

Resisting the Entrepreneurial City: Street Vendors' Struggle in Mexico City's Historic Center

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Abstract

Recent work on entrepreneurial urban governance has focused on the new forms of exclusion produced by neoliberal entrepreneurial urban strategies, arguing that local forms of social-spatial organization are being dismantled through practices ranging from the privatization of urban public space to the emergence of gated communities. By exploring the role of agency amid these changing structures of constraints, this article interrogates processes of socio-spatial exclusion under entrepreneurial forms of urban governance. I argue that despite constraints placed upon different groups of affected citizens, excluded groups develop survival strategies that enable them to maintain a livelihood and in some cases empower them to thrive. I use the case of a recently implemented entrepreneurial policy in Mexico City called the Programa de Rescate (The Rescue Program). The prime objective of the policy is to revitalize and beautify the streets, buildings and central plaza of the city's Historic Center. Although this policy seeks an improvement in the quality of life for the local population, it excludes particular forms of social interaction that are central to the well-being of a large sector of the population, particularly street vendors who rely on public spaces for their daily survival. I use the case of the Programa to show how street vendors have struggled to remain on the streets of Mexico City's Historic Center.

Introduction

This article interrogates processes of socio-spatial exclusion resulting from the implementation of strategies of entrepreneurial urban governance (EUG) in Mexico City's Historic Center. EUG, which refers to the expressions and consequences of neoliberal urban-scale policies, entails a wide range of strategies pursued by coalitions of business elites and local governments to attract inward investment (Harvey, 1989b; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Jessop, 2000; MacLeod, 2002). EUG has occupied a prominent position in the literature on urban politics and draws attention to the tendencies for such strategies to produce new forms of socio-spatial exclusion. Examples often referred to include privatization of public space, the emergence of gated communities, urban disenfranchisement, economic and political exclusion, segregation, and attacks on urban citizens' rights to the city (Dikec, 2001; Katz, 2001; Smith, 2002; Mitchell, 2003). Less well understood, however, are some of the ways in which groups that face removal or displacement by strategies of entrepreneurial governance negotiate, resist or even subvert

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exclusionary practices. With a view to improving knowledge of forms of resistance against socio-spatial exclusion, my focus is on how excluded groups develop survival strategies that enable them to maintain their socio-economic niche in the city despite structures of constraint that seek to remove them.

I ground these theoretical concerns by exploring the terms and outcomes of a recently implemented entrepreneurial strategy in Mexico City, the *Programa de Rescate*. The *Programa* was launched in August 2001 by a coalition of federal authorities under a right-wing party, city authorities under a left-wing city Mayor, and has been heavily promoted by Carlos Slim, one of Mexico's wealthiest capitalists.¹ The *Programa*, which lies squarely within a broader set of neoliberal policies and programs that aim to promote Mexico as a site for inward investment, seeks to revitalize and beautify Mexico City's Historic Center by altering the area's physical shape and image. The Historic Center is an area of mixed land uses, including *Paseo de la Reforma*'s business district, numerous tourist attractions, commercial and residential areas, and an extensive network of street markets within the area's plentiful public spaces. The area is a microcosm of Mexico City's multiple political and economic challenges. Tensions exist between the formal and informal economy, perceived street crime threatens the tourism industry, and traffic, pollution and dilapidated buildings present challenges to city authorities to maintain and protect the area's vitality in the context of significant population loss (Pareyón, 2002). Despite multiple, overlapping and often competing understandings of what the Historic Center means to inhabitants of Mexico City, political and business leaders have tried to define this part of the city in one way, that is, as an attractive place in which wealthy social classes can live and *invest*. Critically, however, an important element in the redefinition process involves the removal of certain activities and forms of interaction that are perceived as threatening to the general vitality of the area. Street vendors have been especially targeted by the *Programa*; their removal is considered essential for its success. Remarkably, despite powerful forces aligned to remove them, the materials I present here demonstrate that street vendors have challenged, undermined and even subverted the *Programa*. Rather than disappearing from the Historic Center, street vendors have reappeared in a new guise, as *toreros* — mobile, almost nomadic agents of resistance to EUG. Understanding how street vendors' resistance strategies have occurred is at the heart of this article.

I begin by examining the literature in geography and urban studies on contemporary urban governance. This literature argues that neoliberal-style urban politics is driven by competitiveness rather than redistribution (Purcell, 2002). The market-driven nature of EUG has given rise to new forms of socio-spatial exclusion, which include, among other things, the privatization of public spaces and the development of gated communities. I then discuss the context in which Mexico City's Historic Center has been re-imagined under the *Programa*. I explain why the *Programa* should be viewed as an exemplar of EUG. Following an overview of the policy and its displacement mechanisms, I use materials from my research with street vendors to show how, despite constraining forces, street vendors have developed multiple strategies that have enabled them to maintain a livelihood in the Historic Center.

Understanding the entrepreneurial city

As many scholars have argued, cities have undergone significant changes in relation to the way they are managed, organized and governed (Kirlin and Marshall, 1988; Harvey, 1989b; Cox, 1995). Departing from managerial strategies that were concerned with the

1 According to the 21st annual FORBES billionaires list, Carlos Slim is Latin America's wealthiest businessman and is ranked third in the world (Coster, 2007). His most well-known national businesses are TELMEX (former state-owned telephone company), a chain of *Sanborns* restaurants and stores, *Mix-up*, a music store, and one of the largest movie theaters in the country.

provision of local public services, new forms of urban governance entail entrepreneurial strategies — often pursued through public–private partnerships — that focus on creating the necessary conditions for attracting mobile capital (Harvey, 1985a). One feature of such strategies entails transforming the image and functions of cities from centers of production and work (Amin, 1994) to attractive places for local and global investment (Ghannam, 1997; Cochrane and Jonas, 1999; Stewart, 1999; Chang, 2000; Hiller, 2000; Ward, 2000; Neill, 2001). Such attempts at re-imagining the city can be achieved through the implementation of a diverse set of strategies, from the creation of consumer attraction centers such as malls, sport stadiums, convention centers and cultural spaces, to the reconstruction of the urban built environment (Harvey, 1985b; Crilley, 1993; Hubbard, 1995; Knox, 1997; Boyle, 1999). What stands out is the need for cities to appear as innovative, exciting, creative and safe places in which to live, visit, invest, play and consume (Harvey, 1989a). Underlying such strategies is the notion of the city as a product; as something to be sold, promoted and marketed (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Philo and Kearns, 1993).

