A Tale of Three Cities: An Evaluation of Urban World Heritage Management in Mexico

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UNESCO’s World Heritage list aims to protect tangible and intangible World Heritage of “universal value.” Mexico ranks third worldwide, surpassed only by Italy (16) and Spain (12), with ten World Heritage cities, an accomplishment frequently touted in official rhetoric and tourism promotion. This dissertation seeks to shed light on the “World Heritage experience,” the designation history, what occurs after the designation, in relation to long-term planning, investment, and how do local, state, and federal government infrastructure cope with the pressures and obligations of preservation.

Drawing on newspapers, official government reports, and interviews with officials, civil servants, and tour guides, I address the following research questions: What is behind the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation process, and what does it entail? How has Mexico protected its heritage? How have the cities of Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca specifically achieved the World Heritage designation and how have they continued to preserve and manage their historic centers? What planning and legislative measures have they taken to aid preservation? And how, if at all, does World Heritage figure in tourism promotion?

My research reveals a politicized UNESCO designation process, little continuity and limited actual implementation of planning tools in aid of preservation, short political cycles and lack of institutional memory, frequent large-scale public works in the historic centers that often seem to duplicate efforts, sporadic and patchy public participation, with the exception of deliberate obsolescence as far as private property was concerned, uneven application of legislation and regulation, and tourism promotion simply for the sake of promotion.
A Tale of Three Cities: An Evaluation of Urban World Heritage Management in Mexico

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

May 2012
Acknowledgments

A dissertation is the product of many, not one — though all errors and shortcomings are my own.

I am indebted to the following:

First, “gracias” to Dr. David J. Robinson for his unwavering support and prodding over the years. Thanks for the countless recommendation letters, meals, coffees, and laughs we have been able to share. Most importantly, I appreciate David’s straight-forward comments and ideas to improve my writing and arguments. To think that a plane ride from Morelia in 2005 resulted in this document — thanks for all the opportunities you have afforded me, David.

Dr. Jamie Winders, for cutting through my arguments with a sharpness that sent me back to the keyboard — and always pushed me to better results. It’s been a privilege working with you.

Dr. Mark Monmonier, deserves a special “thank-you,” for allowing me to be a part of the extraordinary History of Cartography project (three times, no less), for recommending my work for publication, and giving his publishing advice freely and ever so constructively. Mark’s enthusiasm for puns is unparalleled—he is simply not to be outpunned. I’m fortunate to have had him as a mentor and his commitment to his work and research, as well as to students is exemplary.

Dr. Joseph L. Scarpaci’s comments were ever so critical to the dissertation and, based on his ample experience of grappling with urban Latin America — invaluable — thanks, Joe. Architect Anne Munly graciously agreed to be on the committee as well — thanks for your time and patience, Anne, and indulging my lack of architectural savvy. Dr. Peter Castro was ever so kind to serve as committee chair. Dr. Gavin Bridge provided me with initial access to The John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester — I am thankful for his kind assistance.

Without the financial support of the Society of Woman Geographers, the Association of American Geographers, the Roscoe Martin Research grant, the Geography Department Summer Research grant, and the Program on Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Goekjian Summer Research grants, based in The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, my fieldwork and research would have never
been possible. My teaching experience in the Geography department at Syracuse was also an intensely educational and rewarding opportunity, as well as a much needed source of income.

This dissertation would also have been impossible without the collaboration, assistance, and support of the Mexican people and in particular, Mauricio Vázquez González and Fernando Díaz Sánchez in Guanajuato, Carlos Hiriart Pardo, Catherine Ettinger McEnulty, Eugenia Salomao, and Eugenio López Mercado in Morelia, and Alejandro Calvo Camacho and Lázaro García Saavedra in Oaxaca. There are many more, of course, who remain nameless here, but their contribution is not forgotten. Sí, se puede. I have nothing but utmost respect for the resilience of the Mexican people in their efforts to protect their “patrimonio” in very difficult circumstances.

Support also came from the Syracuse student community, as well as other friends and compadres I have been lucky enough to make during the journey. You are amazing colleagues, friends, and scholars, and I am privileged to have worked with you, shared ideas, and enjoyed your company. I expect further great things from all of you.

The staff of the geography department are very much a support system in their own right. Without the help of Chris Chapman, Janet Brieaddy, and most recently, Margie Johnson, and Jackulyn Wells, I would have gotten hopelessly lost in the bureaucratic jungle of the university. I would have also, quite possibly, starved. Thanks to all of you for keeping me sane and well-fed. I am also grateful for the technical support provided by Brian von Knoblauch and The Maxwell School’s ICT department.

Of course, I am indebted to my family. My mother Chris, my brother Eric, my sister Judy, and their respective families endured my many absences. Their support has been invaluable. Dad, wish you could have seen this come to fruition. This is yours, too.

Most of all I thank Dr. James Marsh. Without his constant support and patience, this document would have never looked like this (thanks for the introduction to \LaTeX!), nor, would I have ever completed it.
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List of Abbreviations

ANCMPM  Asociación Nacional De Ciudades Mexicanas Del Patrimonio Mundial  
(National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities)

APPO  Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca  
(Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca)

BANAMEX  Banco Nacional de México  
(National Bank of Mexico)

BANCOMER  Banco de Comercio  
(Commerce Bank)

BANOBRAS  Banco Nacional de Obras y Servicios Públicos  
(National Works and Public Services Bank)

CANACO  Cámara Nacional de Comercio  
(Local Chamber of Commerce Division)

CANIRAC  Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Restaurantes y Alimentos Condimentados  
(National Chamber of Restaurants and Seasoned Food Industry)

CECHZM  Coordinación Ejecutiva del Centro Histórico y Zonas Monumentales de Morelia  
(Executive Coordination for Morelia’s Historic Center and Monumental Zones)

CFE  Comisión Federal de Electricidad  
(Federal Electricity Commission)

CNMH  Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos  
(National Coordination of Historic Monuments)
CONALMEX  Comisión Nacional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos para la UNESCO
(United States of Mexico National Commission to UNESCO)

CONACULTA  Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes
(National Council for Culture and the Arts)

COPAE  Comisión del Patrimonio Edificado
(Built Heritage Commission)

COPLADE  Coordinación General del Comité Estatal de Planeación para el Desarrollo de Oaxaca
(Oaxaca State Planning and Development Commission)

COPLADEMUN  Comité de Planeación de Desarrollo Municipal
(Planning Committee of Municipal Development)

COVECHI  Asociación de Comerciantes y Vecinos del Centro Histórico de Morelia
(Association of Businesses and Neighbors of the Historic Center of Morelia)

CPTM  Consejo de Promoción Turística
(Mexico Tourism Board)

DEH  Dirección de Estudios Históricos
(Office of Historic Studies)

DGCH  Dirección General del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca de Juárez
(General Office for Oaxaca’s Historic Center)

DGDUS  Dirección General de Desarrollo Urbano y Suelo
(General Office of Urban Development and Land)

ENCRYM  Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía
(National School of Conservation, Restoration, and Museography)

ENAH  Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia
(National School of Anthropology and History)
FIPE  Fideicomiso de Proyectos Estratégicos
(Trusteeship of Strategic Projects)

FOGAETUR  Fondo de Garantía para el apoyo financiero a la pequeña y mediana empresa turística
(Guarantee Fund for Financial Support to Small and Medium Tourism businesses)

FONCA  Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes
(National Fund for Culture and the Arts)

FONATUR  Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo
(National Fund for Tourism Development)

HCA  Heritage Conservation Area

IADB  Inter-American Development Bank

ICCROM  Rome Centre
(International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)

ICOMOS  International Council on Monuments and Sites

IMDUM  Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia
(Municipal Institute for Urban Development of Morelia)

INBA  Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes
(National Institute of Fine Arts)

INAH  Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia
(National Institute of Anthropology and History)

INEGI  Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática
(National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics)

INPAC  Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural
(Institute of Cultural Heritage)

IUCN  International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
OAS  Organization of American States

OWHC  Organization of World Heritage Cities

PAICE  Programa de Apoyo a la Infraestructura Cultural de los Estados
  (Program to Support the Cultural Infrastructure of the States)

PAN  Partido Acción Nacional
  (National Action Party)

PEMEX  Petróleos Mexicanos
  (Mexican Petroleums)

PRD  Partido de la Revolución Democrática
  (Party of the Democratic Revolution)

PRI  Partido Revolucionario Institutional
  (Institutional Revolutionary Party)

PROFECO  Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor
  (Office of the Federal Prosecutor for the Consumer)

PRONASOL  Programa Nacional de Solidaridad
  (National Solidarity Program)

PROOAX  Patronato Pro-Defensa de Patrimonio Cultural y Natural del Estado de Oaxaca
  (Trusteeship for the Defense of the State of Oaxaca’s Cultural and Natural Heritage)

SBIU  Subsecretaría de Bienes Inmuebles y de Urbanismo
  (Sub-secretariat of Buildings and Urbanism)

SECTUR  Secretaría de Turismo
  (Ministry of Tourism)

SEDESOL  Secretaría de Desarrollo Social
  (Ministry of Social Development)
SEDEUTUR  Secretaría de Turismo y Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Oaxaca  
(Ministry of Tourism and Economic Development)

SEDUE  Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología  
(Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology)

SEDUCOP  Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano, Comunicaciones, y Obras Públicas  
(Secretariat of Urban Development, Communications, and Public Works)

SEP  Secretaría de Educación Pública  
(Ministry of Public Education)

SHCP  Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público  
(Ministry of Finance and Public Credit)

SIIMT  Sistema Integral de Información de Mercados Turísticos  
(Integrated System of Information on Tourism Markets)

SNDIF  Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia  
(National System for Integral Family Development)

TELMEX  Teléfonos de México  
(Telephones of Mexico)

UNAM  Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México  
(National Autonomous University of Mexico)

UNDP  United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHC  World Heritage Centre

WHCM  World Heritage Committee

WTO  World Tourism Organization
Chapter 1

Scales of Heritage: Historic centers and World Heritage

1.1 Introduction

The preservation of cultural heritage is the concern of the state, because in it lies the foundation, our national identity.

Carlos Salinas de Gotari, 1989

Since ratifying the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Appendix A) in 1984, 31 Mexican properties have been granted World Heritage status; ten of them are historic centers, and 38 further properties on the organization’s tentative list (UNESCO World Heritage, 2011) (Table 1.5). Thus, Mexico is Latin America’s World Heritage leader and even surpasses the United Kingdom, Russia, and Japan in designations. Clearly, Mexico has been successful at making the case for World Heritage list inclusions, but with 936 World Heritage sites world-wide to date (World Heritage Committee, 2011), the question of relative benefit remains unanswered — is “universal value” (UNESCO, 1972) without limitations? Indeed, while the World Heritage Committee (WHCM), the body that ratifies applications to the World Heritage List has slowed down its rate of acceptance, it is not considering a cap to the World Heritage List (Van Oers, 2008).

This dissertation seeks to shed light on the World Heritage experience in Mexico; what occurs after the designation of urban historic centers, how is long-term planning investment treated, and how do local, state, and federal government infrastructure cope with
the pressures and obligations of preservation juxtaposed with tourism as a development strategy? Furthermore, how is World Heritage branded, if at all, and how are Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca faring as tourist destinations? Not surprisingly, heritage, preservation, and tourism involve many different stake-holders with distinct agendas and visions for these historic centers.

Specifically, my research questions ask: What are the designation histories of the cities? In that context, who was involved and which governmental have controlled this process? What happens after the World Heritage designation? Subsequently, how are the historic centers managed today, and how, if at all, has this management changed since their designation? Which institutions and organizations are involved, and what legislation applies to the World Heritage districts? Have there been any significant changes to the historic centers since their designations, and what is the role of World Heritage in local tourism promotion and presentation both by tourism officials and tour guides? Finally, how do local tourism maps represent the historic centers? How does World Heritage figure into these cartographic representations, if at all?

Inevitably, there are more questions that arise from this research, and necessarily, there are subjects that receive only cursory attention, if at all, here, such as street vending and public space debates, which frequently arise in the context of heritage districts. Their importance is not to be dismissed, and though I mention them here and in other chapters of the dissertation, my particular interest here is to tell the little told story of World Heritage designation, everyday management, legislation, and tourism promotion.

1.2 Organization of the Dissertation

This study is divided into seven chapters. My approach is scalar, thus, after reviewing the study of historic centers in social science, as well as defining and addressing the terminology used in the dissertation, I focus on the layers of the international heritage preservation regime driven by UNESCO, supported by its advisory bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Rome Centre (ICCROM), and International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Since 1993, the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), aims specifically to increase cooperation and information exchanges between World Heritage cities. In this chapter, I also explore international
heritage and preservation legislation before and after World War II, in order to provide some background out of which UNESCO’s *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage* was shaped.

Chapter 2 explores Mexico’s history of preservation with the creation of the INAH *National Institute of Anthropology and History* in 1939 and its federal preservation legislation, moving into the national scale. INAH has been the primary institution in Mexico responsible not only for historical monuments, but also for archaeological sites and museums, and generally has dominated the country’s heritage discourse. Its counterpart, responsible for twentieth century architectural heritage, is the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA), created under President Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946–1952). Shortly before UNESCO ratified its *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* at its seventeenth session in Paris on the 23rd of November 1972, Mexico published its “Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos” — *Federal Law concerning Monuments and Archaeological, Artistic, and Historic Zones* in May of the same year, laying the foundation for later World Heritage designation. In this chapter, I include the Asociación Nacional De Ciudades Mexicanas Del Patrimonio Mundial (ANCMPM), a national NGO founded in 1996, which focuses on securing funding for Mexico’s ten World Heritage cities and has most recently taken to shaping the branding of these cities as “Heritage Cities.”

In Chapter 3, I describe my data collection methods, and the challenges I encountered in attempting to recover recent public records, gain access to archival information, and maneuver Mexican public administration. Specifically, I learned that recent history is of little or nearly no interest to Mexican archives and the public record of local and state governments in particular is very sparse. The lack of institutional memory is great and leads to constant attempts by new local and state governments to reinvent the wheel. Some institutions and organizations have now been removed from the political process, that is to say, their staff and leadership do not change after elections; however, these organizations tend, on the whole, to be mainly normative, and thus, have little or no real “power” or influence.

The subsequent three chapters, beginning with Guanajuato, followed by Morelia, and finally, Oaxaca, based on the chronology of my fieldwork, address my specific findings
in the three cities, trace their urban morphological and historical development, the background to their designation as World Heritage sites, and analyze the planning mechanisms as well as the institutions and organizations involved in the preservation of the historic centers (Figure 1.3). I also explore local and state heritage legislation, some of which preceded national heritage legislation to demonstrate that preservation and heritage have transcended the scale of the nation-state. Furthermore, I address how tourism officials and tour guides shape World Heritage in their efforts to promote their cities. Finally, I collected tourism maps in all three cities, to document how the World Heritage areas are represented cartographically, whether there is actual mention of the designation on the maps, and how, if at all, the representations have changed.

In Chapter 7, I synthesize my findings to draw comparative conclusions about the differences and similarities I encountered in the cities’ designation efforts, heritage management, and tourism promotion approaches. While institutions may have differed from city to city, all three experienced jurisdictional wrangling and a glut of legislation and planning attempts that even the experts struggled to untangle. Not surprisingly, tourism officials and tour guides alike viewed the designation as a stamp of approval of Mexico by the international community, but equally, both groups did not feel that World Heritage had been exploited enough yet to attract more tourists.

Regarding Sources
Statistics and data, especially regarding tourism but also statistical information more generally in Mexico is not only collected using different approaches, but also, accessibility is often very limited. This can make direct comparisons delicate, if not impossible. Furthermore, definitions vary, too. The terms “tourist” and “visitor” are generally used interchangeably, but it makes a difference in the statistics. A “tourist” only counts if he or she stays in a registered hotel (Law, 2002; Refugio Ruíz Velasco Negrete, 2006), but not if he or she stays in a hostel or Bed and Breakfast. Wherever possible, I try to be as explicit as possible as to why statistics or data may or may not be comparable.

I identify interviewed sources by their names where they are public officials, because in their roles as such, they also appear named in local media. Similarly, I name sources who are representatives of civic associations, NGOs, or academic institutions because they too
are named in local media and are frequently asked for expert advice. They are, in that sense, public figures. However, I preserve the anonymity of the tour guides who took the time to speak to me. All translations from Spanish are mine.

**Regarding Terminology**

Given the need for translation, particularly as the case studies are concerned, I use “historic center” and by that I mean the boundaries that INAH established for the zones of monuments it designates. However, “historic center” is not always synonymous with the World Heritage designated area, for instance, in the case of Guanajuato. There, the historic center is the national monument zone, but not the World Heritage designated area.

In the cases of Morelia and Oaxaca, the “historic center” coincides with the World Heritage boundary, but both cities have applied Master Plans or Partial Plans to better protect their historic centers, and these boundaries are distinct.

**1.3 Studying Historic Centers**

Why, and how to study the historic center? Where the study of historic centers is concerned, I make no attempt here to adhere to “discrete” categories. That is to say, there are many overlaps in the literature, where scholars have focused on multiple aspects that affect historic centers, highlighting the diversity of these spaces. Most studies are organized around the origin and the development of a city, but then move into discussions of present-day use, rehabilitation, preservation challenges, tourism, tourism promotion, civil society, and planning.

Therefore, this section is loosely organized around regional case studies, and the work produced by North American and European scholars on Latin American historic centers, as well as Latin American and Mexican scholarly contributions. As this research spans the decades, so is it necessarily informed and influenced by international trends and broader debates in social science, from foci on the impact and influence of neoliberalism, to postmodernism, to sustainability in development.

In historic preservation, the primary cities of the world are also given priority; architectural historian Anthony Tung (2001) focused only on large cities such as Rome, Mexico
City, and New York. Thus, the historic center serves as a prism for urban questions in general. While comparisons between Mexican World Heritage cities exist (see Section 1.4), these studies typically involve two cases, not three, and frequently cover cities in closer geographic proximity.¹

Therefore, it is necessary to study and compare less “obviously” visible cities such as Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca, despite the potential pitfalls and limitations of comparative studies (Robinson, 2002; Robinson, 2011; Ward, 2010). Much like the metropolises exhibit differences and similarities, their own dynamics, so too do smaller cities (Bell and Jayne, 2006). Thus, like their larger counterparts, Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca compete, though officials never admitted this explicitly, with each other, as well as other smaller cities within Mexico and Latin America more generally. Of course they do not exist in a planning vacuum, but are influenced by international practices (Jacobs, 2011).

The questions that arise from the literature review are: Why should social scientists study historic centers and more specifically, why study peripheral cities? Why is heritage preservation so dominant in historic centers and why do cities pursue World Heritage designation for their historic centers given rising costs and uneven, or little benefit to the local population?

First, it is perhaps necessary to ask, what is a historic center? The 1977 Colloquium at Quito, defined it as follows: “those living settlements, strongly conditioned by a physical structure dating from the past, recognizable as representative of the evolution of a people” as quoted in (Hardoy and Gutman, 1991, p. 98). In essence, they are not only the buildings and structures, but also the residents and their ways of life. They contain monuments and iconic buildings, landmarks that capture the local imagination. These monuments give structure to cities, and a sense of collective memory is upheld through urban artifacts that have withstood time (Rossi, 2002 [1982], p. 22). Put another way, it

usually occupies the area of the pre-1900 city where there is a strong surviving morphology of buildings, streets and squares despite some modification as a result of contemporary demands (Bromley and Jones, 1996, p. 3).

¹Richard Shieldhouse (2011)’s study of World Heritage impact in Mexico corroborates my findings in Guanajuato and Morelia as far as tourism promotion tactics is concerned.
Sometimes, centrality is lost, as in the cases of San Telmo, Buenos Aires, and La Candelaria in Bogotá (Carrión, 2005, p. 5). In Mexico, these areas are typically referred to as ‘centros históricos’ but other terms include “casco antiguo, casco histórico, ciudad vieja, and barrio histórico” (Scarpaci, 2005, p. 237).

The general perception is that Latin American cities adhere to the grid layout, with rectangular blocks between 83.5 and 167 meters in size (Flores González, 2001, p. 32), but by the time the Ordinances of Laws of the Indies were formalized in 1573, many Spanish towns had already been settled (Mundigo and Crouch, 1977). However, the layout also depended on topographical features (Stanislawski, 1946). The grid pattern, nevertheless, organized the city’s activities around the Church and local power structures, but there is no one unique model (Flores González, 2001, p. 32). Thus, most commonly, the main church and governmental palace can be found in the heart of the city. Centrality was sought for its symbolic value and later codified in law (Gutiérrez and Hardoy, 1987, p. 102).

**First World historic centers**

Not surprisingly, historic center case studies have primarily concentrated on European heritage (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1999; Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Glasson, 1994; Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 2000; Slater, 1984; Tunbridge, 1981; Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996), or comparisons of the European and US experience (Barthel, 1996; Datel and Dingemans, 1988). Peter Larkham (1987) dissected different the agents involved in the planning process and their impact on townscapes in the West Midlands (ibid.). For a relatively newly independent country such as Lithuania, World Heritage designation becomes critical in the assertion of sovereignty (Munasinghe, 2005).

One exception to First World studies are geographers Shaw and Jones (1997), who include Australian, Asian, and African (as well as European) case studies. Kong and Yeoh (1994) extended the research to Singapore; Chinese heritage conservation efforts have recently garnered researchers’ attention, though English-language gaps in the literature remain (Whitehand and Gu, 2007). The case of Singapore has also attracted more recent analysis from a business school perspective (Henderson, 2011).

Much of the case study work comes out of the morphological study of towns, pursued by scholars in different disciplines throughout Europe, including architects and geogra-
phers (Conzen, 1969; Gauthiez, 2004). Differing legislation in European countries, despite overarching pan-European legislation, has also been reviewed (Pickard, 2002). For example, Oliveira (2006) traces Oporto’s attempts to arrest unchecked growth and deterioration of its historic areas through different planning tools back to the 1970s.

In the UK, the foundation for the preservation of historic centers is the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 (Larkham, 1996; Larkham, 2003). This legislation introduced listing of buildings on a register to prevent their demolition. At the time, public interest and support of preservation was strong, but in the 1960s it became apparent that preservation and planning needed to be joined to produce realistic outcomes, and yet the prevailing thought was that conservation areas meant listed buildings only² (Mageean, 1999, p. 71).

The Inner Urban Areas Act of 1978 integrated rehabilitation and regeneration measures to aid preservation (ibid., p. 72). From the 1980s onward, very conservative approaches have prevailed, that is, to preserve and if necessary, to reconstruct in keeping with the “existing visual qualities of a place” (ibid., p. 73). In the 1990s,

the construction of a visually pleasing historic scape through conservation has become (and will continue to be) increasingly important. This is because what is conserved and how it is conserved is shifting ever more from an uncritical notion of “conservation for conservation’s sake” (or conservation as stewardship) towards a process where the commodification and representation of history packages a historic product for the consumption of an increasingly demanding and differentiated tourism market (Strange, 1997, p. 228).

These demands increase pressure on the urban fabric and the city as a site for everyday activities, particularly difficult for smaller cities, for instance, Chester (Strange, 1996). Organizations such as English Heritage and The National Trust regularly contribute their opinions to conservation planning in local authorities (Hobson, 2001).

Larger cities, too, however, can become less attractive for residents when visitor numbers surge, such as in Prague (Simpson, 1999). Venice is one of the most popular examples when it comes to the costs of preservation, with locals unwilling or unable to pay for central housing, not only due to financial costs, but also due to tourism traffic that greatly affects

²By 1975, some 250,000 buildings were listed in the UK (Mageean, 1999, p. 73).
local quality of life (Borg, Costa, and Gotti, 1996; Kington, 2009; Russo, 2002). With the
foundation of the Association of Italian Historical-Artistic Centres in 1960, plans specifi-
cally designed for such cities were introduced in Assisi and Urbino by 1966, which served
as a template for several master plans (“A brief history of Italian town planning after 1945,”
p. 253)

In the Netherlands, conservation had long been the purview of pressure groups and
private individuals, rather than the government (Ashworth, 1984, p. 606). Legislation to
protect public monuments was introduced in 1961, comparatively late, and by the mid
1970s, 55,000 buildings had been registered on the country’s list of monuments (ibid.,
p. 607). But the law did not stop at monuments, it also wanted to preserve townscapes
according to morphological traits, which was then linked to land use plans to prevent
arbitrary changes (ibid., p. 607). This led to sharp boundaries between conservable areas
and those non-conserved areas. Thus, subsequent legislation had to cover this gap, and
the land use plan requirement proved effective in curbing change. Thus, policy needs to
be proactive, not reactive, to address why, for whom, and how, how preservation can and
should be implemented (Ennen, 2000, p. 349).

In the United States, preservation legislation dates back to 1906, and the introduction
of the Antiquities Act (Cullingworth, 1992, p. 67). A National Register of Historic Places
was put into place with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (National Park Ser-
vice, 2011). Community-based preservation efforts began in the 1970s, for example in
Pittsburgh’s Manchester and Cincinnati’s Mt. Auburn neighborhoods, but could not be
sustained long-term, mainly because of “a fierce neighborhood dispute over preservation,
development, and representation” (Ryberg, 2011, p. 157). The challenge to rehabilitate and
preserve in the long-term is perhaps even more daunting for community-based organi-
izations, given their nominal funding and changing community members. Roanoke, Vir-
ginia, which elaborated its preservation measures in the 1980s, did so only after engaging
with the local community and thus was able to draw up plans that were readily accepted
(Cullingworth, 1992, p. 74). However, the US has yet to designate a historic town, instead
the bulk of its World Heritage designations are in the natural site category.

Canada introduced Heritage Conservation Area (HCA)s in 1974 as means to protect
the character of its historic centers (Ashworth, 2002, p. 18), but its Historic Sites and Mon-
ments Act dates back to 1953 (Evans, 2002, p. 121). Provinces added their own heritage legislation during the same decade, and often, this legislation was the basis for future planning tools (McIlwraith, 1985, p. 239). Surveys of historic buildings became common practice in the late 1970s (Lutman, 1977). Québec became its first urban World Heritage site in 1985 (Evans, 2002, p. 123). Several governmental organizations are in charge, with no overall responsibility resting in one organization. Federal Parks Canada manages the city’s fortifications, and two other federal agencies, the National Battlefields Commission and National Defence Commission are in charge of the Plains of Abraham and the citadel and garrison quarters. Metropolitan, provincial, and voluntary organizations also contribute to the city’s preservation (ibid., p. 129). This fragmentation of management, which will also become evident in the case studies from Mexico, leaves much of the local residents’ needs unaddressed.

Spain, influenced by its French neighbor, first began considering conservation policies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly with a view to protecting its walled cities (Vilagrasa Ibarz, 1998, p. 37) (Monclús, 1992). Approaching the historic center as a tourism destination, serious planning efforts that included local participation to ensure its sustainability, as opposed to solely succumbing to promotion without preparation (Troitiño Vinuesa, 2006). Geographer Michael Barke (2003) provides an in-depth analysis of Antequera’s special plan for the management of its townscape, anticipating, however, the difficulty of its meaningful application. Salamanca has struggled to fend off new development effectively since its inscription in 1988. Subsequently, UNESCO has frequently discussed this case and made recommendations to stem the tide of unchecked development, but local officials have not implemented new safeguards, such as the city’s Special Plan for the historic center as no deadlines were set (“The sustainability of management practices in the Old City of Salamanca”).

Then there is the case of Barcelona, almost synonymous with regeneration success (Marshall, 2000). In particular, the Barcelona model, which is frequently noted in the literature, has managed to deal with the distinct cultures within the city; Catalan and Spanish, and beginning in the 1990s, larger numbers of immigrants from Latin America. Of course, Barcelona was not immune to haphazard growth during the twentieth century, but simultaneously managed to preserve its historic core (Subirós, 2007, p. 89). Out of resistance
to Franco grew the movement to support Barcelona’s revitalization—mainly through the means of strategic and staged planning. First, to recuperate public spaces, civic centers were introduced to encourage greater social and cultural cohesion. Then, cultural projects more generally were supported and encouraged, as well as popular festivals (Subirós, 2007, p. 94–96). Whether or not Barcelona’s experience is replicable is of course open for debate.

Clearly, there is no shortage of literature on historic centers and their management in the European and North American experience.

The Latin American experience

Early work on Latin American historic centers was conducted in the 1980s, with studies in Quito, Ecuador, concerned with residents and conservation practices and management (Hardoy, 1983; Hardoy and Santos, 1984). Hardoy and Gutman (1992) further explored urbanization impacts, including unemployment, land uses, and housing stock in cities such as Cuzco, Peru, Quito, Ecuador, Montevideo, Uruguay and Santiago de Chile. In the 1990s, research continued to investigate the historic center’s municipal management, population data as well as conservation trends (Bromley and Jones, 1995; Bromley and Jones, 1996; Hardoy and Gutman, 1991). Hardoy and Gutman (1991, p. 102) cited the potential of the municipal government to have a real impact on heritage preservation if it has the “ability to intervene effectively in the historic center [and] directly linked to its competence in actually undertaking the governance of the city.” This, clearly, is not always the case, and particularly holds in Mexico, where the municipality is typically weak.

Not surprisingly,

there are very few examples of integrated area concepts which strive for the revitalization of whole historic city centers, including (i) the revitalization and modernization of local economic activities and the required infrastructure, (ii) the restoration of monuments, and (iii) the rehabilitation of old housing stock, which apply an integrated financing policy that pools together private individual, private commercial as well as public-sector efforts and funds (Steinberg, 1996, p. 471).

³Incidentally, Quito is the first historic center inscribed in the World Heritage list in 1978, together with Warsaw (Sahady Villanueva and Gallardo, 2004, p. 17).
Bromley and Jones (1995, p. 45) identified different phases in Quito’s conservation, “benign neglect” in the 1960s, attempts at control in the 1970s and 1980s, and active intervention in the late 1980s. They further highlighted that with the formation of new institutions charged with conservation, agendas for conservation outcomes were not synchronized (ibid., p. 49). They also investigated investment in conservation and the links between conservation and property renovation (Bromley and Jones, 1999; Jones and Bromley, 1996). They concluded that property renovation was slow, and that it fostered more mixed or exclusively economic uses of buildings, rather than residential use (Jones and Bromley, 1996).

Extensive research focused on Cuba’s economic redirection to tourism during the Special Period, and on the role of Habanaguanex, a state company in charge of Havana’s rehabilitation (Scarpaci, 1998; Scarpaci, 2000a; Scarpaci, 2000b; Scarpaci, 2002a; Scarpaci, 2002b). The city’s varied architecture, with examples from the colonial, modern, and post-revolutionary period, tell its history over the twentieth century (Edge, Scarpaci, and Woofter, 2006). Havana is an example of early Master Plans, beginning in 1963, facilitated of course by state socialism (Scarpaci, 1998, p. 106). As a contrasting example, the much smaller (pop. 42,000) Trinidad, on Cuba’s south-central coast, which is also a World Heritage site, is explored to highlight how tourists subsidize heritage preservation through direct taxation (Scarpaci, 2002c, p. 367). In addition his work in Cuba, he also studied gentrification processes in Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia, and Cuenca, Ecuador (Scarpaci, 1999).

Scarpaci’s research then culminated in the decade-spanning study of nine historic centers focused on cities scattered throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: Puebla, Mexico, Havana and Trinidad, Cuba, Quito and Cuenca, Ecuador, Bogotá and Cartagena, Colombia, Montevideo, Uruguay, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. Scarpaci compiled land use data counting and coding 30,000 doorways (Scarpaci, 2005, p. 99). This established for the first time, for instance, that Quito was the most commercialized of the historic centers under study with nearly 2/3 of the buildings used for commercial purposes, while Trinidad remained almost completely residential (ibid., p. 105). He further found that local residents had little input in determining what happened in the historic center; my research

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<sup>4</sup> Quito implemented a Master Plan as early as 1967 (Jones and Bromley, 1996, p. 377).
corroborates this experience. This is most likely due to apathy or well-founded skepticism towards authority.

Architect Anja Nelle's work in Vigan, Trinidad, and Guanajuato explored whether or not these cities actively pursued museality, which means to retain things (here, buildings) from the past and use them for a different purpose, and present them in a new way (Nelle, 2007, p. 15). In this case, she sought to document the alteration of urban space for mostly tourism-related purposes, as opposed to local uses, as well as efforts to make the place look old and remove markers of modern life, such as telephone booths or graffiti. She concluded that while all three cities attempted to promote a historic image, only Trinidad achieved musealization due to the government’s conservation efforts and virtually all commercial activity focused on tourism (Nelle, 2009).⁵ She also examined the marketing strategies in the three cities, including the tendency to use the same or similar street furniture, lamps, and cobbled streets in the attempt to minimize contemporary signs of life (“Urban Intervention and the Globalisation of Signs: Marketing World Heritage Towns,” p. 78). This, however, does not mean that the sites are not more commercialized, in fact, these efforts contribute directly to staging of heritage landscapes (ibid., p. 79).

Markets and trading in the historic center were scrutinized in light of the spread of shopping centers in the region (Bromley, 1998a; Bromley, 1998b). Other case studies covered conservation practices in Brazil (Dickenson, 1994). Cuba’s outlier position continues to interest researchers, as town planner Nick Bailey (2008) revisited the role of Habanaguanax as an example of balancing preservation interests with tourism demands. The ongoing efforts to restore Havana’s Plaza Vieja achieved a positive balance for local residents, making the square a more attractive place to live (“Twenty-five years of transformation in the historic center of Havana: A case study of the Plaza Vieja”). Research continued in the 2000s, with the uses of public space and experience of the plaza in San José, Costa Rica (Low, 2000), and reflections on the need for a legitimated planning process in historic centers (Carrión, 2005).

A decade after the initial research into informal labor practices, Bromley and Mackie (2009) revisited street trading issues in Cusco, Peru, ahead of a planned relocation of

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⁵All officials as well as academics I spoke with did not have a positive view of the word “museum” in the context of discussing the historic center. To them, anything to do with museum meant empty streets, no sign of life, instead of Nelle’s use of the term.
street vendors out of the city’s historic center, while Swanson (2007) focused on Quito and Guayaquil’s street vendors’ precarious livelihood procurement under renewed neoliberal economic policies.

Brazil has had seven historic centers inscribed in the World Heritage list. The country’s National Heritage Agency was founded in 1937 (Rosa Sampaio, 2007, p. 99), but heritage planning did not begin until the 1980s (ibid., p. 100). With increased planning efforts, São Cristóvão was inscribed in the World Heritage list in 2010 (World Heritage Centre, 2011b). Ouro Preto, the first Brazilian city to be inscribed in 1980, also struggled with fragmented planning boards, at the local and federal level, which hindered a more holistic approach to the preservation of the area and slowed down an orderly approach to restoration applications (“The World Heritage site of Ouro Preto”).

Many discussions about preservation in Latin America inevitably revert to public space and the transformations these spaces undergo after international recognition, pitting place marketing against place making (Hanley, 2008). But, aside from preserving the past, the historic center also needs to be forward looking, and become the site of large-scale urban projects (Carrión, 2007, p. 30).

**Mexican historic centers in North American and European literature**

Work on Mexican historic centers was conducted in the 1990s by geographers Gareth Jones (1994) and Peter Ward (1993). Jones and Varley (1994) specifically researched the opposing interests of street-traders and established businesses in Puebla, Mexico, a common phenomenon all across Latin America (see also Cross (1998), Cabrales (2005), Donovan (2008), Bromley and Mackie (2009), Crossa (2009)).

Jones and Varley (1999) continued their research in Puebla arguing that gentrification had arrived there with the resurgence of urban conservation efforts. Gentrification, Jones and Varley (ibid., p. 1547) explained, has typically been associated with housing rehabilitation, with the upwardly mobile middle-class moving into newly renovated warehouses or old factory spaces. This, however, is a rather narrow perception of the phenomenon. Instead, they suggest, it “involves the rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and a change in the social group using the property” (ibid., p. 1548) (their emphasis). These conservation efforts aimed to “rescue” and “recover” Puebla’s center (ibid., p. 1559)—from street
vendors and the urban poor.

Along with renovation and rehabilitation of buildings, buses and taxis could no longer access the zócalo, and with the closure of a major market, deterring lower income people from coming to the historic center. Instead, cafés, bars, antique shops, more restaurants as well as educational facilities and museums, made the center more attractive for middle class poblanos, to re-appropriate the space for middle class rather than popular uses. The origins of this shift, Jones and Varley (1999, p. 1564) argue, can be traced to the economic crisis of the 1980s, when middle class Mexicans saw their aspirations to live American lifestyles shattered, leading them to turn inward and reassert their influence over the center, with an emphasis on Puebla’s Spanish, not indigenous past. This “defensive” gentrification, is “both an expression of, and attempt to induce, cultural and economic change” (ibid., p. 1564) (their emphasis).

By the 2000s, Mexico City’s historic center once again became an urban laboratory of sorts (Cabrera Becerra, 2008; Crossa, 2006; Dixon, 2009; Suárez Pareyón, 2004; Walker, 2008). Carlos Slim Helu and Laura Diez Barroso Azcárraga, two the region’s wealthiest entrepreneurs, bought up buildings the historic center with their Empresa del Centro Histórico, a private company through which they intend to regenerate the area (Jones and Moreno-Carranco, 2007, p. 149). These particularly entrepreneurial efforts have received academic scrutiny, because in the displacement of street vendors, historic buildings were destroyed to accommodate the vendors in new markets (Deladillo Polanco, 2009, p. 89). Only 10 percent of the entire historic center was the focus of these recent interventions. Clearly, Carlos Slim has special leverage in seeing his vision for rehabilitation come to fruition. Local community participation in Coyoacán, México City, or effective lack thereof has also been the subject of research (Lezama-López, 2006).

However, other cities such as San Luís Potosí and Querétaro and the private-public partnerships applied to regenerate their historic centers have also been scrutinized (Guarneros-Meza, 2008; Guarneros-Meza, 2009), as well as Morelia’s planning and conservation framework (Rodrigo-Cervantes, 2006). Incidentally, San Luís Potosí remains on Mexico’s tentative World Heritage list, despite its attempts to better preserve and regulate its historic center. Interventions in Guanajuato’s built environment have also been studied (Arcos García, 2007).
As far as international financial players are concerned, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) has commissioned and produced literature on the preservation and revitalization of historic centers in Latin America (Rojas, 2002). The IADB advocates the involvement of the private, public, civil society, and local communities to ensure the success of preservation (ibid., p. 12). In 2010, it commissioned a series of reports on eight World Heritage cities, including Aleppo, Edinburgh, Marrakech, Oaxaca, Oporto, Quito, Salvador de Bahía, Siracusa, Valparaiso, and Verona (Bigio, 2010; Jaramillo, 2010; Mendes Zancheti and Gabriel, 2010; Quartesan and Romis, 2010; Spiekermann, 2010; Stumpo, 2010a; Stumpo, 2010b; Tarrafa Silva, 2010; Trivelli and Nishimura, 2010; Zappino, 2010). The IADB hired consultants to carry out these case studies to provide reports from different geographical regions. Broadly speaking, the aim was to answer how these cities were managing their World Heritage, what activities and services did the historic center provide, and did it do this successfully for different stakeholders (residents, tourists), and was it able attract public and private investment.

While these reports are meant to be comparable across the cases, differences do exist and seemingly not the same methodologies were employed during the data collection phase. For example, the Oaxaca case study does specify that the fieldwork took place over the course of five days (Quartesan and Romis, 2010, p. 8), while no such information is included in the Edinburgh case study (Zappino, 2010). There was also little discussion in the Oaxaca study how local residents might become more involved in preservation, whereas in Edinburgh, the resident involvement is very strong (ibid.). The Aleppo case study is just a brief summary, very short on detail (Spiekermann, 2010). By contrast, the reports on Quito and Oporto contain a lot of statistical and cartographic data, which makes it difficult to compare the case studies amongst each other in terms of scope and results (Jaramillo, 2010; Tarrafa Silva, 2010).

1.4 Latin American and Mexican scholarship

Spanish-language contributions to the study of the historic center are, not surprisingly, prolific and span the continent as well as the Caribbean. Much of this literature, however, fails to penetrate North America or Europe. Where historic centers are concerned, architects continue to dominate debates, though urban planners and historians also contribute

ICOMOS Mexico members have been very active in the realm of analyses of historic centers. One of the earliest contributions was made by art historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero (1985)'s Morelia, en el espacio y el tiempo, which provided an in-depth treatment of the city's architecture as well as a series of maps documenting the development of the historic center. She went on to publish two more books concerned with Morelia, including a retrospective of the civil society efforts to restore the historic center (Ramírez Romero, 1995a; Ramírez Romero, 2004). The Architecture faculty at the Universidad Michoacana in Morelia, for example, has produced a series of books based on fora that explored Morelia's historic center, but much of this has focused, but certainly not exclusively, on architectural restoration challenges (Azevedo Salomao, 2004a; Ettinger McEnulty, 2004b; Ettinger McEnulty and Cenecorta, 2004; Paredes Martínez, 2001).

Equally, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)’s Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas has produced a series of titles on heritage preservation focused on
tourism, the role of civil society in the protection of heritage, and the particular case of heritage in historic centers (Noelle, 1998; Noelle, 2004; Vidargas, 1997).

Studies have ranged from reflections on the planning process and management process (Coulomb, 2001; Flores González, 2001; García Espinosa, 2008; Sahady Villanueva and Gallardo, 2004), to urban image rehabilitation (Vergara Durán, 2006). Frequently, Mexico City’s historic center is the object under study, as the nation’s capital remains the focal point for research. The 1985 earthquake also brought conservation issues into focus, as its housing stock suffered significantly and required immediate attention (Coulomb, 2003).

In Oaxaca, architects studied the impact of recent earthquakes on the city’s historic center and preservation in light of tourism, respectively (Calvo Camacho, 2005a; Márquez Sarrelangue, 2007b). Additional studies tackled the problem of waste management or rather, lack thereof, in Oaxaca (Calvo Camacho, 2005b; Moore, 2006).

Using a GIS, Eduardo Moreno (2010) was able to discern which blocks in Tegucigalpa’s historic center would need priority attention to prevent complete deterioration of the building stock. His study signals the potential of GIS technology, though how widely available these tools are and to what uses they are put, remains to be seen. Certainly, the potential is there to vastly improve cartographic representation of historic districts.

These greatly differing accounts of the historic center and its preservation challenges provide a solid window into the case studies that follow herein (Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6). Most would agree that planning and preservation measures always require review and that there “should be more to conservation than the mere prevention of change” (Lezama-López, 2006, p. 91).

In short, there is no lack of Mexican scholarship on the subject of historic centers, though architects still produce much of this research, and hence focus on technical details and the architectural fabric of buildings in historic centers. While this is undoubtedly important, not only from the standpoint of preservation, clearly, it is worthwhile and necessary to take the scope of research beyond the building.

What all of this literature has in common, too, is that it readily accepts the existence of the designation. That is to say, there is little discussion of the process of inscription or how these designations come about, even at the national scale. They are simply accepted as fact.
I next turn to *World Heritage* and its designation process.

### 1.5 Unraveling *World Heritage*

#### Origins

The twentieth century has seen a slew of heritage and preservation conventions, charters, and agreements. Here, I discuss the antecedents to the *Convention*, as well as all the subsequent legislation ratified up until the present. Cornerstones of all international heritage legislation originate out of the cultural losses sustained in World War I and II, as well as other regional conflicts during the century (Steinberg, 1996).

**The Hague Convention of 1907:**

Buried in the annex of *The Hague Convention of 1907*, one of the predecessors to the Geneva Convention, and primarily concerned with war-time conduct with regard to the treatment of enemies, lies Article 56. This article codifies, for the first time in the twentieth century, that “all seizure of, destruction or willful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art and science, is forbidden, and should be made the subject of legal proceedings” (Second Peace Conference, 1907).

**The Athens Charter, 1931:**

A predecessor to ICOMOS, this Congress issued the first technical and professional charter concerned with establishing international preservation norms. Seven main resolutions were passed, including sanctioning the use of modern techniques and materials in restoration, the need for national preservation legislation and the protection of “areas surrounding historic sites” (ICOMOS, 1931).

**Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (Roerich Pact), 1935:**

Convened in Montevideo, Uruguay, the Roerich Pact saw North America and Latin America sign further protective legislations and deemed “the historic monuments, museums,
scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions...as neutral” (Seventh International Conference of American States, 1935, Art. I). However, should the monuments be misappropriated during the conflict, and used for “military purposes,” the protective measures do not apply (ibid., Art.V). Furthermore, the Pact also suggested to identify monuments during war, with distinctive, neutral markings.

World War II interrupted any further attempts at international legislation. In light of the wave of destruction during the war, preservation and conservation, primarily of the built and natural environment, became a priority.

**Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954:**

The first UNESCO attempt to curb the destruction of cultural property in future military conflicts, recalls the Roerich Pact and The Hague Convention of 1907. The Conventions defines “cultural property” as:

 movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above (UNESCO, 1954, Art. I, paragraph a).

The Convention also the supports the identification of cultural property, to ensure its identification during conflict.

**Recommendation of Paris, 1962:**

The General Assembly acknowledged the threat of modernity to all types of landscapes and sites, including road construction, electric power lines, gas stations, advertising, pollution, and waste management. It encouraged members to utilize town and rural planning to address this threat. The recommendation also suggests zones as a means to control for aesthetics (UNESCO, 1962).
Venice Charter, 1964:

The *Venice Charter* not only laid the foundation of ICOMOS, but also for explicitly called upon UNESCO as a main driver of international preservation legislation. Newly established international bodies such as ICOMOS and IUCN focused on the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. ICOMOS was born at the “Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments” in Venice in 1964, and formalized in the *Venice Charter*, a landmark document in the world of conservation and preservation. ICOMOS has a General Assembly (which meets every three years and elects the Executive Committee, the President and other officers), an Executive Committee, which is responsible for agenda setting and the organization’s budget, an Advisory Committee, which is comprised of national and international scientific committees, and the Bureau, comprised of the President, the Secretary General, the Treasurer and the five Vice Presidents (one representative from the world’s regions) (ICOMOS, 2005). ICOMOS headquarters are located in Paris, and the office maintains the Documentation Center, which keeps a library of *World Heritage* nomination dossiers, as well as literature on restoration techniques, conservation, and tourism best practices. As regards historic centers in particular, ICOMOS (1964) proposed the following:

*considering*

that it is necessary rapidly to promote legislation for safeguarding and improving these historic centers and integrating them with contemporary life;

that this essential question of the preservation of the monumental heritage has already been studied by international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe;

that it is important to find a solution soon, both on a national and international scale, by close association between the bodies entrusted with preservation and the authorities qualified to draw up schemes of town-planning and land utilization;

*recommends*

that national and international bodies should take appropriate steps to promote the rehabilitation of monuments and historic centers;

with this aim, the results of studies and of work proposed or carried out in this field, should be brought to the knowledge of the responsible authorities;
that the international bodies should recommend that countries adopt measures
suitable for the preservation and improvement of historic centers.

Much of the charter’s language was highly technical and focused on specific problems
in restoration and conservation; yet the call for international and national heritage legis-
lation was clearly its major achievement.

**Norms of Quito, 1967:**

With a particular focus on Latin American “monumental” heritage, this meeting of ex-
erts from the Organization of American States (OAS) established explicitly that “archae-
ological, historic and artistic monuments are economic resources in the same sense as the
natural wealth of the country” (Organization of American States, 1967, Art.V, 1). It also
linked monuments to tourism and emphasized the need for intensified tourism planning
within national plans (*ibid.*, Art.VII, 4).

**Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public
or Private works, 1968:**

Here, UNESCO defines “cultural property” as follows:

(a) Immovables, such as archaeological and historic or scientific sites, structures or
other features of historic, scientific, artistic or architectural value, whether religious
or secular, including -groups of traditional structures, historic quarters in urban or
rural built-up areas and the ethnological structures of previous cultures still extant
in valid form. It applies to such immovables constituting ruins existing above the
earth as well as to archaeological or historic remains found within the earth. The
term cultural property also includes the setting of such property;

(b) Movable property of cultural importance including that existing in or recovered
from immovable property and that concealed in the earth, which -may be found’
in archaeological or historical sites or elsewhere. (UNESCO, 1968, Art. I, paragraphs
a and b).

Arguably, some of the language resembles the 1954 Convention quite closely. Clearly, the
concern for historic and archaeological sites was spurred by the post-war reconstruction
boom and particularly, the proliferation of large-scale housing projects.
Resolutions of the Symposium on the introduction of contemporary architecture into ancient groups of buildings, 1972:

Shortly before the ratification of UNESCO’s *Convention* in December 1972, the members of ICOMOS sanctioned “modern” uses of ancient buildings, and the introduction of contemporary architecture into old settings, as long as it “will fit itself into an ancient setting without affecting the structural and aesthetic qualities of the latter only in so far as due allowance is made for the appropriate use of mass, scale, rhythm and appearance”ICOMOS (1972). While the intentions of this resolution, like the others before and those to follow are certainly commendable, the vagueness of the language (after all, “appropriate use” and “mass, scale, rhythm and appearance” are open to debate and likely to be interpreted very differently by distinct interest groups) and the sheer impossibility of oversight severely compromise the effectiveness of treaties and resolutions.

1.6 Legal Framework of the *Convention*

The *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (Appendix A) was first ratified in 1972. Article 1 pertains to cultural heritage and describes it as follows:

**monuments**: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

**groups of buildings**: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

**sites**: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

The onus to protect natural and cultural heritage lies fully with the State Party Members (see Article 4 and Article 5). In Article 8, the *Convention* further created the WHCM, which is made up of 21 State Parties. Members of the Committee are elected during United
Nations General Assembly meetings and remain on the Committee for four years. The Committee is meant to be representative of all world regions and cultures. In addition to adding sites to the World Heritage List, the Committee is also charged with maintaining and publishing the “List of World Heritage in Danger” (Article 11, paragraph 4). Article 15 established the World Heritage Fund, funded by State Parties through dues as well as voluntary contributions, public or private contributors, and fund-raising. “Any State Party to this Convention may request international assistance for property forming part of the cultural or natural heritage of outstanding universal value situated within its territory” (Article 19). The Fund provides money for “preparatory assistance,” “training assistance,” “technical cooperation,” “emergency assistance,” and “promotional and educational assistance” (World Heritage Centre, 2008b). Its ability to support State parties’ requests, is, however, severely constrained by its small budget of merely US$4,000,000 (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the existence of the Fund creates an almost mythical expectation from the point of view of administrators; “we know that countries think the Fund can provide their site with a lot of money, but that is not directly the case. Even though the Fund is small, it can help very poor State Parties” (Van Oers, 2008). I found this “myth” to be pervasive; most government officials I spoke with in Mexico seemed to believe that UNESCO directly funded the country’s World Heritage sites. In fact, since 1989, the World Heritage Fund had on average US$5,000 available per site — not exactly a windfall (World Heritage Committee, 1999). Clearly, the funding structure of the Fund leaves much to be desired. The myth persists out of convenience, it can make for good headlines and sound-bites.

International treaties beyond the Convention

International heritage preservation legislation did not come to an end with the ratification of the Convention, on the contrary, more legislation, agreements, charters, and resolutions were passed after 1972 than before. In fact, international norms more than doubled in the forty years since the Convention came into force.

- Bruges Resolutions on the Conservation of Smaller Historic Towns, 1975
- Declaration of Amsterdam (European Architectural Heritage), 1975
• Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas, Nairobi, 1976
• Carta de Quito, 1977
• The Florence Charter (Historic gardens and landscapes), 1981
• Tlaxcala Declaration on the Revitalization of Small Settlements, 1982
• The Washington Charter (Historic towns and urban areas), 1987
• Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, Paris, 1989
• Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage, Lausanne, 1990
• Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites, Colombo, 1993
• The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994
• Declaration of San Antonio ( Authenticity in preservation in the Americas), 1996
• Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001
• ICOMOS Charter-Principles for the analysis, conservation and structural restoration of architectural heritage, Victoria Falls, 2003
• Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005
• ICOMOS Xi’an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas, 2005
• ICOMOS Québec Declaration of the Spirit of the Place, 2008
• ICOMOS Lima Declaration for Disaster Risk Management, 2010

This extensive list implies that legislation, treaties, and accords begets more legislation, treaties, and accords. Perhaps it is ironic that to “manage change requires effective controls” (Tiesdell, Oc, and Heath, 1996, p. 167), but despite countries having to be UNESCO

⁶Presently in the process of revision.
signatories, the level of compliance and adherence is in flux, nor is it easily feasible to monitor compliance. In the end, the nation state’s prerogative prevails.

1.7 The Nomination Process

Nominating a site for consideration on the World Heritage list is a time-consuming process. State Parties prepare the nomination dossiers, and this process alone can take many years, as gradually, the technical requirements became more stringent, making the dossiers more difficult to compile. State Parties have to describe the site adequately, give its historical context, and present supporting materials, such as published histories, photographs, and maps. Regional representatives from ICOMOS or IUCN, in the case of a natural property, then provide their assessment of the site, and recommend whether or not the site be included in the list. The present turn-around is about 1.5 years, with nominations due every February 1, by 5 p.m. Central European Time at the World Heritage Centre (WHC) in Paris (Van Oers, 2008). The WHCM, which is made up twenty-one, rotating country representatives, makes the ultimate determination at its annual meeting. Generally, the WHCM concurs with the recommendations made by ICOMOS and IUCN (van der Aa, 2005a, p. 19). Figure 1.1 illustrates the nomination process. Each State Party can nominate only one site (that is, one natural site and one cultural site) annually. The WHCM can completely reject a site though according to Dr. Ron Van Oers, a civil servant in the WHC’s Cities Programme in Paris, this is rarely the case, more likely, the State party is asked to make adjustments to their dossier, to keep their site in contention for the next possible inclusion in the list.

The WHCM has changed significantly, in that it is now mostly made up of diplomats, not conservation experts. Consequently, designations have become politicized to some extent. I do not think that it will revert to being comprised of experts or technocrats again. Once the transition to diplomats was made, that was it, really.

— Van Oers (2008), Personal Interview.

26
Figure 1.1: World Heritage List Nomination Process.
(Based on: Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 2008).
Quite readily, Dr. Van Oers discussed the “bias” of World Heritage site distribution, which lies, very deftly so, in Europe and North America, with 48 percent of all inscribed sites in this combined region.

Simply put, sites have to have certain “values” or World Heritage attitude that enable the State Parties to protect them adequately. A heightened awareness of the importance of heritage will be present, otherwise, they would not try to apply for the designation. But there have been sites listed that lack these values, I must admit. We have no intention of closing the list, we simply can’t. What we can do and what we have done is ensure that applications are complete and live up to our expectations. In this way, we have significantly slowed down the “race to the 1,000th” World Heritage site. It is definitely coming, but perhaps not quite as imminently as thought.

— Van Oers (2008), Personal Interview.

Van Oers emphasized the importance of taking an evolutionary view of heritage preservation:

We are presently trying to broaden the view of how to protect urban heritage to include what we call a historic urban landscape instead of simply groups of buildings (as stated in Article 1). The turning point, was the threat to de-list Vienna, considered at the 2003 annual meeting of the WHC. We simply had to address the possibility of delisting, even though it has only happened once before, and to a natural site, the Arabian Oryx sanctuary in Oman in 2007, which had to be delisted because the State Party destroyed the habitat.⁷ Vienna’s proposal at the time was not acceptable, so that prompted us to take a look at the Convention.

— Van Oers (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Vienna’s municipal government had considered implementing an ambitious development project that would have included high-rise buildings that would break with the city’s skyline that is dominated by church spires and domes (Van Oers, 2006).

The inscription criteria for cultural sites are as follows:

⁷In 2009, the city of Dresden was delisted because it went ahead with a controversial bridge project (Connolly, 2009). This is the first case of an urban delisting.
(i): to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

(ii): to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

(iii): to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

(iv): to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

(v): to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

(vi): to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria) (World Heritage Centre, 2005).

Not surprisingly, European and North American sites continue to dominate the list (Table 1.1 shows the distribution of World Heritage sites by region.) UNESCO has tried to redress this situation, for instance, by introducing the cultural landscapes concept in 1992 (Pocock, 1997; Rössler, 2006) and a global strategy to be more inclusive in 1994 (Cleere, 2001). At present, it is considering the formalization of the concept of urban historical landscape, to better cope with rapidly changing urban settings (UNESCO Inter-Governmental Meeting of Experts, 2011). Necessarily, the concept and categories of heritage properties has evolved and continues to evolve (Figure 1.2 provides an overview of inscriptions since 1978).

By “values,” Van Oers means a wide range of capabilities, the necessary legal framework for conservation measures, and, perhaps most importantly,
Table 1.1: Number of World Heritage Sites by region.
(Source: World Heritage Centre, 2011c.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab States</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and North America</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>725</strong></td>
<td><strong>183</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>936</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a general sense in the population that conservation is important and that taxation for the arts and culture are widely accepted and desired. Heritage has not yet penetrated the private sector as much as we would like. It is increasingly necessary to tap into this resource as public funding for conservation will dry up, even in Europe.

— Van Oers (2008), *Personal Interview*.

Intuitively, one might have expected that many more sites would have been inscribed in the 1980s, however, Figure 1.2 shows that most inscriptions actually occurred between 1990 and 2000. 1999 and 2000 were particularly successful inscription years for Latin America; 12 sites were added to the list in both years, the most inscriptions for the region. One explanation for the slower rate of inscriptions in the 1980s is that fewer countries had ratified the UNESCO Convention by then, another contributing factor is Ron Van Oers (*ibid.*) explanation that more technical experts were members of the WHCM, most certainly applying tougher standards for inclusion on the list than the more political members in the 1990s and 2000s. Furthermore, there was no cap on the number of applications a country could put forward early on, whereas presently, each country can only put forward one application (one natural, one cultural site) per application cycle.

**World Heritage sites in Mexico**

Mexico’s *World Heritage* sites are predominately located in the central states and cultural sites are most prevalent (Figure 1.3). Based on its national monument and archaeological designations, Mexico was able to put forward many contenders after signing the Convention in 1984 (Figure 1.2). Six different sites were included in the list in 1987. van der Aa
Figure 1.2: World Heritage Inscriptions per year and region, 1978–2008.
(Based on: World Heritage Centre, 2008a.)
(2005b, p. 145) argues that World Heritage designation in Mexico is a means of defining Mexican identity, through archaeological sites, emphasizing the achievements of past indigenous peoples, but not taking much interest in the fate of its present indigenous population, and through colonial townscapes, differentiate themselves from their North American neighbors. While it certainly holds that Mexicans insist they are not “gringos,” it seems more likely that the over-representation of historic centers has other reasons. Being a cultural site, they stand a good chance at inclusion and furthermore, because they had been designated as national monumental zones, it was easy to present them as contenders for inclusion on the list. However, the Pátzcuaro Lake cultural region, close to Morelia, in Michoacán, was rejected in 1987, confirming that present-day indigenous space remains off the World Heritage list (van der Aa, 2005a, p. 50).⁸

After the initial large push of designations, listing slowed to two inscriptions in 1988. The 1990s started with only one inscription per year, but the pace quickened again in 1993, 1996, and 1999. Because there still was no limit on applications at the time, one does have to wonder how much vetting and scrutiny the applications received. In the 2000s, Mexico’s designations are commensurate with the tightened application stipulations. It only made sense to put forward applications that were just about guaranteed inclusion, such as San Miguel de Allende in 2008. The city’s application had been carefully prepared and received the necessary national support to be put forward. Given the lengthy process, it becomes expedient to nominate cases that cannot be rejected.

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⁸More detail on the Pátzcuaro case can be found in Chapter 5.
Figure 1.3: Mexico’s World Heritage sites and case study locations.
(Based on: Arbingast et al., 1975. Used by permission of the University of Texas Libraries.)
### Table 1.3: Mexican World Heritage sites (1990s).
(Source: World Heritage Committee, 1991; World Heritage Committee, 1992; World Heritage Committee, 1993; World Heritage Committee, 1994; World Heritage Committee, 1996; World Heritage Committee, 1997; World Heritage Committee, 1999.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Site Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Historic Center of Morelia, Michoacán</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>El Tajín, Pre-Hispanic City, Veracruz</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaíno, Baja California</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Historic Center of Zacatecas, Zacatecas</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Rock Paintings of the Sierra de San Francisco, Querétaro</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The earliest 16th Century Monasteries on the slopes of the Popocatépetl, Morelos and Puebla</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Pre-Hispanic Town of Uxmal, Yucatán</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Historic Center of Querétaro, Querétaro</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Hospicio Cabañas, Jalisco</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Historic Fortified Town of Campeche, Campeche</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The Archaeological Monuments Zone of Xochicalco, Morelos</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.4: Mexican World Heritage sites (2000s).
(Source: World Heritage Committee, 2002; World Heritage Committee, 2003; World Heritage Committee, 2004; World Heritage Committee, 2005; World Heritage Committee, 2006; World Heritage Committee, 2007; World Heritage Committee, 2008; World Heritage Committee, 2010.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Site Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Ancient Maya City of Calakmul, Campeche</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Franciscan Missions in the Sierra Gorda of Querétaro</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Luis Barragán House and Studio, Mexico City</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Agave Landscape and the Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila, Jalisco</td>
<td>Cultural Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Central University City Campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, Michoacán and State of México</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Protective town of San Miguel and the Sanctuary of Jesús Nazareno de Atotonilco, Guanajuato</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Mexico City to Valle de Allende, Chihuahua</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Prehistoric Caves of Yagul and Mitla, Oaxaca</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mexico’s tentative *World Heritage* list mirrors the inscribed properties in that they are overwhelmingly cultural site proposals (Table 1.5). Thirty-two properties have been added to the list since 2001. It is no clear which one the Mexican government is prioritizing at present, yet properties that have been on the tentative list since 2001 have, for whatever reason, not received further support to be submitted as a full proposal. They could be lacking the technical detail, the resources to update and amplify information, as well as a lack of interest on the part of local or state administrations. Another consideration might be proximity or similarity to another *World Heritage* site. The inclusion of the Camino Real on the list in 2010 may make it impossible for San Luis Potosí to join the designation list, simply because there are already two mining-based historic centers represented with Guanajuato and Zacatecas. Again, officials are playing it safe, even though it is becoming more common to nominate twentieth century heritage sites. Furthermore, how many more *World Heritage* cities can Mexico accommodate? Does it make sense for Mexico to continue expanding the number of *World Heritage* cities? As Mauricio Vázquez González, then director of the Casa de la Cultura in Guanajuato expressed it, “the piece of the pie keeps getting smaller.”

Mexico has been extremely successful with its *World Heritage* applications, experiencing only two rejections at the WHCM stage, one in 1987, the Lake Pátzcuaro cultural region, and the nature reserve El Triunfo in 1997 (van der Aa, 2005a, p. 50).⁹ Thus, it has shown its strategic prudence when it comes to the process, and has not suffered from the transition of technocrats to political WHCM members.

**Periodic Reporting on the State of World Heritage**

What does UNESCO do with inscribed sites? Does it have any means to monitor them? One mechanism for review of *World Heritage* properties is the periodic reporting on regions. This takes place in six-year cycles (*Periodic Reporting*). Regional experts from ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM help prepare the reports, in conjunction with local authorities. The first such periodic report on Latin America and the Caribbean was published in 2004. It draws on questionnaire responses from *World Heritage* sites inscribed by the end of 1995 (UNESCO, 2004, p. 75). Sixty-one reports were submitted by the State

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⁹Chapter 2 explains the national infrastructure behind the production of the applications.
Table 1.5: Mexico’s Tentative World Heritage List.
(Source: UNESCO World Heritage, 2011.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Site Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Chapultepec Woods, Hill and Castle (Mexico City)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Town of Alamos (Sonora)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church of Santa Prisca and its Surroundings (Guerrero)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Hispanic City of Cantona (Puebla)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churches in the Zoque Province (Chiapas)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Great City of Chicomostoc–La Quemada (Zacatecas)</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Town of San Sebastián del Oeste (Jalisco)</td>
<td>Cultural Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aqueduct of Padre Tembleque (Mexico and Veracruz)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Ahuehuete Tree of Santa María del Tule (and Church, Oaxaca)</td>
<td>Cultural Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mies Van Der Rohe and Felix Candela's Industrial Buildings (Mexico City)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Railway Station of Aguascalientes and its Housing Complex</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo's Home-Study Museum (Mexico City)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valley of Cierges (Baja California)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protected Area of Flora and Fauna, Cuatro Ciéneegas (Coahuila)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biosphere Reserve Selva El Ocote (Chiapas)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical Town of Cosala (Sinoloa)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huichol Route through the sacred sites to Huiricuta (Nayarit)</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Franciscan Convent and Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral (Tlaxcala)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial complex of La Constancia Mexicana (Puebla)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lancan-Tú – Usumacinta Region (Chiapas)</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biosphere Reserve Banco Chinchorro (Quintana Roo)</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biosphere Reserve El Pinacate and Great Altar Desert (Sonora)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tecoaque (Tlaxcala)</td>
<td>Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Petenes–Ría Celestún (Campeche and Yucatán)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wetlands of Centla and Términos (Tabasco and Campeche)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Cuetzalan and its Historical, Cultural and Natural Area (Puebla)</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>San Luis Potosí on the Mercury– Silver Route of the Camino Real</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Fundidora Monterrey Blast Furnaces</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical City of Izamal (Yucatán)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Archipelago of Revillagigedo (Colima)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Petenes–Ría Celestún (Campeche and Yucatán)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wetlands of Centla and Términos (Tabasco and Campeche)</td>
<td>Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Las Pozas, Xilitla (San Luis Potosi)</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Arch of Time of La Venta River (Chiapas)</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parties. Mexico, incidentally, participated fully, with all reports from the surveyed sites returned.

For the purposes of producing the report, the region was divided into South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean. The Central America and Mexico reporting group met in May 2002 (UNESCO, 2004, p. 14). In 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNESCO did a pilot study to monitor World Heritage sites and Mexico submitted individual reports separately (ibid., p. 44). This early pilot found that:

- Little was known of the Convention at site and national levels,
- Promotion is essential
- The obligations of the States Parties to the Convention as such are not reflected in national policies of cultural and natural heritage;
- The Convention should become the cornerstone of conservation ethics (ibid., p. 45).

These findings would be echoed in the later report.

A questionnaire was used to collect data. However, the State Parties did not provide information on how broadly and inclusively this questionnaire was distributed (ibid., p. 58). The report doubted that the tool was applied widely enough, even suggesting that “reports may reflect the opinion of a single individual or institution” (ibid., p. 58). Clearly, not knowing the scope of the application makes results questionable. The report also found “a lack of institutional memory and of adequate World Heritage documentation within the national institutions, for example on past nomination processes and World Heritage activities” (ibid., p. 59).¹⁰ To combat this problem, World Heritage documentation centers should be established.

The periodic report further concluded that tentative lists were not adapting to “reflect the changes in the concept of heritage occurred over the last three decades” (ibid., p. 62), in other words, countries were probably playing it safe, particularly as the listing process became more extensive and difficult, and nominations were limited to one per category, per year (Table 1.5). Not surprisingly, the demand for training was great among the State

¹⁰ In the case studies studied here, this phenomenon will become clear in Chapter 4 Chapter 5, and Chapter 6.
Parties, 87.2 percent identified the need for more training in heritage matters, only 29.8 percent had developed their own training programs, and 76.6 percent of staff had received some sort of training inside or outside their country (UNESCO, 2004, p. 70). Clearly, more training in the region was necessary. Furthermore, more education programs in primary and secondary schools was deemed vital, again, this was echoed in the case studies in this dissertation (ibid., p. 73).

Interestingly, questionnaires that were answered by managers of natural heritage sites showed a greater understanding of the value of the site (ibid., p. 80). Perhaps it seems more straightforward why a natural site might truly be special and worth preserving for mankind, rather than a manmade, cultural site? Those in charge of historic towns or urban ensembles, as it was defined in the questionnaire, also did not feel that the legislative, contractual, or traditional protection means were effective enough, though three historic towns/ensembles managers and two natural site managers did not respond to this question (ibid., p. 84).

The report concluded that the WHC needed to communicate its role more effectively and provide the State Parties in the region with more World Heritage related information to build up local information repositories and encourage institutional memory, that it further needed to provide the State Parties with best practices, twinning to facilitate funding, much more training, and education initiatives more generally (ibid., p. 119–121). Whether or not some of the methodology of the study will be changed for its next iteration is unclear, but it seems that to ensure some sort of quality control, WHC might consider some means of ensuring that not only one official or one office respond to the questionnaire, but that it be distributed more widely, with an eye on parity across the region. One is left wondering how representative the answers really were. Nevertheless, the findings still hold: more education, information, training, and fostering alternative means of fund procurement were necessary.

First steps toward the next reporting period in the region were taken in 2010 (World Heritage Centre, 2011a).
1.8 Summary and Outlook

Chapter 1 has shown how complex World Heritage designation has become since the first properties were added to the list in 1978, and generally how the latter half of the twentieth century has seen a glut of international preservation legislation. Ironically, as application dossiers became more scientific and technically superior, the WHCM’s expertise decreased, and overall, the process became more politicized. Designating World Heritage is just another political decision. Additionally, limiting each State Party to one cultural and natural site application per year has led to a more controlled pace of inscriptions, however, reaching 1,000 World Heritage sites is only a matter of time, and will most certainly happen. The question is not whether, only when this milestone will be reached. The impending introduction of urban heritage landscape illustrates that WHC do see preservation as evolving and in need of new definitions and approaches. Perhaps this willingness to reassess categories has helped World Heritage remain relevant, despite the commitment to keep growing the list.

Research on historic centers, planning, and heritage preservation outcomes has been equally varied. Social scientists have highlighted the great number of stakeholders in these places, and how governments, the private sector, and civil society have grappled with issues of control and influence. It may have lost some of its stature due to urban decentralization efforts, but the historic center still captures the imagination of residents and visitors alike, albeit perhaps not for the same reasons. Planning measures that try to deal with the need to balance local needs and interests with those of visitors have also taken different approaches with mixed outcomes. Local residents’ interests have frequently lost out to more grandiose plans to attract more tourists.

While planning and preservation experiences across continents have differed in some respects, many of the challenges facing historic centers are the same: traffic, parking, preserving buildings, yet not succumbing to only fixing façades, fostering mixed housing and economic activities, rather than allowing commerce to fully takeover, and making cultural events accessible to a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, to name only a few. A particular challenge in Latin America have been street vendors, generally perceived as degrading the heritage area, and thus are frequently relocated.
The periodic report showed that there were still many gaps and that education about *World Heritage* needed to be made more accessible and widespread throughout Latin America. Additionally, more training and routes to funding needed to be provided to ensure that *World Heritage* sites received sustained attention. Whether or not WHC can actually provide this training is another question. Clearly, assessing the state of *World Heritage* sites generally, and progress as far as education and awareness-raising is an absolute necessity for WHC.

Next, in Chapter 2, I discuss Mexico’s federal heritage institutions, INAH and INBA, and the national designation process that precedes and forms the basis for *World Heritage* designation. Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL)’s Hábitat program and the work of ANCMPM is also covered.
Chapter 2

Scaling down: Heritage and Preservation in Mexico

2.1 Introduction

Despite Mexico’s turbulent early twentieth century history, preservation and the nation’s heritage or “patrimonio” (patrimony) loomed large. Here, I discuss the formation of INAH, INBA, and how their roles have changed over time. Established under Lázaro Cárdenas in 1939, INAH became responsible for the maintenance and protection of the nation’s patrimony, including archaeological sites and monumental zones. In this capacity, INAH controls all aspects of the nation’s patrimony, including any modifications owners want to make to their private property, if it happens to be part of national patrimony, such as a colonial building. In 1988, then President Salinas de Gotarí commissioned a new governing body, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CONACULTA), to oversee all cultural activity in Mexico, including oversight over INAH and INBA. Increasingly, INAH’s influence over Mexico’s heritage has been criticized, culminating in the near-privatization of patrimony in 1999 (Ferry, 2005).

The creation of INAH and INBA sought to centralize control over the nation’s patrimony and similarly, the Federal Law aimed to provide the definitive legal framework for the legal protection of patrimony. To this day, INAH relies on this text to make its legal claims and to intervene in construction or restoration that it does not see fit to conform to the law. It is worth examining the Federal Law and compare its key clauses to the Convention. While the law still is in effect, UNESCO’s language of “universal value” has steadily subsumed the national patrimonial rhetoric.

Here, I discuss the origins of Mexico’s preservation institutions, their work, as well as the federal entity that has most recently spearheaded investment in historic centers, SEDESOL’s Hábitat program. Finally, I turn to ANCMPM, a non-governmental organi-
zation that helps Mexican *World Heritage* cities garner funding for projects.

**The origins of preservation in Mexico**

Under Spanish colonial rule, pre-hispanic tombs and ruins pertained to the Spanish crown, and with Mexican independence, this ownership became Mexican national patrimony (Molina Enríquez, 1909).

In 1825, the Mexican National Museum was founded, with the intention to conserve the nation’s artifacts and people’s customs (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 9). At Mexico’s premier university in Mexico, UNAM, a Department of Antiquities was formed in 1831 (*ibid.*, p. 9). But as the newly independent nation went through a variety of growing pains, including armed conflicts with France and the United States, little preservation was achieved.

Under President Benito Juárez (1868–1872), the Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics was put in charge of archaeological sites and monuments, but it was not until general Porfirio Díaz became Mexico’s president (1876–1911) that a General Commission of Monuments was established (*ibid.*, p. 11). The Mexican National Museum, meanwhile, had been transformed into the Museum of Natural History, Archaeology, and History. It flourished under Díaz.

With the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the guardianship of the nation’s patrimony once again changed hands. Instrumental and influential in the future direction of heritage preservation during the revolutionary period was US-trained anthropologist Manuel Gamio¹ (Ferry, 2003). Gamio believed that anthropology was the science to redress a variety of problems the nation faced, and proposed the formation of Institutes of Anthropology throughout Latin America (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 14). In effect, he advocated a pro-mestizo nationalism (Gamio, 1916 [2010]). From 1913 to 1916, he was inspector general of archaeological monuments in the newly formed Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), which would also become INAH’s institutional home (González Rubio Iribarren, 2010, p. 18). With the goal of institutionalizing and bureaucratizing its revolution, controlled by one party, the Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) established INAH to achieve this control in the realm of heritage, culture, and archaeology.

¹Gamio studied under Franz Boas at Columbia and is known as the father of Mexican anthropology.
2.2 INAH formation and overview

Founded during the rule of President Lázaro Cárdenas, on 3 February, 1939, INAH was located within the SEP and was charged with the following activities:

1. Exploration of the archaeological zones of the country,
2. Monitoring, conservation, and restoration of archaeological, historical, and artistic monuments, as well as the objects which are found within them,
3. Scientific and artistic research that apply to archaeology and history, anthropology and ethnography, particularly of the indigenous population of the country,

INAH currently oversees 110,000 historical monuments, dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and 29,000 archaeological sites (Breglia, 2006, p. 45).

Initially, a Department of Colonial Monuments was formed within INAH, which was divided into the Office of Pre-hispanic Monuments and the Office of Colonial Monuments (Álvarez Flores, 2008, p. 18). Because research was to be a mainstay of the organization, INAH incorporated the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH) within its ranks to ensure there would be enough trained anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 20). As early as the 1940s, INAH sought to set up regional offices, and therefore, signed agreements with the states. Puebla’s regional office was the earliest of its kind (ibid., p. 23). In 1959, the Dirección de Estudios Históricos (DEH) was formed to foster historical research, and foci included economic, social, political, regional, and cultural history (ibid., p. 135). While DEH is only a small part of INAH, the arrival of Enrique Florescano as director in the early 1970s made it rise to much greater prominence.

The 1960s represent INAH’s heyday, particularly with the building of the National Museum of Anthropology in 1964 (Ferry, 2003, p. 38). Even earlier, in 1961, the Department of Restoration and Cataloging of Artistic Patrimony was formed, which began training restoration specialists in 1966 (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 31). In 1968, the Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía (ENCRYM) was established and quickly became one of the centers for restoration training in Latin America (ibid., p. 166). The museum became home to ENAH and the Department of Anthropo-
logical Research (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 83). INAH also became more active internationally, through participating in such organizations as ICCROM and ICOMOS, which organized one of its colloquia in Mexico in 1972 (ibid., p. 153). With Mexico changing in the late 1960s and early 1970s, INAH began discussing a new Ley de Monumentos (see Section 2.3).

In 1988, INAH was moved into the newly-established CONACULTA, created by a presidential decree. CONACULTA serves as the umbrella organization for all culture-related policy in Mexico.

INAH’s total budget for 2011 reached US$ 234,930,288,000 of which US$4,600,000 were destined towards public works (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 2011, p. 67–69).

**National Coordination of Historic Monuments**

By 1973, the Department of Colonial Monuments and of the Republic joined the newly established Directorate of Historic Monuments, only to disappear completely by 1979 (2008, p. 18). In 1989, the organization underwent more structural changes. The Directorate was converted into the Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos (CNMH). In order to comply with its conservation, restoration, protection, cataloging, research, and diffusion tasks, it was split into the following subdivisions:

- National Coordination of Historical Monuments,
- Technical Support Directorate,
- Office of Licensing, Inspection and Registration,
- Administration
- Catalog and Zones Section,
- Research Section,
- Project and Construction Section,
- IT Department (ibid., p. 18).

A first attempt at publishing a catalog of monuments in Mexico appeared in 1939, with 447 buildings included (CNMH, 2005, p. 23). The plan for a National Catalog of Monuments and Historic Buildings was put into place in 1984, and since then, CNMH has worked on these catalogs (ibid., p. 28).
Jorge González Briseño was sub-director of the Catalog and Zones section, and at the time of my visit, his section had begun to import data on the historic centers of Mexico City, Puebla, and Zacatecas into a GIS. He explained how the cataloging process worked:

Let’s take the example of the first city we cataloged. San Cristóbal de las Casas, in Chiapas. First, we gather up information that is available in archives and libraries. We try to be as prepared as possible and compile much background information. Then, we move into the field. We conduct a detailed architectural survey of each building, we take photos on the inside and outside and more recently, video filming has been added to the inventory. Of course, this is easier in federal property, such as convents, churches, and other public buildings. In some cases, we cannot find the owner at his or her property. It is often difficult to gain access. Sometimes we solicit special permits from the state or municipal governments to gain access. This also does not work all the time, of course. We note every architectural feature of the building. In the case of Chiapas, we have covered the whole state, in eight volumes. Of course now, we have the catalog on CD.

Each World Heritage city has such a catalog, some are very elaborate and of sound quality, others are not. Guanajuato is such an example, it is a very old catalog.² Really, keeping the catalogs updated is a constant job. There are losses and demolitions every day. In order to keep up with these changes, we are now working the regional offices to create an electronic database that anyone who works at INAH offices across the country will be able to access and edit where applicable. This will help us immensely to keep the catalog updated. We have cataloged about 90,000 monuments now, so there is still much to be done to catalog all 110,000.

What we find in World Heritage cities is very uneven public administration. Querétaro, Campeche, and Guanajuato are so much better preserved than the historic center of México City. So planning and management has to be improved. We need to invest in long-term solutions that go beyond the length of a municipal or state administration.

We also do public surveys when we create a new monumental zone, to find out if people know much about them, if they are aware of the monuments around them, to help them understand what that means. We think this is very important. People are demanding more from us, so we try to provide them with as much information as possible. After all, we need them to understand it is worthwhile to protect their city.

— González Briseño (2008), Personal Interview.

²Guanajuato’s catalog was completed in 1989.
But not everyone had a positive view of the monumental zones or heritage more generally. Historian Elsa Malvido, who spent most of her professional life at DEH, criticized almost every aspect of the concept and particularly, her colleagues who happened to be anthropologists:

They want to make everything intangible heritage. The Day of the Dead, suddenly, they say it’s prehispanic, when it has its origins in European traditions in All Saints Day. They want to make all sorts of festivals heritage, without realizing that with this state recognition, it simply becomes folkloric. A folkloric presentation, nothing more and nothing less. At least with a building, there is some sense in preservation, but since UNESCO does not give any money, I do not know how they expect that to work. People will try to make the greatest gains out of their properties without putting in a dime. That is what capitalism is all about. And then when the building falls down, they can rebuild more cheaply. And it is always INAH’s fault anyway. INAH won’t let me work on my house in the way that I want to. So how can we try and raise awareness when there is no prospect of financial support, and when INAH has little or no bargaining chips with any other institution? And when we are considered the enemy? Above all, this is political. And you’ll never be able to remove this aspect.

— Malvido (2008), Personal Interview.

Once Mexico ratified the Convention in 1984, CNMH and the technical support directorate of INAH proposed the first tentative list for properties that should be inscribed in the list over the next five to ten years (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007a, p. 2). ICOMOS also provided assistance. In 1985, Comisión Nacional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos para la UNESCO (CONALMEX) presented UNESCO and the WHC with its final tentative list of 27 properties (ibid., p. 3). A representative sample of Mexico’s archaeological, natural, and cultural sites had been selected, though unfortunately, that first list is not reproduced. Due to the devastating 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, the first property nomination files were delayed to the following year. At the time, UNESCO still allowed multiple applications in one application period, with proposals due in December (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of more recent application procedures).

After the Federal Law was enacted in 1972, fifty historic centers were decreed from 1972 to 1976, among them, Guanajuato and Oaxaca (Álvarez Flores, 2008, p. 19). Interestingly
and mistakenly, the author Álvarez Flores (2008) groups Morelia in the early period, 1972 to 1976, when Morelia’s zone of monuments was only decreed in 1990 (Azevedo Salomão, 2006a; Hiriart Pardo, 2006a; INAH—CNMH, 2007). Forty further historic centers were decreed from 1976 until the report was published (2008, p. 20). In total, CNMH oversees an estimated 110,000 historic monuments, of which 92,500 have been cataloged (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 2).

Given that the Convention was ratified in 1978, CONALMEX approached the inscription process with a “greatest number of inscriptions at once” attitude, proposing six sites in December 1986, which would eventually be followed by perhaps two or three applications per application cycle (2007a, p. 4). The goal was to “catch up” with many other nations who had ratified the Convention earlier and therefore, had already managed to have a number of sites inscribed. The monumental zone declarations proved very useful in these early applications, where limited applications were nonetheless successful.

2.3 Legislating heritage and preservation: Federal Law concerning Monuments and Archaeological, Artistic, and Historic Zones

As early as shortly after Mexican independence from Spain did the new nation recognize the necessity to prevent the looting of its patrimony (Rojas Degadillo, 2006). Looting of archaeological as well as church artifacts is still a problem in Mexico, and most of Latin America. Most archaeological areas simply cannot be protected adequately, and similarly, many churches lack the capacity to protect their assets. A recent example: The doors of the Cathedral of Oaxaca were stolen in 2005 during restoration efforts (Hispana Nostra, 2007).

The first national patrimony law was enacted on 30 January, 1930, though quickly succeeded by another iteration on 27 December 1933, in conjunction with regulations, which went into effect on 6 April, 1934 (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 16). This law stipulated that all archaeological sites and objects therein belonged to the nation, and all

³A few pages further down in the report, however, Álvarez Flores (2008) does give the correct date, 20 December 1990, when Morelia’s historic center was listed as nationally recognized monumental and historical zone.

⁴To my knowledge, they have yet to be recovered.
privately-owned archaeological collections needed to be registered with the Department of Monuments (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 16). A first iteration of a federal law on the cultural patrimony of the nation was passed in 1970, but it took only two years to be replaced by the *Ley Federal*, which is still in force today (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p. 49).

The *Ley Federal*, enacted on 6 May, 1972, was crucial in confirming INAH’s power over the nation’s archaeological, historic, and cultural heritage (see Appendix B). In contrast, INBA, which is charged with protecting the arts and architecture of the twentieth century, never enjoyed much influence, with the powers of permits for restoration projects firmly resting with INAH and its regional offices. Still, where convenient, state and local governments can also restore buildings, as long as the required permits from INAH are obtained (Becerill Miró, 2003, p. 59). However, local and municipal governments were not included in Article 3, which lists the authorities in charge of protecting heritage. There is also no mention of how restoration might be financed. Given the age of the legislation, financing was seen implicitly perhaps as the responsibility of the federation. Certainly, the federal government still provides the bulk of financing, but trusteeships, often made up of all three governmental levels as well as the private sector have become more common over time. Most importantly, in its Article 41, the *Ley Federal* operationalized the idea of “zone of monuments” which delimited areas with buildings of historic and artistic value, and not just singular buildings (Olivé Negrete and Cottom, 1995, p. 54).

It also stipulated the introduction of a public register of monuments and zones to foster better control and protection (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p. 49). When the President authorizes a new zone of monuments, it is published in the official federal register to become official. However, ironically, Article 24 states that publication in the register does not imply authenticity of the registered building, it has to go through yet another means of vetting, an undue complication of matters (García, 2003, p. 83). Architect Salvador Díaz-Berrio also notes that some aspects of the *Ley Federal* are imprecise, and even artificial, such as the distinction between historic and artistic, when that is simply meant to differentiate the nineteenth century (“historic”) from the twentieth century (“artistic”) (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p. 50).

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5INBA was created in 1946.
Despite its flaws and limitations, the *Ley Federal* remains on the books and is the basis for the protection of heritage in Mexico.

### 2.4 INAH’s World Heritage Office

INAH’s *World Heritage* Office, located in Mexico City, was formed in 2001 (2008, p. 27). It is in charge of producing the *World Heritage* application files. Architect Francisco Javier López Morales is the director of the office. He was trained at ENCRYM and eventually served as subdirector at CNMH from 1993 to 1999. He is also an active member of ICOMOS and has represented Mexico at meetings of the WHC.

The office is divided into seven sections. They are: executive support, secretary to the director, a subdirector, Department of Projects, Cultural Heritage, Intangible Heritage, and Diffusion and Publications (*Dirección de Patrimonio Mundial*, 2011).

Apart from assisting potential applications to UNESCO, and identifying those that ought to be on the country’s tentative *World Heritage* list, the office also is meant to educate the public about the *Convention* and UNESCO’s mission more generally (Álvarez Flores, 2008, p. 27).

Francisco Javier López Morales explained that the applications for inclusion on the *World Heritage* list had evolved significantly from the early applications of Oaxaca, Guanajuato, and Morelia:

Prior to the year 2000, the application process was not very complex, the applications were very reduced. They consisted of the area, the coordinates, legal data, and a bit of the history, some maps, which were copies of copies of copies, and a very thin bibliography. The quality is really poor, objectively speaking. It is simply a reflection of the first period of inscriptions.

But in 2000, there was a crisis of sorts in the WHCM. Italy alone put forward twelve applications, simply too many! And all were of this reduced quality. So, the operational guidelines became more strict. Now, only one natural site and one cultural site per country can be submitted, and the applications are incredibly detailed. Each site is described in great detail, there are many, many annexes, and complimentary books are delivered to Paris. All the information is now compiled in three languages, English, French, and Spanish. The documentation is very, very extensive now and takes years to compile. The examination of the documents is
carried out very thoroughly and closely. And during this period, ICOMOS and IUCN visit the application sites.

— López Morales (2008), *Personal Interview*.

This increased scrutiny explains why applications that are put forward for consideration have to be successful, given the effort, time, and resources spent on application preparation, and it is also the raison d’être for his office. While CNMH can account for the documentation on the historic monumental zones, it is not specifically equipped to deal with the complexities that UNESCO and the WHC present. Thus, López Morales is the go-to person for all things *World Heritage* related.

López was very confident that San Miguel de Allende, Mexico’s contender for 2008, would be accepted on the list. His office cooperated closely with the municipal government and CNMH to produce the extensive and detailed application to the WHCM. It serves as a form of quality control, as López Morales is very aware of UNESCO requirements and expectations. Clearly, selection for the *World Heritage* list has become more strategic, that is to ensure that applications make it through upon their first submission to the WHCM.

He questioned the utility of the periodic reporting scheme:

> While the idea is a good one, I’m not convinced by the implementation of periodic reporting. It is not clear who submits the report and sometimes, the authorities do not cooperate with the monitoring team as much as they ought to. So I question the outcomes of the reports a bit. They could be useful, but I think they need to be better designed and probably better explained to the authorities.

— López Morales (*ibid*.), *Personal Interview*.

Much of the office’s work concentrates on the diffusion of *World Heritage* in all its forms, tangible, intangible, and natural. To that end, it has organized three conferences in Mexico in conjunction with ICOMOS and produced publications.

### 2.5 SEDESOL’s Hábitat program: investing in entrepreneurial historic centers

SEDESOL’s Hábitat program, launched in 2003, has a “historic center” component which specifically provides funding to Mexico’s *World Heritage* centers but also any city with more
than 15,000 inhabitants and a historic center. Cities have to present projects in order to receive funding. A number of agencies are involved (Figure 2.1). Erik Abrín Frutos, sub-director of Sustainable Urban Projects in Dirección General de Desarrollo Urbano y Suelo (DGDUS), based in SEDESOL, explained the purpose of his office and its work:

The World Heritage cities have to apply for funding, and we technically vet their projects and approve the proposals the cities submit. We are the technical validation. All these cities have to somehow find funding, so they apply to Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA), Secretaría de Turismo (SECTUR). Of course there is the national SECTUR, who are like us, but have much more money at their disposal, about US$7,300,000.

The problem has been this: isolated projects that are only focused on the look of the place, very short-term, and that's it. I will give you a concrete example. Tlacotalpan, which is the smallest of the World Heritage cities, was really not doing well, Francisco López Morales, from the World Heritage office was extremely concerned that it would lose its designation. Why? Because it turns out that two municipal administrations spent US$ 2,200,000 in six years, but not on the projects that they had applied for, but on other things. So, we had to drag the state and municipal governments along by the ear to rectify this situation. It was really negative for the residents, because aside from tourism, there is no work, so people started renting out their houses during peak times. It's a small city, so it felt overrun by tourists, which impacted local quality of life. And this is where we really want to have the projects make a difference: in the quality of life of local residents.

In effect, they were saying: "This house isn’t mine anymore, it belongs to UNESCO, I can’t fix it in the way that I want. Thus, I don’t care anymore and I’m just going to let it fall down." This happened because the local government did not involve people in its projects and programs. In our view, public participation is absolutely vital, because if local people are not involved, whatever project you are wanting to implement, it will fail.

— Abrín Frutos (2008b), Personal Interview.

He stressed the importance of improving participation across the board, in terms of government as well as civil society and citizens. However, looking at SEDESOL’s official brochure for the historic centers program, the supported projects look rather superficial:

• Rescue and renovation of façades
• Structural reinforcement of at-risk monuments
Figure 2.1: Investment, normativity, and support for historic centers in Mexico.
(Source: Abrín Frutos, 2008a, p. 11.)
• Rehabilitation or renovation of streets and roads
• Construction of public parking spaces in historic centers or in its areas of influence (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2008).

Somewhere, there seems to be a disconnect between Abrín’s or DGDUS’s understanding of Hábitat and the “official” rhetoric. However, DGDUS was only formed in 2007, and he admitted that while Hábitat had existed since 2003, in the previous administration, under President Fox, it had not been very active.

We have worked very hard and our work has been accepted by the other agencies that we work with. SECTUR, for example, is happy to provide money for projects, as long as we do the vetting. We have exchanged views and experiences with Jorge Ortega from ANCMPM, they can do a lot in the way of coordination. And help cities with their funding applications.

The important thing is to make sure that projects actually do what the application said it would do. So, if a city applies to replace some sidewalks, and a year later, we go and check, and the sidewalks are still broken, and instead, they tell us they built a wall … well, they won’t be able to apply for funding for the next year. If you don’t do what you say you will do, then you won’t get any money. Accountability is a huge problem and we are trying hard to change attitudes, to make people stick to budgets and provide information. We need the paper trail. We have to stop money draining away and lack of audits.

From 2004 to 2007, Hábitat invested US$13,600,000 in projects, we invest in cities with more than 15,000 inhabitants and preferably, World Heritage cities, but we do also finance projects in other historic centers. If we decide a project is feasible and worthwhile, then it will be carried out, even if the city does not have a World Heritage historic center. In 2004, there were seventy-six projects, in 2005, eighty-one, in 2006, ninety, and in 2007, seventy, a total of 317 projects. So we have been very active and

— Abrín Frutos (2008b), Personal Interview.

Abrín insisted that more planning, in the short-, medium-, and long-term was needed to guarantee sustainability. By sustainability, he meant economic, social, and environmental sustainability of projects. His office had conducted a “FODA” strategic exercise, a “fortalezas, oportunidades, debilidades, amenazas” or strengths, opportunities, weaknesses,
and threats assessment. This assessment strategy is based on strategic planning practices (García Del Castillo, Juárez, and Granados, 2010).

The weaknesses or threats of course are multiple, projects are isolated in nature, there is no planning, and loss of credibility on the part of government. There is no long-term planning. There is no supervision and auditing. Therefore, strategic projects are needed to improve citizen involvement. We have to develop management plans and ensure their implementation.

Above, all we have to make sure that everyone is informed. If a project is to be successful, it has to be transparent and local people have to know what is happening. Governments can come up with great projects, but if there is no information, then the citizens will block good ideas, ideas that would even benefit them, simply because they were not involved in the development process. We see this over and over again.

— Abrín Frutos (2008b), Personal Interview.

Clearly, Abrín sought to order investment in historic centers and to make local and state governments more accountable, a huge task. To achieve this, coordination with ANCMPM as well as INAH was sought. To get funding, cities had to present projects, there was no other way to receive support. Whether or not this may lead to a glut of projects that cannot be properly supervised or reviewed, did not seem to be considered.

Apart from vetting projects, DGDUS also assists cities in the development of their planning tools, with the view that master plans and management plans are the way forward (Abrín Frutos, 2008a, p. 13).

2.6 NGO efforts in support of historic centers: ANCMPM

The Asociación Nacional de Ciudades Mexicanas Patrimonio Mundial (National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities) was founded on August 15, 1996, due to the initiative of the mayors of Mexico’s World Heritage cities at the time. The civil association’s history can be divided into three stages: From 1996 to 2001, its main emphasis was information exchange between the designated cities, from 2001 to 2005, the organization began managing federal resources to carry out different projects to improve the urban image of the member cities, including lighting and urban signage, and finally, beginning
in 2006, it began focusing its attention on the promotion of the cities (Ortega González, 2008). The association’s headquarter is in a non de-script high rise on one of Mexico City’s large avenues. Luis Alberto Peréz Rodríguez, its legal affairs officer, apologized that the organization’s director general, Jorge González Ortega, was not available, as he was away, promoting the association and its members.

Principally, we do fundraising and promotion. We have a Board of Directors, whose president is one of the mayors of the World Heritage cities. Similarly, the vice-president is also a mayor. They remain in the post for one year. Other than that, there is our director general, Jorge González Ortega, who is in Spain at the moment, myself, and the young man who answers the phone and who let you into the building. The member cities pay a small fee for us to keep going. We also rely on donations from industry. But really, our financial resources are very, very limited.

Once we receive funding from SECTUR or SEDESOL, we divide it up equally between the cities, however, only cities that present us with a project receive the money. So, if three cities present us with projects, underground cabling, for example, or sidewalk repairs, then we divide up the money between them. We hope to encourage more proposals, but to that end, we need to receive more money. But that is the idea, to motivate the cities to present us with projects.

— Peréz Rodríguez (2008), Personal Interview.

Since 2001, the organization has obtained roughly US$41,662,535 million from the federal government to help fund a variety of rehabilitation projects (Ortega González, 2008). Mainly, these funds are provided by SECTUR, SEDESOL, and FONCA and is contingent upon municipal governments providing matching funds. Unfortunately, ANCMPM only provides these details for 2007 and 2008 (see Table 2.1 for Guanajuato’s funding in 2008), and in 2007, none of the cities in my study benefited from SECTUR funding. That means they did not present a project to ANCMPM. Only with an approved proposal are funds distributed.

It is important to point out that the Presa de los Santos is not located in Guanajuato’s historic center at all but in Marfil, which falls within the World Heritage designated area. The Presa San Renovato is on the outskirts of the historic center. Morelia, in contrast, only received US$45,970 from SECTUR, matched by the local government, for a total of
T able 2.1: Funding procured by ANCMPM in 2008 for Guanajuato, in US$.
(Source: ANCMPM, 2010.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>SECTUR</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subterranean Street</td>
<td>41,177</td>
<td>41,177</td>
<td>82,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational area surrounding Presa San Renovato</td>
<td>76,174</td>
<td>76,174</td>
<td>152,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presa de los Santos</td>
<td>45,970</td>
<td>45,970</td>
<td>91,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>326,642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T able 2.2: Funding obtained by ANCMPM in 2008 for Oaxaca, in US$.
(Source: ibid.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>SECTUR</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Tourist Information Module</td>
<td>9,140</td>
<td>9,140</td>
<td>18,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Information Prototype Module</td>
<td>3,046</td>
<td>3,046</td>
<td>6,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply and placement of 1,743 trash bins</td>
<td>151,923</td>
<td>151,923</td>
<td>303,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>328,218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

US$83,700 to fix its sidewalks (ANCMPM, 2010). Oaxaca received much more support than Morelia, but similar to Guanajuato, despite facing increased needs after the 2006 protests, which caused widespread damage, particularly from graffiti (see Table 2.2).

With regard to promotion, Pérez Rodríguez explained:

> We want to make the cities into a recognizable brand, trademark “Ciudades Patrimonio Mundial” (World Heritage Cities) to bring more visitors to the cities. If you ask someone here, how many World Heritage cities does Mexico have, they will not know the answer. So, we need to promote the cities more vigorously, and to do so we are going to sell different packages. Two or three routes, perhaps. If you go to Querétaro, then Guanajuato, then Zacatecas. But we are just developing this strategy. We feel that the cities have a great potential, and it makes sense to promote them together.

— Pérez Rodríguez (2008), Personal Interview.

In 2011, Fondo Nacional de Fomento al Turismo (FONATUR) and ANCMPM signed an agreement to promote planning and tourism development of the World Heritage cities (Gómez López, 2011). ANCMPM also works closely with its Spanish equivalent to in-
crease the visibility of its cities. There was little concern as to whether or not the joint-promotion would cause any problems, perhaps because this was only in the development stages.

**ANCMPM’s promotional literature**

Part of ANCMPM’s mission is to produce promotional literature on behalf of the World Heritage cities. The organization publishes a glossy magazine *CIUTAT* since 2007. In each issue different aspects of “patrimonio” in the designated cities are highlighted. In 2008, Guanajuato featured in one of the issues (ANCMPM, 2008a). It gives a brief overview of the city’s mining history, its network of subterranean tunnels (though I should note it lists 23 tunnels, not 26), and provides a calendar of the city’s cultural events, as well as articles on local cuisine, and the city’s mining hero, “El Pipila.” Of course, it also provides ample advertising space for local hotels with package deals, as well as restaurants. Later that year, *Ciutat* also published issues dedicated to Morelia (ANCMPM, 2008b) and Oaxaca (ANCMPM, 2008c). Ironically, on the second page of the Morelia issue, a huge mall in Morelia (Plaza Americas) is advertised—perhaps not exactly part of World Heritage, but then probably symptomatic of the need to attract a huge tourism segment, and not “just” cultural tourists. The magazines do not contain any maps of the cities. The Oaxaca issue highlights the city’s traditional festivities, such as the harvest festival, the “Guelaguetza,” its Easter week activities, as well as the “Day of the Dead” celebrations in November, although this is traditionally a much bigger event in Michoacán than Oaxaca.

In 2003, in collaboration with SECTUR, SEP, CONALMEX, ANCMPM published a coffee table book, *World’s Cultural Heritage – Mexican Cities*, about the then nine Mexican World Heritage cities. Each chapter, written by Mexican architects and art historians, provides a brief historical snapshot of each city, its urban morphology, and architecture. It also mentions the World Heritage list inscription dates, but that is about as “technical” as it gets. Curiously, there are no maps of the cities in the book, it relies solely on photography.

The organization has also produced brochures for each of the cities. The brochure advertising Guanajuato, (Figure 2.2) interestingly, brands it as “Ciudad Museo”—“Museum City.” If anything, the expression “museum” when discussed in the context of historic centers, was deemed extremely negative, all public officials wanted a lively historic cen-
Figure 2.2: Covers of ANCMPM brochures for Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca. (Source: ANCMPM, 2003a.)

... particularly at night. The photo on the brochure of a seemingly empty subterranean street only underscores the museum-like aspect. While Guanajuato is the Museum City, Morelia is dubbed the “Garden of New Spain” and Oaxaca as the “Mexico we have always imagined.” These marketing slogans are clearly meant to conjure up colonialism, particularly in the case of Morelia, with the reference to New Spain. This early promotional campaign was squarely aimed at a national audience, with all information in Spanish. The maps printed in the brochures for each city are discussed in Section 4.8, Section 5.7, and
Section 6.7, respectively.

2.7 Conclusions

The complexity of the federal panorama of Mexico’s heritage preservation and protection only points to even greater complexities once state and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations at that scale are considered. Initially, INAH’s role was to defend Mexico’s heritage to help consolidate the national pride in the mestizo nation and prevent heritage theft (Ferry, 2003, p. 38). Of course, resources are scarce and demands on the federal as well as state INAH offices are not commensurate with the organization’s budget nor its personnel.

Ensuring that the nation’s catalog of monuments is brought forward to reflect technological advances has also been a slow process. Many desperately require updates, as is the case in Guanajuato. By moving databases online, keeping more up-to-date records should be facilitated, but the fieldwork still needs to be done and requires personnel and time. The contradictions in the Ley Federal remain unaddressed, perhaps because revisiting it would not necessarily result in a better legal tool.

While DGDUS recognized the problems inherent in municipal and state administrations and their handling of revitalization projects, and the need to include local populations in these processes, its power relative to some state governments may be limited, despite being a federal agency. Furthermore, experience shows that despite its vetting process, money still gets diverted and misapplied.

Finally, with ANCMPM turning its attention to tourism promotion to make a brand name out of the World Heritage cities, undoubtedly, the pressure to make visual improvements for the sake of tourism will become much greater, and stand in contrast to Hábitat’s mission to improve the lives of locals in a tangible and meaningful way, not just by beautification.

These different sets of priorities and interests will become further apparent in the case studies, which follow after a brief review of methods and data gathering.

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Footnote 6: To date, this has not been outsourced to private contractors—yet.
Chapter 3

What Is Really Out There? Gathering Data

3.1 Introduction

“I’d like to get information about the buildings that are cataloged as historic in Guanajuato,” I asked an urban planner in Guanajuato’s Urban Development office, “I’m a researcher from New York State.” “Oh, we don’t have that catalog. You’ll have to visit the local INAH office.”

“Do you have records for the public works projects completed by previous municipal administrations,” I asked an engineer in Morelia’s Public Works office. “No,” he answered politely, albeit reddening slightly, “we do not keep records from previous administrations.”

“Has the governor’s office given you their annual reports from 2002 onwards,” I asked one of the archivists in Oaxaca’s State Archive. “I’m sorry,” she said, “but the governor has yet to send us any annual reports from his administration.”

These brief anecdotes tell the same story: Mexico’s public administrators and archivists are on the whole very helpful and friendly, yet frequently unable to provide a researcher with information, as record-keeping is patchy, at best. Fellow geographer Veronica Crossa (2006, pg.69) encountered similar difficulties due to the common lack of “institutional memory.” Nevertheless, the absence of records also “means” “something.” In this chapter, I will reflect on my methods, what information I encountered, and how I went about gathering it. First, I will explain some of the bureaucratic logistics involved with getting access to archives and “public” information, and discuss the use of newspapers as a main means to reconstruct and supplement official information. Then, I describe how I went about contacting and interviewing tour guides, and finally, reflect upon how my local connections hindered or aided my research, as well as some general fieldwork conclusions.

My goal was to gather evidence how each city prepared their World Heritage application.
dossiers to document this process. Electronic versions of the dossiers were available in the National Archives. I further spoke with architects involved in the national designation as well production of the UNESCO dossiers.

### 3.2 Local liaisons

During my preliminary fieldwork visit in the summer of 2006, I began making connections with local academics to provide me with logistical support. This meant two things: as I was writing proposals, they wrote letters stating they knew me and supported my research. In Guanajuato, I liaised with INAH historian Fernando Sánchez Díaz, in Morelia, with the Architecture department and particularly, Carlos Hiriart Pardo and Catherine McEnulty-Ettinger, and in Oaxaca, very loosely, with Oliver Fröhling of the Universidad de la Tierra (University of the Earth). Much more important, however, was their assistance once I began the longer fieldwork period, as they were able to provide me with “oficios,” letters of introduction for local archives and the local and state government offices. These had to be brought to the offices, and signed and stamped. Naturally, each archive and office worked a little differently. The State Archive of Guanajuato provided me instant access once I brought in the letter; however, when I realized I would have to photograph newspaper articles and maps, I had to bring in an updated letter to state precisely what I was doing. Ironically, then, record-keeping of permission letters is very precise, while very recent historical documents are far more difficult to come by, if at all.

