population, but rather by the committee or civil servants who, in the end, receive the local proposals and make decisions on the basis of their own evaluation of the neighborhood's needs instead of according to collective deliberation results. This also contributes to limit the citizens' interest in collectively mobilizing in the process. As in Nezahualcóyotl, the collective endeavor undertaken through the collective participatory mechanisms is therefore generally limited to the expression of sporadic demands via the use of personal connections, which limits their ability to foster the organizational capacity necessary for collective actors to be able to emerge and actively participate as such to collectively express demands, exercise their oversight function and make the local state more accountable.

The direct participation mechanism created through the implementation of the *Miércoles Ciudadano*, rather than fostering collective organization, tends to reinforce the trend toward individual-based participation in the city. In fact, the goal of such a program is for citizens to have direct access to front-line civil servants to resolve their specific problems. Besides the representatives of the *comités de colonos*, who generally come on behalf or in support of their neighbors, there are very few organized groups who participate in this program according to the responsible of the program: "People generally come [to the *Miércoles*] on an individual basis, very few people come in groups" (Directora Atención Ciudadana, 2007). In fact, most of the demands coming through the *Miércoles* are personal and related to direct services to the population rather than to collective goods: people come for questions regarding jobs, health, information on specific municipal social programs, etc. In addition, the *comités de colonos* sometimes use this other channel

to access the local authorities and bring their demands, but they usually come to represent individual citizens' demands:

> Every Wednesday, we come with our neighbors demands […] coming from individuals who were sent to the committee because they needed the paperwork and signature to validate it (President comité de colonos 1, 2007).

Therefore, this participatory mechanism is either perceived as a way to access particular services of otherwise challenging availability, or as another channel for social demands already formulated to second and third level public administrators via the *comités* to be addressed directly to the corresponding governmental areas' directors.

The previous observations about mobilization patterns in León' participatory institutions all indicate that, as we have observed in Nezahualcóyotl and though the intentions of their implementation by the PAN might have been to sustain the strengthening of civil society through the development of its organizational and mobilization capacities, a more segmented model of individual-based mobilization oriented toward particularistic demands has developed over the years. Though increasing the overall rates of social participation among the population, León's authorities' preferred channel to connect with society does not concretely contribute to the blossoming of an active and collectively organized civil society that would be able to effectively take advantage of the existing accountability mechanisms and collectively demand social inclusion for all sectors of society.

4.4.2 'Participation is Social': The Prevalence of (More) Autonomous Participation

Contrary to my observations in Nezahualcóyotl, where informal practices prevailed over formal rules, León's *comités de colonos* have been able to maintain their formal apolitical and autonomous status. This finding dramatically distinguishes the case of León from the case of Nezahualcóyotl, as it points to the fact that even if participatory mechanisms do not necessarily change mobilization patterns, they can still have a transformative potential for state-society relationships, as autonomous participation from diverse sectors of the population, even when organized in a fragmented way, increases the capacity of

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citizens to become effective actors of the social construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes in collaboration with the state. Contrary to the previous Mexican case, political parties and politicians are not involved in the various steps of the formation and daily functioning of León's *comités de colonos* or in the work their delegated *consejeros ciudadanos*, giving them the necessary room to maneuver in the discussions and decision-making process surrounding the COPLADEM and encouraging autonomous participation patterns within citizen-based organizations.

First, the election process for the *comités de colonos* does not involve the competition of electoral slates that necessitates important political organization and campaigning: individuals generally run for the diverse positions, and the election is held in a popular assembly convoked with the help of the *Dirección de Desarrollo Social* and not directly by the municipal council. Individuals can decide that they will run for a position, without requiring the resources and political organization that would be required to form a slate, organizing skills that parties can provide in contexts where there is no history of social organization outside partisan channels. In addition, and according to the citizen participation rules, *comités de colonos* members and *consejeros ciudadanos* should not be affiliated to a political party or promote a candidate in their functions as elected representatives of their neighborhoods. A president explaining that she got involved to help her fellow neighbors affirmed that her participation "is totally independent [from political parties]. If we are members of the committee, we cannot campaign or support any party" (President comité de colonos 2, 2007). According to one *consejero*, who emanates from the *comités* and is therefore elected in a sector meeting,

> We are totally apolitical, it is the work with the people that is important for us, the improvement of our general condition in neighborhoods where there is still a lot to accomplish … we can't participate in political issues, we need to be neutral, independent because we work with people who support a party or another, so we have to be independent (Consejero ciudadano 3, 2007).

In fact, all elected committee members and *consejeros* I interviewed highlighted their apolitical status. Therefore, it seems that political parties do not 'capture' the formal participatory mechanisms through informal means in León, giving participants the autonomy necessary for them to make their voice heard by the local government and

demand them for any type of need, even when it goes against the political interest of the ruling party.

Second, this autonomy is reinforced by the fact that, even if civil servants are active at the grassroots, fomenting the creation and activation of local committees, the daily functioning of the *comités* and *consejeros* work in the communities and with the government is independent from political activities, and the demand-making process generally follows the rules of transparency established by a formal internal regulation. In fact, politicians are generally not involved in the regular activities of the *comités* and consultative tables as representatives of their parties. When they are invited to participate, they are invited as representatives of the *cabildo*, as members of the legislative commission in charge of planning and citizen participation in order to get their opinions on one of the issues being discussed or to inform them of a new program that has been created by the municipality or the other levels of government. The COPLADEM process constitutes a good example of this, where there is no real participation of politicians in the consultation phase of the urban planning process, as a PAN councilor explained:

> In the COPLADEM process, we don't participate, but they do give us the information […] we have a register with more than 2 400 citizen demands that have been heard by the local citizen associations and from there we find solutions to their problems (Octavo Regidor, 2007).

This understanding of the politicians' role in the COPLADEM process was also corroborated by an opposition councilor from the PRI, who was generally more critical about the PAN participatory programs:

> We [the *regidores*] don't participate to the consultation process. There is a permanent commission that exists, which is formed by citizens and some representatives of the administration, and we get to be involved once the consultation process is over (Decima regidora, 2007).

In fact, most of the grassroots work is led by the local *comités de colonos* themselves, as they collect the specific demands expressed by their neighbors. Working closely with the governments' social development agents and the *consejeros ciudadanos* who represent them during the later stages of the process, they then work on transmitting these demands to the permanent and other thematic commissions of the COPLADEM, which will

deliberate over the prioritization of the public works to be presented to city council as part of the municipal development plan for budgetary approval.

The rules framing the community work of public servants are clear: they should not use their functions and influence in the communities for political purposes at any moment, and this becomes especially relevant in electoral periods. During the 2006 electoral campaign, the director of *Desarrollo Social* was clear about the apolitical role of his employees working with the *comités de colonos* in the communities:

> There was a clear instruction from mayor Ricardo Alaniz, he said in an interview with the *Diário AM de León*, which is of not mix our activities (social organization and social development projects) with partisan finalities, and those who will try to do so will be reprimanded first, and could even be fired (AM de León, 2006).

Though local government officers, generally nominated by the party in office[73], play an important role in helping the *comités* to organize locally and reach their population, the idea that they are professionals and not politically involved in the communities was also confirmed by my interviews with participants. As explained by a *consejera* active in her neighborhood and her sector for more than 10 years:

> Civil servants emanate from political parties, yes, but they don't participate [in local meetings and assemblies] representing any party. They have to comply with the responsibilities, it could be that some may do it to aggregate votes, but it never occurred to me, I have never seen it (Consejera ciudadana 1, 2007).

Obviously, some of them do personally support one party or the other, especially during the electoral campaigns. As a *comité* member who was involved in the election of the PAN explained: "As citizens, we can participate to help certain candidates but once elected, even if we supported them, we still need to go through official procedures to make demands" (Secretary Comité de colonos 1, 2007). Over time, there may have been some exceptions to the rule as some administrators have been publicly accused of informally using their privileged relationship with the *comités*' presidents and members for political purposes. For example, during the Ricardo Alaniz Posado administration in

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[73] In Mexico, municipal civil servants (and especially the ones that are also members of the government executive cabinet and are in decision-making positions) are nominated by the incoming administration, generally based upon political affinities.

2003-2006, a series of mini scandals about the possible co-option and political manipulation of *comités de colonos* presidents surfaced, widely denounced by PRI leaders and citizens in the local media and city council[74]. There is, however, no clear evidence showing that the accusations made by the opposition were well founded, though the refusal of the then director of *Desarrollo Social* to provide the list of elected *comités* members tends to suggest that they might have been justified to a certain extent (Negrete, 2005).

Nonetheless, one can generally argue that, over the course of the implementation of the participatory model of governance in León, this type of irregularity was relatively isolated. Moreover, when irregularities were suspected, their widely public denunciation by opposition parties and the PAN as well as by *comités de colonos* members suggests that the channels of social accountability could be used to make the local government responsible for its wrongdoings. Through the diverse consultations they have with the *presidente municipal*, and with *regidores* in the COPLADEM process, *consejeros* (and through them the *comités de colonos*) have opportunities to collectively address the city's priorities and do not have to rely on personalistic connections with powerholders or bureaucrats to do so. Moreover, as the open-to-the-public discussions of the *cabildo* I attended have shown, politicians do rely on the formulation of priorities by the population to make their decisions on funds attribution, infrastructural development and service provision[75].

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[74] In January 2005, the PRI member Guadalupe Tavera Hernández, supported by two other regidores (one from the PRI and one from the PAN) accused the director of *Desarrollo Social* for an alleged political manipulation of the *comités de colonos*. According to Tavera Hernández, most *comités'* leaders (80%) are also PAN militants even though "they should not be affiliated to any political party" (Larios García, 2005). These accusations of co-option were also sustained by complaints of many members of the city council suggesting that the electoral rules for the *comités* were not approved by the elected officials before the election as they should have been, thereby opening the possibility for political manipulation of candidate and electoral slates in favor of the ruling party (Zacarías, 2005). Responding to these accusations in the local media, Raúl Márquez reasserted the non-partisan character of the *comités de colonos* and of their activities, as well as the "open and democratic character of the elections that should be held in a public assembly"(Negrete, 2005).
[75] These observations were made during my fieldwork in León, where I attended one open meeting of the municipal council on November 22, 2007.

4.4.3 Changing State-Society Relationships?

Looking at the indicators of changing state-society relationships presented above, we can argue that the introduction of participatory mechanisms in the daily administration have provided new spaces for the participants to gain some autonomy from traditional channels of participation such as the political parties (Guarneros-Meza, 2007) and have certainly contributed to professionalize the way municipal authorities process citizen demands. Participatory innovations have therefore contributed to transform the clientelistic nature of state-society relationships that prevailed under the PRI, including previously marginalized citizens as autonomous actors of the governance process, but they have done so in a fragmented way where citizens and groups mobilize on an individual basis, leading toward a model of state-society relationships characterized by fragmented inclusion.

First, we have observed that rather than contribute to changing traditional patterns of mobilization, the participatory governance model implemented by the PAN sustained the individual-based and particularistic model of citizen demand-making that has traditionally prevailed in the city. In fact, as Valencia García pointed out, the creation of the *comités de colonos* has nothing to do with the integration of the already existing social actors and organizations, but more with the integration of individual citizens recognized as such by the municipal government (Valencia García, 1996). In fact, participatory institutions do not include the already existing civil society groups, who are acting outside of this structure of participation sponsored by the government (Guarneros-Meza, 2007). The consequent lack of deliberation and the focus on individual services create a segmentation of participation within these participatory institutions that are mostly used by particularly vulnerable individuals:

> The interest is more with the people who are more needy, it's the people who participate more. People who don't necessitate that much do not participate as much; it is very different, people who need more tend to participate more (Consejero ciudadano 3, 2007).

This all generates and sustains already existing apathy among non-represented groups of the population and, in turn, creates a segmentation of social participation. This has the

effect of not fostering collective organizational skills among participants who act as separate individuals rather than as a community or as a society seeking the advancement of the common good and the development of a more inclusive citizenship regime.

Second, participatory mechanisms remain overall relatively autonomous from political parties and are therefore not subject to informal pressures to abide by the government's position. Since *cabildo* sessions are always open to the general public and journalists, citizens have a possibility to hold their representatives accountable for what they do through formal mechanisms. As a *consejera* involved for more than 8 years in the *comités de colonos* told me: "The local institutions now give the population the opportunity to participate, and today the participation is more open than before, the channels are more open" (Consejera ciudadana 2, 2007). Obviously, political parties seek to be re-elected or elected, and there is clearly some maneuvering on their part to attract support among the population. Therefore, while rejecting clientelism as an electoralist strategy, the PAN administration did try to maintain a regular contact with citizens through participatory institutions to uphold a base of support among the population between elections (Mizrahi, 2003b). Candidates from various political parties also formally visit them during the local electoral campaigns, since they have become an important social actor in León. The fact that this takes place openly and within the frame of the electoral code, however, ensures transparency. In fact, Porras suggests that in León, "the PAN is known for its preference to establish direct citizen-to-governmental agency exchanges, as a means to circumvent neighborhood associations and unions that have been traditionally co-opted by the PRI" (Porras, 2007, p. 51). Contrary to what prevailed under the PRI, however, and tough candidates make electoral promises during their electoral campaigns, once elected, the resources of the municipality are no longer targeted to specific local leaders based on electoral considerations, but they are generally dedicated to the entire municipality's interests without regards to vote and political support. As a consequence, most citizens interviewed do get the impression that their voice is heard and understood by the local administration, and since they are involved in

the process from its outset, they understand better the constraints and conditions under which a decision has been made by the *cabildo*[76].

Looking at these characteristics of the participatory governance model through the lens of the two-dimensional typology developed in chapter one leads me to conclude that in León, the combination of an autonomous participation of citizens disconnected from one another in the process created a model of state-society relationships characterized by fragmented inclusion patterns. As highlighted by Cabrero Mendoza, who studied the early years of the participatory innovations implemented by the PAN: "Possibly, León's social participation model generated a more active participation of citizens for the resolution of problems, but it has not necessarily generated a civic and citizen culture of participation" (1995, p. 103). This type of model, hindering the development of an active and organized civil society at the grassroots level, constitutes an important transformation of traditional state-society relationships, increasing service delivery efficiency and, more importantly, contributing to extending social inclusion to previously marginalized sectors of the population. The fact that autonomous participation from all sectors of the population is now encouraged through the decentralized participatory governance model reduces the significance of the continuity of individual mobilization patterns for state-society relationships and the deepening of democracy. Even if, theoretically, such a type of mobilization tends to hinder collective organization at the grassroots, the fact that it is combined with autonomous citizen participation insulated from political pressures has very different consequences on state-society relationships with what we have observed in Nezahualcóyotl. Rather than strengthening already existing clientelistic ties, the high level of autonomy enjoyed by participants undermines the importance of personalistic ties in accessing citizenship rights, preventing them from becoming political privileges used by political brokers to secure support via unequal access to the rights of citizenship.

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[76] In a majority of cases, interviewees have suggested that though they would like the government to respond positively more often to their demands, they understood the financial constraints that the municipal budget had to cope with and that, in such a big city with that many necessities and poor areas, not all demands could be fulfilled. The fact that they at least consistently received a response to their demands, positive or not, and justifications or explanations for the decisions taken by local authorities was enough to make them feel their concerns and demands were actually taken into account by the government in the decision-making process, something they considered an important advance compared to the previous PRI way of governing.

Nevertheless, individual mobilization also limits potential efforts by society both to use the accountability mechanisms generated by the new governance model and to demand social inclusion from the state through collective action and community organization, thus preventing León's participatory mechanisms from fully achieving their local democratization potential.

4.5 EXPLAINING THE RISE OF FRAGMENTED INCLUSION IN LEÓN

In the previous section, we have concluded that, according to the indicators of state-society relationships identified in chapter one, León's participatory governance model, oriented toward micro urban planning, has contributed to foster an important change in the clientelistic logic of state-society relationships that prevailed under the PRI regime. Yet, it has transformed into a fragmented inclusion model, defined by the autonomy of its participatory institutions but also by the persistence of the individual logic of citizen mobilization patterns. What explains that, in spite of the sustainability of individual mobilization patterns in participatory institutions, local authorities in León have generally respected the formal autonomous status of participatory institutions and the independence of their participants? The following section addresses this question through the lens of the model developed in chapter one, looking at factors ranging from institutional variables to actors strategies and practices. The comparison with Nezahualcóyotl's participatory framework, showing a similar tendency to León's in fostering continuity in terms of the patterns of mobilization observed, highlighted the importance of autonomy as an indicator for participatory decentralization reforms to transform state-society relationships. As we shall see, this finding is not only interesting for understanding the divergences in outcomes between the two Mexican cases, but it also strengthens the argument following which, beyond the institutional framework, one should look at how social and political actors' strategies and practices affect the level of autonomy observed in the practice of citizen participation in order to fully understand its impact on the deepening of democracy.

4.5.1 Explaining the Individual Nature of Mobilization: Historical and Institutional Limits to Collective Action

As we have seen, one of the dimensions characterizing the type of state-society relationships that have developed through León's participatory governance models is, as in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, the individualistic nature of the model of citizen mobilization it has promoted and encouraged. Though I have established earlier that the impact sustainability of individual mobilization patterns has on state-society relationships is less important in León than it was in Nezahualcóyotl because – as we have observed – participation is not controlled by traditional actors such as political parties, it still constitutes a constraint on the development of a cooperative relationship between an organized and autonomous civil society engaging in the social construction of citizenship with an accountable local government. Therefore, the question of why such type of mobilization has survived the creation of decentralized and theoretically collective participation mechanisms is quite relevant to understand the relative success of the León's experiment for the deepening of democracy. First, I consider the importance of historical patterns of citizen mobilization in León, where social organizations were often intermediaries that used the privileged channels granted by their clientelistic relationship to local PRI leaders and sustained individualism and particularistic patterns of social mobilization. Second, and following our hypothesis, the weight of historical legacies should be considered in interaction with institutional innovation, as the institutional design of participatory mechanisms can provide the incentive structure for collective mobilizations and social organization to take place at the grassroots level and can eventually reinforce or reduce the influence of historical legacies. As we will see, in this case, the institutional design of the participatory structure, both including individual (*Miércoles*) and collective (the COPLADEM process) forms of participation, did not provide the incentives for local leaders to collectively mobilize at the grassroots, instead favoring the strengthening of individual mobilization strategies inherited from the past.

Historical Mobilization Patterns

Though it was organized on different ideological grounds, another characteristic León shares with Nezahualcóyotl is the singular history of active social mobilization in the city

(Shirk, 1999; Valencia García, 1996) dating back from the post-revolutionary period. León, however, is a particularly interesting case as it has a history of oppositional social activism at the local level in the post-revolutionary period, during which most social activism has also been canalized through the channels of the Catholic Church, which has traditionally aligned with the PAN and other conservative rightwing political forces, differentiating it from Nezahualcóyotl and most other Mexican municipalities.

As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, however, oppositional social forces and leaders were generally contained and routed through the corporatist channels of political parties, either the PRI or, to a lesser extent, the PAN[77]. Though there has been a certain level of political opposition to the official PRI present at the municipal level, the city's history of collective mobilization has been deeply marked by the violent events of 1946 and the subsequent hegemony the PRI succeeded in installing through the consolidation of its clientelistic networks with key social actors and of a corporatist governance model within which civil society was organized. As in the case of Nezahualcóyotl, social organizations such as the CNOP, which reunited many local social leaders, were central to the stability of the official party in the city, especially with the existence of formal opposition parties (though poorly organized and mobilized). The local community structure was also organized around the official party, and as we have seen earlier, the consulting tables established in neighborhoods by the PRI government were mostly used as mobilization tools for the party.

Thus, in the case of León, we can observe that a culture of particularistic claims-making based on individual interests and dependent upon privileged relationships to the local authorities has developed throughout the post-revolutionary period, with citizens using personal connections and established party structure to access urban services and resources that were not provided otherwise by the local government. This particularistic culture of demand-making seems to have survived the transition toward pluralism and

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[77] The PAN, which quickly appropriated the political discourse against the PRI anti-clericalism, mostly attracted support from religious organizations, such as the *Sinarquistas* movement and its supporters. Nevertheless, the PAN remained a disorganized and marginal political force between electoral periods in León, lowering its impact on generating sustainable and challenging opposition to the regime before the opening of the local electoral arena in the 1980's.

democracy in the city, even with the implementation of presumably autonomous collective participation mechanisms in the structure of municipal governance. As highlighted by a participant, "here, people want to do things in exchange for something else, they were badly used to do things in exchange for something else" (President comité de colonos 4, 2007). The historical patterns of mobilization have therefore deeply influenced the current mobilization trends in the city, and citizens see participatory mechanisms as a means to improve their personal living situation rather than being a tool for collectively demanding social inclusion, better access to citizenship rights and greater accountability from the state.

An Institutional Explanation

As we have seen in chapter one, the design of the participatory institutions implemented by local authorities may have an important impact on framing new cultural reference frameworks with regards to mobilization patterns. In León, we have observed that even if on paper, the structure of the participatory governance model suggests that collective organization and public deliberation should be encouraged through the COPLADEM process and its related organizations and citizen representatives, the reality shows a different story. In fact, the design and functioning of current institutions of participation do not foster collective organization, instead reinforcing the individualistic logic of mobilization that historically prevailed in the city, a fact that might be partly explained by the administrative and result-based logic that has characterized the implementation of participatory institutions by the PAN, oriented toward efficiency, problem resolution and service delivery. The local government's emphasis on individual participatory mechanisms, notably through the implementation of the *Miércoles Ciudadano*, should also be understood in the peculiar Leonese historical context of democratization and through the lens of the PAN's strategies, as the party is known for having established direct and individual connections with citizens as a way to curtail the organizational capacity of PRI-affiliated traditional organizations (Porras, 2007).

First, an important observation to be made about the institutional incentives featured in the León's case is that, similar to what has been observed in Nezahualcóyotl, there are

major limits for collective mobilization imposed by the participatory structure itself. On the one hand, both the *comités'* daily activities and the COPLADEM process only entail few formal collective mobilization requirements for local leaders to formulate official requests on behalf of their citizens as holding public assemblies is not a mandatory step in the claim-making process validated by the municipality authorities. On the other hand, when such requirements for collective organization exist, like in the COPLADEM process first phase, they are not formally enforced by the local government, and most *comités* members generally act on their own and only make sure they have the required number of signatures to back their demands before presenting them. In many cases, the COPLADEM process is both led by the government's public officials and the *comités de colonos* elected members instead of being a massive mobilization effort. In fact, there is a consultation phase, and as explained by the program coordinator, "social development agents walk through the neighborhoods to organize citizen consultations through public assemblies". She, however, continues saying that

> They [social development agents] go to the *comités*, discuss with the people and together they agree on the required proposals for the benefit of the neighborhood […] and from there the demand is made through a formal paperwork (Coordinadora de procesos COPLADEM, 2007).

Moreover, as a president explained, because local committees have a certain latitude to decide whether a neighborhood deserves the organization of a public meeting or not, the mobilized population who is represented by the *comités de colonos* becomes segmented: "When a neighborhood lacks services such as sewage, water, pavement, there is more participation than when all services are available" (President comité de colonos 3, 2007). The local government's tendency to privilege channels such as the *Miércoles Ciudadano* also promotes the prevalence of individual patterns of mobilization. Not only do they encourage individual citizens to formulate and make demands on an individual basis – a process through which they are "learning that they are entitled to expect services from elected officials" (Reding, 1995), which reinforces the culture of citizen-beneficiary and the general apathy for collective action –, but they also tend to delegitimize collective action as a demand-making strategy as even committee members use these channels to complement the other available channels of participation.

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The second observation about León's participatory framework derives directly from the first one, and concerns the lack of institutional incentives for the practice of consultation and public deliberation over the definition of the common good. As proposed earlier, most of the work of the *comités* and *consejeros* involves only the few elected representatives and does not entail any major effort at mobilizing the general population. As a consequence, public consultation becomes a means used to legitimize decisions already taken by citizen representatives behind closed doors rather than a true exercise of deliberation and social interactions that would mobilize the population more largely around the definition of the common good. This description of the local consultation phase suggests that most of the deliberations of the COPLADEM process are organized in a way that reflects the administrative level, and not at the level of the *comités de colonos* or of the public assemblies. There is a sort of coordinated work that the *consejeros* pursue in each sector to prioritize needs, and then among themselves in a citywide perspective in the various commissions where they participate, but it does not involve active collective mobilization and deliberation. A PRI *regidora*, member of the COPLADEM, explained how the decision-making process over public spending and micro-planning priorities works:

> In the commission, we receive a list of public works already prioritized, but the priority is more institutional: the ones who propose the priorities come from the governmental institutions and not from the citizenry. As a consequence, you loose the real democratization process (Decima regidora, 2007).

In fact, most demands coming from the public assemblies are only gathered via an open process allowing individuals to formulate specific demands, but they are not discussed at the grassroots.

The last observation to be made relates to the relatively fragmented nature of community participation, especially with the *Miércoles Ciudadano,* which encourages citizens to avoid collective mechanisms and directly address their personal issues and demands to the relevant sector of the necessary public administration. This type of mechanism tends to divide participants rather than give them the incentives to mobilize collectively. There are some attempts at fostering intercommunity cooperation, as the participatory model in

León tends to encourage local committees from each of the 22 sectors to have regular contacts with one another: they are indeed constantly engaging in activities together, in meetings with the members of the other *comités de colonos* and through their elected sector representatives, the *consejeros*. As one *consejera* stressed several times,

> The decision-making process requires a lot of communication: I might know the problems of my *colonia*, but not necessarily the ones of the neighboring *colonias* and this necessitates constant communication between us. I am not there for only one *colonia* but for all those I am representing (Consejera ciudadana 2, 2007).

The dedication of participants to the improvement of their neighbors' environment creates the necessary conditions to ensure that local priorities are followed through by the state and that no particular interests are privileged in the decision-making process because of personal access to power, which reinforces the autonomous character of participation. Since they are discussed with everyone present at the table, interests are mediated through participatory channels, and therefore more balanced than if participation was isolated and open to informal practices. There are, however, many limits associated to the design of participatory mechanisms that tend to sustain social fragmentation among civil society actors in León. First, though the municipal council is gathering with the *comités* once a month with the mayor and other first line members of the local administrations, these meetings mostly serve to "give us the information about a particular project or event, because we are the main way for their information to reach the population", explained a president I interviewed (President comité de colonos 2, 2007). Thus, even if the conditions for mutual retroaction and feedback between the state and society representative are present, the way it works is still a top-down process where most information comes from the local government and is transmitted by the citizen representatives to their communities rather than going in both directions as a retroaction mechanism. Additionally, the fact that the COPLADEM process consultation proceeds at the neighborhood level with the already regularized neighborhoods having a recognized *comité de colonos* creates tensions and divisions among the poorest communities fighting for already scarce resources, excluding *de facto* the irregular and most needy neighborhoods from the urbanization process. As a consequence, this planning process remains another form of representative democracy with a small group of citizens deciding

for the population rather than the elected politicians, sustaining imbalances in decision-making processes that tend to prevent the development of further collective organization skills through deliberation at the grassroots.

Therefore, although institutional design might contribute to overcome the historically embedded patterns of mobilization by providing incentives for local leaders to encourage collective mobilization around the definition of the common good, my findings in León and in Nezahualcóyotl suggest that the opposite situation can also occur. As we have said, however, this similarity in mobilization patterns between the two cases is not enough to conclude that the institutional model of participation implemented in Mexico has failed, as the differences in the observed levels of autonomy between the two cases' generate very distinct consequences on the prospects for the deepening of democracy. In León, contrary to Nezahualcóyotl, individual mobilization is not mediated through traditional actors repeating the patterns of clientelism through political control and co-option strategies, but is instead channeled through autonomous mechanisms of participation, which changes the basis of state-society relationships and creates more favorable conditions for increased social inclusion. This brings me to the second part of my analysis of the case of León, explaining under which sociopolitical conditions the newly acquired autonomy has developed and blossomed through the participatory mechanisms, thereby contributing to an important change in the nature of state-society relationships.

4.5.2 Explaining the (More) Autonomous Character of Local Participatory Institutions: Actors' Strategies and Perceptions

As we have seen earlier, the introduction of participatory decentralization reforms is theoretically meant to open new spaces for autonomous forms of citizen participation to emerge at the local level, allowing ordinary citizens to overcome exclusionary patterns, participate in the local governance process and, in turn, enter into the social construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes. This autonomy, however, is not a given, and cases such as Nezahualcoyótl have shown participatory mechanisms that have been captured by traditional political actors exercising control over participation through different means.

The case of León nonetheless provides an example where, even in a context of enduring traditional mobilization patterns, the participatory planning structure has allowed ordinary and traditionally excluded citizens to formulate preferences and demands for their neighborhood independently from traditional channels of interest mediation. What explains that the main political parties have not used the participatory structure for political and vote-seeking purposes in León, thus creating the conditions for the development of autonomous participatory governance institutions? The impact of three sets of sociopolitical factors and of their interrelations is evaluated here: First, I will look at the level of political competition among but also within parties characterizing the electoral arena in the city in order to understand politicians' strategies and behaviors toward participatory institutions. Second, I propose to look at the balance of powers within civil society actors and third, at the perceptions participants and political actors have of their own role in the participatory process.

Level of Political Competition

The first factor that needs to be taken into consideration to explain politicians' strategies toward local participatory governance institutions and their practices of local resource redistribution is the level of competition between political parties but also, within the ruling party, among its internal factions. In León, the relatively low level of political competition among parties, as well as the contained and generally democratic resolution of internal political competition are both important factors explaining why politicians might not have had the need to activate local support networks informally through the controlled of formal participatory governance mechanisms.

First, as we have seen in the case of the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl, in the context of democratic pluralism, high levels of external political competition might create the incentives for traditional political parties to try to activate their support networks through targeted resource redistribution and the co-option of local participatory mechanisms' leaders. In León, the situation of competition among the several parties active in the municipal political arena is quite different, constituting a significant element explaining the autonomous status of participatory institutions. In fact, since the election of the PAN

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in 1988, the level of competition among political parties has dramatically decreased in León, creating the incentives for local leaders to tolerate and even encourage autonomous forms of participation within state-sponsored institutions, which may in turn contribute to generate lower levels of social opposition to the government's policies. Though weakly organized at the grassroots level when it reemerged in the early 1980's, the history of mobilization of the PAN has created the conditions for the party to gradually succeed in democratically attracting most of the opposition parties' supporters over the years, the city becoming the most important bastion of the PAN in the country. Since 1988, competition is mostly bipolar, with the only viable opposition coming from the PRI as the PDM renewed *Sinarquísta* discourse decreased as a sustainable option (Valencia García, 2001). As table 6 illustrates, however, the PRI's base of support has consistently decreased over the years, suffering from its own reputation and history of corruption, undemocratic rule and political repression (especially in León, where particularly repressive actions were taken). Without much support from the central organization and lacking resources to face the growing organizational capacity of the PAN, León's section of the PRI went through an important internal crisis during the 1980's that weakened the party even more (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a). Even with the different party coalitions it succeeded in cobbling together more recently (notably with the PVEM), the PRI has not yet find its way back into the city's electoral arena. As for the PRD and other political parties from the left, they still have practically no influence in the municipality, gathering more or less 2-3% of the popular vote in the past few electoral rounds. Thus, rather than controlling the participatory institutions they created through informal practices as a way to secure support networks and continue the political struggle beyond the electoral scene, PAN political leaders have incentives to encourage autonomous participation while benefiting from the positive sentiments expressed by participants about the process and capitalizing upon their existence and the direct role the party had in their creation through electoral discourses and rhetoric.

Second, we have seen that conflicts within the governing party/coalition can also be an important incentive for local politicians to control social participation through co-option strategies. In Nezahualcóyotl, we have seen that the competition among the PRD local

factions have had important consequences on participatory mechanisms, with faction leaders using them as a space for continuing their political struggles. In León, however, the governing party has generally shown a modicum of unity, both between the party organization and the governing elite and between the mayor's team and the municipal councilors. In fact, internal party conflicts are less locally based in the PAN than they are in the PRD, and especially so in León, where the party has deep roots and where conflicts are mostly oriented toward the regional and national levels. Even if León's PAN leaders have been divided over issues of political nominations and pre-candidacies for elected positions, "PANistas across the state were unified in terms of their position on national-level politics; local level differences were downplayed for the sake of more regionally defined interests" (Shirk, 1999, p. 67). In fact, at the local organizational level, the tensions can be attenuated by the fact that there are more important ideological tensions funnelled toward the national organization level. Moreover, the internal rules of accession to powerful positions within the PAN are generally guided by democratic principles, and most power struggles among the party factions in León have revolved around issues of political nominations as candidate for mayor[78]. Yet, because most of these conflicts are resolved through democratic means by the party, tensions are generally appeased once the party convention is over rather than being reinforced by a more authoritarian type of conflict resolution. There are obviously exceptions to the rule, and at certain times there have been higher levels of internal conflicts within the PAN administration (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a). For example, the Ricardo Alaniz Posada administration (2003-2006) has displayed increasing internal conflicts within the local PAN organization. As current mayor Guerrero Reynoso highlighted,

> In the past administration, there have been many problems within city council, but mostly with people coming from the same party, the PAN, which had two different currents represented and thus a lot of confrontation between them (Guerrero Reynoso, 2007a).

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[78] Every municipal campaign in León in the recent years has been preceded by an internal campaign within the PAN to proceed to the nomination of the candidate for mayor, a process that always involves power struggles between opposing factions of the party. Yet, the democratic rule framing this process, where the candidate for mayor has been elected by the rank-and-files and not nominated by the party leadership, has tended to appease tensions in the longer run and to be an important tool for rallying all the PAN members during the actual municipal electoral process.

It is nonetheless interesting to underline the fact that this period seems to coincide with the observed retrenchment of the autonomy of citizen participatory mechanisms, which have been publicly accused of becoming agents of the mayor's executive neocorporatist system by members of the opposition, and even by members of the PAN majority. Though there is no valid data to actually prove the alleged political use of *comités de colonos* in that particular case, the example does tend to confirm the relevance of the internal political competition variable to explain the political use of participatory institutions.

Thus, the combined effect of decreasing electoral competition to the PAN at the municipal level and of a relative unity within the governing party's ranks has created incentives for politicians to tolerate and even encourage the development of autonomous forms of citizen participation within the state-sponsored participatory mechanisms as a way to show the party's commitment to democracy and social inclusion. The political context of León differs from the one we have observed in Nezahualcóyotl, not only in terms of an elected governing party taking advantage of the participatory decentralization reforms, but also more generally in terms of the varying levels of competition observed in both cities employing different strategies toward these institutions in a context of political pluralism.

Balance of Power within Civil Society
The second factor to be further explored is the balance of power among civil society actors participating to the COPLADEM process and the *Miércoles Ciudadano*, as this can have an impact on the way the different types of social actors active in society (individual local leaders, organized civil society organizations and party affiliated organizations) engage one another and deploy strategies to occupy the newly created participatory spaces. These strategies, and consequently the way social actors use the participatory governance structure, may in turn have a great impact on strengthening (or not) the autonomous nature of such structure and of citizen participation more generally. Contrary to what we have observed in Nezahualcóyotl, where most social organizations and citizens involved in the CODEMUN and COPACIs were formally affiliated to the PRD

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and often in conflict with one another, we observe in León a certain degree of pluralism and unity among civil society actors, fostering social inclusion and the citizens' autonomy in the process.

One of the first indicators of the existence of a pluralistic balance of power among citizens and CSOs active in the formal participatory governance structure is the presence of a certain level of continuity in the composition of participants, combined with the opening to new actors representing the traditionally marginalized. In the case of León, which is characterized by the importance of its religious community, a sizable share of the civic activity at the grassroots is organized around the Catholic Church. Religious organizations and movements constitute a large share of CSOs and are a central mobilization structure in the city, where more than 98% of the population is self-declared Catholic. Though religious movements have usually and historically aligned politically with the PAN during election periods (Cabrero Mendoza, 2006a), their support to the PAN has not been formal, and their activities have remained generally isolated from the party's, contrary to the ties observed between CSOs and the PRD in Nezahualcóyotl. As explained by Porras (2007), once in government, the PAN in León is known to have developed its support networks among individuals and local entrepreneurs rather than using formal and informal affiliations to social organizations to reach the local population. Thus, while remaining quite insulated from partisan pressures, the Catholic Church's movements in León have occupied a crucial position in the local organization of the city, benefiting from important political leverage with both the PAN government and the society more generally. This primacy of the Catholic Church, which is a distinct characteristic of León's social organization, has had important consequences on generating pluralism in participatory mechanisms. First, since the groups that are closer to the ruling party ideology are mostly religious organizations, they have enough leverage among the population and with the party not to have to capture the various channels available at the neighborhood level. Moreover, the notion of continuity and the implication of already powerful groups relatively independent from the political forces is crucial to the development of autonomous forms of participation among the general

population, as it contributes to cumulating and sharing social and organizational knowledge among participating actors.

Because such groups were already in a good position with the local government, continuity could have created a renewed form of corporatism in the city and a lack of pluralism among participants. In León, however, we have seen that religious groups generally remained outside of the political arena after the election of the PAN and they did not benefit from a differentiated or privileged access to the channels of the local state. Moreover, the structure of participation favored by the PAN leaders, creating direct ties with citizens in order to overcome the influence of PRI-affiliated CSOs, changed the balance of power within civil society actors, disempowering the traditional groups supporting the PRI clientelistic support structure and empowering individual citizens and groups of residents previously marginalized. In fact, such a choice opened new windows of opportunity for previously marginalized segments of the population to participate, opportunities that were seized by many individuals at the community level who rallied behind the PAN participatory reforms. The public spaces opened by the local governemnt with the implementation of the participatory governance structure in León are therefore open for previously marginalized individuals, local communities and already active social organizations to organize around their own interest, autonomously from party-affiliated social organizations. Such a plethora of actors, combined with a social consensus over the necessity for participatory institutions, creates the conditions for the previously unequal balance of power to change and for autonomous participation schemes to emerge through the process, even if organized at the individual level.