Literature on EUG is helpful for understanding recent changes in the management of urban space in the light of a changing global economy and its effects on certain spaces of the city, in a range of national context, including in Latin America. Although literature concerning EUG has tended to focus on developments in US and British cities, similar practices have been pursued in Latin America (Rodríguez Kuri, 1998; Giglia, 2001; Aguilera, 2002; Carballo, 2002). Redevelopment strategies have been implemented in cities such as Caracas (Garcia and Villa, 2001), Santiago (Salcedo and Torres, 2004), Sao Paulo (Caldeira, 2000) and Buenos Aires (Schapira, 2001). Latin American scholars have argued that such policies have exacerbated socio-spatial polarization and dismantled previous forms of social cohesion (Portes and Roberts, 2005). Although Latin American cities throughout their colonial history have been characterized by processes of socio-spatial segregation, the *scale* and *scope* of more recent segregation is novel (Barajas and Zamora, 2002). The crisis of the central state in Latin America has empowered local authorities, many of which prioritize private interests over the needs of society as a whole (Millan, 2001; Zunino, 2006). From the privatization of urban public space (Garcia and Villa, 2001) to the emergence of gated communities (Svampa, 2001), literature on the privatization and commodification of urban space in Latin America has demonstrated the relevance of thinking about a range of ways in which EUG is giving rise to new forms of socio-spatial segregation (Carballo, 2002; Schteingart, 2001). Latin American cities, then, are facing similar processes to those identified in cities like Los Angeles (Flusty, 1994), New York (Boyer, 1993), and Glasgow (MacLeod, 2001). As Neil Smith (1996) has argued, a revanchist form of urban governance is geographically widespread in the contemporary period.

Downplayed in the literature on Latin America, however, as in the Anglo-American literature, are questions about what happens to those who have been displaced, or about whether their struggles against city governments and their elite 'partners' might lead to novel arrangements. My interest in this article, then, is in exploring how these revanchist forms of EUG are struggled over and negotiated by those who it systematically seeks to exclude. I am particularly interested in the role of agency amid these changing power structures.

Furthermore, although the literature on EUG has been useful for understanding the changing role of the local state and its ties to the private sector, especially through growth coalitions, it falls short in one key respect: how urban governments engage in *multiple* and often incoherent urban development strategies that, in many cases, do not coincide with the neoliberal agenda of the entrepreneurial city (Hubbard and Hall, 1998). As I will show, the *Programa* is an entrepreneurial strategy characterized by public–private alliances established for the physical transformation of urban space at the expense of poor sectors of the urban population. However, the *Programa* was launched by a left-wing government which simultaneously implemented progressive (rather than regressive) policies with respect to housing, education and public transportation.

Street vendors, their activities and resistance strategies, are the connection between my interest in resistance to, and the incoherence of, EUG. They have been explicitly targeted by the *Programa*, although they are by no means the only group affected by its implementation. Indeed, the *Programa* has disrupted the lives of residents, indigenous artisans, and many local businesses. But it is the street vendors that the *Programa* has discursively constructed as the 'threat' to the overall wellbeing and recovery of the Historic Center, given their associations with what the formal structures of the state define as illegal or informal economic activities. Social actors involved in what is defined as the informal economy are often perceived as devious or dangerous.² In Bayat's (1997; see also Bayat, 2000) terms the informal economy quietly *encroaches* upon the city through unplanned and sometimes unarticulated ways of fighting for redistribution, while remaining autonomous from the forces of the state. But in the case of Mexico City, Cross (1998) has examined how street-vending organizations are politically powerful actors that *negotiate* with the state and yet also undermine many of its regulatory practices. I concur with Cross (1998) and Bayat (2000) on the power of resistance strategies practiced by those who participate in the informal economy. However, rather than homogenizing resistance into one exercise of power through an organization or though a silent form of diffusion, I argue that resistance takes several forms and can be exercised in multiple and simultaneous ways. As I will demonstrate, street vendors engage in seemingly contradictory resistance strategies that have allowed them to stay in the Historic Center, albeit in a different form.

Against the backdrop of these conceptual and empirical materials, my contribution is to examine outcomes of the *Programa* with a view to revealing nuances and complexities of entrepreneurial strategies that might otherwise be ignored. I argue that, despite constraints placed upon a range of affected citizens, excluded groups develop survival strategies that enable them to maintain a livelihood and in some cases empower them to thrive.

The materials presented in what follows were gathered during 14 months of research in Mexico City from June 2003 to August 2004.³ I triangulated a wide range of information drawn from a range of archives and interviews, and through participant observation techniques. I specifically refer here to open-ended and semi-structured interviews with government officials of Mexico City; project officers employed by the *Fundación Centro Histórico*, the private sector entity created by Carlos Slim in charge of facilitating the implementation of the *Programa*; 20 street vendors; 10 existing and 10 new residents of the Historic Center; and 15 local shop owners. In addition to the interviews, I used participant observation, particularly with street vendors, to learn how they negotiated the changes brought about by the *Programa*.

The Historic Center, the *Programa* and incoherence in Mexico City's EUG

Mexico City's Historic Center

Mexico City's Historic Center is the largest in Latin America. It has immense iconographic importance because it contains elements of pre-colonial and colonial-period civilization. The area containing the Historic Center was originally Tenochtitlan,

2 For an excellent overview of the changing nature of debates on the informal economy, see Hart (1973), De Soto (1989), Rakowski (1994), Tokman (1995) and Roy (2005).

3 The material is based upon work supported by the *Antipode* Graduate Student Scholarship award; the Sonkin-Bergman-Wasserman Families' Scholarship for International Understanding and Peace; the Ohio State University Office of International Affairs; the Alumni Grant for Graduate Research and Scholarship; the Mershon Center; and the Tinker Foundation.

the center of the Mexica Empire (1325–1521). Tenochtitlan was the heart of Mexica public, social, religious and economic affairs. It was designed for collective participation in polytheistic rituals and housed a *tianguis* or market, which functioned as the focal point for the exchange of products, attracting large crowds from nearby and far away localities. After the Spanish conquered Tenochtitlan in 1521, they proceeded to transform and reorient it towards Spain. Colonial *plazas* were constructed to accommodate a new range of economic, political, social and *monotheistic* religious activities. Relics of the Mexica Empire do remain in view even though the Spanish sought to re-cast the city in their image. With these historical antecedents, the Historic Center is a hybrid urban landscape, which reflects four centuries of what Massey (1999) has theorized as 'happenstance juxtapositions', that is, the area is a product of multiple histories, each of which have overlapped with one another, and each of which have deposited elements that remain part of the city's material and symbolic representations. The area, which includes the central plaza, the *Zocalo*, as well as buildings such as the National Palace and Cathedral, occupies a prominent position in Mexico's national identity (Monnet, 1995, Nieto, 1999). National festivities, such as the day of independence, are commemorated in the Historic Center. It also holds more than 1,600 historical buildings and monuments and includes the highest concentration of architectural patrimony in Latin America (ALDF, 2000; Mantecón, 2003). Furthermore, the area is a central meeting point for social organizations and political groups, many of which protest in front of the National Palace; and a commercial center, in which thousands of merchants trade goods, often on the street. Given its historical meaning, then, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Mexico City's Historic Center as a World Heritage Site in 1987.