One drawback to local contacts (particularly in the rather small town of Guanajuato) is the history they share with others — which can be positive or negative. At the time, the local administration, for example, was not very popular, and Fernando Sánchez Díaz had openly criticized the officials, complicating my access or people’s interest in cooperating with me at times. As a researcher, it was sometimes rather difficult to read between the lines and disentangle the personal problems and rivalries between local actors. Nevertheless, having local contacts outweighed the drawbacks of potential political difficulties, because these contacts helped me immensely with official access, as well as with their suggestions for other people to consult. In many cases, they even took it upon themselves to make these introductions and set up further meetings.
3.3 A Note about Statistics

The availability of statistical information on tourism is highly uneven. Most of the archives could have provided me with birth and civil registries dating back to the seventeenth century; however, statistical information about the last twenty years is often not readily available. Consistent figures about tourism, origin of visitors, length of stay, entry at airports, etc., has only been systematically collected since 1986. The Sistema Integral de Información de Mercados Turísticos (SIIMT), created by the Consejo de Promoción Turística (CPTM), is responsible for gathering these data. However, access to their data is limited to government officials — through a stroke of good fortune and the generosity of a fellow researcher, I was able to contact an individual who works for the organization to provide me with some data. However, even these data, like all data, must be taken with a grain of salt: Hotel occupancy, for instance, is only measured for registered and starred hotels, not other establishments. Therefore, there is most likely a huge amount of under-reporting.

Whenever possible, I asked officials during interviews to provide me with statistical information. Most could only provide me with information from “their” administration. In Oaxaca, even that strategy failed routinely: the current governor’s approach to transparency has been negligible. This is also reflected in the informational content of the state government’s website. Minimally, the governmental websites were useful to find officials and their contact information.

I also consulted the yearly reports that local and state governments produce during their administrations. Admittedly, they are pieces of propaganda, to a certain extent, but they do at least provide some more statistical data. The accessibility to these reports, which are theoretically in the public domain, was also uneven. The destruction of data is mainly due to lack of storage facilities, so I was told. However, legislators sometimes take an active role in this destruction. In 1997, Guanajuato’s state legislature decided that all information from public accounts in 45 municipalities until fiscal year 1990 should be destroyed (A.M.Guanajuato Editorial, 1997a).
3.4 Newspapers as reflections of recent history

Relying on newspapers to fill in many gaps in recent history is fraught with problems. Deadlines are tight, papers need to be sold, if it bleeds it leads. During my review of local newspapers in the various archives, I asked myself the following questions: Is patrimony exciting or interesting enough to appear in the papers? If yes, what sorts of articles are written and how informative and well-researched are they with regards to UNESCO, the Convention, and World Heritage? If it is not consistently reported on, why might there be peaks and valleys in coverage? How is tourism reported on? Is there a coverage pattern? If so, what might that consist of? And finally, how are public works programs that intervened in some form in the historic center portrayed by the press? Furthermore, I tried to determine the backgrounds of those journalists who frequently reported on heritage issues. This was not always possible, and contacting journalists for interviews proved difficult—they simply did not seem interested in talking to me, with the exception of Mario Girón in Oaxaca. It could be a question of time and deadlines, but it also could simply be disinterest or their wishing to not reveal either sources or information. They could also be afraid, as journalists who routinely report on narco-trafficking end up dead.

Yolanda Sereno Ayala in Morelia, Verónica Gasca Rosales in Guanajuato, and Mario Girón in Oaxaca stand out as consistently reporting on heritage or by extension, cultural topics. Sereno Ayala is an artist, as well as a journalist, and has written for La Voz de Michoacán since the 1970s.

When I arrived at the local archives, I first had to find out which papers were available. The State Archive in Guanajuato only had collected A.M. since the mid 1980s. In Morelia’s Hemeroteca de la Universidad San Nicolás de Hidalgo, the La Voz de Michoacán, was available, and in Oaxaca’s Hemeroteca Pública “Periodista Néstor Sánchez Hernández,” El Imparcial. During my stays in each city, I bought daily copies of the same newspapers, as well as the Correo de Guanajuato, and Cambio de Michoacán in Morelia. In Oaxaca, I also bought Noticias—Voz e Imagen de Oaxaca. I began my archival searches a year before the World Heritage designations, thus 1986 for Oaxaca, 1987 in the case of Guanajuato, and 1989 for Morelia. In the case of Morelia, I selected 1989, because in 1990, the city was designated as a national monumental zone, thus making the time period before that
designation relevant and interesting. I identified the local news sections and focused on them to make the searching most efficient. In Guanajuato, I had to photograph the articles I was interested in, while in Morelia, I indexed the pages of interest and these were then photocopied for me. In Oaxaca, I encountered a mix of both approaches, as any items twenty years or older needed to be photographed, while anything younger than twenty years could be indexed and then photocopied, even though all years were bound the same way. I kept track of dates and titles in a large spreadsheet. In total, I collected 3,557 articles.

A main peak for UNESCO related news is the anniversary of the designation, in Guanajuato’s case, December 1988, in Oaxaca, December 1987, and in Morelia, December 1991. Another peak are the anniversaries of the cities’ foundations, particularly in the case of Morelia, which pushed for its designation as a World Heritage site to coincide with the 450th anniversary of its founding.

Major holiday periods also led to more tourism-related stories, frequently projections about hotel occupation and the economic rewards. Reporting on UNESCO and World Heritage was frequently confused, with journalists reporting that the designations automatically meant funding from UNESCO. Often, headlines screamed that the city’s designation was in danger of being lost, when really, this was not the case. Case in point: only one city, Dresden, has been stricken off the designation list thus far (Connolly, 2009). Again, a sense of urgency or threat in a headline may sell more papers. Overall, coverage of World Heritage was rather sparse, sometimes erroneous, and mostly superficial.

### 3.5 Tracking down tour guides

All of my interviews were conducted with accredited tour guides. In Guanajuato, the Municipal Tourism Council publishes a brochure with accredited tour guides, which includes their specialties and language capabilities. In Morelia, the guides were listed on the state tourism web site. In Oaxaca, I asked during an interview at the state tourism ministry if they could provide me with a list of guides. Of course I knew all of these guides would only be accredited guides. As a first means of introduction, I sent emails to the guides who provided email addresses, in order to be able to explain my project and give them the choice of contacting me by phone or email. If I heard back, I immediately tried to schedule meetings with them, as they were taking time out of their schedules to talk to me. If I did not get an
email response, I tried calling guides and left them messages. Overall, email was more successful, as I was able to explain myself better. All of the guides I spoke with were surprised at my interest and were more than happy to share their experiences with me. The majority were males, so perhaps they were also simply flattered that a woman was interested in their work. I generally asked a handful of specific questions (such as where they work, if they go to the historic center, whether they mentioned and explained World Heritage), but then simply let the conversation flow. I took this approach with other interviewees as well.

In Guanajuato, I had the good fortune of having met a guide early on who was in the midst of setting up a civil association to better represent the tour guides interests to the authorities. While their meeting was private, I was able to speak to three more guides afterwards. Most of these now accredited guides started out as “pirate” or unaccredited guides. I could have probably encountered these “rogue” guides walking around the cities, but I am not sure if they would have felt comfortable talking to me. After all, they do not really know who I am and what my capacity as an “investigadora” — “researcher” was; they do have to be vigilant about the police and furthermore, approaching them on the street would have meant a direct loss of business.

3.6 Interviews

I learned early on that sticking to scripted questions made the interview setting very uncomfortable, particularly for the interviewee. Especially officials seemed to feel very self-conscious about the question and answer format. Thus, on many occasions, I reverted to asking them very open-ended questions, and to begin with, to describe what their particular office worked on and what their role within the organization was. The more people were allowed to talk about themselves or their organizations, the more relaxed they seemed to become. I also invited them to ask me questions and frequently, this interaction encouraged them to speak more freely. Even though most were public officials, not all of them were clearly trained or used to speaking with researchers or even the local media. Being a complete outsider might have added to their nervousness, but in many ways, it may have facilitated access to people, because officials did not want to appear unfriendly to foreign researchers.
Not all public officials wanted to speak with me, particularly those who were about to leave office (in Morelia) were reluctant and wary of me and my precise intentions. Of course, I have to question the truthfulness of some of the people I interviewed. What would they gain by divulging a lot of information? What could they potentially lose? Some clearly wanted to avoid being interviewed, by making themselves unavailable, not answering calls, or not responding to emails or visits to the office. Some seemed more genuinely interested in my research than others—those interested proved most helpful, by calling colleagues in other offices and thus making that first connection.

In Mexico City, I spoke with six government officials working in SEDESOL and INAH, as well as one academic and a staff member of ANCMPM. I also attended the annual ICOMOS conference and used this opportunity for networking. Whenever possible, I returned to the capital to attend conferences to get a better sense of the debates occurring among Mexican academics and experts. I also visited the Archivo General de la Nación, the Sociedad de Geografía y Estadística, and INAH’s library in the National Museum of Anthropology. In Guanajuato, I spoke with twenty-eight people, including five tour guides. In Morelia, I spoke with twenty people, including five tour guides, and attended a meeting of Esperanza Ramírez’s NGO, as well as a conference, organized by the architecture department of the University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo. The Hemeroteca of the University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo was the main archive I accessed, but I also visited the state and municipal archives in my search for information on World Heritage. In Oaxaca, I interviewed thirty-six people, the majority government officials and other experts involved with the historic center, as well as five tour guides.

### 3.7 Photography

Using photography as evidence is subjective by nature. For the purposes of this dissertation, I use photographs to illustrate the then current state of some buildings in the historic centers, signage, advertisements, and construction projects. In some cases, photographs were the only means to capture a restoration project in progress and to collect some data about the project, as costs are frequently included on official banners. Photography was often also the only option when working with newspapers, because not all archives allowed photocopying. Where available, I contrast my photographs with older photography, to
make sense of landscape changes — or, similarly, to show that little or nothing may have changed in the intervening period. “Before and after” photography may seem simplistic, but it is also highly effective and straightforward.

3.8 Reflection on the fieldwork experience

Timing is everything and perhaps even more so in the field. During my first visit to Oaxaca in August 2006, the teacher’s strike greatly complicated my access to local and state offices. Simply put, officials were terrified the teachers would try to takeover the offices, so they remained closed. While the situation was certainly tense at the time, I never felt personally threatened or unsafe, I simply avoided hot spots and acted on local advice. In many ways, the air of uncertainty had remained by the time I returned in March 2008, with kidnappings and political, more so than drug-related violence escalating. In contrast, drug-trafficking has most affected Morelia of the three study sites, as the city and by extension Michoacán, has become involved in the turf wars.

Of course, I was aware that as a woman, I had to take more precautions. I did benefit from not having blonde hair, which would have made me stick out immediately, though being relatively tall probably did single me out as non-Mexican. Fortunately, I pick up local expressions rather quickly, so many people I approached initially thought I was “chilanga,”¹ rather than a “gringa,” American. I am also keenly aware that I can only provide a “snapshot” of how these three cities manage World Heritage, based on my own understanding as well as my position as a researcher. Based on the lack of “hard” data, much of my analysis is built on my experience as well as solely on my understanding of documents and interviews. In the interview setting, there were probably subtleties that I missed, despite my decent command of the language. Some things do get “lost in translation.” However, I see my work as complementary to that of Mexican colleagues. Wherever possible, I shared information with other researchers, because they, in turn would share information with me.

Timing issues also arose in Morelia due to the changeover in the municipal and state governments that occurred while I was there. Obviously, it takes a new administration

¹Chilango is local vernacular for a person from Mexico City.
some time to get settled into office. Similarly, Oaxaca’s municipal government was still rather new when I arrived, having started its term in January 2008. Furthermore, I had not expected to run into strikes at the archive in Morelia, but since it is run by the University San Nicolás de Hidalgo, it was included in union action, beginning in February 2008. Arguably, all of this makes fieldwork even more interesting, if challenging.

Perhaps the most bewildering aspect of fieldwork is deciding when to stop. Do I really have enough data? Is the evidence useful? To that end, it helps not to be close to the field, though the Internet has significantly diminished that distance.
Chapter 4

Gallant Guanajuato: Mining World Heritage

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the case study site of Guanajuato, in the state of the same name, located in northern-central Mexico. First, a brief overview of the history of the city, which became the center of Spanish silver mining in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Moving from the distant past to the present, it analyzes the “designation narrative,” how Guanajuato designated its historic center first nationally, in 1982, and then achieving UNESCO World Heritage status, in 1988. The chapter then discusses the city’s and state’s political structure, as well as specific institutions and organizations that work to preserve the city’s patrimony, and the planning mechanisms that have circulated over time. Next, it addresses tourism maps, past and present, tourism promotion, and the experience of tour guides in the city. The chapter reveals that first, public works interventions in the historic center have been intermittent due to financial pressure, but also, due to interest or lack thereof on the part of municipal or state leadership. While the state government’s financial contribution to the historic center’s “rescue” has been significant, the municipal presidents or mayors have been far more influential in effectuating changes in the landscape, and, to leave their “mark where it is visible, at the bottom of the ravine” (Ferro de la Sota, 2007). Therefore, it is useful to critique and analyze their individual contributions chronologically. Second, the city’s industrial economy has nearly completely been replaced by the tourism industry, spurred in particular by the International Cervantes Festival, held every October, since 1972. I argue that in its tourism brochures, Guanajuato emphasizes its theatrical scenery that excludes not only locals, ignores the city’s mining heritage, but also places the historic center’s architecture at risk and at the whim of short-sighted bureaucrats, business interests, and lack of long-term, inclusive visions as to how
the historic center should be preserved for the future. Furthermore, the UNESCO “brand” name has been used to garner more financial support for the city. Much like natural resources, the historic fabric of Guanajuato’s historic center is not an infinite resource, as crumbling buildings and rampant “fachadismo” make plain.

Upon reviewing the newspaper records and interviewing local officials and architects, the following themes emerge and recur: the intensification of public works in the historic center and the investments made to “rescue” it; the lack of integrated restoration projects; the “pseudo tour guides” problem, that is, unlicensed tour guides (also called “pirates”) who offer their services to visitors and thus compete with trained and licensed tour guides; the invasion of restaurants into public spaces; legislation is not applied even-handedly; the cyclical nature of local and state politics in Guanajuato, with former mayors becoming local representatives and then running for mayor again; the desire for politicians to leave a noticeable “imprint” on the city, the increased visibility of World Heritage through the creation of an NGO to solicit more money from the federal government as well as internationally and to jointly promote Mexico’s World Heritage cities; continuous laments from hotel owners and business people that Guanajuato is not promoted enough abroad and nationally; that the city lacks tourist attractions; private patrimony properties are neglected to the point of complete decay; the role of INAH as protector of patrimony, mainly portrayed and perceived as an obstacle and yet, due to lack of resources, also not fully able to comply with its duties.

4.2 Guanajuato through space and time

The foundation of Guanajuato is always described as haphazard. The discovery of silver and other precious metals drove the city’s development, beginning with its first settlements sometime between 1548 and 1550, though the historical record is inconclusive (Lara Váldez, 1999). The Tarascans, the indigenous tribes that lived in the area at the time of conquest, referred to the place as “hill of the frogs” (Moor, 1968, p.18). The city lies at approximately 2,030 meters above sea level, and today, extends 13.6 square kilometers or 1,360 hectares (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). The area’s canyon topography and ubiquity of water facilitated further prospecting after the first silver deposits were discovered (ibid., p.189) (Lara Valdés and González, 2003). By the beginning of the nineteenth century,
the refining process required five tons of water for one ton of mineral (Meyer Cosío, 1998, p.54). Most of the initial settlements were located in the hillsides, but few vestiges from the sixteenth century remain (Lara Váldez, 1999). Mining camps formed and particularly the mining camp of Santa Fe on Cuarto Hill developed rapidly and eventually “gave rise to the process of urbanization that led to the formation of the administrative and religious ‘political quarter’ of the city along 2.8 kilometers of the riverbed” (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p.189). Unlike other colonial cities, then, Guanajuato was born more of necessity than as a planned community, which explains its adaptation to the canyon topography of the region (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 1972). In 1619, King Phillip III named Guanajuato “Villa de Santa Fé Real y Minas de Guanajuato” (Castro Rivas, López, and Rangel, 1999). By the early seventeenth century, the resident population numbered 3,117 (ibid., p.28). Furthermore, the entire livelihood of the area was based on mining and ore-smelting; “this industry was based on a slavery-feudal mode of production, with a social make-up of Spanish conquistadors and conquered indigenous people” (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 190). The city developed in a bi-polar fashion, with the extractive labor activities and worker’s quarters situated in the hills and on the hilltops, and the lower parts of the canyon saw the slow growth of neighborhoods, churches, and administrative facilities (ibid.) (Figure 4.1). The original source, unfortunately, does not provide a geographical scale, making it impossible to judge distances. It is unclear whether that was simply an oversight, or whether the original materials for these schematic maps simply did not feature geographical scales. Since the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) collated the historical maps, I am inclined to think that the original historical materials may not have featured geographical scales. Whatever the case, it is unfortunate and disappointing to be unable to judge distances.

Guanajuato gained city (ciudad) status in 1741, but did not officially assume this title until 1746. It is still unclear why the title wasn’t assumed until 1746, although historians suggest it may have been a matter of taxation, population, or rivalry with surrounding communities (Lara Váldez, 1999). Due to the uneven topography of the city, flooding was very common. Clergyman José Rozuela Ledesma compiled a famous map of Guanajuato in 1750 (Figure 4.2). It provides a good impression of the quickly growing canyon city and the crucial location of the river. Though the map does not reveal it, north=up. Another
Figure 4.1: First settlements, Guanajuato, 1565 (no scale included in source materials.
(Based on: INEGI, 2000a)
Figure 4.2: Topographic Map of Guanajuato, 1750.
(From: H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003b)
stylized sketch of the city in the midst of this growth period (Figure 4.3) provides an alter-native view. It too, highlights, the close proximity of the river to the city. Floods in 1750 and 1760 impacted the city’s architecture and record keeping (Lara Váldez, 1999). After another devastating flood in 1780, many buildings were razed or those deemed too low razed and rebuilt on higher ground (ibid.), and “between 1796 and 1803 [the city coun-cil] ‘boxed up’ the river by canalizing it with stone and mortar walls” (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 195). Thus, very little vestiges of the sixteenth century remain, and the city is not architecturally uniform (Lara Valdéz and González, 2003) although occasionally, older “layers” of the city emerge, evidenced in the discovery of the ex-convent San Pedro de Alcántara (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1996) in the mid-1990s. Local historian José Luis Lara Valdéz writes:

it is necessary, then, to distinguish between the urban core and architecture of the seventeenth century, dating back to the first four mining camps, and another core and architecture of the city dating to the eighteenth century, as well as how differentiated the city of the nineteenth century became (Lara Váldez, 1999, p. 138).

With the discovery of the principal mining vein, the Valenciana in 1768, the population of the city and the mines exploded. By 1792, the city and the district boasted a total population of 55,012, of which 24,160 were categorized as “Spanish” (Brading, 1972, p. 462). However, Guanajuato’s growth did not happen in isolation. The entire region, called the Bajío, was quite industrialized by the eighteenth century; “Querétaro and San Miguel el Grande (today San Miguel de Allende) were New Spain’s leading centers for the manufacture of woolen textiles; Celaya and Salamanca wove cotton; Léon made leather goods” (Brading, 1971, p. 224). The bonanza generated by Valenciana made Guanajuato’s production soar, as historian David Brading explains,

at the close of the eighteenth century, Guanajuato was the leading producer of silver in the world. Its annual output of over 5 million pesos amounted to one-sixth of All-American bullion, gold and silver combined, and equaled the entire production of either viceroyalty of Buenos Aires or Peru (ibid., p. 261).

Clearly, the discovery of Valenciana was pivotal for the ascendancy and growing importance of Guanajuato for the remainder of the eighteenth century. In 1792, 47 percent of
Figure 4.3: Guanajuato, 1750.
(Based on: INEGI, 2000a)
Guanajuato’s residents worked in some aspect of the mining industry (Brading, 1972). Ironically, perhaps, Guanajuato is considered mainly a colonial town, and has been promoted as such from the 1920s onward (Saragoza, 2001). Nevertheless,

many houses presented as colonial treasures by those who talk about and characterize Guanajuato without studying it as the most colonial city of the Americas, even though the houses never saw the glory days of the eighteenth century, and many no less the splendor of the Porfiriato. Thus, the city is no more colonial than from 1800 to 1810 (Lara Váldez, 1999, p. 140).¹

This peak in silver production, however, did not last long. The Mexican independence movement shook the economic foundations of Guanajuato to the core, and the city became a battleground. As the nineteenth century began, the city found itself in dire straights after a severe drought crippled mining productivity and led to food shortages for humans and animals alike (Brading, 1971). Unemployment surged and out of the growing discontent in the region developed the independence movement led by Father Hidalgo from nearby Dolores. He led a group of revolutionaries to Guanajuato in September 1810 and “called upon the peasantry to revolt” (ibid., p. 343). The miners joined the independence movement and much of the mining infrastructure was destroyed in the ensuing confrontations (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b; Rankine, 1992). Some mines were allowed to flood (Rankine, 1992). One miner, nicknamed “El Pipila,” is one of the heroes of Mexican independence, and is commemorated with a large statue overlooking Guanajuato’s historic center (Ferry, 2005; Mallan and Mallan, 2001).

Despite the independence turmoil, by the mid-1820s, however, the industry had regained its footing, and new construction in the city began (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). Most importantly, the rerouting of the Guanajuato river was planned and carried out, “and the city was divided into thirteen quarters with ninety-five blocks and the suburbs into thirteen quarters with sixty-one blocks” (ibid., p. 197). The mines became more prominent in maps, too (Figure 4.4). Foreign investors reinvigorated the sector, and the city was “revived with the bonanza of nearby La Luz in the 1840s” (Ferry, 2005, p. 58) (Rankine, 1992). The mines of Cata, Santa Lucía, San José de los Muchachos also contributed to the area’s

¹552 buildings are listed as historic or artistic buildings or monuments in Guanajuato.
Figure 4.4: Guanajuato and some of its mines, 1857.
(Source: Biblioteca Armando Olivares Carrillo, Universidad de Guanajuato, 1857 [1973])
resurgence (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 197). This revitalization of mining is self-evident in Lucio Marmolejo’s topographical map from 1866 (Figure 4.5). Marmolejo’s map is one of the most recognized and famous maps of the city and its mines, drawn by the lawyer and cleric. A staggering 44 mineral treatment plants are visible, as well as thirty dams. Water, of course, was crucial to separate the metal from debris.

By the late nineteenth century, American companies slowly but surely began to dominate the mining sector in Guanajuato; “between 1897 and 1913 about seventy mining companies operated in Guanajuato, the vast majority US owned” (Meyer Cosío, 1998, p. 101). As for its urban development, the city experienced the introduction of electricity, telephone service, municipal water supply, and public lighting, as well as its connection to the national rail network, with a station in Marfil, on the outskirts of town (1896), and Tepetapa station (1908) near the city center (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 198). The Juárez Theatre was completed in 1903.

**Guanajuato in the twentieth century**

A particularly destructive flood in 1905 led to an incisive change in the city’s morphology and character (Meyer Cosío, 1998). The flood marks are still visible today, commemorated by small placards on buildings, and measure far higher than 2 meters. After the flood, the Guanajuato river was extensively rerouted, buried in pipes underneath streets and in some areas filled in completely to avoid future floods (Moor, 1968). These channels gave birth to Guanajuato’s distinctive system of tunnels that are now the city’s main thoroughfares. The first automobiles arrived in Guanajuato in 1906 (Alcocer, 1988). There are now 26 tunnels that communicate different areas of the city, and the network is bewildering, not only for visitors.

The Mexican Revolution in 1910 dealt the next blow to the mining industry and to the city overall (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). Persistent labor strikes contributed to the steady decline (Ferry, 2005), and the city’s population dipped from 36,000 in 1910 to only 19,000 in 1921 (Meyer Cosío, 1998, p. 47). Stability of sorts returned to Mexico only in the 1930s, after the end of the counter-revolution of the Cristeros, Catholic opponents to the 1917 Constitution of Mexico, in 1932 (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). New infrastructure, such as the Guanajuato-Dolores Hidalgo Highway was built (*ibid.*). The promotion of Guanajuato
Figure 4.5: Topographical Map of Guanajuato, 1866.
(Based on: Alcocer Martínez, 1983)
as a tourism destination also began, billing the city as

‘old’ Mexico and its colonial trappings crystallized into a handful of buildings in Mexico City; away from the capital, the cathedral of Taxco, the narrow winding streets of Guanajuato, and the churches of Puebla augmented the privileged monumentalist repertory of the country’s colonialist architecture (Saragoza, 2001, p. 100).

Furthermore, the University of Guanajuato was founded in 1945 (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). The University has greatly contributed to the city’s cultural offerings, particularly, with the introduction of the “Entremeses,” the performance of Cervantes plays as a means to popularize his plays as well as give the young actors at the university an opportunity to perform (ibid.). These performances were the precursor to the International Cervantes Festival, held annually each October since 1972, which further capitalizes on Guanajuato’s image of the city of Cervantes in the New World.

Arguably, Governor José Torres Landa’s commission of the “Calle Subterránea”, the subterranean street, also known as Calle Hidalgo or Hidalgo street in the early 1960s became one of the cornerstones of the new urban landscape of Guanajuato (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b; Moor, 1968). The street, 2.9 km in length, is routinely photographed and seen as exemplary of Guanajuato’s underground street system (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b). Similarly, the building of the “carretera panorámica”, the panoramic highway, in the mid 1960s, altered the city and even damaged certain elements, such as the church of Rayas and the Cata mining area, according to architect Díaz-Berrio Fernández (1972, p. 232) (Figure 4.6).

By 1968, “the tourist has become a part of the city’s expanding economic base” (Moor, 1968, p. 31). In 1978 Guanajuato had 959 hotel rooms, 1,656 in 1985, an increase of 72.6 percent in that seven year span (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 41). In contrast, only roughly 200 more hotel rooms were added by 1990, reaching 1,766 (ibid., p. 41). However, hotel room statistics are notoriously fuzzy, as the Tourism office does not even attempt to register bed and breakfasts or hostels. Thus, there are surely many more lodging offers than appear in official statistics. Aside from tourism (28.3 percent), the state bureaucracy (24.9 percent), and higher education (18.3 percent) were the two
largest employment providers in the 1990s (Moreno, 1994). Thus, the tertiary sector (as it is typically referred to in Spanish) or service sector dominates Guanajuato’s economy. According to the 1990 census, the 18,900 people employed in this sector represented 56.49 percent of the economically active population (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 41).

One of the city’s major attractions is its Mummy Museum. Interred after a cholera epidemic in the 1830s, the mummified bodies were excavated when the pantheon became too full. Beginning in 1900, they were exhibited, and today, 119 bodies, many still partially clothed, are on display. The mummification is spontaneous, according to scientists (Aufderheide, 2003, p. 88–89). The museum remains a “must-see” spot today.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Guanajuato’s tunnel system expanded as traffic demands on the city increased. From 1979 to 1987, nine tunnels were constructed (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 204). Public transportation has added to traffic problems in the historic center,
“fifteen of eighteen city bus lines traverse the city center... with an estimated actual operation of 108 forty-passenger buses” (2006b, p. 206). Furthermore, the majority of services remain in the city center (Moreno, 1994). Architect Jorge Cabrejos: “the municipal government authorizes new neighborhoods and settlements, but there are no services there, no banks, no schools... so everyone still has to go into the center” (Cabrejos Moreno, 2007).

The expansion of the tunnel system coincided with Guanajuato’s steady population growth. In 1970, the census counted 39,215 inhabitants, by 1990, there were 73,108 (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 36). In 2005, INEGI conducted a population and housing study, and found that the city’s total population had fallen slightly, to 70,798. Cabrejos, however, estimates the population at closer to 95,000 (Cabrejos Moreno, 2007). Adding the 2005 INEGI results for the city as well as the incorporated suburb and former mining hacienda Marfil, results in a population of 93,874. Like many other Mexican states, Guanajuato has experienced waves of out-migration, particularly to Mexico City, but also the United States. Even after the presidential decree, however, declaring the city a “monumental zone” in 1982, followed by the UNESCO World Heritage designation in 1988, the city’s growth has gone nearly unchecked.

In the mid-2000s, Guanajuato began racking up international accolades. It became the World Capital for Cultural Patrimony 2005–06, the Cervantine Capital of the America of America 2005, Cuna Iberoamericana de Cervantes, the “Iberoamerican Cradle of Cervantes,” bestowed by the Spanish city Alcalá de Henares in December 2005, and the International Prize “Alcalá de Henares Ciudad Patrimonio Mundial” in June 2006 (Cabrejos Moreno, 2008, p. 41). For city officials, these recognitions were always mentioned and oft repeated in the media.

### 4.3 Guanajuato’s designation narrative

To make it plain, recent history is not a popular subject in Guanajuato, and Mexico more generally. I can only speculate why that is the case: lack of interest, lack of resources in preserving and maintaining recent documents, and perhaps more generally a persistent attitude that recent historical events have not and do not impact the present. Simply put, this recent history is not considered pertinent or worthwhile. First, Guanajuato was officially designated a national zona de monumentos (zone of monuments) on 28 July, 1982
(National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988). This is true for all historic centers in Mexico with the exception of Zacatecas, which still needs to establish its national monumental zone, but managed to be designated as a World Heritage site nonetheless. Therefore, generally, the national designation precedes the UNESCO designation and provides the blueprint for the area that is to be considered World Heritage. Thus, it was part of the second group of cities decreed a monumental zone. In total, eleven cities became national monumental zones from 1972, when the law was enacted, until 1982 (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p. 221). San Cristóbal de las Casas, Oaxaca, Puebla, Mexico City’s historic center, Querétaro, and Mérida comprise the first group, Durango, Dolores (Hidalgo), Pozos, San Miguel de Allende, and Guanajuato, form the second group, which were all designated in 1982 (ibid., p. 226).

Architect Salvador Díaz-Berrio Fernández stands out as one of the most active campaigners for World Heritage designation in Guanajuato (Ferro de la Sota, 2007). He arrived in Guanajuato in 1967 and laid the foundations for a Master’s Degree in Restoration in the Architecture Department at the University of Guanajuato, one of the earliest programs of this kind. He also worked at INAH’s National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography in Mexico City. Additionally, Díaz-Berrio spent fourteen years at the helm of Mexico’s World Heritage Committee, an organization run by INAH, until he was suddenly dismissed with the arrival of President Fox in 2000 (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2008). In total, he spent twenty-four years working within INAH, including as Director of the Monumental Zones and Colonial Monuments departments, as well as the Technical Secretariat. In this capacity, he was involved in the preparation of twenty-five Mexican World Heritage site applications, of which twenty-one were approved (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b). He was also an ICCROM council member, from 1983–1985, and again from 1988–1997 (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, 2007). Thus, he has been at the forefront of Mexico’s World Heritage efforts.

Díaz-Berrio identifies two distinct phases in the designation histories of the first group of national monumental zones and the second group. Namely, in the first phase from 1974 to 1981, the areas were all consistently large and tried to preserve the homogeneity of the sets of buildings (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p.226). The five cities that were hastily
designated within 18 days in the summer of 1982 show some distinctive changes in the concept of the monumental zone: the specialists at the Department of Monumental Zones and Colonial Monuments, a department within INAH, reduced the areas significantly, “the thought process being that a smaller area would be easier to preserve” (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2008). The national monumental zone could only be 1.9 square km (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988, p.5). He added that this was “absurd,” yet at the time, the main goal was to designate more national monumental zones (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2008). Furthermore, “the declarations lack certain useful details, such as the total number of buildings that are to be preserved” (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p.226).

The World Heritage application states that there are “550 buildings considered to be of premiere importance” (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988, p. 5). In fact, CNMH identified 552 monuments (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 4). In Díaz-Berrio’s opinion, these smaller areas were therefore isolated and thus potentially under threat from official cultural organizations which can have “preponderant or nearly exclusive control” (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p.226) of these zones. While he favors enlarging the zone to fully include the hills and canyons, to take a more holistic approach, he does not think that this will necessarily improve preservation of the area. Instead, he emphasized,

> it is not a matter of having a bigger perimeter, to inscribe more buildings, it is a matter of applying the laws, norms, and rules, to actually follow them. This is what ought to happen, this is how preservation should be achieved. I realize of course that this is not often the case. We do not like to adhere to norms and rules.

— Díaz-Berrio Fernández (2008), Personal Interview.

He further pointed to the fallacious or superficial understanding that most people have as regards World Heritage:

> Everyone understands it (the designation) as a stamp, a distinction, a prize. I have always understood it as an instrument, it aims to protect, the Convention is meant to protect, it is not a convention about “pretty things,” it is called the Con-
In his view, more education about the meaning and responsibilities of the Convention were necessary, he did not, however, explicitly address how this might be achieved. He appeared to be disillusioned with how INAH in particular, but also INBA were handling architectural patrimony. One of the main obstacles is the lack of manpower, in both organizations, but in particular INBA, which is in charge of twentieth century “artistic” monuments and buildings, as opposed to “historic” monuments and buildings, dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, which are the purview of INAH. “If INAH has 400 staff members, and forty deal with architecture, INBA only has four” (ibid.). Clearly, Dr. Díaz-Berrio was exaggerating to make a point as to how understaffed and subsequently underfunded both organizations are.

Considering the changes in Guanajuato’s landscape over the last twenty years, Díaz-Berrio has been particularly outspoken about the construction of a golf course near the mine of Guadalupe, as well as the transformation of Baratillo Square, which presently features a building dubbed “El Ágora,” a marketplace of sorts, with a café, but really, an architectonic “feature that supposedly exists in Venice” (Ochoa, 2008). Díaz-Berrio, like fellow architect Jorge Cabrejos, is also very concerned about the expanding number of tunnels, now numbering 25, which have turned the city’s underground into “Swiss cheese” (Cabrejos Moreno, 2007).

With regards to the World Heritage application files, he emphasized the importance of the annexes, the additional materials, and not the actual applications, which typically are very short and technically focused. This became clear to me when I visited ICOMOS headquarters in Paris and accessed the original application files for the three cities. Listed as properties 415 (Oaxaca), 482 (Guanajuato), and 585 (Morelia) chronologically, the annex for Morelia included twelve different published books highlighting the significance of Morelia, while the annexes for Oaxaca and Guanajuato were far more modest and did not feature nearly as much supporting material. This can be attributed to the emerging professionalization of the nomination process (Van Oers, 2008). When Oaxaca and Guanajuato were proposed, there was less documentation overall necessary to achieve a complete application. Over time, these applications have become more comprehensive.
Guanajuato is registered as *World Heritage* property 482. The application file is forty-nine pages long. The *World Heritage* website offers a very abbreviated version of this file; only in the National Archive in Mexico City did I find a more complete, digitized version than otherwise available on the UNESCO website. The majority of the application is in French, one of the official languages the WHC uses and includes the following sections:

**The exact localization of the property:** Country, municipality, property name, and coordinates.

**Legal jurisdiction:** Ownership and the different laws that govern the property are included.

**The administrative authorities:** Federal, state, and local authorities in charge of the property.

**Identification:** Description and inventory of the property.

**Maps and plans:** Historical as well as current maps, which include relief maps of thirty religious and historical monuments, a map identifying and categorizing buildings of historic value, as well as a map of the delimitation of the monumental zone.

**Photographic documentation:** Color photographs which are included in the application, photographs of the city’s historic monuments, and a series of 35 mm slides. (See Figure 4.7).

**Brief historical synopsis:** Outline of the city’s urban development, highlighting the construction of civil as well as religious monuments in particular.

**Bibliography:** Short bibliography featuring ten sources.

**Preservation diagnostic:** Short description of state of preservation at the time of application submission, which was deemed to be overall “good.”

**The bodies in charge of preservation and conservation:** Levels of government responsible for preservation and conservation (federal, state, and local).
Historical sketch of preservation and conservation: A brief overview of preservation legislation enacted in the state, dating to 1953, as well as preservation trends that developed out of the University of Guanajuato’s architecture school and its Department of Restoration, founded in 1963.

Resources for preservation or conservation: Cites the local INAH and Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología (SEDUE) offices as resources for preservation, as both organizations employ architects, anthropologists, and other specialists that can assist in the process. Then, INAH’s office had 127 people on staff. However, the INAH office is responsible for the entire state, not only the city of Guanajuato.

Management plans: Discusses tools for management of the proposed area, as well as the city’s transportation connectivity. The preservation efforts were to be focused on the historic mining installations (Valenciana, Cata, and Mellado), the historic center, reinforce reforestation around the city, and establish barriers to development in the eastern section of the city.

Justification for inscription: Finally, the application lists the four criteria under which Guanajuato should be inscribed in the World Heritage list (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988, pp. 2–17).

The maps included in the application file are, unfortunately, very vague (Figure 4.8). The area intended for protection, includes the area protected by the 1982 presidential decree (ibid., p. 22), which at 1.9 square kilometers only covers the central area, while the World Heritage designation has a size of 22.64 square kilometers (Figure 4.9) (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006b, p. 204). The area includes the mines of Cata and Valenciana, but the map really is not useful in the sense of providing a lot of information, it does, however, show that while the area of protection is quite large, in effect, only the historic center and its 1.9 square kilometer surface area are deemed important. Additional maps (Figure 4.10) reveal that the World Heritage zone is much larger than the nationally designated zone. It also shows that the surveys for the World Heritage zone were conducted from the hilltops, leading to the irregular polygon shape of the area. Architect Jorge Cabrejos refers to much of the empty lots as a “buffer zone.” The importance of the characteristic ravines
Figure 4.7: Photographs included in Guanajuato’s World Heritage Application.
(Source: ibid., p. 24.)
Figure 4.9: Delimitation of the historical ensemble.
(Source: National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988, p.22)
(for run-off) was ignored or perhaps not yet considered (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002). The sizeable differences between the national and the World Heritage zone are the exception, not the rule, and is explained by the city’s atypical topography and development. Unfortunately, the base map, made by the municipal government in 2003, does not feature a geographical scale, making it difficult to judge distances and size. This is a common problem, as many of the maps are made by architects, for whom geographical scale and location does not matter as much as for a geographer. The third map included in the file, a neighborhood study of San Fernando/San Roque in the center of the city, provides an impression of the detail of neighborhood scale architectural studies (Figure 4.11, (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1988, p. 23)).

Interestingly, the file states that it also includes maps that show the historic development of the city, a topographical study of the historic monumental zone, (maps from 1971 and 1974, respectively) a map identifying and qualifying historically valuable buildings (1977), an architectonic relief map showing thirty historical and religious buildings that have been adapted for modern use (no date given), an 1981 INAH map (Figure 4.9), and finally, ten maps of the partial plan of the city, drawn up by SEDUE in 1987 (ibid., pp. 6–7). Inexplicably, all maps except (Figure 4.9) are not in the file, nor were they available in the ICOMOS library in Paris. Evidently, these supplementary items, as well as a series of 35 mm slides (part of the annex) (ibid., p. 7) have gotten lost in the interim.

The annex contains the “Ley sobre Protección y Conservación Artística e Histórica de la Ciudad de Guanajuato,” published in 1953, as well as the city’s designation as a national monument on 28 July, 1982, published in the federal government’s “Official Journal,” under the auspices of the SEP. With publication in the Official Journal, laws, decrees, and designations become official and legal instruments in Mexico. If a law has not been published, it is not enforceable. While the designation features every street name and house number included in the federal monumental zone, no map of the area is published in the “Official Journal.” Finally, the recommendation of ICOMOS to the World Heritage Committee is included. Guanajuato is inscribed in the list as fulfilling four of the Committee’s six criteria, (i), (ii), (iv), and (vi) (see Section 1.7 for the detailed criteria).

Thus, based on its baroque architecture and mining legacy, (criterion i), the development of mining technology and its influence throughout northern Mexico and other
Figure 4.10: World Heritage Designation Zone and National Monument Zone.
(Based on: H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003a)
Figure 4.11: San Fernando/San Roque neighborhood study.
(Source: ibid., p.23)
mining towns (criterion ii), the merits of its architectural ensemble, financed by mining, as well as its adaptation to the canyon topography (criterion iv), and finally, the importance of Guanajuato throughout the eighteenth century to the world economy (criterion vi) account for its inclusion in the World Heritage list. ICOMOS recommendation justified Guanajuato's inclusion with the previous inscription of Potosí, Bolivia, which, together with Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Querétaro, formed the mining nexus during the colonial period.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect to come out of the designation file is the rather obvious size difference between the national monuments zone and the World Heritage area. Of course they overlap, particularly in the historic center. It is clear that in the case of Guanajuato, the national zone has dominated and is more widely recognized as a cohesive area within the city. Not least the signage placed around the city center and beyond has shaped the awareness of that area. Certainly, the World Heritage zone is more inclusive in terms of Guanajuato’s industrial heritage, but beyond that the centrality of the national monumental zone dominates. Furthermore, the two zones are easily conflated as being the same, particularly in the media. In a sense, the World Heritage zone does not have a distinct, self-contained identity compared to the national monuments zone, which “is” the historic center, for locals and tourists alike.

4.4 Governing, Governance, and Heritage Interventions in Guanajuato

Here, I discuss the various state and local agencies and NGOs that influence what occurs in the historic center.

Guanajuato State Institutions—INAH

Guanajuato's regional INAH office has the responsibility to study, investigate, and protect 7,617 archaeological and historical sites (Rangel, 1998a). More than 200 historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, conservators, architects, among other specialists focus on the state's patrimony. On average, each specialist would have to look after 35 monuments or sites. Clearly a tall order, considering the various states of the properties and the lim-
limited resources of the organization. Of course, INAH is only one of many organizations involved in the historic center (Figure 4.12).

INAH finds itself in a difficult position. It has to enforce patrimony legislation, which does not give property owners much room to carry out any renovations, as only materials that are equal to the original beams, for instance, can be used in houses in the historic center (Flores Fonseca, 2007). Thus, the Federal Law makes interventions in private property very costly. For architect Jorge Cabrejos, INAH has pursued such a narrow interpretation of patrimony, that “the institution has not evolved and changed over time... and it lacks the resources in every aspect of its operation” (2006a). In jest, he called the organization “I-NO”—alluding to the Institute's tendency to block projects. Another nickname for INAH has been “ru-INAH”, a play on the Spanish word for “ruin”, “ruina” (Vázquez González, 2006). This seems particularly fitting in light of its responsibility for archaeological sites. Where public projects are concerned, however, INAH seems to be more flexible in its approach. Architect Manuel Sánchez Martínez, who was highly critical of the new pavement put down in the historic center in 2006, reflected, “I do not know how they managed to get INAH to agree to this” (2006). INAH last produced a Catalog of Monuments in Guanajuato in 1989 (Figure 4.13). It is down to federal and state resources that a new catalog has not been produced.

Historian Luis Fernando Sánchez Díaz works for INAH and paints a slightly different picture:

> From the point of view of INAH researchers, we, the INAH researchers, have been marginalized. Our opinion and research, research to defend our patrimony, has been ignored by the authorities. There is no interest in and support for our work.

— Sánchez Díaz (2006), Personal Interview.

My efforts to speak with other members of INAH Guanajuato aside from Sánchez Díaz failed. Many of my other interviewees confirmed the Institute's local tendency to keep outsiders at arm's length.

INAH receives criticism whatever action or inaction it takes. This adversarial position to progress makes abandonment of private property more “attractive” than trying to pre-
Figure 4.12: National, state, local, and non-governmental institutions that have an impact on Guanajuato’s historic center.
(Figure compiled by author)
Figure 4.13: INAH map of Guanajuato, 1989.
(Source: INAH, 1989, map modified by author)
serve it. It is of course up to the proprietor whether or not he or she tries to preserve and maintain, or chooses deliberate obsolescence. Its stretched resources and rather negative public image have placed it firmly on its back-foot, and not appear sympathetic to private property owners of all economic strata. As architect Eugenio Mercado López explained:

> there are few incentives for owners, and an ordinary, low-income property owner with little or no access to information as regards the possibility to gain assistance ...so people do not take advantage of these opportunities and instead, intentionally let their houses fall down.


Furthermore, Mercado López argued, its structural problems had a lot to do with INAH’s strong union, which required a large percentage of its budget for salaries to remain functional.

Thus, INAH’s relationship with many other governmental departments as well as with other experts is frequently tense but for the moment, its shared monopoly with the local authorities on ruling on permits and evaluating projects remains intact.

**State Institute of Culture—Director of Heritage Preservation**

Anthropologist Hilario Crisanto Aguilar Chaparro’s office is tucked away in the labyrinth that are hidden staircases in the Teatro Juárez. He serves as director of Heritage Preservation of the state’s Institute of Culture. Aside from five churches in the city, his organization does not intervene in the historic center, and as such, is mainly based on acute needs. He further explained:

> We are frequently contacted directly by priests, the local municipality, or whoever is in charge of a building when severe problems occur. Our resources are limited to these emergency situations, really. We only have a yearly budget of roughly US$ 1,100,000 or 1,5,000,000 for all of the state’s patrimony. The need is great, the resources scarce. It would be good to have a normal maintenance program, but we cannot afford that. This is our main contribution in terms of preservation. We also assist INAH with a huge cataloging project that aims to document everything the
Church owns in the state, from buildings, to altar pieces, paintings, simply everything.² Mainly because so many thefts occur and we need to know the condition of pieces of art, buildings, etc., too. We also run workshops and courses (with the University and INAH to help educate the greater public about architectural and religious patrimony.

— Aguilar Chaparro (2007), Personal Interview.

While the goal of these workshops and courses is to reach the general public, Aguilar Chaparro admitted that most of the participants were trained architects. Many professional architects used the courses to advance their careers. Surely, the intention is noble, but the audience remains limited. Not surprisingly, Aguilar Chaparro identified the lack of awareness and education about patrimony as the greatest challenge for its preservation.

People, especially in the periphery, do not identify with this patrimony. It’s old, it doesn’t work anymore, they want a modern house …of course we have to advance, but not at the expense of the past …people think the government or the Church should take responsibility for patrimony, but not themselves.

— Aguilar Chaparro (ibid.), Personal Interview.

To that end, his small permanent staff of four also organizes and publicizes the statewide patrimony conservation prize competition. Its main purpose is to motivate the communities to protect their patrimony, Chaparro explained. The staff reviewed applications and then send experts to the locations to judge the work that has been done and select winners. The prizes are presented annually in a ceremony at the Juárez Theatre. He admitted that the huge bureaucracy that is involved in maintaining heritage also “dilutes any sense of responsibility” (ibid.).

Aguilar Chaparro questioned the utility of the city’s many honorary titles, such as being the city of Cervantes in the Americas, for instance, simultaneously pointing out that of course there was business to be made in the pursuit of and the competition for more titles.³ He thought it paradoxical that particularly people in the service industry did not want to actively contribute to the preservation of patrimony, even though they lived off

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²The church seemingly makes little effort protect its assets.
³See Section 4.6 for more on the “13 marvels of Mexico” competition Aguilar Chaparro specifically mentioned in the context of city titles and honors.
of it. Despite his knowledge of the subject, Aguilar Chaparro too believed that UNESCO designation carried direct financial support from WHC.

Ultimately, it came down to a “lack of education” for Aguilar Chaparro. For him, the World Heritage title:

> It was just the beginning. Patrimony is not only a question of identity, of being from Guanajuato, but also of livelihood … It is a vicious cycle, this lack of education … we have to make progress in education to raise awareness. These historical vestiges are by no means renewable, no matter what anyone says. The heritage can disappear.

— Aguilar Chaparro (2007), Personal Interview.

Education as the key to awareness and then desire to care for patrimony was not Chaparro’s view alone. Mauricio Vázquez González, former head of the Casa de la Cultura, also highlighted the importance of educating young people, but the cost, he argued, was too high, and not as visible as new pavement (2006).

**Guanajuato’s Municipal Government**

Mexico’s local governance structure is a remnant of the country’s colonial experience. Municipal governments are comprised of a *Presidente Municipal or Alcalde* — municipal president or mayor, terms which are used interchangeably. The mayor selects his *cabildo*, his cabinet, with *regidores*, councilors or aldermen, who advise the mayor on various subjects and vote on municipal affairs. Municipal government terms are limited to three years, and the mayor cannot stand for reelection immediately, though it is not uncommon to have mayors become state legislators, and then, during the following election cycle, run for mayoral office again. In Guanajuato, Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto is an example of this pattern, with his first municipal administration in the mid-1990s, and his second term from 2003 to 2006. Furthermore, his municipal career has facilitated his career in the state legislature. This is also a most common transition. While Guanajuato’s state government has been Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) led since contested elections in 1991, the municipal government of Guanajuato remained in control of the PRI until 2006. The mayor is sup-
ported by aldermen, whom he appoints. In Guanajuato, there is an Alderman whose main responsibility is to represent the interests of the historic center and patrimony.

During my stay, I met with the then alderman for the Historic Center, Salvador Flores Fonseca, an architect by training. He was mainly concerned with the state of the subterranean street and the lack of investment in it. As alderman for the historic center, he presumably had to stay abreast of developments that would affect the historic center. He was quite resigned with the efforts being made:

> What is done in the historic center is pure makeup. Much of the design has not been appropriate for Guanajuato. It is purely decorative. Sadly, I think thirty years of well-defined policies have destroyed more than protected. I do what I can in my position, but I know that in reality, there is no money. I try to make the mayor understand that these infrastructure projects are absolutely necessary to prevent the further deterioration of the subterranean street.

— Flores Fonseca (2007), Personal Interview

Thus, he was very much resigned to the lack of resources as well as lack of interest in overhauling and investing in important infrastructure.

Aside from working as an architect, he was also a business owner in the historic center, keen to make some fast money out of a bar he was having built just in time to open for the Cervantes Festival. Obviously, he realized the potential to capitalize out of his property during the festival.

**A Bureaucratic minefield: The business of restoring or preserving heritage buildings**

To give a sense of the complexity of restoring, rehabilitating, or maintaining a heritage building, aside from the obvious material costs, it is worth reviewing the bureaucratic red-tape involved.

INAH issues permissions for all those works of restoration, rehabilitation, remodeling, expansion, new development, demolition, minor repairs, infrastructure and services, including placement of advertisements, and any other type of work.
that lies within the zone of monuments⁴ (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 242).

The regional INAH office receives the initial application and has to approve, the architect in charge, the company undertaking the renovations, the plans themselves, as well as the appropriateness of materials. Materials have to conform, be similar in nature to the original ones, and be applied accordingly. Of course, these types of specialist materials are more expensive than modern products, and the need for specialized workmen also increases the cost. The municipal government, specifically, the Public Works department, issues the permits. Below follows the list of items necessary to gain a permit for restoration and rehabilitation of buildings:

(a) Official application form (original and copy)
(b) Alignment and official number of the property
(c) Photographs of the property and two sections of sidewalk where it is located (corner to corner), referring to a location map (letter sized, attached)
(d) One copy of an architectural survey, including a proposal for materials, as well as documentation of current state of deterioration
(e) One copy of architectural plans of the proposed intervention and adaptation
(f) Original description of the work and specifications
(g) Copy of the expert’s professional certificate
(h) Copy of property deeds
(i) Copy of owner identification (ibid., p. 242).

The requirements vary slightly for extension projects, demolitions, application of advertisements, etc., nevertheless, they are substantial. Obviously, there are also various fees involved. Building sites are frequently closed due to different infractions. Owners then have to reapply to reinstate their project. The application process itself is daunting and costly, so unsurprisingly, owners might prefer to have their buildings fall into complete disrepair. In fact, if a building does collapse, then having to rebuild completely may be cheaper than preservation and maintenance. Owners will still need a permit to rebuild and this project

⁴Zone of monuments implies the national designation.
has to be approved as well. Additionally, owners can only use approved materials and colors to preserve the authenticity of their property. Using the wrong material can also lead to a work site being shut down, if found upon inspection. Obviously, these complications and restrictions may make heritage buildings far less attractive as investment properties, because owners are not free to reconfigure buildings at least on the outside at will. On the inside they have more leeway, and can and do subdivide buildings.

If a construction site is lacking in corresponding or current construction permits, it is shut down (Figure 4.14). This particular site was shut down on August 17, 2007, lacking precisely in corresponding permits. The notice further explains that the site violates the “Regulation concerning Construction and Conservation of the physiognomy of the capital of the State of Guanajuato and its municipality,” ratified in April 1993, and specifically, article 271. Those responsible for overseeing the work can be immediately detained, should the job continue. Similarly, workers who continue working on a suspended site can be arrested for 24 hours and up to 36 hours. Ironically, this building was superficially not in bad shape, however, it was just around the corner from San Roque and faces the Jardín Reforma, one of the more prominent public spaces in Guanajuato, and thus, potentially...
more of an eyesore and simply highly noticeable.

**Surveillance of the historic center**

Within Guanajuato’s Urban Development Office is a subdivision, called “Protection and Surveillance,” which focuses on the enforcement of construction permits for the whole city, as well as in the historic center. I interviewed then director Enrique Arellano Hernández in July 2006, and his successor, Rosana Mendoza Ortíz in October 2007. Together with INAH, the office issues permits for new constructions and renovations.

Architect Arellano was particularly concerned about modifications to housing lots and the expansion of housing around and beyond the panoramic highway.

It was built at the highest point where water could reach then, and it was thought that the city would not expand upwards, but we had to learn over time that this was not the case. The state government first was in charge, but over time, decided that the municipality should take over, creating normative ambiguity and disagreements, and ultimately, lack of control over the area.


Whatever buffer zone was established in the past, it had grown obsolete.

Another major concern was signage in the historic center. According to municipal legislation from 1999, business signs can at a maximum measure 40 by 180 centimeters (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c, p. 1133). He explained:

With the subdivisions from residential to commercial space, every little new store wants a sign advertising its services. In the past, these signs were painted directly on the walls of the building, but that is not practical anymore. The signs have to have certain dimensions and superimposed on wood, for example, or laminate. We don’t allow commercial products to be advertised, unless the company happens to be the sponsor, then we will allow it. During the Cervantes Festival, too, there can be exceptions, particularly to the size of signs, but certain requirements still have to be met. It is difficult to keep up with all of them, and sometimes we have to rely on denunciations. If businesses do not comply, they are fined.

In her busy office, located in the outskirts of the city, Rosana Mendoza Ortiz explains that this organization came into being in 2001. Only four inspectors comb through the historic center on a daily basis. Of course they still review that business signage, advertisements and awnings are up to code (Mendoza Ortiz, 2007). They also attempt to speak with property owners of buildings in varying states of disrepair. Both INAH and the municipal government were criticized as not doing enough to prevent excessive advertising (Romero, 2001).

In 2000, the newspaper reported that the Protection and Surveillance unit had conducted a survey of houses that were in danger of collapse in the historic center. The then deputy director admitted that 90 houses were in very poor conditions, and in some cases, collapse seemed imminent. The article reveals the main difficulty: that apart from recommending any lodgers or tenants to leave the building, the Protection and Surveillance unit could not do anything to protect these buildings, as they were private property. However, the unit did promise support for those owners who wanted to rehabilitate their buildings, by expediting the permit process (Rodríguez, 2000). The following year, the paper reported again on many deteriorated buildings, and how City Hall was attempting to find owners and secure particularly dangerous buildings (García Ledezma, 2001). In 2004, the unit estimated 100 buildings were in varying states of disrepair, with some beyond hope. The unit blamed the owners for not wanting to adhere to building codes and requirements, recognizing, however, that some owners were too poor to afford rehabilitation at all (Juárez Saavedra, 2004).

During my stay, the “Protection and Surveillance” unit also set up new signage around Guanajuato’s historic center. Part of the program “Ciudad Legible” - “legible city,” financed by SEDESOL, 48 signs were posted, some of them including maps, others merely indicating steps to the subterranean street. Guanajuato was selected, Ms. Mendoza explained, “because it’s notorious that people, even locals get lost here” (Mendoza Ortiz, 2007). The new signage cost US$55,265 (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007). In describing where the new signs were posted, the article mistakenly identifies the historical area as beginning at the Plaza Allende, much farther west, even though the national monument zone begins at the Olla Dam (Figure 4.10). The new sign, including a map, was mounted in the Plaza de la Paz (Figure 4.15). The map shows major surrounding landmarks and also locates where the
map viewer is accordingly. The North directional is rather small in the middle of the top of the map. At the bottom, there is also a straight-line representation of the historic center’s attractions, with the Mummy Museum on the very left of the line, and the Olla Dam at the very right end of the line. Despite the straight-line representation, there is no distance scale. A day or so after I took this photo, this post was graffitied (Gasca Rosales, 2007f). The sign had not even been up a week. Theoretically, the signs are graffiti-proof, with a coating made by 3M (Mendoza Ortiz, 2007). However, permanent markers seem to be able to deface the signs after all. The other type of sign that also features a map is not free-standing, but affixed to buildings. The signs are in three languages, English, Spanish, and French (Figure 4.16). The signs also give directions to the nearest landmarks. In this version, the North directional is also in the middle, but at the bottom of the map. The straight-line representation is missing, and there is no distance scale.

I also spoke with Carolina Espinosa, one of the four architects involved in the daily trips into the historic center. She explained that the public gets five working days to get their paperwork in order for signs, awnings, and any other form of advertisement. After five days, they are fined, and the fine is higher than a permit. At the time, she said, the Urban Development office was considering setting up a historic archive to document all the permits solicited by private citizens.

We want this sort of an archive to be able to document what private citizens have been doing with their properties. It’s only at the proposal stage now. We have a list of the houses that are abandoned in the historic center, but we want to put this into the archive as well. There are probably about 75 houses in the city center that are abandoned, though this is only an approximate estimate. We don’t know how many houses are “just” in disrepair. We do not have direct access to buildings … and it is difficult to track down proprietors. We want to do a variety of urban image improvement projects, including cleaning up roofs, because panoramic views are an important feature of Guanajuato and we need to have that zone clean. We take every opportunity to educate the people we come in contact with, to combat the “culture of not requesting permits.” We tell people about historic centers that have been destroyed, such as Monterrey’s historic area. Learning takes time and it takes time to ensure that the rules are followed and that the rules and regulations are still timely.

— Espinosa (2007), Personal Interview.
Figure 4.15: New Sign, Guanajuato, September 2007.
(Photo by author)
Figure 4.16: Affixed new sign, Guanajuato, September 2007.
(Photo by author.)
Espinosa explained that they generally recorded about fifteen incidents per week, though those did not necessarily produce fines. From June to October 2007, 313 irregularities had been recorded. The Cervantes Festival, Espinosa explained, produced a lot of work for her and her colleagues, as advertising increased. Whether the office actually did establish a historical archive, I do not know, but Espinosa was certainly aware of the need for more accessible, tangible information pertaining to changes in the historic center.

One example of a business signage adaptation and eventual compliance with requirements is Domino’s Pizza, opened in 1996 (Aguirre, 1996b) and located prominently in the Plaza de la Paz. In July 2006, the shop still had the typical, rather large sign across its door (Figure 4.17). By the time I returned in August 2007, the sign had been changed to small, golden letters to be more subtle (Figure 4.18). Of course, because the shop is in the middle of the city, it makes it even more important for it to comply with the regulations — tellingly, the business gets premiere parking for its fleet of of delivery motorcycles just around the corner, behind the Basilica, which are specifically reserved for motorcycles (Figure 4.19).
Structural problems in the adobe built houses in Guanajuato are potentially dangerous. During the rainy season, the corner of a house across the street from where I was staying simply “bottomed” out (Figure 4.20). A day later, the Correo de Guanajuato reported that the roof of the house around the corner had collapsed. The house in question was a heritage property, and supposedly, in INAH’s catalog (Ochoa, 2007f). Rainfall in the period June to August can resemble monsoon-like downpours, with drainage systems overwhelmed and flooding in the subterranean street is common and expected. Further damages were reported on a house near to a new tunnel construction on the Paseo de la Presa, again, it was part of the roof of an adobe house softened by extreme rainfall, included in the patrimony catalog (Rodríguez, 2007e). The dilemma is not only that owners simply cannot afford to rehabilitate houses, but they are also bound to use certain types of materials if they do apply to have work done on the property.
Figure 4.19: Domino’s fleet of delivery motorcycles, Guanajuato, July 2006.
(Photo by author)
Figure 4.20: Rain-damaged house, callejón Cabecita, August 2007.
(Photo by author)
4.5 World Heritage in Guanajuato’s media

Guanajuato’s media began covering World Heritage and UNESCO in 1990, with an article in a now-defunct paper, praising the Juárez Theater (opened 1903) as one important World Heritage monument. Two years later, patrimony crops up again in the context of the tourist experience and their complaints about lack of cleanliness and care for the city’s monuments (Buenrostro, 1992). Perhaps the first, most substantial “plug” for the preservation of patrimony comes from the then mayor himself, in 1993. Tomás Zavala urges the inhabitants, in his speech to the University of Guanajuato for the launch of the “Rescate y Vida” program, to take responsibility for their city — a recurrent theme (Rocío Jurado, 1993). The goal of the program was to rehabilitate 500 facades in four of the city’s neighborhoods, including the historic center. Much of the push for preservation at the time seems to have been motivated by the 90th anniversary of the inauguration of various buildings and monuments in the city, such as the aforementioned Juárez Theater and the Peace Monument in the Plaza de la Paz, under much fanfare and the presence of President Porfirio Díaz, one of the relentless modernizers of Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is crucial to note of course that in 1993 and by the end of 1994, Mexico’s currency and economy were in imminent crisis, ending with the devaluation of the peso and the introduction of the new peso, and a floating exchange-rate regime.

Much of patrimony-related news focuses on restauration projects. Aside from the state or municipal government directly engaging in these works, the NGO “Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” is also at the forefront of these projects, mainly relying on funding from the state or municipal government to finance their efforts (Lozano López, 1993; Ulises Mata, 1994a; Ulises Mata, 1994b) (see Section 4.6 for more on the NGO).

Also in 1994, efforts began to move the historic center’s electric grid, television, and telephone cables underground; to end “visual contamination,” as it is frequently referred to. Mainly, these measures were implemented in the Plaza de la Paz, and parts of Calle Sopeña, which passes by the Jardín de la Unión. This project was to be extended to the Granary, Tepetapa Avenue, as well as the Paseo de la Presa, stretching to the Olla Dam in the east (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c, p. 112). Initially, the state government provided US$198,920, and the federal government US$99,460 to support these structural
changes (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1994d), limited to the Plaza de la Paz.

Aside from the UNESCO designation, becoming the Latin American Secretariat of the OWHC represented a major coup for Guanajuato in July 1995 (Aguirre, 1995l). Then mayor Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto was particularly active in the area of patrimony and had lobbied for Guanajuato to become the regional seat of the organization. Based on his initiative, Guanajuato hosted a first meeting of World Heritage mayors, provosts, and city historians from all over Latin America (Aguirre and Buenrostro, 1997) in February 1997. This was intended as a knowledge exchange and to increase collaboration between the cities. The newspaper highlighted the lack of financing the maintenance of these cities, and stressed that “World Heritage cities are not museums, but inhabited areas, where they must attend to the population while conserving buildings” (Aguirre, 1997b). This “museum” analogy is frequently used to express what these cities should not turn into, however, particularly at night, many struggle to remain hubs of activity. The resolution of the meeting stressed the need for universities to better educate administrators about patrimony, because a loss of architectonic, historic, and cultural patrimony directly affects the loss of identity of its people (Aguirre, 1997a). However, much like other international meetings, any concrete outcome of the agreements is difficult to determine, beyond the goodwill of participants.

Thus, by the mid-1990s, Guanajuato was actively involved in what I call World Heritage infrastructure, by which I mean membership in organizations such as ANCMPM and OWHC, as well as participation in the numerous heritage-related conferences, symposia, and meetings organized by these groups and others, including ICOMOS (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1997b). Needless to say, keeping up with this infrastructure requires a lot of travel — a definite perk for administrators. Sister cities are another part of this infrastructure, for instance, Guanajuato’s sister cities in Spain, Alcalá de Henares, Santa Fe de Granada, and Toledo, are all World Heritage cities.

Not surprisingly, the tenth anniversary of Guanajuato’s World Heritage designation was celebrated with much fanfare, including presentations, an exhibition, concert and subsequently, a lot of media coverage (Aguilar, 1998b; Aguilar, 1998g; Alegre Vega, 1998a; Rocha Villalobos, 1998b; Rodríguez, 1998b). The newspaper’s coverage of the anniversary featured an explanation of UNESCO’s criteria for Guanajuato’s inscription, but there
was no discussion about the different sizes of the polygons (Rodríguez, 1998a). A special commemoration event was staged for primary school students, including the presence of the mayor, Luis Felipe Luna Obregón and the then Secretary General of UNESCO, Bernard Pirso (Aguilar, 1998c). Salvador Díaz-Berrio also returned to Guanajuato for the celebrations, though he had a stark warning for the city: if its natural as well as architectural physiognomy was neglected, it would run the risk of losing its title. This of course made for a “shocking” headline in the paper: “The Heritage City Title would be lost.” More importantly, the newspaper stated that there were 649 monuments in the city (ibid.), while other sources cite 695 monuments, 503 of which are located in the historic center (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c, p. 139), and 552 monuments, respectively (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 7). These types of discrepancies and uncertainties are common and very persistent, and are perpetuated in the media. Not only is there a need to update INAH’s catalog of monuments, which dates from 1989, but it clearly needs to be well-publicized and easily available to the public in order to dispel this source of confusion.

In 1994, the paper claimed there were “more than 2,000 buildings cataloged as historic monuments in the city” (Espinosa, 1994).

In 1998, according to mayor Luis Felipe Luna Obregón, the municipal government was only able to spend 1.3 million pesos (or approximately US$98,000) on restauration and maintenance projects of monuments (Aguilar, 1998c). For at least one commentator in the newspaper, the lack of financial transparency of the administration, coupled with seemingly non-existent planning strategies, made the choice of the nineteen preservation projects that were financed at a minimum questionable, and perhaps completely misdirected. The writer recalled that INAH’s representative, who also spoke during the anniversary events, squarely charged the local government with urban planning and safeguarding of its monuments. The planning process appeared to be in disarray at the time, as the planning body, constituted of legislators, the private, public, and community sectors was never convened (Trujillo Moreno, 1998). Perhaps to divert attention from these matters, as well as the lack of preservation funds and projects, the mayor announced during the anniversary festivities that the local government was pursuing the extension of the World Heritage polygon to include more of the hilltop and ravines, as well as the city’s traditions as intangible heritage (Luna Obregón, 1998). I can only speculate if the mayor ac-
ually knew that amending declarations is very rare, and indeed, since intangible heritage is a separate category entirely, would require a new application, making the likelihood of success very slim. Not surprisingly, he called on private initiative to pick up the funding slack and the possibilities of tax incentives for owners of historical properties to encourage rehabilitation and conservation (Aguilar, 1998c).

On the heels of these extensive celebrations followed the announcement that ICOMOS would hold its 12th General Assembly in Mexico in October of 1999, with meetings scheduled in Mexico City, Morelia, Guanajuato, and Guadalajara (Rocha Villalobos, 1999b). Coverage of the event continued throughout the year. Interestingly, the newspaper managed to represent ICOMOS as a part of UNESCO, whilst also describing it as an advisory body to UNESCO (Espinosa, 1999a). ICOMOS was conceived in the second part of the *Venice Charter*, during an UNESCO meeting, but it is completely independent of UNESCO. This conflation is only one of the slippages that occur in the media's portrayal of *World Heritage*. In the coverage of the event, much was made of debates surrounding possible changes to the *Ley Federal* (Espinosa, 1999c). The experts also outlined the problem of administrators lacking training and knowledge of patrimony, the corresponding laws, and the need for its protection (Espinosa, 1999g). A general lack of awareness and few points of interaction between the public and specialists were also cited as some of the major obstacles to preservation, particularly when it comes to primary education (Espinosa, 1999f). With the exception of reporting yet again on the anniversary of the designation (Rodríguez, 1999b), there is a marked absence of patrimony in the local media until 2001. Then, rather out of the blue, a representative from OWHC visited Guanajuato to ask the mayor to establish a separate office for the regional secretariat that Guanajuato took charge of in 1995 (Gasca Rosales, 2001c).

By 2001, the director of the “Casa de la Cultura,” Mauricio Vázquez González, main organizer of cultural events, from children’s painting programs to concerts, etc., was also in charge of OWHC business. He took the Secretariat’s work immensely seriously, even though he could not realistically devote much time to its activities (Vázquez González, 2006). In April 2001, the mayor, Rafael Villagómez Mapes traveled to OWHC’s headquarters in Quebec in anticipation of the General Assembly, scheduled for October 2001, in Puebla. Strangely, while in Canada, the mayor arranged for a personal meeting with then
President Vicente Fox— who was once governor of Guanajuato state. Above all, the mayor was on a mission to garner financial resources for Guanajuato’s patrimony, even, supposedly, directly from UNESCO (Perras Avila, 2001m). However, UNESCO and the World Heritage Center specifically, do not really have funds to give out, though this “myth” of the direct link between World Heritage designation and funding from UNESCO persists (Van Oers, 2008). In emergencies, the World Heritage Committee has helped to support sites, for instance, after the 1999 earthquake in Puebla, to the tune of US$100,000 (World Heritage Committee, 1999). It is important to note that the newspaper never much followed up on the story of the mayor seeking federal funds and whether or not the city received any.

The following year, 2002, marked beginning of the periodic reporting period for UNESCO’s regional experts — the report on Latin America and the Caribbean was released in 2004 (UNESCO, 2004) (see Section 1.7). In this context, the INAH complained that the trash problem in Guanajuato “threatened” its World Heritage status (Cristópulos, 2002a), only to have the mayor emphatically contest the next day that the situation was not so grave, while recognizing that the collection of trash was a problem (Cristópulos, 2002b). Obviously, INAH approved the funicular train in 1996 — a large intervention in the city’s appearance — and these types of infrastructural changes are precisely what UNESCO is deeply concerned about, as evidenced in the de-listing of Dresden (Connolly, 2009).

Yet again, there is somewhat of a lapse in coverage, until October 2004, when a major windfall for Mexican World Heritage cities was announced for 2005. About US$11,000,000 would be made available to the nine cities, and the more preservation projects a city had ongoing, the more money it would receive. In 2004, about US$7,5,000,000 was distributed amongst the cities, but in the case of Guanajuato, a total of US$18,000,000 were invested, simply because after the federal resources were allocated, the state and municipal government provided matching funds (Abad Olivares, 2004c). Again under the leadership of Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto, Guanajuato became the seat for the regional meeting of OWHC in January 2005 (Abad Olivares, 2004d). Furthermore, the city garnered yet another title, as the Cervantine Capital of the Americas. The “Carta Guanajuato” (Guanajuato Charter) was the most important outcome of the meeting, which seeks to “to reassess the concept
of heritage as a social, emotional, and intellectual commitment and as a guiding principle” to develop more sympathetically (Abad Olivares, 2005d). Some of this windfall, apparently, came from Mexico’s oil surplus, and about US$405,000 (5.3 million pesos) were destined directly for Guanajuato (Abad Olivares, 2005b). However, the media revealed that in 2004, San Luis Potosí, which is only on Mexico’s tentative World Heritage list, received about US$1,000,000 from SEDESOL’s Hábitat program, while Guanajuato only received US$304,000. For Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto, this revelation must have come as a slight affront, considering the efforts he had made to secure more funding for Guanajuato. Not surprisingly, he claimed that these resources were only allocated for 2004, not for the following year (Cristópulos, 2005b).

In January 2007, the governor of Guanajuato traveled to Paris in support of San Miguel de Allende’s World Heritage application (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007e). Clearly, the tightening of the application process has made the process more high-stakes for applicants, necessitating political weight. In July, the association Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad celebrated its 18th anniversary, and highlighted that it had a $1.9 million budget, mostly from the state government, to devote to its restoration projects, as well as finance four books dedicated to various patrimony subjects (Gasca Rosales, 2007k). The Correo de Guanajuato, in its children’s supplement, tried to explain the importance of World Heritage in an age-appropriate way, but mainly recounts various treaties and dates — probably not the best way to get children excited about patrimony (Correo de Guanajuato Editorial, 2007). The paper also published a scathing opinion piece by historian Luis Fernando Díaz Sánchez, in which he laments the invasion of public spaces by restauranteurs, and city hall’s unabashed support for local businesses and investors only, as opposed to the inhabitants it supposedly represents. In short, he wonders whose heritage it is that being protected, and to whose benefit. For him, the residents of the city have been marginalized (Díaz Sánchez, 2007).

Arriving in Guanajuato by car today, World Heritage cannot be missed: at the northeastern entrance to the historic center, is the “Plaza de las Ranas” — the Square of the Frogs — a nod to the origin of Guanajuato’s name in the indigenous Tarascan language: “hill of the frogs.” Its large arch reads: Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad (literally, Guanajuato, Patrimony of Humanity) (Figure 4.21). The arch and monument to UNESCO
was completed and dedicated in 1997, during the first meeting of Iberoamerican World Heritage cities in Guanajuato (Aguirre, 1997g).

By contrast, the square in 1990, aside from the fountain, was relatively bare (Figure 4.22). The background shows that Guanajuato’s houses were once predominately painted white, this has changed significantly over the intervening years. The first frog statues were placed in the square in 1994, at a cost of US$22,994 (Buenrostro, 1994f). The square looked even more simple in 1960 (Figure 4.23). This too confirms Guanajuato’s formerly more white and uniform look However, the square itself has recently been of interest to the municipal government: as being in dire need of “restoration” and “rescue” (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007c; Balderas, 2007; Gasca Rosales, 2007c; Gasca Rosales, 2007n; Gasca Rosales, 2008b; Ochoa, 2007d; Ochoa, 2007e). It appears that the mayor found the place in the historic center where he might create the imprint, the legacy of his administration. Eduardo Romero Hicks hoped to create Guanajuato’s “mini Paseo de la Reforma, obviously, it wouldn’t be exactly like the Paseo de la Reforma” (Abúndiz Ramírez,
The Paseo de la Reforma is Mexico City’s major avenue, built under the auspices of Maximilian II in the 19th century, lined with monuments; an instantly recognizable icon. Costs for the “mini Reforma” were estimated at nearly US$2,600,000 ($40,000,000 pesos) (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007c), though no interventions have been made to date.

As the first PAN mayor, Eduardo Romero Hicks has had to endure his fair share of criticism, particularly as regards the management of the city’s World Heritage. In August 2007, Guanajuato lost the Latin American secretariat of the OWHC, a position the city had held since 1995. The mayor was considered responsible for this loss, and criticized, not only in the media, but also by people I spoke with, such as architect Jorge Cabrejos Moreno (Cabrejos Moreno, 2007; García Salas, 2007; Gasca Rosales, 2007e; Gasca Rosales, 2007h; Gasca Rosales, 2007m; Rangel, 2007b; Salas, 2007). The media’s attention was sizeable. The mayor blamed the location of the organization’s annual meeting in Kazan, Russia, as
the reason for the loss, as none of his representatives had managed to gain visas to attend the meeting (Rangel, 2007b). Thus, there was nothing that could be done about losing the office to Olinda, Brazil. There was also confusion as to what had been lost, and the mayor was forced to clarify that it was an office, not an international title (ibid.). Nevertheless, the loss was interpreted by outsiders to have occurred due to the administration’s complacency and laziness where World Heritage is concerned (Miranda Montero, 2007).

A further attempt at damage control was the announcement that the annual meeting of ANCMPM would be held in Guanajuato, supposedly because none of the other eight cities could be the host. This certainly seemed to be an attempt to show that the administration was working actively in the World Heritage realm (Gasca Rosales, 2007r; Tavárez, 2007). Simultaneously, he announced that ANCMPM had already managed to access $1.5 million ($20 million pesos) in federal funding for the World Heritage cities. The meeting established
the concerted effort of ANCMPM to officially and effectively brand the World Heritage cities as “The 9 jewels of México” and to promote them together as one brand (García Ledesma, 2007; Gasca Rosales, 2007d) (see Section 2.6 for more on the organization).

All told, A.M.’s coverage of heritage appears rather thin. At times, reporting was confusing, and it peaked during the anniversary periods, or for any meetings or conferences, particularly those in Guanajuato — not surprising. However, there was no consistent discussion of what the meaning of World Heritage is and thus, no real attempt to raise awareness. Public opinion on the subject of World Heritage or patrimony more generally is non-existent in the paper. Official statements dominate, making it difficult to see how heritage is not just the project of elites.

World Heritage in the eyes of local academics

Architects and other academics, of course, have a very particular take on World Heritage, and perhaps feel a bit responsible, as ICOMOS assists in the compilation of World Heritage nomination files. Furthermore, ICOMOS is meant to be a watchdog or whistleblower when heritage is under threat. Jorge Enrique Cabrejos Moreno, Manuel Sánchez Martínez, and Hernán Ferro de la Sota all work for the University of Guanajuato’s Architecture faculty and are members of ICOMOS. Cabrejos Moreno and Ferro de la Sota, as well as historian Luis Fernando Sánchez Díaz have done their fair share of consulting and contributing to planning actions for the city.

Cubrejos Moreno described ICOMOS in Guanajuato as in stand-by mode, due to the politics of the organization, but as individual members, we keep working, we give talks, we provide consultations for the municipal and state government.

— Cabrejos Moreno (2006a), Personal Interview.

Manuel Sánchez Martínez similarly remained active, but felt that ICOMOS had fallen short, especially as regarded the changing of the pavement. For him, this intervention really represented a loss of character, and most of all
a demarcation of the center as something separate. Of course it is distinct, but there is a huge obsession with the center, while the periphery is neglected. For the politicians, only the center is important and


Luis Fernando Sánchez Díaz concurred, and observed that officials came to

the false conclusion that showing a modern city will attract grand tourism. I doubt that we can even accommodate grand tourism. We already suffer from water shortages, and the only places that do not get their water cut off are hotels and restaurants.


Cabrejos agreed that

the topic of management is the most difficult. The budgets will always be spent on the city center, not on the outskirts. But the city is much more lived in, the Casa de la Cultura has helped to make more use of these public spaces with public performances and activities, and people flock there. People use their public spaces with gusto and it makes the center more attractive. However, we need to have cultural offerings everywhere, not just in the historic center.

— Cabrejos Moreno (2007), *Personal Interview.*

Hernán Ferro de la Sota (2007): “The politicians want to leave their mark on the city, and where else will this seen but in the center?”

But they were not only critical. As Ferro pointed out, the city gained the OWHC secretariat, though of course it lost it again, but some gains had been made, including, putting up plaques. One particular problem he felt strongly about, however, was that of restaurants invading public space. Like the restaurant owner and neighborhood association leader (see Section 4.6), Cabrejos Moreno demanded a solution:

The Juárez Theater, a national monument, has practically been invaded by the neighboring restaurant! This cannot go on. How can a restaurant have three tables
inside and ten outside? This is not the appointed land use. It pains me to see the same thing has happened as in Spain. There are no more public benches there, the only way to sit there is to pay. We still have them here, but the restaurant owners have a lot of influence and we need an agreement. We cannot allow them to do this.

— Cabrejos Moreno (2007), Personal Interview.

The city’s official historian, Isauro Rionda Arreguín, in contrast, did not feel the new pavement resulted in a loss of character or identity, but related,

I would’ve used the money differently … these stupid plaques on buildings are in all heritage cities, they are simply business, someone has made a lot of money out of this. I think though, all things considered, Guanajuato is doing well. We have lost some of our industrial heritage, many haciendas have disappeared, or have been subdivided, or have succumbed to the demand of hotel rooms.

— Rionda Arreguín (2007), Personal Interview.

The experts also discussed the nature of tourism in Guanajuato. Luis Fernando Sánchez Díaz was particularly critical:

Unfortunately, the tourism we have here is of the lowest quality. The tour guides take the visitors to obvious places only, we call this “popsicle” tourism, very superficial. The guides often do not provide reliable information. I would like to see the origins of the city discussed, to give people a real sense of the place, why it developed as it did, but that does not seem to be wanted. It could be attractive, but no one seems interested in a more profound experience.

— Sánchez Díaz (2006), Personal Interview.

Cabrejos Moreno pointed to the brevity of visits, sometimes only hours long, with the emphasis on national tourism, which had not brought

first-class businesses like in Morelia and Querétaro, here, all the shops sell the same things. It is all the same kitsch. World Heritage is not part of their perspective at all. But in general, the city has remained committed to World Heritage. You can’t divert from this route now … these are commitments not just for the mayor, but for
the citizenry … these commitments are important, you can’t neglect the national patrimony and World Heritage.

— Cabrejos Moreno (2007), Personal Interview.

In order to do so, both Cabrejos Moreno and Sánchez Díaz concurred that educating children in the meaning of heritage was obligatory. Thus, the experts as well as tour guides (see Section 4.8) agreed that education is the key to fostering an understanding and appreciation of heritage among younger generations.

Sánchez Martínez identified the complacency of the local population as a major hurdle:

> There is too much conformism. No one complains, no one questions. Everything the authority presents is simply taken in. We are too conservative here, we do not engage our authorities, we do not question decisions. This is why the government can end up pulling up the pavements and nobody says a word.

— Sánchez Martínez (2006), Personal Interview.

Sánchez Díaz added:

> One of my greatest disappointments is that ordinary citizens have not found a way to organize effectively. They have not found a means to make their grievances heard. It is painful to have to admit that we simply have not found a way to do this effectively.

— Sánchez Díaz (2006), Personal Interview.

Cabrejos Moreno explained that there were few intermediaries in the city, that there was not even a Chamber of Commerce. Thus, control and access was left in the hands of very narrow interests.

This inability to coordinate leads to partial, even repetitive interventions, as Section 4.6 shows. There is, of course, no magical solution, the experts tried their best to make a valuable contribution, to point to and speak out about various problems.
4.6 World Heritage investment and interventions

Tracking investment in heritage buildings and infrastructure is sensitive. In the mid-1990s, there was much focus on decentralizing some of the state and municipal government offices, to help ease the pressure on the historic center (Buenrostro, 1993d). One of the first government reports I found dates from 1993. Guanajuato was one of the cities in the “Cien Ciudades” (100 cities) program, run by SEDESOL, which aimed to aid the consolidation of urban development of small and medium-sized cities as alternatives to the metropolis of Mexico City and Guadalajara (Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1995). Some of the funding had begun in 1993, and particularly, in urban image projects (Municipio de Guanajuato, 1993). Unfortunately, the report does not give any financial detail. In 1995, Guanajuato received US$202,855 to pay for labor costs for rehabilitation projects (Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1995). Guanajuato’s main streets, such as Juárez Avenue, were in dire need of repaving and in 1993, the municipal government asked the state government for US$92,356 to complete the project (Buenrostro, 1993e). The work began in June 1993 (Buenrostro, 1993g). The newspaper claimed that nothing but patchwork repairs had been done on Juárez Avenue since 1970 (Buenrostro, 1993a) — considering the cost and amount of traffic problems due to construction, this does not seem too surprising. Another street being overhauled in 1993 was Tepetapa Avenue (Buenrostro, 1993b) — which was being dug up again when I visited for the first time in 2006 (Figure 4.24).

Major road and tunnel construction in 1993 required a loan worth US$768,280 from Banco Nacional de Obras y Servicios Públicos (BANOBRA) (Guerrero, 1993b), the federal government owned and run development bank, which provides loans primarily for state and municipal governments, but also supports the federal government. Founded in 1933, BANOBRA is a major investor in urban development projects (BANOBRA, 2007). Further BANOBRA credit worth US$614,624 was sought to finance 42 different projects in the city, including urban image projects in the Plaza de la Paz, remodeling of squares such as San Fernando, San Roque, Jardín Morelos, Plaza Mexiamora and Baratillo (Guerrero, 1993a). Finances were tightening, as Mexico headed towards the peso crisis, and half of Guanajuato’s public work projects were slowed down due to money not mate-
rializing. The municipal government had been only able to raise US$122,924. The renovation of the Plaza de la Paz alone was projected to cost US$284,263, with support coming from the federal and state government (Guerrero, 1993f). When the budget for the lagging projects were finally announced, the budget for the Plaza de la Paz was raised to US$199,752 (Notimex, 1994).

By summer 1994, 42 public works projects were reduced to 23, and the aforementioned BANOBRA'S loan of US$614,624 was going to cover these costs. Dropped projects were a parking lot near the Alhóndiga and the study of the ruins underneath Temple San Diego (Guerrero, 1994c). The governor was quite quick to assure the press that he wasn't abandoning Guanajuato; quite to the contrary, because the state government decided to
invest US$2,180,000 additional funds into the city, US$612,064 would go to the “rescue” of Guanajuato’s urban image and US$994,604 to pay for the construction of another tunnel (Guerrero, 1994g). The state government gave additional US$40,106 specifically for the patching up of various streets, and in total, US$57,295 in extraordinary funds (Buenrostro, 1994d). The media also reported on the approval of the “Plan Parcial del Centro Histórico,” the “Partial Plan for the historical center,” highlighting that the participants in the planning process were highly critical of Guanajuato’s authorities (Guerrero, 1994b) (see Section 4.7). A major recurring criticism was the lack of communication and information about significant public works projects, such as putting electric and telephony cables underground (Guerrero, 1994a). Lack of transparency in the authorities is a constant concern.

Beautification projects continued through 1994, carrying minimal costs of US$2,304 to pay for the planting of trees in Jardín Embajadoras and replacing of broken steps in Plaza Baratillo (Guerrero, 1994d). Also in May, work on the Plaza de la Paz began, promising the closure of various streets surrounding it for the better part of two months (Buenrostro, 1994c). However, the state’s governor, Carlos Medina Plascencia, was keen on leaving his “imprint” or particular “trace” on the city: by pledging US$1,000,000 to be matched by the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (SHCP) to address the Juárez Theater’s structural problems (Buenrostro, 1994h). The work finally began in the summer of 1994, with a final budget of US$3,000,000 (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1994c).

Based on the media, it seems the holdups in public works projects was rather common, prompting the municipal government to publicize its investment in the municipality for the years 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994, here in US$ (Table 4.1).

Clearly, this level of investment only scratches the surface. Executing public works are further complicated by the timing of the FIC. No city wants to hold a huge festival while major roads are blocked due to construction (Buenrostro, 1994e). Instead, the projects were temporarily halted and then continued after the FIC. By the mid-1990s, the nature of the festival seemed to have changed, having grown sizably year on year. In a survey of 3,216 residents, 43 percent said they didn’t attend any of the festival’s events and the increased public disorder in the streets bothered 38 percent (Guerrero, 1994h).

To combat the trash problem in Guanajuato, the mayor launched the “For a clean Gua-
Table 4.1: Municipal investment in Guanajuato’s cultural heritage or urban image, 1991–1994, in US$.
(Source: H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 1994.)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Buildings</td>
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<td>30,603</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monuments and Historic Sites</td>
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<td>Historic and Cultural Sites</td>
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<td>303,806</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rescue and Life</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>642,555</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>1,450,000</strong></td>
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Guanajuato” campaign that same year. Luis Felipe Luna Obregón certainly made sure that the media reported on the days that neighborhood clean ups were taking place, as well as emphasizing that he was working municipal trash collection becoming more efficient (Aguirre, 1994a; Aguirre, 1994b; Castro Villalobos, 1994; Guerrero, 1994j). As the FIC drew closer, yet another BANOBRAS loan was announced to finance not only the facade and structural repairs of the Juárez Theater, but also its interior, in addition to remodeling the esplanade of the Granary. In total, US$6,120,000 had been requested by the state government (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1994a).

In 1995, when Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto became mayor, first mention is made of closing parts of the historic center to car traffic (Aguirre, 1995e). The general perception of Mr. Vázquez is that he has worked tirelessly to promote the city and preserve its heritage. Thus, he focused on getting more financial resources to “improve the urban image, because we sell the image of Guanajuato” (Aguirre, 1995v). He was also very active in the eventual formation of ANCMPM (Aguirre, 1995d).

The efficacy of public works projects is frequently questioned. Typically, the current administration will blame the previous administration for inefficiencies and oversights in the execution of works. For example, in August 1994, calle Sopeña was torn up to accommodate the underground cabling project — in March 1995, the street had to be torn up again, this time to patch up the cobblestones — due to “irregularities” of the earlier job (Aguirre, 1995k). Much of this, undoubtedly, has to do with the visibility of public works in the historic center. The conundrum is clear: the administrations are damned if they do and damned if they don’t; if there are no projects executed in the historic center, then the
public as well as media question the administration’s ability to obtain the necessary re-
sources. If the administration does finance projects and they cause major inconveniences,
or appear to be botched in any way, then its overall competence will be in question.

Nine public works projects were under consideration in March 1995, including the
rehabilitation of plazas San Cayetano, Baratillo, and Mexiamora. City Hall had a bud-
get US$137,509 available for these projects (Buenrostro, 1995j). The Juárez Theater also
saw more repairs, including the replacement of its floors in 1995 (Aguirre, 1995n). Like
during the prior years, renovations were postponed until after the *FIC* (Aguirre, 1995z).
Then-governor of Guanajuato, Vicente Fox, also promised to support the “dignifying of the
city’s image” (Aguirre, 1995n; Buenrostro, 1995a). The governor approved a job-creation
scheme to support the “Urban Image” program, contributing a further US$189,050 to City
Hall’s budget of US$151,240 for public works. A huge chunk of the funds, US$113,430,
got towards cleaning, repairing, and painting of walls and facades in six streets, while
US$58,151 was devoted to 14 plazas and their beautification and conservation (Aguirre,
1995a). The first phase of urban image restoration was completed in July 1995, when works
in the Plaza de la Paz concluded. However, the second phase still needed implementing.
The first phase had cost US$293,603, while US$225,849 were available for the second
phase (Aguirre, 1995ac). The second phase intended to extend the subterranean cables
into Alonso Street. However, once again the *FIC* delayed the completion of this project.
SEDESOL provided the funds, US$112,926 (Aguirre, 1995u).

The state government promised US$2.5 million to generate more temporary jobs and
finance preservation projects. US$30,113 were dedicated to the city’s theaters in antici-
pation of the *FIC*. The Juárez Theater renovations had cost US$63,916 to date. Work on
the Juárez Theater resumed in June 1995, when its repair budget was boosted by another
BANOBRA’S credit worth US$92,515 (Aguirre, 1995p). A further US$143,039 were used
to attend to historic and cultural sites in 11 different neighborhoods. The Urban Image
program was also slated to receive US$195,738, mainly because it would aid in temporary
job creation (Buenrostro, 1995b). The project began on 28 August. SEDESOL invested
US$114,558 in construction materials, equipment, and tools, while the state government
put forward US$190,930. Painting and rehabilitating facades and streets cost US$117,803
(Buenrostro, 1995f). Already in June, the paper reported the completion of 29 projects,
financed by BANOBRAS (Castañeda, 1995). The multitude of projects, their public announcement and then their amendments as well as cuts along the way is mind-boggling.

Towards the end of 1995, Comisión Federal de Electricidad (CFE) announced it would invest US$301,036 to expand the subterranean cabling in the historic center. The area surrounding the Alhóndiga, the Hidalgo Market, the Cervantes Theater, as well as the Paseo de la Presa, until the Olla dam would be freed of its visual contamination (Aguirre, 1995q). City Hall had already invested US$102,214 in subterranean cabling in various alleys of the historic center (Buenrostro, 1995g), but progress was slow (Aguirre, 1996i). The state government, through its Branch XXVI funding, focused meager resources on subterranean cabling for Hidalgo Market (Buenrostro, 1996c).

Undoubtedly, the biggest change in the historic center’s landscape was announced in early in 1996: A funicular train would connect the El Pípila monument with the city center. INAH seemingly agreed without any reservations, even though the train quite clearly represents a significant alteration of the World Heritage district. Former mayor, construction company owner, and then local representative Eduardo Knapp Aguilar spearheaded the groundwork for the project (Buenrostro, 1996a; Buenrostro, 1996b; Castro, 1996). However, local aldermen felt that there was too little information available about the project, and because it was mainly a private initiative, the mayor had indicated that the project did not require City Hall’s formal approval (Aguirre, 1996f). It seems incredible that a private project, altering public space and ostensibly providing a public service, could do so without City Hall involvement (Aguirre, 1996n), however, any of the necessary permits for the construction and operation of the train would have to be issued by City Hall. Thus, the planning stage was completely out of City Hall’s hands.5

For 1996, the state government promised US$1,190,000 for public works projects (Buenrostro, 1996d), 20 percent more than had originally been anticipated. Most of the federal funding came out of the “100 cities” (“100 Ciudades”) urban development program dedicated to the continuous and orderly development of medium and small-sized Mexican cities. The program ran from 1995 to 2000 (Aguirre, 1996e; Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1996). The mayor also anticipated and announced further

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5The funicular train was inaugurated in 2001. INAH obviously approved the construction plans in the end.
funding from SEDESOL, though no figures were openly discussed (Aguirre, 1996m). City Hall's Urban Image program also continued, with federal and state funds, amounting to US$225,813 and, perhaps most importantly, providing jobs (Aguirre, 1996p). Another large-scale project aimed to replace much of the typical cobblestone in the historic center, mostly financed through BANOBRA S, totaling US$521,367 (Aguirre, 1996k). The state government paid US$59,584 to change the Paseo de la Presa's pavement (Aguirre, 1996g), although public works projects had not yet begun in May 1996, due to funding delays (Aguirre, 1996j). Later reports stated that the federal government would contribute US$65,080, the state government US$6,508 and City Hall, via a loan, US$58,572 to the Paseo de la Presa project, totaling US$130,160 (Aguirre, 1996e). The complexity of different funding programs becomes clear in these differing reports.

Most of the repavement projects continued into 1997 (Buenrostro, 1997d). City Hall gave the contractors a 15 February deadline to finish the repaving and threatened to fine the companies if they didn't deliver on time, as the inconveniences for inhabitants were great (Aguirre, 1997h). The mayor also announced more funding for the NGO “Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” and its restoration efforts in local churches and temples (Machuca, 1997b), though US$11,916 would not go very far. If the newspaper is to be believed, the repavement projects were concluded on time (Aguirre, 1997c). City Hall also continued its facade painting program in the city, providing US$4,703 (Aguirre, 1997e). Through a combined “Urban Image” fund of state and municipal resources, US$89,377 were used to improve public buildings, gardens, and public squares (Aguirre, 1997o). Replacing part of the stonework of Guanajuato’s Basilica (Figure 4.25) was one of the projects the fund financed (US$11,172) (Aguirre, 1997p). A total of 17 projects were announced, including a US$14,896 project to help maintain the subterranean street, a further US$7,448 to attend to vents and drains on the main thoroughfares, US$18,620 to improve tourism signage and information, and US$7,448 to place 11 public benches in public spaces and tourist spots (Aguirre, 1997l).

Despite having issued regulation with regards to business signage in 1995, the Department of Public Works and particularly, the Office of Protection and Surveillance announced it would “invite” business owners to remove their illuminated signs. Four businesses had been singled out and fined. The owners did not feel they had broken any agree-
ments, but the Public Works officials argued the signs affected the historic center’s physiognomy (Machuca, 1997c). Office staff covered the whole historic center and adjacent neighborhoods to look for neon signage (Aguirre, 1997d). Convincing local businesses that neon signage contaminated the urban landscape was certainly a challenge.

During routine repairs on San Diego Temple and the Juárez Theater in 1996, vestiges of an older former convent beneath San Diego had been discovered, revealing more of the layered history of Guanajuato. In 1997, excavations of San Pedro de Alcántara began (Aguilar, 1997a). In March, funding for further excavations finally came through, with the State government providing US$74,481, and City Hall and “Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” raising the same amount, totaling US$148,962. INAH also sanctioned the excavation efforts (Aguirre, 1997j). The tourism potential of the site, dating to the 17th century, was immediately referenced (Aguirre, 1997m). However, by January 1998, the
project had run out of money again (Aguirre, 1998g). Furthermore, INAH had not yet approved how to restore murals, walls, and arches (Aguirre, 1998j). One characteristic in the restoration process seems to be the “stop-and-go” nature, due to funding vagaries. By the end of January 1998, US$7,448 had been found to continue the project (Machuca, 1998a)— though if no further funds were secured, the tools would rest again. Finally, in February 1998, the governor announced his support for the project, promising future loans to ensure its conclusion (Aguirre, 1998a). Once promised State government backing, then mayor Luis Felipe Luna Obregón determined that with US$111,721 the ex-convent could be turned into a small museum and thus a new tourist attraction (Aguilar, 1998d).

In April, the project faltered again (Reyes Alvarado, 1998b), resumed in July and stopped again before the FIC (Aguilar, 1998f). The ex-convent San Pedro de Alcántara were not the only vestiges of an even older Guanajuato discovered in the 1990s. Near the Granary, pieces of a sixteenth century bridge were discovered during repaving and subterranean cabling activities (Espinosa, 1999e).

Construction of the funicular train was first announced in January 1998, funded by a private consortium, which invested US$819,291 (Aguirre, 1998e). Obviously, City Hall had decided it should go ahead and it seems likely that the cost of the project seemed to good an investment to pass up. One might also speculate that the former mayor, whose construction firm was involved, simply knew the right people to get the project approved. In March, according to the newspaper, the construction began in earnest, with an estimated cost of US$607,520 (Espinosa, 1999h). The project would take a year to complete. Once again, the main streets and public spaces of the historic center were cleaned, painted, and renovated, to the tune of US$14,896 (Aguirre, 1998d). Equally, the Juárez Theater received a cash injection of US$27,557 to replace its floors (Aguilar, 1998j). A further eleven streets were also repaved in 1998, including the famous Kissing Alleyway (Callejón del Beso) and Guadalupe carriage-way, costing US$128,107 (Aguilar, 1998h). The subterranean cabling project also continued, with City Hall injecting another US$187,425 to remove electric and telephony cables from Sopeña street, the Kissing Alleyway, Avenue Juárez and San Fernando square (Aguilar, 1998i; Aguilar, 1998k). Once again, these funds came to City Hall via the federal “100 cities” program. Cantarranas street, stretching from the Cervantes Theater to the Principal Theater, was completely repaved, costing US$8,439
Mayor Luna Obregón also hoped that corporate sponsors would be found to help maintain historic buildings and monuments, specifically, the old railway station, which ten years on was still in disrepair and disuse (Aguilar, 1998a).

After the FIC, the mayor announced that the “100 cities” program would invest a further US$1,420,000 in 14 public works projects (Rangel, 1998b). City Hall applied for a BANOBRAŚ loan worth US$345,671 (Aguilar, 1998n) to contribute to these projects. Particularly the street excavations to put electric and telephony cables underground made slow progress, causing major vehicular delays and insecure construction sites—much to the frustration and dismay of the inhabitants (Rocha Villalobos, 1998a). The conclusion of the projects was delayed until February 1999 (Rangel, 1999a). Despite the financial support for these projects, the mayor lamented that no “special” funds existed for the World Heritage city. Luna Obregón had three suggestions to obtain more funding for preservation: To create a dedicated fund for the preservation of historic monuments, provide tax incentives for private owners of cataloged buildings, and encourage private investors to support the rehabilitation of public buildings in need of restoration (Alegre Vega, 1998b).

The disruptions carried on and for the inhabitants, the lack of transparency of City Hall’s interventions was frequently criticized (Rocha Villalobos, 1999a; Rodríguez, 1999a; Trujillo Moreno, 1999). Amidst these ongoing works, City Hall announced the rehabilitation of the Pipila monument and its environs. Despite the public funding of the project, with US$11,298 coming out of the Urban Image Fund, and the same amount out of Mixed Tourism Fund, City Hall announced that a private company would complete the project and then would be given public recognition for the restoration of the monument (Flores, 1999). The mayor wanted to encourage more of these types of corporate sponsorships for buildings and monuments. For 1999, Luna Obregón expected US$2,560,000 from the federal “Branch 33” fund (Rangel, 1999c). The public works projects that should have been completed by the end of 1998 were woefully behind schedule, prompting City Hall to threaten fining the construction companies (Rangel, 1999e). The paper reported that half of the 14 construction companies involved in the various projects would be paying fines for each day that their project was overdue (Rangel, 1999d). The projects had to be interrupted for the Easter tourists (Rangel, 1999b), and several were found to be faulty, such as irregularly laid cobblestones, and failures in the subterranean street’s exit ramp right in the
center of Guanajuato (Espinosa, 1999d). In short, the results were questionable and worst of all, the projects dragged on seemingly interminably. In May, the newspaper reported the repaving had finally been completed (Espinosa, 1999h).

Because trash collection and overall lack of cleanliness were recurring complaints of tourists and inhabitants alike, City Hall announced a permanent cleaning brigade, composed of twenty municipal workers, who would concentrate on the historic center and surrounding neighborhoods, washing streets periodically and collecting loose trash (Rangel, 1999f). Nevertheless, City Hall admonished the lack of public participation in cleaning efforts. To further improve the panoramic vista of the city, City Hall signed an agreement with Comex, Mexico’s main paint company, to paint 1,200 facades, based on the viewpoint from the Pipila monument (Espinosa, 1999j). In 1999, first mention is made of SEDESOL funding specifically aimed at the World Heritage cities. US$377,260 were going to be invested in the painting efforts, though suddenly, the paper reported that 200 facades, not 1,200, would be painted. The esplanade of the Granary would be the main beneficiary of this injection of funds (Espinosa, 1999i). The Basilica restoration could also finally resume, after its hiatus in 1998, even though only US$18,863 were provided out of the Urban Image fund (Rodríguez, 1999c).

In August 1999, a new municipal law was publicized to regulate advertisements and awnings. Apparently, the regulation from the mid-1990s had simply not sufficed to stem the tide of large, intrusive advertisements, neon lights, and other types of announcements deemed to visually contaminate the city and particularly, the historic center (Espinosa, 1999k). Violators could be held up to 36 hours in jail, and any type of announcement (especially during political campaigns) would require the permission of the Department of Protection and Surveillance (ibid.).

The Urban Image fund also provided money for the first phase of rehabilitation of Tepepapa bridge, with US$31,878 (Rodríguez, 1999d). By December 1999, the same project concluded (Gasca Rosales, 1999). The creation of a visitor attraction to promote the ruins found between the Juárez Theater and San Diego, Calas, the ex-convent San Pedro de Alcalá, was also making some progress, with INAH lending its expertise and sanctioning the project (Espinosa, 1999b), however, it would continue well into 2000, mainly due to funding difficulties (Gasca Rosales, 2000a). City Hall and the state government pledged
US$76,278 to ensure its completion (Gasca Rosales, 2000f). Finally, at the end of September 2000, the project was completed (Gasca Rosales, 2000h), and inaugurated by the mayor a week later (Gasca Rosales, 2000c). The four year long tug-of-war to secure the project’s funding was at long last over.

In January 2000, mayor Luis Felipe Luna Obregón, acting as president of ANCMPM, made a highly public appeal for preservation funding to Mexico’s House of Representatives and other federal departments. He asked for $100 million pesos, roughly US$7,590,000, to be divvied up between all of the Mexican World Heritage cities (Gasca Rosales, 2000e). A month later, the mayor announced a US$152,556 investment in the city’s urban image, specifically, improving the subterranean street, as well as further painting projects (Gasca Rosales, 2000d). The opening of the funicular train also took longer than anticipated, with its opening projected for March 2000, initially, but postponed until May. Much of the work along the hillside could only be done by manual labor, causing the delay and raising overall costs to US$877,197 (Rodríguez, 2000a). By June, the train was still not in operation, but promised to run by October, for the FIC (Rodríguez, 2000b). However, in September 2000 INAH suspended the project. The paper reported that neighbors had complained about the in-transparency with which land had been appropriated by the project and lodged official complaints with City Hall, which were first ignored. The completion of the funicular now seemed seriously in doubt (Gasca Rosales, 2000g). Nevertheless, only a month later, the project’s investment company announced that all the documentation for INAH and City Hall was in order, and that only the economic vagaries of the times had led to the stalling of the project. The company predicted the funicular train would be in working order that year (Rodríguez, 2000c). However, the inauguration was finally announced for February, 2001 (Gasca Rosales, 2001b). Towards the end of 2000, the newspaper reported that US$2,006,000 had been invested in the rehabilitation of streets in the historic center, specifically, Cantarranas, in the Plaza de la Paz, Pastitas, and Avenue Juárez. Work on the Guadalupe carriage way was still in progress (Gasca Rosales, 2000b).