Perceptions of Actors' Roles

The last factor that we need to consider to understand the autonomous nature of participation in León is the perception both society and governmental actors have of their own role and functions in the participatory governance process. As we have already highlighted, these perceptions are mutually constructed and reinforced, and they affect the process in terms of the ways in which both types of actors engage with one another in

the discussion, enact the institutional mechanisms available and take part together in the decision-making processes.

On the one hand, politicians' understanding of their role in the participatory structure is generally important as it influences the way they engage within discussion processes with citizens, the material and symbolic resources they inject in the participatory mechanisms and the way they respond to demands coming from these state-sponsored institutions. As mayor Vicente Guerrero Reynoso emphasized, talking about the importance of participation for his municipal administration,

> I see social participation as something important, something fundamental that we should continue to stimulate to avoid authoritarianism. To look for power equilibrium and the deepening of democracy, we need the population to decide. We are the server of the population and we have to do what they tell us to do through an ordered, informed and well conducted process (Guerrero Reynoso, 2007a).

Raúl Márquez Albo, director of *Desarrollo Social* from 2000 to 2006, also explained in an interview with a journalist from the local newspaper *Diário AM de León*, that for the local government, the *comités de colonos* constitutes its principal link with citizens, as well as the local organizations through which residents of a given collectivity identify collective problems, organize to find solutions and thereby act to change the face of their neighborhood:

> We will accomplish this [change] through this citizen participation dynamics, where they tell what they need rather than having us decide what type of public works we want to realize (cited in: Rangel, 2003).

Moreover, politicians of all political stripes in León generally agree upon the idea that the work done in the local participatory mechanisms should be taken into account, and that the role of the municipal administration is not to intervene in the local organization and deliberation processes but instead to continue to create the institutional conditions allowing greater and deeper social involvement in policy making processes as a way to support state's action (Decima regidora, 2007; Octavo Regidor, 2007). As a consequence of such a positive perception of the work done and possibly done through formal participatory mechanisms, the municipal administration of León invests in fostering the

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empowerment of its participants, providing resources for capacity-building workshops and activities at the local level to help participants develop skills for strengthening their autonomy and their ability to collectively enter into relation with the local state (Director Desarrollo Social, 2007). According to the current mayor, "to work, social participation requires many adjectives: informed, educated, engaged, integrated. It is therefore a long and difficult process" (Guerrero Reynoso, 2007a), for which the local government needs to invest resources, time and energy. Such an investment from the local government contributes to generate a feeling of inclusion among participants, who generally have the impression that their work and demands are taken into consideration in decision-making, an impression that strengthens the incentives to autonomously engage in the process.

Contrary to the case of Nezahualcóyotl where participants mostly saw themselves as working for the government, León's participants see themselves as working with the government to find policy solutions to urban development and planning problems affecting their fellow citizens' daily lives. More specifically, the participants I interviewed generally perceived themselves as responsive to their neighbors, as well as beneficiaries of the government entitled to ask for urban services and to represent their neighborhood to receive the attention they consider it deserves:

> Many times we have to be mediators, with a lot of calculations to avoid social conflicts, we need to keep a good control and equilibrium between society and the government, we are the link between society and the government (President comité de colonos 3, 2007).

Like most of her colleagues, a *consejera ciudadana* I interviewed therefore understood her role as being mostly oriented toward her work as the citizen representative of her community members' interests and needs:

> I am the representative of all the *comités de colonos* of my sector who chose me and believed in me, I support my sector, this is where I have my engagement [...] It's a lot of social work, to look after the population and see what you can do to give them a hand and represent them in front of the authorities. We are the communication link between all of them (Consejera ciudadana 1, 2007).

Though most participants interviewed were conscious of their importance as the municipal administration's main means of information dissemination within local

communities, they all expressed their loyalty to their community and their neighborhood. This overall detachment of participants from the local government activities, despite the constant involvement of civil servants in fostering community engagement, demonstrates an understanding of local participation mechanisms as an institutional channel recognized by the local state to formulate demands on behalf of their neighbors, regardless of the potential discontentment of political parties in power[79].

These perceptions, mutually reinforcing, and the corresponding behaviors of both social and political actors have had an important consequence on the engagement of the municipal state toward giving empowerment resources to participants, an important asset to sustain the autonomous character of participation. Moreover, as they consider themselves as equal partners of the state in representing their neighbors in the urban planning process, participants do not feel bound by the local government's positions or the party's commitments, so they can oppose decisions that are against what they consider to be the interest of their community. Though they often lack the organizational capacity to really do so in a systematic and efficient way, the autonomy they enjoy opens the door for citizens to impose sanctions on the local government's wrongdoings if necessary.

To conclude, my findings about the León's case and the comparison with Nezahualcóyotl confirm the hypothesis following which the (un)changing nature of state-society relationships in participatory mechanisms is not only related to their institutional design, but more importantly to sociopolitical conditions that can contribute to the development of autonomous forms of citizen participation at the local level. In León, even though mobilization patterns remained mostly oriented toward individually formulated particularistic demands, there is an important flow of demands coming from the bottom-up formulated autonomously from traditional and politically-driven actors and channeled through the formal participatory mechanisms made available to a plurality of actors by

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[79] As a *consejera* was explaining to me, they try to be very insistent with local authorities, and their demands are not always welcome. She told me that in the past, she has been very unhappy with the treatment her demands have received, but that she never abandoned: "I was disappointed and I told them directly. As I feel it, I tell it and up to now it have probably disturbed certain people, but I say what I think. I am the voice. I am the voice and the ears of my people"(Consejera ciudadana 2, 2007).

the local government. In León, the local government's strategy in a context of political stability has been to encourage autonomous participation in participatory mechanisms in order to democratically gather popular support, which sustains the observed plurality of actors involved in the participatory process and contributes to promote positive perceptions of both the state and society's role toward one-another, as equal partners of an inclusive urban planning project for the city.

4.6 FRAGMENTED INCLUSION AND THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY

In sum, and contrary to what has been observed in our other Mexican case, the traditionally predominating clientelistic state-society relationships have been transformed through the introduction of participatory mechanisms by the PAN in León, a transformation that is characterized by the emergence and blossoming of autonomous participation in the urban planning process. The population's ability to enter the social construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes and to build its accountability capacity are, on a formal level, reinforced because of autonomous participation and the professionalization of the local bureaucracy through processes such as computerization of citizen demands (*Miércoles Ciudadano*), systematization of response rates, transparency and availability of data, etc. In practice, however, the lack of collective mobilization capacity building characterizing the fragmented inclusion model of state-society relationships observed in León limits the prospects for the deepening of democracy. The local government chose to implement a participatory framework including a dominating element of individual mobilization and few incentives for collective organization and deliberation, which makes them the 'official' citizen participation mechanisms for civil society. In practice, the type of mobilization fostered by the *comités de colonos*, the *Miércoles Ciudadanos* and the COPLADEM process is therefore more individually-based than collective.

As a consequence of this lack of collective mobilization capacity, the situation is not as clear for the deepening of democracy as a fully cooperative relationship between an inclusive and organized civil society and an accountable local state has difficulty

developing under such conditions. As we have seen, social inclusion is accomplished through a fragmented citizen-beneficiary logic where the collective organization and, in turn, democratization goal is superseded by the efficiency and solution-oriented logic that marked the creation of León's participatory governance model. Talking about the achievements of the current model of citizen participation, a *consejera* highlighted the need for sustained collective mobilization and social learning:

> Participatory institutions have worked as to bring citizens closer to the local government and they need to continue working and growing […] Now, our society needs to learn how to get together and participate with the government (Consejera ciudadana 1, 2007).

In fact, as this quote suggests, the model might be more efficient and less exclusionary than it had previously been in terms of policy delivery and urban development, though the type of social inclusion it allows is still quite segmented and disorganized, which tends to limit the potential for participating citizens to develop the mobilization skills necessary to demand collectively for these citizenship rights on behalf of their community and to make the local government systematically accountable for responding to these demands.

Despite the previous observations, León can be qualified as a case of success in the Mexican context, as the comparison with Nezahualcóyotl suggests. Though in both cases mobilization patterns have remained oriented toward individual needs directly addressed by the local government, their mediation though the formal participatory mechanisms has been organized in a different ways. While the formal rules of participatory mechanisms have tended to prevail in León, informal practices of political control and co-option have dominated in Nezahualcóyotl. In the context of autonomous participation, however, the consequences of individual mobilization are less important than in contexts where participatory institutions are controlled by political actors such as in Nezahualcóyotl, where clientelism had not only survived institutional innovation but has even been reinforced through it. In fact, as the comparison of Nezahualcóyotl's and León's experiences with participatory decentralization demonstrates, level of autonomy is a central element determining the potential for participatory institutions to sustain greater social inclusion and accessibility to the rights of citizenship, a conclusion that the

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following comparisons with Brazilian cases of participatory budgeting will confirm even more forcefully.

Citizens participating to the weekly Miércoles Ciudadano, City Hall (León, 2007).

CHAPTER FIVE

RECIFE I AND II: PARTICIPATION AS CLIENTELISM AND AS DISEMPOWERING CO-OPTION

"Despite some exceptions, most PB delegates believe in the project. The majority of them are people who were pushed by the PT, but this is not something that is talked about in the forums, because it is an official instance and so you can't be talking about parties per se, but most of it is the work done by the PT at the grassroots."

-- PB Participant, Recife[80]

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Recife, with a population of 1.6 million, is the capital of the State of Pernambuco located in Northeastern Brazil. A colonial city built along the coast, Recife has developed as a major industrial city in the region during the last century, welcoming massive inflows of new residents coming from inlands in search of employment and better living conditions. During this period, the capital of the State of Pernambuco has seen a succession of local governments in tune with the different regimes that have contributed to forge modern Brazil. As in the case of Mexico, Brazilian municipalities have indeed developed quite centralized and exclusionary local governance models, at least until the redefining of the Constitution in 1988. As a consequence, the type of state-society relations that have historically dominated reflect the variety of political and constitutional arrangements' legacies. During both the first democratic (populist) period and the subsequent military regimes, Recife was characterized by a tradition of relatively strong social mobilization via neighborhood associations – though fragmented and organized along clientelistic lines – but it has also been the scene of intense competition among the rightwing and leftwing political forces, both new and inherited from previous regimes.

This history of political competition and social mobilization has influenced the process and outcomes of the return to municipal democracy in 1983, when the pro-liberal branch of the military government led by Gustavo Krause – from the *Partido da Frente Liberal*

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[80] Personal interview with a PB participant, Recife, July, 2008.

(PFL – Party of the Liberal Front) – organized the first open election for mayor of Recife. Since then, the main political parties from the left – *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) – and from the right – *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB – Brazilian Democratic Movement Party) and PFL (now *Partido Democráta*, or DEM – Democratic Party) – have been disputing the democratic political space, finding new ways to gather support from their respective social bases through democratic institutions and integrating new institutional governance mechanisms aimed at including more citizen participation. Did the electoral opening and pluralism characterizing Recife today contribute to democratizing the municipal governance process? More precisely, did the institutional innovations implemented under the respective governments of Jarbas Vasconselos (PMDB) and Roberto Magalhães (PFL/DEM) on the one hand, and João Paulo Lima e Silva (PT) on the other, contribute to the rise of collectively organized and autonomous forms of civil society participation in governance processes, in turn transforming the traditional and clientelistic ways of doing politics in the city? This chapter aims to answer this question by focusing on the PT participatory budgeting program, implemented in 2001 under the municipal government of João Paulo Lima e Silva. This is not to suggest that previous PB experiments were unimportant, and these will be compared with the PT reforms in order to establish distinctions and parallels between these two versions of apparently similar programs that will underscore their differentiated consequences on state-society relationships.

Though the previous period (1993-2000) is mainly documented through secondary sources and previous studies[81], a comparison of these two periods, which I refer to as Recife I–PPB/PB and Recife II–PB throughout this study, adds depth to our understanding of the Recife's experiments with participatory budgeting and strengthens the theoretical foundation of my explanatory model, allowing me to stress the importance of both context and institutions to explain the complex and plural nature of (un)changing state-society relationships in municipal participatory institutions. Recife is an interesting

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[81] See, among others, the in-depth and well documented qualitative studies of the PPB/PB program conducted by scholars such as Brian Wampler (2007), Brian Wampler and Leonardo Avritzer (2004), Marcus Melo et al. (Melo, Rezende, & Lubambo, 2001), Tarcisio da Silva (2003) and Evanildo Barbosa da Silva (2003).

case as it is one of the only experiments in PB that has survived changes in governing parties and coalitions, though its varying institutional format from one administration to another and its centrality as an urban planning and governance tool has been affected by political variables such as political competition and civil society configurations. In the case of Recife I, I argue that similarly to what has been observed in the Mexican case of Nezahualcóyotl, the combination of both sustainable individual patterns of mobilization and a lack of autonomy for participants to the PPB/PB process contributed to reinforce the traditional clientelistic relations between the local state and CSOs. Though the institutional changes to the structure of PB brought by the PT in the Recife II case have contributed to transform mobilization process to make it more collective, they only had a limited effect on transforming state-society relationships in the city. In fact, as we will see, the lack of autonomy already observed in the first period survived the new institutional design due to high levels of political competition, imbalances of power among CSOs and perceptions about actors' roles in the process, thereby leading to the development of *disempowering co-option*.

5.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: LOCAL GOVERNANCE, ASSOCIATIONALISM AND CLIENTELISM IN RECIFE (1947-1983)

As an important industrial capital of the Northeastern region of Brazil, Recife has quite a unique and interesting sociopolitical history characterized by important political conflicts and a certain level of social contention and neighborhood mobilizations around land-tenure and urbanization issues. Between 1920 and 1940, the municipality of Recife has seen its most impressive growth rate, its population increasing by 46% in less than 20 years as the result of economic growth and a massive rural exodus. Contrary to other major Brazilian cities, the population increases and rapid urbanization did not correspond with a consequent increase in the availability of public goods, leaving many newcomers unemployed and unable to acquire regular land, therefore living in spontaneously organized neighborhoods at the outskirts of the municipality (do Céu Cézar, 1985; Sínger, 1977). It is interesting to note that at this time, more than 56% of the population

of Recife occupied a mere 15% of the urban territory of the city, mostly hills and flooded areas (Barbosa da Silva & Silva, 2003).

Under the rule of Vargas' Estado Nôvo years, state interventions in Recife were generally oriented toward the modernization of the city, understood as the eradication of the *mocambos*[82], the modernization of the city center and the industrialization of the city's economy (Rezende, 2002). Appointed by a pro-Vargas state government, Recife's then-mayor was affiliated with the sugar-cane oligarchs, but he was also concerned by Vargas' national call for modernization as local governments had very limited room to maneuver within the federal division of powers and appointed local politicians enjoying very limited autonomy from the centralized federal state. This policy focus, combined with the massive rural exodus in the state of Pernambuco, generated important consequences for Recife, whose infrastructures and market were unable to absorb the inflows of newcomers. Consequently, one of the main challenges faced by local political elites was the growing number of people living in *favelas*, irregular pieces of lands occupied by the poorest sectors of the population, which have no access to basic municipal services and are often located in relatively hazardous terrains of the city, such as unsecured hills cliffs or ocean shores subject to erosion and floods. These social and urban challenges found little resonance in the politicians' preoccupations during the Vargas era and became an important issue used by the growing local opposition movements arising from the left to win support from the popular and working classes in a new populist alliance that would bring them to power in 1946.

It is in this context that associationalism emerged at the neighborhood level in Recife, propelled by political parties during the first 'democratization' period and then remained present under the military rule as a way to maintain relationships with the population and to secure some minimal form of popular legitimacy. In fact, Recife has a tradition of associationalism at the neighborhood level that is closely tied to the struggles of the

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[82] The *mocambos* were traditional little villages of huts generally located at the outskirts of major cities and where runaway slaves established communities during the Portuguese colonization period. In Recife, the *mocambos* were symbols of miserable living conditions and memories of the city's past that needed to be forgotten in the context of modernization (Rezende, 2002).

favelas' residents, which held recognition as a legitimate channel for citizen demand-making by the local state dating back to the first democratization period (1955-1964) and was pursued to a certain extent under the military regime and during the *apertura* (political opening). Yet, and even if the distinct political context of both periods and the space occupied by neighborhood associations in the public space has given different flavors to state-society relationships under the two governance models, they were both defined by the prevalence of clientelism. Even if articulated in a different way, there are interesting parallels to establish between the Brazilian and the Mexican past histories of state-society organization. In fact, while in Mexico clientelism was organized through the channels of the official state party (the PRI), in both cases, residents' associations and existing CSOs were co-opted into the local structure of governance as a way to secure popular support and legitimacy for authoritarian governments that established a direct link with the general population through them.

5.2.1 The Rise and Demise of Neighborhood Associationalism in the City: Populism, Clientelism and Military Repression (1947-1974)

In the aftermath of the Vargas regime, two models of local governance emerged in Recife, the first one bringing political competition and party politics to the center of municipal leaders' preoccupations between 1955-1964, and the other one re-centering politics at the national level under the rule of the military junta that governed Brazil between 1964 and 1974. If the first one opened the public space to the rise of a neighborhood associationalism movement whose relations with the populist leaders were mostly clientelistic, the first years of the second one were characterized by repression and a certain demise of associationalism in the city.

Prior to 1947, only few – generally disorganized – groups of residents coming from underprivileged areas of the city collectively mobilized to demand access to basic urban services and inclusion in the urbanization plans for their neighborhoods, generally relying upon personal connections with the municipal elite, especially the elected municipal councilors, which constituted a central actor in the clientelistic redistribution of public goods in the municipality. The years preceding the end of the Vargas' regime, however,

generated a climate of intense social urban demands and electoral disputes between the official and opposition parties in many Brazilian municipalities, which moved the debate from political arenas into the social realm. In fact, in several municipalities (including Recife), urban neighborhood committees were organized and "under the influence of various political parties became the channels for communicating demands for urban services and infrastructure" (Duarte, 2009, p. 111). This is exactly the scenario that has played out in Recife, where associationalism has rose markedly at the neighborhood level during this period and under the auspices of the main opposition coalition, the *Frente do Recife* of Pelópidas Silveira.

Two complementary explanations have been proposed in the literature to explain the rise of neighborhood associationalism via the direct intervention of local political parties and traditional political actors during this period in Recife. First, as the state started intervening in the rules over the use of land in the urbanization of certain areas of the city, growing popular dissatisfaction with the unequal and privilege-based attribution of urban services created a social context favorable to the creation of urban social movements aimed at protecting citizens' interests. Yet, in a context where social organization was usually repressed by the state, the creation of such social vehicles was closely tied into the existing leftist political forces, and the creation of the *Comités Democráticos e Populares de bairros* (CDPs – Popular and Democratic Neighborhood Committees) in 1947, the first attempt at organizing local communities, was the result of an initiative led by the *Partido Comunista do Brasil* (PCdoB – Communist Party of Brazil). Second, it has also been argued that Recife's neighborhood association movement, while having taken root through the local organization of the PCdoB, truly arose in 1955, in a less atomized form (do Céu Cézar, 1985). The election of Pelópidas Silveira from the *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (PSB – Brazilian Socialist Party), the first elected mayor who was in office during the first Brazilian democratic period between 1955-1964[83], is alleged to have played an important role in the rise of neighborhood associationalism in Recife. In fact, the campaign of the *Frente do Recife* (Front for

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[83] The 1959-1963 mandate as mayor of Recife was, however, held by Miguel Arrães, while Pelópidas Silveira was governor of the State of Pernambuco.

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Recife), a coalition of all major leftist parties[84] led by Pelópidas Silveira, was centered on the notion of popular participation that was sustained through the creation of neighborhood associations. In fact, Paulo Calvancati emphazised the importance of such groups of residents for the Silveira administration, saying that:

> We, the *Frente do Recife*, stay in the need to look for popular support to press the Chamber to vote the proposals and messages of Pelópidas […] and so the associations work as vectors of pressure (cited by: do Céu Cézar, 1985, p. 163).

Such a closeness between the creation of neighborhood associations and political parties was qualified, however, as a populist alliance, since the "participation of the population was done through the molds established by the government according to the alliances that were sustaining them in power" (T. da Silva, 2003, p. 306). Thus, local neighborhood associations created during this period had no political autonomy from the local government (do Céu Cézar, 1985) and were created by the *Frente* to solidify its own position (Assies, 1991) while mostly being used as political support bases that could be activated when needed and for which the granting of an official and direct access to the state for making demands was the central reward.

The 1964 military coup at the national level corresponded with an important political change through which democratic elections and existing political parties were banned by the military regime and replaced by appointed local governments coming from the pro-military political forces. Associated to the 'communist plot' and the banned leftist parties such as the PCdoB by the military regime, the neighborhood associations that were created in Recife after 1947 were disbanded in the aftermath of the coup. Their leaders were persecuted or imprisoned, and their members ended their affiliation with the movement, fearing violent repression and reprimands from the local government (Assies, 1991). Thus, and until 1974[85], the first years of the military regime in Recife were highly

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[84] The *Frente do Recife* was in fact a coalition formed by the PSB, the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB – Brazilian Working Party) and the PCdoB, with important support from members of the União Democrática Nacional (UDN – National Democratic Union).

[85] 1974 marks the start of the *distenção* period of the military rule in Brazil that set the stage for the later *apertura* in 1979, a period that lasted until 1985 and during which power was gradually given back to civilians. The *distenção* period is characterized by the slow opening of the regime to civil society actors,

repressive toward the existing urban movement and were marked by a significant decrease in politically driven associational activity at the grassroots.

5.2.2 The Military Rule in Recife: Political Repression, the Re-emergence of Neighborhood Associationalism and Clientelism (1974-1983)

As we have seen, the first years of the military regime in Recife were marked by the local government's use of repression against urban movements, which were too closely associated to the populist era and political parties, as they also had been everywhere else in Brazil. In Recife, however, such a change in governmental dynamics did not mean the total disappearance of urban associational movement, whose clientelistic relationship with the local state was reestablished on a different basis after 1970.

Though political repression against populist parties and their traditional allies in urban movements and neighborhood associations slowed the activities of the latter, several grassroots organizations, however, remained active as self-help groups under the auspices of the local Catholic Church. The *Comunidades Ecclesiásticas de Base* (CEB – Basic Ecclesiastic Communities), small groups of residents established in local parishes and led by religious authorities, contributed to maintain a certain level of social organization at the grassroots (Bidegain Greising, 1993), tolerated by the military as they were related to survival issues more than political ones. After 1979, when electoral politics returned to political leaders' preoccupations, the strategy of the local pro-military government was to give some leeway to local social organizations, while continuing to exercise a certain level of control through the reemergence of clientelistic networks. As explained by Mainwairing,

> When the movements first emerged, the authoritarian regime generally ignored them or repressed them. As the grassroots movements expanded and the electoral process became more important, however, the state was forced to develop a strategy to respond to them. At this point, clientelistic policies became more widespread (Mainwairing, 1987, p. 152).

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and is often associated with the emergence of the Brazilian new social movements in the literature on the transition to democracy in the country.

According to him, the neighborhood movements' expansion at the grassroots level and their turn to more revindicative and contestatory strategies indeed forced the authoritarian regime to "redefine its political strategy" (Mainwairing, 1987, p. 152) and to include them in the governance process in order to limit their negative impact on the local government's legitimacy and ability to govern. Consequently, the pro-military administration seized the opportunity of using the existing venues of social organization to bolster its own legitimacy, creating the *Núcleos de Planejamento Comúnitario* (NPC – Community Planning Units). Also called the *barrações,* these 'citizen-based' units based in each community worked as a control mechanism for the local government in the sense that it "allowed [local officials] to develop a better knowledge of the areas and to control the possible popular protests, demonstrations or marches" (N. M. da Silva, 1988, p. 18). The social actors who were responsible for coordinating the actions of the *barrações* in the neighborhoods were in fact "mandated to create mothers' groups, youth's clubs and similar organizations that would serve as social structures, as well as serving as a source of legitimacy for the governments' actions" (Dornelles & Rocha Filho, 1996, p. 2). Thus, the relationship that was maintained with social leaders through the *barracões*' activities were of a clientelistic nature, and their recognition as such by the pro-military government and the fulfillment of their demands for urban services was based upon their political support and de-activation as agents of social contention.

At the same time, neighborhood groups slightly changed their focus, which was mostly associated to the Church's communitarian development and self-help discourse, to become more oriented toward political struggles for urban land and social demands, detaching themselves from the Church and moving closer to the emerging political alternatives to the pro-military parties, such as the PSB and the PFL (Assies, 1991). While elsewhere in Brazil the neighborhood association movements' strategy was generally to align with the emerging PT, in Recife the increased diversity and fragmentation of emerging political parties offered new opportunities for neighborhood leaders (Assies, 1991) who did not align with a particular camp but developed particularistic relationships based on clientelistic exchanges with local political leaders. Describing the poor access the general population had to public authorities and the

resulting discretionary distribution of public goods and urban services during the period preceding the redemocratization era starting in 1983, a PB participant explained, "before, only the public works of those who were friends with the king were undertaken. One helped the king's friends. And so those who were not close to him had nothing" (Ex-delegado OP Recife, 2008). Thus, even though social movements started to reactivate during the 1970's under the influence of the progressive sections of the Church and of the emerging opposition to the military government, state-society relations were mostly based upon the clientelistic redistribution of resources among privileged actors, to which neighborhood groups were key.

5.3 THE OPENING OF RECIFE'S ELECTORAL ARENA: A TURN TOWARD MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE?

In Brazil, the growing opposition to the regime led to the negotiated transition from military to democratic rule that occurred in the early 1980s, which has in turn set the stage for the awakening of opposition political parties and the redemocratization of electoral and governance processes at the municipal level. In Recife, the presence of active leftist political forces organized through, among other things, the Church and the various social movements affiliated to opposition parties (most of them associated to pre-coup leftist political figures such as Arrães) facilitated the pluralization of the local electoral arena. In 1985, direct election for mayor was reintroduced at the municipal level, and Jarbas Vasconcelos, who had defected from the PMDB, became the first elected mayor of Recife, leading a coalition of leftist parties under the umbrella of the PSB.

As table 9 shows, since 1985, Recife's electoral arena has been characterized by a polarization of political preferences between coalitions from the left and the right sides of the ideological spectrum, dividing the PMDB (center-left) and the PFL (center-right, now DEM) until 1994, and more recently including the PT as the new party representing the left and the popular sectors. What changes have the rise of political pluralism and alternation brought to the practice of local governance in Recife?

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TABLE 9 RESULTS FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PER POLITICAL PARTY/ELECTORAL COALITION, RECIFE, 1985-2008

Mandates	Political Parties & Coalitions / Elected Mayors	% Vote
1981-1984	**ARENA (Gustavo Krause, appointed)**	**N/A**
1985-1988	**PSB (Jarbas Vasconcelos)**	**N/A**
1989-1992	**PFL (Joaquim Francisco, elected)**	**40.6%**
	PMDB	23.4%
	PTD	11.4%
1993-1997	**PMDB (Jarbas Vasconcelos, elected)**	**40.3%**
	PT	14.3%
	PFL	10.6%
1997-2000	**PFL / União pelo Recife (Roberto Magalhães, elected)**	**43.9%**
	PMDB / Avança Recife	16.5%
	PT / Recifeliz	14.5%
2001-2004	PFL / União pelo Recife	43.4%
	PT / Frente de Esquerda do Recife (João Paulo Lima e Silva, elected 2nd round)	**31.3%**
	PPS / Frente de Oposição Recife Melhor	9.6%
2005-2008	**PT / Frente de Esquerda do Recife (João Paulo Lima e Silva, reelected)**	**51.8%**
	PMDB / União pela Mudança	25.5%
	PTB / Oposições do Recife	8.6%
2008-2011	**PT / Frente do Recife (João da Costa, elected)**	**46.3%**
	DEM	22.1%
	PMDB / Coligação por um Novo Recife	14.7%

Note: Electoral results are based upon the results obtained by the main coalitions after the first round. In most cases, the first round winner was elected during the second round, except in the 2000 election, where Magalhães won the first round and then lost the second round by a small margin to João Paulo, candidate of the PT-led electoral coalition.
Source: Compiled by the author with electoral data from the Tribunal Regional Eleitoral de Pernambuco (TRE-PE), http://www.tre-pe.gov.br/index2.html [page consulted on 07/05/09]

5.3.1 The Ancestor of PB: The PREZEIS and Popular Participation (1983-…)

It was in the early 1980's under the last pro-military administration in Recife that the first institutional attempts at including the traditionally excluded sectors of the population was made by mayor Gustavo Krause from the progressive branch of the pro-military party ARENA. In fact, in the course of the democratization process in Brazil, the concepts of poverty reduction and popular participation became important parts of public discourse at the municipal level, especially in municipalities such as Recife where a large share of the population was living in the city's 300 *favelas* (illegal squatter settlements) that had

arisen during the modernization period on both private and public land as a consequence of unplanned and spontaneous urbanization. As a result of grassroots mobilizations and *favelas* residents' active resistance to eviction, the Krause administration adopted a plan for the use of land in 1983 (Câmara municipal do Recife, 1983) aimed at regularizing the so-called illegal *favelas* as recognized neighborhoods, including them in the municipal urbanization plan as *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS – Special Zones of Social Interest)[86] and therefore avoiding the marginalized residents' expulsion from their houses.

The *Programa de Regularização das Zonas de Interesse Social* (PREZEIS - Program for the Regularization of the Special Zones of Social Interest), adopted by Jarbas Vasconcelos from the PMDB in 1987, actually created a basis for popular participation to become the institutionalized channel for urban planning, as a way to integrate the *favelas* into the urban plan of the city, but more generally as a "governance system recognized as democratic and participatory" (Barbosa da Silva, 2003, p. 10). Under the PREZEIS law, both the mayor and the recognized community-based entities representative of a neighborhood's residents have authority to present the city urbanization plan and to collectively organize the regularization of the still non-recognized *favelas* as ZEIS (Câmara municipal do Recife, 1987, art. 7). Local NGOs such as ETAPAS and FASE-Recife[87] have also been central actors in facilitating the implementation and organization of the PREZEIS in the local communities:

> Local NGOs and urban social movements played a critical role in the approval and implementation of PREZEIS. In these first two periods,

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[86] The 1983 Law on Land Use defines the newly created ZEIS as "existing and consolidated squatter settlements that spontaneously emerged and where are established specific urbanization norms given the social interest to promote their juridical regularization and their integration to the urban structure" (Câmara municipal do Recife, 1983, art. 14.2).

[87] Both FASE and ETAPAS are among the most important Brazilian NGOs present in Recife and active at the grassroots level, notably in the *favelas*. Emerging in the 1980's, they became organizations 'at the service of urban movements' (Assies, 1991). Both are fighting for what has been called the 'right to the city', which refers to the idea that citizens of all sectors of the population should be granted the basic civil rights associated with the status of citizen at the city level, including access to basic services such as water and sewage, as well as property rights. The interviews conducted in 2008 with the leaders of these two local NGOs corroborated the important and historical role played by their organizations in the establishment and further extension of the PREZEIS structure within the excluded zones, as well as their organizational role to propel community-based organization in the context of the urbanization plan coordinated with the municipal authorities (Barbosa da Silva, 2008; Valença, 2008).

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NGOs acted as facilitators in the relationship between government agencies and community-based organizations. Their expertise, command of language and institutional autonomy were elements which contributed to the development of such a role (Maia, 1996).

As urban planning experts and community organization facilitators, local NGOs invested a lot of effort and energy in strengthening local neighborhood associations, a role that transformed them into a crucial actor in the consolidation of this mechanism and the consequent urban development of the *favelas*. The lack of commitment to the program by local authorities, however, has greatly diminished the scope and credibility of PREZEIS and the ability of NGOs to overcome clientelism and the influence of local political brokers. The latter indeed retained the biggest share of local investment power and used it in a discretionary and exclusionary manner, thereby hindering the development of organized and autonomous participation in the *favelas*.

Two main participatory mechanisms were institutionalized as official social participation channels through the PREZEIS: the community-based *Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização da Posse da Terra* (COMUL – Commission for Tenure Regularization and Urbanization), present in each recognized zone, and the city-based PREZEIS Permanent Forum at the level of the municipality (Melo et al., 2001). On the one hand, the COMUL, created in every underdeveloped 'zone' and composed of state officials, NGOs and citizen representatives designated by neighborhood associations[88], is responsible for locally discussing the integration of its zone into the city's urbanization plan, presenting the zone's urbanization needs and demands and, once approved, coordinating the elaboration and execution of the projects, thereby becoming the intermediary between the community and the municipal authorities. On the other hand, the citywide PREZEIS Permanent Forum is the citywide participation venue where state officials, NGO and community representatives designated by the COMUL discuss common questions and issues related to policies and projects affecting the ZEIS more generally, as well as the yet non-recognized *favelas*. It is during the so-called second phase of the PREZEIS, from

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[88] To be recognized by municipal authorities as legitimate community interlocutors in the terms determined by the PREZEIS law, the neighborhood association representatives among whom the COMUL delegates are selected have to be elected directly by the members of the local community (Câmara municipal do Recife, 1987).

1993 to 1995, that the tools for democratic community participation in urban planning processes in the ZEIS were really developed and consolidated (Marinho, 1998). In fact, it is during this period that the Forum's role was extended by the attribution of specific funds and by a reorientation of discussions toward a more deliberative focus. Moreover, the local community representatives at the COMUL, previously designated by their neighbors associations, started to be elected by their neighbors, extending their legitimacy as social actors and representatives of their community.

As the first institutional effort to include citizens in the municipal decision-making process for urbanization plans, the PREZEIS has been an important precursor for furthering social participation from the community level in Recife, breaking with the authoritarian tradition of social exclusion and repression[89]. In spite of this, the efforts at urbanizing and regularizing the *favelas* through the granting of ZEIS status and the election of a local COMUL are still limited. Of the 516 *favelas* that Recife counted in 1993, only 66 had their ZEIS status granted in 2002, and only 33 of them had an active COMUL installed in the community (Barbosa da Silva & Silva, 2003, p. 9). Because of the long and complex process of ZEIS status granting, most *favelas* and marginalized communities remained excluded as they had no access to citizenship rights in Recife, lacking basic civil and social rights as well as the political rights to formulate demands and access state institutions. To overcome such a difficulty, as we will see in the following section, the PREZEIS participatory channels have been gradually complemented by more 'universalistic' participatory mechanisms implemented by the various municipal administrations over the past two decades, such as Jarbas Vasconcelos' *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, which gradually paved the way for the current models of participatory budgeting.

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[89] Though the PREZEIS constitutes an important element to consider while studying the current participatory programs and the nature of state-society relationships that have developed through these experiments, analyzing the implications of the PREZEIS itself in Recife is beyond the scope of this study. Still, an interesting element to highlight is that PREZEIS is, as of today, the only legal participatory channel in the city as it is the only one that has been recognized and institutionalized as such by a municipal law (see, among others: Maia, 1996; Marinho, 1998; Wampler, 1999). Yet, municipal governments have gradually replaced this channel by the PB direct participation channels implemented as the 'official' communication tool between the municipal executive and the communities, which makes it the most relevant institutional participatory mechanism in the city.

5.3.2 The Institutional Participatory Governance Framework in Recife: Two Models of Participatory Budgeting

Following the provisions of the 1988 Brazilian constitution, the municipality of Recife is organized along the principles of the *Lei Orgânica do Município do Recife* (Municipal Organic Law), which defines its general governance principles and institutions along with the election of its governing bodies. The municipality's governance model generally reproduces the federal model of power division[90], as both a mayor and his nominated executive council and the legislative branch - the *Câmara de Vereadores* (Chamber of municipal councilors) – form the municipal governing bodies[91]. Traditionally very centralized in the hands of the mayors, municipal powers have recently started to be decentralized within Brazilian municipalities by means of reforms generally including a greater concern for popular participation in governance processes. As we have seen in chapter two, in the aftermath of the 1988 Constitutional reform, Brazilian municipalities have been given more responsibilities which have been accompanied by requirements to open the governance institutions to citizen participation.

Recife is one example of such a new concern as, since its reformulation in 1990, the *Lei Orgânica* dictates that "the municipality will create instruments of popular participation in decisions, management and control of public administration" (Câmara municipal do Recife, 2007 [1990], art. 9.5). It is in this context, and inspired by the successful model of

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[90] At the municipal level, the political system is generally understood as being one of '*executivismo*', which means that most of the policy-making powers are concentrated in the hands of the executive, the main activity of the legislative being to approve mayoral decisions and to negotiate resources (Abrucio & Couto, 1996; Wampler, 1999).

[91] According to the Brazilian municipal electoral rules, the mayor is elected directly by the population along with his fellow candidate (vice-mayor) by means of universal suffrage. Two electoral rounds and coalitions are often needed, as the elected mayor needs to have the majority (50%+1) of the total number of votes. The members of the *Câmara de Vereadores* are elected following the same majority principle, each citizen voting for one candidate for municipal councilor only (Presidencia da República do Brasil, 1997). In Recife, following the requirements of the Federal Constitution which establishes the number of councilors proportionally to the general population, the 37 candidates receiving the most votes get elected and form the municipal chamber for a 4-year mandate (Câmara municipal do Recife, 2007 [1990]).

Porto Alegre[92], that participatory budgeting has developed in the city, as part of an effort from Vasconcelos' second administration to institutionalize citizen participation and inclusion in decision-making venues and processes. Since 1993, two main models of participatory budgeting have been implemented in Recife: the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros/Orçamento Participativo* (PPB/PB – Program City Hall in the Neighborhoods/Participatory budgeting) under the center-right governments of the PMDB and of the PFL (1993-2000), and the current participatory budgeting program designed and implemented by the PT-led leftist coalition (2001-2008)[93].