The Historic Center's significance, however, belies widespread depopulation that began in the late 1950s and reached its pinnacle in the mid-1980s after the earthquake of 1985 (Monnet, 1995). These demographic transformations were emblematic of wider urban and national economic, political and social processes (Mantecón, 2003). For instance, many manufacturing activities (such as small textile, confectionery and wholesale industries) relocated from the Historic Center to northern outskirts of the city or other parts of the country. The economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s led to rising unemployment and triggered the growth of street-vending activities in the area, which uses abandoned buildings as storage spaces for products or as offices for their organizations. Growth in street-vending activities in the last two decades has caused problems with vehicular traffic, complicated urban planning, and has placed considerable strain on the area's physical infrastructure, which has prevented the city authorities from capitalizing on the area's tourism potential. In this context, it has been argued that the Historic Center's status as a historical and cultural landmark is under threat (Monge, 2003a). Consequently, some business groups in the area, as well as city authorities, have expressed serious concern about street vending. The Historic Center is said to be in crisis.

The Programa de Rescate

The *Programa*, then, is intended to 'rescue' the Historic Center, but it is by no means the first such attempt to revitalize the area (Harrison and McVey, 1997).⁴ One of the most ambitious projects was implemented during the mayoral administration of Manuel Camacho Solís (1988–93). His program, *Échame una Manita* ('Give me a hand'), included the rehabilitation of buildings, restoration of parks and plazas, fiscal incentives for businesses, the creation of a financial corridor and an ambitious plan to relocate street

4 The first attempt was initiated during the mayoral administration of Hank González (1976–82). A second attempt was led by Ramón Aguirre Velázquez (1982–8); a third by Manuel Camacho Solís (1988–93); and a fourth by Oscar Espinosa Villareal. A final attempt was begun by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (1997–9).

vendors into 27 newly created popular commercial plazas (Monge, 1992; Stamm, 2007). The vision was for the Historic Center to become the new 'Mexican Broadway' (Monge, 1993).

The *Programa*'s underlying objective is to address what the city government has defined as the 'crisis of the Historic Center'. The Historic Center is to be re-imagined and made into an attractive place in which to live and invest. As the former governor of Mexico City stated 'investors . . . consider Mexico City "too risky" both for their personal safety, as well as for the safety of their capital . . . If the climate of insecurity continues to prevail . . . this will have extreme negative effects in relation to foreign investment' (Flores, 2001). Thus, the *Programa*'s guiding objectives are to reactivate the area's economy and generate new real estate investment and employment. It aims to revitalize residential conditions, strengthen the embeddedness of families who reside in the area, and solve the problem of street vending, insecurity, poverty and human deterioration (*Programa de Rescate*, 2002).

The *Programa* has been implemented in three stages. The first involved the development of a commercial corridor to link the Historic Center's main plaza, the *Zocalo*, to the business district in *Paseo de la Reforma*. This phase included the construction of *Torre Mayor*, the largest office and residential tower in Latin America, as well as a new hotel operated by Sheraton and a new nine-theater cinema. The first stage also involved increasing the police presence on city streets. The second stage involved the renovation and 'beautification' of *Alameda*, one of Mexico City's oldest public parks. Hundreds of street vendors located in the park were removed during this period (Balazar, 2002). The third and most ambitious stage has been to 'revitalize' and ultimately 'repopulate' the Historic Center. This involves renewing all underground infrastructures and cabling, refurbishing the facades of buildings, improving and increasing street lighting and standardizing street infrastructure such as garbage cans, newspaper stands and shoe shiners' chairs. This stage also seeks to increase safety and security of the area. According to the Secretary of Public Security of Mexico DF, the Historic Center is the most dangerous area of the city, with an average of 17 crime-related activities per day, adding up to more than 6,000 per year (Llanos and Romero, 2003). Security and surveillance systems such as closed circuit television have been installed and an entirely new police force called the Citizen Protection Force has been assigned to the streets of the Historic Center. Furthermore, Rudolph Giuliani's involvement as the main consultant for the city's anti-crime policy was critical to advance a particular vision for the future of the Historic Center. Critically, for the purposes of this article, the third stage also involves the complete removal of thousands of street vendors from more than 20 streets of the Historic Center.

Entrepreneurial governance and the management and administration of the *Programa*

For more than 70 years, the Mexican state was a single party hegemony by the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI).⁵ The PRI was a three-tier system formed by labor unions (CTM),⁶ peasant groups (CNC),⁷ and the popular sector (CNOP).⁸ The state functioned under clientelist strategies of governance, where the PRI satisfied the demands from these three constituencies in return for political support.

Scholars interested in Mexican state–society relations have argued that the political structure in Mexico, specifically during the 70-year rule of the PRI, was based on a clientelist system inherited from colonialism which consisted of hierarchical relations

5 The PRI was founded in 1929.

6 CTM — *Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos* (Confederation of Mexican Workers).

7 CNC — *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (National Confederation of Peasants).

8 CNOP — *Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares* (National Confederation of Popular Organizations).

and unequal sets of exchange between the state and its societal base (Arias, 2003; Brachet-Marquez, 1992). The PRI leadership satisfied the demands of its different constituencies in return for political support — in public events, political rallies, public party campaigns, and so forth (Camp, 1990; Lomnitz, 1982). Clientelist literature on state–society relations highlights the *networks* established between state institutions and different interest groups within society, beyond merely the capitalist class. A clientelist approach thus recognizes that labor unions, for instance, peasant groups, or the popular sector play an important role in shaping the governing structure and practices of the state.