In 2001, City Hall immediately began searching for preservation funding, mainly hoping to set up matching fund programs, where the state or federal government would pro-

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6One might think that ICOMOS Mexico would be consulted for such large projects, but this is not the case, nor, does the organization get to have official say in construction decisions.
vide matching funds to an initial financial commitment (Gasca Rosales, 2001a). Using that model, state government and City Hall contributed US$76,439 each to the Urban Image fund to pay for more facade painting (Rodríguez, 2001). The funicular train's inauguration was again delayed, this time, City Hall, shut down the construction site for violating against the city's construction regulation (García Ledezma, 2001a). The workers had placed all manner of equipment in the street behind the Juárez Theater, where the train's station was being built, obstructing the public thoroughfare. The fine imposed by City Hall, however, was rather pathetic: US$76. However, should the obstruction continue, the entire permit could be revoked (ibid.). The investors paid the fine and four days later, work resumed (García Ledezma, 2001c). Finally, with great fanfare, in March 2001, the funicular train was opened for business (Porras Avila, 2001a; Porras Avila, 2001e).

In anticipation of Easter tourists, City Hall announced further painting projects to improve the look of buildings in the historic center, funded by the Urban Image fund with US$91,726 (Porras Avila, 2001d; Porras Avila, 2001k). The nine ANCMPM cities agreed to each invest US$42,041 in their historic centers, particularly, focusing on their city's iconic public monuments and historic squares (Porras Avila, 2001f). The true windfall in terms of public works funding arrived in April, with federal funds, via “Fund 33” amounting to US$4.6 million. This sum was to be paid out over a 12 month period, and US$4.1 million would be directed at public works, the remaining money invested in buying trash compactors (Porras Avila, 2001b).

More support came from former governor Vicente Fox, who by then had become the first non-PRI president of Mexico, channeled through ANCMPM, thus pledging some form of aid to all Mexican World Heritage cities (Porras Avila, 2001i). Guanajuato's mayor, Rafael Villagómez Mapes, turned to BANOBRAS for another loan of US$122,302, mainly to devise a partial plan how to cope with the deteriorating building stock of the historic center (Abad Olivares, 2001; Porras Avila, 2001l). The mayor and his councillors seemed convinced that seeking out private investment aggressively would be the solution to this particular problem, although they also supported efforts by ANCMPM to establish a national fund for the conservation, maintenance and restoration of historic centers (Porras Avila, 2001g).

Mayor Villagómez Mapes endured a complete public relations disaster: when he signed
an agreement with a company to supply forty new kiosks and information booths to be placed all over the city. The new booths, set up overnight and without any advance notice, were meant to “elevate Guanajuato to the heights of the principal capitals of the world” (Ortiz Tapia, 2001c). The main criticism by locals was that the modules looked “European” and out of context. Furthermore, City Hall had neither informed nor applied for INAH’s authorization of the project (Ortiz Tapia, 2001e), based on the Ley Federal. Whether this was simply an oversight was not clear, but a city official claimed that in this case, the grounds were not federal, but municipal, therefore, City Hall did not have to apply for INAH’s approval. Public opinion did not accept the new urban furniture and demanded an official opinion statement from INAH (Ortiz Tapia, 2001b). Just as quickly as they had been put up, the booths were dismantled two days later. The mayor claimed he did not want to “wound the urban image of the historic center” and therefore had decided to have the booths removed (Ortiz Tapia, 2001a). However, Mayor Villagómez Mapes was convinced that this type of “modernization” (Ortiz Tapia, 2001d) was inevitable.

In January 2002, efforts to rehabilitate Embajadoras street were stalled, as the construction company had not received a target date for completion, extending the vehicular chaos caused by the closure of a main access to the historic center. City Hall was spending US$69,635 on this project, while another rehabilitation project in the Paseo Madero, worth US$92,334 from the federal “Fund 33,” also came to a standstill (Porras Avila, 2002c). Certainly, this was not how City Hall had envisioned the beginning of the new year.

A month later, City Hall launched an “Anti-Graffiti” brigade of six municipal workers to tackle graffiti in the historic center (Porras Avila, 2002b). The mayor estimated these palliative efforts would cost $300,000 pesos, or US$22,896. He lamented the brigade was even necessary, but graffiti was becoming so prevalent that an official response was necessary. He further announced that another brigade would be formed to fix the city’s fountains. The Urban Image Fund had US$91,585 available for further facade painting projects (Porras Avila, 2002a). The remainder of that year and throughout 2003, the paper was rather silent on the subject of public works. For 2004, the State government estimated that it could provide US$318,873 for each municipality, the financial climate for the State was very uncertain (Abad Olivares, 2003). Certainly, the transitional periods between mayors
add to the uncertainty and slow down in public projects.

In March 2004, new mayor Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto announced the public works budget for his administration from 2004 to 2006. US$ 6.4 million would be invested in the historic center alone during that time period, or US$2.1 million per year. State government and City Hall combined would spend US$37.7 million in total, or about US$12.5 million per year. The State government’s investment amounted to US$21.38 million, City Hall’s to US$16.26 million. Compared to funding levels of earlier years, this was certainly a huge windfall, especially the direct funds for the historic center. Aptly named “New Guanajuato,” this huge budget certainly raised expectations (Mayagoitia Jiménez, 2004).

In October 2004, after the FIC the first phase of street pavement rehabilitation began, with a budget of US$843,755. The streets that were repaired were Luis González Obregón (from the Basílica to the Hotel San Diego), Sopeña (from the Juárez Theater to the Iconography Museum), the stretch between the Hotel San Diego and the Juárez Theater, Constancia Square and the Jardín de la Unión. The mayor also announced the restoration of the Baratillo fountain and scenic illumination of street Father Belauzar’an (Abad Olivares, 2004a). Another street to be transformed by introducing red porphyry to replace the old cobblestones was Truco street, running alongside the Basílica, at a cost of US$145,612. Costs for the new porphyry for Sopeña street were even higher, US$162,472 (Abad Olivares, 2005c).

The Mexican Congress approved US$12.27 million for the nine World Heritage cities in November 2004, with SEDESOL providing the bulk of the funding, with US$7.6 million. CONACULTA pledged US$4.6 million, and SECTUR pitched in with US$767,410 (Abad Olivares, 2004b; Rangel, 2004). Further funds were expected out of Mexico’s oil surplus, reaching US$411,562. The mayor did not yet know what projects would be funded with the surplus money (Abad Olivares, 2005b). Perhaps the most ambitious project was the construction of three more tunnels in the city to take some of the vehicular pressure off the historic center. US$3.2 million would be spent on these tunnels (Cristópulos, 2005a).

In June 2005, A.M. Guanajuato revealed that former mayor Villagómez Mapes had paid construction firms for projects that were either never carried out, excessive payments for minimal work, and unwarranted advances. Apparently, this practice amounted to US$1.18 million wasted (Reyes Colín, 2005). Most of the funds came from the federal “Fund 33”
and were paid out during 2003. No consequences for the former mayor were cited. Allegations of fraud are not uncommon in Mexico and elsewhere, but little happens beyond the allegation, especially at the local level.

The Urban Image Fund received a state government boost of US$229,806 to be used in three phases on various projects, such as “rescuing” the old entrance to the city through the Marfil neighborhood, and US$26,810 each for painting of facades and removal of “discordant elements” in neighborhoods near the entrance of the city, the alleys of the historic center and traditional neighborhoods, and US$22,980 for tourist spots (McCoy, 2005). The state government invested a further US$687,537 into the restoration of iconic and historic buildings in Guanajuato, such as the Museum in the Granary, the foyer of the Juárez Theater, and various churches in need of attention. Very explicitly, government officials linked preservation with the promotion of tourism, i.e., the preservation efforts would be worthwhile as tourism would be increased (Gasca Rosales, 2005).

Major projects are publicized and give details as to who commissioned the project, in this case, the State Cultural Institute, via the State’s Department of Public Works and who was the contractor carrying out the work (Figure 4.26). The banner names the project and its intention, the rehabilitation of the theater’s facade, stonework, and edge drain, as well as the cost, about US$38,275 or $499,993.85 pesos. A similar banner was found on the Diego Rivera House, which was undergoing expansion in 2008, to the tune of US$182,672 ($2,393,542 million pesos), again financed by the State Cultural Institute via the Department of Public Works. Simultaneously, Pocitos Street, which is home to Rivera’s childhood home, was being repaved (Figure 4.27). Rivera’s house is the second, reddish building on the right, with metal balconies. The house also has one of the new, orange plaques on it, which can be seen behind the person in the doorway. These were installed beginning in September 2007.

Temple San Francisco, in Guanajuato’s pedestrian zone, was also having work done on its cupola in August 2007, courtesy of the Public Works Department. These repairs were valued at US$30,600 or $399,326 pesos. Similarly priced, Temple Compañía, next to the University of Guanajuato, was having its stonework improved upon in October 2007. “Official” information I obtained from the Municipal Public Works Office did not provide much detail on the projects for 2007. For urban image improvements and scenic illumi-
Figure 4.26: Rehabilitation project, Juárez Theater, September 2007.

(Photography by author)
nation of important buildings, the city, state, and federation gave $1.3 million pesos each, or roughly US$100,000, totaling US$300,000. Similarly, all three parties gave $350,000 pesos, or US$25,255 towards the remodeling of the access and square surrounding the Mummy Museum. They also gave equal amounts to the first phase of remodeling the old train station, which was to become an artisanal market. Each party gave $619,679 pesos, or US$47,425, totaling US$142,275. Only one of the projects listed was not within the city limits. All told, these projects amounted to US$600,000.

According to the media, about US$1,900,000 had been invested in various rehabilitation projects, including the subterranean street and various on and off ramps into and out of tunnels (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007d). Fortunately, data from SEDESOL’s Hábitat program is possibly more reliable (Table 4.2).

The lack of participation of the state government stands out (Table 4.2). It is plausi-
Table 4.2: SEDESOL investment in Guanajuato, 2004–2007, in US$.
(Source: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2007.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>316,393</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>386,244</td>
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<td>386,244</td>
<td>772,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>381,210</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>381,210</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>923,249</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88,587</td>
<td>1,010,000</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>2,480,000</td>
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</table>

Table that city hall signed special agreements with SEDESOL directly to provide matching funds to the federal organization’s contribution. These types of arrangements between different levels of government are very common. The 2004 resources were mainly spent on the rehabilitation of streets in the historic center, as well as scenic illumination of underground street Belauzarán (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2007). In 2005, all the funding was spent on the tunnel system. The following year the monument to El Pípila and the surrounding area received a makeover. 2007 marked a bit of a departure in how SEDESOL applied its funding. Most of the money was spent on various plans to rehabilitate more dams in the city, as well as the Hidalgo Market. Preliminary work was done on the former train station, which is to be converted into an artisanal market, and two dams.

Through an inquiry with Guanajuato’s Freedom of Information unit, I gained some more information on investment in the historic center. Their information placed SEDESOL’s investment for the same time period at roughly US$ 1.1 million, while the city’s “Fideicomiso de Imagen Urbana” (Trust for Urban Image) had contributed US$1.3 million, thus, resulting in about the same total, US$2.4 million (Table 4.2) (Unidad de Acceso a la Información Pública, 2009). Unfortunately, beyond naming the programs that provided funding, no details about the actual projects were included. It did, however, also reveal that CONACULTA had given about US$2.45 million to the cause of historic centers (ibid.).

The media confirmed the plans to overhaul the Hidalgo market starting in March 2006, to the tune of US$190,887 (Gasca Rosales, 2006a). In this case, the money came out of the municipal purse. For the whole year, 2006, the mayor expected US$1.14 million for the maintenance of the city’s heritage, from various federal entities, including
CONACULTA, INAH, and SEDESOL (Ramírez Vázquez, 2006). The mayor had also negotiated and signed an agreement with CONACULTA to free up resources that should have been paid out in 2005, more than US$763,550, which, for one reason or another, were held up. In some cases, the hold ups are due to the municipal governments not presenting cogent projects to the funding agency. Most of this money was to go to the rehabilitation of the former train station, as well as US$38,177 for the Jardín Reforma, US$61,084 for the Jardín Cantador, as well as the same amount for improvements to the subterranean street, and an undisclosed amount for work on the pantheon (Gasca Rosales, 2006b).

Another major project announcement in 2006 was the funding package of US$798,934 for the basilica of Guanajuato. The restoration project, determined to last year, was financed in the largest part by the state's public works department, with US$532,623, the city government with US$152,178 and the NGO, Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, with US$114,133 (López Ródriguez, 2006c). The governor's report of 2006 revealed that 55 percent of the US$23 million that were invested in public works in Guanajuato since 2003, came out of the state's purse. US$6.4 million went into the historic center's rehabilitation (López Ródriguez, 2006b), a formidable investment. Thus, 27 percent or 1/3 of the overall expenditure on public works went into the historic center. Perhaps not surprisingly, Guanajuato’s historic center won the prize for “best preserved historic center” of the state in the “Prize for the Conservation of Cultural Patrimony” competition in 2006, winning US$11,413 (López Ródriguez, 2006a). A year later, the area surrounding the Pípila Monument won honors as best preserved historic neighborhood (Gasca Rosales, 2007b).

Rather unexpectedly, Vázquez Nieto resigned as mayor in March 2006 to help the PRI’s gubernatorial candidate campaign in the 2006 election cycle (A.M.Guanajuato Editorial, 2006), which the PAN candidate subsequently won. Vázquez Nieto himself went on to become a local representative in the state congress.

For 2007, the historic center was to receive US$3.9 million, with the municipal government contributing US$102,682, the state government US$1.2 million, and US$1.18 million from the federal government. The remaining, UD $843,081, came from so-called “Branch 33” funds, a mechanism within the federal government to decentralize federal subsidies to finance projects in municipalities (Rangel, 2007a). US$534,079 would go into urban image projects, such as painting of facades, signage, rehabilitation of pavements and
urban furniture, such as benches and lampposts. US$686,673 would help to rehabilitate public squares, such as Los Ángeles and Pardo, some illumination projects and an archival project relating to the classification of World Heritage city. Unspecified buildings in the historic center would be restored, and given scenic lighting, an expense of US$343,336. A funding package of US$526,449 would be used to finance the rehabilitation of Hidalgo Market, the Los Santos and San Renovato dams (as listed in the SEDESOL budget) and the creation of the callejón of the Artisan as well as the House of the Artisan. These resources, according to the press, had to absolutely be invested in the historic center, though more money, US$1,370,000 would supposedly be available to the marginalized periphery (Gasca Rosales, 2007).

Another form of investment, albeit more indirect, occurred while I was in Guanajuato in 2007. A major competition for the “13 marvels of Mexico” was underway. Through a website of the same name, people could vote for sites such as Chichén Itza, and old Mayan city, as well as Miguel Hidalgo, the subterranean street in Guanajuato. The state government paid US$137,334 to TV Azteca, a private television station that ran the competition (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007d). Posters were splashed all over the city (Figure 4.28). The poster briefly describes the history of the tunnels and on the right, in bold, that the city is a World Heritage site. Television ads also promoted the competition, which gave the public the chance to vote on the “13 marvels of Mexico.” Voting machines were located in the Jardín de la Unión and in City Hall. Suddenly, the street required serious maintenance. The local administration admitted that no such works had been done since the early 1970s and what had seemed like a relatively easy to gain more publicity for Guanajuato seemed to backfire as structural problem after structural problem was revealed (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007e; Gasca Rosales, 2007; Perea, 2007). Already in 1993, historian José Luis Lara Valdés had lectured about the neglect of the street (Mata, 1993a) and the newspaper reported the street’s walls and arches had only been cleaned once, in 1989 (Buenrostro, 1995e). Some of the street’s holes were patched in 1995 (Aguirre, 1995m). US$6,038.58 were invested to repair 400 meters of cobblestone of the subterranean street (Aguirre, 1995o). In 1997, a chemist released a study about the effects of the vehicle charge, meaning, how many vehicles per hour were circulating on the street, and how poor drainage was causing further damage due to lack of runoff possibilities (Aguirre, 1997q). Certainly, the street’s problems
Figure 4.28: “13 Maravillas de México” poster, Guanajuato, August 2007.
(Photo by author)
were not unknown.

At least 35 leaks were found (Gasca Rosales, 2007p), and repairs estimated to cost US$38,148 (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007f; Ochoa, 2007b). For the patrimony alderman and architect Salvador Flores Fonseca, the cleanup that was done was merely window dressing; the serious structural issues would not and could not be addressed, due to cost (Flores Fonseca, 2007). Despite the obvious problems of the street, it was selected as one of Mexico’s marvels — even though only 95 meters (total length, 7.5 km) of it had been “rehabilitated” at a cost of US$7,591 (Rangel, 2007d). The media celebrated this victory vociferously (Romero and Gasca, 2007) and raised expectations that this win would attract more visitors to Guanajuato (Gasca Rosales, 2007b). With the victory in hand, Salvador Flores Fonseca publicly demanded more investment and a serious intervention in the street (ibid.). Within days of the announcement, City Hall approved an action plan to address the leaks in the subterranean street, budgeting US$38,647 for the repairs — but the project would not be carried out until 2009, as the project plan still had to be developed (Abúndiz Ramírez, 2007a; Ochoa, 2007a). Only a few months later, Miguel Hidalgo street suffered a graffiti attack (Gasca Rosales, 2008a; Morales Romero, 2008). This prompted calls for more surveillance in and around the street, and calls for paint stores to refuse selling spray cans to minors (Saldaña, 2008). The vulnerability of heritage property remains a conundrum for authorities.

Certainly during Arnulfo Vázquez Nieto’ second term as mayor (2003–2006), the city experienced an upsurge in investment in the historic center, also sustained by the ANCMPM’s efforts to solicit federal funds, particularly from SEDESOL. Levels of funding were of course not immune to the overall economic conditions in Mexico, such as during the peso crisis 1993 to 1995, the tourism downturn following September 11, 2001 and then the world-wide recession burden of the late 2000s. Clearly, the officials of Guanajuato have become more visibly committed to preserving the monumental architecture, but little effort has been made to address the private ownership of historic buildings and these might be preserved. In fact, many of the administrations seem to have deliberately avoided conflict, particularly with local business, thus postponing solutions to tables in public spaces indefinitely. Furthermore, many of the projects in the historic center were repetitive, focusing on streets and plazas that thus received repeated attention, and most
likely, unnecessary attention in some instances.

The local NGO response

San Fernando plaza is a hugely popular square, lined with cafés, small shops, a fountain, and benches (Figure 4.29). The buildings are split into commercial and residential use. Famous Mexican muralist José Chávez Morado designed the mosaic pavement that adorns the main square in 1972, during a major overhaul of the square (Espinosa, 2006).

The square has also been one of the sites of a long-standing conflict: restaurant tables encroaching public space. In 1993, restaurant owners threatened to strike if City Hall didn't address the issue of table permits. At the time, the Jardín Union and its environs was the main area of dispute. The permits were not being applied even-handedly, the owners argued, with some restaurants privileged over others. Thus, the complexity of the issue
goes beyond a mere binary conflict, of tables invading public space, and thus affecting neighbors, but instead, highlights that laws are not evenly applied (Castro, 1993a; Guerrero, 1993d; Mata, 1993b; Mata, 1993c). This perception and the reality is particularly difficult to address. The municipal government then skirted around the issue of public space invasion, by simply focusing on the fact that restaurants were in violation of the state’s Alcohol Law, which prohibits the sale of intoxicating beverages in public thoroughfares (Guerrero, 1993g).

In 1995, City Hall decided to give provisional licences to place tables in public thoroughfares to restaurants that had had previously been granted licences, while simultaneously conducting a study of the effect of these permits, in order to eventually draw up definitive regulation (Aguirre, 1995w). This regulation was introduced in June 1995. Permits were to be delivered annually, provided bimonthly payments were made by the owners. The price of these permits, unfortunately, is not revealed, nor the cost of sanctioning offending businesses. The regulation further prohibits any lighting changes, permanent structures in the public thoroughfare. Neon signs were also formally prohibited (Aguirre, 1995f). Architect Hernán Ferro de la Sota was highly critical, calling the tables an “invasion” (Ferro de la Sota, 1995b). A month after the implementation of the regulation, the newspaper identified various restaurants that violated different stipulations, for instance using advertising on their tables and umbrellas, and relying on plastic furniture (Aguirre, 1995b; Aguirre, 1995t; Aguirre, 1995y). City Hall appeared to be unable to enforce the new regulation. The newspaper continued to document the problem in 1996 (Aguirre, 1996d).

Until 2000, the issue seemed to have faded away, but the then new administration in City Hall announced it would review all permits and if necessary, remove tables that obstructed thoroughfares, particularly of those establishments in the Plaza de la Paz and near the Juárez Theater (Porras Avila, 2001i). For the owners, this sense of uncertainty was nothing new, with every new administration in City Hall, the permits and rules were reconsidered. This was one of the owner’s main concern: the ever-present threat of lack of continuity in the application of regulation (Porras Avila, 2001h). City Hall began charging US$76 per table a month, in hopes that some owners would reduce their number of tables due to the cost (Porras Avila, 2001c). During the summer of 2005, the problem resurfaced again, with local councilors trying to strike a balance between business interests, tourists,
and citizens (Negrete, 2005).

The issue of restaurants invading public space came back to haunt City Hall, particularly in San Fernando plaza (Gasca Rosales, 2007a; Gasca Rosales, 2007g; Gasca Rosales, 2007j; Gasca Rosales, 2007u; Gasca Rosales, 2007v; Ochoa, 2007g). Promises to resolve these conflicts were not conclusive (Gasca Rosales, 2007o; Ochoa, 2007c). Somehow, restaurant owners managed to get permits for one or two tables, but then placed many more in the same space. For the residents of San Fernando square, this issue is no laughing matter. “Doña Nachita”, Ignacia Aguirre de Chávez, President of “Vecinos de San Fernando” — “Neighbors of San Fernando,” has been leading the charge since her husband, engineer Gregorio Chávez passed away in November 2007.

Doña Nachita, as she is nicknamed, invited me into her home one balmy July evening. She is a short, resolute, and lively woman, who despite feeling the weight of her office, is steadfast to continue the work of her late husband.

We began working loosely as a group in 1991, but my husband was always aware that we needed to formalize the group. We looked after the square together, took turns cleaning it, held small celebrations. We just care deeply about this place. In 1997, we became an officially registered civil association.

— Aguirre de Chávez (2008), Personal Interview.

There are 14 permanent board members, who meet once a month, and 22 associated members. Doña Nachita was particularly proud of the prizes the association had won for cleaning and caring for the square, the first in 2000 and the second in 2004. The group also planted new trees and placed two old mining cars in the square. She recounted that in 2000, there were hardly any restaurant tables in the square — in 2007, there were 24 businesses, half of them restaurants, in San Fernando Square.

In 2000, her husband and architect Hernán Ferro de la Sota engaged in a public exchange in the newspaper about how San Fernando should look, after the neighborhood association had paid for stone plant holders, which were placed in the square. Architect Ferro expressed that they were completely inappropriate and simply ordered and placed

⁷“Asociación civil” is the Spanish equivalent and designates NGOs of all types, and their official tax-exempt status.
at the association’s whim (Ferro de la Sota, 2000), causing engineer Chávez to retort in his own letter to the newspaper, that the association had complied with all regulations and plainly sought to improve the look of the square (Chávez Noriega, 2000). Architect Ferro had implied that the neighborhood associations involvement in the square was more of a curse than a blessing. Similarly, the local Lion’s Club chapter, also criticized the association and called on City Hall to remove the plant holders (Rodríguez, 2000d). Certainly, differences of opinion are not surprising, especially when it comes to patrimony, but the divide between specialists and the local population is typically not discussed, the specialist - authority dichotomy dominates. Furthermore, conflicts between civil associations are also not publicly discussed.

Doña Nachita emphasized how the association protects and stands up for the square's integrity. In November 2006, Doña Nachita related:

We woke up one morning to the sound of a hammer on the pavement. My husband and I went outside and began arguing with the city officials who, without prior warning, were hammering away at the stones in order to change the pavement of the whole square! We collected 470 signatures of neighbors in three days and brought our petition to City Hall and stopped the destruction of Maestro José Chávez Morado's masterpiece. This administration tries to pull the wool over our eyes. This year, they tried again without warning to remove the benches that are in the Square. Why would they want to remove the benches? Because they want more space for businesses! Again, we collected signatures quickly and they stopped. We have to be vigilant or else they do whatever they want

— Aguirre de Chávez (2008), Personal Interview...

Quite recently, an “Italian Coffee,” the Mexican-owned version of Starbucks, opened in a corner of the square and immediately placed five tables outside. Doña Nachita complained to the Town Hall and eventually, the tables were removed. Like other small-scale organizations, the Vecinos have held various fundraisers to finance small initiatives around the Plaza to maintain its upkeep. Doña Nachita was particularly passionate about retaining the public nature of the Plaza for neighbors and visitors alike. Similarly, the Vecinos supported free performances during the FIC in the square.
Of course, Doña Nachita and the Vecinos are not the only ones with vested interests in San Fernando. The restaurant owners, too, since 2004, have been seeking resolution of the table conundrum (Gasca Rosales, 2007). “Miguel” is a restaurant owner in San Fernando plaza. He has run his small restaurant, which does not actually have space for tables inside, with eight tables outside for five years:

We restaurant owners have tried to work with the neighbors, by making certain concessions. We maintain the square as a place for families, there are no bars here, we do not play loud music. We do not want to be like the Jardín de la Unión. We respect this space.

— Restaurant Owner (2007), Personal Interview.

Miguel explained that he and other restaurant owners have tried to form an association, but “we [Mexicans] are not good at working as a team. It’s cultural, we just don’t work together well.” They had tried to organize the placing of a tourism module in the square, with Internet access, but last minute disagreements between the business owners led the local government to remove the module. Miguel voiced disappointment over this lack of teamwork ability, but hoped that things would eventually change and people would be better able to cooperate. During the FIC, he explained, each business owner could apply to extend operating hours:

I don’t ask for the extension, I close at midnight, as I always do. I think the square and the business is more important than a few weeks of the festival. I cannot risk angering the residents, it is just not worth it. I want to have good relations with the other restaurant owners and the residents.

The authorities do not want to get involved in problems. That is why we have this legal uncertainty.⁸ Some of these tables have been here for many years, some for less, without the corresponding authorization from the municipality. Nor does the municipality receive any revenue. Every three years, the new administration comes and removes our tables, we put them back. Three more years pass. I am willing to pay to help maintain the square. But, we do not even receive a piece of paper that will protect us. We want this security. Another example are the trees. I offered to have the problems of the roots fixed, I was going to pay for it. I had a plan,

⁸The uncertainty whether tables could remain in the square or not.
but the bureaucracy wouldn’t let me go through with it. And the public benches. They are in the way, the authority needs to move them to make them usable. But, the old neighbors don’t want their benches moved. And again, the authority does not want to take action.

— Restaurant Owner (2007), *Personal Interview.*

Miguel spoke positively of the plaza’s potential. During the *FICl*, he and three other restaurant owners, who had remained committed to working together, provided 1,600 free meals for the performers in the plaza. This, he felt, was an important way to support free events during the festival, as most locals cannot afford the high ticket prices. He hoped that businesses would continue to thrive there and the challenges and demands on the space would be overcome. “The plaza has to remain alive, and we need people to come visit. It is in our interest to keep this space clean and safe.”

**Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, civil association**

“Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, A.C.” represents a slightly different NGO approach to preservation. The organization was founded 20 July, 1989 and uses different means to promote and advance preservation. Principally, it has managed to help restore various temples, statues, and paintings, through its restauration workshop. However, the organization has also published various coffee table type books about Guanajuato’s patrimony to diffuse information. On average, the organization restored 45 paintings per year, as well as ten historical spaces, mainly temples, despite funding limitations (Rangel, 1998c). In 1994, the organization restored 25 paintings in San Diego church (Mata, 1994). The group also supported the search for funds to restore La Compañía church, which INAH admitted it could not finance (Guerrero, 1994e).

Bertha Hernández Araujo, a preservation specialist by training, serves as the NGO’s director. She joined the NGO in 1990, in her capacity as a restoration professional. After Guanajuato’s *World Heritage* designation, businessman and hotel owner Eduardo Castro Busso initiated the organization, Hernández Araujo explained, to ensure that “Guanajuato would be the best-preserved city in Latin America.” At the time, she related, neither the city nor the state had a Department of Restoration. Of course, INAH’s center was present then, but it could not cope with the demands of preservation. Consequently, with the foun-
dation of the NGO and its call for funding of projects, the state felt it was obligated to put someone in charge of overseeing the distribution of funds, which led to the formation of a Department of Restoration within the state's Public Works Office (Hernández Araujo, 2007). Not surprisingly, working with INAH in the early days was difficult, the guidelines for projects were not ready and requirements were unclear. Suddenly, the governmental institution had a local competitor. However, emphasized Hernández, these problems did not persist.

In the early days of the association, it managed to establish a trust with then state governor Carlos Medina Plascencia. All of the association's projects have to be vetted by INAH, requiring “professionals” to deal with the paperwork and formalities involved. Hernández further described the evolution of the organization:

Initially, I joined with a colleague to work in the studio, to restore paintings, altar pieces, etc., as I was trained. The majority of the projects were of that nature, but we realized that we had to think bigger and work on the fabric of buildings first, to ensure they were no longer humid, for example, which would then again compromise a painting after its restoration. We have to present new, viable projects all the time, we are not subsidized by the government. We do not automatically receive funding. Furthermore, the government or whoever finances our project only gives us money for that purpose, not for running the office and paying the staff. This makes our operation very difficult. However, in 2005, our then new president, Jorge Videgaray Verdad, suggested that we run the studio separately, thus, we are able to hire the studio, or others, to execute the projects, and then pay the operational costs. We only have four people who are administrative staff, two architects, who assist with architectural projects, an accountant, and myself. Much of the initial work is to identify patrimony, then to devise realistic, sustainable projects. By sustainable, I mean that the piece will be adequately cared for once it has been restored. We simply cannot afford to restore a painting, only to have the priests at the church where it is a permanent piece not display it. Not surprisingly, I think that human beings are the greatest threat to our patrimony, be it because they neglect it, are not interested, or simply do not understand its potential.

— Hernández Araujo (ibid.), Personal Interview.

It had certainly been a battle, Hernández related, to convince lawmakers that patrimony was not a “luxury item.” Much legwork was involved, showing lawmakers the studio,
as well as patrimony sites to win them over. She was confident that attitudes had changed
and that money was more easily available, as long as project proposals were sound
and not political—the organization tried to present itself as neutral as possible.

In 2007, “Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” received US$2.46 million to ex-
ecute twenty different projects (Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, 2010). Among
these projects were four books focused on the state’s heritage, Música del Tiempo, fo-
cused on Guanajuato’s church organs, Mineral de Pozos, about a mining ghost town, Ren-
ovada Grandeza de Guanajuato, featuring colonial art, and Guanajuato Herencia Minera, a
homage to the architecture inspired by the mining industry. Hernández Araujo felt that the
NGO’s editorial work was an important means to raise awareness about different facets of
the state’s heritage, though she admitted that they had not done a good job actually selling
the books instead giving them away. Furthermore, the books allowed the NGO to branch
out from “only” doing projects in the city of Guanajuato.

The majority of the organization’s projects have been interventions in federal prop-
erties, such as churches. When asked about the difficulty of maintaining privately owned
patrimony, Hernández explained:

It is easier for owners to neglect their properties than maintain them. That is
a fact. We are hoping to combat this trend by giving the owners a certificate and
forming a network of patrimony owners to help them help each other. Perhaps
we can even establish a trust for them. We want to help them see the value of
preservation.

— Hernández Araujo (2007), Personal Interview.

The NGO did receive funding to help maintain an Art Nouveau-style privately owned
building on the Paseo de la Presa, and hoped to have similar projects in the future. How-
ever, the owners had provided about 30 percent of the US$83,400 (roughly US$25,000) of
the total project cost (Guanajuato, Patrimonio de la Humanidad, 2010; Hernández Araujo,
2007). How feasible it is for many owners to make this type of financial contribution is de-
batable.

And what did she make of the recent investment in the historic center?
I would’ve preferred to preserve the adoquin stone and as many original materials as possible … I do not dislike the new stone, but above all, I wish the planning had been more careful, as it was a huge investment.

— Hernández Araujo (2007), Personal Interview.

4.7 Planning for and in the historic center


Mexico’s planning history begins outright in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ward, 1986). Mexico City has always been the country’s “laboratory” for new policies, including planning (Ward, 1998). The first “plan parcial” — “partial plan” for Guanajuato’s historic center was published in 1994, commissioned and financed by the State Government. It is based on the “Plan Director de Desarrollo Urbano” (Directive Urban Development plan) of the same year (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994a). It was still in force in 2007, as the newest updated version became entangled in legislative controversies (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006a). Legally, it is based on the country’s constitution, the Human Settlements Law, the state constitution, Law of the Executive Branch of the State of Guanajuato, Municipal Law of the State of Guanajuato, and the Law of Urban Development for the State of Guanajuato (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994a, p. 7). The development plan reviews the pertinent articles of the laws listed above and tellingly, the Urban Development Law, in article 26, stipulates that “all works and construction projects, whether public or private, that are realized in the State, need to conform to urban development plans” (ibid., p. 12). Clearly, this stipulation seems unrealistic under the best of circumstances. Considering the historically competitive nature of Mexican governance (Ward, 1986), this stipulation also illustrates the system’s bureaucratic nature; an issue repeatedly raised by architects and private owners. For architect Jorge Cabrejos, the 1980s represented a lost decade, due to the economic turmoil experienced throughout Latin America, but particularly in Mexico, and planning suffered accordingly (Cabrejos Moreno, 2006a).
1994 Plan

To begin, it is critical to note that the Partial Plan focuses on the Historic Center only, not the World Heritage zone as a whole. Of course, the Plan recognizes the designation, but does not address the complexity of the entire 22.64 square kilometer area. As such, the Partial Plan first pontificates extensively on the nature of the actors involved in the planning process (experts, government, and population) (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b). Various teams contributed to the plan, one focused on ascertaining what economic activities underpin the historic monuments zone, while another team produced an urban morphological study. The first team incorporated urban planners, urban sociologists, restauration specialists, historians, and economists, while the second was comprised of architects, urban regional planners, urban sociologists, and restauration specialists. The members were all residents of Guanajuato, which the plan recognized as a strength as well as a weakness, as some things could appear quite obvious to these “insiders” but not to other readers. Two members were architect Hernán Ferro de la Sota and historian Fernando Luis Díaz. However, this local knowledge advanced the study more quickly, which was considered a distinct advantage (ibid., p. 7).

Aside from a brief history of Guanajuato and its current state (see Section 4.2), the study included a participatory planning component, integrating different sectors of society into drafting the plan; featuring, local businesses, professionals, neighbors, people, partnerships and social clubs. One of the document’s annexes features the suggestions and outcomes of these meetings. In total, the first team spoke with twenty-four different groups, including neighborhood associations, business people, and students. The team validated separate 498 opinions, though a total of 919 were recorded. The authors explain that the 421 responses they did not validate were repetitions, clarifications or details of an opinion and thus made the decision to limit themselves to considering only 498 of the 919 (ibid., p. 172). To solicit responses, the participants were shown a visual clip of the city and then encouraged to brainstorm, without the moderator making any suggestions. Most commonly, citizens cited the lack of cleanliness in the city (83 percent, or 20 groups complained about this issue during their meeting), excess of vehicles and lack of parking (50 and 45 percent, respectively), and the inefficiency of local authorities (41 percent), as well as the lack of planning foresight in tourism (also 41 percent) (ibid., p. 173). In an opinion
piece, Hernán Ferro de la Sota admitted that not all twenty-four groups were presented with the results of the study and the subsequent plan during a second meeting—faulting lack of time to do so (Ferro de la Sota, 1995a). These complaints had not changed much by 2008. Another specific source of discontent was also the Festival Internacional Cervantino, FIC. The study found 526 stores in the historic center, along with 27 bars.

In the urban morphology component of the study, 503 heritage buildings were identified, and 2,741 technical data sheets recorded (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 9). Some samples of the data sheets are incorporated into the Plan, but the whole set was not available to me. With reference to Guanajuato’s persistent traffic problems, the partial plan incorporates much information from an earlier study completed by a private company, Cal y Mayor. Some streets and tunnels saw as many as 845 vehicles pass per hour (ibid., p. 56). During peak times (morning and afternoons), Avenue Juárez’ entrance to the subterranean street saw an average of 1,432 vehicles per hour (1994a, p. 50). Not surprisingly, Guanajuato’s small network of roads, many of which converge onto Avenue Juárez, creates numerous bottlenecks and slows traffic down significantly. Public transportation, with 13 urban routes at the time, carried 85,000 people daily. Shortage of parking is a persistent problem.

The Partial Plan criticizes the then current municipal initiative “Rescate y Vida” — “Rescue and Life” for sponsoring 40 projects that mainly (to the tune of 66 percent) were ornamental in nature, and only 2 percent were spent on any infrastructural projects. This, the Plan claims, amounts to a very passive municipal government, “content to simply divide the pie” (1994b, p. 63). The Plan further highlights the particular vulnerability of Guanajuato’s housing stock, as the historic center is home to many of the students, who only seek temporary housing and thus submit to less than adequate housing conditions. The Urban Development Plan states that at the time:

> It should be noted that there are approximately 1,066 homes in the area of historical sites and monuments and its immediate area in poor condition, which must be restored to prevent further deterioration that would lead to their complete collapse (1994a, p. 61).
The Urban Development Plan splits up the city into eighteen different zones, I to XVIII, and I included an overlay of the World Heritage designation area for context (Figure 4.30). In the southwestern part of the city, from the Olla Dam to the Embajadoras market, 281 (15.03 percent) houses (of 1,869 in total) were deemed to be in bad condition (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994a, p. 65). In the Pastitas neighborhood, 83 houses (10.09 percent) were in poor condition (of 823 total). The Alameda zone had 333 deteriorated houses (31.03 percent) (of approximately 1,073 properties. In the Urban Center, the Plan reported 351 heavily deteriorated buildings (19 percent) of 1,846 total properties (ibid., pp. 68–72). If these figures are even remotely accurate for 1994, then the estimates given to me by the staff of the historic center surveillance division were surely too positive. Their estimates placed about 75 buildings in the historic center as being in varying states of dereliction, and they did not offer precise numbers of abandoned or completely collapsed houses (Mendoza Ortiz, 2007). Since the Plan refers to “area of historical sites and monuments” it seems likely it are refers to the national monument zone and not to the much larger World Heritage designated area. There are advantages to not having precise figures — a plan of action and responsibility can be endlessly deferred. Since the majority of houses in disrepair are private property, there is very little that the local authority can actually do to encourage the preservation of homes, despite the provision of the Ley Federal which places them under the control of the nation (see Appendix III). Thus, these properties present a huge dilemma to the authorities.

The Urban Development Plan stressed the need for the Partial Plan to address the deterioration of the historic center, however, it recognized the lack of financial resources to address the infrastructural problems of the historic center, and the city at large, as well as the lack of diversification in the city’s economic activities, keeping per capita income very low (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994a, p. 98). It further advocated an “integrated program” to facilitate restoration of buildings, squares, and gardens, regardless of whether they were cataloged or not, making the criteria simply their location within the “zone of the historic center” (ibid., p. 119). This highlights how the national monumental zone is far more influential and well-recognized than the World Heritage designated area.

The Partial Plan’s recommendations include: the decentralizing some of the primary schools that are causing traffic problems in the city center, moving administrative offices
Figure 4.30: 1994 Urban Development Plan boundaries and World Heritage boundaries.
(Based on: H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003d)
of the University to the periphery, while strengthening University and secondary school activities through the rehabilitation and land use change of underused buildings (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 177). Further, the need for a Cultural Plan is expressed to enhance the city’s offerings, and a greater mixture of small businesses and housing is recommended, to avoid “dead zones in the historic area” (ibid., p. 178). While it might seem like a good idea to move schools out of the historic center, this contributes to less mixed land use. The Plan further demands that restaurants respect the public thoroughfares and that the municipal government restrict the numbers of permits issued.

The Plan also carefully suggests the decentralization of local and state government offices out of the city center, with the view that this requires a long-term commitment. Principal offices, such as tourism and the municipal government itself should, however, remain in the central area. Clearly, public administrators do not want to feel that their domain is being “exiled” to the periphery, thus making decentralization a highly charged subject. The planners also suggest the institutionalization of participatory planning, to give the activity legitimacy. The expression of needs, the discussion of proposals, and the preparation of a draft plan for the municipal government must be followed through to ensure credibility of the process (ibid., p. 183). Incidentally, in the case of this Partial Plan, it appears that the discussion of proposals and a joint draft proposal were never presented to the public. Understandably, the authors of the Plan wanted to ensure the incorporation of their practice to legitimize it, but the lack of implementation speaks to the vulnerability of participatory planning practices.

Further recommendations suggested additional studies and projects to address water supply, drainage, sewage, and lighting in “areas of scenic attraction” (ibid., p. 183). In its own review of water supply, for instance, the Plan found that overwhelmingly, water supplies were deficient. If in fact the supply was deficient in the city center, then what was it like in new neighborhoods? The Plan recognizes the difficult economic position Guanajuato and the whole country was in at the time, the peso had been devalued, forcing the introduction of the new peso, pegged much more closely to the dollar. The authors reflect on the nature of mining and its vagaries, due to the fluctuations in the world market. For them, the production of artisanal crafts as well as tourism are the way forward for Guanajuato’s economy — at least in the short term (ibid., p. 184). The authors highlight the FIC
as a negative example in the attraction of tourism, based on the negative feedback about the event they received from the participating residents. Again, they emphasize the need for cooperation between residents, professionals, and the authorities, and suggest a coordinated effort to properly assess the tourism potential of the city. To my knowledge, this was never done.

The Plan also aims to tackle the public transport problem that to this day dogs the city. Many of the buses are simply too big for the small streets, yet they still operate and are licensed to do so. Different unions also complicate the public transport infrastructure and thus far, it appears, the municipal government and the state government have been unwilling (or unable, if one prefers) to address faults in the licensing mechanisms and enforcement of vehicle standards. The Plan suggests a change of the fleet of vehicles — but does not offer details on how this might be financed (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1994b, p. 208). Thus, the public transport issue has been at a long-term impasse.

The authors argue that the “natural process of evolution and development of historical sites makes them vulnerable, if they do not have a legal instrument that provides one or more options that without losing its heritage status contemporary needs are met” (ibid., p. 226), my emphasis. I argue, however, that it is not the lack of legal instruments at the root of the problem but rather, the lack of enforcement. Considering that both the Partial Plan and the Development became legal documents, further supported by the Federal Law, which still applies, in addition to the State preservation law, the enforcement of these legal instruments has to be questioned. Of course, how exactly could they be enforced? The regional INAH center, responsible for the patrimony of the whole state, clearly does not have the resources or manpower to ensure all the laws are upheld. Furthermore, it is clearly not in the interest of everyone to uphold the laws, as many costs are involved.

The intentions of the 1994 Plan were certainly laudable. However, and perhaps this is the nature of much planning, it seeks to do too much at the expense of workable and realistic strategies for success.

2002 Plan

For the municipal government, the lack of an integrated approach to address the needs of the World Heritage zone was the main motivation for its 2002 “Plan de Conservación,
Guanajuato, Zona Declarada Patrimonio de la Humanidad,” “Conservation Plan for Guanajuato, Zone declared World Heritage.” One of the principal goals of this Conservation Plan was to update and enlarge the World Heritage polygon, which had failed to include mining villages and had “cut” through dams, and to include ecological corridors, which had also not been considered in 1988 (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002, p. 6). This was a particularly ambitious undertaking and in a sense, doomed to fail, as neither the municipality, nor state government have the formal power to submit alterations or even application files to UNESCO, only INAH’s World Heritage office can put forward proposals. This Conservation Plan differs considerably from the 1994 Partial Plan, in that there was no direct citizen participation component, but instead, a reliance on local experts. The Plan is structured as follows:

I Introduction

II Legal Framework and Urban Code: Briefly discusses the laws that impact the heritage area, including the Federal Law and the UNESCO Convention.

III Natural Environment: An environmental history of Guanajuato, present-day ecological aspects and concerns, synthesis and recommendations.

IV Socio-Economic Aspects: Description of Guanajuato’s position in the world economy, and the prospects for tourism before and after September 11, 2001.

V Urban and Patrimony Domain: Architect Jorge Cabrejos’ description of Guanajuato’s atypical patrimony, the designation zones, and the building stock.

VI Policies and Strategies

VII Conclusions, Recommendations, and Proposals: Recommendations divided into addressing the environmental problems, proposals for the integrated management of the city’s patrimony, proposals for a better insertion of Guanajuato into the world economy, and short term proposals.

The Conservation Plan also contains seven appendices, featuring photographs as well as maps. It is worth noting that all of the maps were rendered in AutoCAD, the preferred
tool of architects as it can produce 3-D images of buildings. Unfortunately, none of these maps were useful once rendered in AutoCAD — perhaps the files were corrupted in their transfer to me, or, the change in software affected them. Even if the maps had been accessible, their usefulness was limited by the lack of scale. In effect, the maps float in a little defined geographical space. However, I did obtain one map that shows the different polygons, the World Heritage area, as well as the proposed, new polygon. Unfortunately, this map is clearly not an original, so much of the detail, particularly the exact locations of the ecological corridors is lost. (Figure 4.31).

As argued in Section 4.7, undoubtedly, the legal realm that applies to patrimony is too crowded. The Conservation Plan lists eight different pieces of international, national, state, and municipal legislation that applies to the designated area. At issue is effective enforcement. While this section of the Conservation Plan discusses the UNESCO Convention and its original inception, it does not describe or explain the application process, and the requirement of a nationally coordinated dossier, nor that Mexico did not sign the Convention until 1984. Whether this was an oversight or not is unclear, but recognizing the persistence of confusion about World Heritage and UNESCO’s role, it seems likely that the authors were not exactly clear or aware of the minutiae. However, considering the ambition of the Conservation Plan, the devil is in the details, as the good intention of re-scaling the designation area is rendered obsolete, due to the UNESCO’s requirements (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002, pg.9-11).

Guanajuato has long suffered soil erosion due to deforestation and thus is an area prone to landslides. The protection of the ravines, therefore is critical, and Part III of the Conservation Plan suggests the implementation of fifteen ecological corridors to alleviate some of the environmental pressures on the city. Much of the remainder of Part III is concerned with the area’s flora and fauna (ibid.). The first section on the economic condition of the city and state focuses much on the falling mineral export demands due to technological changes and substitutes (ibid., p. 62). Based on statistics from 1996, the Conservation Plan counted 39 hotels in the whole municipality, as well as 46 “quality” restaurants, and 46 tour guides (ibid., pp. 66–67). The Conservation Plan, much like Salvador Ayala Ortega, the Director of Promotion and Outreach for the State of Guanajuato, blames the limited range of activities or lack of promotion of the existing ones as the main reasons that tourists do not
Figure 4.31: The World Heritage area and the 2002 Conservation Plan area.
(Source: Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002)
stay in Guanajuato longer. The Plan further suggests that poor quality, inadequate lodgings, and the attractions of surrounding destinations also affect the length of stay. Their estimates suggest a reduction in the length of stay from 1.8 to 1.69 while statistics from SIIMT for the years 1994 to 1996 suggest an average stay of 1.5, down to 1.3, and back to 1.4 nights. It is entirely possible that the Plan wanted to convey a slightly more positive picture as regards overnight stays. This discrepancy in data could also be explained by different data collection criteria. Most importantly, however, the Plan suggests that “determination of this is crucial to focus on further actions” (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002, p. 68).

The Conservation Plan identifies two complex variables that have led to the sector’s setbacks: 1) disintegration in the provision of related services (such as transportation) and 2) the lack of a close relationship with the Tourism Secretariat, which does not have “direct legal powers to ensure that those employed in the sector have qualifications which provides at least the national minimum standard” (ibid., p. 73). The Plan also mentions the results of a tourist survey, in which many visitors cited the lack of basic service provision (water), insufficient road signage, and limited tourist information as problems with the city’s tourism infrastructure. Nevertheless, of the 174 participants, more than half vowed to return to Guanajuato, despite these shortcomings (ibid., p. 73). The Plan points out the problem of high turnover in municipal and state government officials, which inhibits the ability to follow through with planning and data collection. Not surprisingly, the majority of national tourists to Guanajuato come to visit family relations or friends (62.6 percent), and subsequently stays with them, rather than in a hotel or hostel (ibid., p. 79), making the national tourist a less attractive visitor. The Plan concludes that a repositioning of the University of Guanajuato in the international context is necessary to stabilize and fortify the local economy, in addition to addressing aforementioned problems in the tourism sector. However, aside from these recommendations, no concrete proposals are made.

Part V of the Conservation Plan focuses on the urban and patrimony domain, the urban building stock and its environment. It further emphasizes the atypical nature of the differences between the national and World Heritage designation areas (ibid., p. 94). The buffer zone constitutes 60 percent of the entire World Heritage designation area and is characterized by negligible agricultural and forestry use. Most importantly, the Plan con-
cludes, the private, communal and public uses of the buffer zone adds to the complexity of protecting and conserving the entire area. Furthermore, this has created a “legal vacuum,” whereby despite the existence of national, state, and municipal legal instruments, none of these entities truly takes responsibility for conservation. The Plan urges the municipal government to assume this responsibility much more actively (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002, p. 94).

In the policy and strategy section, the Plan adopts the Charter of World Heritage Cities, approved during the OWHC meeting in Fez, in 1993 (ibid., p. 113). This Charter commits itself to first and foremost work on behalf of inhabitants of World Heritage cities, as well as greater cooperation between them. As for strategy, the Plan commits itself to reinforce the Directorate of Legal Affairs and the Cadastral Office, to strengthen the Office of Urban Development and Public Works. This is meant to open up new avenues of communication with various actors, governmental or otherwise, perhaps easing the technical and legal requirements to facilitate direct involvement in the patrimony zone. This appears rather nebulous overall. While it might aspire to consolidate leadership and responsibilities, it remains unclear how it will be more inclusive.

In the final conclusions and recommendations section, the Plan becomes more concrete, specifically calling for the recognition of a new polygon that incorporates the small, local mining towns as well as important watersheds of the biological corridors (ibid., p. 116). It reiterates the superseding role of the municipal government as opposed to the other scales of government. Above all, the coordination between all levels of government and the private sector, such as restaurant owners, hoteliers, tour guides is stressed, and anyone working in tourism services should receive regular training, with programs provided by the government as well as the private sector. Ambitiously, the Plan demands the full “integration of strategies, policies, actions and works of cultural heritage conservation built into the urban development plans and programs” (ibid., p. 119) from the municipal government. The language is revealing, “stimulate” citizen consultation and participation, “sustainable tourism,” “sustainable development” — all the buzzwords are there. The Plan also calls for a comprehensive reorganization of public transport, improvement of urban infrastructure and services in newer neighborhoods, and searching for private financing, as well as a continuous conservation and rehabilitation program. Furthermore, it urges the
formation of trusteeships “to finance the preservation of groups of buildings, sites, streets and alleys, plazas and gardens” (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2002, p. 121). Next, the Plan reviews the educational infrastructure in the city and how the University as well as NGOs such as the local ICOMOS chapter might contribute to enhancing preservation and conservation. Again, much emphasis is put on the coordination between NGOs and the state and local governments. Then, the Plan focuses on how Guanajuato might better insert itself into the world economy. In order to do so, tourism planning is required, as the infrastructure is lacking. Tourism, the Plan argues, has grown haphazardly, without direction and an analysis of demand. Furthermore, most of the tourism activities are concentrated spatially (in the city center) and temporally (during the FIC, other religious or local festivals), leaving a gap, particularly as regards ecological tourism. Investment in tourism, the Plan further argues, has been hampered by legal complexity and a lack of clarity with respect to who is in charge in the sector, be it SECTUR, the State's Tourism Development Department, or the municipal government. Additionally, the city's inability to provide consistent water service to residents and tourists alike has created a negative perception of tourists in the minds of residents. “They receive water regularly, we do not, even though we live here. How, if at all, do we benefit from tourists?” The Plan stresses that this service problem needs to be addressed quickly, so as to prevent lasting criticism of tourism.

In the short term, the Plan focuses on nine items that require implementation: Making the new polygon official to strengthen the original declaration; inviting the state and federal governments to legally ratify the new polygon to finally garner international recognition; strengthening the local government's legal say as regards the World Heritage area and particularly support the Cadastral office staff to become more knowledgeable about the local government's urban development plans; encouraging more family tourism; promoting and developing more cultural facilities; reinforcing mining, ecological, and religious tourist attractions; general improvements to the areas of Marfil, and the Olla dam; updating the regulations to include newly identified terms such as “cultural landscape” and “ecological corridor;” and finally, under the auspices of the municipal government, develop a management system that will stimulate the funding of projects in the area (ibid., pp. 126–127).
The attempt to implement the new polygon stopped the entire Conservation Plan in its tracks (Ferro de la Sota, 2007). The new polygon was never published in the official gazette of the municipal or state government, rendering it meaningless, even though the city council, according to the media and architect Ferro, approved the enlarged area (Abad Olivares, 2005a; Ferro de la Sota, 2007). In order to become law, legislation has to be published in the gazette. It might seem a technicality, but it is an important one. The Conservation Plan represents a shift in planning, as it so explicitly focused on the impact and implications of tourism, compared to the 1994 Plan. It also reveals that Guanajuato’s specialists, particularly architects, were being influenced by the international debates, specifically around “cultural landscape” that were then emergent. Sadly, it seems that failing to take the first hurdle disqualified all parts of the Plan — surely not an efficient management of resources, time or otherwise. As is becoming apparent, there is no shortage of plans, strategies, ideas to improve Guanajuato’s designated areas, however, there seems to be an implementation gap, influenced by the political cycle and interest.

2003 Plan

The third and final Plan I will discuss here is the 2003 “Plan Maestro para la Preservación del Patrimonio Cultural del Municipio de Guanajuato” — Master Plan for the Preservation of the Cultural Patrimony of the Municipality of Guanajuato. I will refer to it solely as “Master Plan.” This document is comprehensive at 1,433 pages. It includes much of the international, national, state, and local legislation, which explains its size. Roughly, the Master Plan is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Features two chapters, one on the administration of patrimony, prior plans, and legislation, and one on historic documents, reviewing what materials there are that deal with the history and development of the city.

Part 2: Has seven chapters, the first dedicated to natural heritage, the second to patrimony and infrastructure, the third to the urban image, chapter four covers socioeconomic aspects, chapter five tangible heritage, chapter six intangible heritage, and chapter seven focuses on education for preservation.

Part 3: Features strategies, programs, and legal instruments.
Appendices: Three further appendices cover legislation, planning, and various international and national agreements that influence or involve patrimony] (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c).

The Master Plan collates the work and information gathered in previous plans, laws, and reports, to become an ample resource. Not surprisingly, the Master Plan identifies the same problems as its 1994 counterparts: lack of public lighting, poor drainage, visual contamination in the historic center due to the electric grid, telephone and television cables (Figure 4.32; an outdated public transport system that contributes to traffic congestion and contamination and little parking options (ibid., pp. 106–116). According to the Master Plan, some of the cobblestone still present in callejones dates back to the 18th century, was then replaced by irregular pieces of green stone (Pirindongo), also still present in some
places, and then once again replaced by cobblestone in 30 by 30 cm pieces, now visible in the main streets (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c, p. 119). The new pavement, with Romanesque arches, is made of porphyry, a stone widely used in Europe for paving (Figure 4.33), while the typical, irregular cobblestones that still dominate many of the side-streets and alleyways (Figure 4.34). The repaving of major thoroughfares has been one of the main infrastructural interventions in the city, which have proven highly disruptive and extremely costly. Rather embarrassingly, the new pavement already showed cracks and problems in 2007 (Figure 4.35). 100 square meters of the stones costs US$1,525 (Gasca Rosales, 2007q), prompting immediate calls for a cheaper replacement porphyry in slab sizes (Gasca Rosales, 2007t). The former mayor had to defend himself vigorously, as the repavement of the Plaza de la Paz and other major streets is regarded as one of the hallmarks of his administration (Gasca Rosales and Reyes, 2007).
In chapter five, the Master Plan details the tangible, cataloged heritage. In total, INAH cataloged 695 heritage buildings in its 1989 assessment. Why has there not been a reassessment on the part of INAH? Mainly, lack of manpower and resources are to blame. CNMH, however, has cataloged 552 buildings in Guanajuato’s historic center (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 2). Given the early survey and inclusion as a zone of monuments, it seems likely that CNMH applied a more strict set of criteria. Still, the discrepancy points to lack of communication between the regional office and CNMH. The Master Plan relies on the zones of the city specified by the 1994 Urban Development Plan to document the distribution of heritage buildings (Figure 4.30). Accordingly, the majority of heritage buildings (72.4 percent, 503 buildings) can be found in zone VI, the urban center, followed by a wide margin in zone I, the area of the Olla Dam with 62 buildings or 8.9 percent. Marfil, zone XVI, home to many mineral treatment plants, has 31 buildings (4.5 percent), while,
Pastita, zone III, has 23 heritage buildings (3.3 percent). Zones VII (Cerro del Cuarto) and XIII (Venada-Gavilanes) feature 10 buildings (1.4 percent), while zone XIV (Pueblito de Rocha) has 12 (1.7 percent), and zone VIII (Cerro del Gallo) 14 buildings (2 percent).

Finally, in part 3 of the Master Plan, strategies and actions are revealed. For one, the Master Plan suggests a revision, if necessary, of laws, norms, and regulations that govern and protect cultural as well as natural heritage (2003c, p.192). One specific action is to address the long-standing problem of encroachment of restaurants into public space, a practice that has caused repeated confrontations between restauranteurs, neighbors of restaurants, particularly in San Francisco square, and the local government. One of the strategies suggested is a trust to help finance the preservation of natural and cultural heritage in Guanajuato. Furthermore, the Master Plan proposes a manual with guidelines to assist in the implementation of burying telephony and utility lines in heritage areas, as
well as the creation of a Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage (2003c, pp. 192–193). Most of these proposals are short term, though simplifying the licensing of restoration and preservation projects is listed as a short, medium, and long-term goal. Furthermore, the Master Plan urges to prohibit the subdivision of buildings in the historic center, especially where the subdivision might detrimentally affect the building’s structure. This, it seems, would be particularly difficult to enforce, as landlords routinely subdivide their houses to accommodate students or rent out rooms during the FIC. When it comes to financing, the Master Plan proposes to heavily promote cultural and natural patrimony to private initiative, mainly by means of tax incentives and to establish a program called “Adopt a heritage building,” similar to “Adopt a highway” programs, to stimulate preservation. The Master Plan also advises to revisit all buildings already cataloged and consider more buildings as potential additions to the catalog — a thorough update of the INAH catalog. Included in this revision of the catalog should be a topologically divided registry for buildings, one for mines, one for temples and convents, one for mineral treatment plants, and so forth. Similarly, it suggests a separate registry for architectonic features such as bridges, balconies, and other ornamental details. In particular, dams, mills, and many bridges are a priority, and needed to be cataloged quickly, as there were little technical details and records available, thus making these registries urgent. Additionally, it demands that any materials related to patrimony in archives, museums, exhibits, and libraries be cataloged and constantly updated. Correspondingly, the Master Plan argues that data collection about urban furniture, such as kiosks, benches, fountains, statues, and hydrants was urgently necessary. Again, each feature would be analyzed in detail, listing materials used, size, location, and physical state. Clearly, a highly ambitious project, purely considering the number of buildings and architectonic features. Correspondingly ambitious are the Plan’s suggestions to improve the city’s environment, with permanent cleaning programs for the historic center specifically, and major clean-ups of rivers, and building of a new water treatment plant, to name but a few of the proposed initiatives. Similarly, the Plan highlights the need to update the city’s drainage system, continue relocating the electric, television, and telephone grids, as well as replacing outdated diesel buses with smaller vehicles in the city center. A new proposal calls for credits for tour companies who “rationally” save and take advantage of patri-
mony (H. Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003c, p. 210). What exactly the criterion is for this “rational” effort is anyone’s guess. Another new proposal is the transformation of the old railway station into a tourism attraction. To date, not much has happened to create this new destination. Overall, the Master Plan repeats many of the proposals made in 1994.

In the conclusions section, the Master Plan suggests that there “should be a mechanism for the nation to repurchase buildings when they have been in private hands and regulate the spatial rights of the owners” (ibid., p. 222). Controversial, undoubtedly, for private owners. In their recommendations, the Plan posits that preservation of patrimony should supersede any other interests, such as tourism. The reproduction of all the relevant federal, state, and local legislation far outstrips the actual plan and its analysis in length. The Master Plan, perhaps due to its comprehensiveness, suffered the same fate as the Conservation Plan, namely, it got stuck in the wheels of the legislative process. That is not to imply that ratification and publication of the Master Plan would result in immediate actions on much of the action items, however, the difficulty of moving the Master Plan along reveals the limited effectiveness of much planning in Guanajuato: no matter how sympathetic, it will struggle to get ratified.

4.8 Tourism: “Otherwise there is no work in Guanajuato”

Introduction

Guanajuato is firmly committed to tourism as a means of economic development and a path to greater prosperity. In 1998, the city had 45 hotels — by 2007, that number had nearly doubled, to 83 hotels, 2,623 rooms (Rangel, 2007c). Roughly 150 tour guides were federally certified in 2006 (Refugio Ruíz Velasco Negrete, 2006), yet the total number of non-certified guides is probably triple or perhaps quadruple that number. In short, tourism promises quick and easy profits, and according to the Director of Promotions and Outreach, Salvador Ayala Ortega, “it is easy to do, gratifying, and non-contaminating…and otherwise, there is no work in Guanajuato” (2007).
Tourism Promotion

Tourism promotion campaigns do not come cheap, and despite questionable results, investing large sums of money into these campaigns is popular. In 1994, the federal and state government, as well as the private sector, invested US$137,509 in national and international promotional campaign (Guerrero, 1994f).

During my first visit to Guanajuato, in 2006, I was able to speak to the person in charge of the newly created “Secretaría de Desarrollo Turístico” — the “Ministry of Tourism Development.” It is part of the Ministry of Economic Development. In the past, tourism had had its own ministry, but budgetary concerns forced the governor, Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, to integrate it into the Economic Development sector. María del Refugio Ruiz Velasco Negrete had much tourism experience, working many years in Acapulco, before being called to head tourism development in Guanajuato. Velasco Negrete had attended school with governor Romero Hicks.

Ms. Velasco Negrete said in no unclear terms that while the World Heritage designation might be helpful in attracting more tourism, it was certainly not the most important factor in Guanajuato’s popularity among national tourists, which dominate among visitors. For her, it was the confluence of various factors: the development of the Cervantes Festival, beginning with the “Entremeses” in 1952, the Mummy museum, which is a must-see for national tourists, as well being the birthplace of the Independence movement, and the artist Diego Rivera, in addition to other museums and theaters. Nostalgia for a simpler time, a time where a Don Quijote experienced his adventures, is a large component in Guanajuato’s development as a center for cultural tourism. Hewison Hewison (1987, p.47) argues, “the nostalgic impulse is an important agency in adjustment to crisis, it is a social emollient and reinforces national identity when confidence is weakened or threatened.”

The transition from a mining economy to a tourism economy has certainly not been easy. Ms. Velasco Negrete reflected on this during our conversation:

I think that for us in Mexico or for the inhabitants of Guanajuato, [World Heritage] has not penetrated well... I don't know if it's because of lack of education because many people, the majority of the people have not had the opportunity to travel to other places around the world, to have this idea to compare…and
of course in Mexico you have Xochimilco, the pyramids, you have recently now Tequila in Jalisco, some other sites in Oaxaca, but still, many people have not been able to travel or sometimes even if you do not travel, sometimes you read or you watch programs on TV, but our TV system that is accessible to all the people…is not…it is only soap operas, comedians, comedy programs…things that are not really educational, so I think there is still a lot of work to be done in order to promote what it means to be, to have one site in the city, or many sites in Mexico, I think there are about nine sites in Mexico, so I think that’s also very, very important, to educate our own people on what it means to compare ourselves with …like in Peru, Macchu Pichu, but here in Guanajuato or all around …who has been able to visit those sites, so you really don’t have a point of comparison; perhaps you see that as having a title or a paper that says you are now [World Heritage]…and that is it.


Thus, not surprisingly, Ms. Velasco Negrete emphasized the need to educate the population in different ways about the importance of cleanliness (hygiene in restaurants, bars, and hotels) as well as recycling and upkeep of urban areas. She highlighted the state’s “Prize for Cleanliness and Conservation of Natural and Urban Image” program, run since 1998, as a way of

improving the environment for everybody, not only for tourism but for everybody. It gives you as a resident a chance to contribute and not leave everything only to the government. It helps people realize that there are things they can do to improve their surroundings. This is really important.

— Refugio Ruíz Velasco Negrete (ibid.), Personal Interview.

In 2003, a further competition was initiated, the “Prize for the Conservation of Cultural Patrimony.” It is worth noting that neither Morelia nor Oaxaca have initiated programs of this sort. Categories included are “Best preserved historic neighborhood,” “Best preserved collective public space,” “Best preserved residential property,” and “Best preserved religious property,” to name just a few. The monetary prizes given to neighborhood associations like the “Association of Neighbors of San Fernando and San Roque” are meant as incentives, to encourage the local population to remain involved. Prizes range from roughly US$3,000 to US$11,000 (Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 2004; Gob-
ierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 2006). The San Fernando association first won a prize in 2000, and again in 2004. Schools are also involved to raise awareness among children.

Aside from educating the general public, Ms. Velasco Negrete was particularly concerned about the education and certification of tour guides. The “pirate” tour guide phenomenon, as tour guides who fail to become nationally certified tour guides are routinely referred to, has dogged Guanajuato for a long time. The attraction is the perception of quick money, “simply by taking tourists to their hotels and perhaps showing them a few sites, but it is a misleading concept of a guide …they don’t pay tax.” The Secretariat periodically ran awareness campaigns, because, as Ms. Velasco Negrete explained, “most tourists cannot tell the difference between the guides.” Typically, certified guides carry an identification tag around their necks, but of course, those could be forged. Ms. Velasco Negrete estimated that only 150 guides in Guanajuato were certified, while the number of pirates triple or quadruple that number.

In 2007, during my visit to the Municipal Tourism office, Ms. María de Lourdes Orozco Ríos, Promotion and Cooperation Coordinator, placed the number of accredited guides at 94 (2007). Regardless of the exact numbers, the illegal tour guide phenomenon is a huge image problem for the Secretariat, as well as Municipal Tourism, as negative word of mouth exceeds all promotional campaigning (Ayala Ortega, 2007; Refugio Ruiz Velasco Negrete, 2006).

Ms. Velasco Negrete further raised the issue of statistics in our conversation and how a tourist is defined. The definition applied there was “a tourist is someone who comes to stay for one day or more in a hotel,” in other words, someone who registers their stay in a hotel register. At the time, I was staying in a bed & breakfast and thus, according to her office, not a tourist. She admitted that there was a serious documentation problem, because of course many tourists come to stay with family members, but still visit sites and spend money. One of the challenges for tourism development is extending the length of overnight stay. In Guanajuato, the average length of stay has not changed much since record-keeping began in 1986. Then, visitors stayed on average 1.5 days, by 2006, it was 1.8 (SIIMT, 2006b). 2002 represents the peak year, when the average stay extended to 2.1 days.

For Salvador Ayala Ortega, Director of Promotion and Diffusion, and thus, one of Ms.
Velasco Negrete’s successors, the brevity of stay was a major problem. To combat it, and to achieve at a minimum 2 night stays, he advocated the creation of more tourism products in the city: 

> People have more things to do while they are here. The architecture stays the same and does not create more interest in staying longer. So we need to focus on offering more events, of a variety, to interest different demographics.

— Ayala Ortega (2007), Personal Interview.

Of course the architecture is one of the main criteria for UNESCO designation.

In contrast to Ms. Velasco Negrete, Mr. Ayala Ortega did not have a tourism background, in fact, he is an engineer. For him, the fact that Guanajuato’s museums are closed on Mondays was a huge problem, because “we have to occupy the tourist.” His belief in the ability of tourism to foster development seemed unlimited, “without tourism, there is nothing to do in Guanajuato.” He cited Cuba, Spain, and Costa Rica as tourism development examples. He saw no drawbacks whatsoever to tourism, as quoted previously, “it is easy to do, non-contaminating, and gratifying.” He also emphasized the looming end of Mexico’s petroleum, leaving the country to rely on tourism even more.

For Mr. Ayala Ortega, the lack of World Heritage penetration also came down to education and the

> citizens need to have a tourist culture because respect for tourists will help create a culture of awareness, and thus more respect for patrimony. Everyone must realize they are in some ways connected to tourism and that tourism will help them pay their bills.

— Ayala Ortega (ibid.), Personal Interview.

While it may be true that most people in Guanajuato are in some form connected to tourism, be it through relations, or perhaps owning a shop, or working in a restaurant, the correlation between respect for visitors and respect for heritage does not necessarily hold. After all, tourists may or may not be aware of World Heritage themselves. “We didn't know until we drove into town and passed the arch that announces it,” American tourists expressed to me. Another tourist said, “I saw the sign for [UNESCO], but I really don’t
quite understand what the designation is supposed to do.” What World Heritage is meant to “do” is clearly the most important issue to address.

The Director of the Municipal Tourism Council, Juan Carlos Santoscoy Zamora, was very enthusiastic about both World Heritage and ANCMPM in particular. For him, World Heritage was a matter of pride, and an “added plus, raising expectations,” and it “places us on a different level.” How and what exactly this “level” is he was not prepared to say. He was very much excited about the prospect of further identifying and clarifying a World Heritage brand name, as is the intention of ANCMPM. Further he remarked that Guanajuato would “only have the Mummy museum” if it did not have World Heritage designation. Ms. Velasco Negrete had also emphasized the importance of the Mummy museum. Interestingly, he failed to mention the Cervantes Festival as a major attraction for tourists.

Santoscoy felt it would be “convenient” for the tourist to have San Miguel de Allende also designated as a World Heritage site, as it is only 1.5 hours away. He gave me no impression that the World Heritage pie was shrinking in any way, due to the impending designation of San Miguel. Overwhelmingly, the tourism officials recognized that belonging to the World Heritage “club” was important or distinguishing in some way, but they, too were hazy on the exact details, particularly with respect to funding and what sort of preservation might be useful in an urban setting. All agreed that the World Heritage brand had not been sufficiently exploited yet, and this required more promotion and a unified branding strategy.

The Municipal Tourism Council

Launched on 24 July, 2007, Guanajuato’s Municipal Tourism Council ushered in the era of the public-private partnership to inject more “dynamism” in the promotion of tourism (Orozco Rios, 2007). According to Ms. Orozco Rios, the local promotion coordinator, the council consists of:

- A director,
- A president, elected for a three-year term,
- A representative from the hotel owners’ association,
- A representative from restaurant owners’ association,
• A local Chamber of Commerce member,
• A representative from the University,
• The assistant director of the State promotion division,
• The economic development councillor of the municipal government.

The council meets once a month, though weekly reports are produced. Most importantly, each participant has to contribute money into a joint fund. The private initiative contributes about 20 percent, the state government twice as much as the municipal government. Coordinator Orozco Rios estimated that the council had US$150,000 available for promotional purposes. The yearly goal was to raise about 5 million pesos, or roughly US$380,000 through contributions from all three sectors, the state and municipal government, and the private sector. The monetary contribution from the state is dependent on the continued existence of the council. Ms. Orozco Ruiz, as well as Mr. Santoscoy, were very positive about this restructuring of promotion, because they both felt it gave “the private initiative more incentive to be active, and overall, more money to spend on promotion” (Orozco Rios, 2007; Santoscoy Zamora, 2007). This private-public approach had also been successfully applied in San Miguel de Allende, which, in many ways serves as a reference point for tourism promotion in Guanajuato, mainly because San Miguel has historically been able to attract many more North American tourists.

Aside from the Cervantes Festival, Guanajuato also hosts an Organ festival (each August), a Short Film festival (each July), and a Hot Air Balloon festival (November), in addition to local traditional and religious festivals. Apparently, that was not enough festival activity yet for Ms. Orozco Rios, who told me Guanajuato was planning to “poach” Guadalajara’s Festival of Magic and try and use the moniker “Guanajuato, Ciudad de Festivales” — “Guanajuato, City of Festivals” to position itself in the market. She was in no way concerned that there might exist such a thing as “festival overkill,” and neither did Mr. Ayala Ortega feel that that could be a problem. In fact, to underscore the municipality’s commitment to the “Ciudad de Festivales” brand, Ms. Orozco Ruiz shared the then new municipal map of Guanajuato, which was only then going to print (see Section 4.8 for a detailed discussion of the map). Clearly, festivals are seen to provide an easy opportunity to attract and interest different segments of society to visit the city. The Cervantes Festival has turned into a focal point for local businesses, turning those three weeks into the year’s
“make it or break it” season.⁹

Tourism in the media

Tourism coverage available for review in the State Archive dates back to 1983. At the time, Guanajuato had 1,909 hotel rooms, a capacity of approximately 4,000 persons per day (Punto de Vista Editorial, 1983a). The paper voiced concern that the city’s supply far outstripped demand, and that none of the infrastructure, physical as well as human, was sufficient to provide a satisfying tourism experience (Punto de Vista Editorial, 1983b). Usefully, the paper provides a brief history of the tourism trade in Guanajuato. The State government launched the first Department of Tourism for the state in 1954 (Punto de Vista Editorial, 1983c). By 1959, the Department employed five people, but most significantly, the paper reports that the first tourism maps for the state and the city of Guanajuato were published in 1960 (Punto de Vista Editorial, 1983d). Unfortunately, the archives did not have any further issues of “Punto de Vista.”

A.M. Guanajuato’s coverage of tourism issues begins in 1986. Much of the focus was on the FIC, and the hotel owners demands to raise prices (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1986b). At the beginning of the FIC, the paper reported that the city’s 25 hotels were completely booked (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1986c). Despite a 30% increase in hotel rates, SECTUR still felt that Guanajuato was a cheap destination for tourists (Garcia Ledezma, 1986). For 1987, SECTUR provided the state with US$48,390 for tourism promotion and small credits for hotel and restaurant owners (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1986a). Unfortunately, there is a break in the archival newspaper records of A.M. Guanajuato until 1990.

Records other than A.M. Guanajuato skip forward to 1990. By that time, the Airport of the Bajio had been expanded, as well as the highway infrastructure and still, the then head of Tourism was not convinced that Guanajuato’s infrastructure was sufficient (Mundo de Guanajuato, 1990). There was much concern about Guanajuato being “the world’s largest canteen” with two bars per every church in the city (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1990), mainly during the FIC, but generally, this party reputation was a great concern and this image remained with the city for years. Fast forward to 1992, and the complaints of tourists

⁹Other researchers have tried to disentangle the management and decision-making behind the FIC, but were not afforded much access to documents and officials (Shieldhouse, 2011, p. 150).
with regards to the lack of cleanliness of the city and the Pipila monument in particular makes headlines (Buenrostro, 1992).

Again, the available records leap forward to 1993, though much of what was published about tourism simply highlighted local restaurants and hotels (Los Picachos Editorial, 1993). Another concern raised in the media is that of untrained, non-certified, non-regulated tour guides. A.M. Guanajuato reported already in 1993 that the poor tourist services were a blemish for Guanajuato’s tourism image. Furthermore, there was grave concern that Guanajuato wasn’t been promoted properly in the “colonial cities” program run by SECTUR (Guerrero, 1993c). Calls were made to train the “pseudo guides,” one moniker for non-accredited tour guides, or to relocate them. How either option would be implemented was not elaborated (Buenrostro, 1993c). The State Tourism Secretariat announced the creation of a joint tourism promotion fund between the federal government and the state government. Both entities would invest US$76,871 each, but further hoped to encourage private investment by the tourism industry to help promotional efforts (Castro, 1993b). The leader of the tourist guide union expressed his dismay at the inability of the state, municipality, and the tourism services providers to cooperate effectively to promote Guanajuato. He further identified party politics and their interference as a major impediment to cooperation (Buenrostro, 1993h). This sort of frankness is rare.

During one of the peak tourism periods, July, City Hall authorized police patrols to arrest and “pseudo guides,” which were described as operating like the “mafia” (Castro Villalobos, 1993), with young children doing the “dirty work” for adults that then collected the money. Worse still, hotel owners and restauranteurs were colluding with the fake guides, paying them a tip for bringing them business (ibid.). Another peak tourism period is obviously during the FIC festival every October. Significantly, at least in 1993, the local Association of Motels and Hotels did not keep track of visitor statistics, but instead, left that to the Tourism Secretariat (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1993). Clearly, this puts the association in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the Tourism Secretariat, relinquishing this informational advantage. A final visitor peak period is Christmas and to that end, City Hall’s Tourism Committee pledged US$11,670 to produce a promotional video and print brochures specifically for the holiday season, which runs until 6 January, the Day of the Three Wise-men, when Mexican children traditionally receive more gifts than at
Christmas (Buenrostro, 1993f).

Another issue that affects tourism is the interplay of street vendors, established vendors, and visitors. Typically, street vendors feed office workers or enable them to run quick errands, but during the holiday periods, vendors sell cheap toys and other goods, and frequently appeal to visitors with balloons or little local memorabilia. Guanajuato traditionally does not have many public spaces where vendors might set up semi-fixed stalls, but certain holidays do bring stalls and tents to San Fernando, Reforma Garden, and Embajadoras, particularly, the Day of the Dead (1 November) and the Christmas holiday. The economic pressure generated by the peso crisis in 1993/1994 increased the number of street vendors exponentially, as there simply was no alternative employment (Guerrero, 1993e). “Market creep” into public space is another aspect of local commerce, where the established market in Embajadoras began spreading out into the adjacent garden, first only on Sundays (Aguirre, 1995g), but now, these tents have become seemingly permanent.

By 1994, the peso crisis deeply affected the tourism sector, leading to calls for increased promotion, particularly abroad, as necessary to stem the visitor lull (Los Picachos Editorial, 1994). As mentioned in Section 4.8, lack of promotion seems to be the handy excuse or scapegoat to explain diminished tourist interest. Eventually labeled as “guías piratas,” “pirate guides,” the media decried the lack of responsibility on the part of the State Tourism Secretariat and City Hall (Palabra Editorial, 1994a; Palabra Editorial, 1994b; Palabra Editorial, 1994c). Apart from the difficult financial situation the country experienced, the Zapatista movement in Chiapas further added to a feeling of instability (Buenrostro, 1994a). That year, a new tourism product, “Colonial Cities” was launched, which aimed to capture North American tourists and offer them a circuit tour of San Luis Potosí, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Aguascalientes. A group of service providers had joined forces and spent US$6,192 to promote the new circuit (Buenrostro, 1994g), to ensure the tourists would use their hotels. Further promotional campaigns, aimed at diffusing the entire state, were launched in May, in anticipation of the summer tourist peak (Juarez, 1994). The federal and state government, in conjunction with service providers, also founded a “Mixed Fund” to jointly finance promotional campaigns. Each sector paid $30,960 into the fund, though the state government had to lend the amount to the service providers as they claimed they did not have the cash available to pay in (Guerrero, 1994i). Nevertheless,
City Hall called on the service providers to help not only with the promotion of the city, but also in the development of new tourism attractions, because many people considered Guanajuato “boring” (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1994).

Much of the newspaper reporting revolves around reporting hotel occupation percentages, before and after influx periods. However, much of this coverage seems to exaggerate visitor numbers or underestimate them grossly. One day, the paper would estimate that hotels were half full, then after the vacation period reported that 70% had been full (Buenrostro, 1994b).

The first rumblings of a possible tourism circuit spanning Mexico’s World Heritage cities were already voiced in 1995, even before ANCMPM was launched (Buenrostro, 1995h). Mayor Vázquez Nieto described “because the fact that the cities have been designated World Heritage is a guarantee for the tourist” — of quality, or a certain standard, perhaps. The circuit remained a point of discussion in 1996 (Aguirre, 1996h).

Dealing with the street vendors prior to the 1995 FIC resulted in a ban for sellers from the Jardín Reforma (Aguirre, 1995j). City Hall was determined to maintain street vendor numbers as low as possible. Not surprisingly, the street vendors association protested the decision, but they had little recourse, despite suggesting alternative locations and having participated in the FIC for many years before (Aguirre, 1995aa; Buenrostro, 1995i). The one thing they could do was protest, and they did so during the FIC. City Hall rejected the confrontational style of the vendors, arguing that the citizens of Guanajuato had demanded a hard line against the vendors (Aguirre, 1995s). The subsequent protests drew vendors from other states to support the local union’s cause (Aguirre, 1995x; Aguirre, 1995ab). Not the kind of publicity needed before the biggest tourist event of the year. Finally, the street vendors split into two groups, one placing itself near the Granary, and another in the Cantador garden (Aguirre and Buenrostro, 1995).

Three years and a new local administration later, fresh attempts were made to “combat” the street vendors in the historic center (Aguirre, 1998c). Relocation out of the historic center was at the top of the list as a possible means of solution for the local government (Machuca, 1998b). On the business side, Guanajuato’s Cámara Nacional de Comercio (CANACO) recommended privatizing local markets and legislating commercial-free areas (Agreda, 1998). Twenty-odd indigenous vendors were to move from the historic
center to the Valenciana and Cata mines (Ramírez Santarosa, 1998b).

The FIC itself is a huge expense for the local government, even though the Festival is heavily subsidized by the federation, US$931,176, and the state, with US$15, 519 provided to keep up with basic services, such as trash collection (Aguirre, 1995h; Aguirre, 1995i; Aguirre, 1995r). Nevertheless, the FIC is too important for Guanajuato’s image, its various costs are not seriously criticized. Furthermore, the restaurant and hotel industry still profited (Aguirre, 1995c; Aguirre, 1995h). However, the industry suffered the after-shocks of the currency devaluation and the uprising of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, which destabilized Mexico’s tourism image. The 1997 FIC, for example, had a budget of US$2,080,000 (Buenrostro, 1997b), with the federal government footing US$1,150,000 of the bill.

Mayor Vázquez was very committed to tourism, and announced for 1996 more federal support, US$62,378, for tourism coordination and promotion (Buenrostro, 1995c). Much of this money would be spent on promotional flyers and videos, as well as tourist maps (Buenrostro, 1995d). For him, tourism needed to be pursued for the city to survive, but he saw it as a social compromise that required participation from everyone, not “just” the tourism industry (Vázquez Nieto, 1996). The industry itself predicted a slow and difficult recovery period. To help the industry’s cause, mayor Vázquez announced a new trusteeship for the fomentation of tourism, with a US$77,355 budget, provided by the state and municipal government (Aguirre, 1996l).

By 1996, the city had nearly 2,500 hotel rooms (Aguirre, 1996o) and expected to fill them over the Easter holiday, another peak for tourism in Guanajuato. Thus, according to the media, from 1983 to 1996, the number of hotel rooms in the city grew by about 600 (Aguirre, 1996o; Punto de Vista Editorial, 1983a). That is an average of 46 rooms added per year, over that thirteen year period. In the space of five years, from 1991 to 1995, the number of hotels, according to A.M. Guanajuato, increased from thirty to forty-six, or 1,773 rooms to 2,013, contradicting the earlier assertion that the city had closer to 2,500 rooms (Aguirre, 1996a). Equally interesting are the figures relating to visitors per year, which had actually gone down from 527,866 to 485,820 for those years, yet the economic income increased (ibid.). The paper cites State Tourism figures, which do not correspond to SIIMT data. Their figures indicate 558,097 overnight visitors in 1991, and 505,131 for
1996 (SIIMT, 2006a) — though of course, the newspaper could only draw on data until May of 1996 at the time of reporting. Still, the discrepancy is worth noting. Despite these economic gains, the perceived losses made headlines (Machuca, 1997a).

Generally speaking, the media reinforces the official perception or belief that Guanajuato is not promoted widely enough in its reporting. Promotion is the panacea of officials, and the media echoes this sentiment, balking at the lack of promotion of Mexico in Israel, for example (Aguirre, 1996h), and Europe, more generally (Buenrostro, 1997a). Consistently, figures of visitor numbers and perceived jumps in economic income after peak tourism periods made headline news (Aguirre, 1996c; Aguirre, 1996q). In 1997, the three levels of government and private initiative paid one million pesos (US$77,285) into a pot to pay for promotion (Aguirre, 1997i). However, ensuring that the private sector actually paid their dues was not as straightforward, and led to a suspension of the initiative (Aguirre, 1997k).

Tackling the relatively short visitor stays is not only a professed goal of all tourism professionals, but also is a hot topic in the media. Exactly how to deal with this problem is not clear; the lack of tourism attractions is typically at fault. Efforts are always touted as high profile, citing the involvement of the mayor and the governor — the results, if any, are dubious at best (Buenrostro, 1997c). According to the state's tourism officials, 1997 had been positive, with a 13 to 17 percent increase in visitors — but the paper does not report the increase relative to previous figures (Aguirre, 1998i).

Tourism investment, especially in the form of hotels, and particularly foreign investment, also features prominently. In 1998, the Hilton chain announced its interest in constructing a US$10,000,000 5-star hotel on the outskirts of Guanajuato (Aguirre, 1998b; Aguirre, 1998f).

To address the lack of professionalization of tourism workers, the University of Guanajuato initiated a Tourism Administration bachelor’s degree in 1998 (García Vega, 1998). Equally, to facilitate their professional training, a tourism operator signed an agreement with the University to provide students opportunities for the practical component of their studies (Machuca, 1998c). The industry itself attempted to improve its training through liaising with the municipal and state government to set up courses, run by the University of Santa Fe, for 200 waiters, receptionists, police, tour guides, and other staff employed in
tourism (Aguilar, 1998). Nevertheless, the prevailing relations between industry and government seem strained, with the tourism industry continuously demanding more funds for promotion, and the government response lacking (Aguirre, 1998).

Nevertheless, mayor Luna Obregón’s tourism agenda was ambitious, transforming the old railway station into a new museum and even the construction of another funicular train — while the first one was still under construction. To finance and propel these plans forward, he solicited support and funds from SECTUR (Aguilar, 1998; Reyes Alvarado, 1998a). However, a decade on, the old railway station still has not been rehabilitated and repurposed.

Tour Guides

Tour guides are one of the main representatives of any destination that come in contact with tourists. In Guanajuato, they frequently deemed newsworthy, especially the so-called “guías piratas” or “pirate guides” who are not accredited. One strategy to deal with them was to offer more training to help them become nationally and state-wide accredited tour guides. To that end, the University of Guanajuato, the State Sub-secretariat of Tourism, and City Hall signed an agreement that the University would help train guides and see them through to at least the general accreditation (A.M. Guanajuato Editorial, 1994). News related to guide professionalization or lack thereof is often headline news (Aguirre, 1997; Buenrostro, 1996; Buenrostro, 1997). Amongst the pirate guides are also young children, on average eight or nine years old (Aguilar, 1997b). Negative experiences with local tour guides also is reported (Aguirre, 1997). All the tour guides I spoke with realized that “word of mouth” is the strongest form of promotion and therefore, negative experiences with them only compound this type of feedback.

Tour Guide A had been working in tourism-related jobs for twenty years. In his experience, people were starting to come to Guanajuato more “culturally” prepared, and asked more questions that showed they wanted to confirm knowledge acquired in books. Still, he identified the mummies of Guanajuato as the major attraction that mainly draws national tourists. He emphasized the importance of the University of Guanajuato in providing education for the guides, and cited various courses he had attended, since 1996, to obtain his certification, which he finally achieved in 2003.
People ask me about World Heritage, why is Guanajuato World Heritage, why is there this type of architecture. When I attended the second course the university offered, I realized that this was the best thing that had happened to me, and that I have to never stop learning.


Upon becoming certified, he has to attend various refresher courses in order to keep his certification valid. In fact, he was about to embark on another refresher course the following week, focusing on historical personalities in Guanajuato. He stressed that he had learned that to be genuine with visitors was better than to “make up some story” and to simply admit lack of knowledge and to thank them for pointing something new out to him to learn about. Since the introduction of the certification courses by the municipality in 2003, sixty local guides have achieved certification, in contrast with forty general guides (Lira Mares, 2007). The local guides, as the name implies, specialize in local history, while general guides may travel all over the country to accompany tour groups.

The tour operator he worked for was quite small, with only ten guides working for the company. Sporadically, he said, they would take visitors to neighboring states, such as Querétaro, Michoacán, and Zacatecas. Most common, however, were the panoramic tour of Guanajuato, where he and a driver would show the visitors around the city in a small passenger van, stopping at the mines, as well as El Pipila or the cultural route, which begins at the Cervantes Theater, to the Plaza Allende, and includes various stops at local museums, and finally, a tour of a huge statue of Christ on the outskirts of the city, popular with religious tourists. He gave a rather surprising answer as to what he felt was the biggest problem for tourism in Guanajuato: the fact that most tourists complained about getting lost in the city! He explained that the city’s signage was not sufficient, and “not what people are used to or expect in a place.” The city’s topography, of course, is at fault, especially for drivers, who routinely get lost in the tunnels. With regards to security and cleanliness, he felt that Guanajuato was doing well, not perfect, but gave this an eight out of ten.

Not surprisingly, he felt that the authorities should work to legalize the “pirate guides.” Having himself been considered one in the past, he argued that more training and opportunities were necessary to ensure many more would become regularized. He was concerned about the negative image that bad service and dishonest treatment propagated, but
he didn’t want to speak negatively about the illegal guides— most likely because he knew them personally and probably had worked alongside them, and having been in their position. He saw himself as an “instrument of my city” and was very proud of his work. He most enjoyed giving tours to school groups:

To make the kids feel like they’re a part of history … the education system is really poor here, especially history lessons … the kids have open minds and are really curious… and I get to plant a seed, because one day, these kids will be grown ups and will want to come back to Guanajuato.


He did think that more diffusion of Guanajuato would be useful, but generally speaking, he seemed content with the Tourism Secretariat’s efforts. He highlighted that the Cervantes Festival had been reigned in a bit in recent years, after having become the “biggest cantina in the world” (ibid.). He also thought that the emphasis on festivals was a good strategy to attract visitors, though he questioned efforts to launch a medieval festival, “what does Guanajuato have to do with medieval times? I am not sure, to be honest” (ibid.).

Tour Guide B, like Tour Guide A, began working as a guide as a child, at the age of twelve. He describes his personal development as a guide:

Of course I began as what is categorized as a “pirate guide.” Everyone has a right to work, to improve one’s station in life. I became convinced that in order to do so, I had to become educated. To move forward, I had to know my past. I gained a bachelor’s degree in education, because I felt that education and tourism really work hand in hand. I now am a certified guide. Primary and secondary education in this country is poor, we need to become more thoughtful and critical. In school, people become bored of history. I adapt to what the tourist wants, giving them quality service, with humanity and empathy.


He did mostly local tours in the city, San Miguel de Allende, and archaeological sites. He didn’t think that World Heritage was much on the tourist’s minds. In fact,
the tourist is focused on the mummies, not patrimony. Once their curiosity about the mummies is satisfied, they become more interested, and it is possible to start discussing World Heritage with them and they gain a different perspective on their past, but the mummies continue to be the most important thing. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not complaining that the mummies bring us business, but much gets lost. I mean, who even knows who Manuel Doblado is anymore? He and other characters of our past are not spoken about anymore…they are disappearing.


Tour Guide B also felt that more promotion of Guanajuato was necessary, “but the history of Mexico is littered with lack of coordination” (ibid.). One example he gave was the Cervantes Festival:

First it was cultural, then touristic and even more touristic and then …the government didn’t seem to have a very ample vision of what they wanted the festival to be, and it got out of hand, it became the biggest cantina in the world. Now it is a bit more controlled again, but at what cost? The response has been heavy-handed, repressive, due to the amount of police…still, I think the festival is a great international spectacle.

— Tour Guide B (ibid.), Personal Interview.

He thought if the government didn’t or couldn’t manage, then people needed to organize to cultivate projects, or appeal to international bodies for help. He was very concerned about the destruction of pre-hispanic sites in the state:

Due to ignorance, lack of knowledge and education, people destroy these sites to gain building materials, etc. …somehow, through visual media [though he did not mention television], through magazines, and other means of communication we have to engage with our past.

— Tour Guide B (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide C was the only female tour guide I spoke with in Guanajuato. Unlike Tour Guides A and B, she had only been a guide for two or three years at the time of our interview, and, thus, she explained, “I learned to be a tour guide in the classroom, not in the
street.” Despite being relatively inexperienced, Tour Guide C had been elected the president of a newly formed tour guide association and was full of enthusiasm for its potential:

We have a lot of projects in mind, but most importantly, we want to ensure that our work as certified guides is respected. There are sixty of us, and we are all founding members. We need a Tourism Law that actually regulates our business. The courses for guides to maintain their accreditation are good, but they need to be better. We need to raise the quality of services at every level.

The tourism promoters, the people you see on the streets greeting cars, need to be trained and give reliable information to tourists. We need to be united to be taken seriously by the government. Why, for example, does Guanajuato not have a Procuraduría Federal del Consumidor (PROFECO) office? Tourists have to go to León to make a complaint. How is it possible that since the accreditation scheme was introduced in 2002, SECTUR has managed to only send one person to verify certifications? There is much to be done, but we feel that united we can achieve a lot.


She was frustrated that “all the world wants to see the mummies. It is an attraction worth seeing, but there are thousands more important ones that merit attention” (ibid.). For her, the Mummy museum was part of the problem of the lack of reliable tourism services in the city:

I'd like the Municipal Tourism office to poll visitors of the museum in terms of their satisfaction with their visit. The museum reduced the number of bodies the visitor can see, it still charges the same, and the visitor cannot take photos. Then, when the tourists get to the last exposition room, someone from the museum is there, taking photos, and charging the tourist for these photos. The visitors I bring to the museum complain to me about this. It these sorts of incongruities that give the tourism trade in Guanajuato a bad reputation.

— Tour Guide C (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide C is a local guide, so focuses her tours on the city. She runs a family business with one of her sons as independent guides. Unlike many guides, she did not want to work in the street to gain business, so her strategy was to approach hotel owners and have them
recommend her services to tourists. This hadn't been an easy way to come by business, but she argued that this made a better case for the quality of her services than roaming the streets. Local businesses hired her to take visitors on tours, and some tourism transport firms also required her services. Word of mouth, in her case, was clearly important to gain more business.

She was convinced that *World Heritage* needed to be exploited much more effectively and simultaneously protected more vigorously. While she had a lot of faith in the newly formulated Tourism Law and its ability to regulate the tourism business, she questioned why patrimony was not mentioned in the text. She elaborated her thoughts on patrimony:

> I think the city deserves and needs this title, and it should receive promotion as *World Heritage* and due to its other titles. The different institutions need to come together to give it the right kind of diffusion … but, how do we go about really selling *World Heritage*? How do we project it? There's lots of talk about *World Heritage*, but the patrimony is not exploited as it should be. Guanajuato is (my emphasis) *World Heritage*, but what are we doing to protect this status? We, the guides, believe that the children of Guanajuato need to be educated about patrimony, so that the foundation is laid for tour guides of the future. We need to protect this livelihood. We need the right kind of diffusion and for that we need harmony between all of the organizations involved. And this business of putting in new pavement. It was unnecessary. We're talking about millions of pesos that are invested in crazy ideas that some mayor saw in Toledo, Spain, and simply had to import.


She recognized the obstacles quite clearly and was convinced that a lot of investment, particularly in the subterranean street was necessary to maintain it.

Before a meeting of the association, I was introduced to Tour Guides D and E. Tour Guide D, like A and B, began working as a guide at the age of nine or ten. He was 33 when we met, and been accredited for three years. Like all the others, he was indignant that the different government levels, federal, state, and local, could not agree to work together. He felt that the government's lack of intervention or fear of getting involved only exacerbated the pseudo guide problem:
When there is work, there is work for everyone [pseudo guides included], when there is none, there is none for everyone. I feel indignant, because I keep preparing myself to maintain my accreditation, to provide reliable service. *World Heritage* is important. Many people ask us about it. But I think it only generates money for the federal government.


Like Tour Guide C, he hoped that the association would give the guides more leverage and protect them. Like Guide B, Guide D was qualified to lead tours throughout the state of Guanajuato. He also worked for himself, and relied either on tourists using their own cars or tourism transportation companies.

Tour Guide E, the oldest of the guides I met, had previously worked as a miner. He had retired from the mines, and decided to invest some of his retirement funds towards gaining his accreditation. He had been working as a guide about fifteen years, and started working on the accreditation in 2000. In 2005, he gained the accreditation. He worked at the Pipila monument, fitting for a former miner. He described what his working conditions are like:

> We are four guides with accreditation, but a total of twenty work up there, the rest are pseudo guides. Some come to work drunk, or high on drugs, and nobody says or does anything about it. That is the worst aspect of the job for us, these drunks give us a bad reputation. The police doesn’t do anything. The tourists do complain to us, but we can’t really say anything. There are less tourists now. It is the fault of the guides, but also the municipality. The authority does nothing. For two years, they pretend to run things, and then the third year, they only concentrate on the political campaign, and do nothing at all … The *World Heritage* city is nice and dandy, but it doesn’t affect us.


Despite the difficulties of carrying out his job, Tour Guide E, like all of his colleagues, enjoyed most meeting people and engaging them with Guanajuato, sharing the city with them.

Notwithstanding their various frustrations, all five guides enjoyed their work and above all, wanted to provide visitors with good service. They saw clearly that there were many things in need of improvement, that collaboration with different institutions was
necessary to begin implementing any changes. *World Heritage* status was important, but exactly how to convey what this designation means proved difficult even for them. For Tour Guide A, the architecture was the most important aspect, while Tour Guide B thought in historical terms more generally, and emphasized the importance of understanding history to raise awareness for patrimony. Tour Guide C and D felt that culture, or lack thereof explained why patrimony wasn’t appreciated by the citizens and that visitors were not aware of it either.

**Tourism Maps— Where and what is the historic center?**

To argue that tourism maps are perhaps the most ephemeral of maps is not an understatement. Tourism maps are generally not considered useful or interesting beyond the actual visit to a place, and thus are frequently discarded. Furthermore, there has been little active academic engagement with tourism maps (Akerman, 2006; Del Casino and Hanna, 2000; Hanna and Vincent J. Del Casino, 2003). Therefore, I was not surprised not to encounter many samples of older tourism maps and the ones I did find at the State Archives were frequently undated. Where possible, I had photo copies of the maps made and later scanned them (Figure 4.36), though frequently, I was asked to take photographs instead. I kept any maps I was given or that I could find to have some contemporary examples. All of these maps “communicate a limited version of the truth” (Monmonier, 1996, p. 56), mainly in that they not only offer cartographic information (where places of interest are) but also, predictably, function as a vehicle for advertising of local businesses, mainly restaurants, bars, and hotels.

Older maps were frequently black and white only, and rather basic (Figure 4.36). The legend’s symbology includes the panoramic highway, the subterranean street (Miguel Hidalgo), other tunnels and streets, as well as the railway, which was still functioning at the time—but only in Spanish. It includes a north indicator, but not a distance scale. The map, in one sense, is a tribute to Enrique Ruelas, the father of the “entremeses,” the Cervantes performances that finally led to the International Cervantes Festival, held annually. This history is briefly highlighted in the box at the bottom right, which also features the list of key landmarks. Ruelas’ head is drawn into the map, on the left hand side, dreaming up the “Festival Internacional Cervantino,” FIC, in its Spanish abbreviation. The head points
to San Roque square, where the first such performances were held and today is a stop for the sixteenth-century inspired singers, the “Callejonadas” (Alleyway performances). The map features other key landmarks of the city: The Mummy Museum (no. 1), the Alhóndiga (granary) (no. 2), site of Independence battles, the Basilica (no. 13), Diego Rivera Museum (no. 3), the main theaters (nos. 7, 8, and 11), the main University building (no. 4) Hidalgo Market (no. 17), Baratillo square (no. 6), and the statue of El Pípila (no. 19), amongst others. There is no mention of World Heritage. Nor does the map show the boundaries of the historic center. Its scope is also not big enough to include the World Heritage boundary. Clearly, tourism maps, to a certain extent, are an advertising vehicle, for the actual places of interest a city or site might have to offer, as well as local businesses (as other examples will show), and even a cultural event (Figure 4.36).

Another map appears to have been made with the FIC in mind (Figure 4.37). The small legend at the bottom advises visitors of the “area closed to vehicular traffic during the Festival.” The map is also very limited in scope, it does not include the whole historic center and even two of the city’s theaters, numbered 9 (Teatro Principal) and 12 (Teatro Cervantes) are “off the map.” Furthermore, Figure 4.37 does not feature a scale, nor even a North directional. Major landmarks that do not feature a corresponding number are the Mercado Hidalgo, which is made to look as though it is almost directly across from the Alhóndiga (number 1). Some of the numbered places, featured in the legend, are not on the map, making the reference useless. For instance, number 10, the Teatro de Minas (Mine Theater) is not on the map, nor is the Valenciana Church, number 14, located the highway to Dolores Hidalgo, at kilometer 5. For a walking tourist, this map may still be useful, but only in a limited way. There is also no publication year evident on the map.

The official tourist map the municipal government commissioned for the length of its term, from 2003 to 2006 is a color, fold-out map (Figure 4.39). The legend appears on the left side of the map (Figure 4.38). Unmissable, under the title for the map, “Guanajuato,” it reads “World Heritage Site”. No further information or explanation as to what that means is provided. Nor does the map represent the actual World Heritage area. The legend features fifty sites of interest, a color-coded key for eight tunnels, with grey for the panoramic road and a light blue to depict a walking route through the historic center, as well as contact information for the Tourism Office. Museums are denoted by green, Churches with purple,
Figure 4.36: Guanajuato City map, 1991.
(Source: Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico, Dirección General de Turismo, 1991)
Figure 4.37: Guanajuato City Cervantes Festival Map.
(Source: Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, no publication year)
various tourist “attractives” (surely should have read attractions) in blue, theaters orange, and state or municipal offices (called “departaments” on the key) in pink. On the map itself, moving from the bottom to the top of the page, the map reader finds another key, mainly aimed at a driver, denoting whether roads are one-way (one arrow) or two-way (two arrows), where tourists can find “Touris” information (again, most likely a proofreading oversight), parking lots, as well as hotels (Figure 4.39). The map contains a huge variety of landmarks, from churches to football fields. While pointing out the one-way system is surely helpful for drivers, again, there is no North directional, nor a distance scale. Why these omissions? The answer lies in who designed the maps: graphic designers, as opposed to geographers or cartographers (Orozco Rios, 2007). In the top right corner, there is another special piece of symbology. There is a small drawing, with a church and a figure pointing at it. Above the drawing, it reads “hire only authorized guide.” Whether or not this means anything, especially to foreign visitors, is unclear, but the intention is to make sure tourists are not led astray by “rogue” guides.

Another set of maps, dating from a small tourism booklet, entitled “Guanajuato Cultural Routes” features a number of maps (Figure 4.40). Again, this map does not feature a scale. Route 1 focuses on the area around the Plaza de la Paz and lists six attractions to consider while walking in the area. Route 2 introduces the visitor to the area surrounding the Jardín de la Unión, but actually, leads the visitor as far as Pocitos Street, where the birth house of Diego Rivera (listed as no. 18 in the legend) is located. The booklet discusses the places on the map in more detail.