Prefeitura nos Bairros: The PMDB/PFL Model of Participatory Budgeting (Recife I: 1993-2000)

Once elected for his first mandate in 1985 thanks to the support of social sectors, Jarbas Vasconcelos made a promise to open political space to greater participation from civil society leaders reality with the implementation of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, aimed at creating a direct link between community leaders and the municipal government. It was, however, during his second mandate, from 1993-1996, that the program was transformed into what has been called the PPB/PB program, which created the citizens delegates, consolidated the participation of community leaders and extended participation to the larger population. Roberto Magalhães, who succeeded Vasconcelos, from 1997 to 2000, was elected upon the commitment to pursue the participatory programs designed by the PMDB administration, and especially to consolidate them as PB institutions.

The program's initial methodology clearly stated that the goal of the PPB/PB "should seek to advance broad and global priorities in order to escape clientelistic ties that characterize the participation of community organizations" (Prefeitura do Recife, 1995, p.

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[92] As we have seen in chapter two, the success generated by the PB experience in Porto Alegre has created a demonstration effect, and many administrations (from all political parties) across Brazil have adopted similar participatory programs (Wampler & Avritzer, 2005).

[93] A particularity of Recife's participatory budgeting model is that, though it has changed according to each ruling party/coalition intentions and ways of defining it, the model has survived political alternation in power, which was not the case in many other Brazilian municipalities, where electoral defeats have often meant the end of the PB programs established under previous municipal governments (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007).

15). Moreover, in his *Plano Plurianual* 1998-2001 (PPA – Plurianual plan)[94], Magalhães reiterated that his government would be looking for actions following three main principles: "the consolidation of democracy, the rescue and extension of citizenship, and the strengthening of local economic competitiveness" (Prefeitura do Recife, 1998, p. 5), including the idea of participatory mechanisms. Therefore, while the original PPB program was based upon direct links between local community leaders and the government, the PB added an important dimension, aimed in principle at going beyond particularistic demands and bringing citizen delegates to participate to policy formulation and implementation.

In order to do so, the city was divided in six politico-administrative regions (RPA), each of which then subdivided into three micro-regions, generally comprising 40 000 to 60 000 residents. As a city-planning process, the PPB/PB program was organized around a year-long process, where ordinary citizens and organized society groups were invited to participate to elect their respective delegates who would, in turn, be responsible for discussing policy priorities and formulating investment proposals to be submitted to the executive in the delegates' forums organized by the municipal government. Though the stated objective of PPB/PB was to go beyond the particularistic relationship between community leaders and the local government, the composition and organization of PPB/PB institutions reflected their privileged position – based on party loyalty – within the administration's bases of support. In fact, the PPB/PB process contributed to offer a privileged position to neighborhood associations and local leaders through the designation of *de facto* delegates and then included the idea of elected delegates (Melo et al., 2001). In the first years of the program, 320 delegates were elected, half of them being designated by the accredited NGOs and registered neighborhood associations and the other half directly elected by citizens (see table 10). As Wampler observes, this format not only gave legitimacy to community leaders, but limiting the number of 'legitimate' leaders who could access the administration allowed the administration to "filter the demands of the non-elected leaders" and to "exclude ordinary citizens from

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[94] The PPA is the document that defines the orientations of an incoming municipal government for the 3-4 coming years, presenting the governance and management philosophy of the executive council as well as the instruments for financial planning.

any role in the process" (Wampler, 1999, p. 355). In 1997, Magalhães changed this proportion, raising the number of PB delegates to 470, among which the population directly elected 273 (who mostly came from neighborhood organizations) and 197 were community leaders designated by the NGOs and neighborhood associations. It is in the City Forum (substituted by the Participatory Budgeting General Forum in 1997) that, twice a year, policy priorities were discussed and debated among the delegates, NGO activists and members of the administration, in meetings taking place after their election by the general population and where delegates decided and discussed matters without consulting their communities.

Different diagnoses have been proposed to qualify the Vasconcelos and Magalhães' administrations PPB/PB experiences in Recife in the literature, most of them looking at the first version of PB as institutionalized under the municipal administrations. Some studies have qualified this experiment as an institutional innovation opening spaces for increased citizen participation, better social inclusion of the poorest sectors of the population and empowering community leaders (Wampler, 1999). Yet, most of them remained skeptical about the actual policy results of such a limited participatory program, highly dependent upon political will and limited by the few budget resources allocated to public deliberation (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007; T. da Silva, 2003; Melo et al., 2001; Wampler, 2007). Moreover, and we will explore this in greater details in the following section, this program was closely tied to historical links between associations and the PSB, which became a limit to the development of organized and autonomous participation. After its election in 2000, the PT therefore reformed the program, which became institutionally more similar to other PT's experiences with participatory budgeting across the country.

The PT's Model of Participatory Budgeting (Recife II: 2001-2008)
During the 2000 municipal electoral campaign, the PT candidate, João Paulo Silva e Lima, expressed a deep concern for strengthening 'ordinary' citizen participation and for the need to deepen and transform the existing PB institutions, criticized for only empowering PFL-friendly community leaders and for being generally dismissed in

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decision-making by the incumbent PFL mayor. Inspired by other PT experiences with PB across Brazil[95], João Paulo proposed to rethink the PB institutions and to make them the main channel of citizen participation, as a pillar of the 'radically democratic' governance model proposed by the Recife section of the PT to be "sustained by an extensive popular mobilization" within the communities (Prefeitura do Recife, 2005, p. 33). As a way to gather support for his proposal, the candidate brought together a group of community leaders and NGO activists who, disappointed by the results of the Magalhães PB program, participated with the PT in the discussions leading to the reformulation of the program (Coordenadora OP, 2008; Delegado OP Recife 3, 2008).

The 'New PB' of Recife was announced in 2001 by the new PT-led government of João Paulo Lima e Silva as the administration's flagship program, conceived to revitalize the participatory dynamics and institutions of municipal governance and urban planning. As explained by João da Costa, responsible for the implementation and conduct of the PB process in Recife between 2001-2008, in an address to the residents of RPA 6,

> PB aims, through a dialogue between the municipal government and the population, to construct new spaces of democracy […]. It is a commitment to rescue, requalify and strengthen democracy with another quality and another pattern of relationship [previously clientelistic and often corrupted] that goes beyond the elections (João da Costa, cited in: Barbosa da Silva & Silva, 2003).

The PT version of the PB program constituted a change in focus for participatory planning in two ways. First, PB became the main institutional tool for popular participation in governance processes, superseding the already existing mechanisms such as the PREZEIS and changing the structure and functioning of the previous PPB/PB program. As highlighted by Barbosa da Silva (2003), under mayor João Paulo, PB gained primacy over the other participatory mechanisms in the municipal governance process, a centrality that is exemplified by the creation of the Secretary for Participatory Budgeting and Citizen Management in 2000, later replaced by the Secretary of Participatory

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[95] As he explained to me in an interview conducted in July 2008, João Paulo had visited many PT cities such as Porto Alegre during the years preceding his candidacy in Recife to learn from their experiences and find ways to propose an improved model of participatory budgeting adapted to the city of Recife (Lima e Silva, 2008).

Planning[96]. Second, contrary to the previous PPB/PB and PREZEIS programs, the PT proposal included a concern for mass-mobilization, as the institutional changes introduced to the program exemplify. In fact, rather than focusing on the community leaders' participation, the PB institutions implemented by the João Paulo administration focus on the general population's mobilization capacity to feed deliberations over the municipal budget.

The PB cycle (see graph 3) established by the PT is organized over a year, where popular and delegates' meetings occur at both the micro-regional, regional and city levels to discuss local investment priorities and, more generally, urban planning issues. The first phase of the meeting is the local organization process. From January to March, local meetings are organized by the incumbent members of the micro-regional forums and the PB coordination to inform citizens about the PB methodology for the current budgeting process, a period during which local communities and groups organize their support bases and start formulating the demands they will register to be discussed in regional and thematic plenaries. A minimum quorum of 10 residents is needed for a proposal to be presented, registered and eventually voted in the plenary. Candidates for delegates also start gathering support during this period, often closely related to a particular project submitted to the PB process.

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[96] In 2005, the Secretary of Participatory Planning, Public Works, Urban and Environmental Development was created as the result of the fusion of the Secretary of Participatory Budgeting and Citizen Management and of the Secretary of Participatory Planning. The participatory budgeting process is overseen by a coordination office, which has antennas in each micro-region of the city (for more information on the structure of the participatory planning branch of Recife's municipal government (2005-2008), see: http://www.recife.pe.gov.br/2007/07/04/mat_144834.php [page consulted 07/05/09].

GRAPH 3   PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING ANNUAL CYCLE, RECIFE, 2001-2008
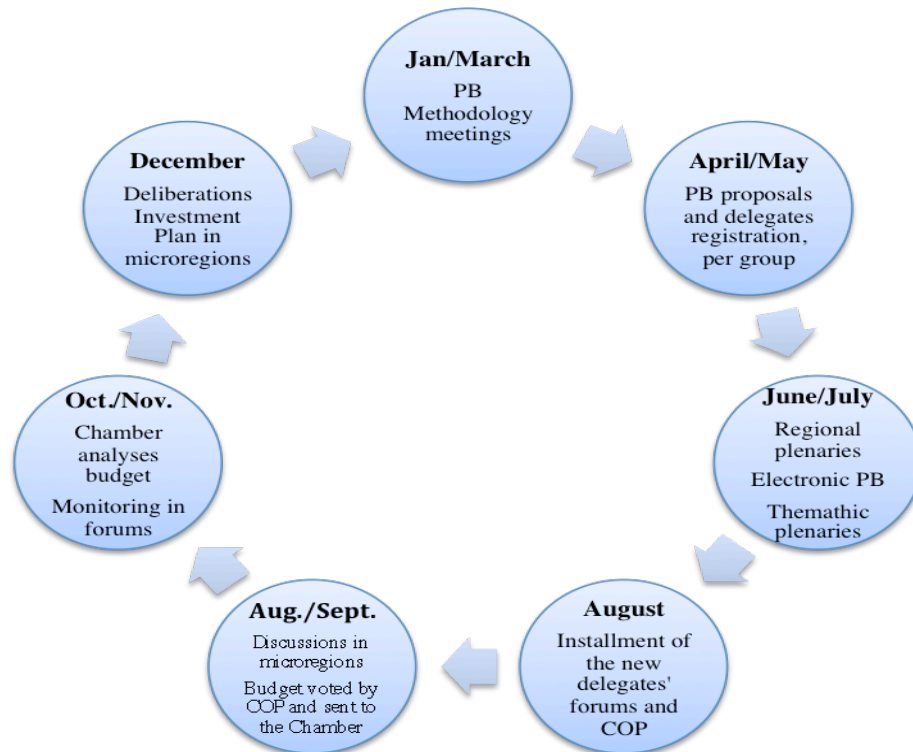
It is in the regional and thematic plenaries that the list of public works to be submitted to the executive for budgeting approval is discussed, deliberated and then voted. Each participant votes for two priorities, and the 30 proposals with the most votes per region are conveyed to the municipal administration for further evaluation and budget approval. During these meetings, delegates are also elected, proportionally to the number of participants registered (one delegate/10 participants). These elected delegates form the micro-regional PB deliberative forums and elect among themselves two PB coordinators in charge of the local organizational questions, who are also members of the *Conselho do Orçamento Participativo* (COP – Participatory Budgeting Council). The deliberative forums meet every two weeks, discussing local projects implementation and informing their community on project advances and the status of the priorities adopted in the plenaries. The COP, which is formed by delegates nominated by their micro-regional and

thematic forums as well as social sectors' representatives from the *conselhos gestores*[97], is the city level participatory organization in charge of the formulation of the budgetary proposal to be sent to the chamber of municipal councilors for approval. They therefore ensure that the priorities voted in regional plenaries and evaluated as viable are included in the annual budget and urban investment plans presented to the Chamber and finally approved by the mayor.

Both of the PB programs show that despite party/coalition alternation in municipal government and different levels of mayoral support for such programs, a framework for citizen participation in urban planning decision-making processes has been implemented and institutionalized in Recife since 1993. New opportunities for local participation have been created in Recife, dramatically increasing rates of citizen participation. Though, as I argued previously, a closer look at how state-society relationships have evolved through the process is needed to understand better the impact of such participatory institutions on the deepening of democratic practices, looking at both formal and informal interactions to uncover the patterns of mobilization and participation that have developed through PB institutions.

5.4 A LOOK INTO LOCAL PARTICIPATORY DYNAMICS: PATTERNS OF MOBILIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

As we have seen, most studies of Recife's participatory decentralization reforms only focused on the PPB/PB program, remaining skeptical about the prospects for such an initiative to contribute to social inclusion. Due to its more recent implementation, fewer studies have looked at the PT experiment, which introduced several changes to the previous model. Nonetheless, the few studies comparatively studying the two models of PB characteristics of Recife tend to place much more hope in the prospects for the PT initiative to lead to better democratization outcomes, assuming that the several

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[97] According to the Constitution of 1988, each municipality has to create management councils formed by representatives of the concerned social sectors, municipal administrators and municipal councilors, which accompany the work of the administration in each area. In certain policy areas, the existence of such councils is mandatory for transfer of funds from the federal level, such as in the sectors of health and education (República Federativa do Brasil, 1988 [2007]).

institutional changes implemented under the PT will most likely contribute to increase citizen participation rates and diversity (Barbosa da Silva, 2003; T. da Silva, 2003), which in theory should contribute to sustain the strengthening of civil society and overcome traditional and generally clientelistic manners of conducting politics and redistributing resources in the city. An accurate analysis of the latest PB experience in comparison to the previous one, however, has not yet been undertaken, with most authors looking positively at institutional changes brought by the PT without considering how the different actors involved in PB institutions have enacted them in reality, a task in which I propose to engage here.

While a straightforward comparison of levels of participation during the two periods immediately shows how PB (Recife II) was clearly more successful than PPB/PB (Recife I), this is only one dimension of state-society relations. As argued earlier and as the case of Recife II will show, another crucial dimension is the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the process, especially as the cases evaluated in this study all refer to participatory mechanisms implemented from above and constituting governmental strategies. In the case of Recife, and similarly to what has been observed in Nezahualcóyotl, the study of both periods of PB shows a general lack of autonomy for civil society participants, whose participation is closely tied to political interests and parties. In effect, though both PPB/PB and PB activities and delegates are supposed to be apolitical, both experiences reveal processes where the executive generally managed to retain an important (though expressed differently) control over the composition and functions of the delegates, who occupy opinion leadership positions in their respective communities. A careful observation of both participants and state officials' interactions and behaviors shows a tendency for informal practices of political capture and co-option to predominate over the formal rules, with traditional political actors controlling participatory institutions. This particular condition limits the autonomy of PB participants and prevents them from becoming full citizens and efficient social accountability agents demanding social inclusion from the state.

5.4.1 Recife I: Mobilizing Empowered Individuals in Controlled Institutions

With the implementation of PPB/PB under Vasconcelos and his successors, the objective was not only to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of service delivery to the poor, but also to empower local communities through the collective mobilization of autonomous citizens. The case of Recife I, however, shows many similarities with the case of Nezahualcóyotl, as the expectations associated to the implementation of participatory mechanisms have not been met in practice. In fact, similarly to what has been observed in the practice of participation in the COPACIs and CODEMUN in Nezahualcóyotl, the PPB/PB institutions mobilize targeted individuals on the basis of particularistic needs and demands, without much effort at mobilizing the disconnected population while generating politically controlled forms of participation.

PPB/PB: Mobilizing Community Leaders on an Individual Basis

As underscored earlier, one of the objectives behind the creation of the PPB/PB program by Vasconcelos was to obtain greater inclusion of the general population in local governance processes and to empower traditionally excluded sectors of the population, giving them opportunities and incentives to organize collectively and formulate demands. The PPB/PB model, however, mostly encouraged an individual-based logic of social mobilization that was highly contingent upon the intermediation of local community leaders, who were the ones involved in the decision-making and deliberation process with the local authorities.

First, the participation of ordinary citizens was limited to the election of half of their delegates, who are then responsible for conveying their concerns at the City Forum when budget issues are discussed (T. da Silva, 2003). As explained by a PB delegate who has been involved in her community since the beginning of the program,

> It was a model that elected community leaders. The population in general only went for the election. They were not giving their opinion, those who were choosing the public works to be done were the proper leaders, it was not participatory. It was like this, you were mobilizing to elect a leader, a delegate but the ones who were giving their opinions in

terms of choices were the delegates only, and not the population (Delegada OP Recife 1, 2008).

In fact, PPB/PB empowered community leaders as representatives of the general population and exclusive intermediaries in the relationship with the local government. Elected by the population in popular assemblies, community leaders and neighborhood association members were generally not particularly incline to organize local communities beyond their election, limiting the ability of citizens to participate actively in building collective mobilization skills (Souto-Maior Fontes, 1996). The fact that PPB/PB institutions reproduced the same idea of 'representative delegation' with the participation of elected delegates and CSO delegates did not contribute to foster greater mobilization around the definition of collective demands. In fact, the discussions over the actual policy priorities took place exclusively in the City Forum meetings held after the election of the delegates, without any feedback mechanism that would bring citizens' concerns back into the deliberative process or that would allow them to make their delegates accountable (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007; Melo et al., 2001). As a consequence, decisions about policy priorities were made behind closed doors, on the basis of the delegates' discussions with local administration experts, without consultation with the population to get their opinion on the projects to be discussed.

Second, PPB/PB institutions, though contributing to diminish the centrality of personal connections with municipal councilors in demand-making processes, did not change the nature of citizens' patterns of mobilization, based upon particularistic needs and concerns directly addressed to the perceived influential political actor. In fact, the population generally saw community leaders as the new legitimate 'political actors' (Wampler, 1999), and because citizens were not involved directly in the policy making process, community leaders and delegates partly replaced municipal councilors and became the intermediary actor to whom personal demands should be formulated on an individual basis. Thus, PPB/PB institutions did legitimize the participation of a restricted group of citizens and NGO representatives, keeping control over ordinary citizens' access to municipal authorities and, in turn, limiting the institutional incentives for collective mobilization to take place around policy-making processes. Therefore, PPB/PB

institutions have reinforced the existing individual-based and demand-oriented mobilization trends organized around registered but not so participatory neighborhood associations and their leaders, officially recognizing and institutionalizing their central position in the definition of the common good.

Political Capture of PPB/PB Institutions

The PPB/PB program was portrayed by its designers as an apolitical tool intended to contribute to the development of an autonomous civil society able to interact with the local government and formulate demands that would benefit local communities as a whole, breaking with the dynamics of targeted redistribution according to political interests that traditionally prevailed in Recife. Though, instead of developing as such, PPB/PB mechanisms soon became a political tool controlled and used by political parties and delegates to strengthen their respective leadership position and popular support within the communities.

First, as a participatory program emanating from and being controlled by the mayor's office executive (Wampler, 1999), PPB/PB has often been used as an attempt by the executive coalition to curtail the power exercised by municipal councilors in their support communities. The program emerged as a centralized project embodying Vasconcelos' will to give a voice and political weight to his traditional social support bases through a direct access to the mayor's office as a reward for their constant electoral support since his arrival on the political scene. As the elected delegates' legitimacy rested on the benefits they were able to bring to their community, it was also highly contingent upon their ability to enter into a relationship with the mayor and his officials. The incentive to comply with the local government's political agenda was therefore very high, and most elected delegates were considered to be politically affiliated or sympathetic to the local PMDB government.

Second, a close examination of the delegates' electoral process shows a tendency for political parties and, more precisely, local politicians to get involved in the process and sustain candidates for PPB/PB delegates, organizing their local campaigns and publicly

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supporting them. As a consequence, the delegates' election to such leadership positions would soon become closely tied with and dependent on organizational support from prominent local political figures, limiting their autonomy once elected. Because they were partially losing their privileged access to financial resources and, thereby, their discretionary spending power, several local municipal councilors feared to lose their traditional bases of support in the communities. As a consequence, many councilors captured the delegates' electoral process, sponsoring candidates for delegates and making their election dependent upon their support, and testimonies from local community leaders suggest a "massive co-option movement" (Melo et al., 2001, p. 89). Melo's interview with DEM municipal councilor Heráclito Cavalcanti in 2000 confirms that trend:

> I have sponsored many delegates of the PB, there is not a single one that is alone, without connections. I work with 80 community leaders, 40% of whom worked with me before the program. But this has a very high political cost, the process was very politicized, unfortunately (interviewed and cited by: Melo et al., 2001, p. 89).

It has also been observed that informal practices generally prevailed over the formal and supposedly democratic electoral rules for the selection of PPB/PB delegates, as the process was poorly publicized among community members and electoral assemblies, organized by the local government officers, were generally poorly attended by ordinary citizens or packed with local supporters brought in by buses organized by the city. In some cases, voters from outside the neighborhood were even brought in to pack the assemblies, as a group of residents from a local community explained to Melo et al.:

> Dona X was elected as representative of the neighborhood association and the other two by the assembly, but the vote session was very tumultuous, because people who were not from the area managed to vote, and we were not able to confirm the fraud (cited by: Melo et al., 2001, p. 145).

Though never carried out explicitly and directly, such a political support has pervasive effects on the autonomy of the elected delegates, who are indebted to the municipal councilor who helped them gather popular support among citizens.

Thus, the type of participation that developed within the PPB/PB institutions was generally highly controlled, defined by the public authorities' political agenda, which sought to ensure that the extension and deepening of public discussion with local organizations remained closely linked to the political will and composition of the administration in power (T. da Silva, 2003, p. 320).

5.4.2 Recife II: Mobilizing Organized Groups in Controlled Institutions

The changes introduced by the PT to the previous PB model after its election in 2000 were meant to, first, bring collective mobilization to the center of the project and, second, circumvent the organizations that traditionally benefited from a close relationship with the rightwing opposition parties. As we shall see, a close examination of the PB model reveals that, overall, it was more successful than the PPB/PB. I argue, however, that the advances made under the PT were not as monumental as they might seem in terms of generating a deep transformation of state-society relationships, to which autonomy is central. In fact, while the new PB institutions have promoted a process of mobilization that is more mass-based and that fosters social organization around collective demands, they are still controlled by political parties, with the PT co-opting the mobilization's main leaders to secure the party's position. This situation, while constituting a change from traditional clientelistic state-society, still represents an important challenge for the deepening of democracy.

PB Model: Targeting Mass-Mobilization and Collective Organization
The important change introduced by João Paulo and his team to the PB program when he arrived in power in 2001 was partly meant to overcome the limits of the previous institutional models of citizen participation in the city, especially regarding mobilization. In fact, a closer examination of the mobilization processes of the PB institutions, oriented toward mass-mobilization rather than on community leaders, reveals that they have not only increased participation rates, but also encouraged collective forms of social organization at the grassroots, sustaining a more collective and pluralistic type of mobilization involving ordinary citizens together in the process of formulating policy preferences and priorities.

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First, as table 10 shows, citizen participation rates in local deliberative assemblies saw a dramatic increase after 2001, the first year of the new program implementation by the PT administration. Since then, participation rates have generally remained the same, oscillating between approximately 35 000 – 45 000 participants every year[98].

TABLE 10 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN PB REGIONAL FORUMS AND OF ELECTED DELEGATES, RECIFE 1998-2008

PB Cycle	Number of participants*	Number of elected delegates
1995	6 900	320 (160 elected / 160 CSOs)
1996	10 500	320 (160 elected / 160 CSOs)
1998	28 765	470 (273 elected / 197 CSOs)
2001	26 257	1 283
2002	41 891	2 119
2003	42 423	2 346
2004	33 522	1 739
2005	46 892	2 438
2006	38 986	1 976
2007	45 652	1 944
2008	44 919	1 803

Source: Compilation by the author with data from Melo et al. (2001), da Silva (2003) and internal documents of the *Coordenadoria de Orçamento Participativo e Participação Popular*, Prefeitura do Recife: http://www.recife.pe.gov.br/pr/secorcamento/index.php [page consulted on 21/05/09].

Note: The number of participants has been calculated on the basis of the number of participants to the popular plenaries (between 1995-2000) and to the regional plenaries (between 2001-2008).

Increasing participation rates are an important indicator of the success of Recife's municipal government at reaching out larger sectors of the population with its PB program. As I have argued earlier, the qualitative aspect of the mobilization process is also an important dimension to evaluate the repercussions of such participation on local communities. In that sense, another important phenomenon that has been observed in Recife since 2001 is a diversification and a 'collectivization' of mobilizing schemes within the PB institutions. As graph 4 suggests, the reformed PB program had generated a

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[98] These numbers only include people who participated through face-to-face interactions in the deliberative instances such as the regional and thematic assemblies of the PB process to elect delegates and discuss policy priorities, excluding citizens who only participated via their vote through to the 'digital vote' included in the PB cycle only recently.

change in the previous patterns of mobilization, which were organized around community leaderships and their members. Under the PT model, an increase in the number and diversity of social organizations and movements involved in all stages of the PB process was observed compared to the previous PPB/ model:

> The participation of various sectors of social movements was extended, reconfiguring the geopolitical configuration of participation through this instrument [PB] beyond the classical community representations. […] The fact that opportunities for the appearance and participation of many organizations which, while already doing community based work, had no real affinity with the PB instrument, was also demonstrated (Barbosa da Silva, 2003, p. 30).

In fact, during the first two years of the program's implementation, many groups that were not recognized and legitimated as social actors by the local government emerged and began to participate in PB meetings, organizing citizens around collective and more diverse demands. Not only did many community leaders adapt to the new institutional format, but other types of social organizations (such as mothers' clubs) and spontaneous groups of citizens also started to organize and mobilize for projects to be voted on in PB assemblies. In fact, under the PT version of PB, the city saw "the emergence of new groups of people who unite to defend specific issues or demands of their communities and who represent a new way of organizing and a new sphere of representation outside the traditional models" (T. da Silva, 2003, p. 323). As noted by an ex-PB delegate I interviewed,

> There is an integration [of the PB process] from the neighborhood associations, but not only them, they are only a part of it. […] But you have the churches that generally play this role [of articulating mobilization], you also have association and councils who play this role. And the elected delegates in a given area also do this articulation work (Ex-delegado OP Recife, 2008).

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GRAPH 4   PARTICIPATION IN PB PER TYPE OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, RECIFE
                 2001-2003
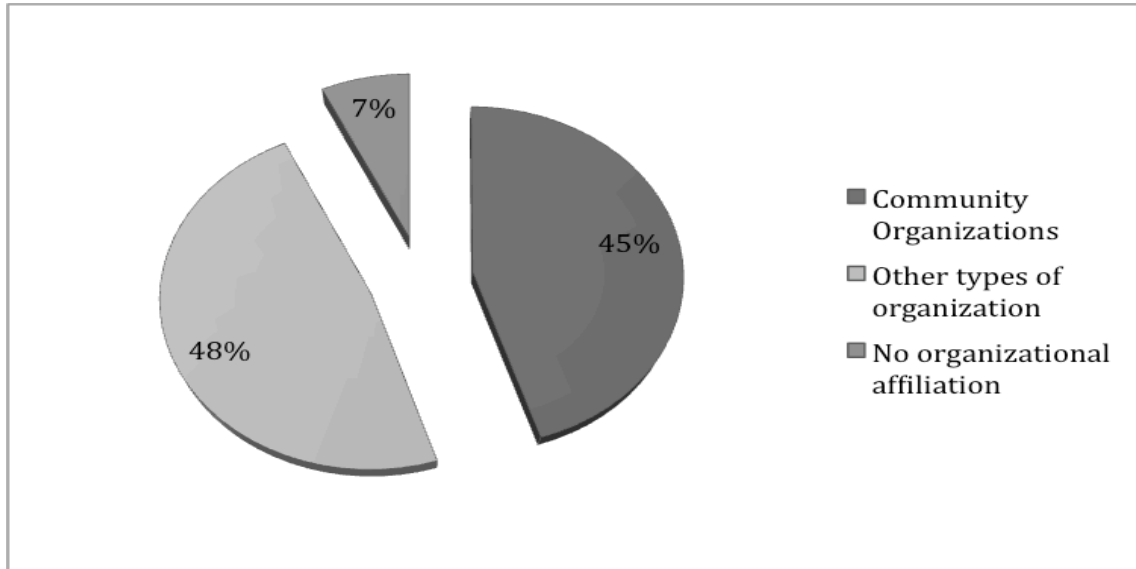
Source: Elaboration by Barbosa da Silva and Chavez Teixeira, with internal data from the
                 Prefeitura Municipal do Recife (2007, p. 180)

Group leaders, though more pluralistic and diversified, do retain a highly influential position within the PT model, as they are the main activators of collective mobilization processes in local communities in order to push their demands through the PB process in plenaries. As explained by an ex-delegate, after the community meeting phases where all public works are submitted, the local groups activate their local members in support of a given proposal:

> In general, the mothers' club brings together some residents and says 'this year, we are voting for such proposal'. The neighborhood association reunites another group of residents and says 'we are not voting for such proposal'. Therefore, they indicate which public works proposal will be part of their priorities (Ex-delegado OP Recife, 2008).

For their proposals to be placed at the top of the voted priority list and their delegates to be elected – and to be able to defend such priorities in regional meetings – groups' leaders need to mobilize and get support among the general population, which fosters a change in collective mobilization and gives it a longer-term and more policy-oriented focus. Therefore, the process of registering, deliberating and voting on policy priorities and delegates in micro-regional, regional and thematic plenary assemblies not only allows ordinary citizens actually to participate in the process, but also creates incentives

for groups to organize at the grassroots and develop mobilization skills that go beyond electoral concerns.

Thus, changing rules for participation established under the new version of the PB modified the nature of mobilization patterns, leading to a change in mobilization patterns, giving mobilization a longer-term and more policy-oriented focus. Most importantly, rather than maintaining the individual demand-based logic that had prevailed in Recife's mobilization patterns up to 2000, such a type of collective mobilization allows citizens to acquire new skills to deliberate over and collectively define the public good as well as to mobilize and formulate social demands to the local authorities. The consequences of this change, however, cannot be understood without looking more closely at the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the new PB institutional framework, which is central to defining the prospects for the new institutional model to generate democratizing outcomes through the transformation of state-society relationships, to which we shall turn.

Sustained Political Control: Co-option and Political Use of Delegates
The PT reforms to the PB institutions were, in theory, meant to break the dependence and lack of autonomy that had characterized ex-mayor Vasconcelos' relationship with the local community leaders and NGOs. The PT, however, also sought to gather new support bases among the population, and its flagship PB program's delegates were soon co-opted by political interests, controlling social debates and using local leaders' legitimacy in their communities to mobilize partisan political support. This co-option process took different forms, as we will see, and not only curtailed the participants' autonomy in the governance process, limiting the prospects for social inclusion and creating 'privileged representation networks', but it also prevented mobilized social organizations from becoming effective accountability agents as it sustained a dependent and unequal relationship between organized participants and governing leaders.

First, an important way of co-opting PB participants in order to have them become and act as supporters of political parties is through neighborhood associations' leaders and

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members, who enjoy some credibility in their communities and are able to mobilize support. In fact, as an influential member of the local administration team in charge of PB explained, through the delegates and forum coordinators,

> The forums are informally occupied by parties, used for the political struggle as are the other public spaces. The PT has a majority, but the other parties also organize local leaders in the neighborhood where they have their electoral and militant support bases (Assesor do Planejamento Participativo, 2008).

This view is corroborated by a PB delegate, active in his community since the early phases of the PPB/PB program and now regional coordinator of the PB Forum in his region:

> What I have seen here in the community associations is an important tendency to affiliate with political parties. There is a great incidence of political affiliation and a lot of people do so without really knowing why (Delegado OP Recife 3, 2008).

Although publicly condemned by PT officials, the predominance of 'behind-the-scenes' informal practices leading to the co-option of PB delegates for political purposes has also been corroborated through the denunciations made by several ex-delegates who decided to stop participating in what they call a political mechanism:

> In the beginning, PB was very good because it let social movements define what they wanted for their regions. But the program lost itself a bit in the past seven years as it mixed with politics. Doing so, it seems that it has armed itself with a whole structure to avoid contestation, explained ex-delegate Evódia Lima in an interview with *Valor Econômico* (cited by: Mandl, 2008).

This is also the case for Heuner Santos, another ex-delegate, who explained he decided not to participate any more because "PB has been tied to its political use. I am not using electoral interests in my community" (cited by: Mandl, 2008).

One of the main manifestations of such political control is the use of PB delegates by the PT for political purposes during electoral campaigns[99]. The mobilization of many of the

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[99] Though the political use of PB institutions by PT candidates has been more documented in the local media and in the discussions I had with participants in the field, there is evidence showing that other political parties have also used PB participants and their denunciations of the process's shortcomings and problems in regions where they could secure more popular support (Vereadora 1, 2008).

2 400 PB delegates elected by their communities in PT electoral campaigns is a strategy that seems to have been used in the last two municipal campaigns for mayor. As all the delegates I interviewed confirmed, political campaigning is common among delegates: In an interview with the *Folha de Pernambuco*, a *Partido Verde* (PV – Green Party) municipal councilor, Daniel Coelho, explained how PB processes have been politicized by the PT over the years: "PB is a political instrument. He (João da Costa) is openly campaigning. He prioritizes the demands of delegates who support him, which is not democratic. Since the beginning, he is doing this with the PT" (cited by: Alves, 2007a). Though generally denounced or minimized by public officials, many manifestations of this type of behavior have been observed during PB-related events, giving them an electoralist flavor condemned by opposition members. As related by a *Folha* journalist, 'spontaneous' acts of support from delegates were particularly important during the 2007/2008 PB cycle that coincided with the 2008 municipal elections. Many participants publicly expressed their support for the PT administration or the members of the PT/PCdoB coalition, and many even campaigned for them, as a delegate who was actively engaged in João da Costa electoral campaign explained to me:

> A majority of delegates will participate [in João da Costa's campaign], more than 60% support him. […] Independently from being delegate, I would have supported him with great pleasure. The thing with being delegate is, however, that it's easier because you have your community behind you […] though you don't have a vote as civil society, but you can talk, circulate, move around and gather a couple of votes, no? So being delegate helps for this, and I think that more than 70% are going to ask votes for da Costa (Delegada OP Recife 1, 2008)

As observed by local political and social actors I interviewed, one of the main ways by which PT leaders instrumentalize PB and co-opt participants is through the public administration officials and mayor's discourse in PB meetings and plenaries, deliberately playing on collective understanding of the PB program and its concrete public spending results and associating them directly with the election of the PT in government and with mayor João Paulo and his candidate João da Costa themselves. A DEM municipal councilor explained that both used PB institutions for political purposes during the 2008 electoral cycle by

> organizing events in plenary sessions and discussing about the fact that if there is no continuity in the next election [a PT government], the public works chosen by PB participants will stop, that the ones that have already been approved won't be done and that the one who did all the previous work with the communities was João da Costa, secretary of planning (Vereadora 1, 2008).

This type of campaign is a strategy used by PT political leaders to make sure delegates who believe in PB will support them:

> I used to be affiliated to the PCdoB […] but today, I am working for the election of our project, participatory budgeting, […] so I am now working closer to the PT people, voluntarily working for the current campaign (Delegado OP Recife 2, 2008).

In PB meetings preceding the nomination of João da Costa as the official PT candidate for mayor, delegates were already calling him 'the next mayor of Recife', one even affirming publicly that through the work of delegates on the ground, "we will win with João da Costa in our 13 zones as we won with the current mayor in 2004" (Ronaldo Passos, PB delegate cited by: Alves, 2007b).

Second, PB delegates and institutions have also been used by political parties and elected representatives as a tool for improving their political leverage in the context of tense intergovernmental branch negotiations. In fact, as soon as mayor João Paulo launched the PB program, the local media noted many examples of PB delegates' co-option by both municipal councilors and the PT mayor and his executive. For example, facing opposition in the local chamber of councilors during the procedures of the municipal budget adoption, João Paulo's administration organized a major mobilization of PB delegates to support his budget proposal in the Chamber. As related by a *Diário de Pernambuco* reporter, "the [almost 400] PB delegates, coming in caravans [organized and paid by the municipal government], occupied all the available spaces to applaud the mayor during the event" (da Eloi, 2001). Another element that needs to be highlighted is that, in the beginning, elected members of the Municipal Chamber of councilors (including PT councilors) did not favor the adoption of programs such as the PB, fearing that it would reduce their role as intermediaries between the local government and citizens through which they secured their support bases. Yet, as mayor João Paulo explained to me,

> They soon changed their strategies: from fighting against it, they started to mobilize their support communities to participate to the PB process […], who started demanding for their organized community under the influence of their municipal councilor (Lima e Silva, 2008).

As highlighted by an opposition municipal councilor and a PB delegate, not only do PB delegates often affiliate to or mobilize for political parties, but many of them are also directly "tied to the municipal councilors themselves" (Delegado OP Recife 2, 2008; Vereadora 1, 2008), working in their political cabinet or mobilizing popular support for and presenting a councilor's project to their local PB assembly.

Therefore, the comparison between Recife I and II shows that, while there are important differences between the PPB/PB and the PB models with regards to the nature of the mobilization they have generated, under both models, politicians and parties have intervened and controlled participatory institutions, both directly and indirectly, using their political influence to push for the election of their candidates for delegates or rather co-opting them once elected in a way that they ensure they have their support in electoral processes or daily political relationships between the branches of local government. The type of participation that emerges from such intervention is clearly influenced by political interests, and the delegates do not enjoy the level of autonomy they would require to represent their neighbors' interests independently from the ongoing political and ideological struggles already present in the public arena. Such a form of control over participation, combined with the distinct patterns of mobilization identified earlier, has important consequences for the potential of the two models of PB to contribute to the deepening of local democratic governance practices in the city, as we shall see next.