In the mid-1990s, the PRI launched a democratization and decentralization strategy, which made it possible for Mexico City's population to elect its own Mayor. The first such Mayor in Mexico City was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (1997–9) of the *Partido Revolucionario Democrático* (PRD), a left-wing political party established in 1989 by former PRI members who were unsatisfied with the neoliberal direction that the PRI was taking. The PRD sought to 'maintain the social objective of the original party, but also challenge the economic and social contradictions of the new neo-liberal economic model' (PRD, 2005). Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), another PRD politician, was elected Mayor of Mexico City in 2000.⁹ His success raised hope among many of the poorest sectors of the city's population that democratization would deliver material change. He developed a new slogan, *La Ciudad de la Esperanza* (City of Hope), which sought to cast the city in a new light, and provide 'hope' for the urban population (Enríquez, 2002). The revitalization of the city's Historic Center emerged in this political context of decentralization, urban/federal competition and democratization (Ronda, 2000).

The *Programa* was launched shortly after his election. Management and administration of the *Programa* were delegated to the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* (The Historical Center Trust Fund). The *Fideicomiso* was originally a private organization, which was established by Cardenas as a vehicle for beginning to revitalize the Historic Center. The *Fideicomiso* operated from monetary funds primarily from donations and/or investments made by private sector actors. AMLO closed it in November 2001 and reactivated it in March 2002 as a *public* body funded by the city government. The *Fideicomiso* coordinates actions carried out by various state institutions and private investors and works in partnership with the private sector, particularly Carlos Slim's *Fundación del Centro Histórico* (Historic Center Foundation). Indeed, what distinguishes the *Programa* from earlier attempts by city governments to revitalize the Historic Center is that it is the first time that a major businessperson with the international status and reputation of Carlos Slim has been involved.

Slim's economic power emerged in the late 1980s with the rise of neoliberal policies in Mexico. Neoliberal economic reforms initiated after the economic crisis of 1982, and the growing influence of international economic institutions in national politics, were both instrumental in increasing the role of the private sector in the provision of services to the population. President Carlos Salinas' (1988–94) neoliberal market reforms included the privatization of all the banks; the weakening of trade unions; and the privatization of more than 800 companies, including the Mexican telephone system (TELMEX), which was sold to Carlos Slim.

Slim's involvement is widely considered critical to achieve the planned objectives of 'rescuing' the Historic Center (interview, November 2003). His objective is to 'make the Historic Center an area where people live, study, work, and have fun. In other words,

9 Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was Mayor of Mexico City from 2000 to 2005, when he resigned to run for president. In 2006, Marcelo Ebrard became the new elected Mayor of Mexico City. Ebrard worked closely with AMLO as the Secretary of Public Security (SSP), during which time he negotiated with several urban interest groups, including taxi organizations and minibuses. Ebrard, as head of SSP, had the task of removing street vendors from the *Programa* streets. Ebrard began his administration with the determination to eliminate all street vendors from the Historic Center, stating that by 'October, 12th [2007] the Historic Center will be free of street vendors' (Ramirez, 2007).

bring life back to the area' (interview, July 2004). As the director of Slim's *Fundación del Centro Histórico* shared with me: 'you go to places like Barcelona, or Madrid, or Soho in New York, and you see exactly what we want to see in Mexico: urban life . . . we imagine the Historic Center in ten years to be the heart of the city's entertainment. Kind of like the Broadway of Mexico City' (interview, July 2004). With an investment of over \$60 million, Slim's Foundation has bought and converted more than 70 buildings into high-income apartments (Monge, 2003b). His investments have been concentrated in the west side of the Historic Center,¹⁰ which traditionally has been the wealthiest part of the area given its proximity to the business district along one of the most important financial avenues of the city, *Paseo de la Reforma*, as well as its immediacy to the cultural and leisure spaces such as the Palace of Fine Arts and the Alameda Park.¹¹

Incoherent EUG

I theorize the *Programa* as a form of EUG because its aims and constitution involve public and private sector actors aligned to re-imagine the Historic Center and reorient it towards a particular population of elites, investors or gentries. But I do not wish to argue that every policy AMLO pursued was entrepreneurial, nor that, as per Harvey (1985b), the full range of policies in Mexico City were coherent. City-wide, for example, the entrepreneurial nature of the *Programa* was incoherent with AMLO's wider political discourse of 'hope' and with other progressive policies that he implemented. For instance, he initiated policies to improve housing conditions for the urban poor; supplementary monthly benefits for senior citizens to compensate for their low pension rates (*Tarjetas para Adultos Mayores*); education policies to improve the infrastructure of existing schools; and programs to provide school supplies for children, computers for schools, food packages, and scholarships to low-income students. Even with the Historic Center, moreover, AMLO offered subsidies to residents of *vivienda de alto riesgo* (housing at high risk, in this case partly as a consequence of the 1985 earthquake).

Furthermore, I want to note that the EUG literature recognizes the permeability of boundaries between state institutions, the private sector and society, and claims that urban governance is a process involving private–public networks and growth coalitions, where individuals pool out resources for the same objective: attract inward investment. The focus tends to be on the changing role of the state with respect to private capital, where the former serves the interest of urban elites and private investors. But embedded within this literature is a focus on *certain* groups (specifically property interests, business groups, local media, urban elites and so forth) as *the* central players in such decisions. Very little attention, therefore, has been given to the role of *non*-elite groups in processes of urban change. This literature thus adopts what Hubbard and Hall (1998: 10) call 'an elite pluralist position that recognizes that access to local politics is uneven, so that certain groups enjoy more favorable terms'.

Given the history of clientelism in the Mexican political system, however, the case of Mexico City provides an alternative account of the role of groups that 'enjoy more favorable terms' in the context of urban change. The post-revolutionary PRI, based on

10 Carlos Slim recently purchased an additional eight buildings in the Historic Center (Gonzalez, 2007).

11 The west was also the most targeted area during previous regeneration efforts and public investments, including Camacho Solís' financial corridor and more recent cultural–tourist corridors (ALDF, 2000). It has suffered least from depopulation and the decentralization of economic activities to the outskirts of the city. As such, relative to the other parts of the Historic Center, the western part has fewer vacant lots and fewer spaces are used for storage by street vendors. It also traditionally has had a lower density of street-vending activities relative to the eastern and southern parts of the Historic Center. The general characteristics of economic activities in the western and eastern parts of the Historic Center also vary. Wholesale commerce, particularly textile and clothing, have concentrated in the west, taking advantage of large vacant spaces for storage and textile workshops (Monnet, 1995). Retail activities, ranging from jewellery and electronics to perfumeries and bookstores, together with finance activities, have concentrated in the eastern side of the Historic Center.