ANCMPM’s brochure about Guanajuato includes a map (Figure 4.41). The map features various sites of interest, including the mining sites of Cata and Rayas, as well as a numbered and lettered grid, 1 to 9, horizontally, and A to F, vertically. It is the only map with a North arrow in the upper right-hand corner. Even though it was commissioned by ANCMPM, the map does not show the designated area in full. It provides the map user with 15 sites of interest, 4 hotel locations, three restaurants, and two shops that specialize in local crafts. How these particular businesses were selected, I do not know. A few key tunnels and street names, as well as plazas are also included. Interestingly, the Mummy museum is not featured. All other maps feature this popular tourism destination, with the exception of (Figure 4.37).
Figure 4.38: Guanajuato Tourism Map Legend, 2003–2006.
(Source: Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003)
Figure 4.39: Guanajuato Municipal Tourism Map, 2003–2006.
(Source: Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2003)
Figure 4.40: Guanajuato Cultural Routes 1 & 2.
(Source: Secretaría de Turismo, 2006)
A new map, as mentioned in Section 4.8 had just gone into print (Figure 4.42). In the context of the city’s new promotional materials, an updated map was necessary, too, to support the new brand. It features the new brand name as its title, “Guanajuato, ciudad de festivales” (Guanajuato, city of festivals). There is no mention of World Heritage, placing the map a bit at odds with what Juan Carlos Santosoy described as an “added plus” (Santoscoy Zamora, 2007) (Section 4.8). Much of its cartographic style compares with a previous map (Figure 4.39). It lists 36 places of interest, grouped into themes, such as churches, plazas, or museums. The map provides drivers with some sense of where there are one-way and two
Figure 4.42: “Guanajuato, Ciudad de Festivales” Map.
(Source: Ayuntamiento de Guanajuato, 2007)
way streets in the maze. However, without a distance scale, it is difficult to gauge how long it might take to traverse the city. Curiously, for all the street guidance, this map does not feature parking information. One also does not get a great sense of the city’s topography.

Guanajuato’s tourism cartography has become a bit more inclusive over time, featuring the Valenciana mine (Figure 4.39, and Figure 4.42). Still, World Heritage is mainly off the map, with one exception (Figure 4.39). The represented spaces on the map did expand over time (Figure 4.39 and Figure 4.42). Still, much of the cartographic information remains a bit up in the air, what without distance scales and directional orientation. Undoubtedly, they have become more elaborate and colorful, as color printing became less costly.

4.9 Conclusions — what is future of Guanajuato’s World Heritage?

Guanajuato’s historic center is a space of contradictions and challenges. Interests and demands on the historic center are great and varied. World Heritage has been used to enhance the city’s brand, but it has not penetrated in a meaningful way: most Mexicans would not know what it actually means, and even so-called experts are not of one mind as to its nature: purely a mark of distinction that makes little or no difference in the actual protection of the area, or a real “instrument” (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2008) to ensure preservation and conservation.

Certainly, since the 2000s, funding has come in specifically due to Guanajuato’s inscription on the World Heritage list (Table 2.1, Table 4.2), earlier funding was scarce, and whether it was provided due to inscription status is debatable (Table 4.1). For local and state politicians, the historic center and World Heritage has become a convenient means of appearing to be doing lots of work for the city, having great vision, and expanding its tourist potential. This is mostly window-dressing.

Thus, while UNESCO certainly provides no direct funding to Guanajuato, World Heritage status has, in the form of funding from SEDESOL, CONACULTA, and other federal, state, and local entities, and this is frequently conflated to mean that UNESCO is the originator of funds. This conflation most likely only adds to the desirability of World Heritage designation. And while the amounts of several million US$ do not appear very large, considering annual budgets, some of these interventions have amounted to 30 percent of the municipal government’s budgets. That is not an inconsequential amount. Lack
of resources is common problem everywhere, of course, making high profile preservation projects seem perhaps even more costly.

The review of planning instruments revealed good intentions, perhaps, but implementing plans has been lacking. The information is there and available, yet there is little ability to enforce legislation and plans effectively. Certainly, it is not due to a shortage of legal instruments either, it appears as though most regulations are not even applied to everyone. This adds to further legal ambiguity and frustration—both for citizens and civil servants alike. The consequences are palpable: a citizen may allow his property to deteriorate because the legalities and cost involved in preservation are too high, and a civil servant, particularly one that is appointed, perhaps for a three-year municipal term, or a six-year state term, is unable to fully comprehend the legal complexities due to constraints on his time to attend to daily business.

The newspaper accounts and descriptions reveal that World Heritage remains a slippery concept. Thus, while it is reported on, there is only superficial understanding of its meaning—and this has repercussions. Not surprisingly, academics as well as tour guides realize that the lack of patrimony education at the primary school level requires action in order to combat local ignorance and disinterest. Obviously, this would require a long-term investment in education—considering the local planning capabilities, long-term planning and budgeting is not a strong suit. Furthermore, whether or not this investment would actually yield greater awareness, respect, and commitment to preservation is questionable, and difficult to measure. These opinions, however, corroborate UNESCO’s findings (2004). There is also the aspect of exaggeration: that Guanajuato can very easily lose its World Heritage status. It is, of course, a possibility, but given that only one city to date has lost its status (Connolly, 2009) to date, the chances are remote. A World Heritage backlash does not seem imminent in Guanajuato.

I argue that World Heritage and historic center space in Guanajuato are conflated—at least by the media, to a great extent, and the general public. The experts know that the World Heritage area is much larger than the national zone of monuments, but somehow, this fact has not received much attention—except from said experts. Furthermore, any information that is widely available, such as the new signage (see Figure 4.15), does not give full spatial representation of the area. This conflation makes it easier for officials to remain
“obsessed” (Sánchez Martínez, 2006) with the historic center. The intention of World Heritage designation was to include the mines, as part of the justification for inscription is the city’s economic legacy, but their importance is obscured by the need to recast Guanajuato’s image as a tourist destination. Not surprisingly, industrial heritage, as regards the mining haciendas, has come to serve the needs of the tourism industry as the number of hotels nearly doubled from 1998 to 2007 (Rangel, 2007c).

The relationship between World Heritage and tourism is also rather tenuous. While it adds a marketing angle for officials, again, the concept’s malleability lends itself to multiple, even contradicting campaigns. Guanajuato still draws national tourists through the Mummy museum, all of the tour guides agreed, and the tourism officials also had to admit that its appeal was great. For international tourists, the Cervantes Festival is the biggest draw. Thus, in spite of or perhaps because its perceived profit potential, the authorities still deem World Heritage desirable, and deny any sense of competition between cities.

The constraints on Guanajuato’s public space are also great, and the prevailing perception is that restaurant owners and hoteliers get preferential treatment. However, there is another level of legislative vacuum that allows the limbo state of restaurant tables in the public way to persist. As Miguel, the restaurant owner, and all the tour guides argued, the government is unwilling (or perhaps unable) to take decisive action to remedy this problem, as well as the accreditation dilemma the tour guides face (Restaurant Owner, 2007; Tour Guide A, 2007; Tour Guide B, 2007; Tour Guide C, 2007; Tour Guide D, 2007; Tour Guide E, 2007). The three-year municipal term seems a particular obstacle.

There is also a sense of limbo as public records are concerned. Without access to records beyond the past five years, it is difficult to ascertain how much has actually been spent on World Heritage. This allows much room for speculation. Furthermore, there is only anecdotal evidence available as far as land use changes are concerned. Record keeping only dates to 2000, and in 2007, none of these data had been transfered to electronic records (Perez, 2007).

After more than twenty years of World Heritage designation, Guanajuato is still searching to balance preservation priorities against the needs of modernity and the demands of tourism.
Chapter 5

Monumental Morelia: Making World Heritage Worthwhile?

5.1 Introduction

The subject of this chapter is the case study of Morelia, located in the central-western Mexican state of Michoacán. First, this chapter provides a historical sketch of this “city of the Spanish” (Azevedo Salomao, 2004b, p. 6), which became the religious seat of the diocese for the region. Shifting from the distant past to the twentieth century, it analyzes Morelia’s “designation narrative” to recount how quickly Morelia’s national monumental zone, only designated in 1990, became a World Heritage site in 1991. This narrative reveals a much more deliberate pursuit of designation than was the case in Guanajuato (see Section 4.3). The drivers for designation were local experts and local government officials, convinced that Morelia deserved the distinction, and further convinced that garnering the designation would pave the way for major changes in the historic center. Next, the planning legislation Morelia chose to implement to protect the World Heritage zone is considered, followed by a review of the institutions involved in preservation, as well as the promotion of World Heritage and the city. Morelia relies on tourism as a major source of revenue, and particularly courts visitors from Mexico City, as the nation’s capital is only four hours away by bus. However, as Morelia-based tour guides revealed, the city itself does not attract enough business for tours; the tour guides have to travel all over Mexico to make ends meet because Morelia does not give them enough business.

With the aid of newspaper articles, interviews, and official documents, the following themes will emerge and recur: the deliberate pursuit of World Heritage to initiate and justify major public works projects in the historic center, the so-called “rescue;” the institution-
alization of heritage at the municipal scale; the use of the designation to remove street traders from the historic center; the legal limbo of tour guides; the uneven application of legislation and regulation; the glut and overlap of scales of legislation; the symbolic uses of the historic center; political term limits impinging on long-term planning; the adoption of European-based light and sound shows to attract weekend visitors; the neglect of private property; and the limited efficacy of INAH Michoacán.

5.2 Morelia

Morelia, formerly known as Valladolid and previously as “Nueva Ciudad de Mechoacán,” was founded on 18 May 1541 in the valley of Guayangareo in central-western Mexico. The Viceroy of New Spain, Don Antonio de Mendoza, is credited with its foundation (Azevedo Salomao, 2005). However, first settlements appeared ten years earlier, with the Franciscan order beginning with their evangelization efforts (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 416). Thus, unlike Guanajuato, Morelia was deliberately founded, between two rivers, and in close proximity to Pátzcuaro, the indigenous pre-Hispanic capital of the region and thus its rival city. Bishop Vasco de Quiroga was vehemently opposed to Mendoza’s project, as he had settled Pátzcuaro and invested in the town as the seat of the bishopric, going so far as to convince the Spanish courts that the “Nueva Ciudad de Mechoacán” in fact needed to be downgraded to “Village of Guayangareo” in 1554 (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 5). However, Quiroga died in 1565, and successive viceroys of New Spain continued supporting the city, even though its population remained small. The colonial forced labor system, the repartimiento, was also employed in Valladolid, mainly to ensure the survival of the settlement. Between 1596 and 1604, when congregations of Indian people were formed to promote the spread of Christianity, 800 indigenous families settled in Valladolid to reinforce the settlement and alleviate labor shortages (ibid., p. 6).

Conveniently, there were quarries in the valley, which provided the building material for the churches, convents, seminaries, hospitals, and homes of the city, eventually defining its architectural character and style (2006a, p. 417). From its inception, the city became a center for religious, political, and economic activity (2005, p. 2). The Franciscans were soon joined by other orders, such as the Augustinians, Jesuits, and Carmelites...
(CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001). The seat of the municipality of Michoacán moved to the city in 1576 (Gerhard, 1986, p. 361). It became the seat of the bishopric in Michoacán in 1580, and the city’s many religious orders shaped much of the historic center’s architecture and public spaces (2005, p. 2) (2006a, p. 417). As in all Spanish American cities, all its functions, administrative, political, commercial, and residential were concentrated in the nucleus (2005, p. 3).

The city was well-planned, with rectangular blocks that varied between 84 and 167 meters in block-size (Flores González, 2001, p. 32). Avenue Madero provides the main east-west marker, and city blocks in the center are about 42 meters long, though this length is adapted to the topography as more distance is gained from the urban core (Azevedo Salomao, 2006a, p. 6). From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, private houses in the center featured courtyards or side patios, and typically were two stories high with straight roofs, with only religious buildings taller and featuring curved roofs (ibid., p. 6). This was made possible due to the homes replacing brittle materials such as adobe with stones from the locally abundant quarries (Azevedo Salomao, 2006b, p. 5). As was customary, the wealthiest citizens’ homes were closest to the central plaza and cathedral. Indigenous workers lived in accommodations surrounding the historic center (Uribe Salas, 1993, p. 48). Valladolid, like other Spanish American cities, developed centrifugally and without limitations.

The earliest cartographic representation of Valladolid dates back to 1579 (Figure 5.1). The map is quite heavily annotated, with North at the top, south at the bottom, west on the left, and east on the right. The “Calle Real” runs east to west through the city, this was to become Madero Avenue. The rivers are also included, and to the right of the main settlement, open spaces for grazing animals (“baldíos”) are indicated. The city remained small in 1619 (Figure 5.2). Only church buildings are represented, with what would become the cathedral at the center of the map.

In 1744, work on the city’s cathedral concluded (2006a, p. 418). Morelia’s cathedral, unlike most in Latin America, actually has two squares, one on each sides, rather than the typical square in front (Cabrales, 2005, p. 39). Several other iconic architectural works were built in that period, including the Templo and Convento de las Rosas, the Santuario Guadalupe, the Templo de las Capuchinas, and, towards the end of the century, the
Figure 5.1: Valladolid, 1579.
(Source: Archivo General de la Nación, 1579, Illustrations Catalog, Volume 4)
Figure 5.2: Valladolid/Morelia, 1619.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 4. Modified by author)
city aqueduct. This structure was more than 2000 meters long, with more than 250 arches (Cabrera Aceves and Ettinger, 1998, pp. 70–71). Much of this monumental architecture was financed by profits from silver mines, including those in Guanajuato, which was included within the bishopric of Michoacán (2006b, p. 6). In 1769, first attempts were made to clean the city, turning the quarries in the north of the city into a waste disposal area (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 15). By 1773, the municipal government paid two carts to travel through the city’s principal streets to collect garbage (ibid., p. 15).

By 1793, the city had grown to 17,093 inhabitants (Figure 5.3), and the historic center had been divided into the four sectors that survive today, albeit with their post-independence names: Nueva España, in the southeastern quadrant of the city, Independencia in the southwest, Republica in the northwest, and Revolución in the northeast. Avenue Madero is the dividing line across the city east-west, while Avenue Morelos North and South provides that division.

The city began expanding eastward, eventually connecting the Guadalupe Sanctuary to the city center via the Calzada de Guadalupe, which formed one of the new radial axes, the other being the aqueduct (2006b, p. 7). Morelia’s historic center has continually been subdivided, so the initial plot division has not survived. Private open spaces not occupied by buildings were used for domestic waste or other domestic purposes, but these small green spaces were gradually lost (2006a, p. 7).

After Mexico’s independence, the city was renamed in 1828 in honor of one of the revolution’s heroes, the local clergyman José María Morelos y Pavón (Azevedo Salomao, 2005, p. 3). The biggest change and lasting impact, however, came with the Reform Laws in 1856, when the Catholic Church’s properties were expropriated and came into private or governmental hands, initiating the first phase of deterioration of the city’s architecture (Ramírez Romero, 2004, p. 19). Suddenly, property speculation became common (Uribe Salas, 2001). Many former convent and monasterial gardens became public spaces (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2005, p. 73). The first street lamps arrived in Morelia in 1810, and electric lamp posts in 1888 (Uribe Salas, 1993, pp. 96–9). More public gardens, walkways, and plazas were also constructed along with the telegraph, tram, and rail connection with Mexico City (2006a, p. 421). The city’s first factory, for yarn and fabric, opened
Figure 5.3: Valladolid/Morelia, 1794.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 5. Key modified by author)
in 1868, the Ocampo Theater in 1870, a School of Medicine in 1896, the first bank in 1897, and a cinema the following year (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 27). By 1898, two of the city's largest green spaces had been consolidated as parks, Juárez south of the river and the Cuauthémoc forest in the southeastern corner, near the aqueduct (Figure 5.4).

**Morelia in the twentieth century**

Morelia, like other regional cities in Mexico, witnessed its population grow rapidly in the late nineteenth century. In 1882, 23,885 inhabitants populated the urban municipality, by 1930, there were nearly 60,000 (2006, p. 438), by some accounts, while Table 5.1 shows a population of about 40,000 in 1930. The dip in 1921 can be explained by the losses incurred during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). The largest population increases begin in 1950, coinciding with Mexico's economic success with the application of Import-Substitution-Industrialization measures. With the increase in population came more pressure on the center, with more people traveling into and out of the center to work, access services (much of the municipal and state administrative offices were located in the historic center), or, to simply traverse it to get to new residential suburbs.

Interestingly, “private initiative literally built much of the modern public infrastructure of Morelia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (Jiménez, 2004, p. 497). For
Figure 5.4: Morelia, 1898.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 6. Map modified by author)
example, the municipal government realized it did not have the financial wherewithal to build a modern sewage system, so it focused on maintaining streets, bridges and access to the city (Campos Gutiérrez and Salomao, 2007, p. 5), while supervising the construction of the water and sewage system according to municipal standards, yet financed by private citizens (2004, p. 500). Thus, one could argue that there is a precedent in Morelian history of private-public partnership in the pursuit of mutually beneficial initiatives. Clearly, the municipal government benefited from modern sewage facilities, to ensure that waste was carried away, and equally, the system helped citizens maintain hygienic standards.

Despite these advances of modernity, in 1900, only 169 buildings in the urban center were two stories high, 5 three stories, with a huge majority 3,943 buildings, just one story (Azevedo Salomao, 2006a, p. 12). In 1904, water purification was introduced, in 1910, street paving (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 27). Thus, the city had managed to preserve a horizontal character. It was unmistakably growing, with a grain mill moving into the city limits by 1913 and new “colonias,” neighborhoods, planned in the south of the city (Figure 5.5). The city had 40,082 inhabitants by then (Table 5.1).

In 1917, the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicoás de Hidalgo was founded (religious educational institutions had been present since the city's founding), fomenting the city's reputation as a hub of modern higher educational activity (2006a, p. 421). Mexico's national highway system reached Morelia in the 1939, facilitating travel and tourism through the connection with the nation's capital (ibid., p. 348). Architecturally speaking, modernity arrived in Morelia's historic center in 1939, with the construction of the Hotel Alameda (ibid., p. 425) (Figure 5.6). The building was much criticized at the time, mainly because with five stories, it is much higher than typical buildings and also set away from the corner of the block, making it stand out even more (Figure 5.7). It sits on the northwest corner of the main Plaza, with a view of the cathedral. The Hotel Virrey de Mendoza was also built during that time, further committing Morelia to tourism (Sereno Ayala, 1993a). The 1930s also saw the formation of the first citizens groups concerned with the conservation of monuments, as well as a group concerned with the fomentation of tourism in Morelia (Aguilera Soria, 2004, p. 97). In 1930, the city's quarries had disappeared, along with the dam, in the southwest (Figure 5.5). Instead, the first airport appeared, on the southwestern
Figure 5.5: Morelia, 1913.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 7. Map modified by author)
outskirts (Figure 5.8). More proposed neighborhoods cropped up. Nearly 40,000 people had to be accommodated, the slight decrease can be explained by the effects of the Mexico Revolution.

From the 1960s onwards, Morelia’s municipal efforts to increase tourism became more persistent with noted results. The International Organ Festival dates back to the 1960s, and the Boys’ Choir, founded in 1947, steadily contributed to the city’s cultural attractions as it continued to grow (Hiriart Pardo, 2004a, p. 202) (Figure 5.9). By now, the city almost reached the Rio Grande in the north now, and has spread well beyond the Rio Chiquito in the south. Only the eastern expansion has not yet occurred to a large degree, while the westward growth already evident in 1930 continued. The core now appears subsumed in modern sprawl. Nevertheless, in terms of infrastructure, such as a modern airport, the state capital of Morelia and subsequently, Michoacán lagged behind (1993a). In 1974, the
Figure 5.7: Hotel Alameda, 313 Avenue Madero West, circa 2000.
(Source: Ettinger McEnulty, 2004a, p. 36)
Figure 5.8: Morelia, 1930.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 8. Map modified by author)
Figure 5.9: Morelia, 1955.
(Source: Ramírez Romero, 1985, Appendix, Map 9. Map modified by author)
State Office for Tourism was created, which combined the federal and state offices. Despite its infrastructural deficiencies, the state made inroads in hosting conventions and large meetings, and a new airport, 20 miles from the city center, was also built that year (1993a).

Prior to the 1960s, the walls of many buildings in the historic center had been covered with colorful plaster, so-called “aplanados” (Torres Garibay, 2004, p. 48). Local architect Carlos Hiriart argues that the Reglamento para la Conservación del Aspecto Típico y Colonial de la Ciudad de Morelia, introduced in 1956, led to the perceived need of a more aesthetic uniformity and emphasis on the “colonial” (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 426). Aside from changing the historic center’s visual aspect to a monochrome, the removal of the plaster also exposed the buildings, making them more vulnerable to contaminants (2004, p. 48). This loss of patrimony would have long-term repercussions, prompting the World Heritage Committee to make the replacement of the aplanados a condition for World Heritage designation (see Section 5.3). Also in 1956, the Junta para la Conservación del Aspecto Típico y Colonial de la Ciudad de Morelia was formed to give citizens say in the interventions of Morelia’s monuments (2004, p. 99). In the 1960s, seven new neighborhoods were consolidated into Morelia’s city limits to accommodate the ever-growing population (Sixto Lopez, 1995).

Morelia’s industrial revitalization began in 1976, with the opening of “Ciudad Industrial,” a 395 ha area devoted to industrial production (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998e). The city’s first commercial mall was also opened that year, creating a new counter to the historic center, and accelerating the development of US-style suburbs (1995).

INEGI data suggest that the population reached 257,209 in 1980 (Tesoreria General del Gobierno del Estado, 1981, p. 331), while an even larger population, 297,544, was also suggested (Table 5.1). ¹. The growth of the city had been anarchic, and the 232 hectares that comprise the historic center housed the majority of services in 1983 (Ramírez Romero, 2004, p. 16):

- 11 Buildings occupied by the federal government,
- 28 Buildings occupied by the state government,
- 43 Hotels,

¹I can only speculate on these rather large differences, with one source of information local, and the other federal, in the form of INEGI
Table 5.2: Selected survey of land uses in the historic center.
(Source: Ibid., p. 23)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Use</th>
<th>Specific Use</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Department stores, shoe stores, grocery stores, etc.</td>
<td>117 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Public offices, banks, hotels, cafés, restaurants, etc.</td>
<td>99 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Homes, apartments, guest houses, student housing, etc.</td>
<td>56 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Museums, libraries, galleries, etc.</td>
<td>19 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Churches, chapels</td>
<td>19 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Partial or complete</td>
<td>5 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Cinemas, theaters, gyms, etc.</td>
<td>2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>317 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 24 Banks,
• 19 Catholic churches,
• 3 churches of other denominations,
• 4 markets,
• 6 bus terminals,
• 1,266 shops,
• 1,254 service establishments,
• 18 recreational venues,
• 57 cultural venues,
• 35 parking lots.

This list does not begin to reflect the amount of traffic circulating through the historic center to transport people to and from these various services, more than 40,000 vehicles (Ramírez Romero, 1985, p. 67). By 1980, 17 monuments had been lost to the vagaries of time, despite the 1956 Reglamento to protect Morelia’s typical architecture (Aviles, 1991).

Historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero collected these vital data in the 1980s, some of which would prove important for the World Heritage application. For instance, she determined selected land uses in the four sectors of the historic center, which were also included in the nomination file (Table 5.2) (Ramírez Romero, 1985).

It is important to note that in the nomination file, only the percentage results of the survey were reported. Perhaps this was not intentionally done to mislead, but I certainly assumed that this covered the entire historic center, when in fact, “only” 317 buildings are
included. Still, it provides a useful snapshot in confirming the dominating land uses of the service and commercial sectors.

In the aftermath of the volatile 1988 elections, the economy needed to be jump-started, and tourism was regarded as the most viable option (Mercado López, 2008, p. 327).

In the course of its 450th anniversary year, in 1991, the city considered introducing a Municipal Commission, made up of the public, private, and social sectors, to help protect the city’s monuments (Sereno Ayala, 1991q).

Despite moving the central bus station to the outskirts, as well as many of various governmental offices through the Plan Maestro para el Rescate del Centro Histórico in 2001 and 2002, in 2006, 17 percent of the state’s population still went into the historic center on a daily basis to receive major services (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2006, p. 169).

5.3 Morelia’s designation narrative

Unlike Guanajuato and Oaxaca, Morelia explicitly and vigorously pursued World Heritage designation to coincide with the 450th anniversary of the city’s founding in 1991. To achieve this goal, the historic center was first designated as a national monument (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b). Beginning in the mid-1980s, due to the economic downturn and in the aftermath of the earthquake in Mexico City, followed by the controversial presidential elections in 1988, unemployment was rife, giving rise to greater numbers of street vendors setting up their businesses on the plazas of Morelia (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 433). The process to include Morelia in the World Heritage list began in 1987 (Sologaistoa Bernard, 1993). Various academics, including from the Institute of Aesthetic Investigation at UNAM, wrote to the then governor of Michoacán in early 1989 to express their concern about the state of Morelia’s historic center and to suggest its application to UNESCO for World Heritage status (2006a, p. 433). In fact, the CONALMEX had already put Morelia on its tentative list for the World Heritage nomination process (ibid., p. 434). In November 1989, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari visited Morelia and agreed to support Morelia’s application (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1992c). Architect Eugenio Mercado López (2008, p. 327) argued that “in this context, championing Morelia to become part of World Heritage was a means to legitimize and recover votes for the ruling party,” or in
other words, it was politically expedient for the unpopular President and the PRI to support Morelia’s application. Thus, there was local as well as national convergence in that facilitated Morelia’s *World Heritage* application.

By March 1990, a commission was formed with various local representatives, including art historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero, architect Luis Torres Garibay (2008), architect Carlos Hiriart, and architect Eugenio Mercado López (2008) to prepare the city’s *World Heritage* application (Rendon Guillen, 1990a). The completion target for the application was June 1990 (Gonzalez, 1990g). In July 1990, the application was presented to the governor (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1990h).

The regional INAH center began compiling the data to decide upon the delimitation of the monumental zone. At the time it was thought that national designation was absolutely necessary to then achieve UNESCO *World Heritage* designation (2006a, p. 434).

Morelia’s application file is only 28 pages long, however, as previously mentioned in Chapter 4, the supplementing materials included in the application were extensive, and seemingly included nearly every book ever published on the city’s history and architecture. The digitized application file includes:

**The exact localization of the property:** Country, municipality, property name, and coordinates.

**Legal jurisdiction:** Ownership and the different laws that govern the property are included.

**The administrative authorities:** Federal, state, and local authorities in charge of the property.

**Identification:** Description and inventory of the property.

**Maps and plans:** Seven items are listed, including a topographic map (1:500,000), a state government produced macro and micro localization map, (1:400,000), nine historical maps (1531–1989), five urban maps (1:10,000), five maps of plazas and gardens (1:10,000,00), Delimitation map (1:7,500), and six maps featuring historically valuable buildings (1:1,200).

**Photographic documentation:** A series of color and black and white photographs, included in the nomination file itself, as well as black and white photos of historic monuments and panoramic color photographs, all in the annexes of the application.
**Brief historical synopsis:** Focuses on city origins, growth, consolidation, and rapid population growth in the twentieth century.

**Bibliography:** Short bibliography featuring fifteen sources.

**Preservation diagnostic:** Despite the pressures of the twentieth century, the state of Morelia's central monumental zone is deemed as good, though the need for a commitment to the decentralization of governmental office buildings is highlighted.

**The bodies in charge of preservation and conservation:** Levels of government responsible for preservation and conservation (federal, state, and local).

**Historical sketch of preservation and conservation:** Recounts legal measures, dating back to the sixteenth century, to preserve and maintain Morelia's buildings. Another regulation from 1852 suggests that the municipal government should ensure the upkeep and good aspect of buildings in Morelia. Legislation (federal, state and municipal) from the twentieth century (1930, 1931, 1956, 1974, 1983) is briefly reviewed.

**Resources for preservation or conservation:** Lists the juridical-administrative, technical, and economic means to promote the preservation of Morelia.

**Management plans:** Describes, federal, state, and municipal planning tools employed in protecting Morelia's historic center.

**Justification for inscription:** Finally, it lists the criteria under which Morelia should be inscribed in the *World Heritage* list, criteria ii, iv, and v (see Section 4.3 for the list of criteria) (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1991, pp. 3–18).

The designated area is comprised of 219 blocks, with fifteen gardens and plazas (*ibid.*, pp. 5–6). Unfortunately, the digitized nomination file only included three of the maps (Figure 5.10). While not explicit, the basis for the delimitation of the *World Heritage* zone is the 1794 map. The two other maps are a macro-localization map of where Morelia is located within Mexico, and the historic center within the entire urban setting. The quality, unfortunately, is rather poor, as this was obviously photographed and inserted without any other digital preparation, as seen in Figure 5.11. The resolution is particularly poor, as zooming in only results in blurred lines.

It is worth noting that the application only refers to 249 monuments of “premier importance” (*ibid.*, p. 4). Morelia’s cathedral and various former convents, are examples of its
Figure 5.10: Morelia, 1794, in the *World Heritage* nomination file.
(Source: ibid., p. 21)
monuments. INAH’s National Coordination of Historic Monuments cites the established and accepted number of 1,142 monuments in the historic center (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 3). This is neither the first, nor the last time that differences of this nature crop up. Five buildings date from the sixteenth century, ten to the seventeenth, 166 correspond to the eighteenth, and 68 to the nineteenth century (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1991, p. 4).

In the justification for inscription, the monochrome pink stone of the façades are expressly lauded (ibid., p. 17). Ironically, the “aplanados,” whose removal revealed the pink stone, are deemed “authentic” by architectural experts (Torres Garibay, 2004). Thus, in its English evaluation, ICOMOS recommended “that this cultural property be deferred …[until] the conservation policy of Morelia’s buildings is consistent with the Venice Charter” (1991, p. 13). The World Heritage Committee repeated this recommendation, but accepted Morelia on the list nonetheless, without enforcing the implementation of a consistent conservation policy (World Heritage Committee, 1991). Two photos included in the nomination file give an impression of the rose-colored stone (Figure 5.12). It also gives a
Figure 5.12: Aerial view of the Federal Palace (top) and the Cathedral (bottom).
good sense of the uniformity of the blocks.

Because only the annex to the nomination file included explicit maps showing the delimitation of the World Heritage area, I resorted to a map prepared by Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia (IMDUM) for its Programa Parcial de Desarrollo Urbano del Centro Histórico, finalized in November 2001 (Figure 5.13). It shows the delimited area (blue line), the partial program (purple), and the transitional zone (red), which was introduced simultaneously with the monumental zone delimitation in 1990.

The blue area is comprised of 271.46 hectares, while the purple area, the partial plan inclusion area, is 428.30 hectares large, while the transition zone is 404.73 hectares. Again, there is a discrepancy, as historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero (2007, p. 16) suggests the area is 232 hectares large, yet the IMDUM suggests it is 271.46 hectares—and the nomination file does not even list the size of the area. CNMH, meanwhile, lists the area as 343 hectares. Thus, even official sources seem to rely on different data. The CNMH actually includes part of the transitional zone in the designated area, because it only mentions one perimeter for the historic center (INAH—CNMH, 2007, p. 3), which is confirmed in the documentation of the Plan Parcial. Thus, even though the delimited area is said to be 343 according to CNMH, the polygon decreed in the Federal Decree of 1990 is 271.46 hectares (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2001, p. 14). While the ICOMOS documentation center in Paris did have many of the books that were submitted as supporting documentation, it did not have the further photographic evidence listed in the application, nor the maps. The documentation center of course relies on the donations of dossiers and supporting materials from the application countries. I inquired with Dr. Francisco López Morales (2008), director of INAH’s World Heritage office in Mexico City during the interview, but the office had recently moved, and all they had were the digitized application files. The full application had included: UNESCO’s application form, in French, 13 annexes of documents, 27 books, 52 maps, 2 photo albums, one in black and white, the other in color, 40 transparencies and one video (Sanchez Reyna, 1995).

Much like in the case of Guanajuato, little has been recorded or published about the process of delimiting the historic center of Morelia. Architect Luis Alberto Torres Garibay (2008) worked in the regional INAH office at the time of the proposal publication. He describes the delimitation process as follows:
Figure 5.13: The designated area of the historic center, Morelia.  
(Based on: Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2001, map modified by author)
When the preparations for the nomination proposal were being made, a proposal already existed, which INAH had prepared in Mexico City. So there already existed a proposal. I was working in the regional Michoacán INAH office at the time. For us, the local experts, the proposal they had made seemed inadequate. Much of the work had been done in Mexico City, in an office, they had not come here to verify things on the ground. These specialists did not have local knowledge. So, we refused to accept their proposal. I should note that not only INAH was involved, but the state government, civil society, there were a lot of different institutions involved. We went on tours, including with the colleagues from Mexico City, there were talks with the local authorities and local experts, to help them understand that their proposal had been too limited. Based on the historical record, we argued that the delimitation should include the four old custom points that were located at four points in the city. These points indicate where the city would expand from, eventually. The INAH colleagues from Mexico City felt that that delimitation was too large. The national legislation says that only a block that contains a national monument should be included in a monumental zone, but we argued that here, the architectural context has to be taken into consideration. The delimitation needed to be more inclusive, and in the end, we achieved this new planimetry. Much of the institutional wrangling was down to who was in charge, who got to carry the baton …the national INAH colleagues did not at first understand why a new delimitation was needed, in their eyes, what was already there sufficed.

— Torres Garibay (2008), Personal Interview.

Interestingly, Esperanza Ramírez expressed that “the national government was not involved with the World Heritage project early on, in 1989.” According to her, it was a citizen-led effort in anticipation of the 450th anniversary celebration in 1991:

We wanted to do something for the city’s 450th anniversary, we wanted to promote Morelia to the authorities, so that it would become World Heritage. We had a lot of detailed studies to base our work for the application on, which covered the city’s architecture, the development of the urban area, the changes effectuated by the expropriation of the Church, and many experts to help us. But once the UNESCO form was filled out, we had to get the government’s support. It had to sign off on the application, so that it could go forward to the WHC.

— Ramírez Romero (2005), Personal Interview.
5.4 Managing Morelia — governance, governing, and heritage interventions

Michoacán’s State Institutions

In this section, I introduce the state and local agencies and organizations that influence the management of Morelia’s historic center. In 1990, the Office of Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Historic Sites was opened. Most of its officials were architects and engineers. Initially, it was part of the then Ministry of Communications and Public Works, which later became Ministry of Public Works (Gonzalez, 1990a; Gonzalez, 1990h). Later, it was moved to the Ministry of Culture.

In 1991, a Michoacán State Fund for Culture was formed, under the auspices of CONACULTA. Its goal was to provide scholarships, but also monitor cultural patrimony (Sereno Ayala, 1991d).

INAH’s regional office, responsible for overseeing all of the state’s heritage, and issuing construction permits, is understaffed and underfunded (Rodrigo-Cervantes, 2006, p. 72).

In the early 2000s, more municipal agencies were added to assist with various aspects of heritage management, particularly planning.

An overview of national, state, local, and non-governmental organizations with an interest in and impact on heritage management in Morelia (Figure 5.14) reveals just how many organizations are stakeholders.

INAH Michoacán

INAH’s regional office in Morelia is prominently located on Madero Avenue. As such, it is in charge of the patrimony of all of Michoacán, including archaeological sites. Most of its activities are restricted to licensing construction projects, monitoring monuments and the historic center more generally, as well as ensuring the quality of high profile restoration projects, such as churches and other public buildings. Many of its assessments are used in an advisory capacity only.

The staff members at INAH Michoacán (2007b) I spoke with were most concerned about garages being built in buildings in the historic center:
Figure 5.14: National, state, local, and non-governmental organizations involved in Morelia's built heritage.
(Figure compiled by author)
Many of the old, typical hallways that connect one part of the house with the inner courtyard or garden are converted into garages. This is structurally unsound, as many cars are wider than these hallways. So, the owners end up knocking down walls, which their construction license would have not been licensed for. There are so many clandestine constructions like this. The traffic and parking in the historic center are issues that have not been resolved, which leads to owners converting parts of their houses into garages. Living in the historic center is a luxury, but it comes with a price. That price is that the cost of restoration is far greater than the cost of new construction. We need some financial support for owners so that they do the right thing and do not let their properties fall into complete disrepair to warrant new construction.

— INAH Michoacán (2007b), *Personal Interview.*

In the summer of 2007, an INAH staff member had conducted a survey of the state of buildings in the historic center. He had done out of his own initiative, he worked in the permit division. He spent four months walking through the historic center and documenting the state of buildings. He recorded 123 buildings in a complete state of ruin, 68 uninhabited and uninhabitable properties, a further 66 were approaching being in ruin, and 195 had not received any maintenance. He also identified 22 empty lots, where buildings had once stood (INAH Michoacán, 2007a). A total of 412 buildings were seriously at risk. He explained:

Of the 1,114 buildings that are in the presidential decree of the monumental zone, sixty percent are in disrepair. They may be newly painted, but that only hides the structural problems. Many have been abandoned, or elderly people live there, when they really should not. From 9 p.m. onwards, the streets become lethargic, empty, the neighborhoods become underutilized. It suits many of the owners to let their property collapse. Then they can build new, and while we try to avoid modern buildings that have nothing to do with the rest of the architectural context, owners have a lot more freedom in a new construction than in restoration. I would say that 224 of these 412 buildings are in a state where they simply cannot be saved from complete collapse. This is due to economic, social, and commercial pressures. The owners are generally not very interested in saving the buildings, and there is no one who wants to invest in these buildings at bigger scale. The governments …well they are mainly interested in façades. They do not want to do any serious interventions, that is too difficult. We, INAH, well we can make suggestions, give

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advice, but we cannot intervene. But the thing is, someone has to take the initiative to safeguard this heritage. We cannot only create catalogs, and emit decrees, we have to do something to prevent deterioration. But how do we maintain these buildings? World Heritage comes with nothing in terms of financial support. We need financial resources to stem this tide.

— INAH Michoacán (2007b), Personal Interview.

Undoubtedly, there was an element of resignation among INAH staff. They simply cannot comply with their lofty mandate and with its small budget, is unable to pursue many projects. It is even difficult for the staff to keep track of active construction permits and to verify that the construction that is going forward is legitimate. For owners, INAH represents hassle, they have to go to the office to get one set of permits there, but they also need to go to the local government to receive their permits. Not only is the process time-consuming, it is also complex. With many property owners absent, deliberate obsolescence is frequent.

The role of Morelia’s Municipal Government

Morelia’s municipal government underwent a few changes in the 1990s and 2000s. Only in 1991, the city council decided to create a Public Works and Municipal Services secretariat to provide better services and be more responsive to citizen requests. The most important new agencies concerned with the historic center, however, were IMDUM, Fideicomiso de Proyectos Estratégicos (FIPE), and Coordinación Ejecutiva del Centro Histórico y Zonas Monumentales de Morelia (CECHZM), which were created in the early 2000s.

Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia

IMDUM, established by the municipal government in 1995, is purely normative and engaged in planning for the city and metropolitan area of Morelia, but not enforcement of planning legislation. Its small office is located in a suburb. I first visited the office in 2006, when I spoke with architects José Luis Rodríguez García, Joaquín Hernández Garza, and Carlos Primo Torres Arenal. They highlighted the importance of ANCMPM in garnering funding for Morelia. Carlos Torres Arenal (2006) gave a brief overview:
There was one quite positive aspect to the street trade, that of relatively unchanged land use in the historic center. Once they were relocated that began to change. But while Morelianos had restored a few buildings here and there before the relocation, afterwards they really began to value the historic center, they got to know it again. The federal government really ramped up investment after the relocation. But there are still many problems. Business signs remain chaotic. Façades and roofs are still in bad shape. Parking is a huge issue which we are presently working on. We have to resolve this, Morelia is a city made for walking, for experiencing on foot. Otherwise, our intangible heritage, the culture, the food, the traditions, cannot fully be experienced.

— Torres Arenal (2006), *Personal Interview*.

José Luís Rodríguez provided more details:

There have been so many different interventions. For instance, the subterranean cabling, but unfortunately, the telephone company has not cooperated, so those are still present. They really contaminate the landscape. But concealing the electrical cables took six or seven stages, and cost US$7.4 million. During the 90s, many of the religious buildings were restored. Until 1999, Morelia received federal funding from the “Cien Ciudades” fund, but that was more sporadic than the resources that ANCMPM has been able to procure. Since 2001, we have received money from SECTUR, SEDESOL, and CONACULTA, all thanks to ANCMPM. The Plaza de Armas received US$825,000 for its restoration in 2004. There has been a little private investment, too, but minute compared to federal funds. About US$80,000 helped to restore the kiosk, benches, and pilasters.

— Rodríguez García (2006), *Personal Interview*.

Joaquín Garza Hernández added:

ANCMPM has really been working very hard with the federal government since 2001, with SECTUR. With US$1.2 million, the archways could be restored, after the street vendors left. They were in a really bad state. 27,000 square meters of sidewalks have also been repaired. They were in poor repair, too. Then, SECTUR and SEDESOL financed 1,500 new street signs for the historic center.² They also financed signs with historic information (Figure 5.15). The most difficult thing is to

² The total number of street signs installed was 1,750, 95 historic information signs, and twelve markers placed to demarcate the monumental zone (H.Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2005, p. 26).
ensure continuity. We have been here for years ... I joined in 1998. José Luís came two years before me. We work most closely with the Municipal Tourism Secretariat and also with the Coordination for the Historic Center. We meet with them on a regular basis to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts. All of this is hugely challenging. I think the successes have been greater than the errors.

— Garza Hernández (2006), Personal Interview.

When I returned in November 2007, José Luís Rodríguez and Joaquín Garza Hernández (2007) were still working at IMDUM, while the former general director, Carlos Primo Torres Arenal had resigned in January 2007, frustrated because he felt his opinions were not being valued. He returned to focus on his architectural business.

At the time, Joaquín explained:

Right now, we are working on updating the 2001 management plan for the historic center. We have expanded our work past the historic center, too, to improve other parts of the city. The municipal government is just implementing our plan for the green areas, beginning with the gardens in the historic center. Another thing that needs updating is INAH’s catalog of monuments. But this is a huge undertaking. Why might people be reluctant to have the “cataloged building” signs on their houses like in Guanajuato? I think most would be concerned that their taxes would go up immediately. But if INAH did this, putting up these signs, then it could complete a full review of the cataloged buildings ... but as I say, this is a huge project. We have done a huge amount of work considering our tiny budget of US$250,000. We have to provide continuity, because politicians are a special breed, and sometimes, they are not educated at all in matters that concern the historic center. The same goes for some of the managers that are appointed, and this remains a very serious problem.

— Garza Hernández (2006), Personal Interview.

FIPE

In 2002, FIPE was launched to ensure that “the mayor’s most important projects are carried out,” explained Fernando Mendoza Espinosa when I met him in the organization’s office. Like IMDUM, FIPE does not execute projects itself, only spearheads planning.
La Calzada Fray Antonio de San Miguel, conocida popularmente como la Calzada de Guadalupe, tiene su origen en el siglo XVII y servía para comunicar a la ciudad virreinal con una capilla dedicada a la Virgen de Guadalupe. El edificio original se desapareció y, en su lugar, como remanente visual de la calzada, se encuentra el templo de San Diego. Históricamente, este espacio se ha utilizado para diversas actividades, incluyendo procesiones relacionadas con el culto guadalupano.

La calzada fue reemplazada como espacio urbano, se instalaron bancas y se colocaron invernaderos de canto a finales del siglo XVII. Como parte de un programa de mejoras en esta área de la ciudad, se incluyó también la remodelación del actual Bosque Cuauhtémoc y la reconstrucción de una parte de El Acueducto. En el mismo periodo se plantaron los fresnos que flanquean la calle.

Locally, the Calzada Fray Antonio de San Miguel is called the Calzada de Guadalupe due to its original function in the 17th century of connecting the colonization to a chapel dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe. The chapel has long since disappeared to be replaced by the church dedicated to San Diego that is at the end of the walkway. Historically, this space has been used for different activities including religious processions related to the Virgin of Guadalupe. The walkway was paved and benches were added in the eighteenth century as part of a program of improvements in this part of the city which also included the reconstruction of part of the aqueduct and the planting of trees in the Bosque Cuauhtémoc. The ash trees lining the walkway were planted in the same period.

Figure 5.15: Information Sign, Calzada Fray Antonio de San Miguel, Morelia, July 2006.

(Photo by author)
We did a pilot project, to test if the illumination of buildings would work. This was done on the Cathedral and the building of the Colegio of San Nicolás de Hidalgo. It was a huge success. Thus, specialists in museum studies, architects, historians, etc., were asked to help in the development of the Plan Luz. Once the Cathedral was fully restored, the lights could be installed. The lights have to be a certain type, so as not to harm the building. We had to protect the Cathedral from birds and their droppings, which affect the porous stone. Presently, there are fourteen buildings with this scenic lighting, two were installed in 2006, five this year alone. We want to include thirty buildings in the end. So far, about US$3.1 million has been invested.


The cathedral was the first building to receive the lighting permanently, in 2003 (Figure 5.16).
By 2005, eight other locations had been illuminated, including the church and square of San José, the Plaza de Armas (surroundings of the cathedral), Plazas Juárez, Melchor Ocampo, Valladolid, church of La Merced, the aqueduct, and the Government Palace (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 481-2). A further eleven religious buildings, seven civil buildings, and five public spaces were projected to be illuminated (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2006, p. 120). (Figure 5.17) The entire area of the historic center now enjoys the sound and light show with illuminated buildings and public spaces on the weekends. By the end of 2007, La Voz reported that US$6.8 million had been spent in total on the project since its 2003 inception. About US$1 million had been spent in 2007 alone, with the municipal government contributing US$430,000, the federal government US$343,000, and the state government US$257,000 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2007b). The newspaper further cited that about US$2.8 million had been spent during the outgoing administration. Whether or not Fernando Mendoza Espinosa had underestimated the overall cost to date, or the paper overestimated is not clear.

But the Plan Luz was only one of many strategic projects FIPE was working on at the time. Mendoza Espinoza elaborated:

We have worked on a project to install intelligent traffic lights in the center, which can react to the vehicular flows, if there is more traffic, they will allow it to move more quickly. We had measurable reductions in contamination. One project we have not yet achieved is a pedestrian area like in Guanajuato. To do this, we need to be able to accommodate more parking in the center. We are hoping to get 700 more spaces in the old bus station, which is another huge project. It is to be converted into a shopping mall, with restaurants, and an artisanal market. We also need to change public transport. We need the vehicles to be slightly larger than they are, to accommodate 20 to 25 people. Right now, they are too small. In the long term, we hope to have an electric tram traveling up and down Madero Avenue. We look to European countries for solutions, as Morelia shares so many characteristics with European cities. We have a rather small budget, about US$660,000, but this goes a long way in terms of the number of projects we pursue. Of course, we leave the execution of plans to others. We work with various other government offices, such as IMDUM. We developed the rehabilitation of the city’s green spaces with them. Much has been achieved, but there is much left to do.

— Mendoza Espinoza (2007), Personal Interview.
Figure 5.17: The Rutas de Luz in Morelia's historic center.
(Based on: Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 480)
At no point did Mendoza Espinoza mention the participation of Morelia’s citizens in the development of the *Plan Luz*, which Carlos Hiriart Pardo (2006a, p. 484) identified as one of the major weaknesses of the program, as well as the lack of foresight as far as traffic problems are concerned. On the weekends, prior to 9 p.m., when the light and sound spectacle begins, it is almost impossible to access the historic center, as Madero Avenue and other main access streets are blocked off. Undoubtedly, however, the program has been a huge success in attracting visitors to Morelia.

**CECHZM**

In 2002, CECHZM was established to oversee the historic center. The organization is divided into several departments, including Urban and Public Works, Liaison, Culture and Social Communication, Supervision, Inspection, and Monitoring, as well as Human Resources and Technical Unit. I met with the head of the Urban and Public Works department, historian Rafael Álvarez Navarro (2007):

> As the title implies, we are concerned with the historic center’s urban image and review the public works projects that the Public Works unit executes. However, we do not issue permits. INAH and the Public Works department deal with that aspect … One thing that is really lacking in the center’s urban infrastructure is the subterranean cabling. We have been in talks with Teléfonos de México (TELMEX)³, but they simply do not want to participate. We have to apply the legal framework more precisely, because we need to remove this source of visual contamination. Another project we have focused on is the graffiti problem. Graffiti really affects the built environment, especially the historic buildings. We quantified the problem, and think it would cost US$3.5 million to rid the whole city of graffiti. We try to work with young people on this issue. We are also trying to catalog all the buildings in serious states of disrepair and contact the owners. Many owners do not want to participate in maintaining their façades. These are very difficult issues. Our budget is woefully small, only about US$500,000 for the entire organization.

— Álvarez Navarro (*ibid*), *Personal Interview*.

³Mexico’s main telephony provider, privatized in 1990, under President Salinas de Gotari, and owned by Mexican millionaire Carlos Slim Helú.
Interestingly, Navarro was one of the officials who was convinced that UNESCO provided funding directly to *World Heritage* sites. He admitted he did not know how much Morelia received, but was certain that UNESCO was the origin of the funds. He went on to explain:

> We are also working on the standardization of business signs. There are more than 2,600 signs in the historic center and most of those do not comply with our regulation. These regulations are based on the 1972 *Federal Law*. These signs are another source of visual contamination that needs to be remedied. Unfortunately, there are lot of ideas that go nowhere. We wanted to put placards on the 1,113 buildings that are cataloged …this was basically my idea. INAH did not like them, argued they contaminated the façades, so that fell by the wayside. We hope that the next administration might take this up again. We are in a transitional phase now, we do not know if the next government will keep us in our positions.⁴ We have this seal (*World Heritage* designation) and not all cities have this. We have to promote more international festivals to exploit this heritage. Exploit it in a rational manner and with care. We cannot afford to neglect the golden goose. This is not only a good of the government, it belongs to all citizens, so the government needs the support of the citizens. However, we have worked very unilaterally, the citizens do not feel included. That needs to change.


### Annual State of the Municipality Reports

Another source for information about municipal actions are its annual reports, or state of the municipality reports. Not surprisingly, availability of the annual municipal reports was also not uniform. Furthermore, earlier reports, from the 1990s, lack detail. The 1991 report highlights the efforts at gaining *World Heritage* designation, and which streets had been repaved, which included some in the historic center, but no detail of cost was given (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1991). Similarly, in 1995, merely the civic engagements in preserving neighborhoods and the Patronato’s efforts at arranging the trust fund for

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⁴Unlike IMDUM, CECHZM officials are appointed by the mayor. By January 2008, Navarro was out of the job.
the aqueduct are mentioned as far as heritage issues are concerned (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1995a).

In sharp contrast are the reports from the mid-2000s, during Fausto Vallejo’s second term as mayor. The 2003 report, 157 pages long, has a separate chapter devoted to the historic center, as well as tourism. The Plan Luz gets particular mention in the report, with the Cathedral fully illuminated, and the additional illumination of four other buildings, the Church and Rosas Conservatory, the Museum of Contemporary Art “Alfredo Zalce,” the offices of Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (SNDIF), and the offices of the State Forestry Commission, and, already in 2002, the main building of the San Nicolás University, located on Madero Avenue (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2003, p. 142). The positive response to these illuminations encouraged the mayor to consider the further illumination of public buildings. ANCMPM’s fundraising for the rehabilitation of sidewalks is also highlighted, costing nearly US$300,000 (ibid., p. 148).

By 2005, US$262,348 was spent on the improvement of plazas and gardens. A further US$380,826 was spent on sidewalks and US$55,000 on signage to promote the rights of pedestrians, and encourage drivers to give the right of way to the other (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2005, p. 7). Various plazas and markets also were rehabilitated, to the tune of US$315,000 (ibid., p. 9). SEDESOL’s Hábitat program provided the nearly US $850,000 to rehabilitate the Plaza Morelos. It was the express goal to “convert Morelia into the most beautiful city of the country” to which end another US$600,000 were invested to improve its urban image (ibid., p. 10). Nearly a million dollars was spent on the continuation of the Plan Luz (ibid., p. 12). Perhaps what stands out the most about this report is its brevity. Twelve pages long, most of the actions and projects described pertained to the historic center. Photos dominated these few pages.

Morelia’s NGOs

ICOMOS’s Michoacán Committee was launched in 1988, and actively supported the designation efforts (Ultreras, 1999c). More recently, however, much like in Guanajuato, the group has not been particularly active. The individual members do not pay a large membership fee and enthusiasm to organize regional and local events seemed to have faltered, according to Esperanza Ramírez Romero (2005).
“Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” was formed in April 1991, timed with the 450th anniversary of the foundation of the city. The organization was active in the celebrations, but was much more focused on the future preservation of the city, rather than merely commemorating the foundation (Vargas, 1991d). Art historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero is one of the founding members. Throughout 1991, the organization hosted numerous public events to raise money and awareness about Morelia’s heritage, including exhibits and talks (Vargas, 1991a). The association formally recognized the dedicated work of the Preservation and Conservation Board, which celebrated its thirty-fifth year in 1991. Various members of the Board were given prizes to recognize their contribution to preservation in the city, most notably, the Casa de la Cultura, the former Carmen convent, which board members had helped restore (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991p). That year, the organization also organized two heritage-themed courses, free of cost and open to the public (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991n). The group continued offering heritage-related courses in 1992 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1992a).

The then-regional INAH director, Víctor Hugo Valencia Valera, estimated that there were 50 civil associations in Michoacán, twenty of which were supported by INAH. He favored even greater civil participation in preservation, because the joint forces of official institutions and civil associations would really be able to make a difference in the protection of patrimony (Sereno Ayala, 1991n).

“Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” continued to raise funds and awareness for the aqueduct’s rehabilitation, using the newspaper as one means to spread information (Covián Mendoza, 1993). Esperanza Ramírez Romero frequently gave talks about the state of Morelia’s architecture, emphasizing that the “future of Morelia is in the hands of its inhabitants” (Sanchez, 1993b). “Club Amigos de Morelia” was another NGO concerned about Morelia’s built environment, particularly, the modification of buildings in the historic center, where façades remained, but interiors were completely destroyed to serve as car parks instead (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993i). The organization conducted a study in 1993 that found 450 historic buildings with irregularities, many of them defaced with painted slogans or graffiti, in the historic center, and criticized INAH for its complacency (Valdovinos Licea, 1993h).

Morelia’s active civil society was frequently reported on. In 1995, “Morelia, Patrimonio
de la Humanidad” and “Codemac” (Conservación y Desarrollo de Morelia, A.C.) collaborated to move the restoration of the aqueduct forward (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995c). At the time, the only permit left to obtain was that of the municipality, the regional INAH office had approved the project and was ready to begin. Similarly, the choir “Miguel Bernal Jiménez” (named after Morelia’s most prominent classical music conductor) and the Michoacán University orchestra, also pledged to contribute financially to the restoration of the Las Rosas church, through the “Adopt a work of art” scheme that a local trust had initiated in 1993, which had gained support at the national level (Sereno Ayala, 1995c).

Architect Manuel González Galván and other well known citizens organized a poll in Morelia, based on the slogan “Citizen, you have the word” to find out if citizens knew what having World Heritage designation meant, if the authorities were enforcing regulation adequately, if new legislation was necessary, etc. It is worth noting that the government never solicited any surveys or polls on the subject matter (Sereno Ayala, 1995d). After three weeks, 2,723 people had responded with their concerns about the historic center, and INAH decided to hold a public forum to discuss the results in depth and through round tables with experts address the different problems the historic center faced (Sereno Ayala, 1995l). As reported, unfortunately, the public’s opinions and suggestions were not immediately discussed, instead, the focus shifted to the mayor’s assessment that decentralization of government offices was necessary, and the expert round tables drew the media’s attention (Sereno Ayala, 1995h).

Ninety-one percent of the citizens who responded to the poll indicated they knew what World Heritage means. Of course, there is a difference between knowing about the designation and its actual meaning or implication for preservation. In their analysis, the poll authors conceded that people probably didn’t want to admit ignorance either, so more diffusion and information about the concept was still necessary. Wording the question, “do you know what it means that Morelia is World Heritage” was therefore, perhaps, not the most useful way to determine how informed citizens were. More than ninety percent agreed that the street vending did not help the city attract more tourists, and agreed too that governmental offices should be decentralized. The final questions were more opened ended, asking which buildings should be restored and what measures should be taken to
restore the dignity of Morelia’s historic center, prompting many to demand job creation to combat the street vending, as well as their relocation (Sereno Ayala, 1995m). For a first-time poll, the results were certainly useful in gauging the public’s interest and concern for preservation, but the methods, using mainly yes or no questions, limited the response outcomes.

Another NGO, “La Sociedad Defensora del Tesoro Artístico de México, A.C.” (Defensive Society of Mexico’s Artistic Treasures) commissioned a survey in the city to determine the population’s concern for the historic center. The survey did not differentiate responses into age group, profession, or social standing. The newspaper also did not report how many people participated, making the result that 91.43 percent said they knew what it meant that Morelia was a World Heritage site, but did not exactly know what that meant as far as progress in conservation was concerned, difficult to contextualize. The paper argued this result made further diffusion a necessity (Sereno Ayala, 1996j, p. 7-B).

88.30 percent agreed that the decentralization of government services was necessary to help divert traffic from the historic center. Clearly, Morelia’s civil society was much more active and vocal on a city-wide scale, rather than Guanajuato’s more localized groups.

By 1996, however, the aqueduct still had not been restored, prompting “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” to launch “Adopt an arch” to raise funds for the restoration. The project had lost a bit of steam, but the group was determined not to let it falter again (Ulterreas, 1996a). It also launched a separate organization dedicated to saving the aqueduct specifically, the “Patronato Pro-restauración del Acueducto de Morelia” (Pro-restoration trust of Morelia’s aqueduct).

Members of the local Rotary club also became concerned about the possibility of losing Morelia’s World Heritage designation. Thirty female Rotarians formed a new Club and one of its members wrote of their preoccupation in the newspaper, urging others to join them and to put pressure on the local authorities to ensure that the designation not be lost (López Mestas, 1996). While the paper can only offer such snapshots, it does appear that a large number of Morelianos were aware of the degradation that affected the historic center.

Restoration of the Las Rosas church and former convent had begun in December 1995, financed through the “Adopt a work of art” group. An estimated US$120,069 would be needed, which the group raised through various fundraising events, as well as sponsorship
of paintings, etc. (Ultreras, 1996b).

Once work on the aqueduct was reported completed in 1998, the “Patronato” began a study investigating the existence of a tunnel system underneath Morelia’s monuments (Gutiérrez, 1998f). The aqueduct had suffered from graffiti, and its structure also required reinforcement to prevent it from collapse. Rumors about such tunnels existing have been persistent, and when I spoke with Esperanza Ramírez in 2007, she mentioned that “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” were still working on this project (Ramírez Romero, 2007). One cannot help but think that preservationists constantly are in need of a new project, something that is in need of “rescuing.” Whether or not that is sustainable, is debatable, though arguably, buildings that do not receive steady maintenance will need serious attention again after a decade or so. At the time of the first studies into the tunnels, little was known, so she speculated there were twenty-one, connecting all the major monuments and even in those early stages, the great tourism potential was immediately outlined (1998f). Other academics, however, expressed doubt that this tunnel system existed (Cortez, 1998c). However, in late 2009, the rumors were confirmed in the news media, after the NGO had hired sonar equipment that determined the existence of tunnels.

The contributions of NGOs to heritage preservation were highlighted in a public exhibit and a series of talks at the regional museum in 1998. INAH Michoacán and the NGOs organized the events and the exhibit. This was done to raise public awareness of the contributions of the third sector organizations (Olivo, 1998a). One speaker pointed to the crisis of 1993 and the move towards greater market force reliance as the catalyst for NGO involvement in the preservation of the city’s patrimony (Olivo, 1998b).

The “Patronato Pro Rescate del Centro Histórico de Morelia” was launched on 18 May 1999, coinciding with the city’s anniversary, to help inform the public about the “Plan Maestro” and to improve public confidence. This group consisted of sixty-eight Morelianos, with Esperanza Ramírez Romero at the helm. Part of the of the organization’s information campaign was an education project in primary schools, “Conoce tu ciudad” (Get to know your city), which was then extended in February 2000 to provide a course for adults. This course was also imparted to staff in government offices, hospitals, some hotels, a sweets factory, and taxi drivers. In 2001, universities and secondary schools followed suit. The organization raised funds for restoration by sponsoring an opera and holding a
fundraiser in the historic center, only weeks after the vendors relocated. This event raised US$143,226. While it had enjoyed a good relationship with mayor Salvador Galván Infante, relations with his successor, Fausto Vallejo Figueroa, were not as positive, as the new administration felt that the “Patronato” had fulfilled its mission and was no longer needed. The “Patronato” decided to keep working, despite the antagonism from the municipal government. The organization continued to work for the restoration of various buildings and squares after the vendor relocation, and the education of secondary school students with the course “Morelia, Patrimonio Cultural” in 2003 and 2004. The “Patronato” received various prizes for its tireless efforts to preserve the historic center (Estrada de Hernández, 2004, p.74–85).

Comerciantes y Vecinos del Centro Histórico de Morelia, Michoacán

The Asociación de Comerciantes y Vecinos del Centro Histórico de Morelia (COVECHI) is another civil association or not-for-profit in Morelia, yet one that is specifically dedicated to the reactivation of businesses in the historic center. Administrator Teresa Caballero Vargas (2008) described the organization and its work:

COVECHI was initially a very loose group of sixteen people, who worked together informally for thirteen or fifteen years. The official civil association was formed in June of 2007. Its main goal is the reactivation of business in the historic center. There has been a marked decline over the past twenty years, due to various problems, such as parking in the center, congestion, and generally, more competition. We have branded the slogan “El corazón de la ciudad” (The heart of the city) and are promoting it on radio, television, and in print. We rely on state or municipal funding. We have participants and affiliates. Participants allow us to advertise in their space, place our leaflets, etc. Affiliates pay about US$17 per year and get advertising privileges for paying this quota. They are placed on our website and in our booklet. Obviously, if they want to take up a whole page in the booklet, they have to pay a bit more. We have about 350 affiliates. Another thing we do is to cooperate with INAH and the municipality to work on streamlining advertising signs in the historic center. To date, we have helped businesses replaced 225 signs that now comply with the regulations. We want to make them uniform and better organized. But the main goal is to have Morelianos and visitors come and consume in the historic center, even if it is just to drink a coffee or an ice cream. There are
other services in the center, such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants, and benefit too when people come to the historic center. The most important thing is to get people back into the historic center to support its businesses.

— Caballero Vargas (2008), Personal Interview.

Aside from two administrators, and the president, COVECHI also had two staff members devoted to promotion. The president’s main activity was to try and secure funding for COVECHI, but the administrator could not tell me how much money was involved. According to newspaper reports, nearly US$60,000 were spent on the promotional efforts (Hernández González, 2008). Whenever the organization was about to launch, or had results from a campaign, meetings were organized to inform the affiliates of its activities. New affiliates were recruited when campaigns were started and occasionally, people would contact COVECHI to become affiliates (Caballero Vargas, 2008).

World Heritage investment and intervention

In this section, I draw on newspaper records as well as other secondary literature to reconstruct the investment and restoration projects begun in Morelia in 1989, just prior to the World Heritage designation.

In the period prior to World Heritage designation, ICOMOS in particular was active in voicing concerns about restoration projects, such as those carried out in 1989 on the Rosas Conservatory. These were not in keeping with the baroque features of the building, and the ICOMOS representative expressed surprise that the local INAH office had sanctioned the work on the façade, where different types of quarry stones had been combined to replace damaged sections (Sereno Ayala, 1989c).

While only a flash in the pan, the federal SEDUE promised Michoacán US$5 million to help rescue and maintain its many monuments, though not exclusively focused on Morelia (Lopez Martinez, 1989c). The historic center’s lighting was restored in March 1989, just in time for tourism influx during Easter (Ortiz Alcantara, 1989b). Simultaneously, 150 trash receptacles were placed in the historic center (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989w). US$2.5 million were spent on the new lighting and only personnel and budget limitations delayed this type of rehabilitation for the new neighborhoods—but surely, im-
proving lighting in the historic center was more of a priority (Miranda Cortes, 1989a; Ortiz Alcantara, 1989a).

Just in time for the city’s anniversary, the city completed nearly US$400,000 worth of work on streets in the historic center, paid for by the federal and state government (Lopez Martinez, 1989a). The historic center also received some preferential treatment as far as election propaganda was concerned, with the city’s public maintenance crews removing such propaganda swiftly (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989ab).

Morelia’s archways in the historic center, which surround the Plaza de Armas, were scheduled for repairs, as reported by the paper in March 1990 (Sereno Ayala, 1990a). New street signs were also installed, which, for the first time, featured the business that sponsored them.⁵ They featured the name of the street, the sector, the zip code, and at the bottom, the business that paid for the sign (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990f). The youth division of the PRI party spent a well-publicized day in the historic center washing the walls of important buildings (Roa Ortiz, 1990). INAH could not stand idly by while citizen volunteers tried to clean buildings and remove paintings on walls, and organized specialists to lead more volunteer brigades (Rendon Guillen, 1990b). Thirteen hundred volunteers helped to clean buildings and façades along Avenue Madero. Volunteers were instructed only to use a neutral soap to minimize damage to the fragile façades (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990d). Good progress on these efforts was reported in May 1990 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990ad).

Efforts to “return Morelia’s dignity” continued to be on the agenda in 1990, but lack of staff and equipment hampered advances (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990ab). Illumination of the historic center, with special lighting, at least during holidays, was not completely new, and the aqueduct’s lighting existed already in 1990 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990s). 420 of the Cathedral’s light reflectors were replaced that year, about half of the total, at a cost of 3 million old pesos (prior to devaluation in 1993), amounting only to about US$250 (Ortiz Alcantara, 1990d). The Cathedral had first been illuminated in 1985.

Repairing and improving the drainage around the central square’s kiosk (see Figure 5.18) was another major project during 1990 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990y).

⁵I could not confirm how long these particular street signs were in use.
Morelia’s central bus station, at the time still located in the historic center, (see Figure 5.23), was remodeled, to the tune of US$40,000 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990ae). Nearly 18,000 people were using the station daily. Other projects included the resurfacing of streets in the historic center, though initially costs were specified (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990e).

Rehabilitation promises for the aqueduct’s lighting first appeared in the paper in late 1990. There was no mention of the cost and it was unclear if the repairs were ever made (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990x). Figure 5.19 shows the aqueduct lit up at night fall. Lighting improvements were again announced in February 1991, this time, not only for the aqueduct, but also in the Bosque Cuauthémoc and the entire historic center, though no precise timetable was given, nor the costs forecasted (Mondragon Norato, 1991b). A month later, the paper reported the city would use about US$56,320 to make long awaited repairs in the Plaza de Armas, opposite the Cathedral, and the Bosque Cuauthémoc (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991aa).

One restoration project for 1991 was aimed the city’s gardens (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991x), while street repairs would continue, costing roughly US$80,000 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991m). Efforts to update the National Urban Development Plan also appeared in the paper early in 1991 (Mondragon Norato, 1991a). In anticipation of the anniversary, the façades of all buildings along Avenue Madero starting at Villalongín until the Palacio de Gobierno were cleaned, which required mobilizing an army unit to assist in the efforts (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991q). The city was to have a makeover in time for the celebrations. In fact, the new lighting was promised by 15 May, just days shy of the anniversary, finally costing US$40,000. 2,160 lamps in the historic center were to be checked and replaced, if necessary (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991c). In addition to normal lighting, festive lighting, to the tune of US$11,000, was installed for the anniversary (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991y).

The paper also reported that National Urban Development Plan would contain measures to support the protection of historic centers, again through BANOBRAS credit (Sereno Ayala, 1991h). The paper then revealed that the Mayor had asked the President, during his recent visit to Morelia for about US$200,000 that was estimated as required to finance the city’s makeover for the 450th anniversary. Nine squares and plazas, for instance,
Figure 5.18: Morelia’s kiosk, August 2006.
(Photo by author)
were to receive new pavement, requiring 38,600 square meters in new paving stones (Ortiz Alcantara, 1991c). Expectations were high, although a response from the President was still outstanding (Rendon Guillen, 1991a).

Plans for rehabilitating the main building of the University of San Nicolás in the historic center were first reported in May 1991. The former convent was in dire need of repair (Cabrera Cruz, 1991d). The municipal public works office had a budget of about US$370,000 available for 150 different projects throughout the city, which included maintenance of the historic center (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991d). This level of funding was unprecedented.

Attempts at implementing a pedestrian are of the historic center of Morelia have con-
continued to fail. One argument against a pedestrian zone was that that area would become too quiet, too much like a museum. Plans to reroute traffic were always met with resistance. Instead, argued Eugenio López Mercado, architect and then Director of Operations of the State Tourism Secretariat, the focus should be on rehabilitating and preserving Morelia’s squares and buildings (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991f).

While lighting in the historic center was generally well-maintained, the same could not be said for parts of the city, where only half or less of the lighting was working, and according to the residents, the municipal government seemed unconcerned (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991s). Clearly, it was difficult for the municipal government to provide equal services (Hernandez Gochi, 1991a). In the state of the state report, only the World Heritage application was mentioned, but not any other actions the state had taken to preserve heritage (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1991, p. 189).

Once again, the Plaza de Armas received some attention in 1992, with new benches and sidewalks, and fresh plants for various other gardens and green areas (Hernandez Gochi, 1992d).

The aqueduct rehabilitation project was fully introduced in the paper in 1993 by a member of “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad,” recounting the history of the aqueduct, reasons for its natural and man-made deterioration, in particular, the number of vehicles that passed the structure daily, graffiti, etc. The article also sketched out the necessary studies and preparation to facilitate its rehabilitation (Cabrera Aceves, 1993). It would take until 1998 to execute the plan. The organization warned a few months later, in July 1993, that the aqueduct was at risk to suffering a significant collapse (Sanchez, 1993a).

In May 1993, the paper reported that all the historic center’s lighting had been attended to, with new, low-energy emitting light bulbs. The aqueduct too, received this overhaul (Hernandez Granados, 1993b). Plans for moving cables underground in a sixty blocks spanning area were first published in June 1993, at an estimated cost of US$1.6 million, to be divided between the federal and state SECTUR ministries, the CFE, and the municipal government (Cabrera Cruz, 1993c). Yet another visit by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari confirmed that plans for the cable project would go ahead, once a “Trust for the Historic Center,” composed of the three levels of government was set up. Cost estimates rose to US$1.9 million (Cabrera Cruz, 1993b). Receiving the first installment of funding,
approximately US$425,000 was the remaining obstacle to starting the project in August 1993 (Cabrera Cruz, 1993d). The money supposedly was authorized the following month (Cabrera Cruz, 1993a). In total, the project was expected to take about four or five years, and finally cost closer to US$3 million. Work was projected to begin towards the end of 1993 (Valdovinos Licea, 1993i).

After stalling again, the municipal government and members of “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad,” formed a Trusteeship for the restoration of the aqueduct. Funds, at first, were minuscule, at US$1,250 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993h).

Progress on the Cathedral’s restoration was also reported. Costs for 1993 and 1994 were estimated at US$98,000 and about US$150,000, respectively. In addition to 70 percent federal and 15 percent state funding, the bishopric contributed the other 15 percent (Sereno Ayala, 1993d). It seemed as though everything was in order to begin the major restorations on the towers, but then INAH suspended the works—apparently, INAH had not yet issued the permits, and work was begun anyway, leading to the suspension (Sereno Ayala, 1993i). There was a fair amount of confusion about this suspension. The Cathedral, under federal law as a place of worship, actually belongs to SEDESOL, and in order to maintain it functioning as a place of worship, the ministry can work on the building when necessary—without obtaining permits. However, to keep matters straight, the Trusteeship in charge of the restoration project did seek INAH’s approval, but never received an answer, nor did INAH attend a meeting it was invited to learn about the restoration. If this case highlights anything, it once again shows how confusing the legislation and the jurisdictions are—even to those so-called experts (ibid.). Even more confusing was that only repairs to the stonework was suspended; other repair work could continue (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993k).

The 1993 municipal report features a small error, dating Morelia’s World Heritage inscription to 1992, not 1991. As a World Heritage city, Morelia participated in the founding of the OWHC in Fez, Morocco, in 1993. Much hope was placed on the importance of the new organization (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1993, p. 21). As such, however, the report was short on many details, particularly financial matters. Over 1,000 street lamps were painted on the principal avenues such as Madero (East and West), and the aqueduct (ibid., p. 22). First steps had also been taken to get the project on subterranean cabling un-
way, through initial negotiations with CFE. Interestingly, the report states that UNESCO is requiring this project so that Morelia could retain its *World Heritage* status (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1993, p. 30). I could not corroborate this as a requirement anywhere else, and while it is feasible, given UNESCO’s preferences to minimize signs of modern life, it might have simply been expeditious for the mayor to include this requirement. After all, the project took years to complete and was costly, and not only CFE stood to benefit.

Between 1993 and 2002, a whooping US$22,100,000 was spent on Morelia’s historic center (see Table 5.3, Table 5.4) (Hiriart Pardo, 2004b, p. 117). Much of this activity focused on rehabilitation of religious and prominent public architecture, as well as educational facilities housed in historic buildings.

The rest of the money can be accounted for by other projects, some of which involved interventions in private property, or public spaces such as parks, or sidewalks (see Table 5.5 and Table 5.6) for the distribution of funds into these other types of projects. It is worth noting that the subterranean cabling was the most expensive project overall at US$3,660,000, followed by the investment in the Hotel Juaninos, at US$1,930,000 million. The investment in the hotel was not without its critics (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 454). Clearly, the focus on the archways that surround the main squares is due to their locational centrality and that they suffered from being used to secure semi-permanent street vendors stalls. The state government planned to invest a further US$1,120,000 on works in the historic center in 2002, but what exactly this amount of money was going to be invested in was not detailed. Similarly, the municipal government aimed to invest a further US$6,400,000, but again, the details were not available (2004b, pp. 116–117).

To give an idea of the distribution of monuments, Figure 5.20 shows the southwest quadrant of the historic center, Independencia, and the monuments within that area. It is worth noting that the southwestern most area of the sector does not contain any monuments.

Seven hundred public works were promised for Morelia in 1995, but no details were given of where interventions would take place, though an investment of US$83,321 was announced. A very modest budget indeed for such a large number of projects (Hernandez Granados, 1995a; Hernandez Granados, 1995b). Despite the economic problems, work on the Cathedral was to continue (Gutierrez Rocha, 1995). Nearly US$500,000 were invested
Table 5.3: Investment in the rehabilitation and maintenance of religious buildings in Morelia’s historic center, 1993–2001 in US$.  
(Based on: ibid., pp. 116–117)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Cathedral of Morelia (until 2001)</td>
<td>765,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Santa Rosa Lima (until 2001)</td>
<td>256,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses attached to the Conservatory of the Roses</td>
<td>160,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices and archives of the Archdiocese of Morelia</td>
<td>136,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various religious buildings ( Churches of La Columna and Capuchins)</td>
<td>136,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of San Agustín and San José Churches</td>
<td>20,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,474,078</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Investment in the rehabilitation and maintenance of public buildings in Morelia’s historic center, 1993–2001 in US$.  
(Based on: ibid., pp. 116–117.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Governmental Palace (Tridentine Seminary – 6 stages)</td>
<td>833,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio de San Nicolás (University)</td>
<td>330,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illumination of historic monuments project and sound and light for the Metropolitan Cathedral</td>
<td>322,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory school Melchor Ocampo (UMSNH)</td>
<td>290,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Palace (works completed by 2001)</td>
<td>270,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Palace of Morelia</td>
<td>208,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morelos Building (Revenue Administration)</td>
<td>189,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Palace of Morelia</td>
<td>144,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Ocampo Theatre</td>
<td>128,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of public buildings (INAH Center, State Museum, etc.)</td>
<td>104,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building attached to the Government Palace</td>
<td>102,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House attached to the State Museum (two properties)</td>
<td>96,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Culture Building</td>
<td>88,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMSNH University Bookstore</td>
<td>80,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Cultural Development UMSNH</td>
<td>78,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and State Congressional Archive</td>
<td>72,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum and Historical Archive of Morelos’ Birth House</td>
<td>57,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palace of the State Judiciary</td>
<td>56,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of the Clavijero Palace and Casa de la Cultura (Ex-Convent of Carmen)</td>
<td>44,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Michoacán Museum</td>
<td>25,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts School of UMSNH</td>
<td>20,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,548,811</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.5: Investment in the rehabilitation of public spaces in Morelia's historic center, 1993–2001 in US$.
(Based on: ibid., pp. 116–117.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subterranean cables, historic center</td>
<td>3,660,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of sidewalks, Avenue Madero</td>
<td>209,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuauhtémoc Park</td>
<td>125,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squares, parks, fountains, and monuments</td>
<td>120,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matamoros Archway (along the main square)</td>
<td>108,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image and urban improvements in the San José district</td>
<td>96,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqueduct</td>
<td>88,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galeana Archway</td>
<td>73,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalks in the historic center</td>
<td>64,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo Archway</td>
<td>56,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkways in the Cuauhtémoc forest</td>
<td>51,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldama Archway</td>
<td>46,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allende Archway</td>
<td>42,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commemorative Sign of Morelia, World Heritage site</strong></td>
<td>32,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk development projects</td>
<td>25,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism information booths, historic center</td>
<td>20,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration project for the archways</td>
<td>13,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Calzada (Road) Fray Antonio de San Miguel</td>
<td>6,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,843,882</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Investment in the rehabilitation of private houses and businesses in Morelia's historic center, 1993–2001 in US$.
(Based on: ibid., pp. 116–117.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Juaninos (former Hotel Oseguera)</td>
<td>1,930,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIP's Restaurant Morelia</td>
<td>764,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive restoration of the house at Fray Calzada Antonio de San Miguel</td>
<td>725,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive restoration of private house, Aqueduct Avenue 19</td>
<td>644,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House, Aquiles Serdán no. 357</td>
<td>643,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,708,382</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in public lighting in the Nueva España and República sectors of the historic center (Hernández Granados, 1995c). In July 1995, mayor Fausto Vallejo admitted that public works would have to be postponed, due to the municipality’s dire financial situation. This also jeopardized projects agreed to with the private sector (Hernández Granados, 1995e).

The project of moving Morelia’s electrical cables underground also began in 1995 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995a; Vallejo Figureroa, 1995). A plaque on the regional museum facing the Jardín de las Rosas commemorates the first stage of these efforts (see Figure 5.21). It reads: “The federal, state, and municipal governments consign the first stage of subterranean cabling in the historic center on the occasion of the 454th anniversary of the foundation of Valladolid, today Morelia, World Heritage, May 18, 1995.” That same year, the city also began adding new street name placards where there were none or the old ones, originally affixed in 1929, were in bad shape (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995e). Figure 5.22 shows the two different sign designs. The old signs, below, are tiles, while the new signs, top, are made of a more durable hard plastic. The new design was considered more legible and featured the post code, as well as the sector.

In October 1995, newly installed public lighting in the historic center was introduced with great fanfare. 2,900 lamp posts and lamps were reconfigured and updated, with a
Figure 5.22: Old and new street signs, Morelia, July 2006.
(Photo by author)
cost of US$83,404 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995g). The governor and the mayor attended the ceremony, highlighting the energy efficiency of the new lamps and the added security due to more reliable lighting (Estrada Chavez, 1995d).

A major challenge was to move the central bus station out of the historic center. While the benefits seemed obvious, less traffic congestion, improvements made on the station in 1992 made it difficult to convince the general manager as well as some users, given the proximity to destinations in the center, that it needed moving (Valdovinos Licea, 1996c). It was located in the northwestern quadrant of the historic center, only blocks from Jardín de las Rosas and the ex-Convent. Figure 5.23 shows the monuments in the República sector as well as the location of the former central bus station. Adjacent streets were continuously affected by taxis, overland buses, as well as local bus traffic. One of the main obstacles, not surprisingly, was the perceived cost. Since it was moved, however, the former site remains vacant, though plans to turn the lot into a shopping mall continually resurface.

In July 1996, planning for the second stage of subterranean cabling was announced, when the state received US$1.3 million to complete the project totaling four stages. A further US$48,027 was provided to help restore domes, balustrades, and the sanctuary of the Cathedral as well as burying utility and telephony cables (Favela Geronimo, 1996). These figures and projects, I should note, were only the projects that applied to the historic center—a total of US$5.7 million was invested in various other public works (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996e). This funding came from SEDESOL’s “Cien Ciudades” program (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996f). Blocks in the Independencia and Nueva España sections of the city were selected, in particular near the Municipal Palace, the Cathedral, the Justice Palace, and San Agustín and San Francisco churches (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996a). Walking only one block east on Avenue Madero and the corner of Pino Suárez, in sector Revolución, the cables remain visible, as Figure 5.24 shows.

Despite the large amount of money suddenly available for many public works, the paper reported that the Municipal Palace was sorely in need of repairs (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996b). Eventually, some funds were used for the Palace (see Table 5.4). But lack of funds for projects was just one problem, another was the theft of material. Efforts to replace previously stolen cable (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996g) were thwarted through further larceny (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996a). When material could not be stolen, lights and in-
Figure 5.23: Monuments and the former bus station in Morelia’s República sector.
(Source: CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001)
interchanges were interrupted or destroyed, costing the city more than US$40,000 (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996c).

Various gardens and public spaces were to benefit with a makeover from a budget of nearly US$60,000 (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996h). In September 1996, the beginning of the aqueduct restoration was announced. With funding from the state, US$24,040, INAH, with US$8,080, and US$3,232 from the municipal government, the project was spearheaded by INAH and “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad,” the local NGO (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996f). US$6,938 were invested in the footpath through the Bosque Cuauhtémoc.

Work on the city’s municipal palace began in late 1996, costing almost US$50,000 (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996g). As a member of the “Cien Ciudades” program, Morelia received about US$240,000 from the lump sum of US$9.2 million that were divided amongst the thirty-eight cities in this program. Some of the funds went to projects in the historic center, but
unfortunately, no specific project was mentioned (Notimex Editorial, 1997a).

In total, the municipal government had undertaken twenty-nine projects in the historic center in 1996, with a modest investment of US$147,277 (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1996, p. 32). The major project was to restore the city’s kiosk in the Plaza de Armas (see Figure 5.18).

By January 1997, 25 arches of the aqueduct had been repaired. The state government had provided US$24,646 and the municipal government US$2,464. The “Adopt an arch” program had not reached great traction yet, with only six sponsors at the time. Adopting an arch cost nearly US$700 (Quintáns, 1997). The State Governmental Palace’s restoration project began in 1997, with an initial investment of US $65,623. The palace contains important murals, painted by Morelian painter Alfredo Zalce (Gutiérrez, 1997c). In May of that year, INAH pledged US$8,300 towards the aqueduct’s rehabilitation (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997f). Two of the architects working on the project, Juan Cabrera Aceves and Catherine R. Ettinger, described the restoration project in technical detail in the paper (Cabrera Aceves and Ettinger, 1997). The first phase of the rehabilitation of the Conservatorio de las Rosas was commemorated in the paper with an explanation of Morelia’s baroque architectural influences (Mendoza Alcocer, 1997b).

By October 1997, 50 percent of the aqueduct had been rehabilitated, costing US$55,276. Some state officials had “adopted” twenty arches, along with six adopted by representatives of the federal government, while academics and staff of the local university had adopted five, and the municipal government four arches. The total cost was then estimated to be US$166,000, thus, there were still US$110,000 available to completion (García, 1997a). In total, the state government had invested US$1.11 million in heritage restoration projects in 1997, which funded sixty projects state-wide (no specific projects were mentioned) (Gutiérrez, 1997e). One project was to restore the statue of José María Morelos, which cost US$5,843 (García and Negrón, 1997).

During 1997, Morelia’s local government became very involved in ANCMPM, which was formed in 1996. Eight meetings were held. Much of the focus was exchange of information and the possibilities of garnering funding from institutions such as the IADB and the federal government (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1997, p. 13). That year, the mu-

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*Only the city’s sewage system received a greater monetary investment than the historic center.*
nicipal government carried out twenty-eight public works projects to foster preservation in the historic center, including work on the Cathedral, the aqueduct, and the Rosas and Columna churches. Morelos square and the statue to the independence hero were also rehabilitated, as were four fountains (1997, p. 32–36).

From 1998 onwards, SEDESOL promised municipalities more autonomy as public works were concerned. Any projects below the 100,000 peso threshold (about US$8,316), would no longer require approval above the municipal scale. The paper claimed that 80 percent of public works were within that expense category (Favela Geronimo, 1997b). In 1997, the state had undertaken fourteen monument restoration projects and executed the rehabilitation of eight more. No details were given where the buildings were located, nor what their given purpose was (Pérez Negrón, 1997b). And still, the new bus station had not been started, with lack of funding as well as location problems cited in the delay (Favela Geronimo, 1997a). The mayor confirmed the empty coffers in his second state of the municipality address (García, 1997b). And despite mayor Salvador López Orduña’s promises, Morelia’s street vendors had remained in the historic center in 1997. Morelia’s dire finances, including debts nearing US$4 million simply did not make large-scale projects feasible, even with emergency loans (García and Negrón, 1997).

The state government promised Morelia US$ 6,400,000 for public works during 1998 (Gutiérrez, 1998e). The federal government, through the “Cien Ciudades” program, promised a further US$2,800,000, which would be prioritized for projects in the historic center, such as the ongoing subterranean cabling (Gutiérrez, 1998a).

Work on the subterranean cabling continued, and was to be expanded to other cities in the state. In January 1998, the paper reported that the first stage, covering 44 city blocks, had cost nearly US$500,000, the second stage, covering a further 69 blocks had cost US$1,400,000, and the third stage, to be completed in 1999, would cover 90 blocks, at a cost of US$1,600,000 (Valdovinos Licea, 1998c).

In March 1998, Esperanza Ramírez Romero announced in the newspaper that the aqueduct restoration project was complete (Ramírez Romero, 1998a). She hailed it as a massive success for the city’s inhabitants, who took up the cause of aqueduct and answered the call for financial support. The final costs for the project were much lower than originally anticipated. According to current exchange rates, costs ran to US$77,000.
shows a slightly higher total, at US$88,508. This difference could be attributed to exchange rates, as well as some other minor touch-ups included in the total that the paper did not consider (Gutiérrez, 1998h). This success story was much lauded in the press (Flores Llamas, 1998).

But while the arches of the aqueduct had been restored, the scenic lighting still needed to be installed. This, it was estimated, would cost a further US$46,412, but would be worthwhile as it would extend the monument’s attractiveness (Cortez, 1998k). The paper revealed that the municipal government had spent US$197,870 on the restoration of the municipal palace from 1996 to 1998. Both the state and federal governments had provided US$16,586. Part of the restoration involved a comprehensive overhaul of the building’s electrical system (Cortez, 1998f).

By May 1998, the third phase of the subterranean cabling had been completed, costing US$1,400,000, paid for by the state government and CFE (Ultreras, 1998c). This phase covered 80 blocks, in the northern quadrant of the historic center. The state government had also committed, for the first time, to a restoration budget of US$829,140, destined for the rehabilitation of colonial buildings. In the first two years of the state administration, it had managed to restore 50 buildings, and for the remaining period, it aimed to restore 60 more—not only in Morelia, but in other cities and towns throughout the state (Gutiérrez, 1998c).

Decentralization of government offices was then well underway, too, with a total of twenty-five moving to the city’s outskirts to reduce traffic in the historic center (Gutiérrez, 1998g). More resources were also allocated to the cathedral’s rehabilitation, with the federal government providing half of US$82,914, with the rest split between the state and municipal government. A new modern lighting system was part of the project, too (Pérez Negrón, 1998). The federal government again stepped in with financial resources to help rehabilitate the Cuauthémoc forest, supporting the project with US$248,742 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998g). That is nearly double the amount listed in Table 5.5. Meanwhile, thefts were again affecting the public works initiatives, with electric cable worth nearly US$5,000 going missing (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998j). All of these federal funds came from the “Cien Ciudades” program (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998d).

To finance the relocation of the street vendors and the relocation of government of-
ices, the state and municipal governments established a fund worth US$828,000, with the federal government providing another US$414,000 (Osorio Altuzar, 1998).

INAH Michoacán launched another training course in the maintenance of historic buildings, with the aim of raising more awareness of what the restoration process entails (Valdovinos Licea, 1998b). Curiously, the paper only reported in July 1998 that INAH never completed replacing all the street name signs and in fact suspended the project in December 1997, despite nearly 90 percent of the signs (500) already being in place. Suddenly, when only 41 more plaques needed to be affixed, INAH decided the new signs (see Figure 5.22) might be damaging the façades. Each sign cost about US$8 and it had taken nearly two years to install (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998c). I can only speculate why the project was halted so late, a change in the project leadership may have prompted putting on the brakes, or perhaps the decision was based on INAH’s lack in funding, thus making it difficult for the organization to properly investigate whether or not the new signs posed a problem for façades.

The relocation of twenty-five governmental offices was to be completed by the end of 1998. Aside from relieving pressure on the historic center, the move would also mean lower rents and thus a savings in governmental expenses (Gutiérrez, 1998b). The plans for these relocations were presented at an ANCMPM and UNESCO forum in Mexico City to garner further financial support and to demonstrate that efforts to deal with the problems of the historic center were advancing (Cortez, 1998i). Street vendors, who agreed to relocate, were promised low interest loans from the private sector on their new stalls. Part of the relocation made it necessary to build a new facility for the street vendors, to house stalls and restrooms to accommodate vendors as well as consumers (Ultreras, 1998g). The public was informed via an exhibition of the plans and anecdotally, (100 visitors were interviewed), supported the efforts to “dignify” the historic center (Cortez, 1998l).

After the presentation of the plan in Mexico City, the then director of WHC reassured Morelianos that their city was nowhere near in danger of losing its World Heritage status. However, he emphasized the need for a solution to the street vendor problem. He suggested that UNESCO had about US$10,000,000 available to invest in preservation and conservation and thus might possibly support Morelia’s relocation plans. However, I am not aware that Morelia ended up receiving any international support (Ultreras, 1998i).
UNESCO was also very concerned that Mexico still lacked much education and awareness about natural as well as cultural heritage. Inter-institutional support for heritage was also found to be lacking (Ultreras, 1998e). Thus, Esperanza Ramírez Romero’s frequent and repeated contributions to the paper, with analysis of Morelia’s origin and why it merited inclusion in the World Heritage list, were important contributions to awareness raising (Ramírez Romero, 1998b).

In the fall of 1998, the federal government assumed the remaining costs of rehabilitation of the Municipal Palace, as well as many sidewalks in the historic center. However, funds were slow to arrive, forcing some projects to be postponed and pushed into the following year. No figures were given in this instance (Cortez, 1998n). There was also no money available to deal with the historic center’s antiquated drainage and sewer system, leading to inefficiencies and loss of drinking water (Cortez, 1998h).

CFE promised to invest a further US$1,500,000 into the fourth phase of the subterranean cabling. Other cities such as Pátzcuaro would also receive this type of investment, which was considered exemplary at the time (Valdovinos Licea, 1998d). The conclusion of restoration works on the Municipal Palace was reported on in November 1998. In total, the federal, state, and municipal governments had spent US$415,750 on the project, spanning 1996, 1997, and 1998 (Cortez, 1998j). Federal funding for the Cuauthémoc park restoration project was reiterated, totaling US$331,804, a final injection of cash via the “Cien Ciudades” program, which was rumored to be discontinued after 1998 (Valdovinos Licea, 1998e).

The 1998 municipal report, unlike Table 5.4 quoted the price for the Municipal Palace’s rehabilitation at roughly US$250,000, substantially more than the price tag cited in the table, US$208, 293 (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1998, p. 54). “Cien Ciudades” 5,154 square meters of sidewalks were replaced, but the report does not include the financial cost. Two church gardens in the historic center, San José and Nuestro Señor de la Columna, were rehabilitated, as was the kiosk in the Bosque Cuauthémoc (ibid., p. 54).

Yet, there were problems early on in 1999, when workers suspended their efforts in replacing sidewalks on Madero Avenue because the construction firm had not budgeted in their wages, despite receiving US$165,416 from the “Cien Ciudades” program (Cortez, 1999c). More than 200 light bulbs had to be replaced in the historic center in March 1999.
Costs for the new local government facilities in the suburb of Los Manantiales were projected to be US$2,800,000. A space for some of the street vendors opposite the government building was also promised, a captive audience of governmental workers promising to rely on the vendors for food and other services (Osorio, 1999b).

The fourth state of the state report confirms that the Palacio de Gobierno, as well as the Church of Santo Niño and San Agustín had been restored in Morelia—however, the nearly US$280,000 applied was used fourteen buildings, not just those three buildings (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1999b, p. 72). The municipal report highlighted the subterranean cabling, then in its fourth stage, costing the municipality nearly US$330,000. The contributions by the state and federal governments was not specified, but probably matched these funds (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1999a, p. 37). The historic center’s public lighting replacement cost US$405,000 and its further maintenance a further US$180,000 (ibid., p. 41). A further US$100,000 was invested in maintenance of plazas, gardens, the aqueduct, churches, and the Cuauthémoc forest (ibid., p. 43). The main achievement of course was the initial phase of the Plan Maestro and laying the groundwork for the Programa (ibid., p. 38).

The municipal government’s report from 2000 highlights the increased support for Comité de Planeación de Desarrollo Municipal (COPLADEMUN), the introduction of the Plan Maestro, and the collaboration between the University Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo and INAH to complete the city’s catalog of monuments (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2000, p. 31). With respect to the Plan Maestro, the construction of the new overland bus station had been achieved, as well as the opening of the new administrative unit, which diverted 10,000 people out of the historic center to the new office unit to conduct their business. The report further noted that the state government had relocated eighteen of its offices (with a total goal of twenty-four). 150,000 leaflets were distributed to citizens, to update them on the progress of the Plan Maestro as well as to solicit their comments, suggestions, and doubts about it (ibid., p. 33–34).

By 2001, Esperanza Ramirez, in her position as the president of the “Trusteeship for the Historic Center” was demanding more citizen participation and needed to raise more money for the restoration efforts, up to US$125,000 (Valdovinos Licea, 20010). The San
Juan and Capuchinas markets were operational in May 2001, just in time for the anniversary celebrations (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2001c) (see Figure 5.37). The NGOs working to help with the relocation recognized that mayor Salvador Galván Infante’s commitment to the project had been vital, insofar as he had continuously supported the Master Plan and its implementation (Valdovinos Licea, 2001). Building the new home for twelve government agencies came with a price-tag of US$1,700,000 (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2001a).

ANCMPM managed to procure more than US$1,130,000 from BANOBRAS for studies and projects, and US$1,090,000 from SECTUR for tourism promotion purposes—but all this money was to be divided between the nine World Heritage cities (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2001b, p. 25). Additionally, SECTUR gave Morelia US$650,000 for the rehabilitation of plazas, the archways, and sidewalks in the historic center. This amount was matched by the state government (ibid., p. 25).

Some of the street vendors would have to wait until the markets were fully functional, so the municipality paid each vendor who had to wait US$200 a month to help offset the relocation cost. Each stall would cost a vendor about US$2,000, to be paid off at a minimum monthly rate of US$33 (Ultereras, 2001a). In effect, each vendor would take out a mortgage on his stall. One of the great concerns had been to be able to leave their children with an inheritance—ideally owning the stall outright as soon as possible.

For the municipal government’s annual report, the removal of the street vendors in 2001 was the major achievement (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2001b, p. 27). Construction of the new markets (see Figure 5.37) cost US$3,700,000 (ibid., p. 28). The mayor acknowledged the participation of the state, the non-governmental sector, the street vendors, and the media to bring about the peaceful relocation of the vendors (ibid., p. 28).

As early as 2002, the municipal government hatched plans to transform the ex-central bus station into a new commercial hub (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2002, p. 103). This still remains in the planning stage, however. A large tri-partite investment represented the illumination of the Cathedral, with the municipal government and state Tourism Secretariat paying US$63,400 each, and SECTUR US$127,000 (ibid., p. 104). Two-thousand square meters of sidewalks were replaced, costing the municipality US$170,000 and the state government US$340,000 (ibid., p. 104). ANCMPM also had financed twenty signs
like Figure 5.15 and signs such as Figure 5.25 that are placed in green and public spaces to demarcate the monumental zone and announce the city’s World Heritage status. These pieces of urban furniture were introduced to “homogenize the urban furniture and make it consistent with the characteristics of the historic center” (2002, p. 105). The report further stated that private owners had invested in more than 100 remodeling and/or construction jobs in buildings in the historic center (ibid., p. 107).

Table 5.7 gives the breakdown of the Hábitat program’s contribution, as well as local and state matching. Again, the state’s contribution in this area is notably smaller than the federal and municipal monies.

Funds during 2005 were used in the rehabilitation of the Plaza Morelos, while 2006 funds were used on an inventory of the historic center’s heritage (about US$9,500), and US$60,862 on the Master Plan for the historic center. The remaining funds were used for the rehabilitation of the Plaza del Carmen and the Jardín de las Rosas. Many of these collaborative projects were advertised as such, as seen in Figure 5.26, in the Jardín de las Rosas.

In 2006, US$720,000 were allocated for upkeep, rehabilitation, and improvements in the Bosque Cuauhtémoc, but a total of US$2,500,000 was contemplated to be invested overall (Muñoz, 2006). Further investments were made in other gardens, such as the Jardín Villalongín, in which US$500,000 were invested, and Jardín Capuchinas, with a further US$340,000 (Lemus, 2007c). These large investments were not uncontroversial, with many Morelianos, including Esperanza Ramírez convinced that the gardens did not require such a huge intervention. The administration was frantically trying to finish the rehabilitation projects before handing over to the new administration in January 2008. Figure 5.27 shows the work in progress in the Jardín Capuchinas. Nevertheless, after twelve

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**Table 5.7: SEDESOL investment in Morelia, 2005–2007, in US$.**

(Source: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2007.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>386,244</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>386,244</td>
<td>772,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>489,466</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>461,334</td>
<td>950,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>170,414</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
<td>3,170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4,770,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.25: Monumental zone and World Heritage marker, June 2008.

(Photo by author)
months of working on improvements to the Bosque Cuauhtémoc, the project ran behind schedule, and the costs had reached US$1,100,000 (Lemus, 2007b). The other projects too were still not finished a week before Christmas 2007 (Lemus, 2007d).

In January 2008, the Palacio Clavijero (see Figure 5.28) was reopened as a cultural center, after US$258,375 was invested in its rehabilitation (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2008b). Another new cultural center was to be the abandoned cinema (see Figure 5.48), which had been acquired by the state government, and which the state intended to transform into a theater, in time for the 2010 national Independence day celebrations. US$2,800,000 were set aside for the rehabilitation of the building (Lemus, 2008b). The birth house of Morelos, Morelia’s independence hero, was also scheduled for restoration (David, 2008b).

Another source of federal funding was Programa de Apoyo a la Infraestructura Cul-
Figure 5.27: Jardín Capuchinas, November 2007.
(Photograph by author)

tural de los Estados (PAICE), which is part of FONCA. Each year, a different amount is available and each state can compete for the funds with proposals for rehabilitation that featured a clearly defined benefit to the local population. Up to US$2,100,000 can be awarded to a state. However, the projects have to fulfill certain criteria. Morelia’s Casa de Cultura planned to apply for PAICE funding during 2008, to finance and open-air auditorium. PAICE was first introduced in 1997, and placed under the auspices of FONCA in 2001 (David, 2008c).
5.5 Heritage in the media

Here, I draw on La Voz de Michoacán to highlight the debates surrounding heritage and preservation in the city, beginning in the late 1980s. One journalist, Yolanda Sereno Ayala in particular stands out, as she frequently wrote about Morelia’s built environment and the importance of its legacy.

In the run-up to Morelia’s World Heritage designation, Architect Manuel González Galván tirelessly campaigned for the city’s conservation, and was one of the major forces supporting the World Heritage application. He was gravely concerned that Morelia’s citizens and authorities did not have enough knowledge about patrimony nor understood the need for its preservation (Rendon Guillen, 1989c). He was not alone with this concern. The paper frequently featured stories on Morelia’s history and architecture, and explained what measures were being taken to foster conservation (Herrera Calderon, 1989; La Voz
de Michoacán Editorial, 1989a). The then-editor of La Voz decried the state of Morelia’s architecture in a public forum and blamed the city’s governments for turning a blind eye to the destruction of its architecture and avoidance in the face of growing numbers of street vendors (Malpica, 1989c; Sereno Ayala, 1989g).

The World Heritage application process was extensively covered in the paper, what it entailed, and which cities had already achieved the status (Alvarez Cordero, 1989; Rendon Guillen, 1989a). Various speakers, including historians, spoke about the non-renewable nature of built heritage, and their opinions were printed in the paper (Hincapié Alvarado, 1989; Sereno Ayala, 1989b). Of course, the city participated in the X International Symposium on the Conservation of Monuments at Oaxaca (Rendon Guillen, 1989b). The deterioration of the city was of great concern, especially in light of the World Heritage application, which would not be successful if UNESCO were to see the state of the monuments at that time, as well as the sprawling street market (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989m; Malpica, 1989b; Sereno Ayala, 1989a; Sereno Ayala, 1989i; Sereno Ayala, 1989j).

Of course, not only Morelia’s built heritage was suffering, but similar problems were affecting smaller towns and cities throughout Michoacán (Gonzalez Guerrero, 1989; Sereno Ayala, 1989h).

In its discussion of the World Heritage list, Spain was exalted as an example that Mexico and Michoacán should aspire to in its efforts to gain World Heritage sites. Again, the myth that financial help would arrive via UNESCO was perpetuated. Interestingly, the author suggested that Pátzcuaro should apply first, followed by Morelia, and eventually, natural sites that merit World Heritage designation (Sereno Ayala, 1989d). Further, there was the impression that UNESCO would directly intervene to save Morelia’s built heritage—that is not the case, as the nation state has to provide and finance the safeguarding of heritage (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989n). After President Salinas’ endorsement of Morelia’s World Heritage application in November 1989, the city’s mayor was quick to confirm its merit, but emphasized the public works needed to ensure preservation (Miranda Cortes, 1989b). Some commentators identified the need for “collective” conservation, in essence, that the World Heritage title was a means to an end, not the end (Martinez Peñaloza, 1989).

Art historian Esperanza Romero Ramírez led a course in the appreciation of Morelia’s architecture in December 1989 (Vargas, 1989a). This was the third such course in a series.
Already in 1989, various business associations, including CANACO, were suggesting that street vendors ought to have new facilities, near the city’s professional soccer stadium, or that perhaps a new overland bus station was necessary (Malpica, 1989a). Similarly, then-mayoral candidate, Salvador López Orduña, who served as mayor from 1996 to 1998, and again from 2005 to 2007, emphasized the potential of the old bus station as a primary commercial location (Sereno Ayala, 1989e). The state SECTUR secretary, Enrique Léon Zepeda, emphasized the need for visitors and residents to respect the city, and made clear that the Tourism secretariat would be intimately involved in attempts to remedy the historic center’s problems (Gonzalez, 1989a). Preservation efforts, as far as architect Galván was concerned, were still sorely lacking and even misdirected (Sereno Ayala, 1989f).

Coverage in the 1990s

To ring in 1990, Esperanza Ramírez published a series of articles discussing the merits of Morelia’s World Heritage application (Ramírez Romero, 1990a; Ramírez Romero, 1990b), while the state of the Cathedral was reported as dire, with humidity and air pollution causing much deterioration (Manuel Belmonte, 1990a). Others questioned whether the “chaotic” Morelia merited World Heritage status, when its officials had been reluctant for years to confront the street vendors and other associated problems (Odilón Juarez Tovar, 1990). An angry reader letter was published that argued the city was not World Heritage but heritage of the street vendors and their stalls (Escobedo Ruiz, 1990). To this writer, immediate government action was necessary to deal with the problem. To restore the Cathedral, however, citizen involvement would be necessary. Morelia’s World Heritage designation was a forgone conclusion for this author (Aviles, 1990).

A trust fund was formed in early January 1990 for the rehabilitation of the Calzada Fray Antonio de San Miguel, a road that leads to the Sanctuary of Guadalupe (see Figure 5.29), and the path the pilgrims to Virgin of Guadalupe traverse on their knees every November (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990g). The paper highlighted the Calzada as a major tourism attraction, and lauded the efforts of the trust to ensure its maintenance and rehabilitation (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990c).

The then new mayor, Samuel Maldonado Bautista, wanted to resolve the street vending
problem with the help of local business, suggesting their relocation in new markets as the preferred option (Ortiz Alcantara, 1990a). CANACO vowed to support the negotiations (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990z). It was estimated then that more than 1,500 street vendors were doing business in the historic center (Miranda Cortes, 1990b). Despite not issuing more licenses, in June 1990, estimates rose to 2,800 street vendors in the city at large (Miranda Cortes, 1990g).