5.4.3 Changing State-Society Relationships? From Clientelism to Disempowering Co-option

One can argue that the implementation of PB as an institutional participatory structure sponsored by the local state in Recife has had a positive impact on the creation of new spaces for citizen to participate. Upon closer examination of both mobilization and participation patterns under the two models of PB in Recife, however, we can conclude

that their implementation did not contribute to the development of more democratic and cooperative state-society relationships. While the first PPB/PB experience has indeed contributed to sustain the clientelistic logic that traditionally prevailed in the city, I have found that in spite of the institutional changes introduced by the PT in 2001, clientelism has not completely disappeared, but it has instead transformed and reinvented itself to become closer to the *disempowering co-option* model, which allows civil society to organize while disempowering its leaders and members.

Similarly to what we have seen in the case of Nezahualcóyotl in Mexico, the combination of individual-based and particularistic social mobilizations and of controlled participation in the case of Recife I generated state-society relationships that are qualified as a "new type of clientelism, embedded in a discourse of popular participation but without institutional life and legitimacy, used only to maintain a mark of empty participatory management" (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007). Despite the alleged intentions of social inclusion, "PPB/PB did not transform decision-making processes in Recife, but it gave the government direct access to the most active CSO leaders" (Wampler, 2007, p. 225), who could in return benefit from such access by bringing particularistic goods to their local community. As explained by Souto Maior in his study of neighborhood associations in Recife,

> the exercise of functions in neighborhood associations is translated into rewards for their holders: not only the prestige and recognition in their community, but also material benefits such as jobs, retributions and access to influential people. Due to their intense relationships with the local political elite, it is inevitable that community leaders transit between the different power spheres, exercising diverse functions and carrying partisan positions (Souto-Maior Fontes, 1996, p. 55).

Therefore, under the PMDB/PFL participatory model, "clientelism continues to be associated with Recife's participatory budgeting as public officials circumvent the new institutional format in order to secure specific resources for their constituents" (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004, p. 306).

Evidence from the Recife II model shows some interesting changes in the nature of mobilization processes, with the PT model of participatory opening more space for

collective organization and generating a move away from the privilege-based intermediation of traditional community leaders. The new PB model, more mass-based, has contributed to sustain the collective mobilization processes necessary for civil society to organize at the grassroots. Nevertheless, this change is only superficial and cannot, alone, engender a deep transformation of state-society relationships. In fact, the lack of autonomy enjoyed by PB participants and groups in their relation to the local state observed in Recife leads PB institutions to sustain a model of state-society relationships that I label *disempowered co-option*, closer to traditional clientelism than to democratizing cooperation. Though allowing collective mobilization in the communities – one of the premises of the development of a more cooperative relationship – PB institutions and processes in Recife II include an important element of continuity with the past as they are still dominated by informal practices allowing political control over the process. In fact, as a COP councilor explained in a public meeting organized by the NGO ETAPAS in 2003,

> During the past administrations, I did not understand because people were prioritizing certain streets, as delegates, and the work was not done. Over time, I realized that it was not important to be a delegate, but you needed to have political influence or the public works would not be done. In the new model, I thought things would be different. On paper, it is different, but in reality it is not. I regret, but I can only say that (Maria da Penha dos Santos, cited by: Barbosa da Silva & Silva, 2003, p. 33).

Political control exercised over citizen participation, though not officially adopted and approved by the local PT administration, relies upon the co-option of many local delegates by influential party leaders and strategic members of the municipal administration, who use their access to PB resources to mobilize support in pro-PT neighborhood and who feed the collective imagination of participants with meetings behind closed doors about the indissociable relationship between the election of the PT and the delivery of urban public goods through popular participation processes.

The current challenge of PB in Recife is therefore the lack of autonomy of social actors involved in the process: "the challenge is to extend the margin of autonomy and mobility of the population within these spheres of dialogue [PB institutions]" (Barbosa da Silva &

Chaves Teixeira, 2007, p. 158). As Evanildo Barbosa, a long-time NGO activist who participated as an actor and as an analyst of the PB process in Recife since its beginning, observed:

> The PB experience has not yet been able to produce autonomous social subjects: even if you have assisted to an animated mobilization of the local public spheres through PB and that we have observed a social effervescence around it, both are regulated from public authorities through their own management logic and criteria (Barbosa da Silva, 2003, p. 52).

Thus, instead of becoming empowered as autonomous partners of the local state, CSOs participating in the Recife II model remain state-dependent social actors mobilized for political parties rather than for their communities. This continuity in informal practices between the two periods not only shows the limits of looking at mobilization patterns as the main indicator of success, but it also stresses the centrality of autonomy to define the nature of state society relationships, thereby highlighting the importance of looking at how actors formally and informally use the available institutional participatory channels. A comparison with León's fragmented inclusion model is also interesting as it stands out as being more successful in generating democratizing outcomes than in Recife, despite showing evidence of continuity in the individual and particularistic nature of mobilization processes encouraged by the participatory structure. In a context like León's, where participants have developed autonomy in the participatory process, the impact of individual mobilization decreases as autonomy curtails the traditional and unequal exchange between citizens and political brokers. On the opposite side, in Recife, the context of political control over participation downplays the fact that mobilization has become more collective and organized, as the lack of autonomy and the co-option strategies deployed by local authorities contribute to disempowering the organized groups and limiting the impact of their collective action by making it dependent upon informal ties with political parties and public officials. The groups mobilized by the PB process develop privileged relationships with local politicians through the participatory process and their underlying informal exchanges, strengthening social exclusion and inequalities as well as limiting their ability to become effective accountability agents able to impose sanctions on the state when necessary.

Hence, our comparison between Recife I and II shows that the traditional clientelistic relationships that prevailed under the Recife II model have transformed through the introduction of the current PB program by the PT, making it more collective and mass-oriented. In spite of this, observations of informal practices show that rather than evolving toward the 'democratizing' cooperation ideal, the traditional model of state-society relationships has adapted to the democratic innovations to transform into disempowering co-option, hindering the potential for CSOs to enter the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes in partnership with the state and to become effective accountability agents in the process.

5.5 EXPLAINING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CLIENTELISM IN RECIFE I AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISEMPOWERING CO-OPTION IN RECIFE II

In the previous section, we have seen that two different institutional models of state-society relationships have been observed with the introduction of participatory budgeting initiatives by local authorities. While the persistence of clientelism as the primary mode of interactions between the state and social actors seems to have characterized the first experience with PPB/PB, and even though it has only had a partial effect on state-society relationships because of the prevalence of informal practices of political control limiting participants' autonomy, the renewal of PB institutions under the PT has opened the participatory sphere to new organized actors and generated a modification in the way society relates to local authorities in PB institutions through changing patterns of social mobilization. What explains the persistence of clientelism in the case of Recife I, and its later transformation into a new state-society relationship defined as disempowering co-option in Recife II? More precisely, what explains the changes to mobilization patterns at the community level between the two periods? Conversely, how can we explain the persisting lack of autonomy enjoyed by participants over the two periods studied, due to the prevalence of informal practices of political control over PB institutions in spite of institutional change? As the following section addresses, several factors must be examined in order to answer these questions, and the in-case comparison of Recife's two

PB periods allows us to identify the most relevant explanations for the variety of relationships that can emerge from the inclusion of citizen participation in governance processes. The comparison between Recife I and II shows distinct patterns of mobilization, a difference that is generally explained by the PT's reforms to the institutional design of PB in 2001, emphasizing the idea that historical legacies alone are not enough to explain varying mobilization schemes. Yet, the importance of such a change for the deepening of democracy decreases once the second dimension defining state-society relationships is assessed. In fact, the comparison with the case of León shows that the development of autonomous participation within participatory frameworks constitutes a central dimension of the successful development of democratizing state-society relationships, stressing the argument following which institutional design alone cannot explain the variety of outcomes observed in reality and bringing the study of informal institutions and actors' practices to the center of our analysis.

5.5.1 Explaining the Dual Nature of Mobilization: Historical and Institutional Elements to Understand Changing Patterns of Social Mobilization

The first dimension defining the differentiated nature of state-society relationships in Recife's participatory budgeting institutions is the changing logic of citizen mobilization in the city, which went from individualistic and particularistic demands-oriented to mobilization schemes oriented toward the collective definition of the common good. We have indeed seen that to the two PB periods studied here correspond two distinct moments in the nature of mobilization processes in Recife, a change to which the modified institutional design of PB institutions adopted under the PT local government of João Paulo was an important key. In fact, as the following comparative exploration of both cultural and institutional roots of mobilization patterns demonstrates, the design of participatory institutions can either reinforce or contribute to modify mobilization patterns at the local level.

Historical Patterns of Mobilization

Contrary to many other Brazilian cities, Recife is known for having had a long tradition of citizen participation and associational life at the community level, as neighborhood

associations have been active on the political arena since the 1940s, mostly organized around land-tenure issues (do Céu Cézar, 1985). Many studies, however, have suggested that neighborhood associations, whose members were often pushed by influential local politicians, have traditionally been dependent on their political connections to bring concrete benefits to their community. Thus, the associational culture in Recife, though including its share of contention and conflict with local authorities, has traditionally privileged the mediation of interests and particularistic demands through the channeled participation of community leaders dependent on their private connections with both municipal councilors and local government members.

The demise of the leftist government of Silveira and the arrival of the military regime in 1964, though repressing contentious movements, did not mean the end of the culture of participation in Recife's neighborhoods, but it limited the scope of action and the autonomy of organized civil society actors. In fact, throughout this period of low intensity mobilization, local leaders maintained a certain level of social organization to secure their leadership position in their respective communities, often acting as the intermediary between the authoritarian government and marginalized citizens to ensure the provision of urban goods. Moreover, the local authoritarian state's need for legitimacy pressed the appointed government to find ways of establishing ties in the communities through the existing leaderships. Therefore, they continued to encourage state-sponsored local community organization in Recife through the establishment of the so-called *barracões* (community cabins), local entities of community planning where questions of urban development were discussed with community leaders (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007).

With the opening of the political scene to electoral competition and democratic elections in the early 1980's, Recife's civil society structure became more plural, including social organizations that have remained subtly active under the military regimes, supporting the emerging opposition forces at the left-end of the political spectrum and working behind Vasconcelos' candidacy. In an anthropological study of the organizational structure of the neighborhood associations in Recife published in 1996, Souto-Maior Fontes highlights

the centrality and closeness of the relationship local community leaders have with groups such as political parties, which provide most of the association leaders' funding attributed along clientelistic lines. As he observed, "the links of community leaders with groups not only are an instrument of political socialization. The group to which they belong is also an important instrument for the promotion of their own leadership […], and allows them a certain power (which is translated into votes)" (Souto-Maior Fontes, 1996, p. 48). Following these observations about the centrality of personal relationships and given the little collective mobilizations encouraged by community association leaders[100], he questioned the participatory nature of community associations, which seem to have been dominated by political brokers rather than being the space for collective mobilization processes to emerge. Therefore, even in pluralistic contexts, Recife's "community leaders favored the 'channeling' of demands through them rather than through direct group negotiation with public officials" (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004, p. 304), sustaining a logic of individual-based mobilization organized around the formulation of particularistic demands that could be fulfilled through personal connections and without too much contention. This understanding of mobilization was one of the pillars of clientelistic relationships in Recife, with politician-affiliated community leaders playing a central role in keeping such a system active.

The singular historical mobilization background of Recife, comparable to the ones observed in the Mexican cases, presents a situation where there was an important culture of associationalism at the grassroots level, but collective action still remained limited by the fact that most social demands were formulated by individuals and channeled through powerful individuals benefiting from their privileged links to the local authorities. In fact, looking at the potential for participatory institutions to effect a change in mobilization

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[100] Souto-Maior Fontes observes that collective mobilizations are not the preferred strategy for community leaders, who would rather use their personal ties to influential politicians to negotiate and obtain public goods for their community. These political negotiations and ties can then be used by the association elites as a justification for their reelection and to sustain their own legitimacy in the community, a fact that is illustrated by the low level of renewal observed in neighborhood association elites and their circulation between community functions and administrative positions in the municipal power institutions. Thus, mobilization remains mostly fragmented in the communities as people come with individual and often particularistic demands addressed directly to the leaders or in public meetings, but without consideration for the definition 'public good' as a collective endeavor (Souto-Maior Fontes, 1996).

practices from the perspective of the weight of historical legacies is insufficient to understand variation in results between cases sharing similar historical backgrounds. The comparison of both periods of Recife's participatory reforms, however, questions the validity of this hypothesis, as even if both cases share a common historical mobilization background, they still present important differences in mobilization patterns between the two periods. This finding therefore support the argument made in the two previous cases and following which institutional design should be considered in order to measure the weight of historical legacies, as institutions can either reaffirm the importance of or contribute to overcome such legacies.

An Institutional Explanation

As I have argued earlier, participatory mechanisms' institutional design can either contribute to reinforce or overcome cultural legacies of associationalism, and the case of Recife is an interesting example of both tendencies. In fact, the comparison of the two PB institutional designs suggests that, in effect, the incentives provided by institutions are central to explaining mobilization schemes, certain institutional features being more likely to lead to sustain the individual-based mobilization patterns historically observed in the municipality while others tend to contribute to overcome such a trend fostering collective organization at the community level.

Under the PPB/PB model, several institutional features limited the incentives for community leaders to foment collective mobilization in their communities. First, an important element of institutional design that needs to be highlighted is that the elected and appointed delegates were not acting as representatives of their communities defending the general population demands but as influential individuals in relation with local authorities (Melo et al., 2001; Wampler, 2007), which tends to reinforce the historical individual-based mobilization patterns identified in the last section. In fact, since the vote over policy priorities was taken only after the election of delegates in local plenary assemblies, the consultation process remained mostly up to them. Commenting on the participatory nature of the first PB program of Recife, a long-time involved citizen from a marginalized neighborhood explained:

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> The population was only there to elect representatives, they could not express their opinion for the public works. The ones who were choosing them were the local leaders: it was not participatory. It was like this, you were mobilizing to elect local leaders, delegates but the ones who could express their opinions were only the delegates, not the population (Delegada OP Recife 1, 2008).

A further exploration of the practice of public consultation and deliberation in the PPB/PB process therefore reveals that beyond the electoral process, there was an absence of a formal requirement for delegates to consult with their community members and collectively formulate the demands that would be made on their behalf. Delegates often had no direct relationship with their neighbors during the PPB/PB process and rather than making decisions based on the community will, they often relied on the information that was given to them by the municipality's public servants: "we are always dependent on the expert opinion of the expert staff", said a delegate in an interview to Melo et al. (2001, p. 143). As citizens were only directly involved in the election process, they had no formal means of holding their delegates accountable for the demands they formulated to the local government or for their positions in City Forum meetings. Thus, local leaders from neighborhood associations had a central role in the participatory process as they were officially recognized as the communities' interlocutors by the municipal government, who had only few direct links with the general population (Wampler, 1999). As delegates were formally the main actors of the PPB/PB process, formulating demands and negotiating them with the local government on behalf of their community, they became important leaders of opinion in their community and came to occupy a central position in the relationship between local politicians and their support bases.

A second element of institutional design that had a negative impact on mobilization processes is the fragmentation of the process into micro-regions with only a few citywide meetings every year. This fragmentation of the process fostered a fragmented form of mobilization, organized on the basis of particularistic demands emanating from individual citizens and not on the basis of the city's general interest. Such a fragmentation made deliberation processes among the delegates in the City Forum very problematic, according to participants accounts of the process: "everybody goes there

thinking that they will come out as winners, and nobody wants to loose… to convince a delegate to vote for another areas' priority is really difficult" (interviewed and cited by: Melo et al., 2001, p. 144). The structure of the program indeed encouraged delegates and community leaders to work in the interest of their own community, against the others, an institutional feature that contributes to undermine the capacity of community groups to organize collectively across the city and to develop an urban movement supported by large social bases (Souto-Maior Fontes, 1997). The third element that constitutes an institutional limit for developing deliberative and organizational skills among the delegates and their communities is the unequal structure of the deliberative forums, where the local government is the main actor and often dictates the course of the deliberations. As explained by a delegate, participants in the City Forum can hardly intervene during the City Forum meetings: "everything is done in a hurry. The municipality tells us how much it has to spend in each area, and there is very little time left for negotiations" (interviewed and cited by: Melo et al., 2001, p. 144) Thus, the structure of decision-making in PPB/PB process did not provide the necessary institutional incentives for fostering collective mobilization processes, thereby reinforcing the cultural legacies of particularistic and individual-based mobilization inherited from Recife's history of associationalism.

As we have seen previously, the institutional framework implemented under the PT brought important structural changes to include mechanisms to reach a more mass-based participation, which widens the scope of mobilization to the benefit of local collective organization capacity building. The principle of universal participation introduced by the PT administration "fostered the involvement of many associative segments of organizational forms and nature different from the ones already known [community associations]" (Barbosa da Silva & Chaves Teixeira, 2007, p. 149), taking away power from the traditional social actors, empowering new associational forms and thereby widening the scope of mobilization processes in the neighborhoods. Another important feature of the PT program that extended mobilization in the communities is the introduction of formal requirements for restricting demand-making processes in plenary sessions to organized groups of 10 citizens and more. Though any citizen can register a

demand to the PB process and run for delegate, all projects need to be supported and carried by organized groups of citizens to be included in the PB discussions and voted in regional deliberative assemblies (Coordenadora OP, 2008), a rule that encourages citizens to collectively organize through either existing channels or spontaneously organized groups of neighbors.

A closer look at deliberation and consultation processes also indicates the existence of formal mechanisms for citizens to be involved in the most important phases of the decision-making process, the formulation of collective demands in each micro-regional and regional assembly. The fact that the vote for investment priorities is done in deliberative regional plenary meetings by the general public and not by the delegates gives incentives for those who propose public works project to mobilize in groups. As observed by an ex-delegate,

> A project that mobilizes a lot has better chances of being on top. Normally, when people mobilize, they already know they are going to vote for such proposal. So, in general, people come with a certain weight already, and the proposal that gets more mobilization is usually one that's been long waited for in a community so people go in masses (Ex-delegado OP Recife, 2008).

Moreover, the PT model includes formal mechanisms for citizens to hold their delegates accountable, which also provide them with other spaces to participate in the process over the course of the year-cycle and not only during the formal consultation phase. In fact, open to the public local delegates' forums, where elected delegates from a micro-regions meet each month to discuss the approved PB projects and their eventual implementation, are local venues allowing further deliberation and a certain level of citizen control over the results of the PB process (Delegado OP Recife 2, 2008). Such assemblies are institutionally relatively independent from the municipality, as even though they are formally included in the PB structure, they are organized and led by the local PB coordinators, who are citizens elected among each micro-region's delegates. As I observed in the meetings I attended in July of 2008[101], the structure of such forums

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[101] During my fieldwork in Recife, I attended two local forum meetings in micro-region 5.3, which is composed of both middle-class and marginalized neighborhoods. In both cases, the local coordinators were

privileged deliberations and discussions among delegates, without much intervention from the administration officials. Such an observation tends to bolster the idea that the new structure of PB created a more balanced situation where deliberation is encouraged, fostering collaboration and mobilization among delegates.

One final institutional feature sustaining collective mobilization capacity through the PB process is the fact that, though still compartmentalized into the 18 micro-regions where most of the meetings are held, the PT version of the PB process has more of a citywide focus, including different venues where the delegates can interact with one another and become aware of the city's largest challenges. Such a focus on city issues is indeed made possible by the existence of two institutional mechanisms bringing delegates from all micro-regions together: the COP and the *caravana de prioridades* (priorities' caravan). The COP, as the citizen-based control mechanism of the PB process, brings together two delegates from each micro-region (the elected coordinators) every month to follow up on the PB projects approved in regional assemblies (Prefeitura do Recife, 2001). The priorities' caravans are organized every year by the municipality in order to bring delegates to other micro-regions prior to the final approval of the budget in forums. Together, these two mechanisms contribute to bring other neighborhoods' concerns to the delegates' attention, which creates a common understanding of the city's most pressing needs and challenges and allows for collective mobilization to occur among delegates from different regions.

Thus, the institutional differences observed between the two periods of the PB program in Recife tend to support the argument according to which institutional design is an important element defining the nature of mobilization processes, who enters the participatory channels made available by the local government and who may legitimately do so. In both cases, collective actors were mobilized, though under the PT the mass-oriented institutional process offers more possibilities for the ordinary population to actually participate in the decision-making process, and not only in the more general

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leading the meeting, and public servants were only there to provide further information on the status of certain projects if needed, not participating to the general discussions.

definition of policy orientations. As already argued, however, even though the collective mobilizations promoted by the new PB format may have had an impact on generating better policy outcomes and urban development, a complete understanding of its impact necessitates that we look at the level of autonomy enjoyed by these newly empowered collective actors. In Recife, in spite of institutional innovation, the level of autonomy has remained similarly low under both experiments, as informal practices of co-option and political control have prevailed over formal rule. Explaining this continuity once again stresses the importance of sociopolitical context, for which a more detailed understanding of both social actors' strategies and behaviors toward PB institutions is central.

5.5.2 Explaining the Persistence of Controlled Participatory Budgeting Institutions: Actors's Strategies and Perceptions

The second dimension defining state-society relationships is the nature of participation, measured by the level of autonomy/control of participation in PB institutions, and it is best explained by the way these institutions are enacted and appropriated by the actors. As previously argued, though participatory decentralization reforms generally claim to allow the development of autonomy through the opening of new social spaces for citizen participation, autonomy is not a given and both Recife I and II show signs of very limited autonomy in the PB process. The important question to answer to measure the real impact of participatory reforms on transforming state-society relationships and, in so doing, on the deepening of democracy is therefore: which, how and why state and society actors participate in the urban governance process? In the case of Recife, we have seen that under both models of PB and despite the introduction of institutional reforms opening up spaces for mass-based mobilization under the PT, PB participants still lack autonomy in the process and are often co-opted by local politicians, hindering their potential role as accountability agents. What explains this continuity of political control between the two periods beyond the introduction of institutional reforms by the PT? Three factors and their interaction effects are considered here to understand better both the state and society actors' strategies and behaviors toward PB institutions[102]: the level of political

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[102] Wampler's (2007) recent comparative study constitutes a first attempt at grasping such factors, focusing on mayors' intentions and political will, but the relational status of democracy demands that we look at

competition, the balance of powers within civil society and both actors' perception of their roles and functions in the process.

Level of Political Competition

The *level of political competition*, among parties but also within the ruling political party, exercises an important influence on determining local politicians' strategies toward participatory institutions and their political practices of power resource redistribution. In fact, high levels of competition between political elites with different interests might sustain a variety of strategies aimed at seeking political support in society and explain the level of formal and informal involvement of political parties and politicians in the nomination of participants and the deliberation processes, which is an important indicator of the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants. In Recife, the high level of competition between right and left political parties, as well as within the ruling coalitions, has led to a strategy of state penetration of all public spaces, including the local participatory institutions.

First, the fierce external competition among left and right political parties and their respective (and changing) coalitions that has traditionally characterized Recife's electoral arena is an important incentive for political parties to occupy as much space as they can in the city and to seek support among the organized social movements and organizations. For example, the consolidation of PPB/PB program under Magalhães in 1997 coincided with a new alliance between the PMDB and the PFL/DEM (T. da Silva, 2003). Despite the traditional struggles between these two natural opposition parties, the rise of the PT at the left of the local political spectrum led them to enter into a political coalition for the 1996 election, for which the continuity of the PPB/PB was a central element. Participatory ambitions emerged from Jarbas' administration and the PMDB, but as a

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both types of actors involved in the relationship to really understand the way they use the institutions in place. Even though the functioning of PB very much depends upon municipal government's will, and the state is crucial in influencing its outcomes, understanding its impact on the quality of democracy requires that we also consider the process in relation to civil society. There is indeed a need to explore a series of factors grasping the inherent complexity of both types of actors (state and society), shaping state and society actors' interests, strategies and behaviors toward one another, therefore contributing to explain both the formal and informal practices that underlie the decision-making processes and the definition of policy priorities, both within and outside the participatory governance institutions.

result of his political alliance with the center-left party, Magalhães continued the program. The need for such a coalition explains the continuity of the program under the DEM/PMDB government, but according to many observers, Magalhães' administration was much less concerned by the success of this program than his predecessor (Barbosa da Silva, 2003; Melo et al., 2001; Wampler, 2007). As suggested in the literature,

> in this context, the institutionalization of participation and the introduction of PB entered in tension with the political will to turn the instances of participation into the central element of the local distribution of public goods (Avritzer, 2003, p. 40).

Such a tension was reflected in the way PPB/PB was organized and social demands were carried through by the municipal government during the following years, explaining the lack of political commitment observed by the decreasing rate of public works achieved through the program[103] and undermining the prospects for PPB/PB to become a real citizen-based deliberative means toward social inclusion. Another illustration of the importance of external competition to account for the political control of participatory institutions is the arrival of the PT in government in 2001 after an intense electoral competition with the incumbent administration. As neighborhood associations were generally associated with the opposition political parties' flagship participatory programs (PPB/PB and PREZEIS), the PT suggested reforms that would allow them to reach the masses and build new networks of support among CSOs. As explained by João da Costa, mayor since 2009 and previously secretary for participatory planning: "When we were elected, we wanted to break the associative tradition that induced CSO leaders to be the political operatives of Jarbas [Vasconcelos]" (interviewed and cited by: Wampler, 2007, p. 233). They thus deployed a program that would go beyond the recognition of neighborhood associations as the only legitimate social partners of the state, instead requiring individual citizens to organize into groups of citizens around specific proposals. This political strategy developed by local PT leaders around the PB program allowed

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[103] Numbers reveal that the proportion of new projects approved through the PPB/PB process dramatically decreased during the Magalhães administration, most of the public works that have been executed were indeed already approved by Vasconcelos during his mandate. Moreover, PPB/PB delegates participating in the City Forum reported having been told to not even present new proposals, as they would come about (Melo et al., 2001). My interviews with ex-PPB/PB delegates have also corroborated such a decrease and lack of commitment from the administration's part, which has fomented the delegates' deception with the PFL government (Delegada OP Recife 1, 2008; Delegado OP Recife 3, 2008).

them to overcome what they called the 'over influence' of non-*pétista* community leaders and, by the same token, to attract poorly organized citizen groups and their newly empowered representatives in the support ranks of the PT through co-option practices[104].

Firstly, as we have noted in previous chapters, internal competition within political parties is also an important element explaining political leaders' strategies toward participatory institutions, especially in Brazil where internal competition can be seen within parties, ruling coalitions and between the diverse branches of the local government. As we have seen, the emergence and consolidation of the PPB/PB program in Recife happened in the context of an unlikely coalition between two parties traditionally opposed, the PFL and the PMDB. The tensions and competition between the different components of the coalition led by Magalhães were reflected within the public administration and, consequently, in the management of the PB process. In fact, the mayor was reluctant to give too much power to the PPB/PB mechanisms and delegates as they were seen as a political tool of the PMDB branch of the heterogeneous political coalition in power (Melo et al., 2001, p. 86). Most of the public officials in charge of the program had been appointed by the PMDB, and since they were monitoring the process and had antennas within the local communities, the mayor tried to avoid empowering such institutional channels. On the opposite side, the PMDB leaders tried to keep their political alliances with social sectors alive through the PPB/PB process. Power struggles between the legislative and the executive branches of government were also important during this period. In fact, the reluctance of PFL/DEM municipal councilors toward the PPB/PB program, seen as a threat to the municipal councilors' role in the communities, became an important source of political struggles between the chamber and the mayor, whose legitimacy and right to veto were questioned by the chamber around the question of the PB program in 1998-99[105]. The mayor did not respond by downsizing the role of

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[104] The incentives provided by a context of intense political competition are present for PT leaders, but evidence suggests that the same logic prevails for opposition parties, who have been using the same strategy of political co-option of delegates in neighborhoods that were more favorable to their party/candidates, as my interviews with political leaders from the DEM (previously PFL) have shown (Vereadora 1, 2008).
[105] See Melo et al. (2001) for a detailed account of the 1998 events, where the mayor faced important internal competition coming from the chamber of councilors.

the program as requested. Instead, the PPB/PB program and its delegates became instruments of power struggles, denounced by legislators and used by the executive, supported by the empowered local leaders attached to the program, to reinforce its central position within the municipal administration.

Secondly, the experience of the two past PT administrations also confirms the importance of internal competition as an incentive for politicians to try to use participatory institutions to secure alliances with social leaders and their local support networks. By nature, the PT is a political party made of several political factions, representing different ideological tendencies under the same larger leftist umbrella. As a quite decentralized organization, however, the level of internal tensions within the party's local sections varies from municipality to municipality according to the local context. In Recife, the leadership of the first elected mayor of the PT, João Paulo, has been highly contested within the ranks of the party. Though very popular among the population, such popularity has not proven to be sufficient to ensure his legitimacy within the ranks of the local PT, especially among the opposing faction *Unidade na Luta*. As observed by a *Folha de Pernambuco* reporter in 2006, "divided in tendencies, the PT did not curved toward the one that can be considered to be its major popular leader, often opposing resistance to João Paulo's opinions" (Rozowykwiat, 2006). PB institutions, as the flag-program of the executive, were therefore used as a way for the mayor to secure his privileged access to local CSO leaders and to gather support among the general population, which would grant him a certain degree of authority within the municipality despite his lack of support within the party. Internal conflicts within the ruling coalition were also manifest in the Chamber of Councilors, which often opposed the mayor's proposals with opposition parties, and observed through a frequent use of veto power by the mayor (Vereadora 1, 2008). The flagship program of João Paulos' government, associated by its participants to the man more than the party, was therefore an excellent instrument to be used to build mass-based popular support and his legitimacy within the party, securing the loyalty of PB delegates through co-option and pork barreling practices. Moreover, the internal competition among the various factions of the party also was reflected in the disputes surrounding the choice of the PT candidate for mayor, as the struggle surrounding the

2008 PT candidate has illustrated. As the candidate of the incumbent mayor, the ex-secretary in charge of the PB process João da Costa has faced a notable opposition movement within the party, and his nomination was far from unanimous (Rozowykwiat, 2006), which might also contribute to explain the use of PB institutions and delegates to gather popular support for the candidate and alliances with social actors traditionally supporting the PT.

Therefore, for the two Recife cases/periods compared here, strong external and internal political competition has created the incentive for local politicians from all parties to try to politically benefit from the existence of an organized structure of citizen participation to secure support bases through the co-option of PB delegates and political control over the participatory spaces, moving the traditional political conflicts from the electoral arena to the public sphere.

Balance of Power within Civil Society

The balance of powers among societal actors is also an important element to consider as it has an impact on the way societal participants actually engage in the governance process, as actors or as passive observers, as well as on the nature of the struggles relating to the definition of the common good and, as a consequence, of policy priorities. During both phases of participatory budgeting in Recife, and partly as a result of the exclusive focus placed on certain channels and groups by municipal authorities, serious imbalances in terms of access to municipal authorities and competition among CSOs within participatory channels have characterized their interactions with one another in the public sphere and their participation to PB institutions.

During the PPB/PB period, formal access to participation channels was highly controlled and mostly reserved for community leaders. In spite of this, as we have seen, neighborhood associations, as one of the major forms of social organization active in the city, because they had generally supported Vasconcelos' campaign for mayor in the 1980's, were already the type of CSO with the greater political leverage. Since 2001, the social organizations and local NGOs with traditionally greater social mobilization, and in

turn political leverage, generally participate outside the official channels of the PB process, which creates unoccupied spaces for political parties to maneuver at the community level, mobilizing militants and deploying strategies to co-opt newly empowered participants and delegates within the ranks of the party. In fact, before the election of the PT, there were already certain participatory dynamics in place with the registered neighborhood associations participating in the program for the urbanization of the *favelas* (PREZEIS), dynamics that are not respected under the PT's version of the PB program. As observed by Clóvis Mário de Lima, ex-coordinator of PREZEIS, in a public debate organized by the NGO ETAPAS in 2003,

> As of today, there is still no integration [of the PB and the PREZEIS processes]. It's like PREZEIS, PB and other participation channels were in a space dispute. The neighborhood associations are loosing their force, their autonomy. […] It [the PB process] has, however, to respect the already existing channels of participation, at least to interact with them and not simply assume that these channels are not important (interviewed by and cited in: Barbosa da Silva, 2003, p. 66).

Such an excusive focus on PB as the legitimate channel of participation creates tensions within civil society and a defection of many groups from the PB process. In fact, one of the architects of the current PT program observed that there have been growing tensions between the two programs, tensions that have led to the regress of most locally organized NGOs from the process, as well as to changes in the structure of neighborhood associationalism:

> There is a struggle of public spaces between the PREZEIS, which has its own local organization, and the PB. For local leaders, neighborhood social organizations and NGOs it's like there are two distinct entities, two separate institutions. It was a big shock for the PREZEIS when PB was adopted since it is today a privileged institutional figure for the municipal government, the most important PT government program (Assesor do Planejamento Participativo, 2008).

These tensions among civil society actors affect their strategies toward the different existing participatory mechanisms. Moreover, there is a tendency of local NGOs and civil society organizations who initially supported the PT and its political agenda but ended up

not being included as such in the PB cycle to criticize it in the local media[106] for being inherently flawed by an "overt political influence and privileged access to power for certain RPAs as well as the political co-option of those who integrate the process" (Moura, 2003). As explained by Isabel Valença, from ETAPAS,

> After a certain period, there was a disenchantment from the NGOs' part [toward PB] because we thought that things would be different, that there would be planning, execution, monitoring… but we saw that it wasn't the case. […] Because NGOs do not represent residents per se, our participation [in PB] as NGOs quasi lost its sense and so we only continued participating in PREZEIS audiences and formations (Valença, 2008).

Itanacy de Oliveira, ex-delegate member of the COP, observed in a meeting of RPA 6 organized by ETAPAS in 2003, one difficulty encountered by the elected delegates and participants of PB was that they

> felt the absence of NGOs, which have a really important role in these participatory spaces in the sense that when they enter, they contribute in an important way, especially when it comes to capacitating participants (Barbosa da Silva & Silva, 2003).

The fact that civic groups with somewhat autonomous capacity to mobilize and organize citizens at the community level are no longer participating in the PB process creates a situation where PB participants often represent a sector of the population that, though participating in groups as the process requires, is less organized and has no experience of autonomous social mobilization. In fact, the divisions within civil society toward their participation in PB institutions hinders CSOs from cumulating collective social learning, and the exclusion of already mobilized and organized autonomous social groups. This allows for co-option practices with the newcomers who form social groups around their particular and often ephemeral social demands on the PB itself, thereby limiting the autonomy and the pluralism of the groups which are mobilized through the PB process,

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[106] A good example of this is the common document produced by several NGOs active in Recife in 2003 under the auspices of the local section of ABONG, providing a very critical account of the relation between the PT government of João Paulo and Recife's civil society organizations (Moura, 2003; Valença, 2008). Among other things, they were criticizing that despite the efforts of the government to create participatory mechanisms, there was still an "absence of spaces for the exercise of criticism toward the existing processes" (Associação Brasileira das Organizações Não-Governamentais - Nordeste, 2003).

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mostly following the lines and directions of the current government which they are mobilized for in the participatory process.

Thus, even if the analysis suggests that there were differences in who occupies the space between the two periods analyzed in the case of Recife, we can affirm that in both cases the pluralistic balance of powers among active CSOs was not totally reflected in PB institutions, which provided differentiated access to municipal authorities to CSOs with more political leverage within the ruling coalition. In fact, in both cases, we can see that the groups who had privileged relationships with the local state tended to participate more actively, preventing the development of an autonomous civil society whose organization could peacefully coexist and collectively participate within the institutions of participatory budgeting.

Perceptions of Actors' Roles in the PB Process
A third element that might affect actors' strategies and behaviors, and in turn the level of autonomy enjoyed by societal actors in the process, is the perception both societal participants and government members have of their own and the other's roles and functions in the participatory process. These perceptions, which are mutually constructed and reinforced, affect the actual process in many ways, but especially in the way participants from both society and the municipal government engage with one another, enact the existing formal and informal institutions and take part in the governance process. In Recife, the perception of self-roles expressed by social, administrative and political actors reveals the profoundly unequal nature of the interactions taking place in the municipal participatory institutions, dominated by the municipal government officials and the PT administrators.

One of the main conclusions that we find in the literature about PPB/PB in Recife relates to the ambiguity of the delegates' own understanding of their role in the process, as delegates *per se* but also in relation to other community leaders and municipal councilors who channeled citizens' demands to the local state as well (Melo et al., 2001). The tension and struggles of delegates with different political tendencies and municipal

councilors that derive from the misunderstanding of each other's functions, as well as the recognition of their respective roles in urban development project achievements also have important consequences on the nature of their engagement in the community. As the vice-president of a neighborhood association expressed in a focus group conducted by Melo and his research team in 2000:

> At the beginning, the delegates join the program concerned only with helping the communities, but later they are involved in 'politicking' and look like true politicians, and then they become more concerned with themselves than the community (cited by: Melo et al., 2001, p. 140).

Moreover, local authorities tend to assume that community leaders and delegates will assume responsibility for the state's wrongdoings and policy-making shortcomings, seeing them as a "political buffers" between them and the population (Melo et al., 2001). Such an ambiguity in perceived functions, reinforced by the behavior of the local executive toward them, is reflected in the way delegates engage in the participatory process, understanding their role as working with the municipality and for their own recognition rather than representing their community members in municipal decision-making venues.

The ambiguity and misunderstanding of the delegates' roles seem to have persisted in the more recent PB model, where delegates are defined as social allies of the local government based at the community level. According to mayor João Paulo, in Recife's PB program is a project of government, the mass-oriented process of which is related to the PT larger political project. As such, it aims at "elevating popular conscience and improving the quality of life through popular participation which are both necessary for the advancement of the construction of democracy, more just and including social control" (Lima e Silva, 2008). As explained by one of the program designer,

> The PB serves to equip the municipal government through community leaders, who were brought by the state, which gives them public functions, such as forum coordinators, etc. […] The administration takes the community leaders and give them a public function in a project that is led by the PT itself. It is then like personal opportunities that, indirectly, the PT gives them (Assesor do Planejamento Participativo, 2008).