corporatist and clientelist politics, was replaced by a 'new form of clientelism, more amenable to the neoliberal model, which operated more selectively and which did not operate through the hierarchy and intermediaries of the party/state apparatus' (Teichman, 1996: 11). AMLO's party, PRD, inherited many of the bargaining relations established by PRI's clientelist system. Thus, at the same time as AMLO was involved in a strategic alliance with Carlos Slim — an elite private investor with particular objectives and normative visions for the Historic Center — he was implementing policies and developing alliances with non-elite urban groups, from taxi and bus drivers to street-vending organizations, each with their own interests, objectives and normative views of the Historic Center. AMLO's seemingly contradictory practices are thus a product of clientelist tactics employed by his own party. These alliances help bring forward certain agendas that would otherwise potentially be ignored, particularly those of street-vending organizations (Brachet-Marquez, 1992). I therefore do not deny the important role played by private investors such as Carlos Slim and others in the context of the *Programa*; but I want to emphasize here that non-elite urban social groups have managed to exert influence over the direction of specific urban policies. As Slim's involvement and as its objectives indicate, the *Programa* exemplifies the notion of EUG; however, the entrepreneurial nature of the *Programa* was *incoherent* with AMLO's wider political discourse. As I argue in the next section, street vendors' ability to remain in the streets of the Historic Center, despite the exclusionary character of the *Programa*, should be viewed as partly a product of Mexico's clientelist governing system.

Street vendors and their opposition to the *Programa*

Street-vending activities in the Historic Center have a long history. It is, as Gonzalez (1997) suggests, a practice rooted in the country's collective memory. Since pre-Columbian times, street commerce played a central role in the Aztec civilization. Tenochtitlan's central markets depended on complex networks that extended throughout Mesoamerica (Bahena, 1999). Systems and networks of exchange were vigilantly regulated by judges and police inspectors (Lemus and Garcia, 1997). During the start of the colonial period these regulatory mechanisms were institutionalized through planning practices that delimited space and restrained street commerce to specific areas. The colonial years were characterized by a series of attempts to centralize commerce in designated areas such that, by the end of the eighteenth century, street commerce was concentrated in a few central plazas and markets. As the city grew in population and extension, street commerce expanded beyond its restricted plazas. The demand for additional market spaces created tremendous pressures on the post-independence urban authorities, which in 1890 constructed one of the most important markets in the city's center: *El Mercado de la Merced*. *La Merced* generated more than 40% of all revenues produced by the markets and by 1930 more than 80% of all commercial activities were concentrated in the area. The number of street vendors grew in size, causing the diffusion of street vendors to surrounding streets and avenues (Bahena, 1999). The growth of street-vending activities was followed by the construction of more than 22 'emergency markets' between 1946 and 1952 (Bahena, 1999). This was the first of numerous publicly funded markets for street commerce. One of the most significant projects occurred in 1952. Ernesto Uruchurtu developed an ambitious project to relocate street vendors into newly constructed *enclosed* market spaces and prohibited any form of street-vending activities in the Historic Center.¹² To

12 Ernesto Uruchurtu (1954–66) also called the '*Regente de hierro*' (the 'Mayor of steel') is remembered for, among other things, his repressive measures taken towards street vendors in the Historic Center.

gain access to the newly built markets, street vendors were required to register with a street-vending organization that had more than 100 members (DDF, 1951). Spaces in the established markets were given to leaders of organizations who then distributed the permits across the organization. Many of these organizations formed part of the popular sector (CNOP) of the governing PRI. Consequently, these organizations grew in significance; they became an important source of support for the party, and they gained political leverage to negotiate with state institutions. It is in this context that many street vendors were granted territory in the Historic Center during the 1950s (Cross, 1998). Hence, the difficulties faced by city authorities and the private sector in removing street vendors stem, to a large degree, from the PRI's governing legacy.

Today, almost all street vendors in the Historic Center are members of street-vending organizations, of which there are 71 (SSP, 2004).¹³ The organizations are heterogeneous and differ along a number of axes. Some organizations have thousands of members; others consist of 100–200 members. Many organizations developed in the last decade, while others date back to the mid-1950s, during which period Uruchurtu designated special permits to street vendors who joined the popular sector of the party (Cross, 1996). The organizations are hierarchically organized, such that the leader takes full control of who enters an organization, where members are located along the street, the daily fee, the size of stall, and in some cases the product that should be sold.

Every member of the organization must pay a daily fee to the leader of the organization. The fee varies depending on the size of the vendor's stand: the larger the stand, the higher the daily fee (25–50 pesos a day¹⁴). Although older and more established organizations have accumulated enough wealth to provide loans to vendors, build schools for children and provide housing credits for its members, other organizations can scarcely afford the necessary fees. Furthermore, while some organizations are part of national and international commercial networks, other organizations depend on localized networks of exchange (Gonzalez, 2002). In addition to the existing heterogeneity among the organizations, street vending as an activity also varies significantly relative to size and type of stand, product sold, daily profits earned, distribution process, number of people working in the stand, relation to leader, and location within the Historic Center. Although some street vendors are certainly involved in illicit activities, such as selling pirate music and movies or stolen goods (Cross, 2007), the great majority of street vendors engage in permissible forms of exchange and distribution. By providing cheaper commodities to the urban population — predominantly the poorer sectors of the population — many street vendors perform an important socio-economic function (Bhowmik, 2007).

For many street vendors the street is the place that provides them with an honorable and respectable means of making a living. At the same time, the street is a place where they construct and strengthen ties with friends and family members. Many of today's street vendors have engaged in this form of economic activity since they were children, either helping their parents who were also street vendors, or working for a friend or family member. Those who were relatively new to street commerce were helped by existing ties to kin/social networks embedded in street-vending activities in the Historic Center. For many street vendors the street is both their workplace and their home. As they have expressed: '... here I feel at home. Like with my family. I mean, among us we really help each other. There is more communication here among us than in my own house where I just eat and sleep. This is like one big family. We basically live here' (interview, April 2004).

13 The precise number of street vendors located in the area is unclear. According to the CANACO (National Federation of Business Managers), one of Mexico's largest business lobbies, there are more than 30,000 street vendors. Official figures published by the city government, however, only identify a total of 9,000.