The business of preservation strategies and heritage was a frequent topic, with special reports not uncommon, which aimed to explain how UNESCO worked, and the technical abilities needed for preservation and adaptation of built heritage (Isabel Martino, 1990). The paper also interviewed citizens and visitors when Michoacán’s teachers were
protesting in the historic center, with the interviewees expressing their displeasure with the protesters (Miranda Cortes, 1990h). Mayor Samuel Maldonado Bautista argued that his administration had inherited Morelia “destroyed” due to lack of financial prudence in previous administrations and general neglect from the 1960s onward. His administration was now in the midst of reconstructing the city (Miranda Cortes, 1990j). The tourism secretary also advocated for more awareness raising as far as preservation of the historic center was concerned, the beauty and the worth of the historic center, ought to be self-evident (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990m).

There was much criticism of the administration, especially in light of the World Heritage application, which would, so it was erroneously expressed by a local politician, bring money directly from UNESCO to preserve the city—but to do so, the mayor needed to do much more work to prepare the city, and especially attend to the state of the city’s roads (Miranda Cortes, 1990d).

Planning for the 450th anniversary of the city began exactly one year in advance, to accommodate a great number of events, presentations, and commemorative acts (Miranda Cortes, 1990a). Morelia’s architectural legacy was lauded during the 449th anniversary celebrations (Lopez Guido, 1990; Sereno Ayala, 1990c). Aside from numerous events, the 450th anniversary also aimed to produce a catalog of Morelia’s architecture (Miranda Cortes, 1990i).

For the summer of 1990, the municipal tourism council planned a series of guided tours to help Morelianos learn about their city’s architecture and history. Two special buses would be used and the cost for each participant was about US$0.50 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991t). The program began in July and companies and schools were encouraged to take advantage of the tours. These covered the historic center and its most recognizable, iconic buildings, as well as the zoo, and were scheduled to last three hours (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990ac).

Due to the precarious finances of the municipal government, calls for self-help and citizens paying for road re-pavement directly appeared in the paper. It was alleged that the municipality had not repaved a road in four years. The mayor was offering to share costs fifty-fifty if neighbors agreed to pay the other half. Not much, it seemed had changed since citizens had paid for private sewage in the nineteenth century. To ensure the city’s beauty
for the 450th anniversary, citizens should not wait for “Papá government” to fix everything (Reza Heredia, 1990).

While the street vendor problem certainly was nothing new, the active public search for solutions was. The phenomenon was discussed and analyzed in the paper, and various suggestions to tackle the problem were floated, from in-depth studies to assess the socio-economic realities of the vendors, to a plebiscite or forum involving the vendors and citizens to find a solution. Without a solution, the author argued, it would be difficult for UNESCO to include Morelia in the list (Enzastiga, 1990a; Enzastiga, 1990b). The municipal government convened a forum to analyze the issues and receive feedback from all walks of life (Ortiz Alcantara, 1990c). The outcome or any conclusions, however, were not reported on. Aside from the street vendor problem, Morelia wrestled with traffic issues, such as trying to restrict delivery times for heavy trucks, which only further aggravated traffic congestion (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990w). While the problems were publicly discussed, solutions were hard to come by.

In the course of 1990, in anticipation of the 450th anniversary, the state government pledged to support a City Museum of Morelia to document and preserve the city’s history (Miranda Cortes, 1990c; Sereno Ayala, 1990b). Nevertheless, the mayor called for the federal and state governments to provide the financial support to improve the city’s roads and ensure the rehabilitation of the Cathedral, and guarantee the success of the World Heritage application (Miranda Cortes, 1990f). Meanwhile, the state tourism secretary, Enrique Léon Zepeda, expressed confidence in the efforts that were made to ensure the success of the application. The article went on to explain how the application form was organized and which organizations were involved in the application (Manuel Belmonte, 1990c). Criticism of the state of the city’s roads continued to be published (Juarez Tovar, 1990).

The state of the historic center was a frequent topic in the media. The paper reported on a journalist’s talk about Morelia’s historic center, which highlighted the problem of theft of patrimony, such as the disappearance of items from the Cathedral, and denounced previous governments who kept the aqueduct buried in cement (Flores Rodriguez, 1990). Patrimony theft remains a problem Mexico-wide.

Relations between the federal INAH and the state government were also reported on.
At the time, the national library of INAH and DEH, which is also based in the capital, were reclassifying and reorganizing the archive of Michoacán's bishopric. The meeting between the federal and state officials was also meant to discuss the major obstacles in the compliance of INAH's duties as stipulated in the Ley Federal (Cabrera Cruz, 1990).

Mention of Morelia’s impending World Heritage inscription was made in December 1990, when the paper reported that the application had reached UNESCO's WHC and was already under review. Assurances and measures would need to be taken to ensure the historic center’s protection. President Salinas de Gortari was only days away from designating Morelia a national monumental zone (Lopez Martinez, 1990f). On 16 December, 1990, the paper announced that both Morelia and Pátzcuaro had been declared historic patrimony of Mexico (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990p). This declaration prompted an editorial by the paper, to reflect upon how important the protection of monuments was (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990v).

The presidential decree designating Morelia and Pátzcuaro as monumental zones was published on 19 December, 1990. Erroneously, the paper declared both Morelia and Pátzcuaro World Heritage—a year before Morelia was actually designated, and Pátzcuaro has never gone beyond the tentative list stage (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990af). How might such an error occur? Most likely, prior reporting about the World Heritage application might have been conflated into the national designation, which could have easily happened, as Morelia pursued the national status as a precursor to the international inscription. It was not the only error in reporting on World Heritage, but perhaps one of the larger ones. In April 1991 the paper again assumed the city’s inclusion on the list as a forgone conclusion (Vargas, 1991d).

Once the national monumental zone was announced, the paper published a gushing tribute to the city’s iconic architecture—while relegating Pátzcuaro’s inscription to one sentence at the end of a three-page feature (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990o). Soon after, however, the state of the historic center was once again center stage, with a local architect Manuel González Galván lamenting the image and degradation of historic center. He noted that other cities, already declared as World Heritage, such as Oaxaca and Guanajuato were much better preserved and did not have problems with graffiti or street vendors. At a distance, once again, Guanajuato and Oaxaca appeared exemplary to this Morelian
architect. Galván also made a significant distinction between the federal declaration and the impending UNESCO designation: “the federal declaration is one of responsibility and action and World Heritage is one of honor” (Sereno Ayala, 1991m, p. 8-B). Thus, unlike Salvador Díaz Berrio, Galván viewed UNESCO as a seal of international approval, but not an instrument of preservation.

A symposium about the city’s history in the context of the 450th anniversary festivities was announced in January 1991. National as well as international researchers were invited to participate in the event, which took place in March (Sereno Ayala, 1991b; Sereno Ayala, 1991s). Commentators urged the governor to intervene in Morelia’s serious traffic problems, to “follow through on the excellent proposals that are gathering dust in offices,” instead of shying away from difficult and potentially unpopular decisions (Odilón Juarez Tovar, 1991, p. 17-A). Local academics were also going to lead guided tours in the historic center, discussing the most iconic and relevant buildings (Vargas, 1991e). The number of events surrounding the 450th anniversary were staggering. The paper also explained the size of the declared area (3.43 square kilometers), which streets were included in the area, and what the declaration means in terms of construction and public works (Rendon Guillen, 1991b). Art Historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero also published in the paper, describing the state of the historic center’s architecture. For instance, she counted 567 buildings in the category of modern architecture in the historic center, which interrupt the urban landscape. One major example is of course the Hotel Alameda (see Figure 5.7). For Ramírez Romero, the challenge was to create new buildings that were sympathetic to the architectural fabric of Morelia, which, at that time, in her mind, had not been achieved (Ramírez Romero, 1991).

In March 1991, the city began a crackdown on advertising affixed on lamp posts, electricity posts, and trees. Sixty-five signs, deemed to have been arbitrarily installed, were removed. The municipal government decided not to give out any new licenses for commercial signs, effectively banning this type of advertising from the historic center. How effective this stringent measure was is hard to discern, and most likely, if enforced at all, only in the run-up to the 450th anniversary celebrations in May (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991r). Advertisements were removed again in April, and fines issued where advertisers could be identified (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991ab).
A further symposium on patrimony, organized by the Mexican ICOMOS chapter, as well as the San Nicolás architecture faculty, and the state government, was announced as part of the 450th anniversary celebration activities of that year. The meetings were to be held in Morelia and Pátzcuaro, with the potential outcome to try and obtain World Heritage designation for Pátzcuaro—even though Morelia’s inscription still had not been officially announced (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991v). The paper continued to lament the state of the historic center, the closer the anniversary date, the louder its clamor (Morales Garcia, 1991). The city’s history, traditions, its public spaces, and its iconic architecture were repeatedly described in the run-up to the foundation anniversary date, 18 May, 1991 (Manuel Belmonte, 1991c; Sereno Ayala, 1991g; Villanueva Mota, 1991). For the newspaper, it was seen as a civic duty to supply as much information about the city’s history and legacy as possible, this was its main contribution to the festivities. A commemorative magazine to mark the anniversary, highlighting its people, personalities, neighborhoods, and legends was also published (Sereno Ayala, 1991p).

The city’s historian throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s was Xavier Tavera Alfaro. He frequently appeared in the media and contributed to various papers. He strongly supported the idea of a City Museum, first floated in 1990, and argued that with Morelia’s national monument designation, the timing was right. The museum would provide a space for artifacts from Morelia’s history and serve as a reminder to help preserve the city (Tavera Alfaro, 1991).

Criticism of INAH and SEDUE, as well as the local authorities, persisted, as pieces of religious patrimony kept disappearing or were not repaired adequately, despite having the appropriate permits for restoration. There seemed to be little or no coordination between governmental organizations of all three levels (Sereno Ayala, 1991f).

In May 1991, the newspaper updated the public on where things stood with Morelia’s World Heritage application. It reported that UNESCO had asked for a transitional zone as a sort of buffer between the historic center and more modern neighborhoods, though CONALMEX estimated that Morelia’s inscription would be announced in December of that year (Ortiz Alcantara, 1991b). The governor, too, expressed confidence months ahead of the designation (Estrada Chavez, 1991a). While the 2001 Partial Plan includes a transitional zone, ultimately, the application file does not confirm it was actually an requirement.
On 18 May, as well as several days before and after, the paper published more homages to the city, its history, and foundation (Belmonte, 1991b; Zavala Paz, 1991). It also called for society to take responsibility for the conservation and defense of the historic center (Estrada Chavez, 1991b; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991z; Ortiz Alcantara, 1991a). Yet another rallying cry to save Morelia was repeatedly proclaimed. Above all, more awareness raising was demanded, to help gain citizen support for preservation (Vargas, 1991b).

The paper continued to feature stories related to Morelia’s built environment and architectural heritage, for instance, Plaza Valladolid, which had served the city as a market until 1967 (Sereno Ayala, 1991t), the Plaza de Armas (Sereno Ayala, 1991j) and various monumental buildings including the Palacios de Gobierno and Justicia (Sereno Ayala, 1991k; Sereno Ayala, 1991o; Sereno Ayala, 1991v). By 1991, with the street vendors, of course it had been transformed again into a market (see Figure 5.36).

The regional INAH Office, with students from the Architecture department of San Nicolás, embarked on a survey of Morelia’s historic buildings and commercial advertisements in August 1991 (Sereno Ayala, 1991i). The INAH office, in conjunction with the municipal and state government also sponsored a “Prize for Historical Research about the City of Morelia” (Sereno Ayala, 1991c). In Mexico’s President Carlos Salinas de Gotari, patrimony found a champion. He supported the restructuring of eighty historic centers in the country, calling upon the public, private, and NGO sectors to support these efforts (ibid.).

Regional conservation and heritage also made the headlines, when cultural ministers from Latin America met to discuss options for preservation, exchanged experiences in management of heritage and suggested to UNESCO that the Convention was in need of an overhaul, based on the experiences over the previous two decades, and that the Heritage Fund become more accessible (Notimex Editorial, 1991c). Nationally, INAH was also contemplating an overhaul to its Ley Federal, but no concrete changes were outlined (Notimex Editorial, 1991a).

Ahead of the Independence day celebrations, more street vendors pushed into the Plaza de los Mártires, around the Cathedral to stake their claim of a spot to sell their wares during the holiday rush. The paper claimed that Morelia was the only city that allowed this sort of thing to happen in its main square (Hernandez Gochi, 1991d). Monuments, gar-
dens, and squares were cleaned ahead of the processions (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991b). Local high school and university students participated in the cleanup brigades, to foster their patrimony awareness (Sereno Ayala, 1991e). Clearly a cost-saving measure, too.

In October 1991, days before ICOMOS’ international symposium on conservation in Morelia, the then president of ICOMOS Mexico, Carlos Flores Marini, announced that Morelia’s World Heritage designation was a certainty, and would be officially announced in December. Furthermore, he revealed that Mexico would then put Zacatecas and Tlacotalpan forward as the country’s next city applicants for World Heritage designation (Notimex Editorial, 1991b). The paper further reported that during the symposium, experts would call on UNESCO to also designate Pátzcuaro as World Heritage. The paper argued that since Pátzcuaro had also been nominated as a national monument zone, it already fulfilled UNESCO’s prerequisites. Without a formal application to UNESCO, of course, achieving this designation simply via publicity was impossible (Manuel Belmonte, 1991d).

With great fanfare and high expectations, Flores Marini inaugurated the ICOMOS symposium (Cabrera Cruz, 1991e). The symposium promised to yield specific suggestions and measures for the preservation of Morelia and Pátzcuaro (Cabrera Cruz, 1991a). In this context, the paper explained ICOMOS’ role in the nomination of Morelia, specifically the role of the Michoacán branch of ICOMOS Mexico, which was founded in 1987 (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991g). The symposium ended, as usual, with a call for improved legislation and more support for maintenance of monuments. As regarded Morelia specifically, a call was made to investigate where, when, and how the aplanados could be put back on buildings again (Cabrera Cruz, 1991c).

The need for new heritage legislation was raised in the paper following the symposium. Specifically, experts cited the need to be able to regulate the street vendors and their location in the historic center (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991e). Similarly, city officials were searching for land to locate the new bus station, but simultaneously authorized repairs and improvements to the existing station (Hernandez Gochi, 1991f).

Only a month after the ICOMOS symposium, the “National Meeting of Medium-Sized cities” took place in Morelia. Meant as an exchange of experiences of growing Mexican cities, and a space for all sectors of society to discuss what type of city would be desir-
able, Morelia’s impending *World Heritage* designation was also a major point of discussion (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1991j). The number of events surrounding urban questions and heritage seemed interminable in 1991. Not surprisingly, Morelia’s mayor concluded that cities had grown without any attempts at planning for or accommodating growth (Cabrera Cruz, 1991b). With an annual growth rate of 3.3 percent, the medium-sized cities were growing much faster than big cities at 2.1 percent and small cities, with less than 10,000 inhabitants, at 1.9 percent. Medium-sized cities were defined as having between 10,000 and 1 million inhabitants—quite a generous size range (Enzastiga, 1991). The potential relocation of the central bus station was yet again floated at the meeting, with the newspaper further demanding a ban on street vending in the city’s main archways (Sereno Ayala, 1991r).

In the run-up to the *World Heritage* designation, an editorial demanded that not only residents but visitors become involved in the preservation of Morelia, that protecting Morelia was a moral obligation of humanity (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1991ac). The paper described Morelia as converted into a permanent open-air market, thanks to the street vendors setting up stalls, tables, and tarpaulins (Hernandez Gochi, 1991c).

The announcement of the designation could not come soon enough for the media. On 18 December, the paper still could not officially announce the designation, citing that the state government was still expecting official confirmation from UNESCO (Manuel Belmonte, 1991f). The next day, governor Genovevo Figueroa Zamudio confirmed he had not received official notification yet. Regardless of the timing, the governor saw the designation as an obligation for all Morelianos to champion the preservation of the city, its culture, and traditions. Despite voicing his support for all sorts of measures to help protect the historic center, such as legislation to control protests and street vending, he stated that the solutions had to come from the municipal government (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1991w). A few days later, there was still no official word from UNESCO. Still, the local CANACO chapter decided to put forth another relocation option for the street vendors, by suggesting to move them to the state fair ground, on the north-side of Morelia (Belmonte, 1991a), as an alternative to the central bus station. This would require subdividing the fair buildings into small stalls, with the potential of creating 2,000 stalls (*ibid.*). The state fair’s director was not opposed to the idea, but deflected the responsibility in terms
of the decision to the state government and congress (Hernandez Gochi, 1992b).

Finally, on 28 December 1991, the paper could officially report that Morelia had been selected for the World Heritage list. The article made clear that the designation did not mean that “money from UNESCO would rain onto Morelia,” as many people seemed to believe. Instead, the city and the country would have to take greater measures to protect Morelia. Within days of the official notification, three historic buildings had nearly collapsed (Sereno Ayala, 1991l). A brief survey of residents showed that there a lot of confusion about the designation and its actual meaning, and which institutions were actually in charge (Hernandez Gochi, 1991e). Thus, despite the media onslaught throughout the year, the meaning of World Heritage had not been that well communicated to the public. The paper demanded a survey of the street vendors, strict legislation for the historic center, and a superstructure to unite all three levels of government and the public and private sector in their efforts to project Morelia LaVoz1991dj. Designation had been achieved and this was recognized, but the problems dogging Morelia’s historic center persisted.

The year 1992 did not start out well for Morelia’s built heritage. With renewed teacher protests, walls in the historic center were victimized with graffiti (Hernandez Gochi, 1992c). Nevertheless, a festive act, in the presence of national politicians, was planned to officially receive UNESCO’s declaration of Morelia as World Heritage (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1992e; Lopez Martinez, 1992c). The paper suggested that the mayor was not intending to participate in the ceremony, because he had not received an invitation and he felt that the state and federal entities had “appropriated” the achievement—credit-seeking behavior on all parts, it seems, on the eve of the celebration (Lopez Martinez, 1992a). In the end, it was only posturing on the part of the mayor. The governor and the mayor received copies of the declaration from Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, secretary of SEP, the Ministry of Education. Erroneously, the paper stated that UNESCO would provide financial help for preservation. While this might be the case in an emergency, it is not a given upon World Heritage designation (Lopez Martinez, 1992b). Here again the opportunity was raised for all three levels of government to work together more effectively to protect Morelia (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1992b).

Reactions by local residents were positive, but many felt that the government needed to address the street vendor problem to fully ensure Morelia’s preservation (Hernandez
Gochi, 1992a). The paper made clear that the street vendors themselves had to become convinced that moving out of the historic center was not for the sake of the Morelianos but for the sake of the historic center (Manuel Belmonte, 1992).

INAH initiated a course on the history, deterioration and conservation of Morelia’s monumental buildings in 1993, open to the public, featuring talks by various local experts (Sereno Ayala, 1993b). The course met weekly and lasted three months, with 60 participants attending the first session (Sereno Ayala, 1993c). The paper, too, carried on with publishing articles about Morelia’s colonial architecture (Sereno Ayala, 1993k). In a “Get to know Morelia” series, the paper featured the Jardín de las Rosas, the San Diego Temple, the Templo de las Monjas, Jardín Villalongin, as well as the Plaza de Armas (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993c; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993d; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993e; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993f; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993g).

Negotiations with the street vendors brought intermediate, but not lasting successes. In May 1993, 150 vendors agreed to remove their stalls from Plaza Valladolid, though the paper was not clear on whether this was a permanent move, or only done for the anniversary celebrations (Hernández Granados, 1993b; Malpica, 1993). Indeed, only half of the vendors actually moved, and in the end, all of them moved back to their old spots (Hernández Granados, 1993c). What went wrong? It seems the mayor did not negotiate with all the different vendor unions on an equal footing and the alternatives presented were simply not workable—yet. The unions complained about the media interfering (Sanchez Rincon, 1993d). The mayor promised a solution within 90 days; wishful thinking, clearly (Valdovinos Licea, 1993c). The Archbishop of Morelia also weighed in on the debate, urging that the interests of the city to be put before all else, beginning with a study to determine how to solve the street vendor problem (Sanchez Rincon, 1993b). National CANACO leaders, meanwhile, were dismayed and blamed the municipal and state governments for not wanting to resolve the problem due to lack of “political will” (Gutierrez Rocha, 1993).

For 1993’s anniversary celebrations, the city unveiled its commemorative World Heritage plaque on the square on the Cathedral’s westerly side (Valdovinos Licea, 1993b) (see Figure 5.30). It is nearly unmissable, within steps of a tourist information booth. Architect Salvador Díaz Berrio, who then worked for CONALMEX, gave a talk about the World Her-
Figure 5.30: Morelia’s World Heritage commemoration, October 2005.
(Photo by author)

itage nomination process, and revealed that Pátzcuaro was among other Mexican sites that was being studied as a potential World Heritage nomination candidate (Valdivinos Licea, 1993a).

Interestingly, the then mayor of Morelia, Sergio Magaña Martínez viewed the relocation of street vendors as crucial to make Morelia a “city museum” — a term which usually signifies for experts that the city is actually not functioning as a city should, but instead, has become a museum and thus static or limited in its activity (Sanchez Rincon, 1993m). The paper does not question the meaning of this term. In June 1993, the municipal government organized a cleanup of building walls in the historic, which had been plastered over with posters and advertisements, a common problem at the time and in contravention of the 1956 law (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993o).

The University’s Architecture school also became involved in preservation in 1993, by conducting an in-depth study of the city’s plazas and their origin and evolution, assisting
with technical data on the aqueduct, and, perhaps most importantly, seeking to establish a Master’s degree in Restoration (Sanchez, 1993e). Meanwhile, the city’s historian, Javier Tavera Alfaro, demanded that a firm hand be applied to those who violated the city’s built heritage (Gutiérrez Rocha, 1993).

In order to encourage private owners to treat their historic buildings kindly, the city council gave each home owner an accredited title and information about historic monuments, and an explanation as to why Morelia was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site (Sanchez Rincon, 1993j). This campaign was in conjunction with another that meant to educate Morelia’s citizens to help keep the city clean and orderly (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993a). Roads all over Morelia, including the historic center, were repaved in 1993. Virrey de Mendoza and Vasco de Quiroga are two parallel roads in the historic center, commencing at Avenue Madero, then running south, were repaired (Sanchez Rincon, 1993c). The costs were estimated at US$6.1 million (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993p).

The paper began another series on heritage in August 1993, with the author pronouncing the 1956 regulation to protect the city center was ignored and not executed. For instance, the Conservation Board, should be composed of five members, with a further twenty-five representatives who had the right to speak up during meetings—however, in reality, there were only three members on the board, who seemed to agree with any construction permit applications, regardless of the project (Sereno Ayala, 1993j). In the next installment of the series, the author decried various types of violations against the 1956 regulations, including deliberate obsolescence to use the newly vacant lots for parking. Interestingly, the article points to other colonial cities such as Guanajuato as examples in “good taste” where buildings are used for commercial purposes (Sereno Ayala, 1993e). In the following article, the author criticized the sanctions for modifications on heritage buildings as not tough enough, nor were they enforced usefully (Sereno Ayala, 1993g). Members of INAH warned about the further deterioration of the aqueduct (Sanchez, 1993c).

Another heritage-related meeting was held in August 1993 in Morelia, a meeting of Mexican colonial cities to improve the “urban image of touristic cities with historic patrimony” (Sanchez Rincon, 1993g). Not surprisingly, the participants determined that the street vendors, contamination, explosive population growth, and uncontrolled construc-
tion were (Sanchez Rincon, 1993a). Other cities, such as San Luis Potosí and Puebla, already were finding ways and means of relocating its street vendors, and Oaxaca claimed to have entered into dialogue with its street vendors (Sanchez Rincon, 1993l). The consensus was that Morelia needed to address the problem urgently. At the meeting, continued funding for the colonial cities from the three levels of government and the private sector was promised. By the end of the year, nearly US$500,000 was targeted to be available, though how exactly the cities could draw on the fund was not explained (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993m). The paper also provided some insights into the history of the street vendors in Morelia, what previous mayors had done to “reign” them in, but how no comprehensive solution had yet been sought or pursued (Lopez Martinez, 1993b). There were at least seven different street vendor unions, which also had allegiances to various parties. Apart from using the old bus station, proposals suggested using abandoned and uninhabited buildings in the historic center, of which the paper estimated existed 266, at the time. However, this was seen as too complicated and too expensive to achieve (Martinez Delgado, 1993a).

How important is the historic center to protesters? By August 1993, 170 generally peaceful sit-ins, “plantones” had occurred in front of the Palacio de Gobierno, with 70 percent closing off Madero Avenue for some amount of time (Martinez Elorriaga, 1993). Many of the sit-ins were carried out by opposition parties as well as teachers and unions. Keeping disturbances of thoroughfares and public spaces to a minimum, yet allowing for protest—a never-ending conundrum for authorities.

The restoration of former Carmen convent, begun in the late 1970s, had concluded by 1993 and the building turned into the Casa de la Cultura (Sanchez, 1993d). Later that year, Morelia joined the OWHC (Martinez Delgado, 1993b). The governor highlighted repairs on the Cathedral in his first year state of the state report (Chávez Hernández, 1993a). Officials assured the paper that the governor and his administration were very interested in conservation (Hernandez Granados, 1993a).

In the continuous efforts to rid Morelia’s walls of graffiti and paint, a Swedish firm demonstrated its product on the Palacio de Gobierno, of course with the authorization through INAH and the public works department (Martinez Delgado, 1993c). In November 1993, INAH then was expected to decide whether or not the Swedish product would be
used throughout the city (Valdovinos Licea, 1993d).

As early as October 1993, INAH’s then director denied knowledge of the plans to create underground parking space in Morelia’s historic center, even though the municipal government had announced such plans days earlier (Valdovinos Licea, 1993e). Strangely, that proposal and reference to it then seemed to disappear again. The INAH director lamented the continued degradation of the historic center and highlighted that the Federal Law was not being enforced, certainly not in the areas of fines and potential jail time for those painting slogans on buildings in the historic center, not even property owners, including the government had launched any prosecutions (Lopez Martinez, 1993a). Whether this had occurred because the phenomenon was so wide-spread, or because the perception was that attempts would be unsuccessful was unclear.

The calls to address the street vendor problem seemed almost endless, but only one writer suggested returning the World Heritage honors should no action be taken (Mejia Gonzalez, 1993a). While the honor of being World Heritage was shared, no one seemed to want to take responsibility for the buildings and the center. The writer pointed out that since 1956 and until 1980, 17 cataloged buildings had been lost (Mejia Gonzalez, 1993b). But the street vendors did not take criticism of their vocation lying down, in fact, with a concerted cleaning effort of Avenue Madero and walls of historic buildings, they wanted to show that they too were concerned about Morelia. Further to these sorts of interventions, they also expressed interest in working on other projects to help improve the city’s image (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993b).

The publication of heritage-related books written by Morelian authors also routinely figured in the paper. Manuel González Galván, a prominent architect and defender of the city’s built heritage, published Morelia, Ayer y Hoy in December 1993 (Sereno Ayala, 1993b; Sereno Ayala, 1993f). The year closed with further funds of US$245,000 to repair more of the historic center’s roads (Valdovinos Licea, 1993g).

Esperanza Ramírez became the director of the Michoacán INAH office in January 1995. Her arrival raised high expectations (Sereno Ayala, 1995i). Her plans for the agency were ambitious; she stated that the focus needed to be on updating the catalogs of cultural goods and conservation laws (Ramírez Romero, 1995b; Sereno Ayala, 1995b). Another Trusteeship, to save the Church of San José, was formed early in 1995. It planned to raise
money through raffles and cultural events (Sereno Ayala, 1995e). The Master’s Program in Restoration formally began receiving students in March 1995 (Ramírez Romero, 1995c).

Then-mayor Fausto Vallejo Figueroa expressed his commitment to “dignifying” Morelia. While the projects might have been smaller in scale, the effort was still noticeable, he argued (Estrada Chavez, 1995b; Sereno Ayala, 1995f). One such project were cleaning brigades sent into the historic center. Fausto Vallejo is another example of serving as mayor multiple times, first from 1994 to 1995, in a caretaker position, stepping in for the former mayor wanting to run for another political position, then again from 2002 to 2004, and 2008 to 2011. Morelia’s challenges in preservation appeared again in the paper, made more timely with the anniversary in view (Martinez Ayala and Arroyo, 1995). During Morelia’s anniversary celebrations, the completion of the first stage of the subterranean cabling was particularly highlighted (Hernandez Granados, 1995f; Hernandez Granados, 1995g).

The economic crisis, so it seemed, also glutted the real estate market, with the paper reporting at least seventy buildings for sale or for rent (Ultreras, 1995e). Much hope was also placed in the private initiative, which entered into talks with the municipality, discussing the street vendor issue and possible investment opportunities for business (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995d). INAH, meanwhile, launched an exhibit of its restoration projects in progress (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995b). The paper estimated that in 1995, there were up to 3,800 street vendors, if all different types of street vending were added up, but it also acknowledged the city’s other problems (Sereno Ayala, 1995a). First mention is made here of using the bus station as the new location for the vendors (Sereno Ayala, 1995j). All this emerged at the INAH organized event “El Centro Histórico de Morelia: Un Espacio en Pugna” (Morelia’s historic center, a contested space), where the difficult economic circumstances nationally, state-wide, and locally, had contributed to the proliferation of street vending and thus more difficulties for preservation. Five proposals emerged, to launch various initiatives to promote professionalization in preservation, to raise awareness about the importance of the historic center to residents, visitors, and property owners, improve inter-institutional coordination, improved planning measures for the historic center (Castilleja Garcia, 1995). What came of these proposals for improvement is difficult to ascertain, but considering the street vendor problem persisted for years beyond this particular forum is perhaps an indicator that many good ideas seemed to con-
sitionally fall by the wayside.

Political advertising during campaigns is also controversial and typically, the historical areas are meant to remain free of this type of advertising. Promises to that effect were made in advance of the mayoral campaign (Hernandez Granados, 1995d). Figure 5.31 is an example of this type of political canvassing. During the campaign, the municipality undertook advertisement removal actions in the historic center (Ultreras, 1995g).

The revision of the Morelia’s Urban Development Plan was presented to the public in September 1995. This document ultimately became the Urban Development Plan 1998–2015, intended to contain Morelia’s disorderly growth. A Mexico City based company developed this plan. The public was asked to give its opinions at public fora (Ultreras, 1995a).
Mexico’s Independence day celebrations prompted more features on the history of Morelia’s historic center, its architecture, monuments, urban grid, the history of preservation legislation in Mexico and Michoacán, how Morelia had gained World Heritage status, and preservation challenges. All authors highlighted World Heritage list designation as a crucial opportunity for Morelia’s preservation (González Galván, 1995; Loaiza Nuñez, 1995; Martinez Peñaloza, 1995; Molina García, 1995; Sanchez Reyna, 1995; Silva Mandujano, 1995), and two mentioned the possibility of losing the designated status due to neglect. Then INAH director Esperanza Ramírez had to admit that sponsorship would be necessary to finance restoration projects, with many buildings in dire need of rehabilitation (Ultreras, 1995c).

In October 1995, the municipal government announced that street vendors with stalls in San Francisco square would have to move to the far side of the square and take down their stalls each evening, instead of leaving them installed. However, one of the street vendor unions opposed the plan (Ultreras, 1995d). This plan proved unworkable and unenforceable.

With the establishment of IMDUM in 1995, new plans for heritage conservation were drawn up by the organization as well as other experts, and then presented to the public. The newspaper, however, seemed rather unsure of details and thus leery of the project (Ultreras, 1995b). La Voz also did not shy away from criticism of INAH. The paper heavily criticized business owners who ignored the signage regulations, aimed to maintain a unified look to the city’s architecture, citing federal laws, and chiding INAH for not sending inspectors to enforce regulation (Sereno Ayala, 1995k). This was described as “visual contamination” (Sereno Ayala, 1995g). Of course, INAH simply does not have the monetary or human resources to do these sorts of inspections on a regular basis. The article suggested that the municipal government simply withdraw the operation permits for businesses with signs not up to code, but surely, that is easier said than done. The regulations call for small rectangular signs that fit on entry ways, or rounded signs in archways. Signs should be made of wood, iron, sheet painted metal, molten metal, and acrylic plates with non luminous letters. Neon lights are forbidden (Ultreras, 1996c). Above all, the signs should be “discreet, simple, and not compete with the general image of the building” (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1995b, p. 5). Figure 5.32 shows a business in the historic center with
a typical sign, which does not conform to the stipulated norms, as well as a plethora of electrical and telephony cables that still are common and visible. Figure 5.33 shows two businesses on Madero Avenue which do comply with the regulation. Location does seem to matter, as the businesses in Figure 5.33 are located on Morelia’s main thoroughfare, and the Sherwin Williams shop in Figure 5.32 is on a smaller side street. Arguably, it is easier to get away with non-compliance at a more removed location.

But there wasn’t only criticism. The paper celebrated the publication of the book, “Morelia, Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad” in 1995 with feature-length, glowing reviews and content summaries (Figueroa Zamudio, 1995; Galvan Infante, 1995). However, one of the authors of the articles, Silvia Figueroa Zamudio, also was the editor of the book—the paper providing a bit of free advertising.

In January 1996, the paper published parts of the new regulations that were to affect conservation and construction in the historic center, the *Reglamento de conservación...*
de la Zona de Monumentos Históricos de Morelia, which had been approved by the local authority in December 1995 (Sereno Ayala, 1996e; Sereno Ayala, 1996l). While the author correctly stated that Morelia had not had new conservation legislation since 1956, the state of Michoacán had enacted, in 1974, a law that cataloged and protected the state's patrimony—which of course includes Morelia (1996e). Whether or not mention of this law was omitted for the sake of brevity, I can only speculate. Perhaps the constraint was also the complexity of the subject. The paper published selected articles of the law, initially, without any commentary (Sereno Ayala, 1996g; Sereno Ayala, 1996k; Sereno Ayala, 1996m). The following day more of the legal articles were published, with the exhortation that “government and citizenry need to take care of it, since it is to be the legacy of future generations” (Sereno Ayala, 1996a). Little commentary was included in these articles, the focus was the main points of the legislation (Sereno Ayala, 1996c).

In the next installment of the publication of parts of the legislation, the paper focused
on the ban on building subterranean parking under squares. In 1994, plans had been hatched to build underground parking underneath the ex-Convent of San Francisco and the Plaza Valladolid. However, “the citizenry and some investigators opposed the project” which would have attracted even more traffic to the historic center and potentially posed structural problems for the ex-Convent (Sereno Ayala, 1996d). To that end, the Reglamento proposed the use of vacant lots for parking, and if any of the building structure was still there, then the façade should be maintained (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1995b, p. 11). New construction in the historic center also had to be sympathetic (Sereno Ayala, 1996b), if not completely devoted to imitation, to “harmonize and conserve the uniformity of the sector” (1995b, p. 10). In the last installment, the paper published the series of penalties that could be invoked if there was a construction contravention, including the destruction of new buildings, as well as hefty fines, 200 times the minimum salary, and prison (Sereno Ayala, 1996i). In light of the new regulation, the glut of previous legislation was discussed, with the hope that the new legislation would actually prove effective, emphasizing the need to adjust legislation to the necessities and realities of the times (Cabrera Aceves, 1996). The then still unresolved street vendor problem, it was suggested, could not be ignored by legislation. The author was particularly concerned that a “regulatory burden can be very dangerous and ineffective” (ibid., p. 9). The author of this analysis was then the Vice-President of “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad,” one of the city’s active civil associations. The publication of the legislation and this analysis stands in stark contrast to Guanajuato, where no such open discussion existed.

When it appeared as though the new legislation was stalling due to the change in mayors and administrations, the paper immediately asked to interview the new, PAN mayor, Salvador López Orduña. He insisted that the new administration was supportive of the legislation, but was simply having ICOMOS review it for its functionality. The paper challenged the mayor, saying that if ICOMOS were given the opportunity to review it, then wouldn’t many other organizations have to follow suit, as there were many other stakeholders? The mayor evaded a straight answer, saying he wanted to make sure “there wouldn’t be any problems” once the law was fully applied (Sereno Ayala, 1996f). He further promised a study on how many business signs in the historic center were in compliance and how many were not. He also expressed his general interest in conservation
and particularly enabling projects on vacant lots as well as the “more than three hundred houses that are currently abandoned in the historic center” (1996f, p. 7-B). Unfortunately, I do not know what he was basing this estimate on, nor were there publicized results of a business sign census.

Amidst this climate of uncertainty, it does not come as a surprise that the paper reported that Morelia was in danger of losing its World Heritage designation due to the general deterioration of the historic center and the proliferation of the street vendors (Ultereras, 1996e). The article actually did a good job at recounting why Morelia merited being inscribed, what the main problems facing the historic center were, and how it might be better protected.

In February 1996 it appeared as though the underground parking project was suddenly back on the table, despite the new legislation (Sereno Ayala, 1996h). However, the project quickly proved controversial again, on many levels. The semi-permanent street vendors in Valladolid square, for instance, were not willing to relocate to facilitate underground parking, nor did the mini-buses, twelve of which originated from the square, want to change their routes (Ultereras, 1996f). The fact that recent municipal government legislation further prohibited the project, due to potential damage to historical buildings, seemed almost secondary, given that the previous administration had semi-successful negotiations with street vendors and their unions about relocating from the Plaza de Armas the previous year. The parking plans threatened to derail any previous negotiation advances (ibid.). The regional INAH Office dismissed the project the next day, denying it would authorize any such attempt (Ultereras and Lugo, 1996). Yet despite this dismissal, speculation in the press continued. However, a detailed impact study would be necessary, particularly to determine if there was truth to the rumor of an extensive tunnel system underneath various monuments, which supposedly connected them (Bustos Arreguin, 1996).

Of course the anniversary of the city’s foundation brings with it reflections on the state of its cultural patrimony, the history of the city’s development, and its legacy (Cabrera Cruz, 1996). It is during these reflections that comparisons with other World Heritage cities arise. In the mid-1990s, this was not a favorable comparison for Morelia (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996b). Commentators did not think it too much to ask for the three levels of government to “apply the law” to protect the historic center and to make it more
livable (Lopez Guido, 1996). These celebrations also seemed to revive plans to address the street vendor problem and decentralizing offices, with the governor, Victor Manuel Tinoco Rubi, announcing the development of an integrated plan (Martinez Elorriaga, 1996). For the city’s historian, the best way to honor the city would be to “clean it up and remove the street vendors,” but this would require the cooperation of all levels of government and the citizenry (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996i). It is worth noting that from 1990 onwards, Morelia’s municipal government was no longer dominated by the PRI (ibid.). Both the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) and PAN had municipal administrations, the PRD from 1990 to 1992, and PAN from 1996 to 1998.

Much like in Oaxaca in 2006, Michoacán’s teachers were on strike in 1996 (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996d). While the protests were not as protracted as in Oaxaca, Morelia is also known as a site for repeated, long-lasting protest, a sit-in. (When I visited in July 2006, the plantón was protesting the outcome of the federal elections). Particularly the gardens in the historic center suffered with the encampment. The paper pointed out that only recently, the city had spent about US$5,603 to lay new grass and plants (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996d). The cost of the plantón to tourism was not quantified.

In December 1996, CONALMEX was preparing World Heritage nomination files for Pátzcuaro, along with San Cristóbal de las Casas, and San Luis Potosí (Notimex Editorial, 1996). None of these cities managed to achieve World Heritage designation.

Mayor Salvador López Orduña, in his first state of the municipality report, highlighted the improvement of the city’s public lighting, not only in the historic center, as an achievement (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1996c). But the historic center’s problems persisted and opinion pieces urging a solution, particularly to the street vendor problem, proliferated (Bernardo Lemus, 1996).

With the new year, once again the deterioration of the historic center was discussed in the paper, but on this occasion in the context of flora and fauna taking over deteriorating buildings. Where regular maintenance was lacking, nature took over (Luis Coronel Chavez, 1997). Figure 5.34 shows a building that is gradually being overwhelmed by plants. Sights like these were not uncommon.

To give an idea of how much money was available for public works, for 1997, SEDESOL provided the municipality of Morelia with nearly US$34 million for public works of all
types (Valdovinos Licea, 1997f). The restoration of the Cathedral was still on-going, with the estimated budget having grown to US$347,547, of which US$217,658 had not yet materialized (Ultreras, 1997a).

In January 1997, Pátzcuaro was host to the fourth Urban Image Meeting of Touristic Cities with Historic patrimony (Valdovinos Licea, 1997e). It proposed an integrative approach to improving historic cities, recognizing that the technical experts were limited in their approach, sustainable community development had not been considered and that the whole restoration strategy had not been widely applied enough (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997e). ICOMOS, meanwhile, was still pursuing Pátzcuaro's World Heritage bid (Notimex Editorial, 1997b).

For Esperanza Ramírez, the Master’s program in Restoration, which admitted its second cohort of students in March 1997, was a hopeful sign for Morelia. She was convinced
that these professionals would help save the historic center through the application of tried and tested restoration practices (Ramírez Romero, 1997a). There were renewed calls for decentralizing services, as 63,000 Morelianos used public transport to access the center (Cabrera, 1997).

The then recently formed ANCMPM met in Morelia in March 1997. The members discussed funding issues and how the cities might gain access to more monetary support, and how to deal with common problems, street vending in particular. Guanajuato, in this context, is mentioned as exemplary, as its historic center had supposedly “relocated” its vendors. The reality is that there never were many street vendors that set up semi-permanent stalls in Guanajuato to begin with— moving them, therefore, rather painless (Ultreras, 1997c).

The idea for a technical commission of experts to work towards a solution of the street vendor problem was floated in May 1997. The commission should collect citizen’s suggestions for solutions and then select the most workable option (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997g). In this context of renewed discussion, Architect Manuel González Galvan wrote about the persistence of land use changes in the city as well as the street vendors as particularly worrisome. He cited Morelia as the most run down of all Mexican UNESCO World Heritage cities, while Zacatecas, to him, stands out as the best preserved (González Galvan, 1997). For the second phase of the subterranean cabling, the state and federal governments raised US$1.32 million. The second phase was to be completed in time for the city’s anniversary celebrations (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997d).

Once again, the anniversary celebrations featured Esperanza Ramírez’ and her continued efforts to raise awareness about the historic center and in particular, the history of the aqueduct (Gutiérrez, 1997a; Ramírez Romero, 1997b). The city’s history and World Heritage designation were also highlighted (Cabrera Cruz, 1997b). Morelia was frequently described as a “patient” in need of a “cure” (Cabrera Cruz, 1997a). Medical metaphors as well as that invoking the need to “rescue” the historic center were common. Then, the paper announced that the plan to relocate street vendors was ready for implementation. Buildings that were not in use would be converted into commercial spaces (Gutiérrez, 1997d). Projections suggested that if there was no intervention, by the year 2000, 6,000 street vendors would be selling their goods in the historic center and in the city at large.
Meanwhile, 800 street vendors agreed in principle to relocate to a new market that could house 2,000 stalls. However, the municipal government was slow in presenting the whole project to the vendors, including time tables and cost per stall (García, 1997c). When the government did begin to inform the vendors directly, it used comics to spread the word, printing 4,000 copies (García, 1997f). Comics, it was argued, would make the information more evenly accessible.

In October 1997, ANCMPM met again, and mayor Salvador López Orduña singled out the street vendors as the greatest obstacle to Morelia’s tourism development. The mayor indicated that through negotiations, the problem would be resolved in the near future. The organization was planning a first National Fair of World Heritage cities for the end of the year in Oaxaca (García, 1997d).

Aside from “rescuing” and “curing,” Morelia also needed “saving”—or so the headlines would state. A photographic exhibit to mark the fourth anniversary of the University’s cultural center intended to do just that, “save” Morelia with fifty carefully selected historical photographs of the city’s iconic architecture (Mendoza Alcocer, 1997a). The publication of Esperanza Ramírez’s “Mi Ciudad y yo,” a children’s book aimed at educating youngsters about the historic architecture in their city, was hailed as another means to transform attitudes and instill the desire to preserve heritage (Castellano Martinez-Baez, 1997).

Frustrated at the non-implementation of the 1995 legislation, the author blamed partisanship and lack of coordination between different scales of government. Architect Carlos Primo Torres Arenal argued that architects had not taken enough time to discuss the legislation’s complexities and that it lacked sound foundations. While it was noted that Torres Arenal was a PAN member, and thus in opposition at the time, it was not reported that he was also in charge of IMDUM, which was working on a much bigger project than “merely” legislation. “Morelia, Patrimonio de la Humanidad” criticized INAH’s monopoly on heritage protection (García, 1997e). Immediately, the municipal government issued a rebuttal, insisting that the 1995 legislation was being enforced (Zepeda Sánchez, 1997).

Subsequently, the paper began publishing details of the legislation, such as how big the designated area was, (3.43 square kilometers) and how many blocks (219) were covered by it. The paper also listed the historic monuments, squares and gardens (La Voz de Mi-
Esperanza Ramírez, however, criticized that the new regulation did not coordinate among the three levels of government. While they had to operate according to the same law, they could act independently, subjectively. Permits still had to be obtained from all three levels, but Ramírez praised the incentives promised to property owners (Pérez Negrón, 1997a).

Morelia’s continuing deterioration was also on the mind of INAH’s director of historic studies, who blamed the lack of economic wherewithal, especially of property owners. Of course, advertisements affixed to buildings and the street vendors were also contributing factors, as were environmental concerns and land use changes. Raising citizens’ awareness was a must (García, 1997g).

Plans for a Municipal Advisory Council, which would monitor restoration projects in the historic center, as well as review heritage-related legislation, emerged in early 1998 (Cortez, 1998e). The mayor put much stock into the new Council. He was certain it would be best equipped to monitor restoration in Morelia. The paper stated that 40 percent of Morelia’s more than 350 cataloged buildings were greatly deteriorated (Cortez, 1998b). Far more than 350 buildings are actually cataloged, but why the exact number is not used, is unclear to me. Furthermore, the reader does not know how this degree of deterioration was determined or assessed. It’s difficult to glean any useful information here.

The issue of advertising signs for businesses resurfaced in 1998. The paper estimated that more than 45,000 signs did not comply with the regulations, which pertained to signs having to be rectangular, painted on wood, or on laminate, with only brown or black letters permitted. Licenses had to be renewed on a yearly basis, so temporarily allowed signs would have to be taken down and replaced with compliant signs (Gutiérrez, 1998e). Whether or not the municipality was actually able to check that inappropriate signs were removed or even bothered to do so remained unaddressed. Despite the municipality’s efforts to reign in the city center’s anarchic signage problem, 90 percent of businesses were still violating the regulations. Fines could range from US$8 to about US$415, however, whether or not they were actually enforced was not discussed (Cortez, 1998o). A total of 4,780 permanent and authorized signs were counted in a census from September 1996 to March 1997 and owners of unauthorized signs contacted to legalize them. 3,687 infractions had occurred, resulting in 325 closures (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998a).
In January 1998, at another meeting of ANCMPM, the headline “At risk of losing the World Heritage title” was splashed on the front page. Not only Morelia, but also Oaxaca, Puebla, and México City were risking to lose their designation, because of the unresolved street vendor issues in all cities. The mayors of Puebla and Oaxaca blamed the socioeconomic climate and the unwillingness of different actors to negotiate as the main obstacles to freeing the city centers from street vendors. The mayor of Oaxaca, Pablo Arnaud Carreño claimed that UNESCO had threatened that if no action was taken within three years of a designation, it could revoke the designation. There was little precedent for such a “threat” at the time, because no World Heritage sites had been delisted. Perhaps it was mainly meant as a wake up call of sorts. ANCMPM had been meeting to discuss strategies to approach SEDESOL and SECTUR for financial support (García, 1998). Zacatecas was cited as a success story again in the paper, especially compared with Morelia (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998i).

As a follow up, the paper interviewed some street vendors, of which a few stated they did not know about World Heritage, but emphasized that the lack of other employment opportunities, wherewithal to provide for their families, was more pressing on their minds than a concept they did not seem to grasp and perhaps no one had bothered to explain (Cortez, 1998m). This prompted a commentator to admit that of course World Heritage designation probably would not directly aid in resolving the multitude of Morelia’s problems, but perhaps it could foster a pride that would lead inhabitants to take greater care of the historic center (Jara Guerrero, 1998). Much wishful thinking, perhaps, but at least World Heritage remained debated and discussed.

Meanwhile, plans for the street vendor relocation were treated as “irreversible” and as an opportunity to “dignify” the historic center and that the street vendors might be able to pursue their business in a “dignified” setting (Gutiérrez, 1998d). In short, it was described as a win-win situation.

In May 1998 the paper reported that ANCMPM would establish a presence in Mexico City to further its promotional and funding activities (Cortez, 1998a). Further to that, the paper produced a special section on World Heritage, which described the inscription advantages as follows: “grants access to international assistance, specialized networks devoted to conservation, and an increase in tourism” (Mendoza Alcocer, 1998). Of the three
mentioned, international assistance is the most unlikely, certainly directly from UNESCO, because it’s World Heritage fund only assists in emergencies. Visitor increases, especially to World Heritage districts is probably only anecdotal, because unlike archaeological sites, there is no entry fee and thus no reliable way to measure visitor numbers—and certainly no or little information regarding visitor motivation.

Compared with other years, the anniversary of the city’s foundation seemed rather subdued in 1998 and was not nearly as heavily reported as usual (Cabrera, 1998). However, for the day of the anniversary, the street vendors promised to remove their stalls, and the governor inaugurated the completion of the third phase of subterranean cabling (Cortez, 1998d; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998f).

Interestingly, the paper determined in October 1998 that the local archives did not contain any maps prior to the seventeenth century. Whether or not maps had been stolen or simply gone missing when archives were moved was unclear, but the admission that archives, even though the local one was considered very good, were also victims of theft, carelessness, and poor record keeping (Cortez, 1998g). My experience confirms these gaps.

Furthermore, involving the citizenry and integrating their opinions on what local government should prioritize proved difficult, with citizens unconvinced that their opinions in public consultations would be taken seriously. Nevertheless, such a public consultation in October 1998 resulted in 2,400 opinions submitted by citizens. Jobs, security, and the relocation of the street vendors were reported as the main concerns (Valdovinos Licea, 1998a). To assist in the relocation, private initiative and civil society formed a trusteeship. This was done to ensure that there were supports in place once the relocation got under way (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998b).

With a new PRI mayor in office, 1999 was to be the “decisive” year for dignifying the historic center (Favela Geronimo and Osorio, 1999). Three fundamental projects were promised to be completed: a new sewage treatment plant, the relocation of the bus station and the relocation of the street vendors, which was seen as synonymous with “dignifying” (Cortez, 1999a; Cortez, 1999d). Yet the mayor was careful not to blame the street vendors for everything, instead insisting that evenhandedness was necessary to address the problem (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1999a).

Change, however, was eluding Morelia’s advertising problem. Regulations were still
being ignored and laws, local and federal, still not enforced (Sereno Ayala, 1999). And while the old Guadalupan Sanitarium was not a historic building, INAH intervened in its demolition as it was located next to historic buildings (Cortez, 1999e).

In 1999, Esperanza Ramírez and another academic, Tere Martínez, won Morelia’s prestigious Morelos prize, given annually to those who had made a major contribution honoring the state and country (Cortez, 1999b). Only seven women prior to Martínez and Ramírez had received this honor. Martínez was then the director of the state museum and called on Morelia to resolve its street vendor problem, citing Oaxaca, Zacatecas, Querétaro and San Luis Potosí as examples that should be followed. Further, she urged the three levels of government to come together once again, as they had done to produce Morelia’s World Heritage nomination file in 1990 (Olivo, 1999). Esperanza Ramírez explained the long process of restoring the aqueduct, despite the long periods of foot-dragging, when nothing seemed to happen. Through the ability to adopt an arch, she argued, the citizenry that donated money felt more involved in the process and could see progress. This level of involvement needed to be restored to make progress in the city’s efforts to relocate street vendors and improve preservation (Ogarrio, 1999).

The Master Plan for the Rescue of Morelia’s historic center was officially launched by the mayor in May 1999, and estimated to take fifteen month to completion. The exact manner of how the street vendors would relocate, however, was still not determined or at least not publicly discussed (Gutiérrez, 1999). The announcement was made to coincide with the city’s anniversary. A “Trust Fund for the Rescue of the Historic Center” was also established that day, with Esperanza Ramírez in charge, and the governor and mayor honorary president and vice president, respectively (Osorio, 1999c; Osorio, 1999e). Decision-makers were a bit more cautious, now estimating the entire project would take eighteen months at least (Osorio, 1999e). President Ramírez planned to look for international support of the project, including pitches to UNESCO and the OAS (Osorio, 1999a). The local CANACO division also supported the plan (Ultreras, 1999b). The plan, however, was not completely uncontroversial. A PAN politician, feeling hard done by a PRI mayor, argued in the paper that the Master Plan had no legal basis, as it had not been officially presented to the municipal council nor decreed by the State Government, as the law demanded. Political favoritism and lack of true citizen participation were his other grievances (Santacruz,
The paper also announced that Morelia would be one of the venues for the ICOMOS General Assembly and the World Congress of Monumental Heritage, to be held in October 1999 (Ulterras, 1999c). ICOMOS vice President Javier Villalobos cited Oaxaca, Campeche, Querétaro and Campeche as exemplary in their level of conservation, even though they received many visitors. Some might argue that they were preserved because many tourists visited, taking the view that high visitor numbers do not cause any potential problems. He further cited the limited nature of street vending in the aforementioned cities, supposedly confined to selling local and regional arts and crafts (ibid.). Architect Manuel González Galván suggested that an awareness raising campaign about the 1,113 cataloged buildings in the city ought to be launched, with a plaque for every building describing its history and cultural value, to educate visitors and locals alike (Osorio, 1999d).

**Coverage in the 2000s**

By January 2001, the new bus station was 65 percent complete, and the new markets for the street vendors about 50 percent (Valdovinos Licea, 2001e). Slowly but steadily, the necessary changes to facilitate the relocation of the street vendors were being made. The paper estimated they would leave by November of that year (ibid.). While four new market spaces were developed in the historic center, the soon to be replaced bus station was still mentioned as a relocation space (Valdovinos Licea, 2001a). However, that space was never rehabilitated and remained derelict, beyond 2008.

At the ANCMPM general assembly, held in Morelia in January 2001, the mayors challenged their citizens to become more involved in heritage preservation. They announced a trust fund to help finance restoration projects, but if the citizens did not exhibit the will to support preservation, all efforts would be for naught (Valdovinos Licea, 2001f).

By May 2001, 1,000 street vendors had formally accepted the relocation plans, after much careful deliberation and negotiation (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2001b; Valdovinos Licea, 2001b; Valdovinos Licea, 2001k; Valdovinos Licea, 2001q). There was now no backing out of the deal (Gutiérrez, 2001b). Despite these advances, the authorities and local academics alike agreed that a more precise regulation for the historic center was desperately needed (Valdovinos Licea, 2001g). To maintain the historic center largely street
vendor free, with the exception of a few shoe shining stalls and balloon and map sellers at the weekends, the city council agreed to restrict street vending in the historic center (Valdovinos Licea, 2001c). The mayor was optimistic that in spite of one street vendor union not agreeing to relocate, the relocation would be completed (Gutiérrez, 2001a; Valdovinos Licea, 2001h). Perhaps in the euphoria of the looming relocation, the PAN mayoral candidate suggested that the historic center become a pedestrianized zone, citing Guanajuato’s example (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2001a). This, to date, has not been realized.

INAH was then completing its “Catalog of Historic Monuments.” The catalog was extensive, with photos for each building, floor and access plans, and a location map. It also featured a history of the city, its plazas and gardens, architecture of the twentieth century, as well as its planning history (Valdovinos Licea, 2001d).

While vendor stalls were being assigned in late May (Valdovinos Licea, 2001p), Esperanza Ramírez urged the last holdouts to reconsider the position, stating that only “those who do not love Morelia oppose relocation” but simultaneously praising the unprecedented intersection of interests committed to dealing with the problems of the historic center (Valdovinos Licea, 2001m). With twelve state and municipal government offices moving to the suburbs, moving street vendors into stalls in a building across the street made sense, to provide workers with vendor services, offering the vendors a safer alternative (Valdovinos Licea, 2001l). On the night of 4 June to 5 June 2001, in the presence of 300 policemen all the stalls in the historic center were removed in a few hours. No force was necessary (Cabrales, 2001, p. 44). It was an absolute triumph for the city authorities, as well as for the “Patronato,” who had campaigned tirelessly for the removal. The reactions from citizens was emotional, they reclaimed the streets and squares of the historic center. Suddenly, the space was to be experienced in a completely new way (ibid., p. 43–44).

In November 2001, work on the city’s famous arched gateways, began. While a major interruption to daily business, rehabilitation of these spaces had been impossible before with street vendor stalls using them as their business. The state government earmarked US$1.24 million for this project (Valdovinos, 2001). By January 2002, 75 percent of the work had been completed (Galván, 2002).

Sometime in the mid-2000s, La Voz began publishing a series called “Morelia, imágenes nuestras” (Morelia, our images), in which the history of important buildings and
Various monuments or iconic sites was recounted (Herrera, 2007a; Herrera and Monreal, 2008; Olivo, 2006; Rodríguez, 2007a; Rodríguez, 2007b; Rodríguez, 2007c; Rodríguez, 2007d). The paper also featured a daily map of the city, with a few selected “hot spots” highlighting various problems or issues. This “Citizen Navigator” section frequently included the historic center, with problems such as roaming car washers puncturing tires of motorists who had declined services.

Morelia’s “rescue” from the street vendors, five years hence, remained an oft repeated success story (Cendejas, 2006). A far less commonly told story was that of the homeless poor living in the streets of the historic center. None of the services providing assistance were located in the historic center, leaving many to sleep in the archways, despite dipping temperatures (Herrera and Lemus, 2007). In January 2008, a newspaper reported that the poor would be removed from the historic center. While human rights would be respected, there was no clear plan how to re-accommodate the poor, or what services would help them (Castillo, 2008). First and foremost, another eyesore needed to be removed from the historic center.

The collapsed building on the corner of Morelos Norte and 20 de Noviembre (see Figure 5.35) featured in the paper, with the coordinator of CECHZM complaining that there was no municipal legislation in place that could have helped prevent the collapse or that would enable the municipal government to impose fines on the property’s owner. Municipal powers needed to be greater. Fines are the purview of INAH and it had suspended permits seeking to build a new building on the site (Herrera, 2007b; Lemus, 2007a). Ultimately, despite private ownership, the public and national nature of heritage remain at odds—with the result frequently deliberate obsolescence. Esperanza Ramírez lamented the state of the historic center in another newspaper, which featured a full-page spread on the anniversary of the World Heritage designation (Aguilera Soria, 2007a). Ramírez argued that the rapidly changing land uses were mostly to blame for the deterioration, but she doubted the city would be placed on UNESCO’s World Heritage in peril list—the situation was critical, but not yet dire (Aguilera Soria, 2007b).

The twentieth anniversary of the first World Heritage inscriptions in 1987 did feature in La Voz, but the paper chose to reprint an article from a national newspaper, instead of producing its own story (El Universal Editorial, 2007). In it, the increasingly difficult
criteria for inscription were highlighted.

In 2003, during the administration of Fausto Vallejo Figueroa, a new set of regulations for signage, posts, and advertisements was devised and published. However, in January 2008, CANACO demanded a special catalog to demonstrate which types of signs and advertisements were permitted and to introduce charges for different types of signs. CANACO insisted it had worked together with COVECHI on improving compliance, but in order to do even better, the regulation would have to be updated (Cruz, 2008c). The paper did not discuss the regulation in use at the time in any detail.

COVECHI, meanwhile, tried to promote the historic center as the city’s primary shopping and services area, as “El Corazón de la ciudad,” the heart of the city. With the holidays fast approaching, the organization hoped to boost its sales figures with the promotion (Arredondo Elizalde, 2007). Merchants offered discounts on Wednesdays and Saturdays to continue attracting more Morelianos into the center to shop (Cruz, 2008b). COVECHI also wanted to attract shoppers to the historic center by introducing a park-and-ride type scheme that would allow visitors to leave their cars on the periphery of the historic center and then use public transportation (Cruz, 2008a).

The then new administration, led once again by Fausto Vallejo as mayor, promised to remove the historic center’s telephone cables7 in time for the bicentennial of Mexico’s Independence, an event to be commemorated in September 2010 (Lemus, 2008a). The mayor and his new team in CECHZM argued that the Programa Parcial from 2001 had not been properly implemented nor followed through upon, leading to the loss of 222 historic buildings (20 percent of the total 1,113 listed in 1991), sixteen years after World Heritage designation (Aguilera Soria, 2008). Ironically, during Fausto Vallejo’s 2002 to 2004 administration, CECHZM had been established, but it seemed little else had been accomplished. This irony was not highlighted in the press. One of the administrations’ new initiatives was to try and tackle the parking problem in the historic center. To that end, proposals were solicited from FIPE, and one suggestion was to create a parking lot in one of the unused “Tu Plaza” locations, in the Plaza Capuchinas (Lemus, 2008c).

In February 2008, CECHZM revealed that 412 buildings in the historic center were

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7His previous administration in the mid-1990s had initiated the subterranean cabling project for electricity cables.
critically deteriorated, with seventy-three at risk of collapse (Lemus and Herrera, 2008). Furthermore, more than 2,000 illegal signs had been detected. CECHZM, under its new leadership, had its work cut out.

**World Heritage in the eyes of local experts**

I spoke with architect Carlos Alberto Hiriart Pardo formally on two occasions, in 2005 and 2006. In October 2005, during my first visit to Morelia, he was still in charge of the regional INAH office. When I returned in the summer of 2006, he had already resigned, and returned to an academic position at the local university and was completing his dissertation. By 2007, he was head of the architecture department.

We first met at INAH’s local offices, on Madero Avenue. Hiriart explained that the state’s interest in tourism dated back to the nineteenth century, but began in earnest in 1950s and 1960s, with improved transportation infrastructure. He was surprisingly candid about the motives for restoration:

> At first, planners might not have been too sure about what type of tourism ought to be attracted to the city... but for the past ten years, cultural tourism has been pushed for much more aggressively. The ultimate goal of the restoration is tourism, so it is not as noble as it might appear. Cultural tourism is a form of development for the state. Dealing with the street vendors ...it was definitely a success, because it was peaceful. But this success could turn into a threat, if the growth of tourism is not controlled, we do not want sex tourism, for example. We need sustainable tourism, which is difficult to achieve. The main threat is that people who own some of the historic buildings don’t care about the heritage, do not understand that it attracts tourists, they want to sell the space for real estate gains. This is a real threat to the historic center. There is little we (INAH) can do about land use changes directly, but we can stop construction plans if we feel they will harm the historic center.

— Hiriart Pardo (2005), Personal Interview.

For him, the situation concerning the aplanados, the building covers that were removed in the 1960s, was one in which there was probably no turning back:
The state government in the 1960s, sought a more “authentic” look, so it authorized the removal of the covers. So this pink (in Morelia’s main monuments) is not original. We have tried to encourage the use of aplanados, but aesthetic preferences have changed. It is not necessarily a question of cost. However, the buildings need to be protected from rain and exhaust fumes, and the aplanados did that. UNESCO accepted the city as it was, and it has been this way more than thirty years now, and we don’t have the means to enforce this criterion.

— Hiriart Pardo (2005), Personal Interview.

Architect Luis Alberto Torres Garibay had a similar take on the aplanados:

Well, INAH has always insisted that the aplanados be reinstalled, with every restoration project. The San José neighborhood has had the aplanados reinstated, this was done in 1997, 1998... however, there is now a recognition, I’d say even at the international scale, the city is recognized for these pink walls. This generates a contradiction for the authorities: bringing back the aplanados would go against popular tastes. From a technical point of view, however, the aplanados serve as protection. Morelia has a problem with humidity, and they absorb the humidity. This complicates decision-making.

— Torres Garibay (2008), Personal Interview.

Garibay also did not think that Morelia was as colonial a city as the media and historians liked to portray it:

In reality, it really is not a colonial city. With an eye to the truth, this city is a great mixture of stages, different stages, strong modifications were made in the nineteenth century. The neoclassical influence was very strong, as well as baroque influences. The façades were modified. The evolution of the city gives an air of the colonial, but mostly, this is colonial by imitation. We can say that this urban evolution has been harmonious, for the most part, and homogeneous, but this is due to imitation. It is much easier to imitate than to try and design a building that is sympathetic to old styles, but is still contemporary. So, I copy what already exists and the job is done. Integrating contemporary architecture into this historic context is very difficult, and is a tricky situation for specialists.

— Torres Garibay (ibid.), Personal Interview.
For Carlos Hiriart, the lack of an integrated, and longer-term vision for tourism was the greatest possible threat to Morelia’s tourism success. He explained:

For instance, the “Plan Luz” (illumination of public buildings), where is it going? We now have eight or nine buildings illuminated, but people come to see the Cathedral, and its sound and light show on the weekends. Every weekend there are 2,000 people there to see that spectacle. But they don’t go to San José or other buildings. There are no provisions for disabled people, and little security. Why is there no strategy to channel this success? And why insist on illuminating forty buildings? And why should it stop there? There simply is no vision—the success of the Cathedral was an accident and the reaction is to exploit it, not to safeguard it. Tourism can’t just be left to its own devices, it has to be managed, and managed well, especially cultural tourism, which is not a cheap product. It relies on the quality of local services and events.

— Hiriart Pardo (2006b), Personal Interview.

Guanajuato, to a certain extent, and neighboring Pátzcuaro, served as warnings of what might occur in Morelia as far as tourism was concerned:

There has been a dumbing down of tourism in Guanajuato. People do not come to do cultural tourism anymore. The Cervantes festival deteriorated and the city officials did not put a stop to it, they didn’t care about carrying capacity in the city (how many people can actually be a space together safely, without negative consequences for the built environment). And the same in Pátzcuaro, during the Day of the Dead. There is no political will in Pátzcuaro to apply an integrated, visionary project for preservation and tourism. That’s why they have not achieved World Heritage designation, they simply have not complied with the requirements. We have to find an equilibrium, Machu Picchu (Peru) and Venice are examples of too much tourism …we have to guard against that.

— Hiriart Pardo (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Of course the question is “how much is too much, and particularly, for Morelia?” To answer this question, a long-term plan and vision, based on the experiences of the recent years, he argued, was necessary. This, he felt, was the greatest potential threat, public officials without a long-term approach to tourism and preservation planning.
Art historian Esperanza Ramírez Romero has defended Morelia’s historic center for decades.⁸ Not surprisingly, given the NGO she has led that restored the aqueduct and helped to pave the way for the relocation of the street vendors, she believes that the twenty-first century is the “century of the civil association.”

Every day we see that in the past, the citizenry left everything up to the government, but I think now the citizenry is ready to take responsibility and pressure the government to finish projects and to come up with answers for problems that we see in the city, to have a voice before the authorities through organized civil associations. We (the Patronato) had a lot more credibility than the government. In fact, the government had suggested setting up this Patronato after seeing the success of the earlier association that rehabilitated the aqueduct. So you see, the government needed us to give the Plan Maestro credibility. We began educating the citizens from the bottom up, starting with children, to help them understand the architecture around them and its importance. We explained why the street vendors should move, because they were obstructing the maintenance of this heritage. They then take this knowledge home and shared it with their parents. We then went to hotel owners, and trained their staff for an hour a day for a week, the same with restaurant owners. We also trained government staff. By and by, we penetrated all of society. We laid a foundation for the negotiations. At the same time, the government was decentralizing offices, because it was known that the vendors got much of their business from government workers. The greatest move, however, was that of the central bus station. By and by, the vendors realized that their clientele was diminishing. Then, they were open to negotiations. We did not know exactly when they would leave, but the night of the 4th to the 5th of June 2001, they left the plazas. The news of the successful relocation spread like wildfire, and the citizens came out to experience the historic center in a new way, to discover there were benches and fountains in the squares. It was an awakening for the citizens. A huge success, and another reason for Morelianos to be proud of their city.

— Ramírez Romero (2005), Personal Interview.

Ramírez acknowledged that the Patronato was then in a transitional phase, trying to carve out a new project, now that the “rescue” had been achieved. The government had

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⁸While most certainly not the only defender of Morelia’s heritage, Dr. Ramírez has been one of the most visible. While respected by most in the community for her efforts, she is not uncontroversial, nevertheless, she has been extremely skilled at using the media to her advantage.
provided the Patronato with an office and a secretary, but Ramírez did not want to live on its handouts and instead had bought a building in the historic center on Avenue Madero for use as office space.

We want to be independent and will achieve this through teaching tour guides, hotel owners, restaurant owners to better understand heritage and that way, we will be independent of the government. The municipal governments change every three years, the state governments every six years, but the people remain and we can help give projects continuity and pressure the governments.

— Ramírez Romero (2005), Personal Interview.

By the time I returned in July 2006, the Patronato’s future still seemed a bit uncertain for Ramírez. Perhaps this was not surprising, considering the scope of the achievement of 2001. I asked her to describe the Patronato’s then current projects:

We are returning to our investigation of tunnels underneath the cathedral, something that we began in the 1990s, and then had to abandon to rehabilitate the aqueduct. We have just contracted a geophysicist to move this forward. However, we are having problems with INAH, because they want a detailed survey, but how can we have one when we still need to determine what is even there? They are not being helpful … We have finished teaching a course about heritage, the participants were from all over Michoacán. This has led us to demand of the governor that the state patrimony law from 1974 be enforced, because the remittances are changing the vernacular architecture of Michoacán’s towns. People knock down their old houses and build something completely new, so the impact of remittances on heritage has been great. We want the governor to establish a committee, as the law requires, to monitor what is happening to houses in these villages and towns. We are also about to publish an architecture guide to Michoacán.

— Ramírez Romero (2006), Personal Interview.

It still seemed that the organization was trying to find its new footing. By the time of my final interview with Ramírez Romero (2007), she was in a defiant mood. She had just gone to the annual ICOMOS conference and denounced the then PAN-led local government. She described what had unfolded over the last three years:
There are two ways of conducting public policy: one, being open, showing respect to the citizenry, the other, to ignore the citizens. What have they done since they came to power? First, they purchased x number of traffic lights without consulting the citizenry, without any studies where exactly more traffic lights might be needed, they simply did the study at the desk and it did not work in practice. It was a total failure. Incredibly expensive and served no good purpose. Instead, we now have traffic lights everywhere—destroying the urban image. The manhole covers are in a terrible state, they have not attempted to fix them. Until 2002, there was great progress in putting cables underground, they have completely stopped this. Another complete disaster are the public gardens. They did not need an intervention, they had been fixed five or eight years ago! Again, it was a huge investment, a huge waste of resources. They had the old, nineteenth century pavement slabs lifted and removed. Now, the gardens all look uniform, where before each was unique, each had its own personality. The authorities sit idly by as buildings in the historic center collapse, and the local INAH office is in close harmony with the municipal authority. They too sit idly by. Take for instance the house on the corner of 20 de Noviembre and Morelos Norte, which has just collapsed (see Figure 5.35). More than one year ago we alerted the authorities, and they did absolutely nothing! We have had two meetings with mayor Salvador López Orduña, and the authorities simply have not listened and have been negligent. This administration has been a major setback for patrimony.

— Ramírez Romero (2007), Personal Interview.

She went on to explain:

The mayor put an accountant in charge of the Office for the Historic Center. An accountant! He does not know anything about the historic center. That is why this administration has been such a disappointment. They have not done anything to stop the graffiti, the aqueduct has been turned into a huge blackboard, for the kids to spray their paint on. And they have done nothing to stop it. We want the historic center monitored and when the kids who do this are caught, they ought to clean it up as well. We have already spoken with the new administration that is about to come into power. They are very willing to work with us. We have agreed to take responsibility for the aqueduct again, to continue the work on investigating the tunnels underneath the cathedral, and to continue our educational efforts to raise awareness of what our patrimony means. When there is corruption, there is little we can do. That pains me greatly. We are very limited in what we can do when the
While she remained defiant, she was also clearly disheartened. Whereas she had been perhaps overly optimistic as to the possibilities and capabilities of NGOs, she now appeared more muted. Clearly, defending Morelia’s built environment continued to be a struggle.

Architect Eugenio Mercado had fulfilled different roles throughout his career, sometimes working as a government official, then returning to academia. He highlighted the difficulties preservation faced, due to its costs and the inability of the authorities to intervene:


**Figure 5.35: Ruins of the property at the corner of Morelos Norte and 20 de Noviembre, December 2007.**

(Photo by author)
Most private owners cannot afford to pay for restoration, there are too many requirements to fulfill. So, they end up renting out the property as an office, or a shop. When the street vendors were relocated, suddenly, real estate in the historic center became almost 30 percent more profitable, so much real estate speculation ensued. In theory, the government is able to intervene, to help facilitate restoration, but in reality, it cannot and does not. Many social scientists, historians and anthropologists, have always treated the economic value of private property in the historic as negative, which is not really helpful. There is a lack of resources and a lack of instruments to foster restoration. Some eight months ago, the newspaper reported that 25 percent of the historic center was degraded. I do not believe it is that much, I think this was an exaggeration to be sensational. Yes, there are many historic homes that have suffered, or have disappeared completely. Ironically, there are some homes that have simply been closed off, the owners do not use them, but they are not in bad repair. It is stupid that they are not being used, but the owners may live elsewhere and have decided to keep the property closed.

— Mercado López (2006b), *Personal Interview.*

I asked him to comment on the *Plan Luz*:

Like anything, there are positives and negatives here. The plan calls to illuminate forty emblematic buildings. In theory, there should not exist a distinction when it comes to historic buildings, based on their size or era, but in practice, that is not true. So, a differentiation is made between buildings, a preference is made and a precedent set, to only preserve what is important. I guess the positive thing is that this is meant to form an ensemble in the historic center and thus become a spectacle for the tourist. The negative thing is differentiation, they selected buildings that represent religious and civil power, the Cathedral, the Justice Palace, and so on. Private property owners petitioned the government to have their buildings included in the scheme, but this was rejected. Of course, the lighting could always be removed again, but this would be difficult. Once these sorts of things are put into motion, they are difficult to stop. I worry about the trivialization of patrimony, about standardizing all the Mexican cities. We (specialists) have not found a good way to diffuse patrimony yet without it becoming banal and superficial. All these historic centers in Mexico represent the same era, but regionally and locally, there are great differences, and they would lose their local identity if all followed Morelia’s example.

— Mercado López (*ibid.*), *Personal Interview.*
One reason why private owners might have been rejected in seeking their building to be illuminated was to avoid potential accusations of favoritism. Furthermore, the location of private properties might not coincide with the planned ensemble. Like Carlos Hiriart, Eugenio Mercado questioned where the illumination scheme would end. His greatest concern was the unresolved issue of public transport in Morelia:

The issue is that there is no real public transport here. It is full of corruption. It is neither in the interest of the government nor the people involved in transport that it is cleaned up, because then the business, the easy money aspect is lost. Theoretically, the state government is in charge of public transport, and gives concessions to individuals. Theoretically, anyone can purchase a concession for a taxi or a minibus, but that is not true, you have to have connections. And even if you have connections, you pay US$10,000 for a concession. Or, you simply drive your taxi illegally and pay a monthly fee to an official. So you see, money changes hands and it seems convenient for everyone involved to maintain this system.

— Mercado López (2006b), Personal Interview.

Finally, he expressed concerns over the “canalization” of funds in the historic center. Other parts of the city were left out, and while the assumption was that cultural patrimony would bring a better standard of living to everyone, this was not the case, or could only be substantiated anecdotally.

The picture that is reinforced here is that of complexity, lack of institutional vision for heritage and tourism based on heritage, the corruption of authorities and how difficult it is to maintain follow through on projects and the diffusion of the importance of heritage. For example:

In IMDUM, the staff are specialists, they have had adequate training, but in the cadastral office, they are not specifically trained and thus, only have a very limited vision, only concerned with taxation. This causes all sorts of difficulties. Mainly, the cadastral staff will not have a broader understanding, why it is important to have mixed uses in the historic center, instead of only businesses. For them, business tax is lucrative, of course.

— Mercado López (ibid.), Personal Interview.
Furthermore, the sustainability of tourism was not considered, with the need for an equilibrium recognized by these specialists, but the government seemingly unconcerned.

5.6 Planning and legislating for and in the historic center

Introduction

The first state laws to protect patrimony appear in Michoacán in the early 1930s. In May 1930, the “Decree no. 99” is published, which aimed to protect historic and artistic buildings (Ramírez Romero, 2004, p. 25). A year later, “Law of Protection and Conservation of monuments and natural beauty” is introduced, which took a more inclusive approach in terms of what ought to be protected (ibid., p. 26). Concern over the changing nature of Morelia’s architecture prompted more state legislation in 1956, the “Reglamento para la Protección y Conservación del Aspecto Típico y Colonial de Morelia,” with its particular emphasis on the protection of Morelia’s colonial architectural heritage. In the wake of the 1972 Federal Law, Michoacán implemented its own law aiming to catalog and conserve monuments, historic, touristic, and archaeological zones in the state in 1974.

In 1978, INAH opened its regional Michoacán office, paradoxically leading to “duplication of activities of state and municipal institutions, creating a clash between federal and state laws,” (ibid., p. 21) instead of more effective protection of patrimony. Beginning in 1981, an urban development plans was introduced in Morelia, and initially approved by the state Secretariat of Urbanism and Public Works. In 1983, the State legislature approved this plan, but in the mean time, the General Human Settlement was in the midst of reform, so the “Plan Director de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia” was formally approved and slated for application in 1987 (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 32), (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 432). However, due to the demographic pressures Morelia experienced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the “Plan Director” was yet again updated in 1991 (2001, p. 32).

In 1993, the federal government issued a new version of the Human Settlement Law, prompting Michoacán to revise its Urban Development Law for the whole state in 1995. This law devoted an entire chapter specifically to cultural patrimony within the state’s urban centers (ibid., p. 33). That year, Morelia’s municipal government formed IMDUM to
address the city’s planning needs (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 33). The 1995 Reglamento as described in Section 5.4, met with failure, as it simply proved too controversial and particularly steeped in a “vision of passive preservation of the historic center” (Hiriart Pardo, 2006a, p. 440). Planning efforts as regarded the street trade were promised in 1996 (Hidalgo Lugo, 1996e).

In 1998, the municipal government approved the Reglamento Urbano de los Sitios Culturales y Zonas de Transición del Municipio de Morelia, Estado de Michoacán de Ocampo which would be one of the antecedents of the plan that would eventually lead to the removal of street vendors and to the decentralization of governmental (federal, state, and local) offices out of the historic center. The earlier failed attempt of 1995 had necessitated this rethink and redevelopment of protective measures, but it, too, was not effectively applied, nor, as architect Carlos Alberto Hiriart Pardo (2006, p. 441) pointed out, did it include much of a tourism strategy.

Master Plan for the Rescue of Morelia’s Historic Center, 1999

During the 458th celebration of Morelia’s foundation in May of 1999, an alliance of concerned citizens and experts approached both the municipal and state governments with the Master Plan for the Rescue of Morelia’s Historic Center. Only days earlier, on 13 May, the Programa de Desarrollo Urbano de la Ciudad de Morelia 1998–2015 had been officially published and thus become a legal reality. The municipal government had approved the Programa in December 1998. It was developed with the help of IMDUM. The Master Plan drew on the research and conclusions presented in the Programa, and, at six pages, is concise, and to the point, as to the actions that needed to be implemented. The Programa listed problems such as the concentration of services in the center of the city as a major challenge, and the deterioration of the environment. To address the historic center specifically, the Programa recommended the urgent elaboration of a partial plan (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 1999b, p. 8–10). In fact, the Programa emphasized that the two most important actions that needed to be taken were the Master Plan as well as an action plan to address roads and transportation. Actions listed concerning the historic center were the rearrangement of the street vendors and the relocation of the central bus station to the periphery.

The Master Plan divides the rescue plan into three stages. In its first stage, the de-
concentration of government offices in the historic center needed to be initiated. The following state government offices were to be moved:

- Civil registry,
- Administration and Personnel Development,
- Administrative Office cellar,
- Procurement Committee,
- Administrative unit of the Government Secretariat,
- Local board of Conciliation and Arbitration,
- Public Defender’s Office,
- State Board of Public Safety,
- State Population Council,
- Department of Prevention and Social Rehabilitation,
- Supreme Court of the State,
- Coordinating Committee for Transportation,
- Michoacán Institute of Youth,
- Police and Transport Headquarters,
- Civil Protection,
- Fire Department,
- Regional Delegation of the National Migration Institute,
- Commentary Section of the State Congress (Villicaña Palomares, 2002, p. 2).

Some municipal government offices were also to be consolidated into a new Administrative Unit building in the Manatiales neighborhood.

The second stage involved moving the bus station out of the historic center into a new facility in the city’s outskirts. Its construction began in 2000 and it started operations in 2001 (2002, p. 3). The new station was four times larger than the old station, allowing for more buses to arrive and passengers to be processed. Licensed taxis operate on a fixed price basis from the station to the historic center. However, this bus station addressed only longer distance travel, but not local transportation. The plethora of mini-bus routes that traverse the historic center remain a problem, and the driver unions have proven resistant to compromise.
Stage three addressed the relocation of Morelia’s street vendors. There were varying estimates as to how many stalls were located in the historic center, from 1,500 (2002, p. 3), to 1,800, including 25 different street vendor unions (Ramírez Romero, 2005), to 2,000 (López Paniagua and Madrigal, 2001, p. 146), and as high as 2,480 (Cabrales, 2005, p. 42). The need to relocate them was manifold, according to the Master Plan. For one, their stalls obstructed public thoroughfares, and public space in general, which was illegal, and many buildings were affected directly through the attachment of tarpaulins with nails and hooks, and other semi-permanent means to set up stands. Figure 5.36 shows the Valladolid square in front of San Francisco convent prior to the relocation of street vendors in June 2001. The fountain is the only area of the square that is not covered by stalls. Furthermore, the Master Plan highlighted the visual as well as physical contamination of the historic center due to the stalls, the transit disruptions (for pedestrians as well as vehicles), the provision of illegal services, the negative impact of the stalls on the tourism trade and the population more
generally, and unfair competition between established, tax-paying businesses and non-tax paying street vendors. Obviously, the public purse suffered too due to tax evasion.

In order to accommodate the street vendors, seven in-door markets were built to fit small stalls. Five of the markets were in the historic center, one near the new administrative unit in Manantiales, and another near the new bus station. Figure 5.37 shows the location of the “Tu plaza” (“Your square”) markets, as they were branded, in the historic center and the number of stalls they could accommodate. A total of 1,225 stalls could fit into these markets. The concentration of markets in the southwestern quadrant was probably not intentional, but due to available space, or rather, lack thereof in the historic center. It took nearly two years of negotiations to convince the vendors and their unions that this relocation would prove beneficial. However, not all unions agreed, making the overnight intervention to remove the vendors on the night of 4 June to 5 June 2001 tense, though fortunately, no violence ensued (Ramírez Romero, 2004). Clearly, the negotiating efforts as well as deferred loans on the new stalls (for ten years), and interim payments as vendors waited for the completion of markets, helped pave the way to the removal (2005, p. 44). Figure 5.38 shows the municipal government’s advertising campaign to promote the “Tu Plaza” markets in July 2008. As early as 2005, however, the markets were struggling to fill the stalls and attract shoppers (Hamilton, 2005).

The Master Plan goes on to explain that some forms of street vending, such as selling of balloons, cotton candy, roses, and small toys could continue in the historic center. These vendors are clearly identifiable, as they have armbands that include a registration number, and they typically wear dark overalls, too, which bear the logo of the municipality. Through the sponsorship of the local newspapers, including La Voz, seventy-six small booths for shoe shiners were installed to provide their services on the Plaza de Armas and other public squares (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2002, p. 105). Figure 5.39 shows a shoe-shining booth in Carmen square. The shoe-shiner is wearing a black shirt with yellow and red stripes on the sleeves, the official colors of the municipal government at the time. All the booths are dark-green, to blend into the setting.

The Master Plan also did not shy away from corporate sponsorship. To encourage cleanliness in the historic center, it allowed Coca-Cola to install 231 trash receptacles. I encountered these during my first visit, in October 2005 (see Figure 5.40). By the time I
Figure 5.37: Morelia’s “Tu Plaza” market locations.
(Based on: ibid., p. 45)
Figure 5.38: “Tu Plaza” advertisement, Valladolid Square, July 2008.
(Photo by author)
returned in August 2006, the sign portion featuring Coca-Cola had been removed.

Perhaps the most important, because more long-term oriented step outlined in the Master Plan was the establishment of the Coordinación General de Preservación y Desarrollo del Centro Histórico de Morelia, (General Coordination Office of Preservation and Development of the Historic Center of Morelia). It began working in February of 2002, under the auspices of the municipal government. Its main objective was to “give continuity to the work of the rescue of the historic center” (2002, p. 4).
Partial Program of Urban Development of the Historic Center of Morelia, 2001

The Programa Parcial de Desarrollo Urbano del Centro Histórico de Morelia, Michoacán was published and approved in late 2001. It is 149 pages long, and divided into five parts. Part 1 focuses on the legislative background (federal and state), as well as a detailed diagnostic of the historic center, including the delimitation of the Programa parcial, demographics, economy, environment, roads, public transport, built patrimony, and a synthesis of the problems in the area. About sixty pages are devoted to the diagnostic. In Part 2, the Programa focuses on the normative, and various other planning tools that impinge on the historic center, various private, public, and social programs, and the objectives of the Programa. Part 3 focuses on the strategic aspects of the Programa, such as the general strategy.
Table 5.8: Landuse in Morelia’s historic center, 2001.
(Source: ibid., p. 27.)

<table>
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<th>Landuse</th>
<th>Monument Area (Ha)</th>
<th>Monument Area (%)</th>
<th>Transition Area (Ha)</th>
<th>Transition Area (%)</th>
<th>Combined Area (Ha)</th>
<th>Combined Area (%)</th>
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<td>74.19</td>
<td>35.18</td>
<td>155.04</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0.46</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop/Store</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.22</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>57.92</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plazas/open spaces</td>
<td>21.06</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>64.81</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50.57</td>
<td>23.98</td>
<td>115.38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>271.46</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>210.86</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>482.32</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for urban development, norms for improvement and revitalization, including the new, permanent market spaces for street vendors, and priority projects, such as the San Francisco–Villalongin garden quadrant (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2001, p. 120). In Part 4, more programs are discussed, such as the updating of major infrastructure. Part 5 discusses the various legal, economic, administrative, and communicative instruments to facilitate the implementation of the Programa, including strategies to engage citizens and promote the historic center.

Housing, businesses, infrastructure and roads dominate the land uses (Table 5.8) (Figure 5.13). The lack of parking spaces is quite pronounced in all three areas. These land uses are significant because they generate a lot of traffic into the historic center to make use of services and businesses, increasing the demand for already scarce parking (ibid., p. 28). The Programa further established that about 63 percent of economically active persons were active in the central zone of the city (ibid., p. 22). While international visitors declined from 1997 to 1998 by 21,284 from 50,181 to 28,897, national visitors increased, from 992,739 to 1,065,263, with occupancy rates or, overnight stays, of 48 percent and 49 percent for those years, respectively (ibid., p. 23). In 1999, Morelia had 173 hotels and
Despite urban growth, buildings in the historic center predominately are two stories high, with 5,259 buildings or 48.29 percent of buildings of that height. 5,152 or 45.44 percent are one story high. These figures include the transition zone. However, there are 74 four-story buildings in the historic center, and a further 56 in the transitional zone, totaling 130 for the entire area. Still, the cathedral towers, at 68 meters, are the highest structure in the historic center (2001, p. 28–29).

The majority of lots in the historic center, 101, were devoted to educational facilities, followed by 40 open spaces and plazas. Government offices, at 24, and health facilities with 23, were the next largest categories. Furthermore, 28 churches are in the historic center as well as 18 cultural facilities. Thus the great need to access the historic center, to access kindergartens, primary, secondary, and college-level educational centers, conduct business with the various scales of government, receive health care, attend religious services and cultural events (ibid., p. 31).

The Programa also provided information on a census of the street vendors, which determined that there were 1,697 stands in the historic center. 293 were in sector República, 22 in Revolución, 460 in Independencia, and the overwhelming majority, 922, in Nueva España, which included Plaza Valladolid, with 180 stalls (Figure 5.36). It noted that the majority of vendors had given up their spaces on 5 June 2001 (ibid., p. 37–39).

The Programa then runs briefly through the city’s history, its built heritage (see Table 5.10), natural heritage, and intangible heritage (ibid., p. 52–57). The Programa’s annex includes nine maps to show different phenomena, such as the built heritage, building heights, and urban image, and eight maps related to various projects. As regards the urban image, for instance, the Programa highlighted that the transitional zones and access points to the historic center show the greatest inconsistencies with an otherwise homogeneous area. Specifically, billboards and other large advertisements, as well as the remaining telephone cables contribute to visual contamination. Other, perhaps more significant threats, are of course earthquakes and the fact that Morelia’s drainage system is woefully lacking—any sustained downpour can lead to localized flooding, which causes a variety of problems (ibid., p. 62).

The Programa highlighted the importance of “Cien Ciudades” investment in various
The objectives of the Programa were divided into general objectives and specific objectives. The specific objectives included: population, land use, housing, roads and transport, public space, infrastructure, environment, built heritage of the historic center, and urban image. General objectives:

- Preserve and improve the heritage characteristics: urban layout, buildings, environment, and cultural heritage of the historic center.
- Order the functions and activities in the historic center to improve it and its environment for residents, users, and visitors.
- Preserve the role and character of the historic center as a dynamic and lively center, with a diverse mix of commercial, social, cultural, and recreational activities for the
benefit of visitors and residents.

- Preserve and improve housing to ensure permanent residential use of the historic center for the benefit of the vitality of the historic center.

- Avoid the construction of further regional facilities that will cause unnecessary attraction of population to the historic center and highlight the need to strengthen urban sub-centers and particularly the sub-center of the southwestern part of Morelia as the Urban Development Plan suggests.

- Establish mechanisms and instruments required for the protection and conservation of the historic center with the participation of municipal, state, and federal agencies, and community organizations in the city (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2001, p. 84).

All of this looks good on paper, but the implementation and enforcement ability remain vague. Perhaps this is to be expected of “general objectives.” What of the specific objectives?

- Population: Encourage residency and establishment of a greater sense of community through incentive programs, simplify administrative procedures, defense of the character and identity of neighborhoods and improve the living conditions of the historic center.

- Land uses: Establish land use zoning, to ensure a mix of commercial and residential uses and a buffer to favor residential uses, in keeping with the character and the potential of the different areas of the historic center.

- Define the norms of occupation and land use intensity to help control capital gain and the speculation of the same, reducing the pressure of these aspects on the built heritage and housing.

- Regulate land use as a determining factor for the care and rehabilitation of heritage, structure, and urban image in the historic center.

- Identify uses inconsistent with the character of the historic center of the built heritage and generators of deterioration of the urban image.

- Determine the most adequate uses for vacant lots, from an economic, social and cultural point of view, and the industrial activity in the northern section of the historic center.
• Housing: Maintain residential uses on the periphery of the study area and a significant proportion of mixed uses such as housing, businesses, offices, within the historic center to contain the population's displacement.
• Determine the necessary requirements and stimuli for housing support in the historic center.
• Promote the improvement of existing neighborhoods with support from the public, private, and social sectors to maintain a diverse mix of people.
• Encourage diverse forms of homeownership and rental housing options to provide options for populations of all income levels.
• Roads and transport: Establish a road hierarchy, according to Morelia's Urban Development Plan, to control the flow of private vehicles and public transport, and enforce parking restrictions.
• Improve public transport routes to avoid overloads.
• Relocate the overland bus station.⁹
• Relocate street vendors who operate stalls near main thoroughfares.¹⁰
• Schedule and enforce timetables for loading and unloading of trucks in the commercial and administrative areas, and prohibit the parking of large vehicles.
• Enforce double parking and sidewalk parking prohibitions.
• Determine appropriate parking possibilities in the vicinity of the historic center, according to current supply and demand and how they might meet the characteristics of the historic center.
• Improve pedestrian areas with street furniture, trees, signs, etc.
• Public space: Relocate street vendors.¹¹
• Establish a structure that links, highlights, and enhances the overall quality and environmental values of public spaces for a quality of life improvement.
• Dignify the public space of the historic center with improvements of sidewalks, street furniture, trees, signage, and lighting to enhance the local and visitor experience of the space and thus make better use of the built heritage that defines it.
• Infrastructure: Identify the areas of the historic center that require improved water,

⁹By the time of the Programa’s publication, this had already been achieved.
¹⁰This too had been implemented by the Programa’s publication.
sewage, and storm drainage systems.

- Determine the next stages in the subterranean cabling project.¹²
- Determine the need to put public lighting cables and telephony underground.
- Facilities: Identify if and how education and health facilities contribute to congestion, and determine which public offices can be relocated without detrimental effects on the character of the historic center.¹³
- Identify actions necessary to improve the operation of existing public facilities in the historic center.
- Promote the urban sub-centers in the western part of the city, as well as the Neighborhood Centers as proposed by the Urban Development Plan to alleviate some of the pressure that now falls on the historic center.
- Environment: Promote and rescue public space, structure roads and transport, increase the number of trees, efficiency of garbage collection, and other efforts to improve the environment and thus the enjoyment and livability of the historic center.
- Heritage in the historical center: Highlight the heritage character of the entire historic center, fully linking cultural, natural, and built heritage as a unit.
- Make an inventory of monumental, relevant, and traditional architecture for a corresponding catalog and its incorporation into the regulation of the Programa.¹⁴
- Rehabilitate and take advantage of built heritage and public spaces for the development of new cultural, financial, commercial, and service opportunities, including housing land uses wherever possible to ensure mixed land uses.
- Establish norms that prevent the “aplanados” from being removed, and encourage their reapplication in buildings where they have been removed previously but were historically present.
- Encourage the conservation of popular and traditional architecture, as a form of physical evidence of the city’s history, and a complementary heritage to monumental and relevant architecture.
- Establish a policy that encourages new buildings to reflect contemporary architecture, but sympathetically fits in with historical buildings, instead of copying histor-

¹²First begun in 1995, but not inclusive of telephony cables.
¹³Some public offices had already been moved, as determined in the Plan Maestro from 1999.
¹⁴INAH’s building catalog was published in 2001; it appears that the Programa wanted its own version.
ichical styles.
- Establish legal, administrative, and financial instruments and foment public participation to ensure the preservation and improvement of existing built heritage.
- Establish programs to diffuse information and raise awareness in the community about the importance and need for preservation and enhancement of natural, cultural, and built heritage.
- Urban Image: Establish specific regulatory norms to achieve integrated improvement of the urban image, including the goals already outlined here and in the application of the Programa.
- Determine specific actions and programs to rescue and care for the urban image of the historic center of Morelia, particularly those related to public space, adding trees to the historic center, and the norms for commercial signage (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2001, p. 84–88).

 Needless to say, this is an ambitious list, although some of the points had already been achieved through the Master Plan. Again, most of the means of implementation are sufficiently vague enough to seem ambitious, yet who will enforce all the norms? Obviously, the Programa wanted to present itself as an extension of the Master Plan and thus associate itself with some of that tools’ success. Many of the goals also seem repetitive, or perhaps the overlap is so great that devising separate categories seems purely an exercise to feign completeness. Interestingly, there is very little in the goals that addresses duplication of effort or directly assigns responsibility to a particular scale of government. Again, one is left with no real sense of financing various projects, nor enforcing greater control over land uses.

 To combat the parking problem, the Programa suggested making use of empty lots, onto which two or three story parking lots could be built. It determined that about 2,000 parking spots could be added in that manner (ibid., p. 97–98). While that still would leave a deficit, based on demand, of 1,700 spots, it would take some pressure of the sidewalks. It further suggested that any subterranean parking would require careful analysis if the area could support it (ibid., p. 98). What becomes clearer is that the Programa does not categorically rule out anything, even though on the face of it, subterranean parking seems bound to put built heritage above at risk—if not through the initial construction, then
Table 5.9: Proposed land uses for Morelia’s historic center.
(Source: ibid., p. 102.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Historic Center (Ha) (%)</th>
<th>Transitional Zone (Ha) (%)</th>
<th>Combined (Ha) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed residential</td>
<td>67.33 (25)</td>
<td>15.54 (7)</td>
<td>82.87 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>54.36 (20)</td>
<td>53.95 (26)</td>
<td>108.31 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential with basic commerce</td>
<td>49.74 (18)</td>
<td>73.03 (35)</td>
<td>122.77 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed commercial</td>
<td>45.51 (17)</td>
<td>2.94 (1)</td>
<td>48.45 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open spaces</td>
<td>21.26 (8)</td>
<td>2.16 (1)</td>
<td>23.42 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic infrastructure</td>
<td>18.36 (7)</td>
<td>19.89 (10)</td>
<td>38.25 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed commercial corridor</td>
<td>6.57 (2)</td>
<td>15.17 (7)</td>
<td>21.74 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional infrastructure</td>
<td>5.48 (2)</td>
<td>13.31 (6)</td>
<td>18.79 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed district corridor</td>
<td>2.85 (1)</td>
<td>14.87 (7)</td>
<td>17.72 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>271.46</strong></td>
<td><strong>210.86</strong></td>
<td><strong>482.32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

perhaps through the sustained traffic.

The Programa detailed 2001 land uses (Table 5.8), but also proposed set of land uses (Table 5.9). What stands out here, particularly compared with Guanajuato, is the amount of information that IMDUM had managed to gather, Morelia’s officials could at least count on somewhat current information when the Programa was published. Still, it remains unclear how these proposed land uses might be achieved.

In the next section of the Programa, the responsibilities of various projects are divvied up among different actors, for example, INAH, and whether a project was short, medium, or long-term in terms of completion. Finally, the Programa discusses the legal instruments, business regulations, economic instruments and mechanisms, social participation instruments, and dissemination and social communication instruments it would need to employ to implement the Programa’s objectives (2001, p. 134).

The Federal Human Settlement Law and the Federal Ecological Equilibrium and Environment Protection Law apply here, as does the state’s Urban Development Law from 1995, and Morelia’s Urban Development Program 1998–2015. Furthermore, the 1990 Declaration as a Federal Monumental Zone, and UNESCO’s World Heritage designation apply, and Morelia’s 1998 Reglamento Urbano de los Sitios Culturales y Zonas de Transición del Municipio de Morelia, Estado de Michoacán (ibid., p. 9).¹⁵ Based on these legal

¹⁵This law was never enforced properly (see Section 5.6).
precedents, a popular consultation was required, as was a presentation of the Programa to SEDUE. Furthermore, the city council had to approve it and it needed to be disseminated via regular media channels, such as local newspapers (2001, p. 134). The Programa again called for the short-term implementation of a catalog of historical buildings.

While IMDUM was in charge of planning, research, and operative regulations, the Public Works Secretariat, COPLADEMUN and Municipal Public Services were responsible for the implementation and realization of projects (ibid., p. 136). If necessary, more regulation would be developed to control land use changes. Thus, control over land uses remained very vague. Equally, financial support was uncertain, with the discontinuation of the federal “Cien Ciudades” program in 1999 (ibid., p. 138). ANCMPM was expected to do the fundraising legwork and much hope was pinned on international institutions, including UNESCO—although it does not give money except in emergency situations (ibid., p. 138). Further funding was expected through BANOBRAS loans, and SECTUR, which would fund tourism-related projects, such as promotion and urban image improvements (ibid., p. 139). This is where the discussion of funding sources ends.

Next, ideas center on how to foster community involvement in preservation, such as reviving neighborhood fiestas and other traditions, producing oral histories of neighborhoods, and more typical publications about the historic center. Esperanza Ramírez’ Patronato features prominently as a detonator for citizen participation. Beyond that, these initiatives again remain vague (ibid., p. 142).

Finally, the media needed to report on the progress of the rescue of the historic center, through a variety of means, such as expositions and conferences, and a continual radio and television campaign to remind viewers not to park on sidewalks, respect public spaces, and encourage community efforts to protect and maintain public spaces. Urban maps detailing the various government projects were also suggested, but as far as I know, never produced (ibid., p. 144). To further promote Morelia in the tourism realm, programmed tours of the historic center, guided tours of Morelia’s museums, the development of the Museum of Morelia, gastronomic sampling, live entertainment in the historic center, and tourism transportation, such as a tram, were suggested (ibid., p. 145).

For an intensely rich document, the Programa still leaves much to be desired, particularly in the realm of financing its ambitious projects. Furthermore, there is no mention
of how difficult coordination among the different actors might be, or what obstacles these coordination problems might engender. The amount of information about the historic center is staggering, particularly where land uses are concerned. But it remains unclear how land use changes might be avoided. To enforce the proposed land uses, surely, more surveillance and monitoring would be needed which either cannot be afforded or simply would be too controversial. Property owners of heritage buildings already feel constrained due to the requirements placed upon them in terms of materials that can be used in construction projects and the associated costs.

The National Institute of Anthropology and History’s 2001 Catalog of Morelia’s built heritage

It is worth reflecting on and discussing INAH’s Catalog of Morelia’s built heritage here. The Catalog was published in 2001. It includes a history of the city, an analysis of its architecture throughout different centuries, its public spaces, urban planning provisions, and tourism in historic cities. In stark contrast with Guanajuato’s catalog, it managed to provide a much more detailed snapshot of Morelia’s architectural heritage. Aside from a general map of the area, as seen in Figure 5.41, each building is photographed, its location plotted, and a floor plan included. INAH’s map of the historic center once again does not feature a distance scale. In the original, the different sectors are only numbered, but not named, as I have done here. I have translated the legend, but beyond that, made no further modifications.

Access to buildings differed, of course, and many of the floor plans are labeled “no acceso,” meaning the inventory takers were not able to access the building. Of course, accessing abandoned buildings in uncertain states of disrepair would have put the staff at risk. However, in many cases, they may have not found anyone at home, thus preventing access. A pilot project to catalog the city’s architectural heritage was launched in 1998. Members of CNMH, the regional INAH center, and students from the architecture department of the University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo participated in taking stock of buildings in the central blocks of the historic center. This was mainly done to garner support and interest in the catalog (2001, p. 42). Twenty-seven students participated in the pilot study (ibid., p. 50).

Following a review of the inventory procedure from January 1999 to March, and a
workshop to train students, the rest of the city's buildings were inventoried from October to December of that year. Six teams, with a total of twenty-eight Master's students carried out the inventory (CONACULTA/INAH–Ayuntamiento de Morelia, Michoacán, 2001, p. 49–50). Results were reviewed in 2000. In Morelia, 1,601 buildings were cataloged, including 38 buildings that had to be inventoried twice because of separate entrances on different streets (ibid., p. 43). The 1990 census served as the basis for numbering the properties. The example property is INAH's office in Morelia, numbered 160530010627. 16 denotes the state of Michoacán, 053 the municipality of Morelia, 001 is the number for the city of Morelia, and 0627 denotes the building. Figure 5.42 shows where the INAH building is,
but does not give much geographical context. It is close to a particular landmark, however, the Villalongin garden, which helps, but all the location maps are of this style, making it difficult for first-time users to properly locate buildings. To give a better sense of the property’s location, I modified the catalog’s map of the Revolución sector, in which the INAH office is located. Figure 5.43 shows half of the sector. The inset map shows the whole sector, as a reference, in yellow, and the whole historic center. Figure 5.44 shows the property from the outside, with a particular focus on the awning, as included in the catalog. Unfortunately, the digitized catalog does not feature the notes and descriptions of each property, only the photographs, maps, and floor plans. Each property is described and the state of its walls is categorized into good, regular, and bad. The same categories apply to the façades, awnings, and inner walls, if and when they were accessible to the inventory teams. Any
Figure 5.43: Morelia’s Revolución sector, with INAH office location.
(Source: ibid., Map modified by author)
historical information that was previously noted was carried forward, such as if and when buildings were modified, by whom, its uses over time, and if any historical events of importance happened within it (2001, p. 45). Figure 5.45 shows the patio inside the INAH office. Only representative photos of the insides were taken, most likely, there was no time to take photos of each room or space, nor the ability to process and index all of them. Finally, Figure 5.46 shows the layout of the INAH offices. The building has two patios and is about 40 meters long, but only roughly 10 meters wide, and not uniformly so. Like the majority of cataloged buildings, it is only one story high.

This example gives a good idea of the level of detail involved in this inventory. It also provides a useful snapshot of the state of buildings at that particular time. There have been various calls to update the catalog, but they have not yet come to fruition. The time-consuming nature of the fieldwork and associated costs are probably to blame ((Garza
Figure 5.45: Inside INAH’s office on Madero Avenue.
(Source: ibid.)