This understanding of the role of citizen participants is reflected in the way the main PB mobilization actors, delegates and coordinators, see their own function in the process. As in the case of Neza, many delegates I interviewed see themselves as working for the local government in the communities, and not the other way around. Commenting on her role as citizen representative, a PB delegate active as both delegate and PB coordinator of her region explained: "As a delegate, I am not from the public administration, I am supporting the administration because I share the same ideology, proposals and dreams" (Delegada OP Recife 1, 2008). As a delegate commented, this misunderstanding of the delegates' role has major consequences on the actual participatory process:

> People think they are giving a hand to the municipal administration, they see it this way, as if they were working for the municipality. But it's not the case. […] I am not giving a hand to the municipality; I am there to observe what they are doing with my money, which is different. Unfortunately, people still do not see it that way and think that they should get something in return. If there is a mayor that doesn't have a larger vision, he is going to love it, give free transportation and food for everyone because then he will have everyone under his control. This is another big challenge that we face (Delegado OP Recife 3, 2008).

This type of perception, commonly present among social PB participants, contributes in turn to feed the dependent status and lack of autonomy experienced by social actors and to make possible the use of co-option strategies by political parties which disempowers mobilized groups.

Such a type of perception and the resulting behavior of actors involved in Recife's PB institutions have two main consequences. First, the administration's understanding of the delegates' function leads it to undervalue their need for training, something that is crucial to the development of autonomous participation skills among the population and to preventing the use of co-option practices by local politicians. The persisting lack of training as well as the apathy and lack of information about PB among the population only contribute to reinforce the prevailing conception of participation and, in turn, open up the possibilities of co-option for political parties.

To conclude, my findings about the two Recife's experiences with participatory decentralization reforms confirm the hypothesis that the nature of (un)changing state-society relationships is not only dependent upon the mechanisms' institutional design, but also and even more importantly on the sociopolitical conditions allowing the development of autonomy within these mechanisms. In Recife, while there have been some changes between the two models studied related to the way institutional design shapes mobilization capacity at the grassroots level, there is a high degree of continuity as both governmental administrations, facing intense competition both from outside and from within parties, used their influence over participatory budgeting and co-opted its participants to secure support. This strategy not only contributed to maintain the exclusionary and non-pluralistic nature of civil society groups active in participatory mechanisms, but it also fed the negative perceptions of both social and political actors about the process, weakening even more the prospects for PB to generate democratizing outcomes.

5.6 CLIENTELISM AND DISEMPOWERING CO-OPTION: DIFFERENTIATED BUT STILL LIMITED IMPACT ON THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY

In sum, the comparison of the two different experiences with PB in Recife tends to suggest that there has been a shift in mobilization patterns between the two models, which is mainly explained by the focus placed by both governments on certain institutional features. While PPB/PB mobilized mostly individuals, the PT model allowed for more pluralism and mass-based deliberations, which also sustained collective mobilization mechanisms. Under the PPB/PB program, clientelistic state-society relationships based upon the close and direct exchange relationships between the mayor and community leaders seem to have continued and adapted to the introduction of participatory budgeting. In fact, though the PMDB/PFL administrations have sought to include more citizen participation in resource allocation decision-making processes, the emphasis put on community leaders as the central channels of demand-making precluded the development of collective mobilization patterns at the community level, sustaining particularistic and individual-based mobilization. Combined with the lack of autonomy of

PB participants, the persistence of such a type of participation has therefore contributed to the durability of clientelism as the principal mode of state-society interactions within PB institutions. Under PT, an important change has been observed in patterns of social mobilization, which became more collective and oriented toward the definition by citizens of the common good. Such a change, due to institutional reforms introduced by the PT administration in 2001, was however not accompanied by a similar change in the nature of participation in the PB process, which remained highly controlled by political parties. The persistence of informal practices of co-option has had the effect of disempowering the organized social forces collectively mobilized around the PB process, a trend that characterizes the essence of the new type of state-society relationship that emerged through PB in Recife, which I called disempowering co-option.

As the case of Recife II highlights, the fact that collective mobilization spaces exist and are used by citizens does not guarantee a positive impact on citizenship: the way they are used by both political and social actors has an even more important impact on the potential democratic outcomes as it shapes the ability of civil society actors to enter the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes with the local state and to become accountability agents. In Recife II, evidence has shown that instead of generating democratic practices at the grassroots level, politicians and parties have captured the collective action mechanisms. As highlighted by a municipal councilor from the opposition party,

> When nothing of all this existed [participatory budgeting mechanisms], the community had to refer to the politicians directly, who had leverage with the municipal government and could ask on behalf of the community. Now, there is a form of popular participation, a way for citizens to make demands to the local government. If this mechanism is well utilized or not in practice is, however, a whole other story (Vereadora 1, 2008).

This lack of autonomy remains a greater challenge to the development of cooperative relationships between civil society and the state as it relies upon undemocratic co-option practices and informal exchanges, even in contexts where civil society participates in a more organized way like in Recife. A comparison of the Recife II experience with the case of León is particularly interesting to illustrate this argument, as the latter has

generated the opposite situation. In that case, the institutional format proposed by the PAN strengthened individual mobilization at the grassroots, but autonomy was one of the pillars defining participation, limiting the negative impact of individual-based mobilization on the transformation of traditional clientelistic state-society relationships. Thus, and though there have been advances in terms of collective organization in Recife since 2001, the prevalence of informal practices and co-option within PB institutions brings the logic of political interests and struggles to the center of the demand-making and deliberation processes, which tends to curtail the prospects for achieving greater social inclusion through an undifferentiated access to citizenship rights and the existence of effective accountability mechanisms.

Announcement of an ongoing PB project of street paving and sewage system installation (Recife, 2008)

CHAPTER SIX

BELO HORIZONTE: PARTICIPATION AS DEMOCRATIZING COOPERATION

"When Patrus [Ananias] implemented PB here in Belo Horizonte, we were already fighting. But it opened the doors that were closed up until then. Today, it's not about who you know. You can demand, and the government listens to the population, governs for the population today, for the residents and the poorest of this city."
-- PB Delegate, Belo Horizonte[107]

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Belo Horizonte, which is today the sixth largest city in the country with a population of 2.4 million, was founded in 1897 to become the capital and the main industrial city of the state of Minas Gerais, located in the center of Brazil. Considered as the first 'planned city' of Brazil, Belo Horizonte was built to replace Ouro Preto, the historical capital of the state, and became the center of Minas Gerais' modern economy and rapid industrial growth. A quite centralized and exclusionary model of governance has marked the building of state-society relationships in the city, often qualified as a traditional bastion of the conservative Brazilian political forces. Partly due to the split between the very well established Catholic Church and the conservative parties, Belo Horizonte became, however, an important arena for political contestation during the military regime and in the first years of electoral opening. Social activism against the military regime led to an important growth of community associationalism in the city – though relatively fragmented and still organized around clientelistic forms of political inclusion – that became the main motor behind the political organization of the left in the late 1980's.

Since the early 1980's, Belo Horizonte has therefore seen many changes in the structure of both the government and society arising through the opening of the political arena and the rise of political pluralism in the city. Yet, the emergence of political pluralism in the 1980's in a context where traditional political parties dominated the electoral scene was not necessarily associated with a transformation of the local governance model, which

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[107] Personal interview with a PB participant, Belo Horizonte, August 2008 (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

remained characterized by a centralized decision-making model as well as exclusionary and clientelistic relationships between the state and certain community leaders. With the arrival of the PT-led leftist coalition in power in 1993 under Patrus Ananias, several institutional innovations were adopted in an attempt to break with the clientelistic tradition of resource distribution and to thereby promote social inclusion and popular participation. What was the impact of the introduction of institutional innovations such as participatory budgeting by the PT on state-society relationships in Belo Horizonte? More precisely, did PB contribute to sustaining the rise of an autonomous civil society collectively mobilizing for social inclusion within the formal channels of the state and the extension of citizenship rights, transforming the traditional and clientelistic ways of doing politics in the city? This chapter looks at these questions, arguing that contrary to what has been observed in all the previous cases where participatory reforms had differentiated but still limited impacts on mobilization and participation patterns, Belo Horizonte offers a good example of where the introduction of PB institutions has had a positive impact on both dimensions of state-society relationships and has, in turn, contributed to what can be considered as the beginning of a redefinition of the traditional model toward a more cooperative one in local governance processes that fosters democratic deepening through greater social inclusion and governmental accountability.

6.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE CHALLENGES OF URBANIZATION AND THE 'UNPLANNED' *FAVELIZATION* OF THE PLANNED CITY

The idea behind the creation of Belo Horizonte as the new capital of Minas Gerais in 1897 was to reorganize the state's economy via a regional industrial center that would be more accessible and more readily developed than the historical capital Ouro Preto. As in most important Brazilian cities, the phenomenon of the *favelas* (also called *vilas*) appeared in conjunction with the urbanization process in Belo Horizonte, the first city of Brazil built according to an organized urbanization plan. The plan did not, however, include living space for the migrant construction workers, as the center of Belo Horizonte was not conceived to offer affordable living space (Fernandes, 1993). Workers therefore had to live in the outskirts of the city, located far from their workplace, commuting

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everyday to the center of the city. As a consequence, as early as in 1895, construction workers started to illegally occupy the unoccupied and unplanned spaces surrounding the downtown area, generally not suitable for housing due to precarious geographical and ecological conditions. It is however in the mid-40's that the city faced a considerable growth of the number of *favelas*, due in large part to the rural exodus and the promises of better jobs and living conditions with the opening of many industries in the city (Rezende Afonso & de Azevedo, 1987), reflecting the growing social inequalities plaguing Brazilian industrial development.

As in the case of Recife, under the rule of Vargas' Estado Novo, modernization logic prevailed in the urbanization of Belo Horizonte. Such logic, consistently applied by the then municipal authorities, was more about *favelas* and evicting their residents from the land they illegally occupied than about legalizing and urbanizing them. In fact, "many evictions took place during the 1930s, on the grounds of the need for 'urbanization' and 'sanitation' in the invaded areas" (Fernandes, 1993, p. 215) with the local authorities taking the evicted populations to peripheral areas without access to basic services while extending the urbanized zone for economic interests. The growing number of *favelas,* however, remained an important challenge in Belo Horizonte, despite remaining a marginal political issue that was not really addressed by the local conservative governments following the modernization logic until the beginning of the 1980's.

6.2.1 Neighborhood Associationalism: From Populism to Repression and Clientelism under the Military Rule

After the demise of the Vargas' regime, two models of local governance emerged in Belo Horizonte, associated with the so-called populist (1945-1964) and military (1964-1983) periods. While the *favelas* were an important social challenge plaguing the city before the mid-1940's, it was only during the populist period that neighborhood associationalism started to emerge as a consequence of unheard social concerns emanating from the less favored zones.

Prior to the mid-1940's, urban movements had generally been repressed by the state as they were considered subversive and associated with communism and the then banned PCdoB (Rezende Afonso & de Azevedo, 1987). Only few disorganized groups were active in the city, generally structured around their opposition to the policy of eradication of the *favelas* and expulsion of their residents from these areas pursued by the local government under the agenda of modernization. Such repression of urban movements continued in the first years of the populist republic, even in the context of 'democratization'. Yet, it was also during this period that the city saw a proliferation of neighborhood associations, often organized clandestinely or under the auspices and protection of the local Church and which became one of the main forms of social organization in Belo Horizonte. Fighting to obtain the right of organization, they created the *Associações de Defensa Coletiva* (ADC – Collective Defense Associations), which later became united under the *Federação dos Trabalhadores Favelados de Belo Horizonte* (Federation of Belo Horizonte Favela Workers). In spite of this, most of the active neighborhood associations, and especially their leaders, were not autonomous interlocutors and were controlled by local bosses (Schettini, 2004; Somarriba & Rezende Afonso, 1987; Wampler, 2007). In fact, their ability to reach local politicians and formulate demands was dependent upon their capacity to gather electoral support and the associations' demands were generally met by the mayor in a clientelistic way, "giving spaces and apartments to people with whom he [the mayor] had a certain relation, emptying the role of the associations as the movement's interlocutors to the government" (Rezende Afonso & de Azevedo, 1987, p. 118).

With the military coup of 1964, all these neighborhood organizations were repressed by the appointed pro-military local authorities and eventually disappeared. In fact, pre-1964 community leaders were either repressed, jailed or sent into exile, and "the channels of participatory expression such as municipal chambers, legislative assemblies and associations, etc., were either closed or transformed into passive structures" (Pompermayer, 1987, p. 10). Considered 'subversive' as they were associated with the previous populist regime, the neighborhood associations and the Federation of *Favela* workers were dissolved by the military, and the residents of the less favored areas of the

city became even more marginalized and deprived of any citizenship rights. Such a change in the model of governance did not mean a total disappearance of local organization. Several local organizations remained active under the auspices of the Church-based CEBs[108]. In fact,

> protected by the CEBs, residents' associations of all sorts proliferated, demanding improvements in their living conditions. 60% of the 202 community associations registered in Belo Horizonte in 1980 were created after 1974 (Pompermayer, 1987, p. 13).

Moreover, during the *apertura,* the military launched the *Programa de Desenvolvimento de Comunidades* (PRODECOM – Community Development Program), supposedly aimed at tackling the issue of urbanization and of the regularization of *favelas* by working with community leaders. Though well received by community leaders, the program was widely denounced by the left and intellectual circles for its clientelistic and patronizing character, as it had "contributed to legitimizing the action of the government [and] interfered with the autonomy of social movements" (Fernandes, 1993, p. 218). As explained by Rezende Afonso and de Azevedo (1987), this program constituted an opportunity to distort the role of neighborhood associations, recreating the traditional dependency of local leaders upon the state's representatives and configuring the conditions conducive to informal practices of co-option and political favoritism generally oriented toward the better-off segments of society and strengthening social exclusion and inequalities in the city. As we shall see next, such practices produced an important gap in access to power and resources between the urbanized neighborhoods and the *favelas*, sustaining social discontentment and demands often mobilized by the emerging political opposition to the military regime. This situation became even more important during the political opening of the regime, when the then opposition formed the local government of Belo Horizonte.

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[108] During this period, the Catholic Church played an important role in fostering grassroots organization in the poor urban areas across Brazil through the community-based CEBs, which are defined as small groups of Christians organized within urban or rural parishes around work or residential questions by local religious leaders or pastoral agents (Bidegain Greising, 1993).

6.2.2 Political Opening: Political Pluralism and the Rise of Associationalism

The transition back to democratic rule in Brazil was accompanied by several changes, among them the direct election of mayors in all municipalities (including the capitals) and the decentralization of powers within the federal governance model, empowering the municipal governments. In Belo Horizonte, the smooth transition was ensured by the PMDB[109], a national party created by the military regime as the only recognized official opposition. Yet, the electoral opening also paved the way for then-repressed opposition parties to emerge or re-emerge, creating an environment of political pluralism and competitive elections at the municipal level.

The return to democracy also had important social consequences, as it formally opened the space for CSOs to exist and organize. In an important study of the changes in patterns of associationalism in Brazilian cities, Avritzer (2000) suggested that Belo Horizonte is a particularly interesting case for observing the awakening of civil society in the aftermath of the transition to democracy. In fact, more than 1 500 citizen associations were created and/or officially registered between 1980 and 1990, a major increase compared to the previous periods. This not only indicates increasing levels of social activity at the grassroots level by formal organizations seizing the window of opportunity opened to them with the political opening, but it also reveals a growing dissatisfaction with the model of governance in the city that privileged modernization rather than social inclusion. Such concerns were true in Belo Horizonte, but also in other parts of the country, and the constitutional reforms of 1988 reflected the need to respond to them through decentralization and participatory measures.

In Belo Horizonte, the PMDB (1983-1988) and then PSDB (1989-1992) administrations attempted to respond to the general dissatisfaction with the traditional centralized governance model. Two main decentralizing measures adopted by the democratically elected municipal administrations in the 1980's are worth mentioning. Yet, both were

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[109] Though originating from a transformation of the MDB, the only allowed official opposition party to ARENA during the authoritarian period, it became a genuine opposition force present at all levels of government during the transition years, generally classified as a centrist party.

only partly achieved and therefore had a very limited impact on the decision-making mechanisms and the social inclusion processes (Somarriba & Dulci, 1997, p. 394-95). First, an attempt at decentralizing the municipal administration was made under the PMDB government through the creation of nine administrative regions, dividing the city into more manageable territories. The PSDB government then completed the reform in 1989, creating regional administrative councils to support the daily work done in the regions, although these councils only took off in two regions, Venda Nova and Barreiro. Second, the PSDB government adopted the *Programa participativo de Obras Prioritarias* (PROPAR – Participatory program for priority works), which consisted of regional assemblies where the mayor met with citizens to learn what their concerns were. Though they were open to citizen participation, these meetings were not even minimally deliberative as they served to provide the municipal government a better knowledge of local needs, but without any commitment to respond to them (Boschi, 1999). More ominously, they even strengthened the already powerful local political brokers by giving them resources to feed their captive clientele.

Thus, it can be argued that, as in Recife and the Mexican cases, there is an important legacy of associationalism and social activity at the grassroots prior to the adoption of the leftist participatory decentralization policies in Belo Horizonte. Yet, as observed in the three other cases, state-society relationships were generally defined by a model of clientelistic exchanges between influential community leaders who personally benefited from privileged links with local politicians to bring public goods to their communities in exchange for their support. A delegate from the *Aglomerado da Serra* (the largest *favela* of Belo Horizonte), very active in her community since the 1960's and also president of the neighborhood association of the *Vila Fátima*, explained to me:

> Before, the municipal government wasn't open, the doors were all closed. To ask for something, you needed a sponsor, a godfather and here in the *vilas* and *favelas*, we did not have this. The community had nothing, no street lighting, no paved streets, no sewage system, no buses, etc. You could cry, you could ask, but if you did not have a sponsor that helped you to meet the mayor, there was no way you could get services (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

In 1993, the incoming leftist government faced multiple challenges in a context of extreme urban inequalities, urbanization problems and growing social dissatisfaction. To deepen democratization and achieve its social justice goal, the new local government therefore had to implement innovative social programs that would overcome the traditional clientelistic state-society relationships undermining the prospects for democracy in Belo Horizonte's political and social spheres.

6.3 THE RISE OF THE LEFT IN BELO HORIZONTE'S ELECTORAL ARENA: A TURN TOWARD MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE?

As I argued previously, Brazil's return to democracy after the negotiated demise of the military junta in the early 1980's set the stage for a political opening in the municipal electoral arena and for an official transition to political pluralism in cities such as Belo Horizonte. It was only in 1993 that the electoral victory of the left took place in Belo Horizonte, when Patrus Ananias (PT) won the election for mayor in an alliance with the *Partido Socialista do Brasil* (PSB – Socialist Party of Brazil). It was under this government that the first substantial institutional innovation for including citizen participation in the governance model was implemented: the participatory budgeting program inspired in part by the model invented in Porto Alegre and adapted to the more conservative reality of the capital of Minas.

6.3.1 The Rise of the Left in Belo Horizonte: The PT/PSB Coalition in Power

As we have seen, the political opening of the late 1970's provided new opportunities for opposition to the military regime and its official parties to start organizing at the grassroots. In Belo Horizonte, however, the traditionally poorly organized and marginal leftist movements and political forces did not benefit immediately from the opening and the general climate of political pluralism. Founded in the early 1980's, the PT remained a relatively weak political force until the 1989 presidential election, in which the party's most prominent figure gathered an important share of the popular vote at the national level for the first time in the party's history. As table 11 shows, the PT-PSB coalition has since then become the main political force in the city, with the population consistently

electing PT or PT-supported candidates for mayor with increasing shares of the popular vote.

TABLE 11 RESULTS FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PER POLITICAL PARTY/ELECTORAL COALITION, BELO HORIZONTE, 1993-2008

Mandate	Political Parties & Coalitions / Elected Mayors	% Vote
1983-1988	**PMDB (Hélio de Carvalho Garcia)**	**N/A**
1989-1992	**PSDB (João Pimenta da Veiga - elected)**	**N/A**
1993-1996	**PT / Frente BH Popular (Patrus Ananias de Sousa - PT/PSB/PC/PV, elected)**	**36.9%**
	PL (PFL/PRP)	20.9%
	PSDB (PSC/PPS/PTdoB)	15.5%
1997-2000	**PSB / Frente BH Nôvo (Célio Castro - PSB/PT - elected)**	**35.1%**
	PT	22.0%
2001-2004	**PSB / Frente BH Popular (Célio Castro - PSB/PT - elected)**	**43.5%**
	PSDB	31.3%
	PMDB	17.3%
2005-2008	**PT (Fernando Pimentel - PT/PTB/PPS/PCdoB - elected)**	**68.4%**
	PSB (PMDB/PP/PSDB/PTdoB)	22.8%
	PFL (PDT/PAN/PRONA)	6.1%
2008-2011	**PSB/ Aliança por BH (Mario Lacerda - PT/PSDB - elected)**	**43.5%**
	PMDB	41.2%
	PCdoB	8.8%

Source: Compiled by the author with (incomplete) electoral data from the *Tribunal Regional Eleitoral de Minas Gerais* (TRE-MG), http://www.tre-mg.gov.br [page consulted on 07/06/09].

Note: Electoral results are based upon the results obtained by the main coalitions candidates for mayor after the first round. In all cases, the first round winner was also elected in the second round.

Contrary to what some experts have observed in other parts of the country, the rise of the PT in Belo Horizonte was not based upon its close links to the workers' unions, as this sector had been relatively weak in the first years of the party's emergence (Abers, 1996). Two main groups have however contributed to the emergence and growth of the party in the city, constituting its main sources of support and generating its first important leaders: Catholic Church activists and the growing leftist social movements. First, as Wanderley (1998) argued, though the Catholic Church had traditionally aligned with conservative politicians and the right in Belo Horizonte, during the military rule, it allowed self-help grassroots organizations to emerge in the poorest sectors of the industrial city through the

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CEBs (Bidegain Greising, 1993). Several political leaders who aligned with the left emerged from the grassroots activities related to the local Churches' communities, including the most prominent PT figures who gave an impetus to the party such as the first PT mayor, Patrus Ananias (Avritzer, 2009). Second, and though they were subject to repression during the military rule, underground leftist social movements such as human rights groups and journalist or teacher associations remained relatively active before the political opening of the late 1970's, contributing to keep alive the momentum for the creation of a political party at the left of the spectrum in Belo Horizonte (Avritzer, 2009). These movements were the second source producing many PT leaders, notably the future president of the party, Virgilio Guimarães. Brought together in the late 1970's, these two sectors of the Belo Horizonte society created the local section of the PT, which would however stay quite weak electorally until 1989, when national mobilizations behind presidential candidate Lula extended to the city.

One of the reasons for the slow growth of the left in Belo Horizonte was that the traditional opposition parties (PMDB and PSDB), representing the more conservative sectors of the population, remained quite competitive political forces challenging the PT and other political parties from the left during the 1980's and even later on in the 1990's. In this context, the electoral rise of the PT is therefore closely linked to its constant ability to negotiate political alliances with the PSB and other centrist political formations in order to become a catch-all coalition able to get elected (Wampler, 2007). In 1993, the first elected mayor Patrus Ananias therefore won in an alliance with Célio de Castro, then leader of the PSB who would eventually become the coalition's candidate for mayor in 1996. Even if the alliance between the PT and the PSB was never sealed as such by an official political pact, it remained quite stable over the years[110], allowing the left to

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[110] The exception to this stability happened in 1996, when an internal conflict between the incumbent mayor Patrus Ananias and the president of the local section of the PT, Virgilio Guimarães, occurred. The succession for the coalition leader in the upcoming election was at stake: the official coalition's candidate, Célio de Castro, incarnated the continuity of Ananias' work in the municipal government, whereas Guimarães represented the more activist branch of the PT. The two candidates ran separately in the first round of the election (see table 11), but soon the parties reunited behind de Castro and reconstructed their alliance. This was, however, an isolated episode, and since then, the tacit cooperation between the two main leftist parties has remained the same, alternating between PT and PSB candidates for mayors in the few last municipal elections.

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become the most important political force in the quite fragmented and pluralistic political arena of Belo Horizonte.

The election of the leftist coalition led by Patrus Ananias in 1993 has had many important consequences for the PT's consolidation as a leading political force in the capital of the traditionally conservative State of Minas, but also more generally for the municipal administrative organization and governance mechanisms. As Avritzer (2009) points out, the different elements in the coalition were generally inclined towards including popular participation as a governing principle, and came to power with the intention of transforming the clientelistic model of state-society relationships that had governed resource redistribution and investment policies in the city until their election. Mayor Patrus Ananias and vice-mayor Célio de Castro were clear: they wanted to implement institutional innovations that would circumvent the traditional political brokers and bring citizens back into the decision-making process, reverse municipal priorities and contribute to the inclusive urbanization of the city through the empowerment of the marginalized sectors of the society. Did the ruling coalition fulfill its promises of including citizen participation in the model of local governance in Belo Horizonte? Before turning to this question, the following presents the overall institutional and procedural scheme of participatory governance as it was implemented and continues to work today in Belo Horizonte: the participatory budgeting.

6.3.2 The Institutional Participatory Governance Framework in Belo Horizonte: Participatory Budgeting

Belo Horizonte is regulated by the *Lei Orgânica do Municipío de Belo Horizonte* (Organic Law), which defines the guiding governance principles of the municipality. As in the case of Recife, the local government's structure reproduces the federal structure of power division between the executive, embodied by the elected mayor and his nominated secretaries, and the legislative, embodied by the elected members of the *Câmara de vereadores*[111]. Since its reformulation in 1990, in accordance with the 1988 Brazilian

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[111] In Belo Horizonte, and following the proportionality criteria established by the 1988 Constitution, the 41 candidates with the most votes for *vereadores* get elected and form the legislative body of the municipal

Constitution, the *Lei Orgânica* stipulates that the "executive power will be organized along criteria of decentralization, regionalization and popular participation" (Câmara municipal de Belo Horizonte, 1990, art. 18). The idea of popular participation actually transcends most sections of the *Lei*, becoming an overarching – though underspecified and leaving a lot of leeway to local politicians in terms of the actual manner of implementing such principle in the governance model – principle guiding the municipal government's action and governance model[112]. In fact, there are two ways by which citizens can participate: indirectly, through representative forms of democracy, and directly, via referenda, popular initiatives and, more importantly, through their participation with the public administration and their oversight and control functions over the decisions of the municipality (Câmara municipal de Belo Horizonte, 1990, art. 2.1-2.2).

As we have seen, the opening of the political and, eventually, electoral arenas in Brazilian municipalities created new possibilities for a revitalization of the then moribund CSOs, possibilities that still remained non-institutionalized and generally organized around particularistic and clientelistic relationships with the municipal governments. In Belo Horizonte, the few efforts at including a certain level of participation undertaken before 1993 were mostly superficial and did not genuinely involve the autonomous participation of mobilized citizens in the local governance process, even under the new provisions of the 1990 *Lei Orgânica*. It is only under the PT government of Patrus Ananias, mayor from 1993-1996, that the municipal government changed its focus to become more 'radically inclusive' and 'democratic', suggesting a model of governance that would institutionalize citizen participation to develop cooperation between the local government and its citizens through the implementation of participatory budgeting. Inspired by the successes of the Porto Alegre experience with PB, and motivated by the

government for a 4-year mandate starting on January 1st the year following their election (Câmara municipal de Belo Horizonte, 1990 [2008]).

[112] According to the *Lei*, the municipality has to guarantee the active participation of civil society in many decisional spheres of the local government, notably through the establishment of the Management Councils (*Conselhos gestores*) in the areas of health, education, and culture. Such a measure, imposed from the top-down by dispositions of the federal constitution, is completed by an obligation of the municipal government to foster popular participation in the elaboration and implementation of the *Plano director*, the budgetary guidelines and of the annual budget (Câmara municipal de Belo Horizonte, 1990, art. 24).

PT idea of the inversion of priorities (*inverção das prioridades*) – focusing on increasing social inequalities and promoting the idea that the policy-making efforts should target the poorest and needy social sectors rather than the already better-off segments of the population traditionally privileged by the political system (Avritzer, 2002b; Somarriba & Dulci, 1997) – Ananias proposed the adoption of PB in Belo Horizonte. His administration thus conceived a PB model adapted to the realities of the city and that was meant to "answer the repressed demands of the population as well as allow a better control over municipal finances" (Ananias, 2005, p. 40).

At first, PB was implemented in Belo Horizonte as an annual process to which only a limited portion of the annual municipal budget was allocated. They only included the traditional regional assemblies, conducted in the nine *regiões político-administrativas* (RPA – politico-administrative regions)[113], each governed by a decentralized regional section of the municipal administration and composed of between three and six sub-regions[114]. Since 1996, however, the original PB organizational and institutional frameworks have been slightly reformed and readjusted to respond better to citizens' demands and include more sectors of the population, notably the middle classes who were not active participants to the program during the first years of its implementation[115].

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[113] The RPAs were officially created in 1983, but they have seen their power and local organizational capacity increased starting in 1993 with the implementation of PB and the further decentralization of resources undertaken by Ananias' government.

[114] The regional administrative units and their public servants assume a very important role in the conduct and organization of the PB process in Belo Horizonte. They are responsible for organizing the two first rounds of deliberation in all sub-regions, the priorities' caravan and the regional meetings, for receiving citizens demands between the two first rounds and pre-evaluating their relevance to the PB guidelines, and for coordinating the local organization of neighborhood deliberative meeting when needed. Contrary to other cases, such as Recife, the PB process in Belo Horizonte is highly regulated from the beginning, as the municipal administration provides guidelines within which demands should be formulated for each budget cycle (see, for example: Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2008a). Those guidelines are defined by the PB management committee, composed of both citizens and public servants, and they are explained to citizens during the first round of the PB process (Coordenadora OP, 2008).

[115] First, two complementary elements have been added to the traditional regional-based PB process in order to extend popular participation: the PB Habitation in 1996, and the PB Digital in 2006. Second, the regional process is now organized around two main phases of PB that are organized over a 2-year cycle of project definition and project monitoring and implementation. As explained by mayor Pimentel, who was then secretary of government, "with the population, we came to the conclusion that, technically, it is impossible to choose, decide, and put together the project, contract and realize the work within one year" (Pimentel, 2008). As a consequence, and because the previous formula had been accused of many delays in the achievement of the selected projects, the PSB-PT coalition mayor Célio de Castro proposed reforms that would improve the actual service delivery phase (Azevedo, 2005; Wampler, 2007). In this particular

With these reforms, the government hoped to be better able to achieve the general spirit of the program, which remained the same: to facilitate the incorporation of citizen participation in the decision-making process over budget-related questions of urban development expenditures and priorities[116]. Since its implementation, Belo Horizonte's PB is organized around two main phases: the decision-making phase and the implementation/monitoring phase. The first phase (see graph 5), which takes place during the year preceding the budget implementation, is the one that includes the direct participation of citizens, organized in neighborhood groups or via the officially registered CSOs active in each community, especially the neighborhood associations.

GRAPH 5 **REGIONAL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING BI-ANNUAL CYCLE – PROJECT DEFINITION, BELO HORIZONTE, 2008**

Municipal Opening (municipal) April	**First Round** (sub-region) April/May	**Second Round** (sub-regions) June/July	**Priority Caravans** (regions) November	**Regional Forums** (regions) November	**Municipal Forum** (municipal) December
Mayor opens the new 2-year cycle	Municipal administration informs about the budget and methodology Neighborhood meetings Formulation of projects proposals	Selection of 25 proposals per region Election of delegates to regional forums Municipal evaluation and costs estimates (July-Oct.)	Delegates visit all 25 projects from their region	Discussion, deliberation and vote among delegates for 14 projects per regions Election of COMFORÇA members	Presentation of the work plan for the two coming years to the mayor

Source: Compiled by the author with information from promotional documents published by Belo Horizonte City Hall (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2003, p. 6), academic contributions (Azevedo, 2005, p. 117) and personal interviews with administration members

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study, we only focus on the Regional version of PB, as the better established mechanism for which data is available and from which we can have a better understanding of change as it can be studied over a longer period, and is designed in a way that seeks the universal participation of civil society, whereas the two other programs are more oriented toward specific policy issues and social sectors.

[116] As observed by Wampler (2007), such a change in the organization of the PB process was however not followed by a consequent increase in the total share of the municipal budget subject to citizen deliberations and votes, which increased the already existing problem of lack of financial resources associated with the functioning of the program in Belo Horizonte, where less than 5% of the total budget is discussed in the PB process.

The first step generally takes place in April, and is the municipal opening where the mayor invites all citizens, social and political actors to the inauguration of the PB process. As observed by Ana Luiza Nabuco (2008), adjunct secretary of planning of Belo Horizonte, this first step is mostly political, as it does not involve the active participation of citizens but rather their passive presence as spectators. It is from the second step of the process on that the participatory dynamics really start, with the organization of the first and second deliberative rounds at the sub-regional levels. The first round is the moment where the general guidelines for demands and the methodology of the process are presented to the citizens, in sub-regional meetings. At this stage, the budget allocated to each of the nine RPAs is announced, calculated on the basis of the following rule: 50% of the total PB budget is divided equally among the nine regions, and the other 50% is allocated in favor if the poorest areas according to the *Indice de Qualidade de Vida Urbana* (IQVU – Urban Quality of Life Indicator), an indicator of the levels of urbanization and urban poverty calculated per area (Avritzer, 2005, p. 206). It is between the first and second rounds that the main mobilization occurs as demands are formulated at the community level through the autonomous organization of neighborhood assemblies, street meetings, and other forms of citizen gatherings meant to formulate priorities and convey demands for further discussion during the second deliberative round. In the second round, all the groups present their demands in sub-regional meetings, where citizens deliberate and choose a total of 25 works to be further evaluated by the municipality and where they vote for the delegates that will represent them in the later steps of the PB process. The delegates are elected according to a proportional representation system, where for each 10 participants one delegate is elected by the participants present at assembly[117]. The representation system also includes an automatic

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[117] To avoid having too many delegates and disproportionate weight in regions where the general population participates more, the municipal administration has introduced quotas of delegates to be elected according to the total number of participants (Coordenadora OP, 2008). Therefore, according to the 2009/10 methodology booklet produced by the PB coordination, the delegates are elected according to the following principles: 1) one delegate per 10 participants, until a limit of 200 attendees, 2) one delegate per 15 participants in the 201-400 attendees interval, and 3) one delegate per 20 participants over 400 attendees (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2008b, p. 7).

seat for all officially recognized and registered community associations, which are guaranteed a *de facto* delegate when they participate in the first two rounds of the process (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2008b). Thus, the first three steps of the project definition process indeed involve the direct participation of the population, organized among neighbors or associations.

The three later steps of the decision-making phase necessarily involve indirect participation: the delegates elected by the sub-regional assemblies participate in the last deliberations and vote on the final work plan submitted by the community to the mayor, representing the will of their neighbors (Azevedo, 2005). After the technical and cost evaluation of each of the voted projects is completed by the municipality, all the regions organize the *Caravanas de Prioridades*, a one-day event where all the delegates from a given region visit the 25 pre-approved projects in order to become more familiar with them before the final vote on the work plan, which will only include 14 of them. As explained by Avritzer, the caravans are "a process of negotiation between the members of each community (or sub-regions) belonging to a given RPA" (2005, p. 206). These negotiations are then pursued through the regional assemblies, in which the delegates vote on the final plan of works (14 projects per region) that will be submitted to the mayor during the municipal assembly in December, the last step of the decision-making phase of PB in Belo Horizonte.

In the second phase, which constitutes the monitoring and implementation phase of PB (see graph 6), the delegates elected in each regional forum form a *Comissão de Fiscalização e Acompanhamento do Orçamento* (COMFORÇA – Commission of Budget Oversight and Monitoring). This step comes after the final approval of the 14 selected projects and their associated budgets by all the legislative and executive branches of the local government. The regional COMFORÇA is the citizen-based organization that represents the interests of the community and, as such, oversees the development and implementation of the selected projects in each region in the two years following their adoption by the community. It is composed of 20% of the delegates elected during the second deliberative round, and so the number of COMFORÇA members varies each year

according to the number of participants in the PB process (Avritzer, 2002b). According to Fária, the COMFORÇA has seven main functions in the PB process: 1) accompany and oversee the execution of the selected public works, 2) detail, complement or substitute the public works chosen during the regional assembly, in accordance with the community's will, 3) promote internal discussions with experts, organs and entities to document internal decisions, 4) ask municipal administrators for clarifications on the executed works, 5) organize meetings with PB delegates in the sub-regions to report on the execution of the budgetary plan, 6) designate two members to participate to the bidding process for approved projects, and 7) participate in the organization of the regional assemblies for the upcoming PB process (Feres Fária, 1996, p. 103-104).