14 At the time of writing US \$1 is equivalent to approximately 10.3 Mexican pesos.

The daily life of many street vendors entails long hours and hard work. Aside from the difficulties of having to be on constant lookout for police and thieves, or of having to deal with the burden of harsh weather (sun, heat, rain and cold), street vendors' daily life entails long and far from ideal working conditions. As Cross (1998: 103) noted, street vendors deal with 'exposure to the weather, fluctuating income, boredom, long working hours, and long and inconvenient trips to purchase merchandise'. The majority of vendors with whom I engaged during my fieldwork live on the outskirts of the city and commute for more than three hours a day to arrive at the Historic Center. Some cannot afford storage space in the Historic Center and thus carry their products back and forth from their home to their work space. They sweep the street and get ready to set up their stand. When they arrive at the Historic Center in the morning, they erect a roof to protect them from the sun or rain by hooking up a large piece of synthetic or fabric cloth from a long vertical metal pole to one of the sides of the buildings or a neighboring street vendors' stall. They build the stand for their products once the roof is complete. Street vendors' stalls are either made out of metal or wood. In the first case, the stand is made by connecting a series of short metal rods together. In the latter case, they set up a series of wooden crates on the floor — one on top of the other — and place a large sheet of thin wood that functions as a table for setting their products. They are ready to begin their regular selling routine after one hour of cleaning, organizing, setting up their stand, and placing their products. For some vendors, this routine has had to change with the implementation of the *Programa*, as will be discussed in the remainder of this article.

I focus on two different organizations of street vendors to discuss issues of resistance to the *Programa*.¹⁵ The first organization, which I refer to as TAP, was formed in the early 1980s and is one of the largest street-vending organizations in the Historic Center. It is affiliated with the PRI. The TAP organizational structure is kin based and hierarchical. TAP authorities claim the organization has over 2,500 members located in different areas of the Historic Center; it also has members based in other areas of the city. TAP members sold on approximately 40 streets of the Historic Center before the implementation of the *Programa*, however it has lost control of 25 streets 'rescued' by the *Programa*. The second organization, which I refer to as UMC, is a small organization with 800 members in the Historic Center and no members in any other part of the city. UMC was created after the leader of another organization of street vendors died and that organization was dismantled. Before the *Programa*, UMC members sold on approximately 10 streets of the Historic Center; since the implementation of the *Programa*, however, UMC has lost seven streets.

I ask how TAP and UMC members have resisted the exclusionary practices of the *Programa*; and ask what factors have contributed to losing and/or retaining spaces in the Historic Center? In what follows, I empirically ground issues of agency and power by examining how these two organizations have resisted the *Programa*. I use this comparative approach to show that exclusionary practices among street vendors are experienced differently. Both organizations disagree with the city government's approach to the production of a 'desirable' Historic Center. But although both organizations have felt squeezed by the *Programa*, their resistance strategies have varied significantly. It is to these differences that I now turn.

Classic and others forms of resistance

Violent street confrontations have been a resistance mechanism throughout much of the history of street-vending activities, including those of TAP. As noted above, policies towards the regulation of street-vending activities have fluctuated between highly

15 Even though readers of this article familiar with Mexico City may be able to identify the organizations to which I refer, I have changed the names of the organizations to protect the identities of the research subjects, as agreed with the respondents.

repressive measures of relocation and prohibition versus tolerance policies put in place in exchange for political and economic support. Many organizations were formed in response to police brutality, especially during the 1950s (Cross, 1998). According to one respondent, the 1950s 'were moments of extreme abuse from the city authorities, from the police, the authorities and from the *delegación Cuauhtemoc*' (interview, November 2003). Given this history of confrontation, many street vendors express their determination to confront the police, in violent ways if necessary: 'I will continue to fight with the *granaderos* and the *camioneteros* if I have to . . . I know I'm not on my own. I know that all my *compañeros* will fight with me' (interview, November 2003). 'This is our home, and as a home, we fight for it. Nobody is taking us out of here . . . that's for sure' (interview, April 2004).

There are, of course, numerous reasons for such determination to confront authority. There is an economic dimension: policies such as the *Programa* endanger their economic space, their niche in the city. But policies such as the *Programa* also disrupt kin networks, social relations between different groups of street vendors, and disturb a sense of community that has existed and has been a source of strength in the context of a harsh economic crisis. Street vendors' resistance over the practices of the *Programa* is thus more than a territorial struggle; rather it is a struggle over their rights as citizens to remain as members of the Historic Center.

TAP's willingness to fight to remain in the Historic Center has been expressed numerous times since the implementation of the *Programa*. For instance, in April 2002, approximately 60 police officers entered an area of the Historic Center controlled by TAP. Hundreds of street vendors sprayed the police with tear gas and struck them with wooden sticks (Reforma, 2003). This event represented a victory of sorts for TAP, at least insofar as it delayed their immediate removal. TAP's resistance to the removal of the *Programa* is also expressed through violent conflicts with other street-vending organizations. In August 2003, for example, street vendors from a different organization who had been removed from their spaces in the Historic Center began setting up stands in front of TAP's main office. One member of the 'invading' organization was killed; the leader of TAP, who initially escaped from the police, was charged with but never convicted of the murder. Street battles such as these are common. As the TAP leader expressed: 'There are many of us and we are inclined to fight. Because this is the only way we can make it. Our people — young and old, women that were abandoned, mothers with children to feed — are working in the streets because they have no other option. We are constantly fighting' (Brayman, 2003).

There should be little doubt, then, that TAP members have tried to halt their removal from the Historic Center. But street vendors' resistance strategies and struggles also extend into formal representative political spheres. TAP members have exploited historical alliances with the PRI. Although the PRI is no longer in power in the city, many city government officials are PRI members. TAP and other street-vending organizations have a relatively long history of connections with the PRI. They are part of the popular sector, which for more than 70 years was an ally of the governing PRI. TAP has called upon its allies in the popular sector to gain leverage over the direction of the *Programa* so that they can stay where they are, or even obtain new spaces in the Historic Center. They have practiced what Allen (2003: 5) has called associational power, where 'power acts more like a collective medium enabling things to get done or facilitating some common aim'. The clientelist structure of the Mexican state established during the PRI years has allowed street-vending organizations such as TAP to extend their resistance strategies into formal political spheres.

TAP has also exploited relations with the jurisdictional powers of the *Delegación Cuauhtemoc*, the local authority in which the Historic Center is located. It has tried to acquire special permits to continue selling on streets of the Historic Center, despite the *Programa*. Since the 1960s street vendors have been granted special temporary permits

to sell products on 'special occasions', also called *romerías*.¹⁶ Although these permits were temporary, valid for no longer than a month (depending on the event), many street vendors took advantage of this opportunity to remain on the streets, even after the permit expired. During the PRI years, these permits were granted by the jurisdictional authorities only to a single representative (leader) of a vending organization. After 1997, when the PRD won the local elections, the permits for *romerías* were granted to individuals, regardless of whether they were members of an organization. The idea behind this change was to discourage and dismantle the clientelist system of exchange that had been established during the PRI years. Officially, permits can no longer be granted to street-vending leaders located on the streets that have been rescued by the *Programa*. In practice, however, the *Delegación* still issued permits to TAP members at the time of my fieldwork.