Figure 5.46: Floor plan of INAH’s office.
(Source: ibid.)
Hernández, 2007), (Garza Hernández, 2007)). However, with the continued presence of architecture students at the San Nicolás University, a willing labor force should be available. The longer a new catalog is not pursued, however, the greater the discrepancies and loss of architectural heritage will most likely be.

**Management Plan of the Historic Center, 2007**

In late 2006, IMDUM, with the support of SEDESOL, the Hábitat program, and the municipal government, published the *Plan de Manejo del Centro Histórico 2007* (Management Plan of the Historic Center 2007), which followed on from the *Programa Parcial de Desarrollo Urbano del Centro Histórico de Morelia, Michoacán* of 2001. The document is 223 pages long. It is divided into five parts, referred to as “fases” or phases

1. Initial situation
2. Desired situation
3. Organization
4. Execution
5. Monitoring and evaluation

In the first phase, the city’s history and urban characteristics are recounted. Furthermore, the delimited area is discussed, as well as the city and the center’s population (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2006, p. 165–174). Unlike Guanajuato, Morelia has documented the slow residential retreat out of the historic center. In 2005, 35,734 people lived there, with 30,972 projected for 2010. In 2000, there were still 40,000 residents (ibid., p. 174). For the planners, this trend was unacceptable and worrisome, especially because residential land use was being transformed predominantly into commercial land use.

680 residences were lost in the historic center and the transitional area in the five-year period 1990 to 1995, a loss of 136 per year. This is quite a high loss, considering that new housing demand in the city amounted to 4,388 units per year (ibid., p. 184). The loss of

¹⁶The document was compiled as a PDF, but no page numbers were included. Therefore, page references are based entirely on the PDF pagination. Much of the preliminaries are consumed by repeated glossaries.
inhabitants brings with it a raft of problems, insecurity at night, abandoned areas, and continued deterioration of the building stock.

Parking is another persistent problem for the historic center, as is transportation more generally. The Plan established that 8,671 more parking spaces were needed to meet the demand and avoid parked cars on sidewalks. Eighty percent of the spaces were needed directly in the historic center, with the remainder in the transition area. Thus, the parking space deficit lies at 3,701 (Instituto Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Morelia, 2006, p. 197).

Public transportation in particular, with 41 total routes of mini-vans, provided by Urban Public Transportation that crisscross the historic center, and 48 urban and suburban routes, serviced by Transporte Público Michoacán using bigger vehicles, contribute to the congestion in the historic center. In 2000, there were 1,342 mini-vans, and 454 larger Transporte Michoacán units. The transportation landscape is further complicated by taxis, of which there were estimated to be 4,800, but there was no detailed census of taxis (ibid., p. 197–203). The Plan then quantifies the built heritage, as seen in Table 5.10.

The Plan acknowledged that most if not all the buildings in the historic center had been modified in some aspect, including the construction of “contemporary buildings that copy historical architectural styles, which create confusion in reading the built heritage of the city” (ibid., p. 206). Among the risks for the building stock of the historic center, the Plan cited the potential for seismic activity, the antiquated electric systems in homes, despite the updates achieved through subterranean cabling, and graffiti (ibid., p. 212–213).

The Plan emphasized its inclusivity and listed all the actors involved in shaping the historic center. These included 16 federal agencies, 10 state agencies, 20 local agencies,
14 organizations representing business interests, such as the local Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Restaurantes y Alimentos Condimentados (CANIRAC) and CANACO chapters, television, radio, newspapers, and telephone companies, 12 university departments as well as the local ICOMOS chapter, and 18 citizens organizations and individuals, ranging from the “Patronato del Centro Histórico,” Esperanza Ramírez’ organization, to balloon sellers and tourists and visitors (2006, p. 16–18). Aside from this list, the Plan does not discuss in detail how citizens were actually involved, leaving me to conclude that this commitment to citizen participation was merely pro forma.

It applied an analytical matrix called “FODA”, “fortalezas, oportunidades, debilidades, amenazas” or strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats in various categories. It clearly has become a popular planning methodology in Mexico, applied in historic centers in particular, and is based on strategic planning practices (García Del Castillo, Juárez, and Granados, 2010).

The list reproduced below come from the “urban development” category, but the same exercise is repeated for economic development, social development, the environment, administration and management of heritage. Amongst the strengths in urban development it counted:

- the consensus between society and authorities that the rescue, rehabilitation, conservation, and promotion of the historic center must be a joint effort
- the conviction that the conservation of tangible heritage gives identity to the historic center, the city, and the country
- the existence of plans and programs for whole of the city as well as for the historic center which provide a general framework for conservation and operation of the historic center
- the existence of many heritage sites in good condition (2006, p. 140).

Whether or not these actually hold true is an entirely different question. One could argue that listing only four strengths is in fact a weakness, but on the other hand, perhaps this is a rather realistic view. Particularly, the conviction that conservation bestows identity and not the identity encouraging or providing a basis for conservation is perhaps the most surprising contention. Could the importance of heritage be overstated here?
In terms of opportunities, the Plan highlighted:

- to improve the image of the historic center through more efficient public services focused on maintaining clean and orderly environments
- to develop programs that would de-concentrate unnecessary commercial activities and production in historic centers
- make urban development programs more concrete through wide societal participation to better define tasks and priorities
- to promote local and institutional partnership schemes to help earlier detection and solution of problems (2006, p. 140).

Interestingly, further de-concentration of public offices is not suggested here. All of the opportunities seem conveniently vague, thus, the possibility of exploring them exists, but we are not going to specify how and not commit to anything. Not surprisingly, the list of weaknesses is the longest of these four characteristics.

- highly deteriorated buildings, due to negligence and lack of maintenance, at risk of complete deterioration
- lack of an integrated image and authenticity conservation program in the historic center and its surroundings
- lack of coordination schemes that enable institutions and individuals to intervene on behalf of the built heritage
- lack of timely and efficient public services
- concentration of commercial and government offices in the historic center that lead to even more commercial and service-oriented activities
- falsification of architectural styles and/or inconsistencies in some contemporary buildings located in the context of the historic center
- lack of dissemination of the rules, regulations, and actions needed for the conservation of cultural patrimony
- transportation routes that focus on the same roads and stop everywhere along their trajectory in the historic center
- lack of pedestrian areas
- insufficient parking
• lack of attention on the transition zone of the historic center as well as non-cataloged buildings and contextual architecture (2006, p. 140–141).

Mimicking colonial building styles, perhaps to maintain overall visual coherence, still raises questions of authenticity, but as architect Torres Garibay (2008) pointed out, copying colonial architecture is easier than trying to insert contemporary, sympathetic architecture. The other concerns seem inline with commonly held views, although the lack of dissemination of regulations is rarely discussed.

Finally, the threats in the urban development category are described as:

• lack of a comprehensive intervention program for the rescue, rehabilitation, and maintenance of at-risk buildings that are frequently lost due to these circumstances
• continuing productive and commercial activities that do not coalesce with the goals of the historic center
• further concentration of vehicles in the historic center, due to the inefficiency of public transportation
• loss of cultural heritage properties due to negligence or willful misconduct on the part of the owners (2006, p. 140).

None of these particular threats seem surprising. In the economic development rubric, the weakness of a lack of an organizational structure that brings together various plans, programs, and projects in a holistic manner and the threat of the uneven distribution of wealth generated by the economic development of the historic center stand out (ibid., p. 142–143). Surely, the historic center has always been a site of uneven distribution of wealth, with Spanish family residences in the center and indigenous housing at the periphery. By what mechanism could it be made more just? Certainly, this would require a program of wealth redistribution, or perhaps some sort of subsidy for low-income property owners in the historic center. Both seems highly unlikely, given budget constraints.

With respect to social development, the Plan acknowledged that the authorities lack credibility in the eyes of civil society. This was considered a weakness. The sustained exit of inhabitants, as well as preferential treatment for certain interest groups over the general public’s access to the historic center posed a great threat (ibid., p. 143–144). Not surprisingly, increased traffic and diminished care for the city’s few green spaces were considered
the greatest environmental weaknesses and threats. Additionally, visual contamination caused by telephony cables was considered a threat (2006, p. 145). The lack of continuity in projects was identified as a weakness, in addition to the poor enforcement of existing regulation. The Plan further identified the tendency to duplicate actions and programs as a threat, as well as poor citizen participation and raising expectations that could not be fulfilled, be that due to financial constraints or lack of human resources (ibid., p. 147).

Certainly, this “FODA” approach might be useful as a starting point, a form of brainstorming to gather and group the issues concerning the historic center. However, there is also the potential for exposing the weaknesses of the Plan while simultaneously trying to sell it as an effective planning tool.

The Plan then goes on to discuss some of the projects that have been implemented in the historic center, such as the subterranean cabling, but urging the authorities to resume negotiations with TELMEX to remove the remaining telephony cables (ibid., p. 125). Encouraging mixed land uses was a huge priority, but proves difficult to incentivize. The Plan recognized the importance of mixed uses, and therefore, suggested a series of measures to promote residential use, from private and public investment in housing, to funding for the rehabilitation of the housing stock and construction of new housing on vacant lots (ibid., p. 126). It remains to be seen if that works. Housing demands in Mexico are typically such that middle and upper class families have at least one vehicle, where would they park it in the historic center? What sort of demographic should be attracted to reverse the trend?

One of the recommendations was to update INAH’s catalog of historic buildings from 2001. To improve the city’s environment, modern and efficient public transport vehicles would be needed to lower exhaust contamination and encourage people to rely on public transport (ibid., p. 130). The majority of the recommendations were short term goals, such as: ordering commercial signage, removal of signage that does not reflect the norm, restricting certain streets to public transport, improving green spaces, conserving the historic center’s fountains and repairing façades. In the medium term, a pedestrianized area should be created, for example, on Calle Hidalgo, which runs behind the cathedral, restricting vehicular access (ibid., p. 114). All these measures to help order and improve urban space. In the realm of preservation and giving value to built heritage, the short term goal was to transform the Palacio Clavijero into a museum and cultural space, reapplying
aplanados where buildings were altered, updating the city’s catalog of historic buildings and registering their condition, implementing an anti-graffiti program, and promoting the built heritage. In the medium term, the maintenance of façades should be made a priority, as well as repurposing the old justice palace, right on the Plaza de Armas into the municipal government headquarters (2006, p. 115).

Most short term recommendations for the improvement of the historic center’s environment focused on the rehabilitation of gardens and tree-lined areas, provision of street furniture, and improvement of public lighting. In the medium term, improved drainage and sewage problems more generally needed to be addressed, and public transport restructured (ibid., p. 116). All the promotional goals for tourism and cultural events were short term, continuing the promotion of various festivals, training tour guides, providing walking tours in the historic center, and improving visitor facilities (ibid., p. 117). Similarly, all the proposals for improvements in urban transportation were short term, which, minimally, was overly optimistic, if not a bit cynical, due to the complexity of the suggestions. They ranged from new surfaces, to intelligent traffic signals, to a new system of set bus stops, where currently, the mini buses will stop almost anywhere they are hailed (ibid., p. 117–118). Short term plans also included the rehabilitation of 118 residential buildings and in the medium term, the construction of new housing on the periphery of the transitional zone. While the agencies involved were listed, INAH, SEDESOL, IMDUM, the Secretariat of Public Works, the Secretariat of Social Development, there was no detail on financing these projects or any of the others (ibid., p. 118–119). Three markets in the historic center were also a short term rehabilitation project, as was the continuation of the Plan Luz. Perhaps one of the more unusual project, medium term, was to register “Morelia, Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad” and “Centro Histórico de Morelia, Patrimonio Mundial” as a brand to be able to control its use and diffusion (ibid., p. 120). Pursuing this registration in addition to promoting the city more internationally, and ensuring that heritage was more profoundly treated in the schools, were the main promotional targets. However, just after detailing all of these benchmarks, the Plan then specified its list of priority projects, which mainly were an enhanced and updated version of the projects in the Programa (see Section 5.6).

These priority projects were:
- Project San Francisco–Villalongín garden. Rehabilitation of built heritage, improvement of green space and vegetation, reorganization of public transport, controlling awnings and signage, controlling parking, illuminating the Plaza Villalongín, design of a pedestrianized area in this part of the city, improvement of public facilities.
- Project Market Independencia–Plaza Carillo. Similar scope to the previous project, though there were no plans for a pedestrianized area. Controlling advertisements and removing billboards was highlighted.
- Project Ex-Bus Station and Ex-Convent del Carmen. Repurposing the former overland bus station has been a priority since 2001. However, plans to convert the space into shopping facility have still not been realized. Private investment has stalled. Otherwise, the same sort of interventions as in the other projects.
- Project San José–Mercado Revolución. Redesigns of two markets, general improvement of green spaces, cleaning of façades, and reorganizing public transport were part of this particular project (2006, p. 121–122).

While updating the Programa was probably necessary, the Plan did not seem to break much new ground or provide much different, or even updated information about the historic center. It remained vague on financing in particular, but seemed convinced that ANCMPM could do a lot of the fundraising. It also suggested applying for international assistance, such as the World Bank (ibid., p. 113), but even the Inter-American Development Bank deems Mexico too advanced and prosperous to consider lending cities money for their historic centers (Hamilton, 2005). The Plan leaves many questions unanswered and no precise timetable for implementation. Perhaps most worrisome, much of the information was “recycled” from the Programa. Gathering these data, of course, is time-consuming and work intensive, but having not done so stands out.

### 5.7 Tourism, promotion, and tour guide livelihoods

#### Introduction

The 1980s had been a turbulent decade for Mexico and subsequently, Morelia. Politically, the state suffered due to instability, mainly in the state government. Consequently, tourism numbers were stagnant. Little is known in terms of data and publicity campaigns, because
the state Tourism Secretariat’s archive was lost, leaving the newly arriving administration in 1986 without access to statistics or publicity materials (Eugenio Mercado López, interviewed in Hiriart Pardo (2006a, p. 370)). Furthermore, the State Tourism Ministry was understaffed, with only 25 members, and consequently solely forged close ties with the private sector, mainly based in Morelia, due to the location of its offices (ibid., p. 371).

From the mid-1990s onward, Morelia committed itself to attracting cultural tourism instead of other types of tourism. Prior to Morelia’s World Heritage nomination, the State Tourism ministry had not made the connection between architectural patrimony and cultural tourism, heavily influenced by the poor relations between INAH and SECTUR, at the national scale. INAH was concerned about and opposed to the commercialization of patrimony, while SECTUR wanted to promote Mexico’s archaeological, cultural, and artistic legacies more aggressively (ibid., p. 372).

Once the street vendors were relocated, the focus on rebranding Morelia as a cultural tourism hub faced fewer obstacles and little opposition. It was also hugely successful.

Tourism in the media

Particularly Morelia’s La Voz emphasized the supposed non-polluting nature of tourism, “industria sin chimeneas,” the “industry without chimneys.” I found this description of the industry fascinating, perhaps in light of carbon footprint concerns many international travelers express today, twenty years later. There was no discussion about transport costs, or visitor capacity, or any other potentially negative outcome of tourism. This could further be influenced by the understanding that because little other industry existed in Morelia, there simply was no alternative to tourism to provide employment and income.

From 1986, the first year that data were available, average stays in Morelia were more than 2.7 days, jumping to an average of three days the following year, then declining slightly to 2.8 days in 1988, and 2.9 days in 1989. Interestingly, the newspaper reported in early 1989 that average stays amounted to only two days (Robles Soto, 1989). Tourism supplements in the paper featured iconic architecture, such as the Ex-Convent del Carmen, constructed from 1593 to 1596 and in the late twentieth century converted into the Casa de la Cultura (Mendoza Lopez, 1989) (see Figure 5.47), the Sweets Market and the city’s arches, and gardens (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989f; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial,
1989g). The country’s economic woes diminished tourism, however, especially national tourism, which the paper reported to be in decline by 20 percent, compared with the previous year (Troitiño Gutiérrez, 1989). Still, Morelia ranked amongst the most visited places in the state. In the period 1987 to 1988, 523 new hotel rooms were built in Michoacán and 82 remodeled. This was financed by loans from FONATUR, US$1.49 million, and the private sector investing about US$100,000 (Tinoco Noble, 1989b).

The local CANIRAC chapter organized a 40-hour training course for waitstaff, which was to be followed by another course for restaurant owners, and human resources staff (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989d). During the summer of 1989, the state SECTUR also sponsored training for those in the service industry (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989s). However, due to continued political instability in the state, projections for the
Easter holiday were muted (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989u). Nevertheless, the state made plans to increase roadside assistance to tourists and led a campaign to bolster the cleanliness and security of public spaces (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989j). This paid off, as the Easter holiday attracted 226,000 visitors to the state, who, on average, spent US$56 a day, to total nearly US$13 million, and filled the state’s hotel to 85 percent, and during the weekend to 100 percent capacity (Priego Silva, 1989).

The then newly appointed state tourism secretary, Enrique Léon Zepeda, promised a Master Plan for Tourism to reactivate the trade in the state, pinning hopes on a tourism corridor which would offer a variety of attractions to visitors (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989r). These efforts were bolstered by the national tourism secretary, who vowed to promote the state more actively nationwide (Tinoco Noble, 1989a). The paper frequently featured stories about cultural tourism destinations within the state and city, including museums (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989k; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989q; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989v; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989ab; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989ac). Guided walks through museums and important buildings were initiated in the summer of 1989, aimed at the local population as well as tourists (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989e; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989h; Vargas, 1989b). Residents needed to get to know their city, much like a tourist, to appreciate its history and valor (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989z).

Despite the political tensions, according to La Voz, it seemed that tourism was not suffering, with hotels still highly booked in the city, but local business sales were suffering (Gonzalez, 1989c). At the time, the PRD in Michoacán was heavily protesting, blocking roads, and organizing sit-ins, expressing their continued discontent with the electoral process. The paper Excelsior, however, disagreed, citing business leaders’ complaints as indicators that tourism was being negatively affected (Excelsior Editorial, 1989). Tourism, in general, was seen as an underutilized resource (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989aa) and in crisis, not solely due to interior problems, but also due to the United States’ economic difficulties (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989i).

Nevertheless, Morelia’s hotels were 95 percent full in anticipation of the Day of the Dead celebrations (Gonzalez, 1989b; Lopez Martinez, 1989b). On the year, 2.7 million visitors came to Michoacán (Cornejo Chavez, 1989). By the end of the year, hotel owners
were bemoaning declining reservation rates and an estimated US$5.5 million in losses (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989l). However, occupancy rates of 80 percent during peak visitor periods in Morelia implied a decent visitor rate (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989o). On the year, the occupancy rate was 55.3 percent, compared with Guanajuato’s 44.8 percent. From January to October 1989, 279,200 visitors were registered in Guanajuato, compared with 597,000 in Morelia (Gonzalez, 1990f). Thus, despite the difficulties and political turmoil, tourism did reasonably well in Morelia.

The newspaper published the state governments’ annual report, which highlighted the private sector’s investment in Morelia’s hotel infrastructure, creating 460 new rooms, at a cost of about US$162,180 (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1990). In terms of the state’s promotion, most of it had taken place at national conventions or in the United States. Projections for 1990 were better, though Michoacán’s image would have to be improved so that visitors would “consider the state as a destination with many important attractions, not one dogged by political problems” (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990b).

More importantly, SECTUR selected Michoacán as the first state in 1990 to receive federally organized tourism training, specifically for restaurant and hotel staff. Nineteen free courses were promised (Gonzalez, 1990c). Three hundred hotel and restaurant staff in Morelia began their training in March (Gonzalez, 1990b). The state tourism secretariat also began emphasizing how important preservation was to tourism, and that it would support these efforts in any way possible (Manuel Belmonte, 1990b). Residents perceived a drop in visitors for the year’s Easter holiday period, typically, a busy time of the year (Miranda Cortes, 1990e), but results showed that hotels in Morelia were nearly 90 percent full, and from Good Friday onwards fully booked (Gonzalez, 1990e). PROFECO did not register any complaints about tourism services during the holiday period (Ortiz Alcantara, 1990b).

In July 1990, small tourism businesses received a significant lift from easy access credits via the FONATUR fund. The federal government provided US$7.75 million, and the state a further US$860,000 (Lopez Martinez, 1990e). Still, hotel owners did not feel that SECTUR was giving sufficient support to the “industry without chimneys,” as it again was referred to (Lopez Martinez, 1990b). The then governor, Genovevo Figueroa, recognized that the political instability had led to tourism “fleeing” the state, but he outlined that the national
SECTUR would continue to promote the state. Erroneously, he also stated that SECTUR needed to clarify the steps it had taken to include both Morelia and Pátzcuaro as *World Heritage* sites (Lopez Martinez, 1990d).

Overall, however, the consensus was that Michoacán was not taking proper advantage of its tourism attractions and the remedy to this problem was more promotion (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1990i). Most worrisome was that only 2.4 percent of visitors came from abroad (Garcia Pineda, 1990p). More federal and state support was needed, argued hotel owners, and particularly, more training for staff (Garcia Pineda, 1990c; Garcia Pineda, 1990e; Garcia Pineda, 1990g). At the beginning of the summer vacation period, hotels in the state were 55 percent booked (Garcia Pineda, 1990a).

Oddly, the state ministry for tourism did not want to give current figures for how much labor was involved in tourism, for fear of creating controversy. In 1980, 8 percent of the economically active population had been in involved in commerce, and of those 23 percent explicitly worked in tourism—but the paper crucially did not include how many people were economically active in 1980, rendering this information useless (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1990j). Still, he insisted that tourism had remained productive, despite the political instability. However, no data were provided to support this statement (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1990aa). Mainly, this was due to the success of the second International Festival of Music and the integration into the “Ciudades Coloniales” program (Garcia Pineda, 1990d).

One of the most popular times of the year to visit Morelia is the end of October, and early November, for the Day of the Dead celebrations. According to the paper, 1990 was an exceptionally successful at drawing visitors for the holiday (Garcia Pineda, 1990b), filling the hotels to 85 percent capacity (Garcia Pineda, 1990l). Even unpublished tourism plans and publicity, in this case intended for promotion in 1991, were reported on in the media (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 1990u). The average 2.5 days (a length that was twice as long as Guanajuato’s average at the time) that visitors remained in Morelia at the time was not long enough for the State Tourism Ministry, so it initiated a low interest line of credit for potential investors to help improve the state’s tourism infrastructure (Garcia Pineda, 1990k; SIIMT, 2006b). Michoacaán’s head of the Tourism Ministry emphasized the need for all Morelianos to participate in the conservation and protection of the state’s tourism
attractions, particularly in light of the impending World Heritage nomination (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990q).

Overall, 1990 was deemed a successful year for tourism, with more than 2 million visitors estimated in Morelia alone (Lopez Martinez, 1990a). The upward trend continued through the Christmas season (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990r). The political instability that had dogged Morelia in the late 1980s seemed over, and confidence in the state's tranquility brought visitors back. To ensure that the influx of tourists would continue to grow, national flights from Cancún and Tijuana were hailed as a major step forward for the “industria sin chimeneas” (Lopez Martinez, 1990c). Further tourism infrastructure support came in the form of US$3.2 million to finance the overhaul of the state's highways and major connections to neighboring cities. Especially the route Mexico City – Morelia would be vastly improved, providing greater security on the road and greater transport loads (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991o).

During peak tourism times, as in Guanajuato, Michoacán took additional measures to ensure the safety of tourists and provide them with information upon arrival, mainly on highways (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991k). Easter in particular attracted many national visitors. The paper also published guides for visitors to Morelia, suggesting they visit Morelia’s State of Michoacán Museum (Vargas, 1991c). During 1991’s Easter vacation period, 713,400 tourists spent almost US$3 million in Michoacán (Sanchez Rincon, 1991a). In Morelia, hotel occupancy rose to 90 percent (Malpica, 1991c). The favorable trend continued through the summer vacation period (Manuel Belmonte, 1991b) and estimates predicted more than 3 million tourists for the entire year. 1988 had been the worst year for tourism, with only 2.2 million visitors, due the political upheaval that affected Michoacán (Manuel Belmonte, 1991e). Thus, the state was finally recovering from that instability.

For the Tourism Commission, the street vendors posed a huge problem for the city’s tourism image and economic development. The paper reported that the number of vendors had doubled in a year, from 800 to 1,600 (Malpica, 1991a). The Tourism Commission favored relocating the central bus station and readapting the station as a marketplace. The local CANACO chapter also supported this option and suggested setting up a trust fund to begin collecting the financial resources for the project, from local and state governments,
the private sector, and the street vendors themselves (Belmonte, 1991c). Hotel owners in particular were displeased by the government’s unwillingness or perhaps its inability to deal with the street vendor phenomenon, leading them to threaten with strikes (Malpica, 1991b). Of course the street vendors did not take their criticism lying down, nor found the relocation proposal acceptable, thereby entrenching positions, mainly because their point of view had not received much consideration (Hernández Gochi, 1991b).

The Day of the Dead 1991 was again a successful period for tourism, with 100 percent occupation of hotels in Morelia and Pátzcuaro, and Uruapan. Morelia gained nearly US$1.8 million, according to the Tourism Secretariat’s estimates (Lopez Martinez, 1991b). The Tourism Secretariat estimated 4 million visitors for the whole of 1991, and roughly US$22 million generated. Even more tourism was expected for 1992 (Malpica, 1991d).

For Easter 1993, Morelia’s hotels were nearly at capacity again (Estrada Chavez, 1993b; Sanchez Rincon, 1993k). Expectations for the holiday period were exceeded, with more than 250,000 visitors to the state (Sanchez Rincon, 1993h). The final numbers of registered visitors was 526,725, who spent about US$1.5 million. About 10 percent of the visitors were international tourists (Sanchez Rincon, 1993e).

The state’s promotional efforts included a campaign in Los Angeles, to inform immigrants about the state’s tourism attractions and package vacations (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993n). Surprisingly perhaps, the tourism sector only represented 4.8 percent of the state’s income, lagging far behind commerce with 56.6 percent. The state was committed to tourism, however, given that nearly 12 percent of the economically active population found employment in the sector (Estrada Chavez, 1993a).

The summer vacation period 1993 was deemed as slightly improved over the previous year, with 60 to 65 percent hotel occupation (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993l). The governor, Ausencio Chávez Hernández, highlighted his administration’s contribution to tourism and promotion in his first state of the state report, such as the agreement signed with the federal government to promote Michoacán, the mixed fund for colonial cities to promote Morelia and other cities, as well the three international flights launched from Morelia’s airport, connecting city (via Guadalajara and Zacatecas) to Chicago and San Francisco (Chávez Hernández, 1993b).

Primary school students were given a tourism primer so that they would be well in-
formed about the state’s tourism attractions and its cultural patrimony. This education could not be begun early enough, the Tourism Ministry argued, so that youngsters would value and better understand the state’s cultural and natural assets and preserve them for tourism (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1995f). SECTUR initiated training for tourism-related service providers such as taxi drivers, receptionists, and waiters (Ultereras, 1995f). Tourism was seen as a way out of the economic crisis, particularly with its ability to create direct and indirect employment (Estrada Chavez, 1995e). Tourism infrastructure had been improved with better highway communication between Mexico City and Morelia, and at the time, the airport offered connections to five US cities—far more than at present, with only a connection to Houston (Estrada Chavez, 1995c).

The state SECTUR demanded that a specific plan for Morelia’s historic center be devised, with the help of the newly established IMDUM, to improve the city’s attractiveness to tourists. The commitment to the tourism industry had to be reinforced by actions in the historic center. Preparations for visitor influx for the Day of the Dead celebrations led to 100 percent hotel bookings in Morelia, Pátzcuaro, and Uruapan (Estrada Chavez, 1995a).

Still, 1995 was a tough year in the tourism trade, with four 4-star hotels forced to close (Maldonado Perez, 1996). Nevertheless, Michoacán registered 189,109 visitors in hotels, 5,531 of which were international tourists during the Christmas holiday period 1995–1996 (Ultereras, 1996g). Unlike Guanajuato, tourists in Michoacán stayed at least 2.5 days and spent a total of US$7.5 million. This surpassed the overall average length of stays for 1995, 2.1 days, and 1996, 2.0 days (SIIMT, 2006b).

Despite the teacher’s strike in 1996, Morelia was the location for a major annual convention of Travel Agencies, with the hopes of promoting the city and the state, and encouraging agencies to include Morelia as a destination in their packages (Ultereras, 1996d). The tourism service providers demanded that INAH control the conservation of buildings and monuments much more closely in order to help attract more tourism to Morelia and further reiterated the need to relocate the street vendors so that visitors could better “admire our beautiful colonial buildings” (Cortez, 1996).

The 1996 summer vacation period brought an upsurge of tourists to the state, according to the state SECTUR office, with 518,577 registered tourists and more than US$20 million in economic output (Valdovinos Licea, 1996e). Ninety-five percent of these tourists
were national, only five percent from abroad. The positive trend continued during the Christmas vacation period, with hotels filled up to 98 percent (Valdovinos Licea, 1996a). The whole year was a huge success, generating more than US$90 million for the state. Furthermore, the state instituted a Tourism police force (much earlier than Guanajuato) and tour guides had been trained both by the regional INAH office and the Universidad Michoacana San Nicolás de Hidalgo (again, much earlier than in Guanajuato) (Valdovinos Licea, 1997b).

Governor Víctor Manuel Tinoco Rubí was celebrated as a keen promoter of the “industry without chimneys” after the publication of his first state of the state report (Valdovinos Licea, 1997c). The state’s SECTUR demanded that the street vendors be relocated in 1997, suggesting yet another alternative location, an abandoned cinema, located near the Cathedral (Valdovinos Licea, 1997b). Figure 5.48 shows the Hotel Virrey Mendoza, one of the city’s premiere hotels, and next to it, the boarded up cinema. Whether or not the building would be appropriate for housing stalls is not raised, and certainly, the central location cannot be faulted.

Several tourists noted the presence of the street vendors and that many walls were painted with political slogans, but overall, they had no complaints about their visits to Morelia (Osorio, 1997). And, with the World Tourism Organization (WTO) reporting in 1997 that Mexico was in seventh place world-wide attracting tourists, harnessing its potential for development was inevitable (Ultreras, 1997b). Again, Morelia found itself experiencing a plantón, a sit-in, prompting the state tourism minister to plead for a quick resolution to avoid tourism losses (Valdovinos Licea, 1997a). He was also interested in establishing a circuit route between Morelia and other regional cities, such as Guanajuato, urging the federal government to invest in highway infrastructure to support these circuits (Valdovinos Licea, 1997d). Infrastructure was lacking in the whole state, according to state politicians (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997a).

While tourism certainly had a role to play, the state tourism minister did not want to become embroiled in the negotiations concerning the street vendors. In the past, the ministry had made its own proposals and suggestions, but it appears those were always rebuffed, leading him to take a more cautious approach (Valdovinos Licea, 1997g).

The 1997 holiday period was a success in terms of visitors, who stayed on average
2.5 days (higher than the year’s total average of 2.3 (SIIMT, 2006b)) and spent US$8.5 million (Ultreras, 1998b). The year was deemed a success, with a 60 percent occupation rate for hotel rooms across the year. To ensure this trend would continue, more promotion would be necessary, especially in light of various social protests (Ultreras, 1998f). Tourism brought the state about US$100 million, a fourteen percent increase over 1996 (Valdovinos Licea, 1998c).

Two new hotels, one being the Hotel Oseguera in the historic center, were due to open in 1998. Costs were estimated at US$6,000,000, with the new hotel offering 120 more rooms, while the Hotel Oseguera would provide 32 more suites (Ultreras, 1998d). A huge chain hotel, the Fiesta Inn, was opened with great fanfare in July 1998. Its five stories and
253 rooms could accommodate 400 guests. The corporation had invested US$2 million in the new property, which, while not in the historic center, catered directly to the Convention center (Ultreras, 1998h).

The governor boasted in his state of the state address in 1999, that tourism had brought US$160 million into the state coffers, a huge success based on promotional efforts and investment in the hotel sector (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1999a). Prior to the Easter holidays in 1999, the local water company threatened to turn off the water in the historic center due to a general water shortage. Hotel owners were up in arms, arguing that tourists could not be inconvenienced in such a way (but of course locals could). They argued it would deter more visitors from coming to Morelia if tourists then booked to visit would have a negative experience (Ultreras, 1999d).

Despite this threat, the hotels were completely booked during the Easter holiday period (Ultreras, 1999a). By 2000, hotel occupancy for the entire year and the state had grown to 56 or 57 percent, compared with 52 percent a year earlier (Ultreras, 2001b). However, the economic slowdown in the US and Europe in 2000 and 2001, had repercussions for Mexico. At the time 170 travel agencies were operating in Michoacán, and more than 50, or 30 percent were in danger of having to close, due to the downturn in business (Ultreras, 2001c).

Tourism continued to grow after the street vendor removal. The first full year after the vendors left the historic center, 1.07 million tourists came to Morelia, 41,339 of which were international visitors (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2002, p. 102). SIIMT numbers showed an average stay of 2.7 days (SIIMT, 2006b), but the municipal government’s annual report stated average stays were 3 days. Visitors spent nearly US$130 million (2002, p. 102).

In 2003, the local government reported approximately 1.3 million tourists visiting Morelia, spending about US$130 million (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2003, p. 134). That was nearly a 20 percent increase on the previous year. Morelia staged more than 100 events during the year, including its film festival, for the first time (ibid., p. 135). Furthermore, the municipal government invested about US$20,000 in a campaign “Get to know your city” which featured a well-known actor asking trivia questions about the city’s most important sites and monuments that was broadcast on local radio station—this was included in the “tourism” section of the report (ibid., p. 136). Five-thousand primary school
children were invited to ride the tram through the historic center to make them more sensitive to tourism and their city’s heritage (2003, p. 136). Figure 5.49 shows the Federal Palace and in front of it, one of Morelia’s trams, which depart from there. The fence at the left marks the Cathedral grounds.

There was also great commitment to providing training courses for people working in tourism. The municipality organized forty-six courses, focused on tourism culture, to 4,800 participants, from hotel workers, to tour guides, taxi drivers, and restauranteurs (ibid., p. 139).

By 2006, Michoacán was a tourism exemplar. SECTUR was invited to Chile, to share Morelia’s success story with the Chilean government. The number of national and international flights to the state had increased from 46 weekly flights to 116, and visitors were spending an average of US$40 a day, and stayed on average 3 days (Hernández González, 2006). During the 2007 Day of the Dead celebrations, 215,000 tourists visited Michoacán, spending nearly US$30 million during average stays of three days (Lemus, 2007c).

About 350,000 tourists were expected to visit Michoacán during the Christmas and New Year holidays, and anticipated to spend US$100,000,000 (Alonso Cruz, 2007). In
many ways, the holiday period represents an opportunity to recoup any losses earlier in the year (Elizalde Arredondo, 2007). Mexican tourists visiting Morelia complained about the on-going protests and the presence of beggars in the historic center (Galván, 2007).

In the period 2002 to 2008, visitor numbers to Michoacán more than doubled, from 3.5 million to 7.2 million, and US$950 million were generated. Morelia’s various festivals, such as the International Organ Festival, Guitar Festival, Contemporary Dance Festival, International Film Festival, and the Meeting of Latin Poets attracted many visitors, and international visitor figures in particular grew to nearly 2 million. Morelia distinguished itself as one of ten national destinations that received more than a million visitors per year, and the primary destination of the interior of the country (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2008c).

In February 2008, a guide of Morelia, with eight suggested walking tours, was published. It featured much of the city’s history, previously compiled by Esperanza Ramírez and other local historians (David, 2008a).

State Government Reports on Tourism

Another source for developments in tourism are state of the state reports. Of course, these tend to be overly positive and congratulatory in terms of a state’s achievements, still, it offers another snapshot of activities and statistics. The state’s tourism secretariat was restructured in 1988 with branches in smaller, regional cities, and investment in promotion was prioritized (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1988, p. 48). In 1991, 3.5 million visitors came to the state, attracted by the 450th anniversary promotions (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1991, p. 60). The report also mentioned the World Heritage designation. By 1992, this visitor figure had grown to 4,136,000 visitors, spending about US$6 million (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1992, p. 63). In 1996, tourism brought in nearly US$80 million and 2,428,671 tourists. INAH and the University of San Nicolás provided a year-long course for tour guides (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1996). The figures increased for the following year, with 2,768,080 tourists, and an economic output of US$10 million (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1997).

The state also contributed to the “Ciudades Coloniales,” “Colonial Treasures of Central Mexico,” and the Mixed Fund for Promotion and Publicity of the state of Michoacán, to the
tune of roughly US$50,000 (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 1997). Primary school students also received 14,500 tourism primers to help foster to strengthen the tourism culture. A dedicated tourist police force was introduced in 1997, and tour guides received further training to become bilingual (presumably learning English) (ibid.).

Training remained a major part of the state’s commitment to tourism. In 2000, 210 courses were offered to tourism service providers, public officials, and the general public, serving 7,500 people with 6,200 hours of class time. Furthermore, service providers in Morelia and other cities were trained to use and understand tourism statistics to aid them in their promotional efforts (Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 2000, p. 124). Tourists stayed in the state an average of 3 days, in Morelia alone, 2.7 days (ibid., p. 125), (SIIMT, 2006b). Tourism generated about US$130 million for the state that year (2000, p. 125).

Tourism had to be a priority for the next municipal and state administrations to ensure that the “industry without chimneys” would exceed remittances, exports, and direct foreign investment (Elizalde Arredondo, 2008). Tourism during the Christmas period 2007 and into the new year 2008 reached new heights, with 213,935 visitors to Morelia alone, who spent a total of US$38.5 million. This was a 5.4 percent growth in spending compared to 2006 (Hernández Valdés, 2008).

Tourism Promotion Strategies

Most promotion efforts launched in the late 1980s focused on neighboring states, but also on the United States, particularly California (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989b). Roughly six million dollars were spent on the state’s tourism program in 1989, much of it on promotion (Estrada Chavez, 1989; La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989t). INEGI published a 218-page tourism guide about Michoacán in 1989 to support the national development plans. Aside from the history of the state, the guide featured the major tourism attractions and included maps of the major urban destinations (Valdovinos Licea, 1989). With the Promotional Plan of Michoacán a 13% increase in visitors was anticipated. Using the motto “Con Michoacán tienes,” “With Michoacán you have” a series of further options such as “an adventure within reach” and “Michoacán gives you a choice,” the campaign aimed to attract more visitors to sites within the state that had previously not been considered as a tourism destination, principally employing television and radio spots (La Voz de
Michoacán Editorial, 1989y). Approximately 100,000 brochures were distributed for the Easter holiday alone (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989x).

The local CANACO chapter agreed to collaborate with the Tourism Secretariat to better coordinate promotional efforts (Malpica, 1989d). It financed a promotional campaign in Albuquerque, New Mexico (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989c). However, promotional efforts still seemed to be extremely diffused, with little real collaboration between government and the private sector (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1989p). Nevertheless, spending on promotional efforts rose to US$800,000 to pay for television and radio air-time, and newspaper space in seven neighboring states, as well as nearly 80,000 promotional brochures, and a further 7,000 brochures printed in English (Garcia Pineda, 1989). Despite overall losses in tourism, compared with the previous year 1988, the investment in promotion was dubbed worthwhile, with spending reaching nearly US$6 million for the year. National tourist numbers in particular diminished, but no concrete figures were given (Gonzalez, 1989d).

In 1990, SECTUR introduced the national program “Ciudades típicas y coloniales” (“Traditional and colonial cities”) to try and take advantage of heritage, increase tourism, and also aid in the preservation of historic sites. SECTUR announced that Morelia would be among the cities included, which also features San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Querétaro, and San Cristóbal de las Casas, among others (Gonzalez, 1990d). The program was generally referred to as “Ciudades Coloniales” in the media (Garcia Pineda, 1990o). In July 1990, Morelia was assessed for its suitability for the program, with a decision pending for ninety days (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990a). Eventually, Pátzcuaro and Uruapan were to be included, as well as Morelia (Garcia Pineda, 1990i).

The state tourism secretariat continued its national promotion campaign, with 28 different radio spots and a 340,000 brochure run, as well as reports on Michoacán’s tourism destination in high profile national magazines (Gonzalez, 1990i). It also invited thirty-eight journalists, some national, some locally based, who focused on tourism, to tour through the state as well as Morelia, to help promote the state (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990t). Promotion, so ran the argument, was the principal means to combat the state’s bad image after the upheaval of the electoral campaign and teacher’s strike (Garcia Pineda, 1990f). As these promotional efforts intensified during the summer vacation
period, the state tourism secretary was not immune to erroneous assertions, again suggesting that Pátzcuaro was due to be named a World Heritage site (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990).

However, the program was not immediately applied, though the paper reported its launch was imminent in October 1990, coinciding with the visit of the Secretary of SECTUR to Michoacán (Garcia Pineda, 1990m). All of this, it was hoped, would help improve the state’s tourist image (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990k). That same month, Morelia was host to the first CANIRAC convention to promote its hospitality, food, and hotel industries (Garcia Pineda, 1990h). Fact-finding missions were led to determine the sites with greatest tourism potential in the state, which would then be promoted abroad, principally, in Europe (Garcia Pineda, 1990n). After decades of federal government support for resorts such as Acapulco and Cancún, Mexico’s tourism promotion was diversifying its offering.

Michoacán’s hotel and restaurant industry was particularly vocal at the time for the need for more funding to help promote the state (Garcia Pineda, 1990j), and were evidently successful, with monetary resources doubled from roughly US$80,000 to US$160,000, all to improve the state’s visibility (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1990n).

In February 1991, the thirty-nine cities included in the “Ciudades Coloniales” program were set to meet in Morelia at the program’s first national meeting to exchange ideas and discuss the problems they faced (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991i). SECTUR promised the cities low-interest credit from BANOBRA\$ and FONATUR. Rescue of historic and touristic patrimony, the participation of municipalities, collaboration between Architecture schools, promotion of the colonial cities and the new level of importance the colonial cities were about to assume as a tourism destination were the subjects to be discussed at the meeting (Manuel Belmonte, 1991a). Hopes for the meeting were high, one editorial suggested it might help resolve Morelia’s street vending problem (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991u). The goal, according to SECTUR was to “create a new culture, a culture and consciousness of service and quality, among all Mexicans, not only those who work in the sector” (Sanchez Rincon, 1991b, p. 32). To achieve this, concerted efforts were needed to protect the colonial cities. The paper reprinted a speech by Dr. Luis Arenal Simon, in which he urged to view colonial buildings and monuments as a “social good”
to ensure their full and proper use (Sereno Ayala, 1991a, p. 8-b).

During the meeting, President Salinas de Gortari toured Michoacán and promised federal support for large infrastructure projects. As regarded the “Colonial Cities” meeting, the President suggested that funding should be made available to the colonial cities to promote their urban infrastructure and provide better conditions for tourists (Lopez Martinez, 1991a). At the end of the meeting, a tripartite agreement was signed between SECTUR, the state government, and BANOBRAS, with BANOBRAS promising open lines of credit for the thirty-nine cities in the “Colonial Cities” program. These resources were to be used for restauration, preservation, and deterioration prevention. SECTUR resources would go towards promotion, and the state government would match funds, whenever possible (Sanchez Rincon, 1991e). This agreement was seen as a major step forward for preservation as well as tourism.

In a sense, the first meeting of the “Ciudades Coloniales” became a rallying cry of sorts, a call to arms on behalf of preservation and promotion (Sereno Ayala, 1991u). Improvements in service provision were also seen as crucial, requiring an in-depth analysis to determine the tourism profile that chose to visit Michoacán (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991a; Sanchez Rincon, 1991c). While the program was created by the federal government, a Michoacán state committee, populated by federal, state, and local representatives, as well as the service industry was formed to oversee the management and continuity of the program in the state. It would decide how to go about improving the cities included in the program (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991h).

The local private initiative then followed suit with a “Tourism Committee for the Promotion of Colonial Cities” to focus on promotion efforts and collaborate with other neighboring states included in the “Colonial Cities” program to further publicize the states’ attractions (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991l). The state government also initiated a credit program Fondo de Garantía para el apoyo financiero a la pequeña y mediana empresa turística (FOGAETUR) to help tourism-related businesses, a budget of about US$250,000 was set aside for applications from businesses to help improve their infrastructure (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1991ad). Radio and television tourism advertisements promoting Michoacán were launched in April 1991, covering neighboring states as well as cable television channels (Sanchez Rincon, 1991d).
For 1992, the State Tourism Secretariat had a budget of roughly US$500,000 to spend on promotion. One of the major events to plan and promote was the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1992d).

The “State Consultative Council of Tourism” was formed in 1993, and incorporated the authorities as well as businesses, and citizens to help resolve problems in the tourism sector (Hernández Granados, 1993a). Furthermore, its goals was to provide better tourism services in Morelia (Valdovinos Licea, 1993f).

In August 1993, the state and federal governments signed a tourism promotion agreement to better promote the state both nationally and internationally. However, the program's budget, at US$32,686 was rather limited (Sanchez Rincon, 1993i). Nevertheless, this amount was committed to paying for radio and television spots, as well as brochures, and not the only funding for promotion (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1993j). A further US$163,336 was going to be spent on promotional materials, specifically destined for foreign markets (Sanchez Rincon, 1993f).

As in Guanajuato, mixed trust funds, with contributions from the state and the federal tourism departments, and local tourism businesses such as hotels were used in Morelia to raise money for promotion purposes (Valdovinos Licea, 1996d). The public-private partnership raised about US$50,000. But not all was well and ex-governor Agustín Arriaga Rivera argued that Michoacán had lagged behind in tourism development and needed to focus its tourism strategies on promoting Morelia, Pátzcuaro and Uruapan in particular, to make tourism an “effective trigger for development” (Valdovinos Licea, 1996b). How exactly this ought to be achieved was not detailed, aside from highlighting obvious tourism destinations.

For 1998, the state Ministry of Tourism planned to spend half of its budget, US$2.6 million, on promotional efforts (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1997c; Valdovinos, 1997). The state had been promoted at 32 separate national and international events in 1997 (Valdovinos Licea, 1998c). That year, the state was promoted at a tourism convention in California (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1998h). Interestingly, the paper reported on a tourism fair staged by the state of Guanajuato in Morelia. Guanajuato's state tourism coordinator emphasized the need for attractive offers and solid tourism services to attract more visitors (Valdovinos Licea, 1998f).
The federal SECTUR secretary, Oscar Espinosa, visited Michoacán in October 1998 and encouraged the state to continue its promotional work, because the potential for greater visitor numbers and thus income was high. He urged the private sector to invest more in tourism. The governor agreed and vowed to help Michoacán become one of the country’s top five tourism destinations (Ultreras, 1998a).

In March 1999, SECTUR, with support from UNESCO, was going to actively promote its World Heritage sites, particularly archaeological sites, even though Campeche was about to be declared World Heritage, too (Notimex Editorial, 1999). The article only identified Mexico City’s historic center, Xochimilco, and Teotihuacán as World Heritage sites. Prior to the establishment of the municipal tourism secretariat, there was very little, effectively, that Morelia contributed to promotional efforts, aside from printing leaflets and cooperating with tourism companies (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2000).

In 2001, the municipal government, the State Tourism Secretariat, and the Patronato Pro-Rescate del Centro Histórico agreed to finance a tourism study by Spanish consulting firm DIT, to “ascertain the city’s tourism potential, to establish activity priorities accordingly” (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2001b, p. 19–20). Sixty-thousand guide maps of Morelia were produced, as well as forty-thousand leaflets to promote the events planned for the city’s 460th anniversary (ibid., p. 55).

In early 2001 an information booklet entitled “Morelia, Tradition and Progress” was published, with information about the state’s economy, geography, history, and its status as a World Heritage site, as well as investment opportunities (Valdovinos Licea, 2001n). New information leaflets, timed with Morelia’s 460th anniversary, were provided to travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, and transportation companies (Valdovinos Licea, 2001i).

The municipal government signed an agreement with CPTM in 2002, which increased its promotional capacity. The municipal government contributed US$25,000, while CPTM contributed nearly US$135,000 to pay for more media coverage of the city. The municipality also used the tourist tram to inform 1,250 primary students about the importance of the city’s heritage (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2002, p. 98). ANCMPM donated two new tourism information booths, as seen in Figure 5.50, which is located near the Palacio Clavijero.¹⁷

¹⁷Photo taken at 1 p.m. in the afternoon—and the booth was obviously closed.
Figure 5.50: Tourism info booth, Morelia, June 2008.

(Photo by author)
Nearly US$850,000 were spent on national radio advertisements, paid for by SECTUR, CPTM, the state and municipal governments, and Tourism Promotion Trust (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2003, p. 137). US$60,000 was used to transmit radio spots in the US, in Chicago, Houston, and Los Angeles, these being centers of large Latino populations (ibid., p. 137). For the tourism peak times, 120,000 Morelia guides were printed, at a cost of nearly US$25,000, which were distributed free of charge. Further promotional materials cost US$42,386, these were distributed at the tourism information booths that are dotted around the main tourist points in the historic center (ibid., p. 138). Figure 5.51 shows a tourism information booth near the Cathedral, as well as a map of the historic center. This map was also used in leaflets and brochures (see Section 5.7). By 2005, 1,393,400 tourists had visited Morelia, according to the annual reports figures, who spent US$170 million
(H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2005, p. 5), or an average of US$120 per person, who spent 3 days, on average, in the city (SIIMT, 2006b).

Like CECHZM, the Municipal Tourism Secretariat was established in February 2002 (H. Ayuntamiento de Morelia, 2002, p. 97). I spoke with Carlos García Delgado (2007), then director of the organization:

> We promote the city through tour operators, which offer packages to tour groups, mainly in Canada. We include all the costs for various types of groups, and then make agreements with the tour operators, who in turn advertise in places like Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec. Morelia is a popular destination for Canadians due to the climate. We do the same in Spain. Morelia now receives 85 percent national visitors and 15 percent foreigners, up to 1.3 million people annually. Most national visitors come from Mexico City, due to the good road connections. Many others come from Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Colima. Our hotels range from very affordable to luxury, there are now 87 hotels in the city and nearly 4,000 rooms. We try to offer the best service possible, to ensure positive word-of-mouth recommendations. If we deceive visitors, then that amounts to negative reviews for the city, and negative experiences are more frequently recounted. Word-of-mouth promotion is incredibly effective.

> — García Delgado (ibid.), Personal Interview.

He made clear that the Plan Luz and particularly the Saturday evening “Sound and Light” show was the most successful tourism promotion project to date:

> The Plan Luz has been a differentiating factor. Puebla and Mexico City have cathedrals of equal grandeur, but we have this event, and people flock to it. Visitors now stay 3.5 days on average.¹⁸ The Plan Luz is unique in terms of the number of buildings it applies to and it gives us another image, it allows people to appreciate the built heritage at night. And this is really important, because World Heritage makes me proud, as a citizen and an official, but it is not only ours, we share it with the world. It is a huge responsibility. In order to share Morelia’s beauty in a positive way, we have to address our traffic problem. That is undoubtedly the biggest challenge Morelia faces. It is a city that needs to be appreciated on foot. We have to find alternatives. In five, ten years, it is only going to be worse, if we do not find

¹⁸Official CPTM figures indicate a 2.9 days length of stay for 2006 (SIIMT, 2006b).
Unlike his colleagues in Guanajuato, García Delgado was not concerned about tour guides, because their services were included in package tours, and he seemed convinced that Morelia simply does not have “rogue” guides offering their services at the city entrances as does Guanajuato. Nevertheless, *La Voz* reported that there were non-certified tour guides offering their services, especially during the peak season for tourists during the Christmas and New Year holiday (Lemus, 2007b). Tour Guide F (2007) confirmed that rogue tour guides were active in Morelia and for him, they presented the greatest problem for an accredited tour guide like himself. The paper further indicated that a guide earned on average about US$7 per hour and US$50 during the vacation period a day.¹⁹ While SECTUR estimated in 2007 that nearly 2 million Mexicans were working in jobs related to tourism activities, the tenor was that tourism needed to be further expanded, particularly in light of dwindling oil resources (Sánchez, 2007b). During Morelia’s mayoral campaign in late 2007, candidates of all parties stressed the importance of tourism to the local economy (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 2007a).

Thirty-three thousand tourists were expected in Morelia for the Day of the Dead celebrations, and it was hoped they would spend about US$8.6 million. Hotels of the city were 90 percent booked (Huante Raya, 2007). Additional information booths were set up along highways and in major transportation hubs to cope with the large influx of people in the entire state (López and Herrera, 2007).

Michoacán’s priority was to attract more European tourists, which were pursued through attendance at the International Tourism Fair in Madrid (Sánchez, 2008). Several tour operators were convinced to put Morelia on their itinerary (*La Voz de Michoacán* Editorial, 2008a). In December 2007, the state tourism secretariat published a book, “The Route of Don Vasco,” based on the life and contributions of Father Don Vasco de Quiroga. Simultaneously, it proposed a tourism itinerary through the towns and places that Father Don Vasco worked and lived in (David, 2007). 3,000 copies were printed and the book was promoted in Madrid.

¹⁹The newspaper indicated an average US$7 per day, and US$50 during the whole vacation period, which simply does not add up. If this is accurate, then tourism certainly could not sustain larger families.
The municipality spent US$215,000 on Morelia's promotion, while combined investments in promotion reached US$2.4 million, with contributions from the state SECTUR, CPTM, and municipality (Sánchez, 2007a). The state tourism promotion budget had increased dramatically from 2002 to 2008, from US$1.1 million to nearly US$8.5 million, a 672 percent increase and the resultant success justified this cash injection (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 2008c).

**Tour Guides**

The first training course for tour guides was announced in La Voz in December 1995 (Maldonado Pérez, 1995). The course was promoted by the Tourism Secretariat, INAH, and the History division at the San Nicolás University. It was to be a year long, with various departments and offices involved in imparting the curriculum, at a cost of US$144 per person, for approximately forty students (ibid.).

Tour Guide F is not a typical tour guide. At the time of our meeting, he was also a state tourism official in the state SECTUR. Being a guide was his personal business:

> I studied to become a tour guide in Mexico City. I went to a school, set up by tour guides in the 1960s or 1970s, who wanted to raise the quality of tour guides. I attended from 1981 to 1983. We had teachers specialized in their subject, archaeologists taught us archaeology, historians, history, and so on. After I completed my studies there, my family moved to Michoacán. After I moved here, I took another course on local history, as this was going to be my area. Principally, I do tours that cater to cultural tourists. History, art, artisan crafts, archaeology, architecture, because these are the attractions we have in Michoacán and which are in great demand. My tour of the historic center, for example, is done on foot. It takes about three hours, and I cover the the Cathedral, various, museums, the university, buildings that have a direct relationship with the history and culture of Morelia. The majority of people come from Guadalajara, Mexico City, Querétaro, Guanajuato, and Sinaloa. Since I speak English, half of my tours involve visitors from the United States or Canada.


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As far as Morelia’s World Heritage application and designation was concerned, he was well aware of the duration of the application process and perceived it as having been a difficult process.

The authorities had pursued this designation for a long time. In the early 90s, Morelia was suffering the repercussions of migration and a demographic explosion.²⁰ The authorities wanted to provide services for the new neighborhoods of the growing city and improve services more generally. Historians, architects, and archaeologists pursued this designation. They prepared the extensive application and as they had planned, the designation coincided with the 450th anniversary of the city. It was an important moment. But this designation did not produce a social or tourism-related transformation. The benefit of having a World Heritage designated city only came five years after, when a promotional campaign emphasized this designation, first in Mexico and then abroad. That this place, with so much important heritage, needed to be preserved. So the benefit took a long time to unfold. But even the late 90s, there was still the street vendor problem that sullied the streets. The government had not yet resolved this issue.


He went on to explain, however, what was far more important for Morelia’s tourism success in the 2000s than World Heritage: transportation infrastructure.

The reality was that despite the promotion, more visitors did not arrive. There was still a crucial limitation. There was no modern highway to Mexico City, we did not have an airport with international flights, and not a steady flow of buses. All this infrastructure did not arrive until 2000. So despite the promotional campaign abroad, Morelia could not consolidate itself as an important destination. From the moment we started receiving flights from Atlanta, Houston, and a daily connection to and from Chicago, we started to see more tourists. Sixteen international flight connections made a big difference. And the new bus station, which can receive 600 buses daily. I remember that foreign tourism was less then ten percent in the 1990s and before. From 2000 onwards, it has reached nearly twenty percent, or nearly duplicated.

— Tour Guide F (ibid.), Personal Interview.

²⁰ A huge influx occurred after the devastating earthquake in Mexico City in 1985.
Perhaps not surprisingly, unlike Carlos García Delgado, director of the municipality’s tourism office, Tour Guide F was gravely concerned about “pirate” guides:

This is a huge problem and I have seen it here as well as in Guanajuato. Uneducated and untrained people offer guiding services. Even though they do not speak English, for example. They simply try their luck. I have seen fights break out in Guanajuato, unions have been formed, but as quickly, they have fallen apart again. In Morelia, this problem has become more acute in the last six months. Even though there is a law, and there are regulations, neither the state nor the municipality, nor the federal government knows how many pirates are operating. Even though a law and regulations exist, they are not applied. Sometimes there are more “pirates” than legitimate guides. I think they do undo the good progress that has been made in promotion. The tourist leaves misinformed and thinks that all tour guides are alike, are not to be trusted. They work in groups and manage to displace accredited guides like myself. This has happened to me.


One reason why many guides remained non-credentialed were the course requirements. He went on to explain:

The training course is a year long commitment. There are lots of different requirements, including language proficiency, as well as different subject areas that are examined. You need passing grades. And even though many people don’t pass all the requirements, they still go out and work as tour guides. Many do not complete the full course, and still work as guides. This occurs all over Mexico. But even if you meet all the criteria, there is no financial program to help set up a tourism-related business. So many of the independent guides give up after some time. The competition from the rogue guides is too great. A guide has no legal recourse to help protect against the non-credentialed guides.

— Tour Guide F (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide F had once formed a small group with five other guides, but after five years, the varying interests led the group to fall apart. Of the six, only two remained tour guides. Two of the female guides got married, leading them to stop their tours. To my surprise, he explained that of the six companies that owned and operated the small trams, (see Figure 5.49) only one was legally authorized to do so. They also used unaccredited
guides, according to him. The other companies were getting away with using temporary permits. The trams had begun driving up and down Madero Street in 1992. A monopoly continued until 1996, when the “Tranvía de la Calle Real” began operating. Passengers on its tram end up in the city’s Confectionary Museum. The museum and the tram operator have had this agreement since the beginning of the tram’s operation (Tour Guide F, 2007).

He put this situation down to a loophole:

I know the law and I know the regulations and the specific sanctions for failing to comply with the permits. It’s a loophole, between the federal and state governments. When there is a failure to comply, the state government has no clear means of enforcing the law. The federal government has delegated the authority to the state to act, but it effectively cannot act because it does not have staff that is trained to apply the law. They simply do not know the law and they do not apply the law. What is needed is a training program for inspectors in every Mexican state to ensure that they correctly apply the law. This has not been achieved.

— Tour Guide F (ibid.), Personal Interview.

He described the work of the municipal Tourism secretariat as complimentary to that of the state, as it had only been operating for five years, while the state SECTUR dated back to 1970. He lauded the municipality’s efforts, particularly, the illumination scheme:

The illumination was very expensive, but the municipality had a clear objective: to position Morelia as the top destination in Mexico outside the beaches. In 2002, we were in 23rd place nation-wide. After investing in the illumination of the Cathedral, and the sound and light shows at the weekends, we were suddenly in 3rd place in 2004. In only two years! And a year later, it had reached its objective: first destination after the beaches. All this in three years. We are now at 3.6 average nights per visitor, and I think we can reach an average of 4 nights per stay. We need to increase the cultural offerings. We had only two festivals before the designation, the Organ festival in May, and the music festival, then in July, now that has moved to November. We have added a puppet festival in February, a guitar festival in March, a theater festival in April, an orchid exhibition and festival in May, and a film festival in October. Not to mention the traditional festivals such as the Day of the Dead. If we extend the cultural offerings, people will stay longer and see more
Tour Guide F was impressed by ANCMPM and its efforts to share knowledge and best practices. He also thought their attempts to sell all World Heritage cities as a package was a good idea, he welcomed the joint promotion of the cities. Yet he insisted that the best promotion would not maintain Morelia’s leading position in tourism, infrastructure and high quality of services would sustain that top spot. Morelia could do even better, he argued, by working to improve its services and tourism offerings.

Tour Guide G, in contrast to Tour Guide F’s twenty-plus years of tour guide experience, had only been a tour guide for six years, and had stumbled into the trade. During her undergraduate studies, she had worked in an office, where visitors would ask her for recommendations about what to see in the city. After some cajoling from friends, she enrolled in a tour guide course, which she finished in 2001, and began leading her own tour groups:

For me, the information booths and the trams are a huge problem, because I am not on the list of guides that the booths have, so they send groups to other tour guides and normally, they convince tourists to buy tickets for the tram. Why? Because they get a small commission for each ticket they sell. In effect, it’s a monopoly. They should allow all guides to advertise their services, but they don’t. So unfortunately, I cannot offer my services through the information booths. Instead, I rely on word of mouth recommendations, and because I used to work in a business office, people there recommend me to any out of town business contacts that arrive. It’s difficult. I also now work with a friend, who ends up doing the driving when we go out of town. He visits different offices and offers our services. We also advertise with local hotels.

She agreed that the pirate guides were a huge problem, and emphasized the need to improve services in Morelia. In particular, she thought there were not enough four and five star hotels in the city to cater to cultural tourists. She too offered walking tours of the historic center:
It is most convenient to walk, so I go to the Cathedral, the Palacio de Gobierno, to the UNESCO commemoration plaque (see Figure 5.30), the university’s main building, the Rosas Conservatory. Then, we get in the car and drive up Avenue Madero to see the Tarascas fountain and visit the Guadalupe Sanctuary. More or less, this is what I show them. If they have more time or are able to walk more, we cover more ground.


Tour Guide G was generally satisfied with the state and municipal tourism secretariat’s promotional efforts, but for her, the devil was in the details, which were left unresolved, such as the proliferation of rogue guides during the summer, the information booth monopoly, and the limited quality of services. She thought that most people that went on tours with her were aware of Morelia’s World Heritage status, so from her perspective, the use of the title in promotion had worked.

Tour Guide H had been in business for twelve years when we met. Like the other guides, she too offered her services for destinations throughout the state, but also led tours through the historic center:

I adjust my tour according to the interests of the customer. If they want history, I take them to historically important places, if they are interested in culture, I make sure to take them to the artisanal market and tell them about local traditions and food. In the historic center, there is something we call the classic tour. It usually takes about three hours, and includes visits to the Conservatory, Templo de las Rosas, the public library, Colegio San Nicolás, the Cathedral, the Palacio de Gobierno and Palacio de Justicia. The city has to be explored on foot. I work independently, but can organize whatever might be needed for participants of conventions and meetings. If transport is needed, I have contacts who can provide vans, mini-buses or larger coaches. I speak English and only few of the accredited guides do, so I frequently do tours for American high school students. The best part of being a tour guide? Meeting people and introducing them to our rich culture. It’s a unique and very gratifying opportunity. Many people are surprised by Morelia’s wealth of history and culture.

— Tour Guide H (2008), Personal Interview.

As her colleagues, Tour Guide H was also concerned about the pirate guides, but suggested that tourists take some more responsibility, for instance, by insisting on seeing a
guide's credentials. These are usually a variety of laminated IDs, distributed by the state, or federal SECTUR, to identify them as accredited guides. These are typically worn around the neck. Of course, foreign tourists in particular may not be aware of this requirement. She felt that the authorities should carry out more verifications of tour guides, particularly by checking on services offered in hotels and near the information booths. But constant surveillance is neither practical nor plausible.

How did she manage to get work? She relied on personal recommendations, but was also listed on the state SECTUR’s website, and worked closely with both municipal and state Tourism secretariats. She was very positive about both secretariats’ promotional efforts and the general investment in the historic center, particularly since the removal of the street vendors. For her, aside from the pirate guides, visual and audio contamination, caused by the protests in the historic center were a huge problem. She did not care much for these expressions of protest, they just posed an inconvenience for the visitors. She was also not critical of the trams and thought they added a value for tourists. Obviously, she did not feel they took away business from her. She also was not concerned about the quality of the service provided, she expressed that most of the guides did a good job.

Since the mid 1990s, so-called “Legend tours” have been offered in Morelia. A guide will typically take a group of tourists to significant buildings, such as the Rosas Conservatory at night, and relate a fairy-tale like story involving the building and people out of Morelia’s past. Whether these are factual at all, is debatable, but they are quite popular. Tour Guide H conceded that these types of offerings can be very attractive. She did not do these types of tours herself, and felt that they could not compare with a traditional walking tour. She also gave a positive assessment of the municipal and state government’s promotional efforts:

The government has done a lot to improve the city’s image. The promotion has been great and very specialized, not just as far as Morelia, but as the whole state is concerned. But there is much that still needs doing. I personally would like to see a pedestrianized area in Morelia. The city is not made for cars, so this would be a huge improvement. Morelia is worthy of these changes. If I see something in the city that I disapprove of, I complain to the authorities. We have to fight daily to make sure the historic center remains an attraction for visitors and we have to
take responsibility. And World Heritage is very important, it’s a crucial title to have. We are one of nine Mexican cities with this distinction, so I have to highlight that. Some visitors know this, some don’t.

— Tour Guide H (2008), Personal Interview.

Like Tour Guide H, Tour Guide I had been a guide since the mid 1990s. He completed his tour guide training in 1996:

I saw an ad in the paper that the federal and state SECTUR were offering a training course for tour guides. It was only held on weekends, and lasted a year. It gave very basic information. I concentrated on Michoacán. As it were, Morelia became World Heritage a few years before, but I was not very conscious of what that meant. I was looking for an alternative means of income. I have been part of two guide associations of sorts. One does not really function anymore, they were mainly youths from the local university, who also happened to be taking the tour guiding course while I was. When I need more people to help me with tours than my present collaborators, then I ask them to help me. The still active group started about seven years ago. Initially, we were six, but one of the partners ended up leaving. I have an advantage over the others in the group, I speak English, so I work much more regularly.


Tour Guide I focused his activities on the state of Michoacán. One of his staple tours was visiting the Monarch butterfly sanctuary. In Morelia, he offered the following services:

In Morelia, I do tours that focus on the city’s history and architecture. I also do legend tours. I started these. I got the idea from a teacher during my guide training. She mentioned a legend, and I thought, “what a good opportunity for an attraction.” So, I began a small legends tour, first it was only an hour long, now it lasts two hours. Initially, I tried acting these stories out with the first association of tour guides, but that really didn’t work. These are not theater plays. I take visitors to a few famous buildings at night and tell them a story that relates to the building and some emblematic people of Morelia. Now, there is a veritable legends boom! This is mainly due to the lack of control on the part of the authorities. It is good that people have found a way to make a living, but unfortunately, this does compromise quality. And if you’re going to offer a service to a tourist, it should be good service.
Another thing I do is take people to places where there isn’t massive tourism yet. During the Day of the Dead Celebrations, for example, I take people to the island of Pacan, instead of Janitzio. Even many natives of Michoacán do not know about the traditions there, so it is enriching for everyone.


While he recognized that the government, which he described as a “superstructure” was doing a lot of promotional work, the infrastructure, roads, banks, ATM machines, electricity was a basic necessity. People in the tourism trade, he considered part of the “structure.” He explained:

People like bell boys, receptionists, waiters, part of the structure behind tourism, are not cared about at all. I realize that the superstructure is selling our product (in this case, Morelia and Michoacán) elsewhere, in Acapulco, and abroad. But there is no training for these people. Most relies on improvisation. Many people only work temporarily in these jobs. So they are low paid. And receive no training. If, as a hotel owner, you invested in training, you’d be wasting money as they wouldn’t stay in the job longer than perhaps six or eight months. So you have a vicious cycle. If we wanted professionals, we would change this cycle. But, for the authorities, these people don’t count, they’re an inconvenience …And when it comes to training tour guides, the municipality has not organized one training course this year. None. There is no control over the rogue guides. Their growth is visible, but nothing is done about training. I’ll give you another example: Completing the training I did, you are meant to be able to function in English, to provide an adequate tour in English. But if you try and speak to a guide with a federal accreditation, chances are high they do not speak English at all. When I graduated in 1996, I protested. I complained, because I put a lot of extra effort into acquiring the language skills. Another example: The tour guides that graduated two years ago, never did a practice tour in the city. They never gave a tour before they graduated. What you have is chaotic and disorderly growth of the trade.

— Tour Guide I (ibid.), *Personal Interview*.

He emphasized that restoration efforts were laudable, that much money had been invested, but without a quality interpretation of what the buildings mean, he argued, the restoration was meaningless. He was equally subdued about the impact of *World Heritage*:
The majority of people come to Morelia because it is beautiful and calm. When we tell them about *World Heritage*, nearly all ask me what that means. There is no clear consciousness about *World Heritage*. Commercialism is much more powerful. Commercialism like the supposed “13 Wonders of Mexico,” promoted by TV Azteca. That buried many other things. No, people definitely do not come looking for a *World Heritage*. We do try to raise awareness. But there is very little we can do. When you see the power of the market displayed like TV Azteca, there is little you can do. We comment that Morelia is *World Heritage*, but most people do not understand what that means. So, I try to explain that Mexico has signed up to the *Convention* and that only 238 of thousands of cities carry this distinction, this unique, universal value, and that they happen to be in one of these cities. It is not just the architecture of course, it’s also Morelia’s contribution to Mexican Independence and history more generally. And previously, I used to do some training and would explain *World Heritage* during the sessions. But that is all. There would have to be a huge advertising campaign, with twenty television spots per day so that people would understand what *World Heritage* is. Maybe that would help, or at least people would think a little more about it. But I think this battle is lost before it is fought.


He had little to say about the impact of SECTUR on the lives of guides. He recognized the federal government’s investments in restoration and promotion:

But as a guide, the existence of SECTUR has absolutely zero impact. They came only twice to investigate our complaints about rogue guides. The sent some people to have a chat. That was it, nothing changed. The second time they sent some of the rogue guides to begin the accreditation course, because that is all that matters to them. But you only need to have gone to high school to start the accreditation course. If tour guide are meant to become more professional, I think a higher educational level should be required. Especially when you consider the disastrous state of high school education in this country.

— Tour Guide I (*ibid.*), *Personal Interview*.

For him, the introduction of the trams had had a disastrous impact on tour guides. He argued that with their introduction, walking tours virtually disappeared. He felt they were too superficial, that in 35 minutes, the length of the tram ride, Morelia could not at all be fully appreciated. Furthermore, he explained that many tour bus operators tried to cram
in too many things into their itineraries, leaving the guides with little or no time to really provide a lot of information, reducing the quality of the experience.

The final guide I met with was the most difficult to track down. Tour Guide J was constantly on the move. Virtually all of his engagements were outside of Morelia:

I accompany tour groups from Spain and other places, all over Mexico. Mainly, the focus is on the Mayan ruins. So I travel through Yucatán, Chiapas, but I also frequently go to Teotihuacan.²¹ I cannot afford to stay in Morelia or even within Michoacán. The tourists come with certain expectations, they know about the big archaeological sites and that is what they have come to experience. Of course we stop in places such as San Cristóbal de las Casas as we travel through Chiapas, and this is a shining example of colonial architecture. Unfortunately, Michoacán's potential for archaeological tourism has not been realized, there are many sites here, but the majority remain buried. And of course there is a lot to see in Morelia, but the coach companies that I work with usually do not include a stop in Morelia. It is out of the way when you are planning to see places in the south. Most of these tours run ten days or a week, so I spend that time running the tour and then I usually spend a few days at home getting ready for the next trip. Simply put, this is the best way for me to earn a living.

— Tour Guide J (2008), Personal Interview.

Despite Morelia’s success at attracting visitors, this does not necessarily translate into more work for tour guides. With the emphasis on weekend tourism, there is little time to devote three or more hours to a walking tour of Morelia. The potential for tour guides increasing knowledge of UNESCO World Heritage is also slim, considering the competition with the “13 Wonders of Mexico” campaign and the complexity of designation more generally. Like their colleagues in Guanajuato, they struggled to expeditiously explain World Heritage to visitors, and they also shared the rogue tour guide phenomenon. In contrast to the Guanajuato guides, however, Morelia’s guides traveled more extensively around their state, or even outside it to provide their services. Guides in both cities had to cope with a lack of enforcement no the part of the authorities as regards tourism services, and the tendency to simply allow new products, such as the tram, to enter the marketplace without

²¹A major archaeological site just outside of Mexico City.
many prerequisites and little future regulation or quality control. Deficiencies in training quality were also a common theme.

Tourism Maps — Representing the historic center

To be sure, Morelia's tourism cartography has an easier task than Guanajuato in the representation of the designated area, but it makes no distinction between that area and the buffer zone. Three-dimensional representations of buildings are a common feature. Many of the maps served as advertising vehicles for local, regional, and national businesses, with the exception of some government-commissioned maps, which are relatively advertisement-free. However, the government also put its seal on a few maps that arguably contained more advertising than useful cartographic content. The combination of three dimensional buildings and too much advertising made some maps distracting.

A compact approach (Figure 5.52) highlights the monumental architecture through the selective use of three dimensions for buildings such as the cathedral, and government buildings. Its title means Morelia, more fun than ever. However, this map does not obviously show the World Heritage boundaries, and it also does not feature a scale nor a directional arrow for orientation purposes. On the left is a list with landmarks and their corresponding numbers on the map and on the bottom right a map with the principal avenues in and out of the city. The historic center streets are clearly labeled. There is also no indication on the map that Morelia is a World Heritage site, unlike in a map of Guanajuato (Figure 4.39).

Maps often served as templates for each other (Figure 5.53 clearly was based on Figure 5.52). Instead of the inset map on the right, it features restaurants, bars, cafés, and shopping opportunities. It also features five walking routes around the historic center. Routes 1 to 4 are directly in the center, with route 5 focusing on the aqueduct. (Figure 5.52, Figure 5.53) Design of maps of historic buildings were often similar (Figure 5.52, Figure 5.53). This map does not list its origin or commissioner. I do not know how the businesses that are listed were included, but I would guess that the business owners collaborated to have the map printed, and thus shared costs and included all the contributors. Copyright costs may have been defrayed that way.

ANCMPM also has a brochure devoted to Morelia (Figure 5.54). In style, it is the same as the map of Guanajuato, with a North arrow, and square, lettered and numbered grids
Figure S.52: Morelia, más divertida que nunca map, 2007.
(Source: Secretaría de Turismo y Cultura, 2007b)
Figure 5.53: Recorridos sugeridos a pie map, 2007.
(Source: Anonymous, 2007)
Figure 5.54: The National Association’s Morelia brochure map, 2003.
(Source: ANCMPM, 2003c)

(Figure 4.41). It features fourteen sites of interest, as well as four hotels, three restaurants, and two stores that sell sweets typical in Michoacán. Again, I do not know how these particular establishments managed to get included on the map. Both maps do not show the World Heritage delimitation of the historic center. Perhaps the desire to show a simplified, more user-friendly detail of the historic center outweighed UNESCO-sanctioned accuracy. Unlike the locally produced maps, this is a more “traditional” map product, without three dimensional buildings or much other potentially distracting information. “North is up” as well, again in contrast with many of the local maps.

Some maps seemed rather unusual (Figure 5.55). In the bottom right corner, perhaps
in a slightly unusual location, the directions are featured, with “North” pointing down. Street names are quite prominently labeled. The map includes hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, nightlife spots, galleries, shopping locations, services, real estate, and tourist attractions. All along the edge of the map various businesses are listed, and the “Plaza de las Americas,” Morelia’s first US-style mall, is listed in the southeast of the city, beyond the aqueduct. The cathedral is still the center of the map and again, three dimensions are used to represent buildings. In the far right bottom corner, a traditionally dressed Purépechan Indian holds a paper scroll that explains that Morelia is a UNESCO World Heritage site, with “more than 200 historic buildings” (Secretaría de Turismo y Cultura, 2007a). This map features information in English and Spanish. The map was distributed without cost. Its effectiveness at communicating basic cartographic information is of course debatable, given its busy look, the many labels, and the color scheme. While the World Heritage designation is acknowledged in writing, the extent of the delimited area is not shown. Distances are also not recorded.

The city also had a partially three dimensional map, but only to the full extent for prominent buildings (Figure 5.56). Other houses are frequently only shown to have façades—prescient or simply a design shortcut? Probably the latter. Here, north again points to the bottom of the map, in this example the north arrow is in the bottom left corner. On the bottom left, just below the north directional are the two UNESCO logos, informing the map user that Morelia is a designated World Heritage site. Hotels and other businesses, as well as the regional INAH office on Ave. Madero are labeled. Again, there is no scale present to give a distance framework.

In March 2004, CECHZM published a 28-page booklet detailing the main services in the historic center by sector. 2,700 copies were produced and sold at a price of US$1.20 (Coordinación del Centro Histórico de Morelia, 2004a, p. 28). All the information is presented in English and Spanish (Figure 5.57). Each sector is then also illustrated individually and its hotels, restaurants, recreational opportunities, attractions, markets, pharmacies, bars, and cafés listed. The last page of the booklet contains emergency contact information and transportation. In the context of this map, it is implicit that only the historic center is represented. While North is depicted as “up” no distance scale is given. Any business that wanted to be listed could contact the local CANACO office as well as CECHZM
Figure 5.55: Mapa Artístico de Morelia, Michoacán, 2007.
(Source: ibid.)
Figure 5.56: Morelia, Centro Histórico, 2001.
(Source: Anonymous, 2001)
Figure 5.57: Sectors of Morelia, 2004.

(Source: ibid.)
to be included in the next print run. However, I was not able to locate an updated copy. Given that most maps of the historic center were free, it stands to debate how successful the municipality was in selling this map. Aside from the emergency contact information, the free maps provided the same information, lessening the attractiveness of the booklet.

The confluence of two businesses contributed to another map, the detailed historic center map (Figure 5.58) and the overview map (Figure 5.59. The map is distributed by the Museo del Dulce, the Candy Museum. On the top right of a small tram is depicted, which brings tourists from the cathedral to the museum, by way of a few side streets, the aqueduct, and the church of Guadalupe (Figure 5.58). The two trams have been in operation since 2002 (Secretaría de Turismo, 2003). Of the sixty-four places of interest listed, the Museo del Dulce is set slightly apart from the rest of the list and is highlighted. Important buildings are again depicted in three dimensions. Hotels and restaurants dominate (Figure 5.59). Still, distances remain a mystery on both maps, and Figure 5.58 also fails to provide directional information. One might argue, strictly cartographically speaking that the maps fail to duly inform the map user. Certainly, where scale is concerned, this holds for all the of the maps discussed here.

A State tourism brochure features (Figure 5.60). In terms of style, it shares similarities with ANCMPPM’s map (Figure 5.54) by using perhaps a more typical flat map style. The shape of the delimited area is somewhat mimicked with the block style, but again, no exact boundaries are determined. This map lists forty-seven attractions within in the city and shows their locations with corresponding numbers. North is up on this map, but yet again, the user does not receive the benefit of a distance scale.

What is noticeably absent from all the maps is parking information. Perhaps this is deliberate, a visitor should not plan on coming into the historic center with a car. This may be sound advice, but particularly for the predominantly national visitors, probably unlikely. Only two of the seven maps discussed acknowledge Morelia’s World Heritage status. Maps could be an easy vehicle for precisely that information, given that tourists still overwhelmingly rely on paper maps due to their practicality. Maps are available at Morelia’s tourism information booths, hotels, and restaurants. Only one of the examples here was not free. None of the maps had a distance scale. While 219 blocks is not a huge area, it could still be useful to be able to judge how long it might take from the aqueduct to the cathedral.
Figure 5.58: Detail Map of Morelia’s Historic Center, *Museo del Dulce*, 2007.
(Source: Museo de los Dulces, 2007)
Figure 5.59: Overview Map of Morelia, Museo del Dulce, 2007.
(Source: Museo de los Dulces, 2007)
Figure 5.60: Morelia State brochure map, 2007.
(Source: Estado de Michoacán, 2007)
Specific Threats to Tourism in Morelia

More-so than the other two case studies, Morelia has recently become a site of narco-trafficking related violence. This, perhaps, is an additional threat to Morelia’s monuments, as evidenced in the explosion of a bomb in the city center during Independence Day celebrations in 2008, causing the deaths of eight spectators. The presence of “La Familia,” “The Family” drug cartel in Michoacán has raised the feeling of instability that has become so pervasive in border cities such as Juárez and Tijuana. The Mexican heartland, it appears, is now equally under threat.

Even during my field work period, there were glimpses of this instability. The leader of a popular band was abducted and killed, which was splashed across newspapers for days. Two years later, Enrique Villicaña Palomares, who had been in charge of the implementation of the Rescue Plan, was kidnapped and murdered (Lemus Velázquez, 2010). The following year, clusters of dead bodies were found at Morelia’s five main highway exits, with the “Zetas,” another drug cartel, claiming responsibility (Al Jazeera, 2011). Morelia is no longer a backwater and immune to the drug violence.

5.8 Conclusions

Morelia, especially when compared to Guanajuato, has a wealth of information available about its historic center. This contrast is really striking. Furthermore, citizens’ initiatives have been a much more common feature, and some have been effective. Of course, there is a sort of ebb and flow, based on the urgency of need and the ability of the organizations to sustain themselves and the cause, but it does appear that citizen involvement is much more accepted and welcomed than in Guanajuato.

Morelia was more focused on its foundation anniversaries than marking the World Heritage designation day each year, unlike Guanajuato, which does not have as “fixed” a date of its foundation as Morelia does. Therefore, marking World Heritage becomes more critical as a landmark day in the city’s history. The newspaper coverage of heritage issues was also much more in-depth than in Guanajuato, with many more detailed descriptions of important architecture, the history of the city, and the need for preservation. Clearly, the newspaper had decided that it was worth reporting these stories and providing its readers
with a fair amount of context.

Morelia’s World Heritage designation and its treatment of its built heritage more generally, was a deliberate endeavor to aid preservation and “rescue” the historic center. Nevertheless, there were certainly many who felt the designation was a badge of honor, but not expressly, as in the mind of Salvador Díaz Berrio, for example, a tool or measure for preservation. There was also much more discussion about heritage in general and it remained visible in the media.

Morelia’s institutional landscape also changed significantly since its World Heritage designation. New administrative offices were formed to help deal with the complexities of the historic center. IMDUM was first introduced in 1995 to provide the municipality with local planning capabilities. This normative institution has retained most of its staff over time and thus can provide some continuity. However, much of its effort seems to fall on deaf ears, or is simply not enforceable. In 2002, with the formation of FIPE, CECHZM, and the Municipal Tourism Secretariat, suddenly, there were more players involved. CECHZM ostensibly enforces and implements planning policy and regulations, and monitors and develops projects in the historic center, while FIPE’s main focus is not the historic center per sé, but its main contribution, the Plan Luz has obviously had a great impact on designated area.

In terms of its branding, Morelia has again made much more deliberate, tactical decisions than Guanajuato. First, there is much less evidence of sloganeering, or attempts to come up with a new brand every three years. Obviously, Morelia banked on the success of the Plan Luz, and decided that this feature, in addition to other cultural events, such as music and film festivals would work as its tourism strategy. Further, it could count on the attractions of traditional cultural festivals, such as the Day of the Dead celebration.

Still, in the planning realm, Morelia struggled, though it implemented the Rescue Plan successfully, but beyond these measures, little movement has been seen. While far from “easy,” the municipal administration at the time realized it could implement these changes and that these would be beneficial for tourism. The amount of information that exists about Morelia’s historic center, in comparison with Guanajuato, is staggering. Nevertheless, there is of course a difference between documenting land use changes, as Morelia has, and actually changing some of the outcomes or the dynamics, which it has so far failed to
do, particularly in the realm of maintaining residents in the historic center. Still, the information at least exists in an accessible form. If Morelia is able to halt the exodus, perhaps, as Eugenio Mercado suggested, by improving the central housing stock and encouraging more student housing, then it seems the historic center will thrive, not only during the day and on the weekends. However, it also needs to tackle the public transport and parking problem, and this seems out of reach. As many admitted, they felt the public transport system is a mafia that is unwilling to compromise and most likely fleecing pockets in city hall. Clearly, the success of the street trader removal has led to a certain amount of complacency and perhaps the public transport lobby is too powerful to tackle. The streets are clean, there are little obstacles for the flaneur, the city is accessible.

But World Heritage in itself does not guarantee anything, of course, what matters is how it is treated and used. We cannot know if Morelia would have removed its street traders without the World Heritage designation. What we do know is that the designation was definitely used as an argument, as a means of convincing the street traders that to do the designation justice, they ought to relocate. And while UNESCO may have insisted on this relocation, they have not tried to insist on replacing the aplanados, the coverings that were present in the city until the 1960s. Whether or not this is in recognition that Morelianos and visitors have only seen Morelia as it is now, or whether it is simply a question of cost, is unclear. It seems that authenticity in architectural heritage is a smokescreen, as architectural periods ebb and flow, intermingle, and influence each other. It seems pointless to insist upon it, yet ICOMOS and UNESCO take it incredibly seriously.

Furthermore, based on the experience of tour guides, Morelia is not “enough” of an attraction to sustain them. They have to go far beyond Morelia to make ends meet. Thus, a tour guide based in Morelia cannot rely on the city alone. This perhaps was the greatest surprise. Another surprise was the lack of emphasis on World Heritage on Morelia’s tourism maps. The ubiquity with which map products are used would make them a logical vehicle to highlight the designation, but many maps did not mention the designation. Perhaps this was deliberate in some cases, to limit the map not only to the confines of the historic center, but to an even more concentrated area of monuments, with an emphasis on the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral. It also implies that understanding the designation has not penetrated as much as experts and activists such as Esperanza Ramírez hope it
might have. This also is apparent in the degree of the degradation of the private housing stock, with 20 percent of buildings beyond recuperation, and nearly 37 percent at risk of complete loss. There seems to be a distinction in protection endeavors between private property and public iconic buildings, which is generally supported. Private owners have not received any direct financial support for maintaining their buildings and then of course they are also restricted in what alterations they can and cannot make. All of this makes preservation too costly.

Still, Morelia has quite obviously benefited from its designation, with ANCMPM procuring more funding for restoration projects and the federal government, particularly SEDESOL and SECTUR seemingly “rewarding” its removal of the street vendors with increased funding. Thus, it has become an exemplar as regards the street vendor removal, as well as in the implementation of the Plan Luz. Unfortunately, it has not been able to immunize itself from greater trends within Mexico: violence and insecurity have become commonplace there, too, threatening the best promotional strategies.
Obstreperous Oaxaca: A Case of Lacking *World Heritage* Values?

6.1 Introduction

The city of Oaxaca, located in the southern state of Oaxaca, focus of this chapter, is one of Mexico’s earliest *World Heritage* designations. Because Oaxaca’s national monumental zone (its historic center) was decreed in 1976, within four years of the ratification of the *Ley Federal* (Appendix B), putting it forward for *World Heritage* consideration probably seemed straightforward, much like in the case of Guanajuato (Section 4.3). However, its designation application originally included not only the historic center of Oaxaca and the archaeological site of Monté Albán, but also another village, Cuilapan, ten kilometers southwest of the city, which was not retained in the ultimate designation.

Traveling to Oaxaca by bus from Mexico City still takes six hours, despite the improved highway infrastructure. Travel time by plane, however, is only an hour from the capital. Thus, Oaxaca remains removed and remote. Oaxaca’s *World Heritage* application deliberately linked to Monte Albán to ensure its designation, but little thought was given to what needed to be done to ensure preservation. While Oaxaca had relied on tourism prior to the *World Heritage* designation, once inscribed, it concentrated efforts on creating more spaces for tourism, specifically, with the conversion of the Santo Domingo complex from army barracks into cultural hub. The project took four years to complete, and received much federal support.

The protracted teacher’s strike of 2006, combined with governor Ulises Ruíz’s ambition to affect changes to the *Zócalo* and other important public spaces had a marked impact on the historic center. The built environment was compromised, but most importantly,
Oaxaca's image as a safe and tranquil tourism destination was tarnished. Furthermore, the space for civil society participation was severely limited.

As in Morelia (Section 5.7), Oaxaca's tour guides spent most of their time guiding tours outside of Oaxaca in neighboring states, and if they were leading tours in Oaxaca, the historic center received a rather superficial treatment, due to transportation and mobility difficulties, which many of the guides found too cumbersome to accept, despite insisting that Oaxaca had many interesting and worthwhile places for tourists to visit. Thus, Oaxaca corroborates some of the previous findings of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, with many attempts at planning, but little to show for in terms of results.

6.2 Oaxaca—a brief overview

Oaxaca de Juárez, capital of Oaxaca state, 350 miles southeast of Mexico City, was first founded in 1521 as Antequera, the Valley of Oaxaca has been inhabited for more than 10,000 years. Its main square, the Zócalo, rests on the former pre-Hispanic ceremonial and administrative center (Murphy and Stepick, 1991, p. 19) of the Mixtecs, one of Oaxaca's sixteen indigenous tribes. Oaxaca's Zapotec urban legacy is still visible in the archeological site of Monté Alban, located on the outskirts of the modern city, which was abandoned in 1000 A.D. (Chance, 1989, p. 3).

Modern Oaxaca is located between the Atoyac and Jalatlaco rivers in the Valley of Oaxaca, and its rectangular grid layout is attributed to the Spanish geometrist Alonso García Bravo (Ruiz Cervantes and Silva, 1997, p. 9). The blocks were approximately 84 meters long (Balderas Gil, 1988, p. 19). The foundation for the city's cathedral was laid as early as 1526, albeit not in its present location (Balderas Gil, 2000, p. 80), prior to fixing the city's grid in 1529 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 2). As in Morelia, the Spanish inhabited the center, while indigenous laborers and servants occupied the periphery of the grid (Smith, 2010, p. 21). Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés “received” Oaxaca as a gift after his conquest of Tenochtitlán. Initially, the colonizers were disappointed in the lack of local mineral resources, but cocoa and cotton production soon became profitable (Chance, 1978). In 1532, King Charles V bestowed city status on Oaxaca (Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología, 1987, p. xxii). A strong earthquake nearly destroyed the fledgling city in 1534 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 3). Between 1603 and 1931, more than eighteen earthquakes, of which
historical records exist, struck the city (Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología, 1987, p. v).

Over time, what came to be considered the historic center absorbed what were separate villages, Santo Tomás de Xochimilco in the north, Santa María del Marquesado to the west, Santísima Trinidad de las Huertas in the south, and San Matías Jalatlaco in the east (ibid., p. xii–xiv) (Figure 6.1). Construction of the present-day Cathedral began in 1535, and finally completed in the nineteenth century, after various tremors and other modifications interrupted and stalled progress (INEGI, 2000c, p. 3). Also in 1535, the diocese of Oaxaca was formed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993c). Between 1550 and 1555, the riverbed of the Jalatlaco river was rerouted to better accommodate the streets, the same occurred with the Atoyac river in the 1561, to allow further development to the southwest (1987, p.xxiv). The redirection of the Atoyac in particular helped to facilitate the consolidation of Oaxaca.

In 1575, work began on the Santo Domingo convent (Figure 6.2), as the evangelization of the valleys was pursued more vigorously (INEGI, 2000c, p. 4). Santo Domingo and Oaxaca’s other churches and convents are all built using a local green stone. The trade in cochineal, which produces a vibrant red dye, became the principal economic activity in the city’s hinterland until the end of the colonial period (Balderas Gil, 1988, p. 21).

The pueblos of Xochimilco, Marquesado, Trinidad de las Huertas, and Jalatlaco had not yet been formally absorbed by the city limits. A first map of the city appeared relatively late, in 1777, compared with Guanajuato and Morelia (Figure 6.1). The original had been commissioned by the Spanish (Ruiz Cervantes and Silva, 1997, p. 11), and is located in the Archivo General de las Indias, in Seville. Like the maps of Guanajuato, the reproduction of INEGI does not include a scale on the map.

Growth, however, was initially slow and measured. In 1700, Oaxaca had only 6,000 inhabitants, which tripled nearly 100 years later. By 1792, the city had 18,008 inhabitants (Butterworth and Chance, 1981, p. 20). First official use of the name “Oaxaca” in a royal decree is also recorded in 1792 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 6). By 1803, it had expanded to 180 city blocks, with a population of 20,000, but growth then seemed to stagnate (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 16). Unlike Morelia and Guanajuato, Oaxaca did not become a key battle site of the Independence movement. Nevertheless, with Independence, political reform was brought to Oaxaca, in the shape of the municipality as a spatial and political
Figure 6.1: Map of Oaxaca, 1777. (Based on: INEGI, 2000b, map modified by author.)
Figure 6.2: Ex-convent of Santo Domingo, August 2006.

(Photo by author)
Meanwhile, in 1818, a young Zapotec from San Pablo Guelatao arrived in the city: Benito Juárez (1806–1872) (Baz, 1874, p. 24). Juárez went on to study in the seminary of Oaxaca. In 1826, the State Institute of Science and Art was founded, which would later become the Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (INEGI, 2000c, p. 6). Juárez also studied at the State Institute of Science and Art, and became a lawyer in 1834. He had already served a term as an alderman in Oaxaca by that time, and subsequently, was elected to the State Congress in 1834. He was, in essence, a career politician, who went on to serve in the National Congress in 1846. From 1847 to 1852, Juárez was governor of Oaxaca (Baz, 1874, p. 35–48). During his period in office, in 1848, he commissioned a map of the city of Oaxaca, produced by engineer Antonio Conde Diebitech de Sabalkanski (Figure 6.3) (Overmyer-Velázquez, 2006, p. 61). This map remained a template for municipal maps until the 1930s (ibid., p. 61). It shows the distinct city blocks, although its orientation with North to the left is a bit unusual. With this orientation, the Fortín Hill would be at the left of the map, where the scale is located.

In 1850, Oaxaca experienced a serious cholera outbreak, which claimed the lives of 10,698 people (INEGI, 2000c, p. 6). Nevertheless, modern progress continued, with electric lighting inaugurated in 1854 (ibid., p. 7). The population grew to 25,000 in 1857, despite further cholera outbreaks (Ruiz Cervantes and Silva, 1997, p. 9). Juárez, meanwhile, after periods of exile, would serve several terms as Mexico’s president, from 1858, with some interruptions, until 1872 (Baz, 1874).

When church property was nationalized in 1859, many of Oaxaca’s convents and monasteries were repurposed, much like in Morelia. Local government used many of the buildings as offices, allowed schools to use the buildings, or sold them to private investors. Much of the building stock consequently suffered (Medina Martínez and Cervantes, 2007, p. 40). Most drastically, perhaps, the Santo Domingo convent became a military barracks in 1863 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 7). Mexico continued to experience turmoil in the mid-nineteenth century, due to wars with the United States and the French intervention of the 1860s. Oaxaca was besieged by the French and in 1865, they established an office in the city and assume command of the area (ibid., p. 7). General Porfirio Díaz, a native of Oaxaca, and his troops spent much of the next year preoccupied with re-taking Oaxaca, which
Figure 6.3: Oaxaca, 1848.
(Source: Sabalkanski, 1848, courtesy of The University of Texas at Austin.)
they managed in late 1866 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 7). The first telegraph connections between Oaxaca and Tehuacán and Mexico City were completed in 1868 (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 24). Díaz went on to become the governor of Oaxaca from 1881 to 1883, and eventually, president of the republic (1884–1911) (Overmyer-Velázquez, 2006, p. 20).

Nevertheless, modern technological advances such as the telegraph, the telephone and public services such as municipal sewers and street lighting did reach Oaxaca in the 1880s. Consequently, the city’s population grew, though not as markedly as elsewhere in the country. In 1865, 24,907 people lived in the city, reaching 29,038 in 1889 (Medina Martínez and Cervantes, 2007, p. 43). The city assumed its current name, Oaxaca de Juárez in 1872 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 8). While the city was never an industrially-driven hub, and thus relied on the surrounding areas for its industry, but it has served as the economic, commercial, and public service center for the region (Murphy and Stepick, 1991, p. 78–79). Although the Mexican Southern Railway arrived in Oaxaca in 1892, communication, travel and transport remained arduous (Overmyer-Velázquez, 2006, p. 13).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Oaxaca city had expanded to 188 blocks that spanned roughly 2 square kilometers, and a population of 35,000 inhabitants (Balderas Gil, 2004, p. 146). Just prior to the Revolution, the Macedonio Alcalá Theater (Figure 6.4) was completed in 1909 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 9). In 1910, the city had grown to 38,011 inhabitants (ibid., p. 9), but numbers dipped to 27,792 by 1921, due to the Revolution (Ruiz Cervantes and Silva, 1997, p. 8).

To mark the centenary of Mexican Independence in 1920, Oaxaca’s state government decided on a large-scale project in the Zócalo, with new pavement and new electric public lighting (Calderón Martínez, 2005). Despite attempts to improve Oaxaca’s water supply and infrastructure, water became scarce in the 1940s, sparking a social movement which lead to frequent protests and strikes into the 1950s (Smith, 2009, p. 281). Many of these actions took place during public holidays, much to the dismay of public officials. A series of large-scale strikes finally had the desired impact, leading to large infrastructural investments to improve access to water and electricity (ibid., p. 284).

In 1944, the public works of governor General Vicente González Fernández were not accepted by Oaxaca’s citizens, and another round of interventions in the Zócalo occurred in 1967, when again the pavement in the archways was replaced and improvised stands were
Figure 6.4: Maceldonio Alcalá Theater, August 2006.

(Photo by author)
removed (Calderón Martínez, 2006b, p. 9). In 1972, for the centenary of Benito Juárez’ death, another intervention was initiated (ibid., p. 9). For the 450th anniversary of Oaxaca in 1982, the Zócalo again received a makeover, followed by the last major and controversial intervention in 2005, when several large trees were knocked over and cement blocks were enlarged to protect flower borders (ibid., p. 15).

Urban expansion occurred mainly north of the historic center (shown in Figure 6.32), fueled somewhat by the destructive force of the January 1931 earthquake that flattened parts of the city, and later the construction of the Pan-American highway (Smith, 2010, p. 42). After much reconstruction in the city center, the first open-air theater was built on Fortin Hill in 1932, which later would become the much larger Guelaguetza Auditorium in 1975 (INEGI, 2000c, p. 9–11). The city’s first airstrip was opened in 1934 (ibid., p. 9), enabling air travel. Slowly but surely, the city’s population reached 29,306 (ibid., p. 9), the built-up area expanding to reach 4.69 square kilometers in 1940 (Balderas Gil, 2004, p. 150). However, the city’s urban fabric, aside from the losses sustained in the earthquake, remained the same as it had been, largely one-storey, and a mix of colonial and contemporary vernacular architecture (Figure 6.5).

The state introduced the Ley sobre Protección de Monumentos Coloniales, Artísticos e Históricos y Poblaciones Típicas del Estado in 1942, an early effort to protect its cultural heritage. (Estado del Gobierno de Oaxaca, 1958)¹ Article 1 of this law considers the colonial architecture in the state of Oaxaca as monuments and their protection and conservation as vital and in the public interest, whether it belongs to individuals or the state, and where they are not protected by the federal government (ibid., p. 1).

Thus, the clear emphasis was placed on the value of Oaxaca’s colonial architecture, even though it had suffered extensive damage during the 1931 earthquake. The law also established a Municipal Committee for the Protection of Colonial, Artistic, and Historic Monuments in each of Oaxaca’s 571 municipalities (ibid., p. 1). The subsequent State government committed itself to protecting the “architectural treasures of the colonial era”

¹While the law was officially enacted in January 1942, it was not published in the official gazette until 1958.
(Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1945, p. 26). A “Central Committee of Protection” was also formed then, made up of the State governor, the inspector of artistic, archaeological, and historical monuments (INAH), the head of the Federal Treasury office in the state, the mayor of Oaxaca, and an appointed engineer or architect (Balderas Gil, 1988, p. 40). The focus of the committee was not only preservation, but also maintenance of the city’s visual character. This is characterized by the prevalence of one-storey buildings forming the context for the many former churches and convents.

In 1943, Governor Eduardo Vasconcelos prompted the first study of the level of preservation in the city, most likely inspired by the recent legislation. Architecture students from UNAM supported these efforts, which focused on religious buildings and then the rehabilitation of public parks and plazas (Márquez Sarrelanguel, 2007b, p. 64). This marked the beginning of recurring preservation efforts in the city.

By 1950, 46,741 people lived in Oaxaca, marking the beginning of steady population

6.3 Oaxaca’s designation narrative

First, Oaxaca’s historic center was declared a national “Zone of Historic Monuments” on March 19, 1976 (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1987, p. 4).² While this initial designation did not include the precise area of the delimitation, architect Salvador Díaz-Berrio Fernández (2007b) pointed out that the “eastern slopes” of the Fortín hill were not included (ibid., p. 222) (Figure 6.32). INAH Oaxaca opened its offices in 1972, one of the earliest regional offices (Márquez Sarrelangue, 2007a, p. 27). Its purpose was to monitor and protect Monte Albán, as well as the state’s other archaeological sites and Oaxaca’s historic center. Architects Jaime Ortíz Lajous and Rafael Vergara Rodríguez spearheaded the efforts and compiled the World Heritage application materials (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986g). Ortíz Lajous was Director General of Federal Monuments of Mexico, a predecessor of CNMH, from 1972 to 1984 (Ortiz Lajous, 1993).

Second, the World Heritage application was the culmination of ten year’s work in Oaxaca’s historic center (Vergara Rodríguez, 2011). The maps in the application are not of good quality, so I borrowed a series of maps from 1973 from the INAH office for photocopying. Additionally, I was also sent one electronic version which the organization still uses (Figure 6.6), but that map, too, is rather limited. I added the Zócalo and Santo Domingo for reference only, the original map does not identify any landmarks nor give a scale.

Application file 415 (property number 415) is short, of only thirty-five pages, particularly sparse considering that the historic center of Oaxaca, Monte Albán, and the convent and basilica of Cuilapan, located 12 km southwest of Oaxaca, were also under consid-

²Another source, which reproduces the official announcement in the federal government’s gazette, cites the 15th of March, 1976 as the date for the national declaration (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007b, p. 257).
Figure 6.6: Oaxaca's delimitation of the zone of historic monuments.
(Based on: INAH Oaxaca, 1998, map modified by author.)
eration. On average, each separated application file contained fifteen pages of text and thirty illustrations, as well as a number of annexes and complementary graphic and written sources (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007a, p. 5). This was then collated into one document.

**Oaxaca’s World Heritage application file**

The *World Heritage* application file was divided as follows:

**The exact localization of the property:** Country, municipality, property name, and coordinates.

**Legal jurisdiction:** Ownership and the different laws that govern the property are included.

**The administrative authorities:** Federal, state, and local authorities in charge of the properties.

**Identification:** Description and inventory of the properties.

**Maps and plans:** Seven items were listed, including three maps detailing the location of the state of Oaxaca and the location of the city, an aerial photograph, (1:50,000) featuring the city and the archaeological site of Monte Albán, a map of Monte Albán (1:50,000), maps of Oaxaca’s historical growth and development, and the delimitation of the monumental zone (1:50,000), further maps of the delimited area with historical monuments identified (1:10,000), forty-five architectural drawings of historical and religious buildings and their present-day use, and six further urban development maps (no scales given).

**Photographic documentation:** Five color and ten black and white photographs of religious monuments and Monte Albán were included in the file, with a further 250 in the annexes, as well as a series of 35 mm slides.³

**Historical synopses:** Brief overview of the rise and fall of Monte Albán, the foundation and design of Oaxaca, and the building and eventual abandonment of the Cuilapan convent.

**Bibliography:** A bibliography featuring ten sources.

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³There is no indication in the application whether these files were in color or not.
State of preservation: Brief diagnostic of the state of Monte Albán, Oaxaca’s historic center, and Cuilapan. All are given a positive overall assessment of their state of preservation.

Historical sketch of preservation and conservation efforts: In the case of Oaxaca, the brief overview notes that Santa Catalina convent was converted into a hotel in 1972, and major preservation efforts occurred in Santo Domingo in 1960. It also noted the development of Oaxaca’s pedestrianized area in the historic center, under way at the time of the designation.

Resources for preservation or conservation: At the time of the designation, five INAH architects were in charge of the historic center, as well as Cuilapan. A further eight archaeologists dedicated themselves to Monte Albán and the rest of the state’s archaeological heritage. SEDUE staff were also involved in overseeing restoration projects in the historic center.