GRAPH 6   **REGIONAL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING BI-ANNUAL CYCLE – PROJECT MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION, BELO HORIZONTE, 2008**
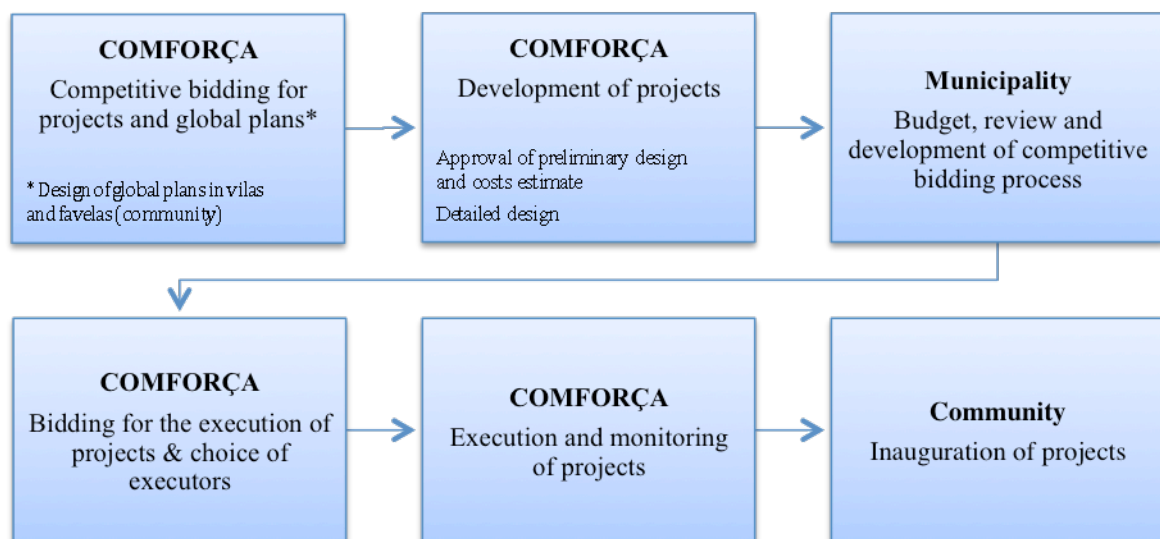
Source: Reproduced from promotional documents published by Belo Horizonte City Hall (Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, 2003, p. 6).

Its mandate is thus diverse, but mostly revolves around an oversight function. As explained by the adjunct secretary of planning, Ana Luiza Nabuco, commenting on the control function of PB participants in an interview:

> The regional COMFORÇAs have specific attributions for which they have to meet monthly with the regional administration and the

municipal technical staff to accompany the implementation of public works. They receive a report; they oversee the work and accompany them systematically. They can also resort to any organ of the municipal administration to look for information about any problem in the course of the implementation of a project, or any technical problem. They can complain if there are execution problems (Secretariat Adjunta Panejamento, 2008).

The COMFORÇA thus provides an institutionalized form of citizen control over the process, ensuring that the municipality complies with the work plan approved by the communities and their PB delegates in a timely fashion.

As the preceding description of institutional innovations in Belo Horizonte shows, there is a formal institutional framework fostering citizen participation in governance processes that has been implemented and institutionalized in the city. This, along with the increasing number of citizens participating in these institutions, could lead one to conclude that there are new opportunities that have contributed to democratize the governance process in Belo Horizonte. As I have argued and demonstrated with the previous cases, a closer look at state-society dynamics and interactions within these newly created institutions is nonetheless necessary to evaluate better their actual impact on democratizing governance practice.

6.4 A Look into Local Participatory Dynamics: Patterns of Mobilization and Participation

Though quite a few studies have studied the impact of PB in Belo Horizonte over the past 15 years, particularly between 1993 and 2001, there is still confusion about the status of the city's experience in the literature. Depending on the definition and indicators of success they look at, some observers have qualified PB in Belo Horizonte of a successful experience, whereas others have been far more critical of the program. Scholars such as Avritzer (2002b, 2009) and Souza (2001) tend to categorize it as successful, both in terms of its positive distribution effects on social inclusion and its strong deliberative nature. Wood and Murray (2007) also consider Belo Horizonte successful, as they argue that it opened space for participation and reduced the use of clientelism and political favors as a

way to distribute resources. Finally, many local scholars tend to qualify it of a success in terms of continuity, social redistribution and inclusion when compared to other Brazilian cases, which have exhibited more ambiguous results (Azevedo, 2005; Boschi, 2005). Other scholars have been more critical in assessing the potential of PB in Belo Horizonte. Among them, Nylen (2002) has argued that, once confronted with the 'empowerment thesis', the Belo Horizonte case cannot qualify as a successful experience as numbers have shown that such innovations have not contributed to an increase the number of new associations and CSOs involved in the governance process. Wampler (2007) is also critical about the results of PB, classifying it as an intermediate case where he still sees many limits for PB to become an effective societal accountability mechanism as the type of cooperation it entails limits CSOs' use of contentious politics as a contestation strategy[118].

To begin to understand this lack of consensus in the literature, we need to analyze the Belo Horizonte experience through the lens of more encompassing indicators of success, focusing on the nature of state-society relationships that have developed within PB institutions and processes. Though it is certainly not a perfect case, the comparison of Belo Horizonte with the cases previously studied gives us the necessary perspective that allow us to qualify it as generally successful, sustaining the development of 'democratizing' practices of cooperation through formal interactions between an accountable local state and an autonomous and organized civil society. As we shall see, and contrary to the previous cases, introducing formal participatory mechanisms in Belo Horizonte has contributed to start transforming traditional and clientelistic state-society

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[118] Wampler (2007) understands cooperation as a constraint on CSOs' ability to exercise their social accountability function, as he argues that cooperation ties CSOs to the local state and the formal channels of participation and interest representation in such a way that they can hardly use contentious politics to manifest their opposition to governmental policies. This leads him to conclude that cooperation among CSOs and state actors could have negative impacts on the ability of CSOs to use contestation strategies to oppose the local state's decisions. My understanding of cooperative state-society relationships in participatory mechanisms, however, does not exclude the idea of conflict and contestation as an important type of interaction between the state and society. On the contrary, cooperation is only possible when participants are autonomous from the local state and politicians, and are able to manifest their opposition through the variety of means that are available to them, including contention. The fact that it has been less common in Belo Horizonte does not necessarily entail a problem with cooperation as it might also indicate a decreasing need for using such strategy due to the increased effectiveness of other representation mechanisms in responding social demands and addressing social concerns.

relationships by generating a change on both of their dimensions. In fact, as in the case of Recife II, the implementation and functioning of PB have positively contributed to providing incentives for collective mobilization and increased participation rates, but they did so in a context enabling a significant increase in levels of autonomy for participants instead of in a politically controlled environment disempowering organized groups. Thus, rather than becoming a limited space reproducing unequal exchanges in controlled participatory institutions, PB in Belo Horizonte became a public space for autonomous civil society actors to arise, strengthen their organizational capacity and actively enter the social construction of more inclusive citizenship regimes through their cooperation with an accountable state to local decision-making process.

6.4.1 Mobilizing Organized Groups of Citizens Around the Common Good

The goal pursued by Patrus Ananias and his governing coalition when implementing the PB in Belo Horizonte was not only to improve the distribution of public goods through an inversion of priorities to favor the poorest sectors of the city, but also to include these traditionally excluded actors in the municipal governance process through their empowerment as collective actors able to organize to formulate demands for their communities. In a context where civic associationalism was on the rise in Belo Horizonte (Avritzer, 2000), the local PT government saw in PB mechanisms an opportunity to institutionalize this effort at organizing the masses and empowering the ordinary citizens, providing the neighborhood associations and other CSOs with an institutional incentive for including deliberation and social mobilization in their demand-formulation strategies. A closer look at the current dynamics of mobilization reveals that, while previously oriented toward specific and individual needs and the use of personal ties to access power, PB institutions have contributed to change the focus of local associations' and leaders' mobilization strategies, which have become more inclusive of ordinary citizens and foster the organization of society around collective demands.

The first indicator of the revitalization of popular mobilization is the increase in participation rates associated with the implementation of PB in the municipality: "popular

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participation increased a lot here, there is no comparison possible with when PB began"
(Delegada OP-BH 4, 2008). The aggregate data on the number of participants in the PB
various instances in Belo Horizonte since 1993 (see graph 7) is quite revealing on that
matter, as it shows a constant progression of the number of participants in the first few
years of the process to reach a peak oscillating between 35 000 and 45 000 participants
every year since 1996[119].

GRAPH 7   NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN REGIONAL PB CYCLES PER YEAR, BELO
               HORIZONTE, 1994-2008
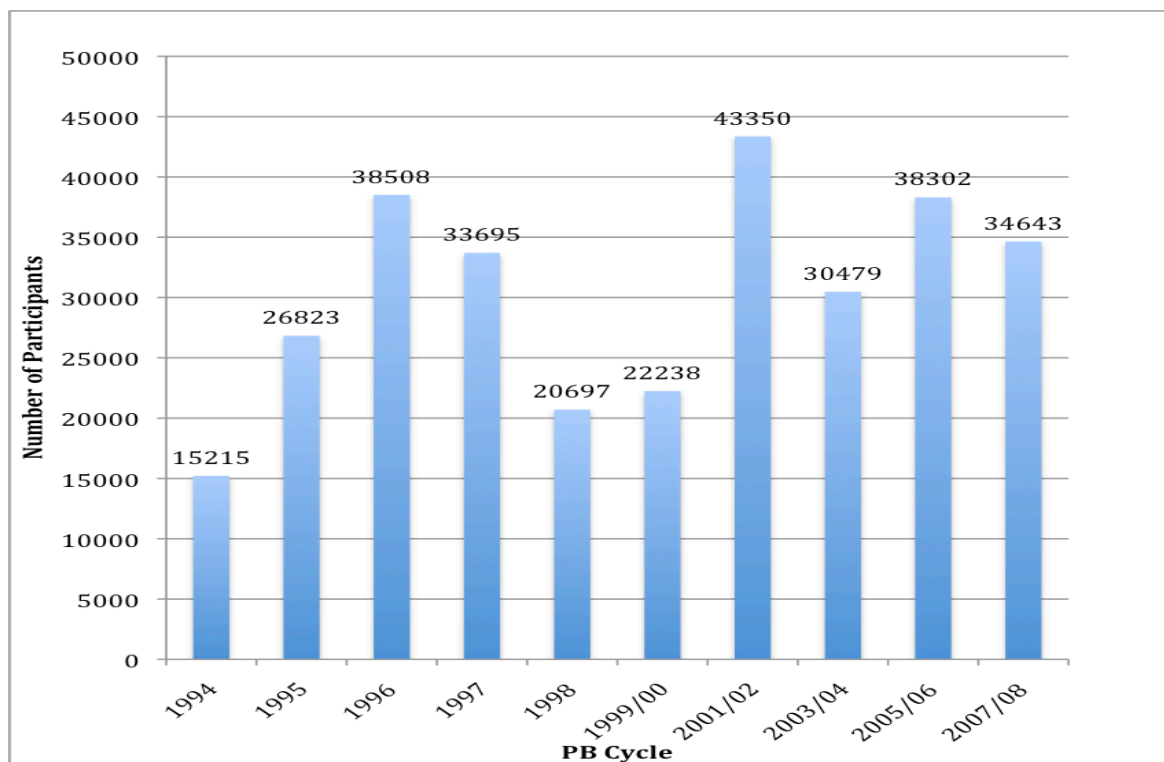
Source: Reproduced from the plan of work approved and published by Belo Horizonte City Hall
                after the 2007/08 PB cycle: *Plano Regional de Empreendimentos do Orçamento
                Participativo 2007/2008* (2008c, p. 14).

[119] The only exception to the generally stable trends in participation rates were observed for the 1998 and
1999/2000 exercises, which took place in 1997 and 1998 respectively. Wampler and Avritzer have
suggested in previous studies that the explanation for such outlier years can be attributed to the uncertainty
of the future of the participatory process at this time, as the consultation rounds happened just after the
election of the PSB mayor Castro, who proposed reforms to the process. Once the population was reassured
that such reforms had not affected the distributive outcomes of PB, participants started to attend meetings
again as a result of the demonstration effect that had prompted the increasing participation in the first place
(Avritzer, 2002b; Wampler, 2007; Wampler & Avritzer, 2004).

As graph 7 highlights, PB has promoted a significant increase in individual participation in Belo Horizonte, but as we have seen, it is also important to understand the nature of the mobilization process, its qualitative dimension, to gain a more accurate and complete understanding of the changes that have been brought about by the implementation of this participatory mechanism.

As we have seen in the previous section, before the implementation of PB, most mobilization for citizens' demands occurred on an individual basis and was mostly defined by particularistic needs, even when carried out by community and neighborhood associations that were closely tied to councilors or the municipal administration. The implementation of PB by the municipality has led to an increase in the number and diversity of social organizations mobilizing at the grassroots and involved in the deliberation and decision-making processes. As observed by Boschi in his comparative study of Belo Horizonte and Salvador (Bahia) PB models,

> the PB model adopted in Belo Horizonte distinguishes itself by the fact
> that it combines the participation of popular associations (principally
> community associations) and other representative entities (religious,
> cultural, etc.), with the participation of doubtful citizens, thus covering
> a significant contingent of people who are not linked to any organized
> movement (Boschi, 2005, p. 186).

Moreover, ordinary citizens are also formally invited to mobilize and present demands to the PB process "as long as someone forms a group, of a minimum of 10 people", as explained by a PB delegate active in *Ouro Minas* (Delegado OP-BH 7, 2008), a form of collective and spontaneous community mobilization for which there was no institutional response before the introduction of formal channels such as the PB. Thus, as observed by Ana Luiza Nabuco, adjunct secretary of planning, PB does invite individuals to participate more, but it does so through emphasizing the role of community organizations and groups because

> the selection [of priorities] is made by all the population and the
> delegates are picked among the ordinary citizens, but there is always a

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portion of neighborhood associations' representatives involved. Today, the representatives of neighborhoods from the each region also enter as representatives of neighborhood associations. They are really active (Secretariat Adjunta Panejamento, 2008).

This renewed importance of community organizations is confirmed by the coordinator of PB, who emphasizes their crucial role in mobilizing the ordinary citizens and in helping them to organize collectively in their communities:

> Community organizations have a central role for mobilization. However, the neighborhood meetings are open to the general population, so both organized and non-organized citizens come. Associations and other groups also come. It is in these neighborhood meetings that all the demands are generally carried, and there starts the voting articulation process. They discuss about how the vote will happen, a strategy that necessitates the definition of the priorities for a given neighborhood (Coordenadora OP, 2008).

In fact, with the introduction of PB institutions in Belo Horizonte, the nature of mobilization moved away from its individual-based focus to become more inclusive, with the neighborhood associations still playing a crucial role as mobilizing agents in the communities, making a "call for mobilization beyond the one done by the municipality through the radios, pamphlets, and all the communication means available" (Secretariat Adjunta Panejamento, 2008). Rather than only acting as intermediaries between individual citizens' demands and local politicians, community associations have become the central mobilizing agent in the PB process, "because if you don't have a strong collectivity it becomes hard to publicize what's going to happen and to get to the mouth-to-mouth that is so central to the PB process: I think that it is through this that a collectivity strengthens the others", explains a PB delegate from the Universitario district (Delegada OP-BH 2, 2008).

The new functions performed by community organizations could have, in theory, led to the formation of an increasing number of new associations and community groups in the city, as the empowerment thesis would have suggested. Nylen (2002) has argued, however, that most delegates active in the PB process in Belo Horizonte were already politically or socially active before the implementation of the program. Though Nylen may not be objectively wrong, his understanding of mobilization does not account for the

qualitative aspect of it. As we have seen, however, the institutional innovation introduced by the PB has contributed to increase the diversity of interests represented and, doing so, revitalize the associational movement in the city, creating incentives for dialogue among different types of groups and associations as well as mobilization opportunities for community leaders to reach the general population (de Jesus, 2004; Nez, 2006). As a delegate and president of the neighborhood association in the *favela* Vila Fátima since 20 years suggested:

> Because there was no way to get things through the municipality [before PB], we had to organize a bit here in the *vila*, but it was not easy. When they started the PB 15 years ago, we decided to form a formal association and to organize ourselves, to learn how to formulate demands, how to work with the municipal government (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

One of the main impacts of the PB exercise on community organizations and local CSOs is the fact that it changed the focus of their own perception of the demand-making process and, thereby, their mobilization strategies; as explained by regional administrator Adonis Pereira in an interview with Nylen in 1998,

> PB has changed the way neighborhood associations perceive their role. People participate in PB to benefit the community and they work to get the neighborhood association to do the same. Many exist that are still of the traditional type. But many more have been renovated, with new membership and new leadership (interviewed and cited by: Nylen, 2002, p. 139).

Rather than mobilizing individual citizens occasionally around particularistic demands that would only benefit them or the few people concerned by such demands, community leaders have learned to mobilize citizens collectively around issues identified as being of interest for the entire community. In fact, the process of defining public works, registering them, voting priorities and electing delegates to defend them on the longer run created incentives for ordinary citizens to mobilize and for community leaders to sustain such collective organization initiative at the grassroots to generate mobilization processes that are oriented toward collectively defined policy interests.

Another important finding about the impact of PB on mobilization patterns in Belo Horizonte is that, though such a participatory process has often been criticized for

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fragmenting neighborhoods as it places them in opposition to one another in a situation of few economic resources available for investments, the opposite situation has also started to occur. In fact, in several neighborhoods community associations and local social movements have mobilized together to support another neighborhood's project. For example, in the region Barreiro, the neighborhood associations from Regina and Barros have joined their efforts (and potential resources) during the 2009-2010 PB exercise, mobilizing support and delegates to advocate the creation of a health center in the *favela* Vila Lindéia:

> The two neighborhoods got together to support another one that has more necessities. We could have entered the process with any type of demand, like the revitalization of a public place or something like this. We have some necessities here too, but Lindéia needed an appropriate health center. For that reason, they united (Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008).

Other examples of such types of inter-neighborhoods/inter-associations collaboration leading to collective mobilization and demand-formulation have been observed in the Nordeste region, as the president of the Ouro Minas community association (also PB delegate) explained to me in an interview:

> The project that we will ask for this year is the urbanization of a small *vila* close from here, so we are not asking for something that will directly benefit the neighborhood but that will help a *favela* right next to here. […] We are collaborating, with our votes, and we think we will succeed (Delegado OP-BH 7, 2008).

In such collaborative processes, community leadership and other social movements (like the Church, in particular) play a central role in mobilizing support and participation, as they constitute the basis of such type of alliances and collaborations between communities.

Our observations of mobilization patterns generated by the introduction of PB institutions in Belo Horizonte lead to the conclusion that this process has fulfilled its announced goal and contributed to overcome the traditional logic of individual-based mobilization organized around particularistic needs that prevailed up until the early 1990's. In fact, PB has not only extended participation to traditionally excluded individuals and CSOs who had no personal ties to political brokers, but it also fostered a change in the already

existing community organizations' mobilization strategies. These organizations have become central collective mobilization agents getting the population to collectively organize to formulate and express community demands to the public authorities through the formal participatory channels provided by the local government. As we have seen in all previous cases, however, the nature of mobilization is one important dimension defining the type of state-society relationships that can develop in participatory mechanisms, but it is not enough to fully understand such a complex phenomenon. Looking at its effect in conjunction with the context is therefore critical. The notion of autonomy thus becomes central to understanding the extent of change or continuity in state-society relationships as it can either undermine or reinforce the 'negative' consequences of individual forms of mobilization, as in the Mexican cases, and do the same for the presumably 'positive' impact of collective mobilization, as in Recife II where political control disempowers organized social groups and, as we shall see, in Belo Horizonte where autonomy enables organized and coordinated social action.

6.4.2 'Participation is Social': The Prevalence of (More) Autonomous Participation

The second dimension defining the type of state-society relationship that has developed within PB institutions and channels that needs to be assessed is the level of autonomy enjoyed by both individual and collective participants in the process. Contrary to what we have observed in Recife, the case of Belo Horizonte is interesting as it shows progressive gains in autonomy for community leaders – whose traditional interlocutors were local politicians in the unequal and discretionary public goods distribution process – in their relationship with the local state. While Recife's process has proven to be permeable to informal practices of political co-option, PB institutions in Belo Horizonte have maintained their apolitical and autonomous status, giving CSOs the necessary room to maneuver in their relationship with the local state, gradually becoming central social actors and critical citizen-based accountability agents in the local governance process.

The first indicator of PB participants' level of autonomy is their self-identification with reference to the main political parties present in the city, either as activists or as members

of the partisan organizations. In a survey conducted by Somarriba and Dulci with 832 PB delegates in 1994, data suggested that from the beginning of the program, only a small portion of the delegates elected were affiliated with political parties, with the large majority (78.9%) not self-identifying with a party (1997, p. 403). This data could, however, have changed over the years, as more and more capture might have been observed, as was the case of Recife. The PB delegates I interviewed however corroborate the idea that they generally continue to act independently from any type of partisan activism, even in cases where they identify themselves as sympathizers of one or the other political parties present in the city (Delegada OP-BH 1, 2008; Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008; Delegado OP-BH 5, 2008). Of course, when asked about their political preferences, delegates can express them as individuals and voters, but such preferences generally reflect the diversity of public opinion found in the community. A very active PB delegate from the Regina district (Barreiro), also member of the regional COMFORÇA, characterized the process of deliberation and participation in PB meetings and negotiations as fundamentally non-partisan, making such instances really different from the institutions of representative democracy:

> I think that what makes the community meetings different from institutional politics [the work of the councilors and deputies, for example], is that when the members of a community and their leaders sit together to negotiate, partisan ideology remains outside (Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008).

He continues explaining, "such a thing [as partisan ideology] doesn't enter the process of discussing the participatory budget", suggesting that this autonomy in the definition of collective needs for the local communities is one of the main innovative and community-building enabling features of the PB process in Belo Horizonte:

> A thing that is particularly rich in the PB process, in the discussions, is that the interest of political parties, PT, PSDB, PFL, DEM, is not at play. There is nothing like this. What we have there is the interest of a community. Community groups and leaderships are autonomous from the parties, such a link doesn't exist (Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008).

As noted by another delegate, the president of *Ouro Minas* community association, "most members of the association are not affiliated to a party, and when they are, they are oriented not to use the name of the entity in their other participation activities" (Delegado

OP-BH 7, 2008). Thus, even in cases where participants and elected delegates do hold certain political preferences, the work of the deliberative meetings remains insulated from politically and ideologically oriented discussions, focusing on shared concerns for the community's public good, which secures the autonomy of the decision-making process.

Second, this autonomy is reinforced by the fact that the daily work of PB participants, delegates and COMFORÇA members generally remains relatively independent from political activities and from the traditional political brokers such as the municipal councilors. Conceived and understood by many councilors as a citizen-based space, many think PB discussions should stay outside of their sphere of action and therefore do not participate in the citizen mobilization and deliberation steps of the process. As a municipal councilor from the PT explained to me:

> I think it's an opportunity for the population to discuss and learn and I think the presence of councilors inhibits a bit the residents. I don't participate for this reason. I think it's a space for citizens to choose and decide without the presence of the councilors, who already have their space in the chamber and in society in various occasions, whereas PB I think is a privileged space for the population (Vereador 1, 2008).

The various PB delegates interviewed generally concur with the observation of the limited role played by municipal councilors in the PB process, as one of them explained: "Municipal councilors only participate in certain steps of the process, they come to the opening and municipal forum, but in the ones that are more community-oriented they don't come" (Delegada OP-BH 1, 2008). Though they often participate in the municipal opening[120], politicians and parties remain generally absent from the other rounds of deliberation and from the voting process, especially the ones organized directly by grassroots organizations with ordinary citizens and aimed at collectively defining the priorities to be put forward in each neighborhood. The dynamics I observed in the various

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[120] The fact that they are present in the municipal assemblies is explained by the very political nature of such grand events, which are aimed at launching the consultation process under the auspices of the government's executive, which clearly takes this opportunity to take credit for the public service accessibility improvements and the generally positively perceived redistributional effects of PB (Wampler, 2007). As explained by a delegate, "they only participate in the opening because they are invited to the presentation table. However, there is a consensus that none of this is the product of their work, they are there only as a form of support because they are part of the public administration, but everyone knows that everything that was obtained through the PB is not a triumph of politicians or municipal councilors" (Delegado OP-BH 7, 2008).

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PB meetings I attended in 2008 also confirm the accounts of the delegates and municipal councilors interviewed[121] as no politicians were present and the meetings were managed by the local regional administration and organized around the citizens presenting projects and discussing them with their fellow citizens.

Of course it is not a totally universal position within the Chamber, and several councilors do participate in the mobilization process for the various social activities and community meetings surrounding PB (Vereador 2, 2008; Wampler, 2007). In fact, there is still a certain level of political party involvement in the process, notably through mobilization around councilors' candidacies especially during election times, but this phenomenon is far less generalized and entrenched in informal practices than what we observed in Recife. My observations during the 2008 electoral campaigns[122] suggest that candidates in local elections often participate in such participatory instances and visit the PB delegates and COMFORÇA members during their campaign because PB institutions are crucial spaces of social articulation and leadership that need to be visited. In addition, and because of the delegates' and COMFORÇA members' monitoring and accountability capacities, some candidates for reelection even avoid participating in PB meetings during campaigns, as a delegate observed:

> They are even more taken responsible for the problems of the city during election time, and so during the campaign, many don't even come here in our meetings because they know that they will be made accountable for and questioned about public works that haven't been accomplished yet and for which they have no solution. They don't want to be made responsible for this so there is no advantage for them to come (Delegado OP-BH 5, 2008).

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[121] During my fieldwork in Belo Horizonte, I attended three PB sub-regional meetings during the second round of the process, meetings where votes on the 25 proposals to be further analyzed were taken and where the participants elected the delegates that would defend their proposals in the later phases of the process. I attended one meeting in the special sub-region 6 of the regional Nordeste on June 25, one of the sub-region 3 of the regional Centro-Sul on June 26 and one of the sub-region 4 in Nordeste on June 28. I also attended one meeting of the COMFORÇA Pampulha on August 12, 2008 and one of the COMFORÇA Nordeste on August 21, 2008.

[122] In both Recife and Belo Horizonte, the fieldwork (interviews and participant observations) was conducted during a municipal election year, in 2008. Such a context has allowed to take into account the importance of political use of participatory institutions, as political campaigns are a privileged moment for observing such practices, as they tend to increase when politicians need to concretely mobilize popular support.

Moreover, many local CSOs and delegates who are asked for support during election time have a strict policy of independence that prevents them for giving it to any candidate, regardless of his party of relationship to the members of the associations, as a delegate who was also president of the Ouro Minas community association explained:

> In times of election such as this year, some candidates will appear and will want to get support from us, but we don't support anyone, we don't allow that. It was always like this, not only under my presidency, but also under the previous administration. Our driving force is our independency (Delegado OP-BH 7, 2008).

Some exceptions to this rule might have occurred in certain neighborhoods, where delegates might have agreed to support politicians in their electoral campaigns and in mobilizing popular support through their influential positions in the community. Nonetheless, one can generally argue that over the course of the past 16 years, this type of behavior has become more and more isolated in Belo Horizonte and has generally remained dissociated from influencing PB. On the contrary, PB citizen-based institutions and their active members have become part of the democratic game, as they are today considered important social actors central to the articulation of political preferences in the city over the years, and candidates from all parties need to show them support and listen to their demands as representatives of the communities in a democracy.

The third element that needs to be considered to measure the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the deliberation and decision-making process is the nature of the functions performed by public servants in the planning service of the municipality given the central coordination role they play in the organization of the PB process. Though generally nominated on the basis of political affinities by the executive team forming the government, the public servants' role in the organization and coordination of the PB's different rounds and meetings is framed and limited by strict rules preventing them from taking over the stage and manipulating the course of the discussions. Their involvement in the process was reported by most delegates I interviewed as being very professional (Delegada OP-BH 2, 2008; Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008) and is indeed only a facilitating one: they set up dates and spaces for the meetings to take place, help local CSOs to publicize the events, explain the PB rules to the population in the first round, receive the

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proposals from the communities and monitor the proper functioning of the official sub-regional and regional meetings while registering participants and overseeing the voting procedures upon necessity.

Thus, political parties and their representatives are generally not politically involved in the various steps of the process, or at least to a significantly lesser extent than they are in other cases. In fact, contrary to what we have observed in Recife, where PB institutions are captured by politicians and become spaces to pursue the political and partisan struggles and co-opt social leaders, in Belo Horizonte PB institutions and their delegates are courted by politicians from all political allegiances as they have become a relatively autonomous social force that is part of the social web, forming the society's preferences and demands within the existing governance system, thereby making the local government more responsive to local needs and accountable to its citizens.

6.4.3 Changing State-Society Relationships?

Often characterized by the literature as a successful case in terms of its redistributive and social justice effects, as well as in terms of institutionalization and continuity, the case of Belo Horizonte's PB model can also be qualified as an interesting case of success in terms of the type of state-society relationship that it has allowed to develop through its institutions. By providing new incentives for renewed patterns of collective mobilization and opening spaces for CSOs to gain some autonomy from the traditional channels of participation, PB institutions and related social deliberations have contributed to fostering and strengthening the on-going changes to the traditional clientelistic state-society relationships that had prevailed in municipal governance up until the early 1990's. In so doing, they encourage the development of a new form of cooperation generating democratizing outcomes.

First, the implementation of participatory mechanisms in Belo Horizonte has contributed to changing traditional patterns of mobilization, traditionally organized around influential individuals acting within a particularistic model of citizen demand-making. In fact, PB

has contributed not only to widening the scope of the mobilized groups, but it has also modified the nature of demand-making processes by focusing on collective concerns defined by the community. As observed by a PT municipal councilor involved in the city's social movements since the late 1970's:

> Not only participation is increasing, but they are more organized because before the PT [and the PB], what we had was a social movement without orientation. They were important but they were not part of the decision-making process, they were not organized as an instance of power. Today, the PB is an instance of power (Vereador 1, 2008).

Moreover, PB institutions generated a move away from traditional intermediaries, toward a more diverse and inclusive body of CSOs and participants, thus becoming a learning tool to decrease the use of personal ties and the prevalence of individual-based demands:

> In Belo Horizonte's society, now that it is starting to understand the importance of popular participation there has been an important diminution of clientelism because the population has started to understand through the process thanks to PB, to the collective mobilizations (Delegada OP-BH 4, 2008).

In a survey conducted by Avritzer (2002b)[123], 60% of the association members responded that before the introduction of PB, they resorted to personal connections with local politicians and political brokers to gain access to public services and urban goods, a number that dropped to less than 7% after the implementation of the PB model, demonstrating that personal ties and personal political mediation are no longer the primary means for resource-redistribution and demand-making (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004). This empirical finding has also been corroborated by my personal interviews with PB delegates: according to most of them, personal connections are not needed to formulate demands and have access to the municipal government. As a long involved PB delegate from Vila Monte São José explained in an interview:

> Before, to get to talk to someone in the municipal government, you needed to have that friend who was friend of a friend of a friend of someone who could introduce you to the person who would hear your request. And sometimes, even once heard, it did not resolve anything. We didn't have this access that we have today. You could not talk to the

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[123] This survey was conducted by Avritzer (2002b) in Belo Horizonte among a sample of 800 participants of the 1999 PB meetings and who belonged to voluntary associations.

mayor, today you can. This is the big change that has been brought by
the PB (Delegada OP-BH 1, 2008)

This new focus of mobilization processes not only contributes to developing organizational skills within communities, using a wide range of communications to reach out to their members and keep them informed of the process[124], it also contributes to fostering wider attempts at organizing civil society among communities. In fact, discussions with community leaders from the Barreiro and Pampulha communities, among others, have revealed a concerted and relatively new effort at generating inter-community cooperation mechanisms related to the PB process[125] in order to strengthen communities and CSOs in their relationship with the municipal government (Delegada OP-BH 2, 2008; Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008).

At the same time, participatory mechanisms and the participants in them have managed to remain generally autonomous from politicians and parties, translating PB's formally apolitical status into reality and enabling mobilized citizens to conduct their deliberations and make decisions on the basis of their understanding of the collective interest and not following partisan or ideological interests. As the differences in state-society outcomes observed in the cases of León and Recife II revealed, my findings in Belo Horizonte by comparison to Recife II show that beyond mobilization patterns, it is the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the process that matters most in determining the prospects for such collective mobilization to effectively lead to 'democratizing' practices of cooperation between the state and society in practice. As a consequence of this newly acquired independence in participatory schemes and the resulting ability of local civil society to autonomously formulate demands to the state as collective actors, the accountability function of CSOs, and of citizens more generally, has improved considerably. As a delegate explained, speaking of the local capacity to enforce results in service delivery and accessibility in her community:

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[124] See for example, the blogs created by the COMFORÇA members of the regional Nordeste: http://www.uniblog.com.br/opdanordeste, of Pampulha: http://comforcapampulha.blogspot.com/, and of Barreiro: http://msbarreiro.blogspot.com/.

[125] For example, at the time of the study, there were ongoing discussions between community leaders about the possibility to form a city COMFORÇA that would be in charge of overseeing the PB process from a citywide perspective and that would allow the different communities to get together and organize as a united and collective social force.

> Now we can make them [the politicians] accountable. They comply with their promises, and they have people like me who make sure they do, who question them through their communities, through the COMFORÇA and the neighborhood associations (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

As I have already suggested in the case of León, participants' autonomy has different levels, and does not necessarily mean a complete detachment of CSOs and citizens from the representatives of political society, who remain important interlocutors of in the co-governance process. As it was the case in León, there is still some maneuvering on the part of politicians who seek to be elected or re-elected by the population in Belo Horizonte. While mostly rejecting co-option as an electoral strategy, politicians and candidates have tried to maintain regular contacts with PB participants and delegates, formally visiting them during their meetings and sometimes even asking community leaders for their formal support during electoral campaigns. Unlike in Recife, however, this is generally done in a democratic way that respects the electoral code, and is not associated to the clientelistic provision of public and private goods in exchange for political loyalty. Moreover, the increased ability of COMFORÇA members to hold politicians accountable for the investments promised through the PB process makes resource-distribution even less susceptible to being distorted for political use in targeted communities or as a tool for sustaining political loyalties among CSOs and community leaderships.

In sharp contrast to what has been observed in all the previous case studies presented here, Belo Horizonte can be considered a case where a form of cooperation has developed between the state and society through the introduction of participatory mechanisms in the governance process. In fact, the combination of both a change in the focus of mobilization patterns in the city and the increasing autonomy enjoyed by CSOs and other participants in the participatory process has contributed to transform traditional clientelistic relationships into a democratizing model of cooperation between actors from the social and political spheres. As explained by Nylen, "PB stimulated a revitalizing democratization of local non-elite community groups and organizations, thereby fostering civic consciousness" (2002, p. 139). While one of the limits of PB remains the lack of

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social awareness in some communities that mostly remain preoccupied by filling their immediate needs, even in these communities, the rise of social consciousness begun to take root, as a delegate and COMFORÇA member from the *Vila Monte São João* (Centro Sul) explained to me:

> At first I was participating because of the needs. Now, it's not so much for the needs but for democracy. Seeing that my participation is worth something, via the transformation that is occurring though such democratic process that is PB (Delegada OP-BH 1, 2008).

Such a change is important for understanding the process of deepening democracy in the city, as the type of cooperative relationship that has developed in Belo Horizonte over the past few years ensures a more inclusive access to citizenship rights for the ordinary citizens who had previously been marginalized, guaranteed through formal and effective accountability mechanisms performed by an organized and autonomous civil society.

6.5 EXPLAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIZING COOPERATION IN BELO HORIZONTE

In the previous section, we have argued that according to our typology defining state-society relationships in participatory mechanisms through the combination of two varying dimensions – the nature of mobilization and the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the process – Belo Horizonte can be qualified as a model of democratizing cooperation. In fact, PB institutions have contributed to developing a cooperative relationship between civil society actors and the local state, based on collective mobilization patterns led by autonomous CSOs entering into a partnership-type interaction with state actors. What makes the Belo Horizonte case different from the three other cases we have studied previously? What explains the development of such cooperative relationship in Belo Horizonte? As the next section argues, several factors contribute to explain such a transformation in the case of Belo Horizonte, ranging from institutional variables to contextual sociopolitical variables.

6.5.1 Explaining the Collective Nature of Mobilization: Historical Legacies and Institutional Innovations

The first dimension characterizing the type of state-society relationships that have developed within the institutions of PB in Belo Horizonte is, as was the case of Recife, the emergence of new patterns of social mobilization within local communities and active CSOs, defined by collective organization and community-driven demands. Two sets of factors need to be explored to understand such phenomenon. First, I consider the weight of historical legacies hypothesis, concluding that as illustrated by the four other cases, the historical patterns of particularistic social mobilization driven by individual demand-making and channeled through political intermediaries can only be understood in combination with the design and nature of institutional change. If the design of a participatory institution can reinforce past legacies and hinder collective mobilization, the opposite is also true. I propose that a series of institutional design features specific to the PB model implemented in Belo Horizonte but essentially similar to those identified in Recife have, in both cases, played a central role in creating incentives for overcoming historical legacies of demand-making and, thereby, for modifying the traditional mobilization patterns at the community level.

Historical Mobilization Patterns

Though Belo Horizonte was historically relatively conservative, and though leftist movements only had a marginal importance in the city in its early days, it is also known for having an important history of community associationalism, mostly tied to the urbanization and later '*favelization*' of the periphery. In fact, as we have seen in the first part of this chapter, neighborhood associations generally organized around land-tenure questions in Belo Horizonte proliferated starting in the mid-1940's, in a context where the eviction of the illegal land occupants was the main policy adopted by local governments to tackle the problem of social marginalization and urban poverty. Yet, many studies have pointed out the fact that these associations and their leaders were traditionally dependent upon their personal connections with local politicians to channel their demands to the state. As observed in Recife, and although this includes its share of conflict and contention with local authorities, the culture of associationalism in Belo

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Horizonte had developed into a culture of privileges and political interest mediation, favoring particularistic demands formulated directly by community leaders and individuals through the channels of personal relationships with local politicians.

The military regime did not completely spell an end for the culture of associationalism in Belo Horizonte, though it brought the extensiveness of mobilization and social organization to much lower levels than during previous periods. Low intensity mobilization was the rule, but local leaders remained active in their communities via the creation of the CEBs by the Catholic Church and, later, via their affiliation to underground social movements associated to the re-emerging leftist political parties opposing the military rule. In spite of this, as we have seen, the local authorities needed to accommodate neighborhood associations' demands to maintain their own legitimacy, and they therefore created the PRODECOM in order to build particularistic and privileged ties with specific social leaders in the communities (Fernandes, 1993). After the transition to electoral democracy, the rise of opposition parties coincided with a growth in the number of associations in Belo Horizonte. Throughout this period, neighborhood associations and social movements developed very close ties with traditional political actors such as political parties, using their support as a way to get closer to the local state and access resources. As it was observed in the first years of Recife's democratization, the prevalence of particularistic demands and personal connections remained central to defining state-society interactions, and mobilization patterns were generally characterized by their individualism and the resort to personal connections and political brokers to access private and public goods (Avritzer, 2005, p. 217; Hagopian, 1996).