Besides opposing removal from the streets and seeking leverage with politicians or allies in the state, street vendors engaged in a range of other resistance strategies to deal with the implications of the *Programa's* implementation. Such was the case of the second organization I researched, UMC. UMC formed cooperative ties with other street-vending organizations to continue selling on the street. One of these alliances was with LOK, a smaller organization with operations elsewhere in the Historic Center. This alliance capitalized on relations of trust between UMC and LOK leaders and members. The alliance enabled UMC vendors displaced by the *Programa* to relocate to street segments controlled by LOK, thereby allowing some UMC members to maintain their social and economic niche in the Historic Center, albeit in a different location. Exemplifying the potential value of informal ties (Ettlinger, 2003) and associational power (Allen, 2003), UMC members, as well as street vendors from other organizations, also established informal associations with shop owners in the Historic Center. These subtle and unwritten agreements of 'acceptable' practices seek mutual benefits amidst the changing context as the *Programa* was implemented. Shop owners agreed to share electricity and street-cleaning efforts with street vendors, and even agreed to look after street vendors' products if they left their stall. Furthermore, and critically given the context of removals from certain streets of the Historic Center, shop owners offered refuge to their street-vending allies when the police or authorities arrived. In return, street vendors agreed to sell products on the street on behalf of shop owners. Because street vendors sell their merchandise at cheaper prices relative to regular and large department stores, such street-vending activities outside shops actually attract customers to shops. As one shop owner stated: 'My sales increase up to 70% when street vendors are outside my store' (interview, March 2004). These alliances, which have helped street vendors to continue selling on the street, exemplify what Bayat (2000: 536) has described as 'non-collective but prolonged direct action[s] by individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives . . . in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion'.

Torear: resistance through mobility

In addition to engaging in classic resistance politics by confronting the police authorities in public space or constructing new alliances to gain leverage over the workings of the *Programa*, some displaced street vendors have found ways to reconstitute their social networks *within* the Historic Center. Against the backdrop of the *Programa* and its exclusionary practices, some of the displaced street vendors have become mobile and have returned to the streets from which they were originally displaced by engaging in *torear*. *Torear's* etymological predecessor is *toro* (Taurus), followed by *torero*

16 Officially, *romerías* are special festival events such as Christmas, Day of the Three Kings, Easter, Day of the Dead, Mexican Independence, and so forth. However, permits for *romerías* have been extended to any event of the year that has the potential to encourage mass consumption. Such is the case of 'Back-to-School' month in September, *Día del Niño* (Day of the Children) in April, Mother's Day in May, and Valentine's Day in February.

(bullfighter), *toreada* (bullfight) and *torear* which is what bullfighters do. Figuratively it means deceive or tease. Rather than erecting a wooden or metal stall on the street and staying there all day, *torear* entails selling goods while remaining mobile; *toreros* are Mexico City's nomadic vendors. Some do so by walking around the streets carrying their products or attaching them to their body. Others place their products on a blanket or piece of long plastic sheet on the ground. If police officers enter the area, *toreros* grab the four corners of their blanket or sheet, pick up their products, and run to a safe area.

The form of *torear* practiced by TAP and UMC varies significantly. *Torear* for TAP requires extensive organization and resources. TAP pays certain members to monitor the streets, to watch for the police, and to warn other vendors of police activities through the use of walkie-talkies. *Torear* strategies are therefore not spontaneous; rather, they are carefully planned and supported by the organization and hence require extensive organizational skills, geographic coordination, and financial and social resources — they need walkie-talkies and a committed organizational structure to support the *toreros*. But whilst TAP has the financial and social resources to enable them to practice *torear* in this way, their resource base is by no means shared by all other street-vending organizations in the Historic Center. Members of UMC, for example, have engaged in *torear* strategies, but the characteristics of this practice are significantly different from those practiced by TAP members. UMC does not have the same social and economic resources that would enable them to organize as TAP members do. UMC also lacks the organizational structure to provide protection from the police. In the case of TAP, although *torear* involved placing blankets on the street and enjoying a certain level of protection from the organization's support network, *torear* for UMC members implies walking on the 'rescued' streets — constantly moving, never stopping, carrying their products, and in some cases attaching their wares to their body (depending on the nature of the product). In some cases, UMC members warn each other about police activities and movements during the day, but its 'early warning' system is spontaneous and does not involve any sophisticated technological communication tools such as cell phones or walkie-talkies. Indeed, communication among UMC members only extends to vendors whistling to each other to sound the alert about police activities or other potential threats. Thus, whereas *torear* was a relatively protected practice for TAP members, UMC's form of *torear* places street vendors in a much more fragile and vulnerable position, not just compared with TAP-style *torear* but also, and crucially, compared with selling techniques and forms of organization during pre-*Programa* days. Nevertheless, even though vendors risk losing their products if they are caught selling on rescued streets, the risk is worth taking. Numerous *toreros* agreed with the following sentiment:

I've been on this street since I was eight. This is my home. I spend more time here than in my own home. A block from here my son is selling socks. My husband also works here. Nobody is going to push me out of this place . . . And if the government continues to prohibit our entry to the rescued streets, what do we do? Well, *toreamos* (interview, February 2004).

Thus, the practice of *torear* is something vendors will continue to do, if that is the only way to remain in the Historic Center.

Torear strategies have presented unexpected challenges to Mexico City's authorities. However, new techniques have been adopted in response. For example, Marcelo Ebrard, Mayor of Mexico City recently stated that any *torero* caught selling products on the streets of the Historic Center will be arrested and their products will be confiscated (Vega, 2008). Government documents suggest that more than 7,000 *toreros* have been detained under Ebrard's administration (SSPDF, 2008). This determination to eliminate any form of street-vending activity from the area has proven successful for the time being. However, important future questions arise regarding the new directions taken by the *Programa* and the potentially novel ways in which street vendors might deal with these new challenges. Will the *Programa*'s vision of a Historic Center without street vendors be realized or will street vendors' strategies of resistance endure? The

perspective I have developed throughout this article suggests that the *Programa's* objectives will continue to encounter serious challenges since it is unlikely that street vendors will silently comply with Ebrard's strategies.