Management plans: The declaration of monumental zone and archaeological zone, in the case of Monte Albán, were highlighted as the main measures to protect and manage these sites. Oaxaca’s first urban development plan was under development at the time and cited as a new tool in progress.

Justification for inscription: Finally, the inscription criteria for Oaxaca follows, citing criteria i, ii, iii, and iv (see Section 4.3 for the list of criteria) (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1987, p. 3–18).

Inscription criteria

The historic center comprises 4.96 square kilometers, with 177 blocks of zone A and a protective perimeter of another 55 blocks. Within this area, there are 1,200 buildings of historic importance, with the file highlighting 242 buildings of particular historic value (ibid., p. 6). Unfortunately, the included maps are of very poor quality, much like in the other nomination files (Figure 6.7). The first map in the file shows Monte Albán on the left, and the outline of the delimitation of the historic center on the right. No scales are provided. Curiously, the file does not contain a map of Cuilapan in relation to either Oaxaca or Monte Albán. Perhaps this was merely an oversight. The absence seems significant in terms of the outcome, that Cuilapan was not inscribed with Oaxaca and Monte Albán.
Figure 6.7: Oaxaca (right) and Monte Albán (left) location map.
(Source: ibid., p. 19.)
INAH had actually produced very elaborate and detailed maps of the historic center in 1973 in preparation for the national monument nomination, and they do form the basis for the UNESCO application, however, their poor reproduction in the file renders them nearly useless (Figure 6.8). The upper map ostensibly identifies the buildings of historic value in the historic center, while the bottom map shows the pedestrianized area that was just being developed at the time of the application. Another set of maps shows Oaxaca’s historic center relative to the location of Monte Albán (top) and buildings of historic value in the historic center (bottom) (Figure 6.9), but again, their poor reproduction is their main limitation.

Once an application has been submitted to the WHC, it commissions ICOMOS or, in the case of natural sites IUCN, with assessing the applying site. In ICOMOS’ justification for inclusion, the experts focused on Monte Albán's archaeological legacy of human settlement and Oaxaca’s cultural legacy in the form of its many religious monuments and its checkerboard street layout (National Commission of the United States of Mexico to UNESCO, 1987, p. 30–31). ICOMOS argued that Cuilapan, twelve kilometers southwest of Oaxaca, was simply too far away to be considered part of the heritage sites, and Oaxaca’s many religious monuments made the listing of the convent at Cuilapan seem redundant. Therefore, the organization did not recommend the inclusion of Cuilapan in the World Heritage designation (ibid., p. 31). The WHC meeting notes corroborate this stance. Since Oaxaca and Monte Albán were within each other's lines of sight, thus linking them as one site for an inscription for archaeological as well as cultural reasons was not an exaggeration (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007a, p. 5). ICOMOS further demanded that the land between Oaxaca and Monte Albán remained an area “not to be built on,”“whatever the cost” (1987, p.31). Continuing urban sprawl has affected Monte Albán and the demand for the non-built up buffer zone never gained much traction.

The original map series compiled by CNMH's predecessor, Subsecretaría de Bienes Inmuebles y de Urbanismo (SBIU), show the determined boundaries of the historic center quite clearly (Figure 6.10). This map shows the growth of the city, limiting its development to 1910. ⁴ Another map (Figure 6.11) depicts the heights of buildings. One story

⁴In this case, I translated the building categories, removed the original legend, and replicated the scale to improve the quality and legibility of the map.
Figure 6.8: Buildings of historic value (top), pedestrian area, historic center (bottom).
(Source: Ibid., p. 22.)
Figure 6.9: Top: Oaxaca and Monte Albán; bottom: buildings of historical importance.
(Source: Ibid., p. 23.)
Figure 6.10: Oaxaca de Juárez, urban growth 1790–1910.
(Source: Subsecretaría de Bienes Inmuebles y de Urbanismo, 1973a, map modified by author.)
buildings dominate the cityscape, as was to be expected, but there are a number of taller buildings, particularly in the vicinity of the Zócalo, with its multiple-story hotels. There are seventy buildings with three stories, but they are relatively scattered around the area, though slightly more prevalent south of the Zócalo. Their number has remained stable, as applications for tall building construction are typically not successful. Keeping building heights to one or two stories is one of the common criteria applied to maintaining a cohesive, even colonial look. In Morelia, for example, the towers of the cathedral are the tallest feature in the skyline.

SBIU further compiled a map that divides the building stock into colonial, nineteenth, and twentieth century categories (Figure 6.12). The nucleus of the city, not surprisingly, dates predominately to the colonial period. However, interventions and renovations over time may effectively mean that little of the original colonial building remains. A thorough survey would be necessary to confirm the present state of buildings.

As in Guanajuato and Morelia, few direct accounts of compiling the designation file exist. Architect Rafael Vergara Rodríguez (2006) was involved in compiling and editing the designation file (Medina Martínez and Cervantes, 2007, p. 131). He and fellow architect Jaime Ortíz Lajous had met in the National Heritage Secretariat in 1973, which was part of INAH and had become fast friends. Ortíz Lajous hired Vergara to help restore the Santo Domingo complex in 1976 (Vasconcelos Beltrán, 2007, p. 11). Architect Ortíz Lajous, incidentally, favored the reutilization of colonial buildings, such as in the case of the Santa Catalina convent, and suggested it as a model to be followed elsewhere in Mexico (Ortiz Lajous, 1993, p. 141).

After Vergara had read about World Heritage sites in 1984, he decided that Oaxaca should be included in the list, and approached a local journalist, Alfredo Martínez de Aguilar, to write an open letter to the public of Oaxaca. In it, he suggested that World Heritage was an opportunity Oaxaca could not afford to miss (2007, p. 12–13). It seems that Vergara’s efforts went somewhat in parallel with the CONALMEX, as they had in-

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5 Here, I again translated the building heights, removed the original legend, and replaced the scale to make the map more legible.
6 In this example, I translated the architectural period and replaced the scale.
7 This is in stark contrast to more recent applications, such as San Miguel de Allende, where a large commemorative volume was produced.
Figure 6.11: Building heights in Oaxaca’s historic center, 1973.
(Source: Subsecretaría de Bienes Inmuebles y de Urbanismo, 1973b, map modified by author.)
Figure 6.12: Oaxaca's architecture by period.
(Source: Subsecretaría de Bienes Inmuebles y de Urbanismo, 1973c, map modified by author.)
cluded Oaxaca on their preliminary list to UNESCO (Díaz-Berrio Fernández, 2007a). Vergara was made coordinator of the application, which took six or seven months to compile (Yañiz, 2001a). Of course, Oaxaca also had the advantage that it had already been declared a national monumental zone, which helped to facilitate the application with materials from the earlier study of the area (Vasconcelos Beltrán, 2007, p. 13). Vergara and other public figures in Oaxaca, including Rubén Vasconcelos Beltrán, who would become the city’s historian, formed a “Council for the Historic Center of Oaxaca” to promote the World Heritage application in public conferences and meetings (ibid., p. 14). The cost of the application reached nearly US$750,000, precisely because of these promotion efforts (Medina, 2001).

Architect Vergara is a gregarious, yet humble professional, who has dedicated his life to restoration, but does not boast of his achievements. Vergara described his career and involvement in the World Heritage application as follows:

I finished my architectural studies in 1972, and from then on worked for ten years in the national heritage office …this took me all over the country to restore monuments. I worked in Guanajuato and Veracruz, for example; I worked on the Alhóndiga in Guanajuato, on the Valenciana church. I then became responsible for all the architectural heritage of Oaxaca as a state official. I then helped to compile the application file. It was a big package of information, texts, maps, photographs, anything we thought was worth including …but we only had two copies, one of which we sent off to Paris, to UNESCO.⁸ The other one was kept by the state government …but they have managed to lose it! Can you imagine? This important record of this landmark application, and they have lost it. It says a lot about the government’s attitude towards our heritage. I can’t believe that there wasn’t enough money to make another copy, but in the end, that is what happened, and it is lost now.

— Vergara Rodríguez (2006), Personal Interview.

In 2001, the city presented Vergara with the Donají medal, a prestigious local award, for his work to gain UNESCO World Heritage designation for Oaxaca (Yañiz, 2001b).

⁸A visit to the ICOMOS documentation center in Paris confirmed that the file contained additional books, but the slides nor photos referred to in the digitized files were available.
6.4 Ordering Oaxaca – governance, governing, and heritage interventions

In this section, I dissect the various governmental and non-governmental organizations that have an impact on the historic center. Most importantly, it will show how many new agencies have been more recently created to manage the space, and what their work focuses on.

The State government

Amongst the state governmental offices that concern themselves with preservation are of course INAH Oaxaca, with one of the oldest regional offices, opened in 1972 (Márquez Sarrelangue, 2007a, p. 27). Governor José Murat Casab created the Comisión del Patrimonio Edificado (COPAE) in 2002, to meet the growing preservation demand (Medina Martínez and Cervantes, 2007, p. 139). His successor, Ulises Ruiz Ortíz renamed COPAE Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural (INPAC) in 2004, but retained the same staff.

As in Section 4.4 and Section 5.4, the institutions and organizations with stakes in the historic center seemed to expand over time (Figure 6.13).

The state government was certainly not shy in publicizing its public works in Oaxaca’s historic center. In 2008, US$3.2 million were spent on new sidewalks, a new water pipe network and waste water collector, new pavement (cobblestones), public lighting, and underground cabling in Jalatlaco (Figure 6.14).

INAH Oaxaca

INAH Oaxaca maintains various offices in the historic center, with main premises at 715 Pino Suárez, and at 609 García Vigil, and smaller offices, mainly concerned with its archaeological sites, in Santo Domingo and Monte Albán. To give an idea of how precarious its finances frequently were, state government reports reveal, for example, that the organization received only US$75,000 in 1991 alone (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1991b, p. 7). Two years later, its budget rose to US$133,407, equally divided between historical and cultural sites and restoration projects (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1993a, p. 195). In 1994, INAH Oaxaca’s total budget suddenly rose to US$1,164,607 (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1994, p. 253), to fund regional development planning, and restora-
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<td>Alderman for the Historic Center</td>
<td>National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities (ANCMPM)</td>
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<td>Institute of Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
<td>Trustees for the Defense and Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage</td>
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<td>Ministry of Tourism (SECTUR)</td>
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<td>Office of Civil Protection</td>
<td>National Chamber of Restaurants and Food Condiments Industry (CARNAC)</td>
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Figure 6.13: National, state, local, and non-governmental organizations involved in Oaxaca's heritage.
(Figure compiled by author.)
tion projects. It makes the previous extremely low budget years appear odd. INAH Oaxaca oversees the whole state’s archaeological sites. As far as Oaxaca’s historic center is concerned, INAH has to vet any construction applications that are presented. Since the late 1990s, architects or engineers, or whoever else presented an application for a construction permit, would go to Dirección General del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca de Juárez (DGCH) first, who then would pass the application on to INAH for technical assessment. INAH and DGCH then meet to compare their decisions on the merit of the applications. The organizations can tell the applicant to make amendments, if necessary, to fulfill their criteria.

I was given access to INAH’s construction permission application records, which covered the years 1987 to 2003 (Table 6.1). These records were still in paper form and had not been collated or digitally recorded. For some years, record keeping appeared not complete. For example, data for 1993 were not available. The office had apparently moved that year, so the records were lost. The number of detected unauthorized construction projects also seems very low. This could mainly be due to DGCH taking responsibility for sending inspectors on daily reconnaissance walks through the city from 1995 onwards, and either, not bothering to report their findings to INAH, or simply not sharing this information. It could also indicate that the inspectors are not particularly adept at detecting unauthorized
(Source: INAH Oaxaca, 2003; hyphens denote unavailable data.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Historic Center</th>
<th>Periphery</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Unauthorized</th>
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<tr>
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<td>382</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 5,120 60 65 5,180 32

construction projects, or, property owners becoming more resourceful at evading detection over time. The obvious evasion tactic was to wait until after 8 p.m. and have workers complete the job overnight.

These figures raise a number of questions, of course. For one, many property owners were clearly not aware of the boundaries of the historic center, which implies that not enough information about the area was easily available, bearing in mind that the national monumental zone was declared in 1976. If they had been aware of the delimitation, they would not have bothered to go through and pay for the onerous application process. It also seems unlikely that over a period of more than fifteen years, only 32 non-licensed projects were carried out. However, it might also simply make INAH look bad if it registered illegal constructions more accurately. Keeping non-authorizations of projects low is perhaps surprising, when anecdotally, architects and specialists complain that INAH is too stringent. The numbers also do not reveal how many applications were then resubmitted after revision and subsequently successful, or again unsuccessful. Nevertheless, if these figures
are representative, then application numbers remained rather stable over time.

I spoke with architects Raúl Pacheo and Mayela Castro. Pacheco discussed the difficulties INAH experienced with property owners:

First, the *Ley Federal* is not precise enough actually. Theoretically, all these buildings in the monumental zone are of historic or religious value, and thus pertain to the nation, but we cannot intervene without the owner’s approval. This means, for example, that we cannot enter buildings, so there are many houses in the historic center where we only the state of the façade, and not what it actually looks like inside. We do not have the personnel to do inspections, we rely on data from the municipality.⁹ The status of buildings is also in constant flux. We do our best to invite property owners to come and speak to us about options to protect their property. However, many property owners do not live in Oaxaca, so we cannot reach them. Many want their property to collapse, even though this is dangerous to the public and potentially the owner. In the end, many do not heed our invitation. The crux of the problem is this: there are financial resources available, but the municipality spends federal money on interventions in parks and public spaces, instead of offering a credible loan program to property owners. They want to leave a legacy behind, and helping a number of property owners a year is not very high profile, so there is little interest.

— Pacheco (2008), *Personal Interview*.

Apart from these difficulties, the lack of INAH personnel was of particular concern to INAH architect Mayela Castro:

There are simply too few of us to do the built heritage justice. We have seven people here, and we have to look after the heritage properties state-wide. So the universe of problems and issues is huge, but our resources are of course finite. Clearly, culture is not a priority and this is a nation-wide problem. This explains why, for example, the revision of the catalog of monuments will not be finished next year, even though we keep working on it. It is a very time-consuming work and in reality, it never ends.


INAH’s Catalog of Oaxaca’s Monuments, 2004

Oaxaca’s catalog of monuments includes 929 of the more than 1,200 buildings of historic or religious value that are contained within the urban monumental zone. The present version of the catalog dates from 2004 and was developed by CNMH with the assistance of architecture students at Oaxaca’s Benito Juárez university. Aside from photographic records and architectural plans of buildings, there is also a text file with 929 of the buildings described. The location, neighborhood, address, century of construction, original use, and present use, and the building’s characteristics, type, and state of conservation (good, regular, bad) are listed.

As an example, building 0131, at Constitución 201, on the corner of Constitución and Reforma (Figure 6.15) was listed as “without use” in 2004, its wooden beams and brickwork rated as in bad condition. This building is right behind the Santo Domingo complex in the historic center. The façade and adobe walls of the one storey building were rated as in regular condition. Each description also includes a notes section, where other features are discussed, for example, whether or not the INAH staff were able to access the building. They did not have access here, but noted that one of the entrances was probably used as the entrance of the business (Coordinación Nacional de Monumentos Históricos, 2004, p. 154–55). “Miscelanea” was still faintly visible on the side of the building (Figure 6.18 for a photo of the same property from 2008.)

The catalog did not provide location maps beyond identifying the building on the block level. Nevertheless, the description of the property, and historical information, where available, provide some more detail than Morelia’s and Guanajuato’s catalogs. Predictably, the staff was able to access public buildings, and provide even greater details on their history and state of conservation, but only rarely gained access to private buildings.

Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural INPAC/COPAE

INPAC’s offices were in the Colonia Reforma, north of the historic center, and thus perhaps somewhat out of the way. I first visited the office in August 2006, as it was one of the few that was open despite the political standoff between Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO) and the state government. The office was later moved to the ad-
Figure 6.15: 201 Constitución and Reforma, property 0131, 2004.
(Source: *ibid.*, photo and map combined by author.)
administrative city on the outskirts of Oaxaca, as part of the decentralization of public offices. INPAC publishes *La Gaceta*, a glossy magazine that covers heritage and restoration projects, including rather specific and technical aspects of restoration of statues and other decorative details of colonial buildings. Strangely, INPAC does not maintain a presence on the Internet.

In 2006, INPAC was working on its intervention in the “El Llano” garden. I spoke with three architects working at INPAC at the time. Danivia Calderon was in charge of research, studies, and projects:

INPAC started in January 2005, before, we were COPAE. Generally speaking, we focus on two things: 1) We plan, research, and execute preservation projects, which could be the restoration of a work of art, or a buildings, or a space. Our preliminary studies are very detailed, we research very thoroughly before embarking on the project. 2) We try to educate various subsections of society about heritage. “La Gaceta” is quite academic and it is available in libraries here in Oaxaca and nationwide. But we also try to educate children about heritage at an age appropriate level. A huge problem is obviously graffiti, and youngsters can see that everywhere, so in our storybook for them, we take them for a walk in the historic center and discuss important buildings and they see what damage graffiti does. We also produce commemorative books about projects we have done, where we explain the history of the project, what the problems were, and how our restoration helped to rectify those problems. It is important to have these sorts of records. Of course we work with a large number of other agencies, with Public Works, for example. We take a very multidisciplinary approach. There is lots more we need to do.

— Calderón Martínez (2006a), *Personal Interview*.

Architect Gustavo Donnadieu Cervantes (2006) was in charge of the urban architecture division at INPAC. He described the lengthy work sequence involved in vetting and carrying out heritage projects:

The state government comes up with initial proposals, and we then study if they are feasible. Normally, we work with a variety of professionals, engineers of all types, architects, construction specialists. Projects we have done range greatly, from the façade of the Cathedral, to the Alcalá Theater, restoring statues, the façade
of the Museum for Contemporary Art, the federal palace, San Felipe Nerí, and as well as open spaces, of course, such as the Zócalo, the Alameda, and now, El Llano.

Once we have done our research, and written up the proposal, we hand it off to DGCH, who have to vet it and make sure it conforms to the legislation. They then tell us if it will be approved or not. They meet with INAH for their opinion. They may send it back to us and ask us to revise certain aspects of the project, we do that until it is approved. In total, 40 people work at INPAC, in various offices, like administration, projects, legal affairs. We don't actually deal with any money here, that is a completely different office. When a project is approved, that other office sets up the budget. At the moment, we are working in El Llano park. We are there every day, even though another office is actually carrying out the work. We assist them in every way we can. Proposals for other projects are for the Conzatti garden, and some churches. For those, we need to seek permission from the national INAH office, as churches are generally federal properties.

— Donnadieu Cervantes (2006), Personal Interview.

To my surprise, INPAC did not have a copy of the catalog of monuments, but deferred to DGCH when questions that pertained to the catalog arose (ibid.). The work in the El Llano park involved the replacement of pavements and erecting larger cement dividers to protect the flora and fauna planted in the park (Figure 6.16).

Architect Verónica Arredondo Paulín (2006) headed up the planning division at INPAC. Her observations reflect the limitations of planning for preservation, not only in the context of the then ongoing APPO protests, but more generally:

We really have a variety of problems here, and much of it comes down to territorial problems. For 2007, we want to develop a Preservation Development plan with the Urban Development office for the whole of the central valleys, if we can get the money. The present urban development plans in Oaxaca are very outdated, and the preservation plan is also very outdated. We also need a new state law on preservation, to be more effective. DGCH is supposedly working on a revision of the preservation plan, and they have invited us to join their workshops. It's very important that we are able to participate.

Historically, the state has always funded preservation projects, not the municipality. The municipality simply does not have the financial resources. We need to know what the Urban Development office is doing and vice versa, they need to know what we are doing. The most frustrating thing is that a very complete and serious study was conducted by a university from Mexico City a few years ago, which
produced more than 200 maps, but in the end, there was no money available to translate the findings into a viable plan. What a waste of a useful resource.

— Arredondo Paulín (2006), *Personal Interview*.

Not surprisingly, Arredondo Paulín (*ibid.* ) defended INPAC and its work in the Zócalo:

The Zócalo had not received any attention since 1982. It looked run down, it was very dirty. It did not have a very historical image. The work needed to be done. We unified the pavements, protected the flora and fauna. Some of the old tree simply were not healthy anymore, so we replaced them. All of these works were criticized. However, once the work was done, it was immediately accepted. We fol-
owed the conventions, people are simply making everything contentious.

— Arredondo Paulín (2006), Personal Interview.

The Municipal government

Now, I turn to the municipal government and its organizations and individuals that focus on the historic center.

The Alderman for the Historic Center

Rául Baltazar Castellanos is the alderman for the historic center of Oaxaca. He is young, in his early 30s, and arrived late to our meeting, due to his duties. A lawyer by training, Castellanos had spent much of his life away in Mexico City for his studies, but returned to Oaxaca in 2006. He freely admitted that “I do not have much background in the subject, in architecture and preservation, but I am willing to learn.” Most of his time was devoted to programming activities, and, at that stage to gain approval for the new Partial Plan for the Historic Center, devised and developed in 2007. What did the World Heritage designation mean to him?

First and foremost, it fills me with pride, it is a great honor. World Heritage is a great honor, but also, an opportunity that not every city has. Oaxaca lives on tourism, the biggest source of income are the remittances from the United States, of course, but tourism must be second. Therefore, World Heritage is an opportunity, but an opportunity that requires a commitment to maintain order, to keep it clean, and beautiful. Perhaps after twenty years, this commitment has waned. At first, as with a girlfriend, you care for her, buy her flowers, make sure she’s content. But over time, you are not as interested anymore, perhaps …and there is a strong tendency here among citizens to leave everything to the authority.

We must foster this commitment to heritage. We are trying to start with the children, by going into schools, and showing them photographs of how the city looked, to see if they can recognize streets. We want them to see that where they live is special.

— Baltazar Castellanos (2008), Personal Interview.

He further outlined the limitations of the municipal budget:
The municipality spends about US$ 30,000,000 on expenses, just to keep people paid, and the bills paid. So, that only leaves about US$5,800,000 to use … and there is a lot of need, not only in the historic center. It is a vicious cycle, in a sense. If we let the center deteriorate, and only invest in the periphery, then the people who live in the periphery and who work in tourism, won’t have many tourists to serve in restaurants, take tours, and require hotel accommodations. The budget always constrain us. That is why we think promoting tourism routes for the nine World Heritage cities will benefit all of us.

We rely on ANCMPM to help us get support from the federal government, or to come to agreements with different ministries, like SECTUR. They can help us with promotion too.

One thing I want to achieve is to Europeanize the pedestrianized area. I want to see cafés offer tables, to foster more outdoor life in that space, just like people are used to in Europe.¹⁰

— Baltazar Castellanos (2008), *Personal Interview.*

Castellanos admitted that in many instances, the municipal government really had no means to respond with any force to construction violations, or in the prevention of graffiti spraying. Perhaps because he was a lawyer, he felt that a federal law was needed that would impose a strict age limit on the sale of spray paint, similar to cigarettes or alcohol. Thus, apart from trying to work with shops who sold the spray paint, to ensure they registered each sold can and did not sell to minors directly, there was little the municipal government could do to intervene. The desire to Europeanize the pedestrianized area perhaps is symptomatic of the reliance on tourism—with a specific clientele in mind, of course, who appreciate, are used to, and certainly in the minds of officials demand these types of amenities.

**The General Office for the Historic Center (DGCH)**

I spoke with Guillermo González Léon, head of the projects division in DGCH in 2006 and again in 2008. Not surprisingly, the office, which opened in 1995, is located in the historic center. González León explained the office structure and how DGCH works with INAH:

¹⁰In essence, Castellanos wanted to enable local businesses to set up tables in public space, a practice that has caused conflicts in Guanajuato’s San Francisco square, as discussed in Section 4.6.
The office is divided into a projects division and a licenses division. I am in charge of projects, and there are three people who work on the following: one architect prepares project plans in Auto-Cad, one integrates project proposals, gathers all the necessary signatures, etc., takes the proposals to INAH for their review and signatures, and one architect vets the projects the municipality wants to carry out. Usually, the municipality will maintain gardens and public parks.

Within the licensing division, there are five inspectors and a chief inspector. These five inspectors divide the area of the historic center up amongst themselves and they inspect construction sites six days a week. If they find that an owner has not applied for permits, they leave a notice for the owner to tell him he needs to get the paperwork in order. If they ignore it again, they get another notice, and if that still is ignored, the site gets closed down. Two notices, that is it. Sometimes we get anonymous tips from neighbors, who will call and say that suddenly, there is work going on at night, clandestinely, next door or across the street. We rely on citizens to act responsibly and give us this information so that we can shut down the project.

The architects from the licensing division meet with INAH twice a week to go over new permit applications and whether or not the proposal can go ahead, or whatever modifications might be necessary in order for the permit to be authorized. So we work very closely with INAH.

— González León (2008), Personal Interview.

Most likely influenced by the events of 2006, the architect insisted that public protests were the greatest threat to Oaxaca’s built heritage, as well as graffiti spraying. He claimed that there were only ten buildings in the historic center that were in danger of collapse, mainly because they were left in a legal limbo after the death of the owner (González León, 2006). This seems to be a rather sanguine view of the state of the historic center and perhaps he did not want to leave me with a negative impression of the work of his office and preservation efforts in Oaxaca more generally. However, the Office of Municipal Protection had detected more than sixty buildings in serious disrepair (Figure 6.17).

In 2008, Oaxaca was considering instituting a “unidad de gestión,” a management unit comprised of state, local, and non-governmental organizations to oversee preservation projects and vet their feasibility, and then implement them. UNESCO now requires planning programs from new applicants, and recommends that already designated cities also implement them. Any organization that wanted to join the management unit, González
Léon explained, could do so, but would have to pay their representative’s salary. Obviously, this could prove difficult or impossible for many small organizations, who could not afford paying another full salary. González León thought it was a positive development to have a unit decide on projects, as opposed to one person, as seemingly occurred when governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz simply implemented his plans for the Zócalo.

**Office of Municipal Civil Protection**

The Office of Municipal Civil Protection was busy organizing its new offices outside the historic center when I visited it in June 2008. Its director, Abraham Reyes Arezola explained that he and representatives from DGCH and INAH met to align their criteria as to how to determine the state of deterioration of a building. It turned out the three organizations had conducted their own surveys and reached different conclusions:

> We found 62 buildings (Figure 6.17) in a state of near collapse, which is what we aim to prevent, or rather, we try to make sure that the public is aware of these buildings and doesn’t get hurt. So we found 62 buildings, of which 59 we photographed for a photographic record, DGCH found something like 70 to 100 buildings, and INAH 120 buildings.

> Of course, it is more important to us to ensure structural safety, rather than maintenance or particular architectural features. So, for us, a cracked cornice is a problem, whereas for them, it is a minor thing, they might not even take note of it if the rest of the building seems to be intact and relatively well maintained. According to the criteria of all three organizations, we have found about 222 buildings in the historic center to be in very bad condition.

— Reyes Arezola (2008), *Personal Interview*.

The office had eight inspectors that checked on buildings daily, particularly during the rainy season, as adobe is especially vulnerable when exposed to prolonged rainfall. The inspectors attempt to talk to owners, to assist in minimally reducing the hazard their building poses to the public. Properties are cordoned off to prevent injury (Figure 6.18). Unfortunately, the Civil Protection office had been recently broken into and computers were stolen that contained the photographic record of buildings in disrepair.
Figure 6.17: Map of buildings in serious disrepair, Oaxaca, June 2008.
(Source: Dirección de Protección Civil Municipal, 2008, map modified by author.)
We realize that the owners are just waiting for their building to collapse. They can’t afford permits or won’t receive permits from INAH. Preservation is more expensive than starting from scratch. So they just wait for natural decay and earthquakes to destroy the property. But we have to maintain public safety, so we affix signs and completely cordon off buildings if that is necessary.

— Reyes Arezola (2008), Personal Interview.

Oaxaca’s NGOs

According to a 2007 geographical study, by 1991 the city of Oaxaca was home to 100 NGOs (Moore et al., 2007, p. 225). The newspaper’s reports of citizen initiatives coincides with that first peak of NGO activity. A group of 150 Oaxaqueños had formed “La Verde Ante-
querá” (Green Antequera), concerned with the city’s environment, particularly its public spaces and gardens. In April 1991, the group cleaned up the Zócalo and planted new plants. This was all part of their community contribution (called tequio) (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991n). In December 1991, the “Amigos del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de Oaxaca” (“Friends of Oaxaca’s historic center”) under the leadership of local architects was formed to help protecting the city’s historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991e).

By the end of the 1990s, NGOs had mushroomed to 200 (Moore et al., 2007, p. 225).

**Patronato Pro-Defensa de Patrimonio Cultural y Natural del Estado de Oaxaca (PROOAX)**

Artist Francisco Toledo founded perhaps one of the more visible NGOs in Oaxaca, PROOAX, officially in 1993, but it began working as a pressure group in 1989 (PROOAX, 2008, p. 1). Toledo is an icon in Oaxaca, a star, a celebrity. Hailing from the small village of Juchitán, Toledo is a largely self-taught artist who produces paintings inspired by magical realism (Congdon and Hallmark, 2002, p. 268–269). He supports the Museum of Contemporary Arts, the Graphic Arts Institute, the Borges Library for the Blind, as well as the Manuel Álvarez Bravo Photographic Center, a printing house, Toledo Ediciones, and, not least PROOAX (ibid., p. 269). In short, he is a consummate philanthropist. His work has been exhibited worldwide.

Architect Rafael Vergara Rodríguez (2006) summed up Toledo’s importance quite succinctly:

> Look, Toledo formed this organization by himself and we are fortunate to have such a “maestro” look after and be concerned with our cultural and natural heritage. The government could not dismiss his views, they could not ignore him. Oaxaca’s citizens really appreciated his efforts, as he was able to stop some of the government’s bad proposals, for example, the parking lot that was meant to be built underneath Santo Domingo. But recently, it seems he is either not interested anymore or perhaps has run out of energy. He lives in California now, I think.

— Vergara Rodríguez (ibid.), Personal Interview.

PROOAX’s activities were spread far and wide, eventually, beyond the state limits. From the early 1990s onward, the organization campaigned to prevent of the sale of the
Santa Catalina convent ((Figure 6.21), which had been a state-owned and run hotel since 1972. President Miguel de la Madrid terminated the trusteeship, which oversaw regular maintenance of the building in 1988 and allowed FONATUR to take responsibility for the building (PROOAX, 2008, p. 1). Subsequently, FONATUR wanted to sell the convent to the “Camino Real” hotel chain, but Toledo and his supporters, who included Rodolfo Morales, another famous Oaxacan artist, argued that the building should remain in the hands of the nation, not a private company, and that any profits should return to the public purse. PROOAX did not object to Santa Catalina being used as a hotel, but they wanted its profits to benefit the public, not a large company. The then Governor of Oaxaca, Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano, agreed, and under pressure, FONATUR canceled the sale in 1994, and gave the hotel chain “only” a twelve-year concession to run the hotel (ibid., p. 2).

In 2001, PROOAX started a symbolic public collection of money to purchase the convent from FONATUR, who had decided to sell it to the Hilton group (Rios Olivera, 2001c). Toledo went to the hotel and asked for contributions from the surprised staff—a successful publicity stunt, which garnered 16 pesos, roughly US$1, and a stream of media coverage (Rios Olivera, 2001b). The goal simply was to return the hotel to the nation (Carrillo, 2001). Toledo then wrote an open letter to FONATUR to continue putting pressure on the organization (Rios Olivera, 2001g). He also tried to contact the Governor and suggested in a newspaper interview that he might go as far as contacting Vicente Fox, Mexico’s president, about the issue (Rios Olivera, 2001f). Eventually, FONATUR abandoned its ambitions to sell to the Hilton group (El Imparcial Editorial, 2001e), but would continue to rent the property to the “Camino Real” group, for US$1.5 million per year (Rios Olivera, 2001a). Clearly, this marked a huge success for PROOAX, even though this was only a temporary victory (Rios Olivera, 2001d). The matter remained unresolved in 2005 and in anticipation of the end of the concessionary term, Toledo and PROOAX reinitiated their demands to re-nationalize the property. It remains a hotel and is now run by the “Oaxaca Hotel Group.”

In 1993, PROOAX gained formal NGO status and adopted a formal constitution and mission to:

[...] protect, rescue, and promote the conservation of monuments and historic
buildings, archaeological sites, works of art, libraries and archives, and to defend the environment, plant diversity, and natural resources where it is destroyed, depredated, or used improperly or irrationally. Struggles for conservation and rescue of traditional customs, folklore, languages, traditional medicine, gastronomy, and everything concerning Oaxacan culture (PROOAX, 2008, p. 6).

PROOAX has further lobbied for a new home for Oaxaca’s State archives, albeit not successfully to date, as items have gone missing or their preservation was compromised in the current location. To avoid further losses of this nature, PROOAX filed an official petition with the state government. However, this was summarily ignored (ibid., p. 7–9). More successful was the NGO’s objection to a project for an underground parking garage below Santo Domingo church in 1994, with that idea eventually abandoned by the authorities (ibid., p. 9–10). In 2002, PROOAX joined forces with local citizens, students, and even tourists to protest McDonald’s opening a franchise in the Zócalo (ibid., p. 35). The NGO sent a letter to President Vicente Fox, to then then governor, José Murat Casab, and mayor Gabino Cué Monteagudo, with thousands of signatures of people opposing the multi-national chain. This, too, was successful.

Of course, not all of PROOAX’s efforts have been successful. ADO, an overland bus company that dominates the Oaxaca to Mexico City traffic, managed to build a large station at the northern outskirts of the historic center in 2005, despite protests from neighbors and PROOAX that redirection of a road to facilitate buses entering and exiting the station was not in keeping with preservation efforts (ibid., p. 36). In 2003, ICOMOS awarded Francisco Toledo the Federico Sescosse prize for his preservation efforts (ibid., p. 37).

Other projects involved support of community radio stations (2003), assisting coffee growers (2003), and advancing the establishment of a textile museum (2003, it opened in 2005) (ibid., p. 39–40). PROOAX also supported efforts in 2004 to prevent the building of a Wal-Mart store on the grounds of Teotihuacán near Mexico City, but these protests fell on deaf ears and the stores opened (ibid., p. 43). Clearly, Toledo’s notoriety helped PROOAX gain visibility and made the organization more attractive as a potential partner. Toledo won the “Right Livelihood Award” in 2005¹¹ (ibid., p. 57).

¹¹The Right Livelihood Award, set up by Swede Jakob von Uexkull, is sometimes referred to as the “Alternative Nobel Prize.”
When I visited Toledo’s Institute of Graphic Arts in Oaxaca, which is also the official address for PROOAX, a staff member, who preferred to remain unnamed, explained:

PROOAX has been put on the back-burner for now, mainly because this state government is so unpredictable and violent. Toledo is working in Monterrey. Thus, the organization is waiting for the administration to change. This government has been violent, and there are serious security problems, even for Toledo.

In the past, many of PROOAX’s proposals as well as fundraising ideas were simply taken over by the state government. They want to be seen in control and as doing things, but then they don’t end up going through with the projects, such as a water treatment plant we had proposed and even raised all the necessary funds for. Toledo then passed everything on to the state government and nothing happened. He is not adverse to letting the state government take the lead on a project, even if we have done all the legwork. He is not doing all this work for publicity’s sake.

But the state ends up allowing construction projects without applying valid criteria. They simply give contracts to people that are close to the government. I think it makes sense for the organization to hold back at the moment. The situation is too fluid, and too many prominent people or their relations are being kidnapped.¹² We can only surmise that the government is behind all this, but we cannot prove it. For now, PROOAX remains in hibernation until we have a new state government.

— PROOAX Staff Member (2008), Personal Interview.

Once the Ulises Ruíz Ortíz government departed in 2010, PROOAX indeed became active again.

Casa de la Ciudad

Dutchman and historian Sebastián van Doesburg was in charge of the Casa de la Ciudad from its opening in 2004 until June of 2011. He has since become director of the Francisco de Burgoa library, housed in the Santo Domingo convent and since 2010, a member of ICOMOS Oaxaca. The mission of the Casa de la Ciudad is to provide citizens with access to information about the city and its history. While the municipality owns the build-

¹²During my fieldwork, a prominent businessman was kidnapped out of a famous restaurant, El Colibrí, less than a block from my accommodations in broad daylight on a Sunday afternoon. I personally never felt threatened in Oaxaca, but clearly, highly visible people such as Toledo felt threatened.
ing at 115 Porfirio Díaz, the Alfredo Harp Helú Foundation provides the budget, roughly US$4.4 million annually. To that end, the organization hosts conferences and talks on urban subjects, invites experts to discuss common urban problems, and to give small local organizations the chance to present their work in a space conducive to public interaction. It is also home to two libraries, one run independently from the Casa de la Ciudad, but still financed by Harp Helú, and a small library maintained by the Casa de la Ciudad, as well as an architectural workshop. Most of its events are free. The staff consisted of van Doesburg, a secretary, two assistants, and three architects (van Doesburg, Sebastián, 2008). Its architects have also worked on restoration projects, mostly outside the city. Despite the popularity of its events and its many services to the public, van Doesburg said they had been threatened with closure on a number of occasions, but so far, had evaded that threat. The Casa works closely with PROOAX to unite forces as often as possible.

He highlighted the greatest challenges in the management of Oaxaca’s built heritage:

The loss of housing in the historic center stands out, basically, there are no mechanisms to prevent owners from selling or renting their buildings, which are then converted into businesses. Year after year, fewer people live in the historic center, and those that can afford to leave do so. Consequently, tourism services and businesses continue to expand. With more commercial activity comes more traffic, which the center cannot support. There is no parking available, creating bottlenecks where people double-park.

The concentration of tourism-related activities and events in the historic center brings more street vendors into those areas, again, causing more traffic problems. The curious thing is that there is an oversupply of cultural events in the streets, while the theaters are empty. And most of these events are of course in the historic center, so it appears as though they are for tourists, or elitist in some fashion. There’s also a huge deficit of green spaces in the city.

There simply is no way to negotiate conflict. The government manipulates groups, gives some preferential treatment, and equally, the teacher’s union throws its weight around, as do the transportation unions. There are no channels to resolve conflicts without protests in the historic center, that destroy, temporarily, the city’s economy. So the city loses all around. The street vendors are not negotiable, transport is not up for discussion and resolution either, nor are the teachers. If the subject cannot be broached, how is it going to get resolved?

— van Doesburg, Sebastián (ibid.), Personal Interview.
van Doesburg further explained that while Oaxaca was to a certain extent famous for the great number of civil associations that shaped the city’s cultural climate, while they simultaneously struggled to fulfill their roles as non-governmental actors because their ability to access decision-making negotiations was limited. Relations with the state and municipal governments were frequently fraught with tension and sometimes outright confrontation. In a society dominated by clientelistic relationships, in the public and private sector, NGOs struggled for space and the means to participate. He went on to say:

Francisco Toledo organized a very interesting forum in 2002, when there were plans to allow McDonald’s in the Zócalo. I would say that this was the first very public attempt to get non-governmental organizations actively involved in thinking about how to manage the historic center. There were more than 160 presentations and roundtables. Of course this did not sit well with the authorities. This was successful, however, McDonald’s did not move into the Zócalo.

So when the state government simply brought in the bulldozers and tore up the Zócalo without explanation in 2005 people became enraged. It ruined relations between the people and the government, which were already fraught. The norm is that the government does not consult the people, and that tendency continues. Civil associations were just getting started and beginning to learn how to operate in this reduced space, when the protests in 2006 escalated and so now, everything is highly charged and is politicized.

This culture of non-consultation of the public was really evident in the latest urban development plans that were being contemplated. They just wanted to put more highways around the city, there was almost no mention of culture and environmental concerns. It was a terrible plan, more akin to planning in the 1950s then today.

The Plan de Manejo, which was much more seriously designed by architect Enrique Anda, who is quite prominent, was much more inclusive, they held a series of workshops, where people were involved in discussing problems as well as possible solutions. However, the Plan de Manejo was never approved by the municipal government, and basically, it seemed as though it was only done to win a national prize from INAH, which it did! I don’t have a copy, even though it won this prize and it seems to be going nowhere fast.

— van Doesburg, Sebastián (2008), Personal Interview.
The same seemed to be the case of the Management Unit, that was then being discussed, as previously explained by Guillermo González León of DGCH. van Doesburg was not very optimistic about it, it seemed unclear how exactly it would work, and the fact that organizations had to pay the representative's salary would prove to be a great obstacle for small organizations, he argued, in addition to the fact that organizations had to be formally invited, presumably by the municipal or even state government. He further questioned whether or not the organization would really get any decision-making power, instead of merely having to acquiesce to decisions made elsewhere, most likely informally.

**Colegio de Arquitectos and ICOMOS Oaxaca**

Various architects and ICOMOS Mexico members were of course involved in preservation projects, as well as in the review of projects and their outcome. ICOMOS Mexico maintains a representation in each Mexican state, and local chapters are more or less active, depending on location.

Architect Lázaro García Saavedra (2008) was first vice president of the Colegio de Arquitectos del Estado de Oaxaca, and subsequently became president of the NGO. He was also involved with another professional association which brought architects, construction engineers, civil engineers, and property appraisers together. The architects were concerned with having a level playing field. He explained:

> The authorities demand that citizens comply with regulations, when it comes to construction, opening a business, whatever. For example, for my office here in the historic center, I had to provide one parking space for potential clients. But just down the street is a governmental office with about 100 workers. Do they have parking spaces? No. None. So, if they want the citizens to comply, then they need to comply as well. That is all we want, a level playing field, where the same rules apply to everyone.

> At the moment, this is simply not the case. Banks can get away without parking spaces, the hotel Camino Real does not provide parking, but instead, its guests simply leave their cars in the pedestrianized area, but they are not fined, nothing is done about it. I have nothing against that hotel, but it is breaking the law. There should be consequences. Instead, particular interests win out. It is not hard to make the public comply with the rules and regulations, but it seems almost impossible
to get the authorities to comply. It should not be this way.

— García Saavedra (2008), *Personal Interview*.

With regard to the historic center and its boundaries, García Saavedra (*ibid.*) thought that the delimitation had been inclusive enough, and that it did not matter very much that a few buildings were not within the boundary. It was more important, he stressed, to make sure that valuable buildings, regardless of location, were preserved.

A big concern is that the historic center is a market during the day, and dead at night. All preservation is for naught if we cannot ensure that people still live in the center and that the transportation and street vendor problems do not completely constrict the center. This is related to the playing field not being level; particular interests manage to get around the regulations and just do whatever they want. We cannot move forward without the even application of the law.

What use is another consultative body for the historic center, as has been proposed in the new management plan, that states that no officials should be members of this body, when the first two names on the list are the directors of DGCH and INAH? Why do they insist that architects who want to work on a project in the historic center have to live in the historic center? Surely, only your competence should matter, not where you live. It is just a means to ensure that the same people continue to get the jobs in the historic center. We have been reviewing the plan and will make our observations known.

— García Saavedra (*ibid.*), *Personal Interview*.

Elí Pérez Matos’ architectural and construction firm PEMAV was frequently used for various preservation projects, in and around Oaxaca (Figure 6.19). Matos had worked in the state government’s Urban Development office in 1992, but Pérez Matos had since left public office. He explained to me how the historic center had changed and evolved since the designation:

When the first heritage designation was made,\(^{13}\) property owners felt threatened, knowing that they could not carry on doing with their property what they wanted to once the designation was finalized, so there were a series of quick,\(^{13}\)He is referring to the national declaration from March 1976.
rushed demolitions. Owners did not want to be limited by the designation. But in reality, because only a polygon was delimited, but no regulation, no plan, instituted, nothing much changed. Since 1994 we have a Partial Plan, which is still in force …INAH’s catalog of monuments is also nearly finished, but they have chosen not to publish it yet. Why? Because they would have to notify all the owners and it would imply an economic interest. Of course many important preservation projects have been executed, I worked on the Cathedral myself. That must have cost about US$500,000. But these sorts of figures are not publicized, there is no transparency, when there should be.

— Pérez Matos (2006), Personal Interview.

As regarded the delimitation of the monumental zone, he expressed that it seemed a
bit whimsical; a street was included that didn’t even exist.

Architect and ICOMOS member Eloy Pérez Sibaja was more openly critical of the preservation projects undertaken by the state government:

Perhaps having an ambitious program of preservation interventions was not actually the problem, but the procedure, how they went about implementing this program was simply not transparent and they did not include all the different stakeholders. Businesses, civil society, neighborhood associations, everyone should have been involved, but from my point of view and other ICOMOS members here, that was not the case. Our focus is limited in the technical and scientific sense, but even with that narrow lens, the procedure was not right. The bulldozers appeared overnight, without warning and they started replacing the paving stones. Now, the previous stones had shown signs of wear and tear, but it could have probably been retained. There was no advance planning in place to deal with the trees that fell as a cause of the work; some may have been old and weak, but there was no consultation on the matter.

We now have a similar situation in El Llano (Figure 6.16), where the interests are clearly economic, all the pavement is being replaced. Far less money could have been spent, but the state government wants to ensure the visibility of its interventions.

— Pérez Sibaja (2006), Personal Interview.

He also spoke of the difficulty that architects who are critical face, in terms of their ability to work.

For architects specialized in preservation, work only comes through the state government. You can only get preservation contracts from them. I have to think carefully each time I accept a project: Is it good or bad for my integrity, and for the historic center? It is very complicated. In order to make a living, I have to weigh up the consequences very carefully. There are some private initiatives, in particular, Alfredo Harp Helú’s foundation, which has bought some buildings and restored them, but it is just not enough.

If you go to DGCH and ask for the register of architects who can do preservation projects, well, you are always going to come across the same firms that are doing this sort of work. So, you cannot afford to burn bridges, otherwise, you cannot make a living.
Personally, I think INAH and DGCH are also not interested in supporting contemporary architectural construction. The tendency is to be conservationist, to build houses that will look “colonial” even though they are not. I don’t think it’s adequate to emulate colonial building styles in the twenty-first century, contemporary architecture can be integrated in an acceptable fashion.

— Pérez Sibaja (2006), Personal Interview.

Architect Esteban Sanjuan Maldonado, who worked as a volunteer director for the Alacalá Theater, and was the legal representative of painter Rodolfo Morales’ foundation gave a rather damning verdict of World Heritage designation:

For me, the declaration, or being declared World Heritage is not a gift, perhaps it is a punishment. Buildings increase in value, owners sell them, perhaps they are even worth US$1 million. People sell or rent these buildings and life moves on. The center becomes a showcase, a museum, uninhabited. UNESCO has not dealt with this at all.

Furthermore, political vagaries and interests have made it impossible to come up with a sustainable, integrated project. There is no continuity. I wrote to UNESCO, WHC, and no one replied. The reality is that we have to help ourselves, if we are in fact committed to supporting a project that integrates tourism, tangible and intangible heritage.

But how can a city of 500,000 like Oaxaca not have a water treatment plant? The quality of life is not there, services are lacking. It is a great void. People say how beautiful Oaxaca is, but as a painting, not a reality. The historic center is not worthy of admiration for its restorations, but for its people. The restoration might complement the city, but the goal should not be empty showcases.

So I think there is confusion about what “patrimonio” really means. I do not agree with declarations that emphasize a historical heritage. We have to reestablish these historic centers, give them life, not turn them into empty window display cases. Education is the only way out of this limited approach. But what is INAH doing? What is CONACULTA doing? Nothing. Fox’s national cultural program did not work. We need education, to prepare ourselves, and to send representative work like that of Rodolfo Morales, Francisco Toledo, and Rufino Tamayo around the world to demonstrate Mexico’s wealth. But as long as we limit ourselves to the curtain of folklore, how pretty the city looks, how nice the Guelaguetza is, then I do not think that our heritage can last.

— Sanjuan Maldonado (2006), Personal Interview.
The city historian and the local media

Rubén Vasconcelos Beltrán, an engineer by training, had also previously served in the state government in a cultural affairs role, before becoming the city historian in 2000. As such, he regularly contributed to the local media. He emphasized the importance of the state government’s interventions in the city’s built heritage over the past twenty to fifty years:

I first came to Oaxaca in the 1950s and you cannot imagine the level of destruction still present after the 1931 earthquake. Many of the major churches had been destroyed, and it was only then that the towers of the Cathedral were being restored. Father Santa Cruz, who was also an engineer, was interested in restoration, of course particularly of churches and convents. But for me, governor Eduardo Vasconcelos (1947–1950) was really groundbreaking. He was a very educated person. He instigated many projects, paving of streets, the Plaza de la Danza, the restoration of various churches, the Socrates park. The governors who followed Vasconcelos continued this work. Santo Domingo’s main cloister was rehabilitated from 1970 to 1974, under the direction of architect Jaime Ortíz Lajous. Much later, of course, governor Heladio Ramírez López negotiated with the military that occupied part of Santo Domingo, and they finally left in 1992, which then enable the state government to initiate a huge rehabilitation project, with the blessing of the President, who came to visit. The Teatro Alcalá was also restored, San Felipe Nerí, many streets were paved in the center, such as Alcalá, Morelos, Bustamante, Armenta y López, The Museum of Contemporary Art was opened, the Institute for Graphic Arts. Many of Oaxaca’s artists have also been very active in this realm, Francisco Toledo, Rodolfo Morales.

However, because these are mainly government-led efforts, the people do not give it much importance. They forget very quickly. If we had more of a historical memory, we would recognize the effort that has been made. After 1931, many of the houses were destroyed, and it is only through the exertions of residents that many houses were rebuilt. The government and the clergy did their part. This history is easily lost.

— Vasconcelos Beltrán (2008), Personal Interview.

He recognized, however, that today, the historic center is mainly in the service of tourism, and not the resident:
I’m not an architect, but I differentiate between “urbanism” and “urban development.” I understand the former to mean more decorative aspects of cities, while the latter means infrastructure, water, electricity, gas, road maintenance, so that people can continue to live there. I think we have fallen into urbanism. Into the thinking that by maintaining parks, public spaces, maybe some roads, that that is enough to keep the city alive. We have received the answer to this: after 8 p.m., the streets and the center are dead.

This city, unlike European cities, was built based on a new concept. Openness of spaces. Open for interaction, for conviviality, not for defense, like the European cities. Some people would come to the Zócalo to go to the Cathedral, to share religious experiences. Others would gather to play music, to talk. Others would come and bring their grievances to the government palace. It all happened in one place. But now, businesses dominate the area. If you look at other local churches, they have been abandoned, because there are only businesses in the area and the people that used to create the community have left.

I can’t blame them. Receiving regular services is extremely difficult. There is no parking. The noise levels are incredible, due to traffic. Everything is a battle, and people do not want to have to struggle to get their gas. And they should not have to if we thought of urban development differently.

— Vasconcelos Beltrán (2008), Personal Interview.

As the city historian, he understood his role as an observer, primarily, and as such, he did not see an end to these developments. Worst of all, he felt that opportunities to educate and work towards a collective benefit of society through joint effort was being lost, because various interest groups felt entitled to various benefits, and had no interest or vision for the community as a whole.

Similarly, journalist Mario Girón saw himself as in the service of the public. He felt that none of the politicians were in touch with what was going on in the city:

They never walk through the historic center, they don’t talk to local business people or people more generally. Thus, because they don’t actually know what is going on, how many streets are full of potholes, how many buildings have graffiti on them, everything they do is improvised. And when everything you do is improvised, nothing works. You do not actually address the heart of a problem, let’s say, for example, public transport. So it might look like you are doing something, but you are not. The government will always give the impression that it is working, doing something, it is active. But it really isn’t. They also have no clue how expensive
basic foodstuffs are now, they are in this government bubble, with their drivers and other amenities that remove them from our lives.

— Girón (2008b), Personal Interview.

Girón saw his role as a journalist to serve the community and to bridge the gap between the government and people. To do so effectively, he said he insisted on pointing out this disconnect. He was also unconvinced by the trickle down effect of tourism:

Tourism does not benefit people in general. The hotel owners and restaurant owners undoubtedly benefit the most. They have a huge employment pool here, so if they do not like their worker, they can easily replace them and pay really low wages. They also get preferential treatment from the government, whereas the artisans, tour guides, market people are ignored. The same rules do not apply. We need to get the government to address the real problems here. I will keep trying my way, by doing what I do best, which is reporting.

— Girón (ibid.), Personal Interview.

World Heritage through the eyes of local academics

Anthropologist Manuel Esparza Camargo (2008), who served as director of the regional INAH office for eight years and then five years as director of Oaxaca’s state archives in the 1970s and 1980s, and who is still a researcher within the national INAH system, had a more institutional perspective, in terms of how Mexico’s institutions had been transformed after neoliberal economic policies were implemented. He explained:

In the past twenty-five years, with economic policy subordinated to IMF and World Bank and their goals, cultural institutions have been neglected, minimized, and no one is interested in them. If they can somehow serve private investment, attract more tourism, then that is acceptable. It does not matter if heritage is destroyed along the way, or if we ignore the international treaties we have signed, such as the Treaty of Venice, it does not matter.

This is clear to me since Gotari decided to take INAH out of the SEP and placed it under the auspices of a small office, CONACULTA.¹⁴ Really, this was a legal aberra-

¹⁴Esparza believes this was done to isolate and curtail INAH’s national influence and access to federal funding.
tion, because a vote to move INAH should have been taken, but instead, he created CONACULTA by presidential decree. In theory, a presidential decree does not hold as much power as a congressional vote. But this vote was simply sidestepped, and since then, CONACULTA controls cultural politics, it controls INAH, and INBA, and it follows whatever the President or SECTUR tell it to do. So there is little money for research. Worst of all, now most who get appointed to INAH have never worked within the organization and are not trained. The regional INAH directors were always supported by the federal office, but now, they seem to continuously fight.

It was not always like this, I should know, I ran the regional office in the 1970s. People who worked in SEP were well-trained. We received support from the federal office. Now, it is a total mess, with politicians who know nothing in charge. And so, INAH has become obsolete. It does not matter anymore, it has no means to truly educate about heritage anymore.

— Esparza Camargo (2008), Personal Interview.

Julio Cesár Torres Valdéz (2008) trained as an urban planner and briefly became a government official on two occasions. He then joined the Instituto Tecnológico de Oaxaca as a researcher and lecturer.

I was the director of urban development for the state government for a year, in 1992. I won’t tell you why I resigned, that is personal …, but I can tell you that it was a very frustrating experience. There simply was no plan. None whatsoever.

Among the things we did was an inventory of the houses that had been abandoned in the historic center. It was difficult to gain access to buildings. But then, nothing was done with this information and this was a frequent experience, many projects simply did not go anywhere at all. Then, when I was an official in the tourism development office, it was the same thing. Sometimes it was due to a lack of resources that nothing was done. Sometimes it was simply that people could not agree to come together.

— Torres Valdéz (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Torres Valdéz did not agree with the perception that tourism was the principal employer and economic driver in Oaxaca.
Of course tourism is important, but people always say it is the most important employer in the city and that improvements are only made to attract more tourism. I do not think this is true. If we actually counted, we would see that the governments, state and local, are the largest employers, not tourism. It’s just not true that everything is done in the city to serve tourism.

First and foremost, the problem is corruption. Lack of transparency. We simply have always had this culture of caciques and fiefdoms. Always. And on top of this, recently, say within the last two administration terms, the mayor or the governor has appointed people who are simply not qualified for their job.

— Torres Valdéz (2008), Personal Interview.

Neither Esparza nor Torres were very optimistic that things would change drastically in the near future. Positions were too entrenched, most of all, battles over limited resources.

6.5 Heritage Investment and Interventions

**Governmental reports on heritage investment**

While official government state of the state or municipality reports were not complete in Oaxaca’s archives, some information was available and it augments newspaper information. Specifically, none of the reports issued during Ulises Ruiz Ortiz gubernatorial term were publicly available. The staff at the State Archives had been promised the reports, but not received them, and did not know when or if they would.

In 1988, funding for projects in Oaxaca was limited to the Macedonio Alcalá Theater (Figure 6.4) and six other projects, which were not detailed. Investment was minimal, however, at US$12,000 (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988c, p. 290–91).

With the introduction of the “Cien Ciudades” program in 1993, more funding was channeled into large-scale restoration projects. Secretaría de Turismo y Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Oaxaca (SEDETUR) invested US$112,657 into the ongoing renovation of the Alcalá Theater, while the municipal government provided US$200,000 to rescue efforts in the historic center (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1993, p. 137), specifically, for the construction of cobblestoned streets and sidewalks to simulate “colonial” conditions (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1998, p. 344). SEDETUR spent a total of US$594,743 on cultural and historical sites and restoration,
as well as a further US$110,736 on fomenting tourism (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1993a, p. 187).

The following year, US$419,268 were spent in the historic center, the majority, US$369,120 on the Santo Domingo complex, with the rest spent on improvements on the regional museum and the birth house of Benito Juárez (INAH Centro Regional, 1994, p. 214–215). Coordinación General del Comité Estatal de Planeación para el Desarrollo de Oaxaca (COPLADE) invested US$1,736,431 on historic and cultural sites in the state, but there was no breakdown given where exactly the money was spent (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1994, p. 237). The federal government directed nearly US$600,000 towards further work on Santo Domingo, and US$222,924 to remodel Oaxaca’s Institute of Culture and continued work on the Alcalá theater, at a cost of US$55,000 (ibid., p. 288).

Through the “Cien Ciudades” program, the municipal government was able to invest US$5,000 in the rehabilitation of a very small section of the water supply in 1994 (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996d, p. 390). The Santo Domingo project, through its various trust fund financing, received US$891,000 in 1995, and doubled this amount to US$1,780,000 million the following year (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996c, p. 456). The regional museum also received support for its upkeep, US$5,200 in 1995, and US$4,830 in 1996 (ibid., p. 456). The federal government, via COPLADE, contributed US$126,000 in 1995, and US$680,000 in 1996 to the preservation of cultural and historical sites (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1996, p. 494-496).

The Santo Domingo complex project, initiated by artist Francisco Toledo in 1994, which involved removing the military until from the ex-convent, continued to receive the bulk of funds, with US$1,325,610 invested in 1997 (INAH Centro Regional, 1997, p. 381). Thus, by 1997, US$4,365,730 had been channeled into the project. Various visual improvement projects were funded in 1998, attending to the plaza of El Carmen Alto, the Calzada de la República, and the Alcalá Theater, amounting to US$25,000 (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1998, p. 345).

The municipality authorized 153 restoration, conservation, and building maintenance projects in 1996, and together with INAH 625 rulings were issued for projects, subdivisions and mergers of buildings, façade colors and placement of signs (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1996, p. 32). Signs and advertisements had caused the greatest number
of infractions, 792 (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1996, p. 85). US$360,000 were invested in restoring “encanto colonial” to several streets in the historic center (ibid., p. 39).

In 1999, DGCH identified 479 damaged properties, of which it considered 141 to be slightly damaged, 158, somewhat damaged, and 180 seriously damaged. As preventative measures, 211 buildings were cordoned off, 171 had to be evicted, and 103 demolished, keeping in mind that Oaxaca was hit by two strong earthquakes in June and September 1999 (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1999, p. 52).

Perhaps rather tellingly, in 2000, the municipality approved 823 applications for commercial licenses in the historic center, as well as 404 restoration, conservation, and maintenance permits (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2000, p. 43). Presumably, it should weigh up these authorizations quite carefully to control land uses, considering the growing number of businesses opening in the historic center. A year later, DGCH authorized 360 restoration, conservation, and maintenance projects, as well as 228 permits for minor repairs, and a further 1,021 commercial licenses (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2001, p. 43). The report did not detail what sort of businesses were seeking commercial licenses. Clearly, the office was under pressure to grant these licenses, perhaps an even greater pressure than to limit them.

In 2004, DGCH had apparently started to contact owners of buildings in the historic center that were in grave disrepair. Thirty buildings had been determined to be in this precarious state, and seven owners responded fully and subsequently presented restoration projects. Eleven others accepted that they needed to somehow support their structures, but twelve owners did not respond at all, either because they no longer lived in the city or the properties were subject to a lawsuit (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2004, p. 56).

The 2006 municipal report also featured information about DGCH’s activities that year. Some 236 projects were suspended, 52 sites were closed down, and 107 projects went ahead without licenses (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2006, p. 38) (Table 6.1 for earlier records). Additionally, it corroborated SEDESOL’s project financing. Above all, it tried to convey a sense of business as usual, despite the events of 2006.

In May 2006, as every May, Section 22 of the National Teacher’s Union went on strike in the city’s Zócalo. However, in 2006, they remained in the Zócalo for nearly a month,
until Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz decided to use force on 14 June to try and remove them (Smith, 2010, p. 199). Out of the carnage, APPO, a loose association of 200 different organizations emerged in attempt to organize and formalize the protest movement’s interests (Esteva, 2007). However, even within the movement, no consensus could be reached, save that it wanted to out the governor. Then, tensions again heightened after the controversial presidential elections in July 2006. The stand-off lasted until November 2006, when out-going President Fox deployed the army.

It continued this in the 2007 report, trying to project a sense of calm and stability, highlighted the investment in the historic center, a total of US$514,000, mostly channeled through SEDESOL’s Hábitat program (H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2007, p. 17).

**Newspaper reports on heritage investment**

Newspaper reports became critical in trying to piece together information about heritage investment, as there were few other sources to provide any level of detail. Where possible, I identify journalists, as some individuals were and remain influential. I began reviewing records for the late 1980s, and thus, information here is presented chronologically.

Some of Oaxaca’s architectural gems were in the process of rehabilitation in the mid 1980s. The Patrocinio Church (Figure 6.20), located at the southern end of El Llano park, though perhaps an extreme example, had to be closed completely in 1972, as its structure was so fragile. Preservation efforts begun in 1982 were projected to last eight years, with the support of SEDUE (Jarquín, 1986c). Apart from the Patrocinio project, SEDUE was also financing work on the Cathedral, as well as 19 other projects outside of the city. Costs for all the projects were estimated at more than US$1,000,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986e; El Imparcial Editorial, 1987h). As Figure 6.20 shows, it was in need of repair again in 2008. Beginning with governor Heladio Ramírez López in 1986, the foci of government remodeling efforts became concentrated in the zócalo, El Llano park, the Alameda (surroundings of the Zócalo), and other small plazas (Medina Martínez and Cervantes, 2007, p. 132).

INAH’s regional office in Oaxaca also did not escape criticism, however. The organization had closed its office temporarily, “forcing” owners to rehabilitate their properties without official sanction or guidance (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986n). Still, rehabilitation
projects moved forward, such as the restoration of the tourist walkway in the historic center. Nearly US$80,000 were invested to remove visual contaminants such as electricity posts and cables, as well as other repairs (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987f). Because Oaxaca is in such a seismically active area, concerns about building standards, particularly in light of Mexico City’s devastating 1985 earthquake, are persistent. Engineers in the late 1980s felt that opportunities to improve building codes and reinforce colonial buildings had been missed repeatedly, increasing the potential for greater harm during an earthquake (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987b).

Aside from deteriorating colonial buildings, sculptures, altars, and church artwork suffered greatly from neglect. The newspaper criticized the state and municipal governments for not supporting the preservation and restoration of these threatened works of art (El
Imparcial Editorial, 1987a). The deteriorated state of the Macedonio Alcalá theater was also decried in an in-depth report in the paper, and in an integrated project to restore it to its former glory demanded (Hernández Castellanos, 1988). The mayor rejected repeated criticism of the municipal and state governments and insisted both governments were committed to preservation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988y). Still, the paper lamented the state of the center, the abandoned fountains, the sidewalks cracked, the sad state of public spaces, and the Cathedral (Caballero, 1988; El Imparcial Editorial, 1988h).

To receive suggestions for the housing program of the presidential campaign of Carlos Salinas de Gotari, the state government, PRI, INAH Oaxaca, and federal agencies such as SEDUE and SEP organized a meeting about recuperation schemes for historic centers (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988w; El Imparcial Editorial, 1988x). Roughly US$40,000 was invested in public lighting in the historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988c). The Catholic Church claimed it could not afford to keep various churches and the Cathedral lit at night, due to the high cost of electricity, and demanded that the public purse support the electricity for the Santo Domingo complex and the Cathedral (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988i).

In November 1988, SEDUE launched a new program to “rescue” the city called “We love our town.” Much of the intervention centered on painting building façades, repairing sidewalks and lamps, and invited neighbors to actively participate in the efforts (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988a). Students from a local school were also involved, knocking on doors to help homeowners in the historic centers join efforts to paint their homes and clean up around their properties (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988n).¹⁵ The clean-up and painting efforts were still ongoing in February 1989 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989v).

Not surprisingly, repairs to the Alcalá Theatre were costly and immensely time-consuming (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989a). In 1989, the city embarked on an extensive paving project of more than 50,000 square meters, including many streets in the historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989p). The Alcalá Theatre, meanwhile, reopened in February 1989, even though more repairs were still necessary, including a conversion of the gallery area into a museum of the theater and art gallery. As 1989 marked the theater’s 80th year, it could not remain closed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989x; El Imparcial Editorial, 1989z). By March, only 50 percent of the repaving in the city had been completed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989v).

¹⁵The paper did not detail if these visits were just a one-time event or not.
parcial Editorial, 1989n), but the conclusion of the disruption was promised as soon as May (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989e).

INAH Oaxaca, meanwhile, received another injection of funds, roughly US$300,000 from the federal government. However, this money would be divided among various projects, including the catalog of monuments, but also restoration interventions and archaeological sites (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989g). The paper reported that the repaving scheme was unprecedented in recent public works history in Oaxaca. The governor had managed to receive about US$320,000 from the federal government for these improvements, citing the repaving as necessary in a city with World Heritage status (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989u).

In May 1989, restoration work resumed on the Patrocinio Church (Figure 6.20) (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989y). Plans to turn various monumental buildings, such as ex-convents, into hotels began surfacing in late 1989 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989m).

In early 1990, the municipal government and INAH Oaxaca called on the property owners in the historic center to comply with a program of using INAH approved colors for their houses in an attempt to change the visual aesthetic of the historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990r). Guillermo González León from DGCH explained with regard to Oaxaca’s color scheme, that

> unlike Mérida, where overwhelmingly, buildings are kept white, Oaxaca’s buildings cannot be white. INAH determined this and it has a catalog of colors that it uses when people apply to paint their houses. Lively colors are encouraged.

— González León (2008), Personal Interview.

Military conscripts helped to clean up the gardens and public spaces of the city, saving its budget about US$486,000 as the conscripts were not paid for their services (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990i).

In March 1990, the municipal and state government launched a new program, “Oaxaca, Clean City” aimed at primary and secondary school children to maintain their city clean (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990c; El Imparcial Editorial, 1990o; El Imparcial Editorial, 1990q). The program was slated to last five months as a trial run (El Imparcial Editorial,
Further clean up brigades began working in the historic center too, to help maintain the streets tidy and standardize the colors of buildings (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990d).

Further promises to restore important buildings in the city emerged in May 1990, most significantly, moving the military regiment based there out of the ex-convent Santo Domingo and instead financing a cultural and artistic hub in the space (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990t; El Imparcial Editorial, 1990aa). Despite three years passing since its World Heritage designation, Oaxaca had not yet consolidated spaces such as the Santo Domingo convent as exclusively for cultural or tourism consumption. SECTUR also offered its support in Oaxaca’s move to restore public monuments to their former glory (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990ac). Similarly, FONATUR provided the municipal government with a series of loans to facilitate this restoration program (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990b). The press highlighted all these efforts as a “rebirth” of Oaxaca (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990x).

In August 1990, Banco de Comercio (BANCOMER), at the time one of the country’s largest state banks,¹⁶ donated US$400,000 to the restoration fund for the Macedonio Alcalá Theater, which, despite repairs in 1989, still needed at least US$1.6 million to be fully restored (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990a). The national lottery would provide a further funding avenue (Gómez Santiago, 1990). The state government began its official fundraising campaign for the Alcalá in October 1990 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990ab). Not surprisingly, perhaps cost estimates for a complete restoration kept rising, up to US$3.2 million (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990j). Clearly, the iconic nature of the theater and the need for dramatic interventions to preserve it, made for continuous headlines (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990e).

A variety of proposals for the Santo Domingo repurposing were publicized, with suggested uses of the space as a gallery for colonial art, a contemporary art museum, a folkloric clothes museum, an artisanal crafts museum, a natural history museum, or providing the state library expanded space (Vasconcelos Beltrán, 1990).

In May 1991, the paper reported that the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (PRONASOL), President Salinas’ program for targeted interventions,¹⁷ would contribute about US$500,000 to the master project to restore the Macedonio Alcalá theater (El

¹⁶President Salinas privatized the bank in 1991.
¹⁷The program mainly funded community programs through grassroots committees.
Imparcial Editorial, 1991k). Overall, the city was to receive about US$30 million for infrastructure-related projects, mostly meant to cope with its continued expansion (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991a). Restoration of the ex-convent de la Soledad also went ahead in August 1991 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991v), as did the rehabilitation of the museum “Benito Juárez,” the house in Oaxaca where the first indigenous President of Mexico lived (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991d). INAH would provide the finances, roughly US$500,000.

Work on the Macedonio Alcalá Theater stalled, by the end of 1991, leaving it closed to the public for nearly a decade, according to the newspaper (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992e). Fast forward a few months, and INBA promised it would ensure that renovations went ahead (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992j). The city historian explained that in 1937 and in 1974, attempts were made to restore the theater to its past glory (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1992).

Still, SEDUE boasted of its investment in preservation (US$3.2 million) during 1991 and its ability to involve various communities in contributing to preservation through their tequio obligations¹⁸ (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992i). The costs of removing telegraph and telephony posts and cables in the historic center surpassed US$3,000,000, with half of the funds coming from FONATUR (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992b). The city’s public gardens and parks also received some much needed attention (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992k).

Work on the ex-Convent La Soledad was complete after six years in August 1992. The building became the seat of the municipality (Castillejos Avila, 1992). In addition to winning a prize for tourism quality (Section 6.7), Oaxaca’s architects also received a prize from their fellow practitioners at the National Assembly of Architecture departments (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992f).

INAH Oaxaca was once again made the scapegoat in September 1992, when the newspaper reported it was opposed to creating a single public office that would issue construction permits in the city. The then head of Municipal Public Works, architect Elí Pérez Matos heavily criticized INAH, though his motives were probably not altruistic. Pérez Matos runs an architectural firm, Pérez Matos, as well as a construction company, “PEMAV, S.A.” in Oaxaca, so simplifying the construction licensing was most definitely in his interest, maybe not immediately, but certainly, upon leaving his position in the munici-

¹⁸Typically, tequios are communal projects that benefit a community, so members devote a day’s work to completing a project. In recent years, monetary contributions instead of time and labor have become more commonplace.
ality (Hannan Robles, 1992b). His business interests were obvious in the historic center (Figure 6.19).

Low-interest and long payback period loans were promised to property owners in the historic center to facilitate the rehabilitation of their façades (Hannan Robles, 1992a). The city’s enclosed markets, south of the Zócalo, were rehabilitated all during 1992, at a cost of nearly US$2 million, US$400,000 provided by the municipal government. A further US$560,000 had been invested in other rehabilitation projects (Gómez Santiago, 1992a). The rehabilitation projects of the “20 de noviembre” and “Benito Juárez” markets was concluded in 1992, at a cost of US$5.2 million (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992a).

Plans to restore the Macedonio Alcalá Theater once again were on the table in February 1993, with an initial cost of US$58,234 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993b). Another large project, finding a new use for the ex-convent Santo Domingo, was also under way and the then SECTUR secretary visited Oaxaca to review the proposals. The federal and state governments, as well as INAH and SEDESOL would help finance the project (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993b). The Zócalo and its environs were also scheduled for a makeover, with the complete reconstruction of the kiosk, the small gazebo at the center of the Zócalo and sidewalks replaced using the distinctive green stone of Oaxaca’s buildings (Figure 6.26). In total, nine blocks would be restored, with a budget of US$600,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993b).

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also came to visit Oaxaca and supported the proposal to turn the ex-convent Santo Domingo into a cultural center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993b). Recounting the history of proposals surrounding Santo Domingo, which had included converting it into a hotel, the newspaper’s cultural editor erroneously cited 1987 as the year of Oaxaca’s World Heritage designation, not 1987 (González, 1993b). Financially, about US$5.5 million were to be distributed via PRONASOL in Oaxaca’s municipalities (Torres, 1993).

Many streets in the historic center were also going to be repaved, due to sustaining flooding and erosion damage from a hurricane (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993b). Money, nearly US$780,000, for this project came from the “Cien Ciudades” program, which had also supported projects in Morelia and Guanajuato, among other cities (Hannan Robles, 1993c).
As in Morelia and to some extent in Guanajuato, Oaxaca began to plan moving some of its federal and state governmental offices from the historic center into newer parts of the city. While a new area was designated, no exact details of which offices and when they would move was reported (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993o).

Local artist Rodolfo Morales donated about US$3,000 to the rehabilitation efforts of the Alcalá Theater, which only had about US$10,000 to spend, though it required about US$1.5 million to truly be able to address structural problems (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993t). Morales’ donation was used as a starting point for a fundraising effort for the theater and to seek further donations from the public (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993d).

The federal government, via SECTUR, invested a further US$230,000 in new cobble stones in particular for the areas of the historic center where car circulation had been limited (Jiménez, 1993a). The newspaper described these changes as widely supported by the population (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993v).

In September 1993, the newspaper’s cultural editor revealed that the military regiment would move out of Santo Domingo by February 1994 to facilitate the transformation of the space into a cultural center and a botanical garden highlighting the species of Oaxaca (González, 1993a). To that end, the governor, Diódoro Altamirano Carrasco, signed an agreement with CONACULTA and estimated it would cost about US$770,000 to ensure the building was fit for its new purpose (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993h).

The mayor promised the rehabilitation of thirty more streets in the historic center over the course of the next two years of his administration. This would include subterranean cabling, new sidewalks, and new street lamps, if necessary (Martínez Cervantes, 1993). With support from the federal government, a further fifteen streets would be rehabilitated, bringing the total up to forty-five (Jiménez, 1993b).

The initial nine streets, mostly surrounding the Zócalo and Santo Domingo, were to be completed by the end of 1993 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993g). On the eve of the completion of this part of the street rehabilitation, which amounted to 5,000 square meters of new pavement and sidewalks, INAH and the municipality signed an agreement that the DGCH would be able to hand out construction permits and if necessary, shut down construction sites. INAH would still vet the proposals and help train DGCH staff (Santiago and Jiménez, 1993). DGCH would begin its operations in January 1994, according
to the newspaper (Santaella Sánchez, 1994c) and simultaneously, INAH Oaxaca had to 
suspend thirteen projects in the historic center, ten temporarily and three indefinitely, as 
property owners had not acquired the necessary permits. Despite some uncertainties as 
to how DGCH and INAH would coordinate and cooperate in the issuance of permits, the 
two organizations signed an agreement in January 1994 (Torrentera Gómez, 1994f). The 
one-stop permit process would cut down on different responses to construction projects 
from the municipal government and INAH (Santaella Sánchez, 1994a). INAH’s financial 
situation, however, was uncertain at the start of 1994, as it did not yet have a budget for 
the year (Jiménez, 1994f).

The introduction of a Partial Plan for the historic center was publicized in January 
1994. Its principle aim was to control the loss of residences and encourage private sector 
investment in the historic center (Torrentera Gómez, 1994e).

The transformation of the ex-convent Santo Domingo did not occur without contro-
versy. In the midst of preparations to have the military move out of the building, the state 
SECTUR supposedly advocated turning part of the space into a parking lot instead of the 
proposed botanical garden. Artist Francisco Toledo, who also formed and led PROOAX, 
an NGO, heavily criticized the proposal in an interview with the newspaper (Torrentera 
Gómez, 1994b). Clearly, a disparity of interests emerged. On 17 January, 1994, the news-
paper declared that Santo Domingo once again belonged to Oaxaca’s citizens, as the mili-
tary withdrew (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994i).

More funds, US$57,000, were made available for the continuing Alcalá Theater reha-
bilitation (Castillejos Avila, 1994b). The transformation of Santo Domingo also received 
financial support, US$230,000, from the federal and state governments (Castillejos Avila, 
1994a). In the course of the rehabilitation, colonial relics were found, including old tiling 
and a latrine (Martínez Cervantes, 1994b). Nearly US$50,000 had already been invested 
in the project, which also led to the discovery of wall paintings in the former convent (El 
Imparcial Editorial, 1994a).

Meanwhile, PROOAX called on SECTUR and FONATUR not to sell another former 
convent, Santa Catalina, only steps from the Santo Domingo convent, to the “Camino 
Real” hotel chain (Figure 6.21). INAH called on SEDESOL to clarify the legal status of 
the building and whether or not SECTUR could actually sell it (El Imparcial Editorial,
Figure 6.21: Ex-convent Santa Catalina, August 2006.

(Photo by author)
The following day, INAH had an announcement printed in the newspaper to dispel any rumors that FONATUR had actually appealed to INAH to change the legal statutes of the convent to enable its sale, that other federal agencies needed to be made aware of this unauthorized attempt at a sale, and that INAH would closely monitor the convent to make sure that it remained intact (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1994). The governor did not support the sale, so FONATUR had to back down in March 1994, even though the governor did not object to a sale of the building per se, just not under the circumstances at the time (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994k). Opposite the exclusive hotel, it should be noted, has languished an abandoned building, at least since 2006, but probably much longer (Figure 6.22).

Controversy was a constant in the Santo Domingo rehabilitation project, with sudden changes to the plans introduced without public approval, such as including a 500-seat theater again instead of the botanical garden (Torrenera Gómez, 1994a). This was not carried out in the end, but the uncertainty surrounding the project remained. As in Morelia, talk of underground parking below Santo Domingo suddenly appeared in the newspaper. It would cost nearly US$2 million and take more than fifteen months to construct. In fact, the same company as in Morelia had made this proposal for 259 parking spaces below Santo Domingo and 230 below the Zócalo (Torrenera Gómez, 1994c). As sudden as the proposal appeared, it seemed to disappear, with little more reference to it made in the media. PROOAX opposed the project, and eventually, the plan was withdrawn. Figures from PROOAX suggest that in total, the Santo Domingo project cost US$8.5 million when it finally was finished in 1998 (PROOAX, 2008, p. 10).

Progress was being made on the Macedonio Alcalá Theater, due to cash injections. In 1993, the theater had received US$110,000 and in 1994, a further US$50,000, but it was estimated full repairs would cost at least US$1,000,000. Repairs had advanced about 25 percent by July 1994 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994b).

Money for the refurbishment of Zócalo kiosk bathrooms, meanwhile, seemed unattainable. The price tag was estimated at US$25,000 and while the state of the toilets was decried in the newspaper and lamented by officials, any intervention seemed stalled (Jiménez, 1994g). Many former convents had become federal properties after expropriation in 1857, but the legalities were often complicated by poor record-keeping and other problems.
Figure 6.22: Abandoned building, Cinco de Mayo, August 2006.
(Photo by author)

1994c; Martínez Cervantes, 1994a). About 700 projects in the historic center had been suspended since 1993, or about 50% of all permits that had been requested. The then head of DGCH, Mateo García Pujol, estimated that 300 projects had been completed clandestinely, without adhering to regulations, despite four inspectors who monitored the historic center 365 days a year (Torrentera Gómez, 1994d). Due to the costs of preservation projects, at least 10 percent (120) of Oaxaca’s listed buildings were deemed in critical disrepair. Owners had no means of accessing loans to help finance repairs, due to the country’s precarious finances after the collapse of the peso (Jiménez, 1994a).

In October 1994, the newspaper reported that the budget for the Santo Domingo project had already been spent, yet not all the necessary repairs had been made and it
was unclear what some of the funds had been spent on (Montes Ruiz, 1994). INAH entered the public affray and questioned the restoration and the tourism official in charge, Martín Ruiz Camino, criticizing that the organization’s suggestions and input had been ignored throughout the project (Martínez Cervantes, 1994c). Still, with the help of Banco Nacional de México (BANAMEX), PROOAX, and the state government signed an agreement to fund a trusteeship for the botanical garden in Santo Domingo, to the tune of nearly US$130,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994i). Further improvements were made to public lighting in the historic center, after sustained complaints from the public about dark streets, according to the newspaper. US$3,000 were spent on the new equipment (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994h).

By the end of 1994, nearly US$9,000 in fines had been handed down to construction projects that did not adhere to regulations, including not adhering to the approved color scheme for buildings, as well as removing any of the wrought iron grates (rejas) (Jiménez, 1994d). Construction projects in the historic center were also shut down the following year, with fines set at two thousand times the minimum wage (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995d).

Re-pavement of 26 streets in the historic center was announced in early 1995 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995t) and the second stage of the Santo Domingo project initiated in March 1995. INAH had contributed US$783,000, the state government US$712,380, PRONASOL and thus the federal government, US$213,714, BANAMEX gave US$45,000, and US$55,000 from the Trusteeship for Santo Domingo, which was all invested into the first stage of the project (Torres, 1995). For 1995, US$500,000 were made available for the project, from the state and federal government to ensure work would continue uninterrupted (Jiménez, 1995e). Funding from BANAMEX and CONACULTA would sustain the Santo Domingo project through 1995 and 1996, though figures for the continued cost of the project were not disclosed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995e).

By May 1995, the newspaper reported that 25 percent of the repaving project in the historic center had been completed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995c). Costs were estimated at nearly US$680,000, which the municipal government had available, and 2 million liters of asphalt donated by Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) (Jiménez, 1995p). DGCH announced it would install fifteen public mailboxes in the historic center that had been made in the
late nineteenth and early twentieth century and subsequently refurbished, at a very low cost, to enhance the area (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995k).

Fundraising for the Macedonio Alcalá theater, which was still in need of major repairs to its casino requiring more money, continued in 1995, with trustees raising US$1.4 million (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995a).

Plans for improvements to the Zócalo were revealed in June 1995, with a fresh coat of paint for the benches and new lights near the kiosk, as well as more plants and landscaping promised (Santaella Sánchez, 1995b). More worrisome for DGCH was the fact that less than 50 percent of buildings in the 253 blocks making up the historic center were purely residential. The prospect of a commercially dominated historic center was a real threat. DGCH had also detected 316 construction projects without permits, of which 29 were suspended, and one completely shut down. A further 119 citations were sent out (Jiménez, 1995k) and 33 buildings were deemed close to a complete loss, as owners could not pay for repairs. Still, DGCH approved 85 construction applications from July through August 1995 (Jiménez, 1995o).

Meanwhile, more funding for further rehabilitation work in the historic center was solicited with success from SECTUR, who promised US$75,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995q). This money was eventually applied to more repaving and underground cabling in the historic center (Jiménez, 1995j).

In September 1995, the municipal government and the Youth Institute of Oaxaca launched “The visual rescue of the historic center,” a campaign to get young people to paint the façades of buildings and remove graffiti, where possible (Jiménez, 1995a). Four hundred teenagers agreed to participate (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995s). By October 1995, DGCH fined 220 people for various violations of regulations in the historic center, with fines ranging from 300 days of minimum salary payments to 1,000. DGCH and INAH were also still working on the details of the “one-stop permit” to save architects and proprietors time in the construction application process (Jiménez, 1995n).

The next round of work in the historic center, including underground cabling, new sewage drains, and pavement, began in late October 1995 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995m). Funds of US$90,000, slightly more than first anticipated, were made available for this project (Gómez, 1995). The interim mayor had to assure the public that these were federal
funds, not municipal funds destined for other projects. The project was estimated to finish before Christmas (Jiménez, 1995d).

The interim mayor then signed a new agreement with SECTUR for another US$40,000 for further work on the historic center, specifically, a new kiosk for the Zócalo was contemplated, and finally, much needed repairs to the bathrooms (Jiménez, 1995g). Despite all the advances, DGCH still was particularly concerned with owners going through with demolitions to change the interior of their buildings on the weekends, when inspectors were not doing their periodic checks. The concern was that the center would morph into a ghost town, without life beyond businesses (Jiménez, 1995c).

By the end of 1995, SECTUR had invested about US$550,000 in the rehabilitation of streets and drainage in the historic center, including the pedestrianized area. These funds were part of the “Cien Ciudades” funding scheme that also benefitted Guanajuato and Morelia. The drainage infrastructure had not been overhauled in thirty years (Jiménez, 1995f). The brigades of teenagers managed to clean 45 façades, a huge success for the “visual rescue of the historic center” program (Jiménez, 1995m). Progress had also been made on the Alcalá Theater, with investments from the state and federal governments, as well as the trustees of the theater, amounting to nearly US$200,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995i). Still, the project was far from complete, with only 30 percent of the scheduled repairs completed, and a further US$260,000 needed to keep up the pace of the rehabilitation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1996a).

INAH’s budget in 1996 for the maintenance of Monte Albán, the Santo Domingo project, and another archaeological site, Mitla, was US$892,680. The organization admitted that this was of course insufficient, even though it was a substantial amount of money (Girón, 1996b). The mayor opened another round of street repaving in the historic center in April 1996, financed by US$70,000 from the “Cien Ciudades” program (Jiménez, 1996k).

The newspaper reported that the Santo Domingo project was on course to finish in a further eighteen months and more funding to the tune of US$1.8 million from BANAMEX and the state government (Hannan Robles, 1996b). The municipal government had asked the state government for US$338,746 to continue its ambitious rehabilitation of the historic center’s streets, but did not receive it. Still, the municipal government authorized
US$113,000 to overhaul 32,000 square meters (Jiménez, 1996e). The University Benito Juárez’ main building also received a makeover in 1996, costing nearly US$100,000 (Santaella Sánchez, 1996).

By the fall of 1996, however, the quality of the repaving projects carried was questioned by the newspaper. The asphalt used seemed prone to cracks and potholes, but the municipal government showed little concern (Gómez, 1996a).

At the first meeting of ANCMPM, Oaxaca received another US$150,000 from “Cien Ciudades” specifically for rehabilitating García Vigil. DGCH announced that the Plan Parcial was nearly in the phase where it would be presented to the public. (Jiménez, 1996c). The project got off the ground in October 1996, with funding augmented to US$300,000, with “Cien Ciudades” providing US$100,000 and the remaining funds coming from the state government, US$31,000, the municipality, and residents footing the rest of the bill (El Imparcial Editorial, 1996b). However, the municipality estimated that US$2 million would be necessary to sufficiently attend to the city’s roads—the entire city, not just the historic center (Jiménez, 1996j).

In early 1998, more road repaving work was completed, at a cost of more than US$115,000 (Hannan Robles, 1998g). Sidewalks were also receiving attention, and promises of removing more telephone cables (Hannan Robles, 1998i). In total, US$1.12 million was spent on repavements during the administration of Pablo Arnaud Carreño (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998c). Despite these advances, DGCH emphasized the need for more money to ensure that a variety of buildings in the historic center could be maintained and rehabilitated, to retain the homogeneity of the building stock (Hannan Robles, 1998a). Through the “Cien Ciudades” program, nearly US$100,000 would be put in a trust to pay for cobblestone pavement on 5 de Mayo (Figure 6.23), amongst other projects that were not yet specified (Hannan Robles, 1998d).

After nearly US$6 million invested in its rehabilitation, thousands of Oaxaqueño school children and other groups received tours of Santo Domingo convent (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998f). Yet another round of repaving began in April 1998 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998e; Hannan Robles, 1998f). The project was expected to run for 80 days (Hannan Robles, 1998h). By May 1998, the Santo Domingo rehabilitation project was 95 percent finished (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998a).
Figure 6.23: 5 de Mayo, Oaxaca, June 2008.
(Photo by author)
Already in 1999, the newspaper was decrying the state of the city’s fountains (El Imparcial Editorial, 1999a). Journalist Mario Girón (2008b) was then reporting on buildings that were abandoned and had deteriorated (Girón, 1999b), as well as the fountains (Girón, 1999a), and any other areas of the city that were in need of attention (Girón, 1999c). With the cancelation of the “Cien Ciudades” financing program, questions arose what would replace the program. The newspaper erroneously described it as funding coming directly from UNESCO (Torrentora, 1999). Still, rehabilitation work continued in the historic center throughout 1999 (Hannan Robles, 1999), and in the wake of the strong earthquakes of June and September 1999, nearly US$12 million were made available for earthquake damage mitigation statewide (El Imparcial Editorial, 2001b).

Unlike Morelia, Oaxaca’s attempts to solve its street vending problem never resulted in a permanent removal of stalls in the historic center. Officials frequently negotiated “re-treats” of vendors during peak tourist times, such as Easter, to insure that visitors retained a “positive image” of Oaxaca (Àngeles Nivon, 2001). PROOAX at the time wanted to see the pedestrianized area of Oaxaca enlarged (Ramírez Cortes, 2001). While businesses did not object to improvements such as repaving, they did object to not being given prior notice from the municipal government. After some wrangling, the municipality agreed to notify business owners on a block-by-block basis to avert protracting the disagreements (Hannan Robles, 2001d).

Public works in various public spaces, including the Zócalo, the pedestrianized street Macedonio Alcalá, the Alameda de Léon, across from the Cathedral, and the Labastida garden (Figure 6.24), alongside Santo Domingo were completed by the end of 2001. A further 152 building façades were painted within the “Giving Colors” program (Hannan Robles, 2001a). Nearly US$500,000 was invested (Hannan Robles, 2001b). Nearly US$900,000 was spent on another attempt to rid streets such as 5 de Mayo of electricity cables. The project was estimated to take six months (El Imparcial Editorial, 2001c). Nearly US$180,000 was spent on the rehabilitation of the Conzatti and El Llano gardens (Hannan Robles, 2001e). Scarcely four years later, El Llano underwent a series of major public works, with new pavements and concrete plant containers (Figure 6.16).

The state government invested further US$500,000 in upgrading drainage, sewers, and pavement on Avenida Juárez in the Jalatlaco neighborhood at the northern edge of the his-
toric center (El Imparcial Editorial, 2008) (Figure 6.25). The work began in April 2008 (Torres, 2008a), but funding bottlenecks slowed the project down significantly, and dangerously close to the opening of the Guelaguetza in July (Torres, 2008b). Another US$816,299 was made available for various buildings in Oaxaca and other cities, including the public library (Figure 6.19).

One might surmise that SEDESOL’s Hábitat program spending levels in Oaxaca immediately after the events of 2006 would have risen dramatically, given the graffiti damage in the historic center, but this was not really the case (Table 6.2).

Again, the state contributions or lack thereof, stand out. This was also the case in Guanajuato and Morelia, but SEDESOL had signed these agreements independent of the state
Figure 6.25: Avenida Juárez public works, May 2008.
(Photo by author)

(Source: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2007.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federal</th>
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<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>347,620</td>
<td>173,810</td>
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<td>173,810</td>
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<td>2,930,000</td>
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government, which explains its reduced participation in the scheme. Hábitat funding in 2004 was mainly spent on rehabilitating the kiosk (Figure 6.26) in the Zócalo, the Alameda, and the restoration of four of the Cathedral’s doors. 2005 funds were used for public lighting, 152 trash cans for the historic center, and improvements of the Plaza de la Danza, including replacement of pavement. The following year’s money, US$36,000, was invested in the preliminary studies of the Management Plan, but US$140,000 went towards improving public lighting. Hábitat also directed money towards an inventory of the historic center’s cultural heritage. In 2007, more than US$200,000 were invested in the rehabilitation of the Sócrates public park and the re-pavement of various streets in the historic center (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2007). While it was already paying for the development of the Management Plan, Hábitat was also financing the overhaul of the 1998 Plan Parcial—how this sort of dual investment makes good fiscal sense is debatable, particularly given that
the Management Plan has yet to make an impact.

In 2009, Hábitat funding reached US$623,649. The bulk of this money was spent on energy-saving light bulbs and lamps in the historic center, about US$505,671 (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2009). A total of US$3,880,000 was spent in Oaxaca’s historic center in 2009, with the largest injection of money coming from FONCA, which spent US$2,400,000, mostly on urban image improvement projects, of various streets, and small public spaces (ibid.).

**Oaxaca’s heritage as reported in the media**

Aside from the organizations involved in heritage preservation, there are few sources that focus on heritage in everyday life. Therefore, again, the newspaper can fill this gap to a certain extent, and provide an overview of the debates and themes. For instance, the city historian, frequently writes columns in the newspaper, as do other experts.

Beginning in May 1986, *El Imparcial* began reporting on Oaxaca’s efforts to become a World Heritage site. In fact, it was the first Mexican site to be put forward by the Mexican government and the dignitaries that formally announced the bid claimed that this was due to Oaxaca’s exceptional preservation of its historic center (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1986b). More likely is the fact that INAH’s regional office had done much of the preliminary work necessary to put forward a solid, acceptable application, and was decreed a national monument zone in 1976. Almost immediately, the myth that UNESCO would directly channel monetary funds to Oaxaca in the case of its World Heritage designation (Jarquin, 1986b). At such an early stage in the process, scarcely two years after Mexico ratified the *Convention*, perhaps this is not so surprising. Events about conservation and the World Heritage application were held during the 1986 Guelaguetza, to raise awareness (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1986i). The paper also began publishing a series about the heritage of the neighborhoods of the historic center (Santiago, 1986).

Given its advancing candidature for World Heritage listing, Oaxaca had to attend ICOMOS’ international heritage conference in Puebla in October 1986, to reaffirm Oaxaca’s commitment to preservation (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1986i). Architects and historians gave a series of talks about the architecture of the historic center and the importance of preservation in the run-up to the designation (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1986d). Inter-
estingly, the full scope of the application, which had originally included Cuilapan, was only reported on in October 1986 (Section 6.3 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986c). The then-governors 6th state of the State report, highlighted Jesús Martínez Alvaro’s commitment to World Heritage through his support of Oaxaca’s application (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1986). The paper reported that UNESCO officials would visit the city in March 1987, and in preparation, a series of rehabilitation projects was to be begun (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986h). One such project was the restoration of the iconic Macedonio Alcalá Theater, opened in 1909, which the new governor, Heladio Ramírez López saw as an opportunity to affirm his commitment to preservation (Cruz García, 1987). Approximately US$500,000 was channeled into the project.

First mention of Oaxaca and Monte Albán’s inscription success surfaced in August 1987, months ahead of the WHC’s official meeting and inscription (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987e). The paper did not describe why Cuilapan had not been included, even though it had been submitted as part of the application. Even in the moment of celebration, however, INAH Oaxaca was criticized for not committing itself to preservation, in particular, for not having produced a catalog of monuments (Santiago, 1987). On 9 December 1987, the paper reported the official inscription of Oaxaca and nearby Monte Albán in the World Heritage list. The SEP, the ministry that includes INAH, INBA, and CNMH, emphasized the responsibility and obligations the country had accepted to ensure the preservation of the World Heritage sites (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987g). Oaxaca state governor Heladio Ramírez López also stressed the importance of local responsibility and commitment to preservation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987d).

The Cathedral was slowly being restored in early 1988 (Cruz García, 1988b). The parish representative claimed that only the contributions of worshippers were paying for the repairs, aside from the small expert group sent by SEDUE to manage the project (Cruz García, 1988c). A situation not exactly positive for a recent World Heritage site. Because INAH only had the ability to fine owners who neglected their buildings or did not follow the preservation criteria, some particularly concerned citizens demanded the introduction of prison sentences for those owners in violation (Cruz García, 1988a). Additionally, calls

²⁰A total of six Mexican sites were listed in 1987 (Table 1.2).
for a catalog of historic monuments was again issued.\textsuperscript{21} Calls for more stringent legislation continued, as well as for a more proactive and energetic INAH Oaxaca (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988s).

The paper also featured a special report on the ex-convent of Santo Domingo and the ongoing preservation efforts, begun in 1976 on its altar painting (Cruz García, 1988d). The federal agency SEDUE was working on over 4,000 different restoration projects nationwide at the time, according to the paper, and hoped to increase its budget to over US$1 million (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988v). Events publicizing Oaxaca’s World Heritage designation continued in 1988, with a series of talks by historians and architects, organized by the state government and the College of Architects (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988l). Principally, these talks were aimed at young Oaxaqueños in an attempt to raise awareness about patrimony, including what area included was to be included in the historic center, and provide them with socio-historical context (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988d). In fact, there were plans to implement a curriculum called “Oaxaca, cultural World Heritage” to broaden understanding of World Heritage (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988q). The pilot program was scheduled for late April 1988 (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988t). The architecture department at the University of Oaxaca planned to introduce a master’s program in conservation of monuments and historic sites (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988k).

Still, the then city historian, Everardo Ramírez Bohórquez, continued to voice his concern, arguing that the historic center’s typical architecture was suffering and that the local population lacked the awareness and consciousness to care (Cruz García, 1988e). He contributed to a book about Oaxaca’s monuments, published in October 1988 by SEDUE, partly to commemorate the successful UNESCO inscription (\textit{El Imparcial} Editorial, 1988r). But the fact that only 1,000 copies were produced, and the price seen as prohibitive, at about US$8 at the time, the book’s aim to help raise awareness and consciousness about heritage in the local population seemed dubious. The intentions of the authorities were further in doubt, as their interest was their immediate political future, not really preservation, according to the author. Much more long-term effort would be necessary to instill a sense of the meaning and necessity of preservation (Gomez, 1988). But the threat to patrimony was constant, with at least sixteen churches in grave disrepair.

\textsuperscript{21}The most recent version of this catalog dates to 2004.
and INAH Oaxaca unable to do much about it, putting World Heritage at grave risk (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988)).

Further public events about Oaxaca’s architectural heritage were continuously reported on (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988e). In November 1988, the state Education, Culture, and Social Well-being office began to offer tours through local historic centers, beginning in Oaxaca, though the exact route was not detailed. These were aimed at the local population (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988o). The first anniversary of the World Heritage declaration was celebrated with a renewed call to commit to preservation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988p).

The city historian published a monthly column about Oaxaca, typically discussing some historical events, but also drawing attention to present phenomena. In February 1989, he questioned the proliferation of street vendors and semi-permanent stalls in the historic center, particularly those set up in public spaces (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1989a). Yet another public event documented some of the deterioration and destruction of colonial buildings in the historic center, but erroneously claimed Oaxaca had been a World Heritage site since 1976. Here, the national monumental designation was mistaken to mean the same as UNESCO designation (Lagunas V. 1989). In the historian’s March column, he noted that President Carlos Salinas was going to visit Oaxaca to commemorate the UNESCO declaration (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1989b). A plaque (Figure 6.27) was installed near Santo Domingo, and the President did attend the festivities and unveiled it (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1989c; Reyes Sánchez, 1989).

The recurring concern was that Oaxaca appeared to be hellbent on destroying its colonial architecture (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989l). In March 1989, the paper reported that a three or four-story department store was to be built next to Santo Domingo, without intervention from INAH Oaxaca (Crespo, 1989). Concerns about the city’s chaotic expansion were also voiced, and the continued need to raise heritage awareness and respect (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989t). More funds, about US$160,000, were promised, in particular for INAH’s catalog of monuments. The expectation was that it would be completed within six months (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989q).

The calls for a shared sense of the meaning and importance of preservation continued (Montes García, 1989). The tenth international symposium on heritage preservation was
held in Oaxaca, gathering 300 specialists in the city to exchange preservation experiences and practices (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989f). INAH Oaxaca, meanwhile, was increasingly concerned about the theft of heritage artifacts such as church reliquaries, a common occurrence in Oaxaca (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989ac; Santiago, 1989) (see also Section 2.3).

In October 1989, Oaxaca was host to ICOMOS’ symposium on monuments and urban heritage. ICOMOS expected experts from Latin America as well as Europe to attend the event (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989ab). The paper simultaneously reported of plans to turn the Santo Domingo complex into a cultural center, a projected headed up by architect Jaime Ortiz Lajous, who had also been instrumental in the UNESCO application process (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989h). Discussions centered on keeping historic centers alive and viable, and not turning each available building into a museum (El Imparcial Editorial,
as well as contributing to raising awareness about patrimony and the importance of preservation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989j). The community had to be involved to ensure preservation would be successful, according to the experts (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989o). Equally, the city historian called on the local media to take their share of the responsibility in the preservation of the city’s heritage (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1989d). The governor, Heladio Ramírez López, gave the closing speech at the ICOMOS symposium, insisting on the shared responsibility of government and citizens, to preserve heritage, be it through direct financial contributions or communal clean up efforts as frequently done in Monte Albán (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989i; El Imparcial Editorial, 1989s). The symposium also triggered the formation of a local ICOMOS sub-committee in Oaxaca, committed to raising heritage awareness in Oaxaca and the state at large (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990l).

The municipal government made an official statement to protect the historic center, in response to the call for all excessive advertising of events in the historic center to be removed (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989w). As in Morelia, the founding of Oaxaca was celebrated each April with a series of special events including concerts and illumination of avenues. Oaxaca’s UNESCO designation was also highlighted (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990g).

In July 1990, yet another forum about Oaxaca and its citizens called for continued preservation efforts (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990n). The main speaker’s address, a representative of CONACULTA, was reprinted in the paper (Marín Ruiz, 1990). His concern for Oaxaca’s cultural heritage went beyond the tangible architecture or archaeological sites to include the city and state’s customs, which he judged as under threat, too. The mayor, Lino Celaya Luria, promised to clean up the city’s public gardens and vowed not to allow spontaneous flea markets to be set up in these public spaces (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990f).

INAH Oaxaca, meanwhile, it was reported, was working on its catalog of the city’s historic buildings, including, but not limited to monumental architecture. It was also particularly focused on working with citizens who were converting their homes into businesses in the historic center, to ensure that this transition was done adequately and according to the stipulations of the Ley Federal (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991f). Simultaneously, the alderman for the historic center and the municipality in general were planning a similar catalog—there was no mention that there might be some duplicity of effort between the municipality and INAH Oaxaca (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991u). The municipality then set
up a commission for the historic center, which was to monitor developments in the area and generate new regulations to govern the historic center. Its members were experts, mostly architects (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991t).

INAH Oaxaca made use of the paper to explain that owners would have to get INAH’s approval before making any alterations to their buildings in the historic center. INAH would review project proposals and help owners comply with regulations—perhaps are rather sanguine view of the process (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991j).

In April 1991, restoration and preservation experts from all over Europe and Latin America met in Oaxaca to “rescue colonial cities.” Tourism was seen as the key means to revitalize urban settings (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991c). Thus, FONATUR and SECTUR played a major role in the discussions as these agencies were particularly interested in developing a strategy to repurpose failing buildings for tourism purposes (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991r).

Heritage-related events continued to make headlines, with the architecture faculty chiming in with a series of events about the built environment, the loss of residents in the historic center, and the commercialization of the area (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991l). The prospect of international hotel chains buying buildings in the historic center did not go without criticism, in fact, there were allegations that the foreign consortia received preferential treatment from officials (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991i). Meanwhile, efforts to remedy visual contamination such as telephony and electricity cables were underway in the center of Oaxaca, particularly in the area of the tourist walkway (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991o). Avenue Morelos, for example, was to receive sidewalks in Oaxaca’s characteristic green stone, and have telephony and telegraph masts removed, at an estimated cost of nearly US$2 million (Torres, 1991a). SECTUR gave an additional US$1.6 million for the “rescue” of the historic center (Torres, 1991b). CFE’s contribution to the underground cabling was US $650,000 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991b). Clearly, momentum and financial support for preservation projects had gained in 1991 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991p), with the intention of improving the city’s image for tourism purposes (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991w).

On 25 November 1991, Oaxaca celebrated 470 years since its foundation, according to the paper (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991g), and in April 1992, it celebrated 460 years since
its elevation to city status in 1532 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992c).

Architects from the “Colegio de Arquitectos” frequently expressed their opinions in El Imparcial and their chief concerns with unchecked urban expansion. Nonetheless, the experts made mistakes too, such as stating that Oaxaca became a national monumental zone in 1986, when this occurred in 1976 (Santiago Contreras, 1992). Similarly, Oaxaca’s then mayor, Alfonso Gómez Sandoval Hernández stated in an interview that Oaxaca had been declared World Heritage in 1985—and that this declaration provided the impetus for the flurry of rehabilitation projects underway at the time (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992g).

Guillermo García Manzano, one of the organizers of Oaxaca’s 450th anniversary celebrations in 1982, author of a book about the history of Oaxaca, and municipal tourism director in 1992, began writing a weekly opinion in the newspaper in October 1992, at the invitation of the editor. His first piece centered on the sixteen years that had passed since Oaxaca’s designation as a national monumental zone in 1976 and how this had not brought about the hoped for preservation and local awareness of heritage issues (García Manzano, 1992a). Simultaneously, INAH stated in an interview with the newspaper that because of the continue destruction and deterioration of the historic center, it was in danger of losing its UNESCO designation (Santiago, 1992b). All three cities experienced the threat of losing their World Heritage designation at one point.