As it was observed in the previous cases, Belo Horizonte presents a situation where PB was implemented in an historical context where the local neighborhood associations had been particularly active on the political scene, but where citizens had traditionally interacted with the state on an individual basis, formulating particularistic demands through the empowered local leaders' privileged access to political brokers' granting it in exchange for loyalty and support. Looking at the potential for participatory institutions to

lead to a change in mobilization practices from the perspective of the weight of historical legacies is, however, insufficient to understand the significant variation in results among the cases studied here, which all share similar historical backgrounds. As we shall see, in the case of Belo Horizonte, the institutional design of PB has contributed to provide the incentives for changes in patterns of mobilization, thereby sustaining the development of more collective forms of social organization and demand-formulation strategies at the grassroots level.

An Institutional Explanation

As seen in the case of Recife after the PT introduced its reforms to the PB design to make it more deliberative and mass-oriented than the previous model, the institutional design of participatory mechanisms can contribute to overcoming cultural legacies that have traditionally defined and oriented social mobilization patterns. Belo Horizonte constitutes another interesting case that tends to confirm this hypothesis, as the institutional features of the PB model introduced in 1993, along with their subsequent improvements, have provided the incentives for community leaders to change the focus of their mobilization strategies to bring them more in tune with the requirements of the participatory process. Such a change has had important longer-term consequences on the ability of ordinary citizens to participate in the governance process, fostering the development of collective organization skills and mobilization patterns in local communities.

As was the case in the second period of PB in Recife, the PB program implemented in Belo Horizonte in 1993 includes formal mechanisms guided by the principle of universal participation. In fact, the objective of the program is to reach a mass-based audience, widening the scope of social mobilization to a larger population and a greater diversity of CSOs. First, an important space is reserved to local CSOs as each recognized community association and civil society group participating in the two first rounds of the process has the *de facto* right to one delegate (Azevedo, 2005), which ensures their representation in the decision stages of the PB process and gives them incentives to actively mobilize citizens to participate. Second, another important feature of PB in Belo Horizonte is the requirement for citizens to present projects supported by organized groups of a least 10

residents, who could then elect a delegate to represent them. This rule encourages individual demand-makers to mobilize collective support within their communities, either through the existing CSOs channels or via spontaneously organized groups of residents. The universal participation principle underlying the PB program has also led the administration to constantly innovate to make the program as inclusive as possible. Maria Auxiliadora Gomes, highest coordinator of the PB process in the municipal administration since 1997, suggested in 2005 that since its inception, the program, its instruments and its role have been very flexible and have adapted to the changing realities of an evolving understanding of participation:

> The understanding that there are no permanent or rigid models of popular participation is what orients the adoption of more flexible practices in the structure of PB in Belo Horizonte. In this practice therefore prevails a conception of participation as a principle of social control over the actions of the public power (Gomes, 2005, p. 64).

According to all of the actors interviewed, both social and governmental, there was always a concern for extending the participation to the largest possible public, so PB would become more and more inclusive and pluralistic as a mechanism for participation, including not only marginalized populations, but also the middle classes in order to give the process a vision of the city in its entirety. The creation of the IQVU indicator as a redistribution criteria and of the *sub-regiões especiais* (special sub-regions) in 1999 in order to make the consultation process more universal, while making sure the PB resources are also distributed along objective criteria of social justice, is a good example of this. It was in effect designed by the local PSB/PT government of Castro for PB to have a fundamentally educational role for the population to gain an understanding of the city's problems, a comprehension of the urban space as a whole (Gerente OP, 2008). While the index prioritizes needy regions for the distribution of municipal resources, subject to PB deliberations and vote, the creation of the *sub-regiões,* generally composed of middle-class neighborhoods was an important innovation to extend the mobilization beyond the traditionally excluded sectors that had been initially targeted by the PB program. To address the problem of low participation among the middle classes, these special sub-regions were also given their own share of the budget to ensure that they were not out-voted by the poorer and more historically mobilized neighborhoods (Wood &

Murray, 2007, p. 30). Similarly, PB digital was recently implemented in order to include youth and the middle classes in the participatory process by allowing the population to vote for their preferred infrastructural project through an Internet platform.

A close look at the deliberation and consultation process taking place during the PB cycle also reveals the presence of formal mechanisms allowing citizens to participate in the determining phases of the decision-making process, from the collective definition of the communities' priorities at the local level to the vote for the final selection of investment projects to be presented to the mayor. As we have seen in the case of Recife, the fact that the vote for public works and delegates takes place in regional plenary assemblies where the general public is invited to participate makes social mobilization even more important. In fact, in order for a proposal to get through the first steps of the PB cycle, numbers are key. Commenting about her role as a community leader in the formulation of demands through the PB process, a delegate explained:

> We need to mobilize our community to win the vote in the PB sub-regional and regional plenaries. We had three associations here in the *vila*, for each sector. We stopped working with three, mobilizing and uniting our forces to help and improve the community even more, and it worked (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

As another delegate added, "the more you mobilize [around a particular demand], the larger number of delegates you get and they are the ones who ultimately will vote for the budget in the third round" (Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008). Moreover, the participatory model developed in Belo Horizonte includes formal mechanisms for citizens to perform monitoring functions and make local politicians accountable, as it provides them spaces in which to participate with the municipal administration during the post-decision phases of projects definition and implementation. The regional COMFORÇAs, composed of elected delegates, assume a very important control function, as they are designated by their fellow residents to oversee the implementation phase of the PB projects voted in regional assemblies. Open to the public, the monthly meetings of the regional COMFORÇAs are an opportunity for members to oversee the proper functioning of the implementation process, allowing them to monitor the bidding process, to question the municipal officials about potential delays in service delivery and to formulate complaints

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when necessary (Delegada OP-BH 2, 2008). As my observations in COMFORÇA meetings in August 2008 confirmed, the structure of such meetings, organized and led by the regional administrators of the program but directed by the elected citizen representatives' questions, privileges deliberation and collective discussion among all the actors present over the issues at stake, reinforcing the creation of a mutual and equal partnership between state and society actors.

Finally, the existence of regional deliberative decision-making bodies such as the caravans and the regional forums is an important feature sustaining collective mobilization processes and inter-neighborhood cooperation and alliances organized around the PB process. First, as in the case of Recife, the municipality organizes priority caravans for the delegates to understand better the other public works proposals that will be submitted to a final vote in the next and last steps of the decision-making. As explained by Ana Luiza Nabuco, the caravans, taking place before the final vote on the 14 selected public works to be executed, were meant to overcome the tendency of PB to create internal tensions among neighborhoods fighting for limited resources in the same region:

> One critique that had been made to the regional PB was that participants only had a vision of their own neighborhood, of their territory and not of the city as a whole. Thus, this process of circulating in buses that is the caravans is important to perceive the other regions' priorities, to see that many times, the other neighborhoods are asking for things that are less important than others. It's a way of somewhat creating a consensus (Secretariat Adjunta Panejamento, 2008).

In fact, as observed by Somarriba and Dulci, the caravans were conceived as a way to give the deliberation and decision-making processes a more global overview of the city's urbanization challenges, "diminishing the tendency, largely observed in the interaction state/communities, to formulate excessively localized and atomized demands" (1997, p. 397). Second, the regional meetings, where delegates are required to negotiate and deliberate with each other to determine the final selection of public works to benefit the entire region and not particularistic needs emerging from one region, are another important mobilization moment included in the PB cycle, fostering negotiations and the creation of alliances between delegates. As observed by Azevedo,

> the fact that the delegates vote the budget priorities of the entire region allows for negotiations and for the establishment of agreements between the community leaders and, as a result, the formation of groups of leaders who coordinate such negotiations (Azevedo, 2005, p. 122).

Negotiations and alliances between delegates from different neighborhoods/sub-regions are a central element of regional forum preparation and meetings: "We make alliances, we look for partnerships to have our projects approved […] this is why mobilization is so important, it needs to be well-done because if not, we don't get to have delegates elected" (Delegada OP-BH 1, 2008). Such mechanisms not only contribute to generating mobilization opportunities within and among communities, but they also contribute to the rise of community leaders' consciousness of other regional necessities and foster increased collaboration in mobilization processes behind collective demands among neighborhoods within the same sub-region.

Thus, the institutional features present in the Belo Horizonte model, generally similar to those found in the case of Recife's second period of PB, supports the argument following which institutional design is a critical variable to consider in order to explain the nature of mobilization processes that are encouraged by the creation of new mechanisms and channels for participation. Though historically embedded patterns of social mobilization may, in certain cases, hinder collective action, institutional innovations focusing on deliberative mechanisms and creating formal incentives for people to organize collectively to formulate demands can contribute to overcome such legacies, as the case of Belo Horizonte demonstrates. As we have seen in the Mexican cases, however, institutional features are not sufficient to assess fully the issue at hand as they only explain the nature of mobilization processes without allowing further exploration of the actual formal and informal practices and interactions between state and society actors observed in the participatory mechanisms. In fact, as the comparison between León and Nezahualcóyotl has highlighted, mobilization patterns are important to consider for understanding the nature of state-society relationships, but they may have very different consequences on the democratizing potential of participatory institutions, according to the way actors appropriate and enact them in practice. In Belo Horizonte, contrary to what has been seen in Recife, increased collective action has been accompanied by a

critical increase in the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants, a difference that can be explained by including sociopolitical contextual elements that may have created the conditions for cooperative relationships to develop through PB institutions.

6.5.2 Explaining the More Autonomous Character of Participatory Budgeting Institutions in Belo Horizonte: Actors' Strategies and Perceptions

Observations about the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants and delegates in the exercise of their functions in the PB process have allowed me to conclude that, generally, state-sponsored institutions have permitted CSOs and delegates to formulate and address demands to the local government autonomously from the traditional channels dominated by intermediaries such as political brokers and parties. This makes the case of Belo Horizonte different from Recife, where participants generally lacked the necessary autonomy to prevent them from being co-opted by the local political executive coalition parties. What factors explain the prevalence of formal rules and the consequent flourishing of autonomous PB venues for participation in Belo Horizonte? In both cases, the PT-designed initiatives have proven to foster renewed mobilization patterns, strengthening the collective organization capacity of local CSOs and ordinary citizens, but they have experienced different outcomes regarding the level of autonomy enjoyed by participants. The reason for this lies in the fact that Belo Horizonte varies from Recife (as well as León and Nezahualcóyotl) along the three main sociopolitical variables influencing actors' strategies and interactions in the participatory process: the level of political competition, the balance of power within civil society and the perceptions both state and society actors have of their respective roles. Our findings on these three variables reveal similar sociopolitical conditions to the ones found in the case León, confirming their relevance in explaining the greater levels of autonomy observed in these two cases and, in turn, the more successful outcomes achieved by these two experiences. These comparisons thus confirm the necessity of looking beyond institutional models or the ruling party's ideology and considering contextual factors to grasp the various types of democratizing outcomes brought about by the implementation of state-sponsored participatory innovations in municipal governance processes.

Level of Political Competition

The level of political competition among political parties, but also within the ruling coalition and between the executive and legislative bodies, is an important element defining politicians' strategies toward participatory mechanisms. In Belo Horizonte, a city with a long tradition of conservative governments, the left (embodied by the PT) only arrived in power in the 1990's. Contrary to what we have observed in the case of Recife, where there was a lack of unity among the consecutive governing coalitions, the "array of united leftist forces" embodied by the *Frente BH Popular* was brought to power in 1993 through a tight alliance between the most important parties situated at the left of the political spectrum (Pimentel, 2008), an alliance that has had the consequence of limiting political conflict within the left and of sustaining a growing electoral and governmental hegemony of the PT as the motor of the coalition.

First, the level of external political competition to the PT-PSB led leftist coalition ruling the local government in Belo Horizonte since 1993 has declined over time, reaching a peak in 2004 when incumbent mayor Fernando Pimentel (PT) obtained 68.4% of the vote in the first electoral round[126]. Though historically governed by the more conservative political forces, Belo Horizonte's political arena has grown into a bastion of the PT and its political allies over the past decade, the more conservative PFL and PMDB, inherited from the military rule, having become more and more marginalized over the years. The absence of fierce competition among parties is also present in the daily administration activities of the municipal government, notably reflected in the relationships among parties within the Chamber of municipal councilors, the legislative body of the municipal government. In fact, the executive in power only rarely has to face opposition in the Chamber and generally sorts potential discontentment through political compromises and discussions, as explained by a PT municipal councilor elected since 1993:

> When the executive sends proposals to be approved by the Chamber, the PT constitutes the support basis for the mayor, but we discuss with the other parties, and there are no difficulties to approve projects respecting the city (Vereador 1, 2008).

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[126] For detailed municipal electoral results per year/party, see the *Tribunal Regional Eleitoral de Minas Gerais* (TRE-MG) website: http://www.tre-mg.gov.br.

In fact, though the PT itself has never held a majority elected in the legislative chamber, which could have created tense relationship between both branches of the municipal government, a powerful opposition block has also never surfaced in the Chamber, remaining very fragmented and weak. As explained by a PT councilor,

> the opposition here is very weak, it has no political force, no social basis, and so the councilors composing the opposition work on the basis of exchanges with the executive. There is no real opposition […], they do not have a political or ideological basis, nor a social one to be able to front the government"(Vereador 1, 2008).

One of the reasons explaining this is certainly the extreme fragmentation of the party system in Brazil. At the time of this study, the Chamber counted with 41 members belonging to 17 different political parties, many of them having only one representative elected. Contrary to what we have seen in the case of Recife where the opposition to the PT coalition is quite organized within the Chamber, the tradition in Belo Horizonte is for parties to remain independent from one-another in the Chamber (Vereador 3, 2008). As explained by a councilor from the *Partido Social Cristão* (PSC – Social Christian Party),

> I would say that here in Belo Horizonte we don't have an opposition per se because of this managing way implemented by the local government [demonstrating a high administrative capacity] and with this it basically brought a form of unanimity in the Chamber (Vereador 2, 2008).

Thus, political parties generally do not form sustainable alliances or unified blocks at the legislative level to create a real opposition to the executive coalition, which keeps them fragmented and disorganized, generally unable to contest the executive decisions and propositions. The resulting fragmentation weakens the opposition, which becomes more sensitive to governmental pressures to approve the executive's projects and policies, helping the mayor gather support from a majority of councilors in the Chamber even in a situation where the PT is in minority.

This fragmentation and lack of opposition to the executive is also reinforced by the dependency of the legislative branch on the executive, which is a characteristic of the Brazilian political system as a whole: "the relation between the executive power and the legislative is not an independent one, we a very submitted to the executive" (Vereador 1, 2008). Such a political equilibrium between political forces, favoring the ruling coalition

and the executive, has had consequences on the way PB has been supported and defended as a citizen participation initiative by the municipal councilors. While in Recife both PT and opposition councilors have shown strong resistance to the implementation of participatory programs, councilors in Belo Horizonte have been less vocal about their potential opposition to PB. As suggested by Wampler (2007), not only was the leftist government able to maintain support within the centrist forces present in the Chamber, but the participatory program promoted by the PT administrations also only concerned one third of the new investments budget and was therefore not perceived as a threat to the authority of the councilors. Though it constitutes an intrinsic limit to the scope of PB in Belo Horizonte, the fact that it did not represent a threat for councilors is a key component of its successful implementation and institutionalization in the city as this attribute has allowed the executive to avoid opposition to the project. As Avritzer (2009) notes, PB was a qualified effort to include citizens in governance processes and was never presented as a radical change in the conduct of politics, generating a general context of unity among political forces behind the program. The past leftist mayors have indeed been able to contain potential opposition to participatory mechanisms in the Chamber by accommodating potential disagreement from the beginning as well as limiting the extension of PB budget and discussions to wider public policy issues. Thus, the context of low external competition and relatively harmonious legislative-executive relationships have contributed to generate only a few incentives for political parties to antagonize PB or for candidates and politicians to use its institutions and delegates as a tool to discredit the PT, attempt to co-opt social leaders and gather political support.

Second, the low level of internal conflict within the PT and the ruling leftist coalition needs to be accounted for in explaining the dearth of incentives for political actors to manipulate PB delegates and instrumentalize the program institutions for political purposes. As we have seen in the case of Recife, the PT is by definition a party composed of various factions, and internal conflicts can become a motor for local politicians to try to use PB benefits to secure their alliances with community leaders and their bases of popular support. The relatively decentralized organization of the PT in Brazil, however, allows local sections of the party to organize and form alliances without necessarily

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following national guidelines, and the case of Belo Horizonte has generally been one where the PT has remained overall quite united behind its leadership's decisions and political alliances. In Belo Horizonte, the contention of internal conflicts was critical to the stability of the party in power as the rise of the PT as a leading political force was closely linked to its capacity to secure a solid electoral and governing alliance with the PSB without making a formal political pact on the longer term. In such a context of constant negotiations and discussion over the governing alliance, "the PT leadership was accustomed to negotiating with other political parties" (Wampler, 2007), securing a certain level of harmony within the ruling coalition. Moreover, and though they appointed a PSB candidate for mayor in 1996 and 2000 (Célio de Castro), the PT always remained the leading political force behind the coalition: "the PT quickly became the dominant faction of the left-leaning coalition and kept its leadership in the PB" (Melo et al., 2001, p. 149). Thus, despite the fact that there was never a pact between the PT and the PSB sealing their tacit agreement (Avritzer, 2009), the level of support for the PB program remained relatively stable over the years and the local executive managed to maintain the coalition's unity around the idea of participatory democracy.

As a consequence of such unity within the governing coalition, PB institutions did not become a theater for internal political struggles for power, and they were never perverted into manipulated and co-opted spaces for political interests to gain support as they were in Recife, for example. Moreover, the general cohesion within the ruling coalition leads to a certain level of continuity in the higher functions of the public administration, which is nominated by the incoming elected team. Such continuity is good for developing autonomy among PB participants as it ensures that the level of bureaucratic support for the PB initiative remains high while allowing a certain level of knowledge accumulation on the program from the public officials, as well as increasing bureaucratic professionalism around the organization of the process. Thus, similarly to what has been observed in León and contrarily to the cases of Recife and Nezahualcóyotl where participation remained highly politicized, the combination of both low external and low internal competition to the PT-led governing coalition has created the conditions for autonomous forms of participation to emerge within the PB institutions. This political

context indeed kept them relatively insulated from becoming spaces for continuing the partisan political struggles and from the political manipulation and co-option strategies that often derive from such situations.

Balance of Power within Civil Society

The balance of power among the various civil society actors participating (or not) in the PB process is also important because it could influence the way actors engage with one another in the participatory institutions, as well as their demand-making strategies toward the state. Contrary to what has been observed in Recife, PB was successful in integrating all sectors of civil society in its institutions, including the older neighborhood associations that were directly targeted by the project, the local Church-related organizations, and the leftist social movements closely associated to the PT consolidation in the city of Belo Horizonte.

One of the first indicators of the existence of a pluralistic balance of powers among CSOs participating in the PB process is the presence of a certain continuity in the composition of the participating social sectors and organizations, preventing the development of tensions between the different sectors composing the emerging civil society. In an interesting study of the nature of participation in PB processes conducted in Belo Horizonte[127], Nylen (2002) has found that 80.3% of the respondents were already active in CSOs prior to their election as PB delegates, mostly in neighborhood associations (52.2%). As emphasized by a delegate from Barreiro, continuity has been an important trademark of community involvement in many neighborhoods of Belo Horizonte:

> Most of these people [who were involved in the struggles for democracy in the 1980s] are part of the current process of improving communities. So you have, for example, people who struggled for and made the political opening who are today working with us in the PB, together with the community (Delegado OP-BH 6, 2008).

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[127] The survey was conducted in 1998, with a sample of 1 998 PB delegates who indicated their participation in both civil and political society at the time of the survey and prior to their election as PB delegates (with no distinction with their participation prior to the implementation of PB *per se*, which could have been a better indicator of empowerment through PB institutions as the questions do not specify when participants have started to be involved in the process). For more results, see: (Nylen, 2002).

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As we have seen, the rise of the PT is associated with its close alliances with the various leftist social movements active in the city, and it therefore expected to be included in the model of governance after the election of the coalition in 1993 (Avritzer, 2009). Thus, most of the already-active neighborhood associations have supported the project of PB since its beginning and participated in its successful implementation, as they were primarily targeted as privileged interlocutors of the state in the design of the program, aimed at channeling residents' living-condition improvement demands. Another interesting finding Nylen's study (2002) revealed is the PB delegates' prior involvement in religious groups (40%). This data points to the important role played by the Catholic Church in the development of community organizations able to autonomously engage collectively in the improvement of their communities. Traditionally sympathizers of the conservative political forces in Belo Horizonte, the main Church leaders have aligned with the PT during the redemocratization period. Though they contributed to building popular support for the PT-led coalition in 1993 (Bidegain Greising, 1993), the pastoral agents and religious leaders generally mobilized their communities via the local CEBs in the hope for building an autonomous organizational capacity at the grassroots, as was the case in León where the Catholic Church was actively present as well. The notion of continuity in CSOs participation in the new channels provided by the PB process and the important role played by this traditionally autonomous actor in generating apolitical mobilization are both critical for the development of a collective action strategy motivated by a commitment to citizens and independence from state actors among civil society actors. In fact, it contributes to the accumulation of shared social and organizational knowledge among them, a key skill in a context of state-sponsored participatory innovations.

Continuity *per se* is, however, not a panacea as it could well have led to sustaining a model of particularistic relationships based upon political privileges and turning social leaders into political brokers, as observed in Recife. Because many groups were closely tied to the ruling coalition to a certain extent, such continuity in the composition of participants could have created a situation of renewed corporatism where new groups would be left out of the process, as they were not necessarily sympathetic to the project

from the outset or were not associated to the leftist movements that had supported the rise of the PT. For that reason, the combination of continuity and opportunities for new participants to integrate the PB institutions as civil society agents is central to the development of autonomous and pluralistic participatory schemes within these institutions. Along with traditional actors, many new actors have therefore seized the opportunity to participate and formulate demands through the formal channels of the state, such as community organizations, social and religious movements, local NGOs, and even spontaneous movements of residents from a community. The increasing diversity of social organizations, citizens and interests represented in the PB process has had the result of diversifying the range of demands addressed to the local government while strengthening social inclusion by integrating previously marginalized sectors to the local governance process. Therefore, contrary to the observations made in Recife, it can be argued that the pluralistic nature of active CSOs is well reflected in the structure of participation embodied by the PB process in Belo Horizonte, where participants come from all sectors of civil society and interact with one another on the basis of a social partnership.

Such a variety of participants could have created tensions if it had been accompanied by a differentiated access to the participatory channels. In Belo Horizonte, however, CSOs were generally united behind the PB idea and were integrated as privileged actors of the process by the municipal government. As a result, PB did not only generate a need for cooperation among CSOs from the same community/region themselves, increasing the prospects for cumulating social learning and decreasing the likelihood of political manipulation, but it also made co-option strategies more complicated for politicians to establish due to the variety of social interests represented in the large body of PB participants and delegates. Together, these elements contribute to the flourishing of an autonomous civil society, whose members co-exist peacefully, learn from one another and are able to constructively participate as demand-making and accountability agents within the state-sponsored public spaces provided by participatory budgeting institutions.

Perceptions of Actors' Roles in the PB Process

The last variable affecting actors' strategies and behaviors in the participatory institutions, thereby influencing the level of autonomy enjoyed by social actors, is the perception both type of actors have of their own roles and functions in the process. Such mutually constructed perceptions influence the way participants interact and engage with one another, as these affect the way they enact the available institutions, show the level of commitment and resources of local authorities and thereby influence the type of participation skills social actors can learn from their engagement with the state in the governance process.

In Belo Horizonte, similarly to what we have found in León, politicians and public officials' perceptions of PB as the central participatory mechanism of the city governance model are closely tied to their understanding of popular participation as a pillar of social inclusion and decision-making processes. In fact, as Secretary of Planning Julio Pires explained to me, PB is considered by the executive team in place as a

> space to construct a model of governance that involves the legislative, the executive and the active social forces of the city in the common discussion about how to organize public policies in the municipality (Pires, 2008).

Moreover, most political actors I have interviewed in Belo Horizonte, both at the legislative, executive and bureaucratic levels, share the idea that PB has become the main channel for citizens to formulate collective demands, imbuing these demands with legitimacy and force. Such an understanding of PB creates a favorable environment for citizens' demands to reach their state-level interlocutors, and generates a climate of confidence about the policy results of process that is necessary for citizens to engage fully without resorting to political connections and local brokers in the PB deliberative and decision-making processes. Moreover, as mayor Pimentel emphasized, PB is conceived by the administration as a social and political learning tool, even though it does not necessarily reach the masses:

> PB is a mobilization tool, with the goal of promoting, valorizing and disseminate the popular participation thesis [...] It has a fundamental pedagogical function of forming leaders and people to maintain permanently galvanized the public opinion's attention (Pimentel, 2008).

This perception also motivates the local government to give formation and tools for leadership and organizational capacity-building through what Pimentel calls the "technical qualification of participation", an important feature of PB in Belo Horizonte that we have also found in the case of participatory planning in León. In fact, the municipality invests increasing resources and energy fostering empowerment via the organization of capacity-building workshops and other types of training sessions for the delegates to acquire the technical background necessary to assume their monitoring function. As explained by the program manager, it is the role of municipal government to provide such education, as the sponsor of participatory mechanisms and which has the necessary resources for social training sessions to be organized for the delegates and the COMFORÇA members (Gerente OP, 2008). This focus on PB institutions as a space for capacity-building is an important element explaining the relatively high level of autonomy enjoyed by participants, who, through their formation and participation, acquire the skills necessary to be able to organize among themselves and develop their strength as collective actors, even within the channels provided by the state.

Delegates and other PB participants also take their representation and interest-mediation roles seriously, perceiving themselves as the spokespersons designated by their community to defend the common interests defined during the first rounds of the PB process and in the more informal community meetings organized locally. Through their action as PB delegates, they seek to achieve projects that will benefit their community and feel entitled to formulate demands to the state and act as watchdogs to make sure the municipal government fulfills its promises. A delegate from the *Vila Ouro Preto* (Pampulha) and COMFORÇA member, involved in PB since the beginning of the program, explained, commenting about her role in the community:

> The community leader is pointed out as such by a group of people and tries to do something good for his community, for the collectivity without trying to get something in return, or look nice, without hoping to become mayor or elected by him, without expecting to get a job out of it. He does so because he believes in doing so (Delegada OP-BH 4, 2008).

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Though part of their work is done in collaboration with the local government, all the community leaders I interviewed were clear about their social responsibility as delegates, and even more as COMFORÇA members. In fact, many of them commented about the fact that they were responsible to their communities, and that as such, they were always doing their best to carry and defend demands to the public authorities. Moreover, most of them were conscious of the importance of their social mobilizers' and community organizers' role in fomenting autonomous and wide popular participation, as a delegate suggested: "I think it is essential that groups such as ours [community associations] remain active, it's essential for the process of popular participation in decision-making to continue" (Delegado OP-BH 5, 2008). Thus, rather than understanding their role as delegates from the local government in the communities, like we observed in both Recife and Nezahualcóyotl, Belo Horizonte's delegates clearly understood their own function as representatives of their community, responsive and accountable to its members.

To conclude, it is important to stress that these three sociopolitical conditions are mutually reinforced and interact with each other. In fact, the deep commitment of municipal authorities to respecting civil society's autonomy, reflected in the way they see their role as facilitators in the PB process, reinforces the likelihood that institutional innovations will generate opportunities for new actors to be genuinely included and empowered as autonomous actors in the process along with more traditional social actors. This empowerment and acquired autonomy not only generate more accurate perceptions of civil society's role as social mobilizer and equal partner of the state in the decision-making process, but they also facilitate the accumulation of social knowledge and organizing skills that, in turn, contribute to strengthen CSOs autonomy. It is therefore together that these three variables contribute to explain the increasing levels of autonomy enjoyed by the participants in Belo Horizonte which, combined with the institutional conditions sustaining collective mobilization and greater civil society organizational capacity, allow participatory institutions to realize their potential at generating democratizing practices and transforming traditional clientelistic state-society relationships into a more cooperative model.

6.6 DEMOCRATIZING COOPERATION AND THE DEEPENING OF DEMOCRACY

To conclude, our findings on the potential for PB to transform popular mobilization patterns in Belo Horizonte echo Abers' (1998) conclusions about Porto Alegre's PB program. Even in contexts where particularistic and individual-based mobilization patterns have historically dominated, institutional innovation can contribute positively to the transformation of previous instruments of citizen demobilization and political clientelism (in this case, neighborhood associations) into tools of collective mobilization and grassroots demand-making processes. As suggested by a PB delegate active in Pampulha,

> the creation of this collectivity, of this link because then you start to know other people, is better, it has a better quality [than other forms of mobilization]. I think it's the principal gain we've made with PB, communicative people and a participative city are starting to really take form (Delegada OP-BH 2, 2008).

Going one step further than her argument by focusing on (un)changing state-society relationships as the most accurate indicator of the success of participatory mechanisms to deepen democracy, I argue that, as our comparative case-study has allowed me uncover, it is only when combined with an understanding of the actual practices of participation (level of autonomy) that institutional design institutions become fully relevant to assess the varying levels of success. The low level of both internal and external political competition to the PT coalition in power, combined with a pluralistic balance of power in civil society mean that such institutions can become spaces for autonomous forms of participation to grow and remain relatively free from politicians' manipulation or co-option strategies. In fact, this balance favors the deployment of autonomous collective action strategies within state-sponsored institutions and a generally positive and acute perception by both participants and state officials of their role in the participatory process.

Yet, some exclusionary dynamics can still be observed in the PB process, as participation and mobilization processes related to public works and specific urbanization projects have mostly empowered the poorest sectors of the society (Nez, 2006). Many efforts have

been employed to counter this tendency, such as the PB digital and the creation of the special sub-regions in the middle-class neighborhoods. Though participatory programs continue to mostly attract the marginalized populations who most needed an access to the local state and who are also the traditional electorate of the leftist coalition ruling the city since 1993, a conscious effort is being made to be inclusive and attract the middle classes who could have otherwise been marginalized by a program originally targeting the poor.

Of course, it would be an exaggeration to claim that clientelistic practices of resource distribution have totally disappeared. The resources distributed through the PB deliberations are still limited by the model adapted to the particular and generally more conservative local context of Belo Horizonte as well as by the fact that municipal councilors managed to keep a portion of the budget to be distributed according to their discretionary will[128]. What is important to emphasize is that PB itself has remained insulated from such traditional practices in Belo Horizonte (Souza, 2001), sustaining collective mobilization and genuine deliberations over community-oriented demands among participants who have managed to organize through a diversity of social organizations and, most importantly, autonomously from political brokers and from the agendas of political parties. In addition, the principle of social justice is at the center of the project and the newly acquired capacity of social organizations and ordinary citizens to mobilize and organize to formulate demands autonomously and work with the local state toward their adoption, implementation and execution (through the COMFORÇAs) does change the dynamics of social inclusion, sustaining the development of a more engaged and organized citizenry and the strengthening of state accountability. As emphasized by the manager of the program, "PB has a fundamental educational role for the population to get a notion of the city's problems, a comprehension of the urban space as a whole" (Gerente OP, 2008). As a result of the participatory process and of its associated social learning, long time *favela* community organizer from Vila Fátima qualifies PB as a social inclusion mechanism:

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[128] In order to avoid overt resistance from the municipal councilors, who have often seen PB as a threat to their power and have therefore been an important limit to the expansion of PB in many Brazilian municipalities (see, for example: Baiocchi, 2005; Nylen, 2003; Wampler, 2007), the municipality of Belo Horizonte has given them a share of the budget over for which they still have full decisional power.

> Thanks to the PB, we feel included and the municipal government now complies with our demands, the works are realized in the communities. And if not, we complain and make them accountable, which is the most important part: accompany the works and complain when it is not going well (Delegada OP-BH 3, 2008).

This is echoed by a long time *favela* activist, today a delegate in the Vila Ouro Preto (Pampulha), saying that "the main gain from PB is the empowerment of the population, which we can call the empowerment of the citizen" (Delegada OP-BH 4, 2008).

Overall, we can therefore conclude that the Belo Horizonte PB model contributed to renewing the nature of state-society relationships and making them more cooperative through the interactions and discussions it encourages, thereby supporting democratizing governance processes in the city. As argued, both dimensions of state-society relationships taken together explain Belo Horizonte's model's greater success at engendering a deep change: in fact, the high level of autonomy observed allows the representation and channeling of genuine citizens' collective and diverse interests rather than sustaining traditional clientelism as in Nezahuyalcóyotl and Recife I, disempowering collective actors and being the reflection of governmental priorities as in Recife II, or of a fragmented society like in León. Though they have some intrinsic limits, the design of the institutions implemented in Belo Horizonte has contributed to overcoming traditional patterns of individual and particularistic mobilization. This could not have been the case without the influence of local context, however, as they were implemented and enacted by political and social actors in a context favorable to the development of autonomous forms of participation, which strengthens the capacity of civil society to formulate demands, negotiate them with the municipal state and then make local politicians more responsive and accountable.

Citizens defending their proposals at the 2nd Round Assembly of the 2009-2010 Participatory budgeting cycle in Belo Horizonte, region Nordeste (Belo Horizonte, July 2008)

CONCLUSION

MAKING LOCAL PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WORK IN LATIN AMERICA: COMPARATIVE LESSONS FROM FIVE EXPERIENCES

*A democratic citizen must be an active citizen, somebody who acts as a citizen,
who conceives of himself as a participant in a collective undertaking*
- Chantal Mouffe

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of their transitions to democratic rule, both Mexico and Brazil have undergone critical political, administrative and financial decentralization reforms aimed at empowering lower levels of government that had traditionally been dependent upon the central government. Though adopted unevenly across municipalities, those reforms, entrenched in the countries' respective Constitutions, included a participatory requirement for resource-redistribution at the municipal level. As a result, a number of municipal governments in both countries have implemented institutional innovations aimed at including citizen participation and control in the local governance model through formal mechanisms for channeling popular demands and including them in policy-making processes. Though different in their design and functioning, those reforms attempted to institutionalize participation through formal decision-making and consulting mechanisms at the grassroots level.

Despite this important effort by local governments to institutionalize citizen participation, the existing literature on the subject points to contradictory results: in some cases, participatory institutions seem to lead to a democratic deepening, while in others those same kinds of institutions seem to buttress authoritarian rule[129]. Yet, there is a void in the

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[129] Few studies have attempted to comparatively assess the 'success' or 'failure' of participatory decentralization reforms within a country, and even fewer have compared across countries to achieve better generalization potential (see, for example: de Sousa Santos, 2004; Goldfrank, 2007). Examples of the current literature on Mexican cases include the work of Arzaluz Solano (2002), Selee (2006, Forthcoming), Ziccardi (2004), Cabrero Mendoza (1995, 2006a, 2006b), Grindle (2007), Guillén López (1996), Merino (2004, 1994) and Guarneros Meza (2007). Though most studies on Brazil focus on the classic and exemplary case of Porto Alegre (Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2002, 2005; de Sousa Santos, 1998; Navarro,

existing literature, due to its failure to provide a theoretical framework for understanding this variation. The goal of this dissertation was to attempt to fill this void through a comparative study of four municipal governments, two in Mexico and two in Brazil. More specifically, I have examined five distinct experiences with participatory decentralization reforms in four municipalities. Given the variation observed in both the type of mobilization (collective or individual) participatory institutions foster and the level of autonomy of participation patterns (autonomous or controlled), there is a wider variety of outcomes than what is generally accounted for in the literature. Such variation can be observed across cases in different countries, as well as within each country, and my findings reveal that certain types of state-society relationships are more likely to lead to the deepening of democracy than others.

A unique theoretical framework, developed in chapter one, highlights the factors explaining such variations in the observed outcomes and guides this comparative approach. As a result, my findings offer important potential insights for understanding other cases and for designing decentralization policies that will be more likely to achieve democratic deepening. Ultimately, my goal is to contribute to the comparative study of democracy more generally and suggest questions for future research.

7.2 COMPARING AS CLASSIFYING CASES: A TYPOLOGY TO CAPTURE THE VARIETY OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

Starting with the assumption that democratic success should be redefined in terms of state-society relationships, it becomes apparent why there are a variety of possible outcomes that can arise from the complex process of transforming (or not) the way the state and society relate to one another through their interactions within institutionalized participatory mechanisms.


2002), current studies tend to approach PB in a more comparative way. See for example the important contributions by Avritzer (2005, 2009, 2007), Avritzer and Navarro (2003), Nylen (2003), Souza (2001), Wampler (2000, 2004, 2007), and Wampler and Avritzer (2004).

In chapter one, I argued that there are two dimensions of the deepening of democracy – the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes and the improvement of accountability mechanisms – and that the success of participatory mechanisms should be evaluated in terms of their impact on these two dimensions. More specifically, it is argued that the quality of a democracy depends on the ability of civil society to enter into the social construction of citizenship with the state and to become an efficient accountability agent overseeing the state's actions. Participatory decentralization reforms can affect the nature of state-society relationships through two main processes: the nature of the mobilization processes they generate, ranging from collective to individual mobilization patterns, and the level of autonomy such participation reflects, ranging from controlled to autonomous participation. On this basis, I have developed a two-dimensional typology for classifying cases.