Conclusions

It is possible that street scenes such as those planned by the *Programa* would be commonplace in the Historic Center if the policy was entirely successful. The Historic Center would be neat and tidy, empty, seemingly ordered, and free of street-vending activities. It would be an area akin to the streets of Barcelona or New York; the Historic Center would be the Broadway of Mexico City. However, the development of the *Programa* and the struggles resulting from its implementation has produced a different Historic Center. But not exactly the type of Historic Center imagined by those involved in the development, design and implementation of the *Programa*. The fact that street vendors remain on the streets of the Historic Center indicates that the ability of the *Programa* to render them invisible is fundamentally defied. Their presence represents not only a challenge to the exclusionary nature of the *Programa*, but it is an indication that the social ties and networks that the *Programa* sought to rupture have in fact been reconstituted. The situation in the Historic Center vividly shows that the very people whom the policy intended to socio-spatially exclude — the street vendors — have exercised their power to reoccupy space, to re-stake their right to the city. They have managed this by tapping into the state, exploiting exactly the sorts of multiple incoherent strategic alliances through which the state governs. Street vendors have practiced both associational power and 'power through mobility' by tapping into different social networks and practicing *torear*, respectively.

I have argued in this article that the literature on urban governance recognizes socio-spatial exclusion produced by policies like the *Programa*, but pays insufficient attention to how new structures of power are negotiated in the daily lives of *all actors*. Processes of socio-spatial exclusion under entrepreneurial forms of urban governance entail diverse and multiple geographies of power, some of which are highly incoherent. While Mexico City's *Programa* is an exemplar of more widespread entrepreneurial strategies under neoliberal forms of urban governance, it was implemented at the same time as progressive redistributive policies sought to benefit poorer sectors of the urban population. As I have shown, the post-revolutionary Mexican state created opportunities for groups within the popular sector (including street vendors) to tap into the state by virtue of its tendency to coopt members of society. Street vendors' resistance has been made possible in part by the political legacy of the PRI's three-party sector and clientelist strategies, which have remained embedded within today's state structure.

I have shown how exclusionary policies such as the *Programa* do not necessarily lead to the disintegration of social ties and networks. Rather, networks transform through time and, in that transformation, urban excluded groups recast and reclaim their right to the city. As I have shown, the effects of entrepreneurial strategies, such as commodification and privatization of urban public space, are challenged by the spatial practices of differentially affected groups. Their identities and interactions undermine the entrepreneurial agenda, creating 'counterspaces' (Lefebvre, 1991) or representational spaces of resistance. Excluded groups develop oppositional consciousness (Mansbridge, 2001) in struggling and negotiating change in their daily life and, in so doing, construct a range of contestation strategies.

The case of TAP and UMC in Mexico City's Historic Center suggests that urban excluded groups find new, alternative, and innovative ways of claiming their right to the city, despite new structures of constraints associated with the implementation of the *Programa*. The cases explored here shed light on the wide variety of geographies of power in the city by illustrating how the excluded exercise power through strategies of

manipulation, association and mobility. Socio-spatial exclusion under EUG therefore entails acknowledging differential power relations that are more complex and dynamic than the simple removal of particular social groups from urban spaces. Although state institutions in combination with the private sector seek to regulate and control certain spaces of the city, their efforts are contested. Furthermore, those that the state seeks to exclude are themselves a highly differentiated group who also interact through differential power relations.

Mobility as a spatial strategy of resistance has been cited in the case of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (Bosco, 2001; 2006), or homeless people in cities across the United States (Deutsche, 1996). Despite authoritarian dictatorships or tightened regulations on the uses of public space, excluded groups find ways to express their concerns, maintain a livelihood, or render themselves visible, despite structures of constraints. It has examined street vendors' spatial strategy of mobility. I have suggested that vendors' right to remain on the streets of the Historic Center entails the ability to tease (*torear*) authorities. In this case, mobility becomes a practice of power. Furthermore, alliances between shop owners and street vendors enable TAP and UMC to challenge the authority of the police and practice power in ways that undermine the *Programa's* objectives and subvert its power to remake the Historic Center as its designers imagined. Street vendors have engaged in multiple practices of power that counter claims that power is always and only exercised by the state and private investors over other social groups in the city (Ettlinger, 2001; 2003).

Attention to the different cases of TAP and UMC also demands de-homogenizing street-vending activities. Both organizations have been targeted by the *Programa's* policies, but they have managed change in different ways. TAP has resisted the *Programa* by fighting police as well as tapping into the state and exploiting alliances with its patrons in the PRI. It has also moved towards *torear*, a shift which is facilitated by its extensive base of financial and social resources. UMC, meanwhile, has established new relations with other vending organizations, shop owners in the Historic Center, as well as *torear*. The latter practice, however, is hindered by UMC's limited resource base. Consequently, UMC-style *torear* is a higher-risk form of resistance. Acknowledging differences between these two groups also brings to light new players (for instance, shop owners) that have been excluded and squeezed by the *Programa's* practices. The networks of street vendors in the Historic Center intermix with those of excluded shop owners in cooperative ways and, in so doing, these overlapping networks broaden the arena of contestation (Ettlinger, 2004). In addition, although vendors from TAP and UMC have reconstituted their social and economic niche in the Historic Center, they have done so through cooperative and confrontational paths. De-homogenizing power in the implementation of the *Programa*, as I have demonstrated, highlights a range of social groups involved in struggles over the changing meaning of the Historic Center.

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Résumé

Les travaux récents sur la gouvernance urbaine de type entrepreneurial s'intéressent surtout aux nouvelles formes d'exclusion que génèrent les stratégies urbaines néolibérales. Ils affirment que des formes locales d'organisation socio-spatiale se désagrègent à cause de pratiques allant de la privatisation de l'espace public urbain à l'apparition de communautés privées sécurisées. En s'attachant au rôle de l'agence dans ces structures de contraintes évolutives, cet article examine le processus d'exclusion socio-spatiale en cas de formes entrepreneuriales de gouvernance urbaine. Malgré les contraintes imposées aux différents groupes de citoyens concernés, les groupes exclus élaborent des stratégies de survie grâce auxquelles ils préservent leurs moyens de subsistance et se trouvent en mesure, dans certains cas, de prospérer. L'article prend le cas d'une politique publique de type entrepreneurial appliquée depuis peu à Mexico: Programa de Rescate (programme de sauvetage). En l'occurrence, il s'agit principalement de revitaliser et d'embellir les rues, les bâtiments et la place centrale du centre historique de la ville. Même si cette politique vise à améliorer la qualité de vie de la population locale, elle exclut certaines formes d'interaction sociale essentielles au bien-être d'une grande part de la population, notamment des vendeurs ambulants dont la survie au quotidien dépend des espaces publics. Le cas du Programa permet de montrer comment ces vendeurs ont lutté pour rester dans les rues du centre historique de Mexico.