As table 12 illustrates, the five cases vary along both dimensions of the typology, all representing one of the following four ideal-types: *clientelism*, *disempowering co-option*, *fragmented inclusion* and *'democratizing' cooperation*. While none represents an ideal case, this reflects the fact that they entail different combinations of mobilization patterns and levels of autonomy, corresponding to various possible outcomes and confirming our initial assumption about the pluralistic nature of the state-society relationships that can emerge within participatory mechanisms. More specifically, I argue that these outcomes can be understood in terms of two dimensions: mobilization, ranging from individual to collective, and the level of autonomy from the state that civil society actors enjoy. When the level of autonomy is low and people are mobilized as individuals, the result is *clientelism*. My comparative case study has revealed that the cases of Nezahualcóyotl and Recife I both exhibit patterns of controlled forms of participation that, combined with the prevailing individual mobilization patterns, have sustained clientelism as the primary mode by which the state and society relate to one another. When the level of autonomy is high and people are mobilized on an individual basis, the result is *fragmented inclusion*, as observed in León. This is a consequence of enduring patterns of individual mobilization, even though increasingly led by autonomous participants. When, on the contrary, the level of autonomy is low and mobilization is collective, state-society

relationships display the characteristics of *disempowering co-option*, as observed in the case of Recife II. After 2001, an important change took place in the type of mobilization fostered by the PB process, which became more collective in nature and was driven by demands for achieving some form of common good. At the same time, however, the new mobilization dynamic was not sufficient for eliminating controlled forms of participation that survived subsequent changes in government and continue to characterize the participatory program. Finally, a situation where the level of autonomy is high and mobilization is collective, like in Belo Horizonte, most clearly approaches the ideal of democratic deepening, representing a case of *'democratizing' cooperation*. In this case, the local PT government implemented PB in 1993 and has continued with it without interruption since then. Collective mobilization is led by local CSOs and autonomous forms of participation predominate in PB institutions.

TABLE 12   TYPOLOGY OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS: CLASSIFYING CASES
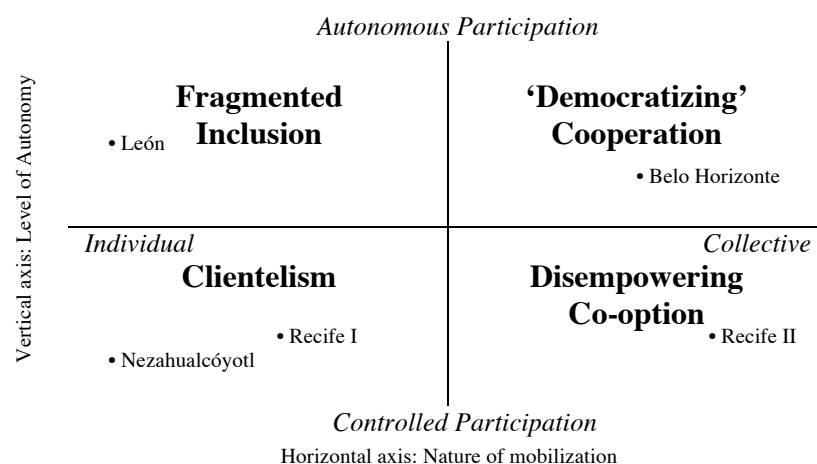
Thus, the two Mexican cases' experiences with participatory urban planning show similar patterns of reinforced individual mobilization but vary on the level of autonomy observed in the practice of participation. Turning to the Brazilian cases highlights different combinations from the Mexican ones on both dimensions. These comparative findings are summarized in Table 13.

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TABLE 13 SYNTHESIZING OUTCOMES: INDICATORS OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

	Indicators		Type of Relationship
	Mobilization	**Level of Autonomy**	
Nezahualcóyotl	Individual mobilization • *Particularistic demands* • *Increased but non-organized participation* • *Few CSOs–disconnected individuals*	Controlled participation • *Partisan direct & indirect intervention* • *Informal ties and practices prevail*	Clientelism
León	Individual mobilization • *Particularistic demands* • *Increased but non-organized participation* • *Few CSOs – disconnected individuals*	Autonomous participation • *No direct & indirect partisan/state intervention* • *Formal rules and practices prevail*	Fragmented inclusion
Recife I	Individual mobilization • *Particularistic demands* • *Increased participation* • *Few CSOs – community leaders as intermediaries*	Controlled participation • *Partisan direct & indirect intervention* • *Informal ties and practices prevail*	Clientelism
Recife II	Collective mobilization • *Community demands* • *Increased organized participation* • *CSOs as mobilization agents*	Controlled participation • *Partisan direct & indirect intervention* • *Informal ties and practices prevail*	Disempowering co-option
Belo Horizonte	Collective mobilization • *Community demands* • *Increased organized participation* • *CSOs as mobilization agents*	Autonomous participation • *No direct & indirect partisan/state intervention* • *Formal rules and practices prevail*	Democratizing cooperation

7.3 EXPLAINING VARIATION: SOME INTERPRETATIONS

What accounts for this variation among cases? What insights might they offer for understanding the sociopolitical conditions necessary for participatory decentralization institutions to have a positive impact on the deepening of democracy through the transformation of traditional local state-society relationships models? As explained in

chapter one, answering these questions requires a comprehensive approach that integrates a series of structural, institutional and rational variables.

The findings from the five case studies suggest a twofold lesson for understanding the relationship between participatory decentralization and the deepening of democracy. First, the design of the participatory institutions implemented is central as they may provide either positive or negative incentives for collective mobilization to take place. Second, the strategies and behaviors of both state and society actors interacting with one another are key to understanding the way they appropriate and enact participatory institutions. Three factors influence these strategies and behaviors, thereby affecting the level of autonomy observed in the practice of citizen participation and deliberation over public policy. Autonomous forms of participation are more likely to develop within participatory mechanisms in contexts where: 1) the level of political competition among political elites is low and the ruling party/coalition is not challenged, 2) there are pluralistic civil society organizations representing all sectors of society participating together in the institutions of participatory decentralization, and 3) state and society participants share a similar perception of their distinct but complementary role as either facilitator for citizen participation or representative of the larger public will in the process. This is summarized in table 14.

TABLE 14   EXPLAINING THE VARIETY OF STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS: COMPARING CASES

	State-Society Relationships	Mobilization Patterns		Nature of Participation		
		Culture	Institutions	Competition	Balance within civil society	Perceptions
Nezahualcóyotl	Clientelism	Individual Mobilization		Controlled Participation		
		• Active CSO • Corporatism • Individual and particularistic demand-making	• Low incentives for deliberation • Fragmentation • Low incentives for organization	• High external competition • High internal competition (PRD)	• Exclusion & conflict among CSOs • Party-affiliated organizations as central actors	• Participation as supporting state action • Citizens work <u>for</u> the state
León	Fragmented Inclusion	Individual Mobilization		Autonomous Participation		
		• Active CSO • Corporatism • Individual and particularistic demand-making	• Low incentives for deliberation • Fragmentation • Low incentives for organization	• Low external competition • Low internal competition (PAN)	• Increased pluralism of civil society • Church as a central actor	• Participation as learning process • Citizens work <u>with</u> the state, for their fellow citizens
Recife I	Clientelism	Individual Mobilization		Controlled Participation		
		• Active CSO • Populism & corporatism • Individual and particularistic demand-making	• Low incentives for deliberation • Fragmentation • Low incentives for organization	• High external competition • High internal competition (PFL/PMDB)	• Exclusion & conflict among CSOs • Party-affiliated organizations as central actors	• Participation as supporting state action • Citizens work <u>for</u> the state
Recife II	Disempowering Co-option	Collective Mobilization		Controlled Participation		
		• Active CSO • Populism & corporatism • Individual and particularistic demand-making	• Deliberation mechanisms • Intercommunity collaboration • High incentives for organization	• High external Competition • High internal competition (PT)	• Exclusion & conflict among CSOs • Party-affiliated organizations as central actors	• Participation as supporting state action • Citizens work <u>for</u> the state
Belo Horizonte	Democratizing Cooperation	Collective Mobilization		Autonomous Participation		
		• Active CSO • Populism & corporatism • Individual and particularistic demand-making	• Deliberation mechanisms • Intercommunity collaboration • High incentives for organization	• Low external competition • Low internal competition (PT)	• Increased pluralism of civil society • Church as a central actor	• Participation as learning process • Citizens work <u>with</u> the state, for their fellow citizens

7.3.1 Structural and Institutional Factors: Explaining Differentiated Mobilization Patterns

The similarities and differences across the cases were evaluated along two variables taken individually and in relation to one another in order to understand the observed variation in the nature of mobilization patterns: historical legacies of mobilization and civic engagement, and the institutional design of participatory mechanisms. Our findings reveal that, although structural factors such as the history of mobilization and civic engagement may have an impact on strategies of mobilization deployed by civil society leaders and the general population at the grassroots during the first phases of the reforms' implementation, the institutional design of participatory mechanisms is an even more important variable to consider in the longer run as it can either reinforce or undermine past patterns of mobilization.

The first hypothesis that was tested – inspired by the literature on the weight of structural variables such as historically embedded cultural frameworks as constraints for institutional innovations to achieve sociopolitical transformations (Almond & Verba, 1965; Putnam, 1993) – suggests that the nature of civil society mobilization patterns at the grassroots level is path-dependent, as historically embedded patterns of social mobilization and demand-formulation influence the nature of mobilization processes beyond institutional innovation. I therefore looked at this hypothesis exploring the weight of historical structures of civic engagement as a determining factor explaining variation in the nature of mobilization that has developed in each case. Following these premises, one would expect to find that although social activism was historically important in all cases, the prevalence of personal ties and particularism for demand-making processes in both the Mexican and Brazilian traditional mobilization models would limit the development of democratic state-society relationships through the implementation of participatory institutions. Instead, such institutions would be expected only to reinforce traditional political practices by strengthening already active and mobilized traditional actors. My findings demonstrate the opposite. Despite the existence of a culture of social organization/associationalism organized along clientelistic lines in all four cases, mobilization patterns did change when other factors predominated. The case of Recife is

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particularly revealing in this respect, as the variation in the mobilization patterns observed through our in-case comparison of the two PB experiences implemented in the same context – marked by a tradition of individual mobilization and clientelism – controls for this variable in explaining change. While I found indicators of the persistence of traditional individual mobilization patterns in Recife I, the second PB experience of Recife II shows how mobilization patterns became more collectively oriented after the PT reformed participatory mechanisms in 2001. These differences in mobilization outcomes between two experiences located in the same city draw our attention to the lack of explanatory power of the cultural/structural hypothesis. This finding in Recife is consistent with the other cases. More generally, the case studies confirm that differences in the nature of the mobilization strategies deployed by local leaders around the participatory processes observed in the Mexican and Brazilian cases that cultural and historical explanations are overly deterministic because they cannot account for observed change in mobilization patterns.

If factors relating to the weight of historical structure are not, in themselves, enough to explain the nature of mobilization encouraged by the reforms introduced in local governance models, what can explain the observed variation? The comparison among the Mexican and Brazilian cases of state-sponsored participatory reforms tends to support the findings of Abers (2000) and Wampler (2007), who argue that the nature and design of participatory institutions also matter, as this provides the incentives framing patterns of mobilization that might be able to become transformative vehicles fostering collective demand making processes. In particular, my findings confirm the second hypothesis, that in contexts where mobilization is traditionally defined by its individualistic and particularistic nature, the presence of institutional features for deliberation among citizens and requiring collective organization to formulate demands are more likely to create incentives for collective mobilization organized around the definition of the common good and to occur within decentralized participatory institutions. Participatory decentralization reforms have taken different institutional forms across countries, and these differences can also inform the study of local mobilization since, as I have argued earlier, social action and interactions at the grassroots are influenced by the institutional

context within which they are taking place. Here again, the comparison between Recife I and II is revealing, as I have found that an important institutional reform between the two PB periods – with the second one including incentives for collective deliberation, organization and intercommunity collaboration – explains the subsequent change in mobilization patterns. This finding about the particular case of Recife is also consistent with the comparative findings made in other cases. The similarities between the institutional features found in Belo Horizonte and Recife II participatory models, both formally encouraging deliberation, organization and intercommunity collaboration, show that the institutional design of the participatory framework creates the incentives for local leaders to collectively mobilize at the grassroots. Conversely, in cases where they were not present, as in Nezahualcóyotl, León and Recife I, continuity in the observed mobilization patterns after the implementation of participatory decentralization reforms reflect the fact that the current institutions do not provide the necessary incentives for change through deliberation, collective action and local organization.

It is, however, important to go beyond the mobilization/institutional design argument to understand the complexity of state-society relationships, which are also defined by the actual practices and sociopolitical context within which they are taking place. The common wisdom would generally suppose that, because the Brazilian PB institutional model is more conducive to collective mobilization outcomes at the grassroots, it should be more successful than the Mexican model at empowering civil society and contributing to the deepening of democracy. My results, however, invalidate this assumption, showing that under certain sociopolitical circumstances, institutional designs encouraging individual mobilization processes can have better prospects at sustaining democratic practices and state-society interactions, as we shall see next.

7.3.2 When Context Matters: Sociopolitical Factors and the Participants' Level of Autonomy

Most of the current literature on participatory decentralization tends to focus on the nature of mobilization patterns observed among the population as the main indicator of the existence of a potentially active and revitalized civil society. As I have argued, such

an understanding of success overlooks a central defining feature of democracy: the nature of state-society relationships, which are not only defined by mobilization patterns, but also and most importantly by the level of autonomy of participants.

As highlighted in chapter one and confirmed by my empirical findings, it is important not to reify the importance of collective mobilization at the grassroots as a sufficient measure of the potential for a particular participatory design to lead to the deepening of democracy. This is particularly clear from the comparison between Recife II and León. Although the model developed in León encourages a more individual and fragmented form of mobilization than Recife II, is still more promising in terms of its transformative potential for state-society relationships. This is because in León's there is greater capacity for social actors to autonomously formulate demands through the democratic and transparent channels of representation. In contrast, Recife II's PB experience promotes collective organization in a context where the prevalence of informal practices of the political control of PB delegates and CSOs participants compromises the prospects for civil society to be empowered as an autonomous actor in its relations with the local state. The comparison demonstrates that not only mobilization counts in explaining transformations of state-society relationships but, more importantly, that the level of autonomy is a central dimension of civil society's ability to enter into the social construction of citizenship and of its strength as an accountability agent before the state, a dimension that only contextual factors and in-depth process analysis can fully capture. Moreover, the contrasting autonomy levels found in Recife II and Belo Horizonte, in which cases the leftist coalition led by the PT was the leading political party that promoted and implemented PB suggests that party ideology is also not a sufficient condition to explain success. Going beyond this common idea[130] and emphasizing the

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[130] The argument following which the success of participatory decentralization relied upon the willingness of the governing political parties, which is partly explained by the existence of a 'leftist' partisan ideology emphasizing the role of the citizen in democracy, was extensively present in the literature, derived from the early empirical literature on participatory budgeting, which focused on Porto Alegre, the first PB program implemented by the PT in Brazil and still considered as the perfect example of a success story (Abers, 1996; Baiocchi, 2005; Koonings, 2004; Nylen, 1996). As a PT initiative, the success and diffusion of PB programs in Brazil were often associated with the election of the party in municipal elections. In our case, however, where we compared experiences elaborated and implemented by different political parties, ideology did not seem to be a determining explanation.

primacy of sociopolitical factors, I propose an explanation framed around the complementary and mutually reinforcing notions of political competition, social conflict and actors' perceptions. Contextual indicators providing information about the way both state and society appropriate and use the formal and informal channels of participation made available through participatory decentralization reforms are essential for understanding their strategies and behaviors toward one another, explaining the varying level of autonomy enjoyed by participants in the participatory decision-making process.

The first contextual variable I looked at was the impact of the level of political competition among elites, both within and between political parties/coalitions, a variable that encompasses the notion of political will in a more nuanced and contextual manner, highlighting the strategies behind the elites' level of support for citizen participation. My findings confirm the hypothesis that high levels of both internal and external political competition lead to greater needs for popular support, in turn providing incentives to politicians who privilege informal practices in the way they participate and address the demands received through formal participatory channels, using and co-opting their participants as a mechanism to reach the population and secure their own legitimacy and political survival at the expense of their political adversaries. More precisely, I have found that a highly competitive context provides the incentives for politicians to circumvent formal rules and use co-option strategies that curtail the participants' autonomy in the deliberation and decision-making processes within which they are involved with the local government. In fact, as they need to gather political and electoral support to be reelected in a context of political pluralism, political parties and politicians tend to resort to traditional practices and to control participatory mechanisms when they are electorally challenged. More importantly, internal competition and lack of unity within the governing coalition and/or party, observed at both the level of internal party relationships and of relations between the executive and legislature, are even more determining aspects explaining the prevalence of the use of informal practices by elites, who use participatory programs as a way to maintain a certain level of popular legitimacy to secure their leadership position within the governing coalition. The cases of Recife I, Recife II and Nezahualcóyotl represented highly competitive electoral contexts, which

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were even more competitive within the ruling parties/coalitions. As a consequence, in these three cases the autonomy of participants was continuously challenged by the fact that participatory institutions became spaces for continuing the political struggles among parties and factions rather than for allowing interactions between the local government and an autonomous civil society. The relatively low levels of political competition observed on both accounts in Belo Horizonte and León, where participation has proven to be more autonomous, also confirm my hypothesis, as politicians did not deploy strategies to circumvent formal rules and transform the participatory spaces into political ones they control to dispute political support.

The second relevant contextual variable is the balance of power within civil society. The hypothesis, confirmed by my comparative analysis, was that a pluralistic civil society united behind the ideal of participatory governance and reflecting the various sectors of society in a participatory context that accommodates both old and new forms of social organization and that does not create unequal access to the state, leads to more inclusive, coordinated and integrated participation patterns. These patterns, in turn, are more likely to sustain the autonomy of organized civil society within the participatory mechanisms. Both cases showing greater levels of autonomy within participatory institutions, Belo Horizonte and León reflected higher levels pluralism within the participating civil society or among individual social actors, including and accommodating both more traditional and new actors through an undifferentiated access to power resources and structure. An interesting finding that would need further exploration is the role of the Catholic Church in fostering autonomous participation from CSOs and resident groups and in contributing to the accumulation of organizational and cooperation skills in both León and Belo Horizonte (both traditionally conservative cities). In both cases, it seems that the Church has become an important and autonomous agent able to gather the population in an independent way around the formal participatory process, understood as a channel for transparent and direct citizens' interest representations. Conversely, in Nezahualcóyotl and Recife I-II, though historically important as a mobilization agent, the Church was not as present to sustain the population's engagement within participatory decentralization institutions. In fact, in these cases, the rise of often party-affiliated organizations and

social movements active within the formal participatory institutions was more closely associated to the growth of the left and its inherent divisions. Moreover, in the latter three cases, we have observed several sources of conflict among civil society actors around the informal access to power and politicians, generating the conditions for certain sectors of society to remain excluded from participating in the consultation and decision-making process, extending the possibilities for political capture and control through the practice of CSOs and local leaders' co-option.

The third contextual factor that has been taken into account in this study relates to the notion of both social and political actors' perceptions of their roles in the participatory process. Here again, our comparative investigation confirmed the hypothesis following which the autonomy of citizens participating is more likely to be strengthened when state representatives value citizen-participation as a governing principle and when citizens see themselves as the guarantors of their neighbors' and fellow citizens' interests and demands, as both actors enter in the participatory decision-making process as equal partners. A situation where state actors perceive citizen participation as a form of support to state action, while citizens understand their role as working with (and not for) the state as their fellow citizens' representatives was found in both Belo Horizonte and León, fostering an increased role given to formation and training and a greater commitment from the state to respect participants' autonomy in the participatory institutions. The opposite situation has been observed in Nezahualcóyotl and Recife I-II, generating apathy among the general public and allowing greater political control and co-option strategies within the institutions of participatory decentralization.

Thus, the combined effect of these three contextual sociopolitical variables and their interaction effects confirm the theoretical assumption following which sociopolitical context matters for explaining the level of success of participatory decentralization reforms.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF PARTICIPATORY DECENTRALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

The comparative case study conducted in this dissertation have shown how different types of state-society relationships have emerged or endured as a result of participatory decentralization reforms. What does this diversity in outcomes mean for the deepening of democracy at the local level? What are the consequences of each model for the prospects for the institutions of participatory democracy to actually become 'democratizing'? Taken together, the two dimensions that define what I call the *cooperative* model of state-society relationships – collective mobilization and autonomous civil society – which was found in the more successful case of Belo Horizonte have the greatest prospect of leading to the deepening of democracy compared to the other models presented in our typology. In Belo Horizonte's PB program, the combination of both a change in the focus of mobilization patterns in the city and the increasing autonomy enjoyed by CSOs and other participants in the participatory process has contributed to transforming traditional clientelistic interactions into a model of equal cooperation between actors from both the social and political spheres. As a consequence, we have observed the blossoming of democratizing governance practices that helps ensure that ordinary citizens – including the previously marginalized – are included in the social construction of citizenship regime. This results in a better access to citizenship rights while strengthening their inclusiveness through more effective accountability mechanisms. In contrast, in the least successful cases of Nezahualcóyotl and Recife I, the continuity on the mobilization and autonomy dimensions has meant that both formal and informal mechanisms contribute to maintaining and even reinforcing the clientelistic relationships that traditionally prevailed in both cities, curtailing their prospects for the deepening of democracy.

The intermediate cases of the Recife II and León are particularly interesting in this regard. These cases represent characteristics of both change and continuity on the two dimensions. The traditional dichotomy between *cooperation* and *clientelism* is insufficient for understanding the full range of state-society relationships. As suggested by the results of the Recife II and León experiences, respectively, there are two other potential outcomes: *disempowering co-option* and *fragmented inclusion*. In Recife II,

instead of becoming empowered as autonomous partners of the local state, CSOs participating in the PB process remain state-dependent social actors mobilized for political parties rather than for their communities, constituting an important limit on CSOs' ability to engage actively as accountability agents and partners of the local state in the social construction of inclusive citizenship regimes. In León, though individual mobilization hinders the development of an organized civil society at the grassroots level, the fragmented inclusion model does constitute an important transformation of traditional state-society relationships, increasing service delivery efficiency and, more importantly, contributing to extending social inclusion to previously marginalized sectors of the population. This is why León represents a higher level of democratic deepening than Recife and an important area for future research would be to explore the potential of fragmented inclusion to become transformed into the kind of collective mobilization found in Belo Horizonte and essential for maximizing democratic deepening.

Most importantly, these nuanced findings show that, as the differences in outcomes between our intermediary cases suggest, autonomy is a central feature of democratizing state-society relationships as it can both positively or negatively interact on the nature of social mobilization. The fact that in León autonomous participation from all sectors of the population is now encouraged through the decentralized participatory governance model reduces the negative impact of individual mobilization patterns for state-society relationships and the deepening of democracy while remaining a limited model compared to Belo Horizonte. In Recife II, in contrast, the context of political control over participation reduces the impact of social mobilization becoming more collective and organized, as the lack of autonomy and the co-option strategies deployed by local authorities contribute to disempowering the organized groups, limiting the impact of their collective action by making them dependent upon informal ties with political parties and public officials. These findings reveal that the individual mobilization of autonomous participants in León is still more promising in terms of social inclusion than collective mobilization through controlled leaders in Recife II because it can contribute to the inclusion of previously marginalized and the transformation of traditional clientelism. It offers the promise of reinventing itself within the new participatory institutional

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framework or taking place within other municipal spaces that are not covered by this study. Whereas the nature and intensity of social mobilization has generally been the focus of previous studies in participatory decentralization, given its focus on associationalism as the indicator of greater civil society vitality, the theoretical contribution presented here reaffirms the centrality of autonomy as a defining feature of social action for civil society to be able to enter the social construction of citizenship while being able to make the local state accountable.

More generally, these findings regarding the relationship between participatory decentralization reforms and democracy contribute to larger theoretical debates relating to the role of institutions in comparative politics. The first lesson coming out of this study is that institutional innovation, *per se*, is not sufficient for understanding democratization processes. While it can explain changing mobilization patterns, the complexity of state society-relationships is conditioned by the actual practices, behaviors and strategies of both social and political actors whose interests are influenced by the particular sociopolitical context within which they evolve and interact with one another. Thus, contrary to what has dominated the policy agenda, encouraging collective mobilization through formal institutional change alone is not sufficient for participatory institutions to lead to a profound transformation of state-society relationships underlying the deepening of democracy at the local level. This brings us to a second lesson: current debates concerning the importance of institutions cannot ignore the importance of informal institutions in the functioning or quality of democracy. In fact, if the institutional context of local democratization processes matters for defining their outcome, this study has argued, following Helmke and Levitsky (2004), that a thorough and accurate understanding of this context goes beyond formal institutional structures and has to include the study of informal institutions to reflect better the actual practices and the way actors either respect or circumvent the formal ones in the pursuit of their own interests. In this way, in addition to contributing to the study of participatory decentralization reforms and democratization in theory and practice, this dissertation constitutes a larger contribution to important debates in comparative politics about the role and interactions of institutions and actors in the study of democracy and institutional change.

7.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS: LIMITS AND UNEXPLORED AVENUES

Participatory decentralization reforms as a means for deepening democracy has been on the scholarly and policy agendas for more than two decades, with a variety of local experiences implemented throughout Latin America. Theoretically speaking participatory decentralization reforms can be an important aspect of revitalizing democratic practices at the local level. As this dissertation has shown, they are not a panacea. Not only does their institutional design matter, but most importantly contextual sociopolitical factors need to be taken into account to understand their likely contribution to democratic deepening. At the same time, their inherent limits as a locally based initiative aimed at improving the general quality of democracy at both the local and national levels must be acknowledged.

First, legacies from the authoritarian periods that have endured beyond the adoption of democratic Constitutions both in Mexico and Brazil constitute important obstacles to the extension of participatory initiatives' depth and scope. More precisely, it is the persisting concentration of powers in the hands of the executive and mayor despite the constitutional reforms, and their ascendency over the budgetary and urban planning processes, that constitute significant limits. As programs of government principally supported by the mayor, top-down participatory decentralization reforms remain highly dependent upon the good will of the executive, which has political and electoral incentives to decentralize decision-making processes to citizens in contexts of political pluralism, but only to a certain extent that does not challenge its central authority. Moreover, though political decentralization is reality in both Mexico and Brazil, the legacy of centralism inherited from the presidential and federal structures is still present in the conduct of intergovernmental relations (Limongi & Figueiredo, 1999; Mainwairing & Shugart, 1997). Central governments (and especially the executive branches) are indeed still reluctant to give up too much of their power, and the limited scope of policy and resource decentralization still inhibits the full potential of participatory decentralization, as many public policies are not of the municipal level's authority. This

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is especially true in the case of Mexico, where policy and fiscal decentralization to the municipal level is even less profound that it is in Brazil and mostly restricted to infrastructural and urban development questions, limiting the extent to which citizen can contribute to the extension of citizenship in all policy-making areas.

Second, the paradox of participatory decentralization reforms in Latin America is that, as we have seen throughout this study, its institutions are often designed to reach the poorest segments of the population and increase their access to basic services. They, however, often fail at fomenting the creation of a 'civic community', of a sustainable and active form of social organization that sustains the exercise of democratic citizenship. While participatory institutions can engender increased participation rates and a better access to urban services (Abers, 2000; Avritzer, 2002a; Canel, 2001; Wampler, 2007), they often do so following fragmented and individual demand-basis logic, as we have seen in Recife I, León and Nezahualcóyotl. Even in cases like Belo Horizonte, where participatory experiments are fostering greater cooperation between the state and organized civil society, one can find heterogeneous models of community-building at the neighborhood level. The source of the paradox lies in the fact that, in general, the type of participation encouraged through these mechanisms is geared toward the resolution of concrete and immediate problems that, once resolved, mean there may no longer be incentives for further participation as a community (Cabrero Mendoza, 1995). The type of participation, oriented toward short-term goals, is not necessarily leading to the emergence of civil leaders mobilizing on the basis of the population's civic awareness (Wampler, 2000; Wood & Murray, 2007, p. 32). Under these circumstances, participation can become a consumption strategy for groups and individuals who ask the state for public services that would not be available to them otherwise (Oxhorn, 2006). In fact, it has been argued that CSOs participating at the local level use the participatory institutions primarily as a strategy to influence the allocation of public resources and to extract benefits from the government (Grindle, 2007), and that participatory institutions have a limited effect on the capacity of civil society to self-organize (Baiocchi, Heller & Silva, 2008). Moreover, though it is suspected that it might have the potential to do so when collective mobilization processes are observed (Wampler, 2007), it is not yet clear whether

institutionalized participation contributes to foster bonding horizontal ties and trust between participants, which require face-to-face and recurrent interactions among members of a community (Putnam, 1993, 2000). The latter issues, which were beyond the scope of this particular study, however raise important new questions on participation, civil society and citizenship and open a new research agenda that will be explored in the future.

To conclude, it is important to note that despite the limits of participatory decentralization mentioned above, the institutions of participation that have been implemented in Belo Horizonte, Recife I-II, León, Nezahualcóyotl and several other cities across Latin America constitute an important political innovation for citizens as they give a voice to individuals and groups representing sectors of the population that were traditionally excluded from the political arena in both Mexico and Brazil, but also in most countries of the region. Their existence constitutes a significant advancement in itself in terms of social inclusion of the poorest sectors of the population, who have now a better access to otherwise non-available urban services. The question that remains is how can policymakers and citizens maximize the potential positive effect of successful experiences such as Belo Horizonte and León on governance outcomes and civil society organizations, despite their limits as identified throughout the study? How can current participatory experiences be improved and their inherent limits minimized in a way that fosters participation as citizenship and not as a way to shrink the state where the market becomes a surrogate arena for citizenship (Dagnino, 2005)? How can participatory institutions become spaces for community-building, where social organizations remain organized beyond the participatory process and short-term concerns? Bringing back the idea of the citizen at the center of the democratic project in Latin America constitutes an important step into the longer-term process of raising the democratic consciousness among leaders and the population. Future research should therefore start from the approach to participatory institutions presented here in order to respond to the previous questions and, ultimately, to understand better the logic behind the construction of active civic communities able to work with the political community to achieve the common

good, but also to use contentious politics and accountability mechanisms against the state when necessary.

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ANNEX 1

Participants' Oral Consent Form

Dear participant,

This interview is being conducted in relation to a doctoral research project on the relationship between political decentralization and democratization. This project investigates the variety of relationships that can arise between the local state and civil society within decentralized institutions.

This research is conducted by Françoise Montambeault, Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Political Science at McGill University (Montreal, Canada) under the supervision of Professor Philip Oxhorn. Our respective contact information appears at the end of this letter.

You may decline answering any of my questions during the interview. You may choose your comments to be attributed to you in person, to be attributed only in a general way (that does not identify your name), or not to be attributed or directly quoted at all. There is no financial compensation for participating to this research. However I will be glad to send you a summary document of my dissertation once finished and approved by my university. If you agree, I may contact you again during the research for additional questions. These rules will also apply to all other publications written out of this project (e.g. communications, articles and book chapters).

My private notes will be locked-up in a secure place at all-time, will be identified with a secret code and will not be communicated to any researcher other than my supervisor, Prof. Philip Oxhorn, nor serve to any other current research project. However, they will not be destroyed, as I may have to reuse them for future research projects with topics similar to the one of this dissertation. In such a case, the same rules of confidentiality, security and sharing will apply.

You may withdraw your agreement to participate at any time during this study and have data withdrawn.

This project was reviewed and received ethics clearance by the McGill University Ethics Board. Should you have concern or question about your involvement in this study, please contact me or my supervisor. You may also contact the Ethics Board Chair with any ethics concerns or complaints:

Ms Lynda McNeil (lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca)
McGill University Research Ethics Officer
McGill University
1555, Peel Street, 11th Floor
Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L8
Tel.:1.514.398.6831
Fax.: 1.514.398.4644

_____	_____
Françoise Montambeault	Professor Philip Oxhorn
Researcher	Research Supervisor
855, Sherbrooke West, room 414	Associate Professor and Director
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2T7	Centre for Developing Area Studies
Tel. (1) 514.804.1613	McGill University
francoise.montambeault@mail.mcgill.ca	3715, Peel street, suite 212
	Montréal (Québec) H3A 1X1
	Tel. (1) 514.398.8970
	philip.oxhorn@mcgill.ca

Estimado participante:

Esta entrevista está hecha en el contexto de un proyecto de investigación doctoral sobra la relación entre la descentralización política y la democratización. Este proyecto se interesa en la variedad de relaciones que pueden existir entre el estado local y la sociedad civil en el contexto de las instituciones municipales descentralizadas. La investigación está conducida por Françoise Montambeault, candidata al doctorado de ciencia política en la Universidad McGill (Montreal, Canadá). Su asesor de doctorado es Dr. Philip Oxhorn. Sus datos están al final de esta carta.

Durante la entrevista, usted puede declinar de contestar a unas preguntas en cualquier momento. Usted puede también decidir si quiere que sus respuestas y comentarios le eran atribuidos en persona o solamente en el sentido mas general (sin identificación de nombres), o si quiere que no haya nada atribución o citación directa. No hay remuneración para su participación en esta investigación. Sin embargo, estará un placer mandarle un resumen de mi tesis de doctorado cuando estará terminada y aprobada por mi universidad. Si usted está de acuerdo, podría contactarle de nuevo durante el proceso de investigación para pedir preguntas adicionales. **Estas reglas también aplican para todas las otras publicaciones que voy a sacar de este proyecto (ex.: ponencias, artículos, capítulos de libros, etc.).**

Mis notas personales van a estar en un lugar seguro en todos momentos, van a estar identificadas con un código secreto que no va a estar comunicado a otros investigadores (otro que mi asesor, Dr. Philip Oxhorn), y que tampoco va a estar utilizado para ninguno proyecto de investigación corriente. Sin embargo, no van a estar destruidas porque podría tener que reutilizarles en proyectos futuros **de temas similares al tema de esta tesis de doctorado**, En este caso, las mismas reglas de confidencialidad, seguridad y compartido aplicaran.

Usted puede retirar su participación en cualquier momento durante esta entrevista o más generalmente de esta investigación, y yo voy a retirar sus datos.

Este proyecto fue revisado y aprobado por el comité ética de la Universidad McGill. Si usted tiene algun deuda o pregunta sobre su implicación en esta investigación, por favor contacten-me o mi asesor. Puede también contactar la directora del comité ética con sus preocupaciones o quejas éticas:

Ms Lynda McNeil (lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca)
McGill University Research Ethics Officer
Room 419, James Administration Building, 845 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec H3A 2T5
Tel.: +1.514.398.6831
Fax.: +1.514.398.4644

_____	_____
Françoise Montambeault	Professor Philip Oxhorn
Investigadora	Asesor
855, Sherbrooke West, room 414	Associate Professor and Director
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2T7	Centre for Developing Area Studies
Tel. +1.514.804.1613	McGill University
francoise.montambeault@mail.mcgill.ca	3715, Peel street, suite 212
	Montréal (Québec) H3A 1X1
	Tel. +1.514.398.8970
	philip.oxhorn@mcgill.ca

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Prezado participante:

Esta entrevista foi feita no contexto de um projeto de pesquisa doutoral, que interessa-se na relação entre a descentralização política e a democratização. Este projeto interessa-se na variedade de relações que possam existir entre o Estado local e a sociedade civil no contexto das instituições municipais descentralizadas.

A pesquisa será conduzida por Françoise Montambeault, candidata ao doutorado em Ciências Políticas na Universidade McGill (Montreal, Canadá). O seu orientador de doutorado é o Dr. Philip Oxhorn. Nossos dados estão no final desta carta.

Durante a entrevista, o Sr./a Sra. pode decidir de responder ou não as perguntas, em qualquer momento. O Sr./a Sra. pode também decidir se quer que as suas respostas e comentários lhe sejam atribuidos pessoalmente ou somente no sentido mais geral (sem identificação de nomes), ou se quiser que não haja nenhuma atribuição ou citação direta. Não há remuneração para a sua participação nesta pesquisa. Entretanto, será um prazer enviar-lhe um resumo da minha tese de doutorado quando estiver pronta e aprovada por minha universidade. Se o Sr./a Sra. concorda, poderei contatá-lo novamente durante o proceso de pesquisa para solicitar perguntas adicionais. Essas regras também aplicam-se a todas as outras publicações que vou tirar deste projeto (ex.: Proposta/moção, artígos, capítulos de livros, etc.).

Minhas notas pessoais estarão em um lugar seguro em todos momentos, serão identificadas com um código secreto que não será comunicado a outros pesquisadores (somente a meu orientador, o Dr. Philip Oxhorn), e que também não serão utilizadas para nenhum outro projeto de pesquisa. Entretanto, as notas não serão destruídas porque poderão ser reutilizadas em projetos futuros com assuntos similares ao tema desta tese de doutorado. Neste caso, as mesmas regras de confidencialidade, segurança e compartido se aplicam.

O Sr./a Sra. pode decidir de não mais participar desta pesquisa em qualquer momento durante esta entrevista ou de maneira mais geral desta pesquisa, e neste caso eliminarei suas informações.

Este projeto foi revisado e aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética da Universidade McGill. Se o Sr./a Sra. tem alguma dúvida ou questão sobre sua participação nesta pesquisa, favor fazer contato comigo ou com meu orientador. Pode tambíem contatar a diretora do Comité de Ética com as suas preocupações ou queixas éticas:

Sra Lynda McNeil (lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca)
McGill University Research Ethics Officer
1555, Peel Street, 11th Floor
Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L8
Tel.: +1.514.398.6831
Fax.: +1.514.398.4644

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Françoise Montambeault	Professor Philip Oxhorn
Pesquisadora	Orientador
855, Sherbrooke West, room 414	Associate Professor and Director
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2T7	Centre for Developing Area Studies McGill Unive
Tel. +1.514.804.1613	3715, Peel street, suite 212
francoise.montambeault@mail.mcgill.ca	Montréal (Québec) H3A 1X1
	Tel. +1.514.398.8970
	philip.oxhorn@mcgill.ca

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ANNEX 2

McGill Ethics Certificate