In García Manzano’s second column, he emphasized the need to balance revitalization of the historic center for visitors with that of inhabitants. Tourism, he argued, should not supersede local needs and uses (García Manzano, 1992b). In his next column, he focused on the history of the historic center (García Manzano, 1992c), followed by an analysis of different types of monuments (historic, religious, public). He further criticized the authorities for not regulating business advertising better. He had surveyed ten blocks in the city center at random, and found 93 large and imposing advertisements dominating buildings (García Manzano, 1992d) (Figure 6.28). At his request, the municipality began a program of painting and repainting façades in the historic center to minimize the visual cacophony of advertisements and colors (Hannan Robles, 1992c).

In his penultimate column, he concluded that the historic center needed to be visible and hospitable for inhabitants in order to attract visitors. It should not be made up and or fixed for the tourist alone, and finally, the government alone should not be responsible
for its upkeep, instead, the Oaxaqueños needed to be actively involved (García Manzano, 1992e). He gave no suggestions of how this might be achieved. Others echoed the need for an overall responsibility for the rehabilitation of the historic center (Segura, 1992).

In January 1993, the newspaper published a series of articles explaining the history of UNESCO and Mexico’s participation in the organization (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993l). Another article reviewed the history of Oaxaca’s preservation legislation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993a), while yet another piece briefly recounted the city’s foundation and history (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993c).

INAH, meanwhile, faced criticism again for its tough stance on preservation and its unwillingness to give out permits for construction. The tension lies within the need to restore or maintain historical buildings, but provide modern amenities, too. To modernize or not to modernize, that was posed as the main question (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993k).
The new municipal administration, headed by Carlos Manuel Sada Solana, once again committed itself to preservation projects (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993m). An immediate headache, however, was the building at 111 Porfirio Díaz (Santaella Sánchez, 1993d) (Figure 6.29). It was classified as historic, and yet its demolition had been approved by the previous administration (Santaella Sánchez, 1993b). The newspaper reported that there was obvious confusion as to why or who may have authorized the demolition. The fact it is located next to the meticulously restored 115, the Casa de la Ciudad, and the equally well-appointed 108, a boutique hotel opposite, makes the building stand out even more, and it remained in limbo, neither fully restored nor fully destroyed.

Journalist Luis Santiago called attention to the desolate state of public fountains in the
city in 1993, much like fellow journalist Mario Girón would do fifteen years later (Santiago, 1993b). Other prominent architects and professionals further warned about construction projects run at night, to evade the authorities, including Guillermo García Manzano, and Rubén Vasconcelos Beltrán, a former state official for the arts and culture council. ²² These experts were particularly incensed that there still was not a catalog of historic buildings (Santiago, 1993a). They also argued that an independent, decentralized body should be set up to monitor and the protect the historic center. They cited Zacatecas as an example of a city that had such a body and that had had positive preservation results (Santiago, 1993c).²³ A mere three days after this exclusive interview with the newspaper, the mayor announced that in fact there would be an independent body, the “Coordinación del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca”—to be up and running in a month, no less. Various representatives from the state and municipal government, as well as INAH, and architect’s associations would make up the new body (Santaella Sánchez, 1993e). It was hoped this new body would prevent the destruction of historic buildings. Members of Mexico’s ICOMOS also supported the new body, which in subsequent days of first reporting was referred to as a council. Beyond giving advice though, it was unclear how much direct influence the council would have beyond making recommendations (Santaella Sánchez, 1993h).

The municipal government announced further improvements to public spaces, such as new benches and trash bins, and the much-demanded catalog of monuments (Hannan Robles, 1993b). In the newspaper, architects expressed that the catalog would help them deal with client demands that were incompatible with the state of their building, and would improve the owner’s awareness of his or her historic building (Santaella Sánchez, 1993g).

In order to streamline the construction and rehabilitation process, the municipality wanted to establish one office that would deal with permits, though of course INAH also has to vet all construction proposals. Still, a one-stop office would make the process more straightforward, i.e., architects and construction firms would know to go there as well as INAH to receive their permits (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993e).

The newspaper was highly critical of INAH, as well as SEDESOL, alleging the organizations’ “disinterest” in protecting and preserving Oaxaca’s churches in particular. What

²²He later became the city historian. I interviewed him in March 2008.
²³Zacatecas became a World Heritage site in 1993.
might appear as disinterest was probably funding or staffing constraints, on the part of INAH, and SEDESOL’s reorganization out of SEDUE, most likely also constrained its ability to pursue preservation immediately. But not only INAH and SEDESOL were heavily criticized, the mayor, Carlos Manuel Sada Solana and his administration were accused of covering the city with their propaganda announcing their programs, yet not actually implementing much useful (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993j).

Still without a catalog of monuments in May 1993, the newspaper reported that ICOMOS might take charge of collecting these data (Santaella Sánchez, 1993c). The municipal government reiterated its commitment to preservation in the first “Workshop of the urban image of tourist cities with heritage sites,” and in particular to make construction easier through the one-stop office (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993q). The municipal council further decided to ban electoral campaign propaganda in the historic center to improve the city’s visual appearance (Jiménez, 1993c). In December 1993, the mayor met with businesses to also remove large advertisements for particular soft drinks (Jiménez, 1993e).

By September 1993, new municipal legislation to govern and protect the historic center was under review (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993n). Still, the former president of the College of Architects raised concerns that the city’s urban development plans ran counter to preservation efforts (Santaella Sánchez, 1993f).

The newspaper continued to report problems at various heritage sites, for instance, the cathedral’s clock stopped working and remained in disrepair (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993f), and while the Alcalá Theater was being restored, concerts were still ongoing (Jiménez, 1993d). In the first four months of 1994, large-scale advertising would be removed, piece by piece, starting with the Zócalo and its surrounding streets, then expanding outwards throughout the historic center (Santaella Sánchez, 1993a).

However, 1993 ended on a negative note for Oaxaca’s built heritage. The newspaper reported that a municipal official in charge of administering funds for public works projects had actually kept the money, nearly US$1,000 instead of paying for delivery of materials. He was subsequently arrested for non-payment (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993p). Most likely, this was only the tip of the iceberg where fraud was concerned.

On 30 April, 1994, the municipal regulation for the historic center was published in the state government’s official gazette and thus became law (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994d).
INAH’s woes, at least as reported in the newspaper, continued, as it still did not appear to have a budget in May of 1994 and subsequently, appeared incapable of maintaining historic buildings (Jiménez, 1994c). After a period of public consultation the Plan Parcial was to be presented publicly in August 1994 and formally ratified (Hannan Robles, 1994c). A 30-day review period was eventually announced to give the public the opportunity to comment (Jiménez, 1994b).

Meanwhile, INAH and SEDESOL held a roundtable discussion about transportation in historic centers, and demanded a significant reduction in large transport access to the center. Participants suggested the establishment of local subcenters to accommodate large trucks, whose cargo should then be redistributed among smaller vehicles. How this would be implemented was not specified (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994f). Architect Elí Pérez Matos spearheaded this new plan for the historic center, vowing to reduce the traffic, which reached nearly 50,000 vehicles a day, and decentralizing some of the municipal and state government offices (Hannan Robles, 1994b).

Journalist Luis Santiago, who had a keen interest in cultural heritage, published a series of articles on monumental architecture beginning in October 1994 with the church of La Merced (Santiago, 1994b). Two colleagues, Filadelfo Figueroa and Isidro Hernández, also contributed to the series, with a piece on the history of the Zócalo and a number of Oaxaca’s many churches and ex-convents, and monumental public buildings (Figueroa, 1994a; Figueroa, 1994b; Figueroa, 1994d; Figueroa, 1994e; Figueroa, 1994f; Hernández, 1994a). Oaxaca’s wrought iron gates, balconies, and gated windows, a common feature in the historic center, were also discussed (Figueroa, 1994c). In addition to these analyses of particular features and buildings, the newspaper also published what can only be described as an advertorial, extolling the romantic uniqueness of visiting a colonial city, which suggested Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca, amongst others, as the featured destinations (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994e).

The urban image of heritage cities was the topic of the second workshop of “Touristic Cities with Heritage” which was held in Oaxaca in October 1994. This meeting was meant to be an opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices, and to encourage public participation in preservation (El Imparcial Editorial, 1994i).

The Plan Parcial was finally given to the mayor in November 1994, and the newspaper
estimated it would be in operation in 1995 \cite{El Imparcial Editorial, 1994c}. Reordering traffic routes and closing more streets in the historic center to traffic entirely were some of the main features of the Plan \textit{(ibid.)}.

Graffiti was, and remains, a serious challenge to preservation, not only in Oaxaca. In the wake of the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in 1994, political graffiti adorned the kiosk in the Zócalo \cite{Olson, 1994}. Similarly, in 2006, graffiti was especially prevalent near the Zócalo (Figure 6.30).

The series on Oaxaca’s monumental architecture continued in 1995 with an essay on the Santa Catalina convent \cite{Alvarado, 1995}, as well as other convents, markets, the Cathedral, and noteworthy spaces in the city \cite{Cuevas Legaspi, 1995; El Imparcial Editorial, 1995g; El Imparcial Editorial, 1995h; El Imparcial Editorial, 1995j; El Imparcial Editorial, 1995o; El Imparcial Editorial, 1995p; Hannan Robles, 1995a; Hernández, 1995a; Hernández, 1995b; Hernández, 1995c; Hernández, 1995d; Hernández, 1995f; Hernández, 1995g; Hernández, 1995h; Hernández, 1995i; Hernández, 1995j; Hernández, 1995k; Hernández, 1995l; Santaella Sánchez, 1995c). Clearly, heritage became more prominent in the newspaper in the mid-1990s, as most of these stories ran on the front page, and went beyond
covering buildings and spaces, to the use of certain materials, such as wrought iron and the Oaxaca-typical cantera stone, and the problems caused by graffiti (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1995b; *El Imparcial* Editorial, 1995n; Hernández, 1995e).

In March, the mayor received the official paperwork from UNESCO that confirmed Oaxaca and Monte Albán’s inclusion in the list (Cabildo Municipal, Oaxaca de Juárez, 1995, p. 89). Why this official document was only received in 1995 is not explained, but the mayor took the opportunity to lobby SEP and SEDESOL to set up a separate fund for World Heritage cities (Jiménez, 1995h). European preservation schemes were cited as an example to follow, despite many of the urban circumstances differing significantly between European and Mexican cities. (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1995f). The newspaper also reported on the *Plan Parcial* and its continued revision, as well as the renewed efforts to move electric and telephony cables underground (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1995u).

During the local electoral campaign, all political parties violated local legislation that prohibited political advertisements in the historic center (Jiménez, 1995b). DGCH was deemed ineffectual or too timid in pursuing the political parties with fines and sanctions.

The continued lack of a catalog of monuments, the inability of the *Ley Federal* to be properly enforced, and no mechanism for helping property owners to fund saving their deteriorating buildings were identified as some of the major obstacles to preservation (Santaella Sánchez, 1995a). The *Plan Parcial* was still in seemingly endless review, with the interim mayor, Alfonso Calvo Cuevas, who expressed his confidence in the eventual effectiveness of the *Plan* (Charis Gallegos, 1995). The newspaper reported that the *Plan* would finally be finished by the end of 1995 (Jiménez, 1995l). INAH promised to catalog at least 100 historic monuments in the historic center and not only buildings dating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also vernacular architecture and buildings that in the urban context were noteworthy (Hannan Robles, 1995c). No reference was made as to why a complete catalog was not going to be produced, though the following year, INAH did specify that after the historic monuments were cataloged, other contextual buildings would follow (Hannan Robles, 1996c). Despite the *Plan Parcial* still being under review at the end of January 1996, the new mayor, Pablo Carreño Arnaud, and INAH Oaxaca were convinced that the *Plan* would eventually be emulated by other cities with historic centers (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1996d).
In January 1996, PROOAX was fined by DGCH for advertising the Institute of Graphic Arts outside of regulations. Francisco Toledo agreed to pay the fine, but disclosed to the newspaper that fines were not applied in an even-handed manner and he openly criticized DGCH (Jiménez, 1996b). The fine was US$1,700 and Toledo pledged to remove the advertising. DGCH rejected his criticism of not applying the law evenly (Jiménez, 1996d). In protest, Toledo resigned from the consultative body for the historic center (Jiménez, 1996n). His support for preservation, however, did not falter, as he gave the Casa de Juárez, the museum dedicated to Benito Juárez and run by INAH Oaxaca, a check for US$3,700 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1996d). Toledo and other artists did, however, resign from the Santo Domingo project, not due to the fines, but due to what they perceived as INAH Oaxaca’s authoritative control and management of the project. The collective also felt that agreements over how to plan and manage the botanical garden had not been adhered to by INAH (Jiménez, 1996l).

The newspaper continued to publish articles on Oaxaca’s iconic spaces, the importance of its architecture, and how built heritage was being modified to suit modern needs (Figueroa, 1996; Miguel G. 1996a; Miguel G. 1996b; Miguel G. 1996c; Miguel G. 1996d). The later city historian, Rubén Vasconcelos Beltrán (1996) also contributed to heritage coverage with an article recounting the history of the Santa Catalina convent and its transformation into a hotel.

By April 1996, the Plan Parcial was still not in place (Jiménez, 1996o). During the visit of ICOMOS Mexico president Carlos Flores Marini, it was announced that ICOMOS would hold its international colloquium in Oaxaca in 1997 (Jiménez, 1996i). An in-depth review of anthropologist Manuel Esparza’s book on the history of Santo Domingo and the convent’s contributions to the city also appeared in the paper. Esparza had at one time been in charge of INAH Oaxaca and then the state archives (Marín Ruiz, 1996). Meanwhile, multiple stories reported on the deterioration affecting the Cathedral (Girón, 1996c; Jiménez, 1996h).

In July 1996, the mayor put Oaxaca’s World Heritage designation in doubt. Much as in Morelia, the street vendors were to blame, but he vowed to not allow this demotion to occur (Jiménez, 1996f). The newspaper decried the state of the Zócalo as “a letdown for tourists” (Girón, 1996a; Jiménez, 1996a).
PROOAX, meanwhile, also aided in the consciousness raising attempts by speaking to proprietors of businesses in the historic center about the importance of adhering to the standards for colors on façades (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1996e). The alderman for the Historic Center blamed the street vendors for causing damages to the Zócalo and surrounding areas, but acknowledged the lack of financial resources of the municipality and proprietors (Jiménez, 1996m).

Toledo again objected to double standards in the historic center during the gubernatorial campaign in 1998, where political advertising appeared in the historic center without the municipality intervening and fining the respective parties. Toledo argued this was because Pablo Arnaud Carreño, still the mayor, was running for the state governor position as PAN candidate. Toledo further criticized that the regulations were being ignored by the “Camino Real” hotel franchise, which began setting tables out on 5 de mayo in front of the Santa Catalina convent (Figure 6.21 without permission (Morales Niño, 1998). The newspaper reported that they were removed shortly after the initial publicity (Hannan Robles, 1998b).

The 466th anniversary of Oaxaca’s foundation provided an opportunity for officials to once again stress the need for more preservation measures in the historic center (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1998d). The newspaper also reported on the latest UNESCO designation of Mexican heritage, the Hospicio Cabañas in Guadalajara (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1998j), and criticized that Oaxaca’s heritage was not meant for all, but only the few, namely the wealthy (Beltrán García, 2001c), and those who could garner favor with PRI, but more recently, with PAN, who had succeeded in the mayoral elections (Beltrán García, 2001a; Beltrán García, 2001b). This included the street vendors, who remained uncontested in the historic center (Beltrán García, 2001d).

The newspaper continued to report neglected spaces in the historic center, such as the Conzatti public park (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1999b) and within two days of denouncing the state of the park, the municipal government promised to restore it to its former glory (Girón, 1999d). Meanwhile, first measures were being taken to move government offices out of the historic center (Girón, 1999e).

In August 2001, WHC director Francesco Bandarin visited Oaxaca to learn about Oaxaca and Monte Albán’s specific preservation challenges (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 2001a). The
newspaper also published results from a study conducted in the beginning of the 1990s, which found that 32 percent of the historic center was used for commercial activities, 15 percent for services, and the rest, 53 percent, for residential purposes (El Imparcial Editorial, 2001f).

The newspaper was once again publishing a series of reports on iconic buildings and structures in the historic center, such as the arches of the aqueduct in Xochimilco (Figure 6.31), which had been in sporadic use until 1940 (El Imparcial Editorial, 2001d; Girón, 2001a).

In March 2008 reports emerged that there were 67 buildings in the historic center that required precautionary sign to warn of their precarious state and local architects called for revitalization of the historic center, but offered no suggestion how that might be feasible (Hernández, 2008a). Scarcely three months later, the Office of Civil Protection revealed
they had found 172 buildings in a very precarious state in the historic center, with 42 in immediate danger of collapse (Hannan Robles, 2008e). When I spoke with Abraham Reyes Arezola (2008) two days later, he adjusted that figure upwards, to over 200. Perhaps 200 seemed to dramatic a figure to publish to the newspaper?

Meanwhile, DGCH had fined some businesses in the historic center for using signs that were too large, exceeding 1 by 1 meters, but the owners claimed the signs had been there for years, and that the municipality was simply not applying the regulations evenly and to all businesses (Rosas, 2008a). Some businesses were closed due to in-compliance (Hannan Robles, 2008a). In the wake of the experiences of 2006, suggestions were made to put a fence around the Cathedral to reduce access, but city historian Rubén Vasconcellos rejected the proposal as a step backwards, as efforts in the late 1970s had removed a metal fence (Hannan Robles, 2008c). He also lamented the state of the city’s fountains and demanded their repair (Girón, 2008c). In brief surveys of ordinary citizens, most felt the government had abandoned the fountains, or simply seemed to hope that private initiative would rescue them (Girón, 2008a). The mayor also rejected the metal fence in a municipal vote (Hannan Robles, 2008d).

With the return of teacher protests in May 2008, business owners demanded that the municipal and state governments negotiated in order to avoid further losses (Rosas, 2008b). Two-hundred eighty businesses had closed in recent months, as rents in the historic center had reached up to US$3,000 (Hannan Robles, 2008b). With the reduction in sales, the viability of businesses became precarious (Gómez, 2008b).

### 6.6 Planning for and in the historic center

**Introduction**

In 1988, INAH Oaxaca was put in charge of issuing new regulations on the preservation of the city’s historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988u). New planning legislation was supposedly being devised in 1989, in an effort to fulfill the 1982 federal law that municipalities design their own urban development policy, principally to reign in chaotic growth and land use changes (Mancilla de Hernández, 1989). The newspaper reported that a first Plan Parcial proposal was developed in 1990, which was a collaborative effort
between the state’s Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano, Communicaciones, y Obras Públicas (SEDUCOP), INAH, and the federal SEDUE (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990y). However, the first Plan Parcial appeared in 1988. Further details emerged in October 1990, with a specific plan to classify buildings explicitly according to ownership and period of construction (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990z).

In fact, a first Partial Plan was published in 1988, but it seems to never fully have been applied, and almost immediately after its publication, efforts were made to update it. In 1993, a new version appeared, but again, it became bogged down in the legislature and subsequent revisions slowed down implementation. The 1998 version finally became the "go-to" plan and it remains in place, although discussions for revisions, particularly of its regulatory section, were ongoing. Despite the critical acclaim for the 2007 Plan de Manejo, it too has not been moved forward or implemented.

**Plan Parcial del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, 1988**

This first Plan Parcial is 160 pages long and divided into five parts:

1. Legal bases and background, includes a diagnostic and prognostic section, the legal background is kept very brief.
2. Policy level, this section is subdivided into planning conditions, norms, criteria, and components of the urban structure.
3. Strategic level, includes a subsection about land uses as well as urban infrastructure and transportation.
4. Sectoral responsibility and programmatic level, supervision of programs among different actors.
5. Implementation strategies, securing financial support.

Mostly, state governmental agencies were involved in devising the plan, with input from the SEDUE representative as well as INAH, and the municipal urban development office. At the time, the Plan estimated that 80,000 people lived in the area that the Plan covered, which included the Fortín hill (Table 6.3) (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b,
Table 6.3: Characteristics of Oaxaca’s historic center.
(Source: ibid., p. 11.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Element</th>
<th>Area in hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old pantheon</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green spaces and open spaces</td>
<td>69.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale market</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central bus station</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining built-up area</td>
<td>460.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>555.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Plan briefly covers the Oaxaca’s history and development, and then discusses the population dynamics of the city. An hourly minimum wage, at the time of the Plan in Oaxaca, was about US$1.15 (Servicio de Administración Tributaria, 2010) and residents within the historic center made twice or three times the minimum wage (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 30). In short, residents of the historic center were generally on the low-income end.²⁵ Most public services were adequate or better in the historic center, despite the aging infrastructure. Three public transport companies with a total of 242 functioning buses carried nearly 1,000 passengers per bus per day (ibid., p. 36). Of the city’s twenty markets, nine were within the limits of the historic center (ibid., p. 43). Furthermore, 65 buildings were being used by either the state or municipal government, seventy-one educational and cultural facilities, and twenty-nine health facilities (ibid., p. 49).

The Plan highlighted that there were too many primary schools in the historic center given the demand, a general deficit as far as cultural institutions and offerings were concerned, and more services for the poor, orphans, and elderly were needed. Furthermore, the lack of recreational space was particularly noted. In Oaxaca city, residents only had .25 square kilometers of green space, where the national norm was 3.15 square kilometers. Visual contamination due to the web of cables as well as unrestricted advertising were

²⁴Unfortunately, none of the maps that are referred to in the document were included in the copy of the Plan that I managed to obtain.

²⁵ Minimum wages in Oaxaca in 2010 were still among the lowest in Mexico, at less than $4 an hour (Servicio de Administración Tributaria, 2010).
cited as a contributing factor to the overall deterioration of the historic center (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 65–66).

INAH, the state government, the municipal government as well as SEDUE were all blamed for causing the demolition of many historic buildings due to lack of coordination between their offices (ibid., p. 67)—perhaps the most explicit and direct criticism of established institutions in any of the planning documents discussed here. However, the Plan does not provide any immediate suggestions how to combat that lack of coordination, lessening the efficacy of the criticism somewhat.

The Plan did identify a vicious cycle that affected and still affects the historic center: first, because the center is bogged down by traffic and ineffective at coming up with solutions to traffic problems, demand to establish businesses and services diminishes, lowering private and public investment in the maintenance of buildings. Due to this lack of investment, buildings and public spaces deteriorate, which leads to the creation of alternative spaces in the periphery and because of its inefficiencies, the historic center cannot compete with these new peripheral hubs. Still, despite this vicious cycle, the Plan concluded that the historic center was basically still well-preserved and that civil society as well as formal institutions were ready to work towards the revitalization of the area (ibid., p. 69).

The objectives of the Plan were summarized as follows:

1. To permit conservation, improvement, and use of properties, sites, and urban structures that make up the historic heritage of the historic center.
2. To organize the development of urban activities in the historic center, such as movement of vehicles, people, goods, and services and better distribute them throughout the area.
3. To maintain the historic center as “alive,” with a variety of administrative, commercial, service, cultural and touristic activities, and particularly maintain its residential quality.
4. To facilitate the public participation to in the definition and realization of projects and programs aimed at improving the historic center.
5. In the short term, to support the local authority’s efforts to obtain financial support from national and international institutions (ibid., p. 88).
In addition to the legal approval of the Plan, it also recommended the establishment of a council to coordinate actions in the historic center, led by the municipal government, with representation from the state tourism, public works, urban development offices, INAH, COPLADE, as well as “social organizations involved in the urban development of the historic center, such as inhabitants and neighbors, property owners, business owners, and general users of the historic center” (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 151). While it clearly aims to be inclusive, it remains vague, with no non-governmental organizations specifically named to participate nor a clear strategy for implementation and follow-through. This council was to be a normative body, meant to review project proposals and publicize the Plan and more generally the projects to be carried out in the historic center.

To support the Plan financially, it was suggested it be incorporated into state-wide planning overseen by COPLADE, as well as soliciting funds from SEDUE. But ultimately, it remained too vague and open-ended to be implemented. It seemed more of an intellectual exercise than an actual policy aimed at implementation. This first Plan remained in place until the early 1990s, when successive updates were commissioned.

**Plan Parcial del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1993**

Like its predecessor, the 1993 Plan is divided into five chapters and thus very much an update, incorporating new statistical information as well as analysis, but is only 37 pages long.²⁶ It is divided as follows:

1. Shared basis with state planning
2. Identification of existing problems and anticipated problems
3. Particular objectives for urban development
4. Strategy, policy, and actions

²⁶Unfortunately, the maps and additional appendices that were originally included were not included in the copy made available to me.
The Plan estimated that 44,216 people were living in the historic center in 1993 (1993, p. 5), which represented a 35 percent drop compared with 1987, when 68,430 residents had lived there (ibid., p. 13).

The document estimated that there were about 1,300 buildings of historical and artistic merit and outlined what specific reasons were advancing the deterioration of many buildings, particularly those privately owned (ibid., p. 16).

a) Inadequate commercial use
b) Lack of maintenance
c) Abandonment
d) Subdivision to increase profits
e) Lack of a technical and legal instrument for protection and conservation (ibid., p. 17).

The Plan further documented about 70 educational facilities in the historic center and its immediate surroundings, which implied that the metropolitan area should receive new facilities of this type, not the historic center (ibid., p. 21). It further detailed that despite new museums and galleries being opened, there was still a deficit as far as cultural facilities were concerned (ibid., p. 22). The Santo Domingo convent had not yet been repurposed for cultural activities at this point. With the view that the residential character of the historic center was swiftly diminishing to the point of reducing the city’s political and symbolic importance, the Plan moves into discussing its particular objectives, which included organizing urban activities in such a way that would avoid the deterioration of buildings and the environment; foment and support preservation; create sub-centers to provide better services to the metropolitan area; and regulate land use (ibid., p. 25).

To achieve these objectives, the Plan proposed Urban Image regulation for the historic center, to better control the look of business signs, various urban improvement projects, a program to recover various deteriorating buildings, a catalog and registry of “valuable” buildings, and a recovery program for popular housing and middle income housing (ibid., p. 29).

Further improvements would pertain to public infrastructure. The Plan ends with a large table of prohibited and permitted land uses in the historic center. But apart from strengthening existing legislation, there is no explanation here how the Plan would be
enforced, even though it had been published in the official gazette of the state government, typically an indicator that legislation was accepted and would become law. Blatantly absent are any references to who was invited to review the Plan, if there were any attempts at popular diffusion. There is also no discussion of public participation.

However, this particular version of the Plan did face numerous delays and eventually, was replaced by the next iteration in 1998.

**Plan Parcial de Conservación del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, 1998**

In many ways, the 1998 Plan is again based on its predecessors (Figure 6.32), certainly in its structure, again featuring five chapters. In contrast with the 1993 document, this version details who was involved in its development, INAH, federal as well as state member of the organization, the municipality, transit, environment, and police, as well as CANIRAC, CANACO, the College of Engineers, PROOAX, and the permanent advising council to the historic center (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1998, p. 4). How much input each organization had is not made clear.

The document, which is again only 37 pages long, then goes on to provide a short synopsis of the city's history in conjunction with a timeline. The population of the Metropolitan Area that includes Oaxaca de Juárez and 18 other municipalities reached 331,247 in 1990, 65 percent (213,985) lived within Oaxaca’s city limits, and 15 percent (49,000) in the historic center (ibid., p. 8). The 1988 plan had estimated about 80,000 people as living in the historic center (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988b, p. 9). Certainly, losing 30,000 residents in the course of a ten-year span gives an idea of the pressures on housing in the historic center. In 2000, estimates put the population of the historic center at 39,173 (Quartesan and Romis, 2010, p. 12). Some of this pressure can be attributed to the high concentration of commerce in the area (Table 6.4). In the case of non-financial services, the historic center completely dominates, and across the board, with 61 percent of all commercial activities, it remains the productive center.

Where housing was concerned, the Plan recorded 10,720 dwellings in the historic center, 45 percent of which were rented. The Plan admitted that the water and sewage infrastructure in the center was in poor condition (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1998, p. 10). Average costs per square meter in the historic center ranged from US$45 to US$360,
Figure 6.32: Boundaries of the 1998 Plan.
(Source: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2009, map modified by author.)
Table 6.4: Business distribution in Oaxaca, 1993.
(Based on: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Historic Center (%)</th>
<th>Periphery (%)</th>
<th>Oaxaca (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>3,144</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,601</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-financial services</td>
<td>2,932</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,266</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,422</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,045</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,467</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the lowest prices were found in the traditionally more residential areas such as Xochimilco and Jalatlaco (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1998, p. 14). Interestingly, only Oaxaca’s Plan documents these prices, none of the planning documents in Morelia and Guanajuato do. Of course, the financial crisis of the mid 1990s had deflated prices a bit and slowed sales.

I was able to obtain only one of the original maps included in the 1998 Plan. It documents land uses in the historic center (Figure 6.33). The map makes it obvious that certainly the area south of the Zócalo is almost entirely devoted to commercial activities, while the north remains more mixed.

The Plan identified the concentration of commercial activity, concentration of schools and governmental offices, transportation deficiencies, and deliberate obsolescence in the maintenance of properties to sell them as the main challenges for the historic center (ibid., p. 14). 105 different bus services traverse the historic center, causing massive traffic congestion during peak travel times (ibid., p. 15). Of course with most services in the historic center, the demand for transportation into the center for work, recreation, or official business was almost endless, and the supply, based on old, over-sized buses woefully inadequate. Interestingly, after this brief description and discussion of transportation, the document does not offer any solutions, only moves on to a review of the center’s architecture.

Oaxaca’s architecture was classified into four categories: Monumental (churches, convents, etc.), relevant, which is described as typically surrounding monuments, traditional architecture, which exemplified more modest building styles, and finally, vernacular architecture, which is representative of the most modest building types. The Plan draws on
Figure 6.33: Land use in Oaxaca, *Plan Parcial*, 1998.
(Source: *ibid.*, map modified by author.)
Table 6.5: Architectural inventory 1976–1980
(Source: ibid., p. 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monumental</td>
<td>22 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>182 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>544 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>735 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,483 100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6: State of inventoried buildings
(Source: ibid., p. 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Count (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolished</td>
<td>21 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>139 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered</td>
<td>391 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivided</td>
<td>164 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restored</td>
<td>22 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>746 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,483 100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A survey that INAH conducted between 1976 and 1980, which suggests that by 1998, this exercise had not been repeated (Table 6.5). Not surprisingly, perhaps, traditional architecture dominates. The inventory also included an assessment of the state of buildings (Table 6.6), however, the Plan implied that “only” 737 had actually been assessed. Thus, to retain parity, it was necessary to assume that 746 of the buildings were in an acceptable state. The number of restored buildings seems woefully low, but again, this survey was dated even in 1998. Whether or not a survey could have been conducted for this Plan is unclear, in any event, the use of the outdated survey information limits its utility. About half of building stock had been altered, destroyed, or was in some sense deteriorated.

The Plan then moves into a brief overview of Oaxaca’s intangible heritage, such as religious festivals and the Guelaguetza. It describes the commercial area near the Zócalo as one of the more deteriorated areas, as well as the markets more generally.

It reaches the same conclusions as the previous documents, albeit noting that vacant lots in the northern and southern parts of the area needed to be addressed, as well as the increasing commercialization pressures at the southern end. Three open spaces surrounding
churches were also identified as in need of an intervention, Santo Tomás Xochimilco, El Carmen Alto, and the Soledad church. Not surprisingly, the Plan’s objectives were nearly unchanged from the previous iteration.

- Maintain the historic center’s diverse character.
- Establish a structure to ensure the ordered development of the historic center.
- Determine what tools are needed to ensure preservation, with the help of DGCH, the municipal council, and “corresponding community organizations.”
- Construction regulation after a new inventory.
- Stimulate residential uses.
- Create more sub-centers to deal with traffic.
- Increase the pedestrian area to essentially make the historic center off limits for cars.

The pedestrian area was enlarged towards the zócalo in 2006, but beyond that, nothing has been done to actually address traffic and transportation problems. One suggestion was to build two-storey parking facilities in the many vacant lots, but this never happened (ibid., p. 29). As regarded built heritage, the elaboration of a catalog of buildings was at the top of the list, followed by high-profile restoration projects, such as El Carmen Alto and San Tomás de Xochimilco, as well as twenty buildings that were presumably in private hands (ibid., p. 30).

To finance various aspects of the Plan, the municipality was going to rely on the “Cien Ciudades” program, which was discontinued after 1999. It called for various forms of financial support, via loans from BANOBRAS and depending on the project, with support from CFE or TELMEX (ibid., p. 33). The Plan suggested that loans would be made available to private owners and business owners to maintain their buildings, but it is not clear who would provide these loans (ibid., p. 34). Given the scarcity of these types of resources, it seems unlikely that many property owners actually benefitted from them.
The document ends with the estimation that organizations such as PROOAX would be involved more closely in preservation efforts, at least in some consultative capacity. Other citizen organizations that were identified to become more involved were all of a commercial nature, the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and other professional organizations. Again, there was no clear sense of how they might be included.

While not short on data and fieldwork, implementation and enforcement remains vague. How exactly might this Plan encourage increased residential uses, when the quality of buildings leaves much to be desired, and services are not consistent? There is further no discussion about how regulations will be enforced and what sort of sanctions violators might face, nor how pedestrianizing the majority of the historic center would work, if at all, as businesses routinely rejected these types of proposals as unworkable for their deliveries.

The municipal government did approve this Plan and it remains in effect, despite yet another Management Plan appearing in 2007.

**Plan de Manejo del Centro Histórico de Oaxaca, 2007**

This Management Plan, like the 2006 Plan devised for Morelia, applies the “FODA” matrix, “strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats.” It is 64 pages long and divided as follows:

1. Vision and mission
2. Leadership
3. Design of the organizational model
4. Diagnosis, FODA, and scenario outlines
5. Incorporation of the inventory
6. Programming matrix and co-responsibility
7. Contingency models and accountability
An architect runs the consulting group that was in charge of drawing up this Management Plan and conducted workshops with residents, public, private, and social sectors and surveyed their values and affectations (EXA Consultores, 2007, p. 5). To my knowledge, this was the first attempt at more inclusionary planning. The results showed that participants valued the ex-convent of Santo Domingo as a “new” collective icon of the city, residents of the historic center identified historic sites such as Monte Albán as fundamental heritage sites, they lacked awareness of surrounding natural heritage, and recommended that more community and visitor awareness raising be initiated, as well as new education proposals for children (ibid., p. 6).

Participants also mentioned the loss of housing as a component of the traditional urban space, and with it the decline of community values and collective memory, followed by the need to address urban transport problems (ibid., p. 7). Neither of these results is surprising nor particularly revelatory, but because the pilot study was small, or one has to surmise it was, given that no figures for participation were provided, the Management Plan suggested that once the management unit was in place, more public participation workshops should be implemented to echo the results of the pilot study (ibid., p. 7). Various local leaders were interviewed, too, including Francisco Toledo.

Despite acknowledging the pilot study extensively, the authors prioritized earthquakes, drinking water, and birds and mammals as the key three threats to heritage that needed immediate attention (ibid., p. 13). Earthquakes and water scarcity are quite obvious and long-term threats to Oaxaca more generally, but it is unclear how exactly birds and mammals pose such a threat, although bird droppings pose a serious problem for historic buildings. Still, it is somewhat curious that this problem was rated as more important than social conflict, drainage problems, and street vendors (ibid., p. 13).

To set up the management unit a full-time sociologist, anthropologist, IT person, office assistant, ethnologist, social communicator, lawyer, and architect were suggested as personnel (ibid., p. 14). How they would be paid was not detailed.

Out of the “FODA” exercise, the authors synthesized the following:

- Design an outreach campaign to increase heritage awareness and knowledge statewide
• Strengthen neighborhood associations to improve relations with the authorities

• Promote natural and historical patrimony nationwide and internationally to increase participation of communities in the benefits of tourism and lessen the pressure on the historic center

• Identify national and international funding sources for heritage projects

• Develop a regular monitoring program to review the quality of life in the historic center

• Identify causes for social conflict and generate spaces for dialogue

• Use state and federal financial resources to offer training to diminish social, ethnic, and cultural divisions

• Create a permanent representative, independent of electoral cycles, to represent the interest of citizens and to ensure continuity of projects

• Correct application of rules, regulations, and norms as regard trash removal, informal trade, public and private transport, land use, pollution, rescue and conservation of historic buildings

• Incentivize conservation of private property in danger of collapse

• Improve water capture and treatment

• Improve awareness of recycling, solid waste disposal

• Establish tax incentives for sustainable projects

• Train and improve public safety in the historic center (EXA Consultores, 2007, p. 20–22).

A rather ambitious set of strategies, to be sure. Moreover, there was little reflection about the implications of these proposals. Instead, the Management Plan moves into a discussion of the state of the built environment in the historic center and how it has been
altered. Many alterations were put down to popular ignorance as far as the importance of authenticity was concerned, and the tendency to make changes to buildings that could appeal to tourists (EXA Consultores, 2007, p. 24). How these attitudes might change is not discussed, nor where they may have originated in the first place. The document seems disjointed, keen to address as many topics as possible, but not providing much in the way of analysis.

Much of the remainder of the Management Plan is dedicated to short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, which are divided into socio-economic and territorial strategies. One of the key short term strategies was to implement the Management Unit but that has yet to happen. While there is nothing inherently wrong with devising short-, medium-, and long-term goals, there seemed to be little means of actually implementing any programs, let alone follow through on them as long as the Management Unit was not in place. Despite these flaws, the Management Plan won the 2007 annual INAH “Manuel Gamio” prize (Palapa Quijas, 2008).

All these planning tools exhibit good intentions and certainly provide much needed background and data, from a researcher’s point of view. However, their endemic weakness is lack of implementation and enforcement. This raises the question of why investing in consulting firms is deemed worthwhile, when there is no real outcome per se. Of course, hiring experts at least gives the impression that planning is being considered. Even better, in this last case, public participation was showcased. Funds to implement the Management Unit in 2009 were available, and amounted to US$56,000 (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2009, p. 5). Perhaps if the money is not spent on this, it would go elsewhere; whoever proposed projects received funding, who did not, received no funding.

6.7 Tourism, promotion, and tour guide livelihoods

Introduction

Tourism has been a mainstay of Oaxaca’s economy and particularly, the Guelaguetza, the area’s harvest festival, held in July each year, has attracted thousands of tourists over the years. With little other industry in the city itself and the state more generally, the “industry without chimneys” is the cornerstone of the economy, or at least it is portrayed as such.
Clearly though, tourism is incredibly vulnerable to persistent social inequalities that affect the historic center every year in May, when the teachers go on strike.

However, the unrest of 2006 seems to have left Oaxaca off-kilter in the tourism realm, unable to articulate a coherent strategy or brand. The goal is to replicate the record 963,860 visitors, reached in 2005, no matter the cost or how this might be achieved.

Tourism in state and municipal government reports

Official records might try to paint a more positive or impressive picture than reality, or at least give the impression of a lot of impetus for different programs. Details are also typically short, and much of the information is simply presented in endless tables and frequently, no cost figures are included. It is as if the mere mention of various projects should be satisfactory.

The State reports reveal that seven training courses for tourism employees were given in the period 1986 to 1987, very early compared with Guanajuato and Morelia. Furthermore, there were seven tourist events held in the city, and 208 congresses and conventions (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1987, p. 208). Perhaps most interesting to note is the number of hotels at the time, 123, with 3,768 rooms. US$3,120,684 was pumped into Oaxaca's economy (ibid., p. 210), which made the city the center of tourism activity and expenditure, with 658,529 total visitors (ibid., p. 212). This figure does not coincide with figures obtained from SIIMT, which makes a distinction between arrivals, 375,736, and those tourists that stay overnight, 779,747 (SIIMT, 2006a). Still, the average length of stay, at two days, is recorded in both sources. The majority of visitors are national.

The following year’s report showed that Oaxaca’s tourism officials had attended nineteen international and national tourism fairs to promote the city, and sent out 1,807 promotional packets abroad. Fifteen complaints were investigated, which seems very low (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1988a, p. 349). A further eleven hotels had opened in the city, bringing the total to 134, elevating the number of hotel rooms to 4,107 (ibid., p. 350). Records indicate that until May 1988, US$6,761,482 had been spent in Oaxaca, which accounted for 90 percent of tourism income in the state (ibid., p. 353). Fifty-eight tour guides had attended a refresher course on guiding (ibid., p. 354).

But average stays did not change much, in 1989, stagnating at only two days, but two
more hotels opened in the city, and nearly US$8,500,000 had been spent by October 1989 (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1989, p. 381). SECTUR trained 490 tourism sector workers, among them travel agency workers, waiters, and receptionists in fourteen training courses, all of which were held in the central valley, where Oaxaca is located (ibid., p. 382). The reports also listed each tourism-related project carried out in the respective year, but no financial information was provided, nor a total cost of activities.

In 1991, spending had reached US$10,000,000, making it a standout year, with nearly 800,000 visitors reported (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1991a, p. 75). Oaxacan business leaders had invested nearly US$2,000,000 in expanding hotels and tourism services (ibid., p. 76). Governmental spending on tourism, however, at least via COPLADE, was very low, with only US$250,000 invested (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1991b, p. 1). This represents less than one percent of the overall budget, and the majority was spent in the central valleys (ibid., p. 2). For instance, US$111,801 was spent on visual improvements on the touristic walkway in Oaxaca (ibid., p. 527).

For the period 1992 to 1993, nearly US$18,000,000 were spent in Oaxaca by tourists (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1993b, p. 84). By the following year, the economic crisis had hit Mexico and subsequently Oaxaca, hard, decreasing economic output from tourism to US$14,000,000, a 23 percent decrease (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1994, p. 124). By that 1994, there were 150 hotels in the central valleys (ibid., p. 123). COPLADE invested US$90,000 to foment tourism, but the federal government invested a further US$3,339,000 (Coordinación General COPLADE Oaxaca, 1994, p. 233–238).

In 1995 and 1996, the city rebounded, with tourists spending US$21,920,000, and US$28,831,000 respectively (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996b, p. 275). Interestingly, the state estimates for average stays differed from SIIMT for both 1995 and 1996. The state estimated average stays of 1.9 and 1.88 days (ibid., p. 275), while SIIMT’s results show 2.4 days for 1995, and 2.9 for 1996 (SIIMT, 2006b). This could simply be a result of counting differently, or one or the other entity over or underreporting if it seemed expedient.

More training took place state-wide, with 48 courses that served 1,440 people (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996a, p. 139). In the city, 221 police officers, students, and other service providers were trained, but noticeably absent from the list were tour guides.

²⁷This type of training is mostly focused on customer service, not the provision of guiding services.
In 1999, the municipal government was in charge of six different events in the city, and for the first time, the “Day of the Dead” celebrations with their typical traditions were brought into the historic center, instead of letting visitors go to the neighboring villages and towns to witness local differences (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 1999, p. 28). In terms of promotion, the municipal officials did not travel beyond Mexico’s borders to promote the city, leaving this to the state officials (ibid., p. 27).

By 2001, there were twenty-six different events held in the city, nine of which were conferences or conventions. Still, city officials did not promote Oaxaca beyond Mexico (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2001, p. 29–30).

Training carried on in the 2000s, but mainly in the realm of hotel workers, receptionists, and waiters (H. Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2004, p. 94). The municipal tourism office co-sponsored eleven different traditional events in 2004 (ibid., p. 93). By 2005, Oaxaca had 5,922 hotel rooms (Quartesan and Romis, 2010, p. 28).

**Tourism in the media**

Much like Morelia, Oaxaca was quite successful keeping tourists longer than one night in the city. In 1986, the average length of stay was 2.6 days (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986a). Official statistics contradict this number, with an average length of stay of 2 days (SIIMT, 2006b). There could be a variety of reasons to account for this discrepancy, including the method of counting tourists, though it is likely the federal statistics office would have accessed and perhaps relied on the state numbers only, though figures could also have been solicited from hotels directly. Still, hotel owners complained that they were only operating at 30 percent capacity in February 1986, blaming the teacher and university strikes (Hernández, 1986b). The city and state expected to receive about 80,000 visitors for the Easter holiday period (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986m). Similarly, about 85,000 tourists were expected for the Guelaguetza, the harvest festival, that year (Hernández, 1986a), but numbers were continuously revised, and generally, downward, to between 50,000 and 60,000 (Jarquín, 1986a).

As in Morelia, El Imparcial frequently referred to tourism as the “industry without chimneys” and stressed how important said industry was to Oaxaca’s economy and inter-
national image (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986k; El Imparcial Editorial, 1990ou). The Christmas holiday period also was a peak time in Oaxaca. In 1986, Oaxaca’s hotels were full and more than 40,000 visitors arrived (Navarro, 1986). But the newspaper also reported the conflicting information that was coming out of the Tourism Secretariat SEDETUR. On the one hand, the local Hotel owners’ representative claimed there was a 10 percent decrease in visitors and therefore, only US$1.5 million could be expected to be poured into the local economy (Hernández, 1987), while on the other hand, the state tourism official expected nearly US$1.7 million and overall growth in the numbers of visitors (Torres, 1987a). These sorts of discrepancies are not surprising, given the interests involved, and it only muddies the waters further.

An increase in foreign tourist arrivals occurred from 1986 to 1987, although simultaneously, the figures for national visitors declined. The paper’s figures and those obtained from SIIMT coincide, in this case, where 75,000 foreign visitors arrived in Oaxaca in 1986, while a year later, 106,000 arrived (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988g; SIIMT, 2006b). In 1983, Oaxaca had 39 hotels, by 1988, the number had nearly grown to 62, increasing the number of hotel rooms to 2,819 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988m). The end of the year holidays and vacation period brought a further 60,000 to the city (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989d).

As regarded training for tourist-oriented service providers, bus drivers and others involved in tourism were offered a course on the history of the historic center to provide better information to tourists in June 1988 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988z). The state government sponsored these courses, as well as training in human relations to improve service provision (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988b). Seven hundred hotel, restaurant, and travel agencies’ staff received training in May 1989 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989b).

By June 1989, Oaxaca had already recorded 250,000 visitors, a ten percent increase on the first six months of the previous year, all credited to increased promotion (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989c). More than 2,000 tourists a day were arriving for 1989’s Guelaguetza (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989r).

The following year, the paper started publishing tourist routes through the historic center, with suggestions on which buildings and places were a must for a visitor, such as the

²⁸SEDETUR went through a series of different names, including Secretariat for Tourism Development (1996), before settling on its current form.
Zócalo, the cathedral, and the Macedonio Alcalá theater (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990k). By Easter 1990, the paper lamented the low occupancy rate of 53 percent and urged more promotion to ameliorate the decline in visitor numbers, while reporting that 100,000 tourists had come to Oaxaca thus far in the year (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990h).

With tourism generating approximately US $20 million and more than 800,000 visitors arriving in the state, the governor indicated that there would be more investment in tourism, particularly in the training of staff in the sector (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990p). Yet for hotel owners in Oaxaca, a ten percent decrease in overnight stays, precipitated by the creeping economic recession of the early 1990s, which would eventually see the peso devalued in 1993 (Hannan Robles, 1990).

In early 1991, the newspaper reported that 1 million visitors had come through Oaxaca in 1990 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991x). According to official statistics, that figure was 866,042—for the city of Oaxaca (SIIMT, 2006b). If the former refers to the entire state, that would seem likely, though in fact a bit low, given that Oaxaca has a beach resort in Huatulco. The statistics remain poorly defined.

Oaxaca was to host three large conventions in 1991: the first meeting of cities in the “Ciudades Coloniales” tourism program, the state government and FONATUR convened a meeting of restoration experts from France, Italy, and Mexico, and finally, a seminar on ecological culture and tourism (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991q).

One advantage of being selected a colonial city meant that Oaxaca had access to low-interest loans from BANOBRA$S, which could be used for rehabilitation projects, and a 33 percent subsidy from CFE, to finance underground cabling in the historic center (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991m).

A blow to tourism was undoubtedly the suspension of regular services of “El Oaxaqueño”, the city’s passenger rail connection to Mexico City. Nearly 100 years after the train had arrived in Oaxaca, its daily services did not prove financially viable (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991h). The city historian argued that this service termination was a serious step backwards, as airline flights and bus services were not as economical (Ramírez Bohorquez, 1991).

In 1992, the city had 3,837 hotel rooms to offer and tourism generated about US$50 million. Furthermore, in the space of five years, from 1987 to 1992, 189 restaurants had
opened in the city (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992a). The newspaper reported that there were state-accredited 78 tour guides in Oaxaca in 1992. At the time, the state was attempting to form a state-wide organization for tour guides to better facilitate training for tour guides (Martínez Cervantes, 1992). In September 1992, the newspaper announced that the city had won the “National Prize for Tourism Quality in a Municipality,” ahead of Morelia and Guanajuato, for example, due to the preservation efforts. With the prize came US$400,000, which were designated towards a fund with SECTUR to promote Oaxaca internationally (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992d; Santiago, 1992a).

Oaxaca’s hotel owners demanded that the municipality “cleanse” the historic center from the beggars that populated the streets and made the streets unpleasant for visitors, who also had to contend with street vendors. This was all too unseemly for a high culture destination (Hannan Robles, 1992d).

By the end of 1993, the financial crisis had repercussions for Oaxaca’s hotel, with 100 staff laid off (Torretera Gómez, 1993), 20 percent of the hotel workforce. While no hotels had to close during the year, the occupancy rate of 50 percent or less was a worrying development for city officials as well as hotel owners (Hannan Robles, 1993a).

The construction of a super highway from Oaxaca to Mexico city, underway in 1994, promised easier and faster travel times to and from the capital. Governor Diódoro Carrasco Altamirano was convinced that this infrastructure investment, along with the rehabilitation of Santo Domingo, would bring more tourists to Oaxaca (Santiago, 1994c). Nevertheless, hotel owners were still concerned about low visitor numbers, with occupancy rates as low as 25 percent for the first five months of 1994 (Hannan Robles, 1994a). The year brought further difficulties with the Zapatista movement in neighboring Chiapas, which reduced visitor numbers by 15 percent (Hernández, 1994b)—also evidenced in reduced average length of stays to 1.9 days and occupancy rates not even reaching 40 percent (SIIMT, 2006a; SIIMT, 2006b).

No significant turnaround in visitor numbers was expected for 1995, with the crisis in Chiapas and the weak economic climate generally cited as major factors (Hannan Robles, 1995b).

In March 1996, SEDETUR suggested a route for visitors through Oaxaca highlighting the city’s colonial monuments, which was published in the newspaper (El Imparcial
ICOMOS Mexico and SEDETUR signed an agreement to collaborate in April 1996, with ICOMOS providing technical expertise and assistance, and training for tourism service providers (Jiménez, 1996g). Hotels were 100 percent booked for the Guelaguetza that year, with 70,000 guests expected (El Imparcial Editorial, 1996f).

The newspaper highlighted the fact that Oaxaca had hardly any public lavatories for visitors, and where they were provided, at the Zócalo, their state was unacceptable. In no way ideal for a city attracting many tourists (Gómez, 1996b). More common were stories emphasizing Oaxaca’s diversity and variety in tourist attractions (El Imparcial Editorial, 1996c).

Despite the uncertainty in the trade, from 1993 to 1998, twenty more hotels opened in Oaxaca. One in five jobs in the city related to tourism. Foreign tourist visits increased by 44 percent, which SEDETUR felt certain was due to Oaxaca's exposure in “Travel and Leisure” in 1997 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998b). Forty-thousand visitors were expected for Easter week in 1998 (Hannan Robles, 1998e). To further boost tourism, a plan emerged that would expand the pedestrianized area and a light train to help alleviate traffic in the historic center. Yet another ambitious proposal that fell by the wayside (Guzmán Sibaja, 1998).

In May 1998, a new tourism police force of 65 officers began its work in the historic center (Hannan Robles, 1998c), and Mexico’s Association of Travel Agents met for their annual national congress in Oaxaca. The head of SEDETUR enthused that “Oaxaca had become fashionable” and only within a period of five years of the present state government administration (El Imparcial Editorial, 1998g).

SEDETUR, battling to lengthen average stays beyond two days, laid the blame for the short stays at the feet of tourism service providers for their lack of creativity and imagination, prompting the businesses to demand more training opportunities for their staff to improve said services (Martinez de Aguilar, 1999). At the time, SEDETUR’s budget for promotion was only about US$45,000, while Huatulco’s budget was much higher, at US$65,000, with matching funds coming from the federal and state government, as well as tourism service providers (Torres, 1999).

In 2001, various tourism services providers lodged an official petition with then mayor Alberto Rodriguez González about the proliferation of street vendors in the historic center.
They urged the mayor to find a solution (Ríos Olivera, 2001e). SEDETUR and the private sector, on the eve of the 469th anniversary of Oaxaca, were hoping to fund a market area for street vendors to reduce their numbers in the historic center, but little came of this idea (Hannan Robles, 2001c).

More common still were articles lauding Oaxaca’s diverse tourism opportunities, where the historic center was prominently reviewed and recommended (Girón, 2001b). Oaxaca’s tourist tram (or rather, a bus “disguised” as a tram) was introduced by a private firm in 2001 (Figure 6.34). Unlike the trams in Guanajuato and Morelia, Oaxaca’s tram does not include a tour guide but instead a recorded talk. The most obvious advantage to this recording is its cost-saving nature, as the tram company does not have to pay a guide. The experience for the tourist, however, is diminished, as traffic patterns can lead to the recording being out of sync with the landscape elements, and of course there is no possibility of asking questions and thus engaging with the experience.

Visitor numbers increased during the Easter period, despite reports that some busi-
nesses were taking advantage of the visitors by raising their prices accordingly (Gómez, 2008e). Still, average stays were less than two days and once again the quality of tourism services providers was questioned and criticized (Altamirano Díaz, 2008). Still, hotel occupancy was above 65 percent (Hannan Robles, 2008g). The economic output of the Easter period amounted to US$22,262,700, much more than had been anticipated, leading the newspaper to declare that the “industry without chimneys” was finally recuperating from the 2006 strike (Gómez, 2008c). With the teachers returning to Oaxaca for the annual strikes, tourism took a hit, with 15 percent of reservations canceled due to the uncertainty (Hannan Robles, 2008f). The hotel owners association estimated that 17,000 jobs had been lost in 2006, with 6,000 recovered by 2008 (Gómez, 2008a). Reservation cancelations were widely reported (Hernández, 2008b). Not surprisingly, May is one of the worst months for tourism providers (Gómez, 2008d) and daily losses estimated to be at least US$75,000 (Hernández, 2008b).

Tourism promotion strategies

Already by the mid-1980s, Oaxaca had participated twice in the large Spanish tourism trade show in Madrid, promoting itself as a major tourism destination (El Imparcial Editorial, 1986f), earlier than Morelia and Guanajuato. To address various questions and problems in the local tourism industry, including tourism promotion of Oaxaca, a forum was launched in August 1987 (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987c). Oaxaca was particularly promoted in Mexico City, but also abroad (Torres, 1987b). In 1988, state tourism officials attended tourism trade shows in Madrid, Paris, Milan, and Berlin to promote Oaxaca’s attractions (El Imparcial Editorial, 1987d), as well as in Acapulco (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988s).

The state also wanted to attracted more frequent flights to increase tourist numbers (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988f). Promotion abroad was credited with the increase in foreign visitors in 1988 (nearly 140,000, compared to 106,000 in 1987) and 77 percent occupation rates in Oaxaca’s hotels (La Voz de Michoacán Editorial, 1988). A new airline, Aerovías de México began services from Mexico City to Oaxaca in October 1988, spurring hopes that visitor numbers would steadily increase (El Imparcial Editorial, 1988aa).

In 1989, the state government organized a seminar on tourism and culture and invited
representatives from neighboring Mexican states to exchange experiences and strategies to promote tourism and cultural activities, which included Oaxaca’s World Heritage (El Imparcial Editorial, 1989aa). Nevertheless, efforts were also made to attract large conferences, conventions, and trade shows to Oaxaca, as the hotel infrastructure was available to accommodate large events (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990m). In May 1990, SECTUR announced that Oaxaca was selected as one of its “colonial jewels” in an effort to promote cultural tourism in the city as well as others including Morelia and Guanajuato (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990v).

For hotel owners, however, there was seemingly never enough promotion. With several national airlines canceling different routes through Oaxaca, the need for more promotion, from the perspective of hotel owners, was the only obvious response (El Imparcial Editorial, 1990s). In 1990, the state spent only about US $700,000 on promotion, and still achieved growth—at least according to the reports, suggesting the tourism industry had grown by 18 percent (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991x).

With the restoration activity in the historic center in full swing, tourism to Oaxaca was promoted in Canada, the US, particularly in Los Angeles and Chicago, as well as various European countries (El Imparcial Editorial, 1991s). The state government’s fifth annual report noted that eight new hotels had opened and four hotels reopened in the city in 1991, and improved transportation via increased flights from Mexico City (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1991c). Nevertheless, for hotel owners, 1991 was a disappointment, with the paper reporting that average overnight stays had fallen to 1.9 from 2.3—official statistics maintain that stays average 2.4 nights (Gómez Santiago, 1992b; SIIMT, 2006b). Of course, hotel owners were always critical of promotional efforts.

The state of Oaxaca, the municipality of the city, the federal government, and tourism service providers entered into a jointly financed Tourism Promotion Fund, as reported in March 1992. The money from the fund was to be used to promote the city of Oaxaca specifically, and its initial budget was cited at US$1.2 million. Oaxaca would be represented at various tourism fairs, abroad and in Mexico, as well as train hotel, restaurant, and travel agency staff (El Imparcial Editorial, 1992h). In April 1992, the newspaper’s tourism reporter, Humberto Torres, noted that in its first year, 1991, the fund had reached about US$5 million, and the following year nearly doubled its budget to US$10 million. The
state and federal governments made the largest contributions, with nearly US$4 million each (Torres, 1992).

In 1993, Oaxaca was scheduled to host the “Eurobolsa,” a tourism event that would bring European tour operators to the city to meet local counterparts and offer the opportunity to promote their services in Europe (El Imparcial Editorial, 1993a). The following year, Oaxaca was once again in the group of “Ciudades Coloniales,” as well as the “Cien Ciudades” public works funding scheme. Oaxaca resumed its promotional push at the annual Acapulco tourism market (Santaella Sánchez, 1994b). Nearly US$50,000 from the federal government were proportioned to the state for promotional purposes after state tourism officials met with federal counterparts in Acapulco (Ferrer, 1994).

With the rehabilitation of Santo Domingo underway, governor Carrasco renewed his commitment to tourism as a means for the state to move forward economically. He gained further support from SECTUR (Santiago, 1994a).

In 1995, Oaxaca’s promotion received a monetary boost, with nearly US$40,000 given by the private sector, which was matched and doubled by the municipal government, and enhanced by a further US$40,000 from the state government to be spent on national and international promotion campaigns (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995a). With the investment of nearly US$350,000 Oaxaca was able to better promote the city. US$200,000, supplied by the federal government, had helped to finance the re-pavement in the historic center and fund the printing of 20,000 tourism maps which featured photographs of historic places and colonial buildings (Jiménez, 1995a).

Through its increased promotion, visitor numbers were slowly bouncing back in 1995. By November, 738,000 tourists had passed through the city (El Imparcial Editorial, 1995a). The total for the year was 887,995 (SIIMT, 2006a). In 1995, occupancy rates had stood at 47 percent, by 1996 they had improved to 58 percent, at least these were the figures reported in the newspaper (Hannan Robles, 1996a). Official statistics placed occupancy rates much lower, for both years, at 42.5 percent in 1995, and 49 percent, respectively (SIIMT, 2006a).

Promotional spending on the city alone rose to US$110,467 in 1996, with funding coming from FONATUR, the federal government, the state government, and tourism service providers (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996a, p. 137). Oaxaca was represented abroad in Madrid and Berlin, as well as a number of promotional events in the US and
South America (Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1996a, p. 138). Promotion also continued nationally in Acapulco, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and elsewhere (ibid., p. 138).


The Association of Hotels and Motels of Oaxaca joined the efforts of CPTM by paying nearly US$40,000 into the fund via its members, in the interest of furthering Oaxaca’s promotion (Torres, 2001b). Visitor numbers from 1999 onwards were increasing year on year. That year, 1,335,910 tourists came to Oaxaca, in 2000, 1,687,132, and in 2001, 1,697,896, generating nearly US$830,000. SEDETUR estimated that tourism also created 26,000 direct jobs, and 181,000 indirect jobs statewide (Torres, 2001a).

Palacios López (2008) was director of tourism promotion in Oaxaca’s SECTUR. He is an engineer by training. He emphasized the large numbers of campaigns his department undertook to promote the city and the state:

We have about US $11 million to spend on promotion, that money comes from us, from CPTM, and the federal SECTUR. We promote Oaxaca via travel companies, such as Travelocity and Expedia, because Continental Airlines flies here from Houston, we have an agreement with them. We invite journalists here to experience Oaxaca, because their write-ups are more accepted than mere advertisements in magazines or newspapers. Of course we attend all the big tourism conventions. In a sense, our campaigns are meant to support the municipal tourism activities and events. Municipal tourism has little money, so they cannot do these big campaigns.

We have managed to get more direct flights to Oaxaca, from other Mexican cities, and most importantly, we will now have a late night flight from Mexico City, so foreigners who arrive on planes from Europe will be able to connect more easily. Our president Felipe Calderón is also going to open the construction of the new super-highway between Oaxaca and Huatulco, which will cut travel times to two hours, which should help us get more people to stay longer in the state. In the city, people stay only 1.7 nights on average, that is obviously too short.

We also have produced documentaries that are shown in the History Channel and Discovery Channel, and a soap opera is about to be filmed here. We spend about fifty percent of our promotion budget on Oaxaca, twenty-five on Puerto Escondido, and twenty-five percent on Huatulco. With twenty festivals a year now,
not a weekend goes by that is eventless.

— Palacios López (2008), Personal Interview.

His colleague in the municipal government, Bonilla Martínez (2008), who had only been in office about three months when I met him, agreed that Oaxaca’s events calendar was fully booked, with the municipality promoting particularly the Easter weekend and Day of the Dead celebrations, as well as the “Night of the Radishes,” just before Christmas, where craftsmen exhibit their carved radishes on the Zócalo. From his point of view, his office and also SECTUR were working well with tour guides:

We met with them at the very beginning of January. They have told us that there is a problem with pirate guides, but the state ministry has organized courses and already, there are fifteen new guides that have just received their accreditation. We cannot really do much more, it is up to the state government to organize courses.

We do try to increase tourism awareness, so that citizens understand why they should value tourists. We do this with radio spots, advertisements, and by going into schools. Tourism is extremely important and we need citizens to treat visitors with respect.

— Bonilla Martínez (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Both officials acknowledged the importance of the World Heritage designation, but it was clear that they both regarded it as a branding mechanism, more than anything else. Bonilla Martínez (ibid.) highlighted the importance of ANCMPM:

The federal SECTUR has just announced that it will give ANCMPM US$150,000 to promote the World Heritage cities at various international tourism conventions. ANCMPM has been hugely active and another way for us to promote Oaxaca, so for us, they have been quite important. They have their own stands at the tourism conventions, so present another avenue for promotion.

— Bonilla Martínez (ibid.), Personal Interview.

There was certainly the general sense that the quantity of events was really important, and the overall quality of various events was not being questioned. Both men wanted to appear to be very active and neither reflected upon whether or not their strategies were
really working, nor whether or not the goal of more tourists was really sustainable. Unlike in Guanajuato, there was little attempt to change the branding tactic or a particular obvious use of slogans.

**Tour Guides**

The state’s tourism secretariat provided tourism training as early as 1986, though its first course lasted barely two weeks (*El Imparcial* Editorial, 1986). Guides and chauffeurs staged intermittent protests and strikes, as inflation significantly diminished their earnings. Tours were not restricted by time limits, so guides frequently worked all day, getting paid roughly US$3 per person per day (Santos, 1986).

I spoke with five tour guides who were based in Oaxaca. Like in Morelia, the state government retained a list of all authorized guides state-wide.

Tour Guide K had been working in tourism since the mid-1980s. Already in high school, he had been interested in tourism. He trained as a guide in the former regional museum. Then he attended the Instituto Tecnológico de Oaxaca, which had a tourism degree, but he found he was not interested in what it offered. Instead, he began studying languages, which enabled him to work as a tour guide, in particular taking on groups from Italy. He explained his training and education:

> Eventually, I studied economics and graduated with this degree. I have a small travel agency that I run. I offer a lot of different tours, but I particularly offer what I call ethno-tourism, where I take groups up into the desert so that they can get to know the communities there a little bit. I also work with businesses in Mexico City and Cuernavaca, and do many tours outside of Oaxaca, in Chiapas, Yucatán, Guanajuato, though I try to promote my tours in Oaxaca.

But Oaxaca is difficult to sell, it is expensive to get here, expensive to stay, tours are expensive, so it is not an easy place to attract visitors to. The fact that it is *World Heritage*, well eighty or eighty-five percent of visitors do not know that. I do tell them during the tour, but I am not sure how much that really means to people. I am actually disenchanted with the designation. Why? Because it is not as though some people from UNESCO came around, saw Oaxaca, and were convinced that it is worthy of the designation. No, instead, it was the authorities in conjunction with architects who lobbied UNESCO to be included. It is not an extraordinary city, in
my opinion. And anyway, the designation does not bring financial benefits from UNESCO, that is a myth.

— Tour Guide K (2008), Personal Interview.

He was highly critical of SEDETUR’s promotional efforts, mainly because he felt that none of these efforts were visible outside of Oaxaca:

I consider seventy percent of the promotion as completely wasted. SEDETUR wants to project that Oaxaca is quiet, nothing bad happens here, our events are worthwhile, but it seems to project that into the city, not beyond.

I spend a fair amount of time in other states, and I always get the same questions, is it safe to come? Obviously, the message from SEDETUR is simply not reaching the intended audience. They invested a lot of money into mobile advertisements on buses, but I have never seen them in Tuxtla or Villahermosa, or Cancún. Never. Not even in Mérida or Campeche. So what is the point? And in the north? Forget about it. Because the message never arrives, people still have doubts about Oaxaca. Tourism here has suffered greatly due to the events of 2006, and projections tell us that it will take between two and five years to return to the previous levels—if there are not any new disturbances.

— Tour Guide K (ibid.), Personal Interview.

With respect to the quality or quantity of tour guides in Oaxaca, Tour Guide K explained:

The quality of the guides is very varied, but I would say that we do not have such grave problems as in Guanajuato, where on every corner there is a person who calls himself a tour guide. There are some travel agencies that will only function as transport, but not include any guide service. The fluctuation in prices has to do with the commission that receptionists in hotels receive from travel companies. The receptionist recommends a company, the tourist books a tour, and the company pays the receptionist a small commission. Well, everyone has their price, so the companies started paying the receptionists more for selling the tour than the tour guides makes in the two or three hours he is guiding people. Prices for tours skyrocketed or, the companies decided to simply provide transportation. Then there are simply some people who work in Santo Domingo, who tell old wives’ tales and sell that as a tour. SEDETUR did not do anything about this for ages, and now, the
tourism police will occasionally come by, but the guides return.


Given the various problems and difficulties, particular the political uncertainties, why did he care to continue in the job?

I like the fact that there is always something new to learn, to read. I am always learning something new. Contact with the visitors can also be very interesting, but the continuous learning opportunities are what matter most to me. I like that by taking people into the desert, those communities benefit, too. I like coming up with new tours, to offer something new.

It’s a creative thing, especially taking people into the historic center. I do some of the tour in the car and some on foot. You have to be flexible, you can’t expect to sit in the car the whole time. I usually pick up groups at their hotel and we start in the north, in Xochimilco and Jalatlaco. It’s possible to park there, if we need to. Then near the Zócalo and the markets, we walk. The markets are very interesting, and depending on the group, I am spontaneous, and cater to their interests, so we may go to other sites and spend more than three hours on the tour.

It is about being creative, and unfortunately, when SEDETUR complains that people only stay 1.5 days, well I think that is down to lack of creativity on their part. It is always the same people … they just change the position they are in, but they stay in government.

— Tour Guide K (*ibid.*), *Personal Interview*.

As far as the tourist tram was concerned, Tour Guide K was less than impressed, and found the taped recording a poor substitute for a guide, but of course, it is a cost-saving measure. Tour Guide L was not so critical, he simply identified it as a fashion, particularly popular with national tourists, who were content with this sort of offering.

While Tour Guide K did not let the obstacles of parking interfere with his tours in the historic center, Tour Guide L, who also had more than twenty year’s experience in the field, admitted that the travel company he worked for had basically terminated its tours in the historic center:

There is much to see in the historic center, but unfortunately, the government has not considered that many of our visitors are older, in fact probably fifty percent,
and thus unable to walk great distances, especially on uneven pavements. It simply
takes too much time to try and take a tour in the center, when you have to make
allowances for slow walkers—wheelchairs are a nightmare, and it is simply not
practicable to take a group of twenty, if there are four people in wheelchairs. The
city is not equipped to accommodate them.

So, we take people to Santo Domingo, and just let them explore the area for
themselves. We would like to do more things, but we can’t. It is too time consuming.
Some of the groups that we provide with tours come from institutions such as the
Smithsonian and the Chicago Art Institute, so naturally, we take them to galleries,
we show them the rich cultural contributions and spaces that Rufino Tamayo and
Francisco Toledo have created in the city. We take them to workshops, too. These
are things the government cannot provide and won’t provide, but Toledo does.

— Tour Guide L (2008), *Personal Interview.*

Unlike his colleague, Tour Guide L thought that most of his company’s clients knew
about *World Heritage*:

Yes, I think most people know now, and certainly those that look at our website
do, as we have a link to all *World Heritage* cities right on our page. But really, Oaxaca
is famous for its art. And also its traditions, of course. So, from my point of view, the
UNESCO designation only strengthens Oaxaca, and the fact that more cities are still
applying to gain the designation.

— Tour Guide L (ibid.), *Personal Interview.*

He also criticized the promotion efforts of the state government, arguing that to return
to visitor levels such as in 2005, Oaxaca would need really aggressive promotion, especially
abroad. He elaborated:

The state government has tried, by bringing the Guelaguetza to other states,
to promote Oaxaca. It’s important, diplomatically speaking, that our politicians re-
alize that Americans and Europeans usually take out travel insurance before they
travel. So when there is an official governmental alert that Oaxaca is not safe to
visit, well then that means that the travel insurance won’t cover the tourist, so they
will definitely want to avoid Oaxaca. This is a problem. We have to ensure security.

2006 and 2007 were complete losses for us, we have some hopes for 2008, and
2009, but if things fall apart again … we can’t be sure that people will not cancel
their reservations from one day to another. And it is not only tourism that suffers. The citizens cannot be sure they will be able to live their lives in peace. And other services suffer too. Some of my colleagues have left Oaxaca for this reason and hotels have closed.

The authorities also do not enforce the rules and regulations, they let unaccredited guides get away with working. Maybe it is good that there are people motivated to work, but the authorities should provide them with some training and a means to become licensed, so that a certain standard of service is maintained. Some are not bad tour guides, others are, so they need the opportunity to become better.

— Tour Guide L (2008), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide M 2008 was at the other spectrum of his colleagues K and L, in the sense that he had only been licensed as a tour guide since December 2007. However, there was no doubt that he was enchanted by his work and took it as an opportunity to be an ambassador for Oaxaca. His training began in 2006:

I was actually working as a taxi driver, when someone told me that the state tourism ministry was going to offer a diploma in tourism. I completed a legal studies degree, and then decided to study English, while driving the taxi to support my family. I really wanted to do this diploma, but initially, I thought I would have to move to Huatulco, on the coast, and that was not an option. I spent a week in the Tourism ministry convincing them to let me into the course in Oaxaca. They finally did, but then the teacher’s strike caused us problems.

Actually, our teachers were coming from Mexico City, so because of the problems, the diploma took more than 1.5 years to complete, instead of the nine months they had planned. The teachers stopped coming due to the protests. It was very difficult. Twenty-eight started out in the course, and ten completed it.

I work in a small company, there are three guides and the owner is the chauffeur. He knows a lot of the artisans, so he has made good connections with them. We can take our clients to their workshops to experience what they do. That’s a bit our niche, because few people go to the workshops. But I like doing all sorts of different tours, religious architecture, for example, or taking visitors to the market to show them Oaxaca’s cuisine.

— Tour Guide M (2008), Personal Interview.
His company did not maintain a website, but relied on leaving their business cards at hotels, as well as word of mouth. He was proud of the UNESCO designation, but at the same time sad that many visitors felt Oaxaca was a backwater. He didn’t think that many people realized that it was a World Heritage city:

No, I don’t think people know. Many visitors say things like, “Oh yes, isn’t this village nice.” Yes, they call it a village, when it is a city. It is not as developed as Monterrey or Mexico City, but it is a city. And it has been a city for hundreds of years. And that is what bothers me or hurts me. They treat us as backward, even though the city has such a long history and such a great influence on many civilizations. Monte Albán was here before many of the other civilizations came along. So I feel that UNESCO has forgotten us a bit.

— Tour Guide M (2008), Personal Interview.

Like his colleagues, Tour Guide M felt that Oaxaca was not being promoted enough in other Mexican states or abroad. Furthermore, he argued that bad news about Oaxaca traveled further than good news, and it also did not disappear, even when things had improved in the city. With reference to unlicensed guides, he said:

The Tourism ministry does not do any inspections, they don’t check if people are accredited, and thus these people get away with their poor services. The guides who take large groups to the archaeological areas, charge the group, never buy the tickets, but split the money they collected with the guy in the ticket booth. That sort of corruption is unacceptable. And tourists who get treated like that will tell many more people about the bad service and treatment they received in Oaxaca than the other way around. If I do a good job, maybe I do get a recommendation or two out of it, if I don’t, the repercussions are much greater. I treat people like I want to be treated. We need people to enjoy themselves, to tell their friends and family that they should come to Oaxaca, too, and ideally, that they themselves will return.

— Tour Guide M (ibid.), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide N was a seasoned veteran of the trade, with twenty-two years of experience. Like Tour Guide K (2008), he really enjoyed learning more about various subjects to enhance his knowledge. He also worked in other states, such as Chiapas, Yucatán, and
Tabasco. He felt that some visitors did not know about Oaxaca’s *World Heritage* status, nor did he think that SEDETUR or the state SECTUR emphasized this fact in their promotional literature. He described his view of the problems of tour guides in Oaxaca:

> Only about five to seven percent of people who come to Oaxaca end up booking a city tour. So my standard tour involves Santo Domingo, the pedestrian area, the *Zócalo*, and the markets. Sometimes I add the Soledad church and the Rufino Tamayo museum, but mostly, people explore those by themselves. I realize that is really very little. It’s just quite complicated to take a group that is staying outside the historic center into the center, especially without a driver. You have to drop people off, then find parking, nobody respects the parking spaces. Despite the fact that tourism is important for the city’s economy, I don’t think tourists are actually treated that well.

> Principally, tourists spend time in the northern part of the historic center, not in the south, past the markets, even though the Casa de la Cultura is there and the La Defensa church. They have made some efforts to put cables underground, but there is still much more to be done, and I personally think all the graffiti is a disgrace, and something should be done about it.


Not surprisingly, he raised the issue that tour guides are generally not taken into account by SEDETUR as well as the state SECTUR, despite the state government offering training opportunities. Accredited tour guides are supposed to wear their identification badges, much like one would wear a badge at a conference, around their necks. The badge features their picture and when their accreditation expires. He went on to explain:

> They have no vision for tourism, really. Every six years they reinvent the wheel, throw out any studies done by the previous government, it is such a waste. For tourism to work, they would need to know what sort of tourism they want and how they want it. They don’t consult us, when we really deal with tourists on a regular basis. But all they want is more tourists and more tourists.

> They also do not do anything about the rogue guides. In fact, there are only two inspectors, I think, nation-wide, that will come and check accreditation, but all they do is check the accreditation of guides they already know are legitimate, but they give them a hard time about whether or not they have all their paperwork in order and available at any time. There are no great legal sanctions for the unaccredited
Tour Guide N (2008), Personal Interview.

Tour Guide O was not a full-time tour guide, as he also ran a small café in the historic center. Therefore, unlike the others, he did not frequently leave Oaxaca, because his responsibilities at the café kept him there. He explained how he became a tour guide:

I worked in Cancún in tourism for six years, and then moved back home to Oaxaca. I have been a guide since 2002. I really enjoy working with people who are interested in learning about a new place. It is so enjoyable to share the cultural riches we have here.

Depending on the time that I have available, I take private groups to the two main markets in the historic center, to the Zócalo, the Cathedral, the Palace Museum, Santo Domingo, and if there is time the Soledad church and the Casa de la Ciudad, because they have some interesting photos of the city in the 1930s. So that is basically what I do. I don’t like taking more than ten people on one tour, because with the traffic and the noise, it becomes difficult. There are many more things that could be included, but this is the standard or the minimum.

I work based on word of mouth, really, with small private groups, who then pass my name on. I don’t want to work with the big travel agencies, I don’t think they really care about the tourists. I also do not feel that there really is a culture for tourism here, especially compared with Cancún. Services are expensive, and people do not receive what they are paying for.

— Tour Guide O (2008), Personal Interview.
He too criticized the promotional efforts of SECTUR and SEDETUR, as related to promotion:

It is clear to me that the authorities do not really know what they are trying to promote, so they just spend money because they have it. It is a waste, really.

As far as World Heritage is concerned, people are informed, but we ourselves do not appreciate it very much. We ourselves do not have that awareness, so how are visitors supposed to appreciate something we don’t even appreciate? I think it’s because we are self-interested only. We want to be able to do whatever we want with our house, if we own one in the historic center. And this designation does not let us, effectively. Yes, there are ways and means, but generally, we do not get as much control over the house as we would like. This selfishness affects everything.

It also affects me as a business owner, of course. My sign can only be 1 by 1 meter in size, and adhere to certain colors, etc. But the politicians get to advertise their party whichever way they want during elections. This incongruence, or double standard, that is a huge problem here. The rules do not apply equally to everyone. And the politicians should be focused on resolving our problems, to avoid another 2006, but they are not really interested in solutions. In fact, they insist on doing major public works during vacation periods, so that visitors say, “Wow, the state of Oaxaca is really doing something to fix up the city.” But for us, that creates more problems if we want to do a tour in the city.

That’s why they also do not concern themselves with the pirate guides. They are not all bad, and of course there are guides who are accredited who do not really care about the work they do. The travel agencies actually benefit using these unaccredited guides, because they can pay them less. So perhaps they exert some pressure on the state SECTUR not to get involved. And SEDETUR does not really have contact with us guides anyway.

— Tour Guide O (2008), Personal Interview.

All guides coincided that SEDETUR and the state SECTUR were doing a poor job promoting Oaxaca, in fact, they were wasting money. Promotion, however, is easy, producing glossy brochures, perhaps some radio advertisements, and that could already incur quite a bit of cost, but more importantly, it would seem as though the institutions are doing something. Despite the double standards in the application of rules, the guides, like their other colleagues, enjoyed their work and deemed it important in improving Oaxaca’s image.
All agreed that Oaxaca had a lot of attractions to offer, but the realities of traffic, parking, as well as physical limitations of tourists made it not the most attractive place to tour.

Tourism Maps—Representations of World Heritage?

*World Heritage* as a slogan or brand does not exist on Oaxaca’s tourism maps, or at least not in the examples I was able to gather. Maps of the historic center were all quite similar in their scope and were generally free, as they promoted restaurants and businesses quite prominently. They do show the delimitation of the historic center, but none are explanatory, as to what this area actually is or what it might mean (Figure 6.35). SEDETUR’s main slogan at the time, “Oaxaca Tú México” features prominently and the map is in English and Spanish. Sites or places of interest to tourists are divided into four categories: churches and convents, museums, and “places” of interest, which contains a variety of sites, including the Alcalá Theater and the Zócalo, and services, which includes the SEDETUR and municipal tourism office locations. Three hotels and one restaurant have their own call-out symbols; whether or not they paid to be on the map is unclear. There is no scale to indicate distances. The pedestrianized areas of the city are highlighted.

One more distinctive map is a black and white map of the historic center’s notable and historic trees. Local artist Francisco Verástegui created it in 2007 (Figure 6.36). It is most likely based on Figure 6.35 as far as the area included in the map is concerned, as well as some of the symbols used to depict roads, the pedestrianized area, parks, and the historic center itself. Instead of highlighting traditional visitor sites, the map shows the locations of trees and gives their genus and family, but only in Spanish. Some trees planted in El Llano date back to 1894. The map is clearly a unique attempt at highlighting the city’s natural heritage.

Oaxaca’s tourism directory also produces a map, and I was able to obtain a copy of a 2008 edition (Figure 6.37). While tourist maps are ubiquitous, they also get replaced very quickly or, print runs simply do not outlast the demand. This map is larger than the previous examples, and highlights the city’s markets, as well as churches and museums. It is most likely directed at visitors with an automobile, as directions to various other locations are designed as prominent blue arrows. There is also an advertisement for car rentals printed in the upper lefthand corner, just above a plug for a local restaurant. It seems likely
Figure 6.35: Oaxaca Tú México, map of the historic center, 2007.
(Source: Secretaría de Turismo y Desarrollo Económico del Estado de Oaxaca, 2007)
Figure 6.36: Notable and historic trees in Oaxaca’s historic center.
(Source: Verástegui, 2007)
the restaurant had to pay to feature on the map. In the bottom righthand corner, the beer brand Sol is advertised, along with establishments where one can presumably purchase said beer. While it also does not describe or delimit the historic center explicitly, this map is probably the most comprehensive and inclusive of the designated area.

Another example is a far more reduced than the other maps presented here (Figure 6.38). It appeared in the municipality’s cultural agenda in March 2008, which is a free events guide available in the historic center. It reinforces the notion that cultural events are concentrated in the historic center, and specifically so around the Santo Domingo complex. The shape of the delimitation of the historic center has been lost in this map and in fact, the Zócalo is not listed as a place of interest. Fourteen of the nineteen places listed are cultural spaces, museums, theaters, and other cultural institutions, such as the Casa de la Ciudad. Three other places are a plaza and two public gardens, while the government seat is also listed, as well as the Benito Juárez market. Like the other maps, there is no scale.

Finally, ANCMPM’s map of Oaxaca is in the same style as the maps of Morelia (Figure 5.54) and Guanajuato (Figure 4.41). It too does not retain the full area of the historic center and so the user cannot gain a sense of its size and scope (Figure 6.39). However, the Zócalo features prominently in this map.

None of the maps I encountered relay anything about World Heritage, as opposed to maps in Guanajuato and Morelia. This seems curious, given the other two cases. Perhaps it is simply not regarded as useful to use maps as a vehicle to promote and diffuse World Heritage. The style of maps in Oaxaca also seems more simple, one might say straightforward than in the other two cities.

6.8 Conclusions

Oaxaca represents perhaps a middle ground in the spectrum of heritage management. Information gaps remain, but they are not as glaring as in Guanajuato, where INAH has not managed to update its catalog since 1989. Access to information, or lack thereof, however, plagues both cities. Oaxaca’s DGCH was the earliest specialized office of its kind in all three cities, but its impact has been limited to construction permit review and surveillance more generally. In contrast to Morelia, there is no IMDUM equivalent to work on planning, albeit normatively only. Instead, planning is left to outside consulting firms. While
Figure 6.37: Map of the city, 2008.  
(Source: Directorio Turístico Oaxaca, 2008.)
Figure 6.38: Map of the historic center, March 2008.
(Source: H.Ayuntamiento de Oaxaca de Juárez, 2008)
Figure 6.39: The National Association’s Oaxaca brochure map, 2003.
(Source: ANCMPM, 2003d)
admirable attempts have been made to produce a planning tool that might protect the historic center more effectively, implementation and enforcement have been lacking. As in Guanajuato and Morelia, INAH Oaxaca is limited in staff and funding to truly oversee the city, and in fact the state’s heritage.

Oaxaca’s social divisions and repeated social conflict, however, are a unique challenge to its built environment. Teacher protests are an accepted feature of life, and in light of events in 2006, now authorities seem concerned to contain the protests to prevent another escalation. There is also the sense that some things are simply not open to negotiation, such as reorganizing public transport, particularly the number of routes that traverse the historic center and the size of buses.

For tourism, both present a problem in terms of access to the historic center, its maintenance, and travel within its limits. For tour guides, this limits Oaxaca’s attractiveness, to the point that one avoids the center entirely, and the other four guides provide only limited services to the area, despite recognizing that it has a lot to offer. Thus, as in Morelia, Oaxaca is not “enough” of an attraction to sustain them. Like their colleagues in the other cities, Oaxaca’s tour guides were highly critical of the authorities’ approaches to promoting the city. There seemed to be no coherent strategy, unlike in Morelia. This lack of strategy affected the number of tourists visiting and how long they decided to stay in Oaxaca. Thus, the need to ramp up the number of events to not have a weekend go by without some sort of municipal or state-government sponsored event.

It shares the issue of enforcement of regulation with Guanajuato and Morelia, and perhaps more directly, the tour guides, architects, and academics pointed to different applications of the laws for different sectors of society. It further shares the commercial pressures, driving out its remaining residents to replace them with lucrative businesses. Its newspaper record is more akin to Guanajuato’s in terms of its coverage of heritage; much of it remained confused and piecemeal. Oaxaca’s socio-demographic makeup affects the historic center directly, with protests focused on the Zócalo, its central square.

The “official” story is that everything is fine in Oaxaca, and that tourism in particular is rebounding and moving forward. However, without the ability to negotiate transportation, the teachers’ grievances, and perhaps even street vending, the historic center will continue to suffer from terrible congestion and deterioration. Furthermore, with the uneven appli-
cation of regulation, trust between the citizens and the government remains long out of reach. While some effort has been made to ensure more participatory planning, there is still the sense that even after public opinion has been solicited, little will come of this participation. Thus, there is an impasse of sorts, with the municipal and state governments interested in leaving behind a legacy, and citizens left to try and influence government as best they can.
7.1 Introduction

This study has shown that heritage management in Mexico is highly complex, and frequently prone to overlaps in jurisdiction that leave a responsibility vacuum in its wake. In essence, different municipal, state, and national agencies supposedly cooperate to manage heritage, but they do not coordinate effectively nor share information. In the legislative realm, confusion is common, with significant legal loopholes that leave ample room for deliberate obsolescence on the part of private property owners and enough inertia and uncertainty among officials to breed complacency.

The dichotomy between collective heritage, i.e., monuments, and private property, looms large. Despite federal jurisdiction, there is little that can be done about the deliberate strategy of simply letting the elements cause a building’s ultimate decay, which frequently affects historic centers. That is to say, property owners elect to let their building collapse in order to rebuild, which is more affordable than restoration and maintenance, or, reuse the space as a parking lot, or else, sell the vacant plot. This act of deliberate obsolescence is the proprietor’s most effective weapon to strike back at the limitations on construction that heritage designation places on him.

In tourism, the goal to maximize profit out of World Heritage is probably misplaced, due to low recognition value among national citizens. Still, the World Heritage brand is deemed valuable for promotion purposes. For tour guides, the historic centers were difficult to promote for a variety of reasons, not least traffic and accessibility problems.
7.2 Managerial Differences, political conundrums, and legislation gaps

Even though heritage properties belong to the nation, and hence are subject to the Federal Law and INAH or, in the case of twentieth century heritage, INBA, there is no national leadership per se when it comes to heritage management. Mexican states and municipalities are left to decide the organization of their government.

While Morelia (CECHZM, IMDUM) and Oaxaca (DGCH) had separate offices dedicated to the affairs of the historic center, Guanajuato only had a small division of four architects within its Urban Development office responsible for monitoring the changes in the historic center and issuing construction permits. Differences in oversight, however, did not radically change outcomes, or prevent inconsistencies between agencies. For instance DGCH and the Office of Municipal Civil Protection in Oaxaca worked with different data as far as the number of seriously dilapidated houses in the historic center were concerned.

To be sure, more institutions does not necessarily mean better oversight and improved management. In fact, overlap in responsibility can also create a gap—DGCH might be under the impression that INAH is actually carefully vetting applications for land use changes in Oaxaca’s transition zone, but really, they are so short-staffed, they cannot manage. In turn, DGCH may not want to concern itself with that area, so the outcome is a vacuum that lends itself to abuse.

Officials frequently asked me what was being done differently in the other cities I was studying. Of course, some of them had only assumed their office, so would possibly have had little to no prior exposure to heritage management, given that officials were frequently engineers or lawyers by training. However, it points to a gap in ANCMPM’s work, which has brought together the mayors of the ten World Heritage cities to discuss management and tourism promotion strategies, but clearly done very little in trying to educate the staff that is involved in the everyday management of these spaces. Ostensibly, OWHC works on facilitating best practice and information exchanges, but whether or not Mexican municipalities are able to participate very much is unclear. Again, if the staff are only brought in for three or six years, then training may not seem a worthwhile investment—it would have to be repeated too frequently due to rotating staff.
The politicization of heritage and the nature of politics in Mexico have further complicated the management of World Heritage sites. Appointed civil servants, particularly in local government, rotate in and out of government after three year terms. While lower level employees may retain their jobs, with a new administration also comes the tendency to want to “reinvent the wheel” and leave a visible “mark.”

While mayors cannot have successive terms, they can and do run again for the office after a few years time. Some also go on to run for the Mexican Congress or for governor of their state. They also frequently transition into the private sector, and may wind up being contractors for much of the public works projects. Clearly, these are lucrative ventures. In any case, the names involved in local and state politics do not seem to change, so the relationships they have built remain in place and continue to benefit them and their supporters.

The six-year terms of state and national governments also impact continuity. Like mayors, governors, too want to leave a legacy behind, and a major rehabilitation project, whether necessary or not, offer a great deal of visibility and create opportunities for headlines and media exposure. For instance, in Guanajuato, in the early 2000s, new pavement was installed around the main church and yet in 2006, it was again taken up and replaced. A lack of institutional memory is greatly exacerbated by staff turnover and there seems to be little effort thus far in addressing this problem. Not only does this lack of memory affect continuity, it also causes gaps in efficiency. New staff have to be trained to some extent, but many seemed to learn on the job, as they had previously been working in completely different sectors, for example, several engineers ended up in charge of tourism and promotion, both in Guanajuato and Oaxaca. This lack of training and awareness leads to the perpetuation of the myth that UNESCO supplies Mexican World Heritage cities directly with funding.

Information sharing across agencies also seems to be difficult. The Urban Development office in Guanajuato did not have INAH’s catalog of monuments, yet it was supposedly charged with looking after these monuments. Equally, members of INPAC did not have INAH’s catalog of Oaxaca.

There was also a lack of awareness of what other World Heritage cities were doing; officials frequently asked me questions about these differences. This despite efforts of
ANCMPM to foster exchanges of ideas, though it seems these remain at the mayoral scale only, minimizing impact. This is where OWHC is also working to improve and foster information exchanges, but those are generally limited to higher management ranks rather than regular civil servants, so how much of the acquired knowledge actually gets passed on through the ranks is debatable.

The implementation and application of local, state, and federal legislation can be described at best as selectively applied, depending on relationships between property owners and local authorities, for instance, and at worst woefully inadequate. The planning process has mostly mirrored the top-down approaches of local and state government and many of the authorities’ decisions to intervene in the built environment.

Fundamentally, if conservation areas and historic centers are to be considered as integral elements of the structure and functioning of the wider urban framework, then conservation strategies must be grounded in a realistic consideration of their role as part of this broad planning context (Mageean, 1999, p. 95).

Much of the planning process, however inclusive, has also suffered from the failure of implementation and application. Many of the efforts were duplicated. What is the point of commissioning a consulting firm with coming up with a planning tool when it never gets properly publicized, debated, and then implemented in a democratic fashion? In some ways, hiring consultants is a form of window-dressing too, to give the impression that the authority is doing something to address the planning vacuum. With the exception of Morelia’s IMDUM, Guanajuato and Oaxaca had to rely on outside consultants to produce their plans.

### 7.3 Designation histories

All three designation histories revealed the limited quality of the first World Heritage application dossiers, especially as far as cartographic evidence was concerned. Simply put, applications until the year 2000 lacked complexity and detail, even though a lot of supporting materials were generally submitted along with the sparse applications. With the tightening of standards, and, ironically, with the inclusion of more political rather than
technocratic WHCM, designations have slowed significantly, yet the 1,000th designation is no longer far off.

Furthermore, little institutional history of the process remains, even of the nationally designated areas. While INAH’s World Heritage office and the local municipality now produce “official” memoirs of the evidence and data gathering process, how inclusive these memoirs are is not obvious. While it is useful to document the archival, fieldwork, and technical efforts involved in producing the application, it would be equally important to document local debates that could shed light on who has driven World Heritage designation applications in the local community. Many improvements will have been made since the designations in the 1980s, but the accepted wisdom seems to be that UNESCO designation will be beneficial, even when the empirical work that has been completed suggests there is little direct economic gain or that sites may even face greater pressures (Frey and Steiner, 2010). With the tougher application standards, the World Heritage office has to carefully select which applications to put forward, so “safe” applications are more attractive, to ensure designation success. Thus, it seems likely that Mexico will carry on nominating safe bets, as much as it can.

7.4 Why bother?

Studies on the potential economic gains of World Heritage have found that in the UK, it cost nearly US$500,000 to attain designation (Rebanks Consulting Ltd and Trends Business Research Ltd, 2009, p. 1). A significant amount, even for a developed country. Perhaps an even greater cost is the potential disruption caused by designation, with public works centering on the heritage district and mainly engaged in beautification efforts that may be visually pleasing, particularly for visitors, but beyond aesthetics not actually improve people’s lives. The counter example is Morelia, where the public consensus agreed that street vendors should move, but given the increased violence in the city, one does wonder where the street vendors have gone, given that the assigned market stalls have not proven very popular—neither with the vendors nor the consumer.

Above all, the principal motivation for pursuing designation is not “to achieve significant socio-economic results …[but] overwhelmingly about preservation of heritage” (ibid., p. 5). This may not hold exactly true for Mexico, but clearly, in the eyes of the tourism
officials I spoke with, the economic value of World Heritage designation was overstated. Others, however, claim that:

As key resource, cultural heritage has become a driver for development, which when properly managed can enhance the livability of their surrounding areas and sustain productivity in a changing global environment. However, governments need to have clear strategies and effective methods for planning, designing, executing and managing these facilities in order to optimize their production and consumption potential, while preserving and where possible enhancing their cultural significance (Pereira Roders and Oers, 2011, p. 277).

But crucially, the planning tools used to manage World Heritage sites “are not expected to propose processes for meeting the socio-economic needs of community development, only for conservation” (ibid., p. 281). While all cities were producing more and more complex management plans, and the recognition of the importance of a balance between development and preservation was there, they still do not quite manage to address how this balance might be achieved realistically.

Despite the difficulties as far as the application process is now concerned, and the vague outcomes of direct benefit to local populations, the Convention remains “one of the most successful international conventions ever drafted when measured by the number of state parties involved (184) and the number of sites included” (Alberts and Hazen, 2010, p. 69).

7.5 Media Impact

Newspapers still remain relatively cheap and ubiquitous in Mexico. Prices range between US$.40 and US$.60 for daily editions, and US$.75 for the Sunday paper. Nearly 9.5 million papers were published every day in Mexico in 2000 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2000). While the Internet will have affected readership in the country, it is still more common to purchase the daily edition than read the news online. Locally, they were bound to make an impact, and particularly Esperanza Ramírez in Morelia relied on the media to publicize the activities of her NGO. Equally, PROOAX relied on media exposure.

The potential for newspapers to educate the public is there, but it has not been consistently applied as a mechanism for the diffusion of World Heritage’s “universal value.” Un-
fortunately, journalists remained elusive, with the exception of Mario Girón. Few reporters seemed particularly well-versed in heritage issues, with one exception being Yolanda Sereno Ayala, arts writer and author of a book on Michoacán cuisine. However, the perpetuation of the UNESCO myth, that funding was directly available to World Heritage cities, stands out and there were no challenges to this myth published.

Because there are little other public records, the financial information published has to be taken at face value, to a certain extent. Using state and municipal reports to counterbalance media information is also not ideal, as those reports could also contain inaccuracies.

Guanajuato recently introduced a freedom of information division, which did produce historic center investment data for the 2000s (Unidad de Acceso a la Información Pública, 2009); whether other states will follow suit remains to be seen.

7.6 Tour guide experiences and cartographic reflections of World Heritage

The tour guides in all three cities highlighted the uneven application of the law as one of the major problems affecting their business. All concurred that training was important and that their role as tour guide was an opportunity to put Mexico’s best foot forward. In short, they saw it as their obligation to educate tour participants, but to do so in a manner that was enjoyable and added to their relaxation. They realized that word of mouth was extremely important for their future business and in fact far more effective than official promotion.

The majority of the guides in Guanajuato that I spoke with had started as rogue guides themselves.¹ Therefore, quite understandably, they were more sympathetic towards those unaccredited guides in the city, even though they made their lives difficult. In Morelia and Oaxaca, the guides had all gone through formalized training prior to offering their services—or at least that is what they had said during the interview. Still, they did not fault rogue guides per se, but criticized the legal loopholes that allowed them to flourish. Dealing with unaccredited guides was another area where legislation was not enforced or simply not applied evenly. This was a particularly serious problem in Guanajuato, where the rogue guides proliferated and affected the reputation of accredited guides.

¹Tour Guide C was the exception.
World Heritage designation was generally seen in the context of an honor for their city, not as a tool for preservation. Many agreed that greater promotion of this “brand” was necessary, but there was uncertainty how exactly that might be achieved. Thus, while the guides recognized it as an important honor, they did not perceive it as a means for preservation and protection of architecture. Tour Guide I, based in Morelia, identified that commercialism was much stronger than the tour guides attempts at explaining the meaning of World Heritage to tourists. It seems particularly significant that even tour guides, to a certain degree experts in patrimony, could not easily explain what World Heritage is and what it might mean in the context of Guanajuato, Morelia, and Oaxaca, nor how it contributed to preservation. Clearly, UNESCO and the WHC have to improve how these concepts are communicated.

Tour Guide K, based in Oaxaca, was particularly cynical about the designation, arguing that UNESCO had not actually come to Oaxaca to include it, but rather, that the authorities had lobbied for its inclusion, despite there being no direct financial benefit. Authenticity and integrity of sites is difficult to define and maintain, and further complicated in historic centers of modern cities, where current demands and preservation strategies frequently clash (Alberts and Hazen, 2010).

Perhaps most surprisingly, tour guides in Morelia and Oaxaca had almost given up on taking tourists into the historic center. This was mainly down to logistics, but also the sentiment that tour groups were not treated with sufficient respect. While there were sufficient attractions, the hassle outweighed the benefit of taking tourists into the historic center for most of the guides. Guanajuato’s tour guides were much more reliant upon the city as a means of economic income. Upon realizing the scarcity of guided walking tours, particularly in Oaxaca, but also in Morelia, I had to abandon the idea of mapping these activities and thus recording how World Heritage was presented. While the guides in Guanajuato did not feel that the tourist tram took away from their business, the guides in Morelia felt it did, and provided only a superficial view of the city’s buildings and history. In Oaxaca, most of the guides were even more dismissive of the tram, given that it uses a recording instead of a guide. Of course, having these trams in all three cities again contributes to the sense that all World Heritage cities feature the same services.

In the realm of city promotion, nation-wide and internationally, the guides were, in
the majority, critical of the municipal, state, and national efforts to promote their cities, particularly the guides in Oaxaca, as they continued to suffer from the fallout of the 2006 teacher’s strike. Tour Guide K felt that most of the municipal and state efforts went to waste, and Tour Guide L raised the problem of travel insurance, frequently taken out by international visitors, and did not cover places that the US State Department, for example, issues travel advisories for and suggests that tourists avoid visits. All concurred that their cities were not promoted enough nationally as well as internationally. There was little awareness of ANCMPM’s activities among the guides, and even less so of the organization’s attempts to brand Mexican World Heritage cities as “Ciudades Patrimonio Mundial.” The efficacy of World Heritage branding seems uncertain, at best, and even inefficient as a means to attract visitors to specific sites (Poria, Reichel, and Cohen, 2011). If it fails to work for specific sites, then communicating the diversity of urban architectural World Heritage effectively seems even more of a stretch and challenge. Still, ANCMPM’s efforts did introduce the same signage and street furniture in all three cities, contributing to a streamlining of urban World Heritage areas. ANCMPM felt this was a positive step forward, but those seeking authentic experiences might find seeing the same types of signs, lamps, and street furniture disappointing.

It is with a view to creating more attractions that all three cities have focused on offering more festivals to attract different, but most importantly, greater numbers of visitors (Richards and Palmer, 2010). In Guanajuato, this led to a glut of branding attempts that were abandoned in rapid succession. In Morelia, a combination of the Plan Luz and cultural events drew greater crowds, at least until 2008, when a bomb exploded in its historic center. It has yet to properly recover from this event. Oaxaca, meanwhile, emphasizes its folklore, though it has struggled to overcome the media coverage of 2006. The tour guides generally had favorable opinions of festivals, which all three cities were using to attract different segments of cultural tourists, but Tour Guide A in Guanajuato did question how a medieval festival related to Guanajuato.

Finally, the maps of the historic centers generally reflect that the cartographic representation of the historic centers remains reduced. In the case of Guanajuato, this can be explained by the huge size difference and limitations that paper map representations present. Would it make sense to show the whole area? Probably not, as tourists on foot are
unlikely to walk the length of the area. For Morelia and Oaxaca, however, the area is pretty compact, and certainly would fit on one map. Only one map of Guanajuato (Figure 4.39) referred explicitly to World Heritage, implying that overall, the World Heritage brand is not quite convincing enough to routinely include it on tourist maps. Perhaps it more generally speaks to the dilemma of communicating what World Heritage means, thus by omitting an exact cartographic representation, the need to discuss the concept is obviated.

7.7 UNESCO’s utopian vision

Undoubtedly, UNESCO’s and ultimately, the WHC’s intentions to protect the world’s natural and cultural heritage were good, but perhaps utopian. Civilizations have always built upon previous settlements, but the value of architectural remnants in modern cities is frequently contentious and difficult to sustain. Listed buildings do get destroyed, new uses have to be developed to allow old buildings to remain. But with the change of purpose, does the cultural value subside or merely change?

The language of the Convention is marked by the European experience of two devastating wars. It was meant to protect heritage, but not give nation states the financial means to do so. International norms rely on nation state support and to ensure nation state support, a technocratic and bureaucratic system had to be put in place, for example, the WHCM, establishing an inventory of properties, a tentative property list, regular meetings, etc. From 2000 onwards, it has been up to politicians to decide which sites join the list—effectively increasing the process’ vulnerability to lobbying. Sovereignty, in the end, was deemed essential.

Unsurprisingly, the Convention, now forty years old, has not been altered, even though Article 37 enshrines the possibility of revisions. Dr. Van Oers admitted that the euro-centric bias is a problem, but did not think it was serious enough to derail World Heritage. Through curbing application numbers, the slow down of inscriptions would affect Europe more so than other continents, as most European countries have easier access to the technical expertise required.

Nevertheless, the Convention has been successful, in the sense that it has lasted forty years and enjoys wide-spread international support, despite the challenge that preservation presents national, state, and local governments (Alberts and Hazen, 2010; Hall, 2006).
However, the general public may still not “actually know what the UNESCO designation really means” (Leask and Fyall, 2006, p. xxiii), which points to a great challenge facing UNESCO: how to effectively communicate the World Heritage criteria and particularly, “outstanding universal value” and why designation is meaningful and important. This cannot be reduced to an economic question only, for locals, the issue runs deeper, whether to retain an architectural link to the past, or to let it fade away.

### 7.8 Further research

Much work remains to be done in the analysis of World Heritage experience. While this dissertation has focused on the experience of long-designated urban centers, little research exists as to how more recently designated towns and cities are faring or have fared. It would be useful to juxtapose these old and new experiences. Furthermore, more research is necessary at the stage of designation nomination, how countries decide on putting forth a nomination, and what preparations, aside from the technical report documenting the merits of a site, are made in situ. The assumption is that World Heritage designation is positive, yet residents of Tlacotalpan, the small Veracruzan town that gained World Heritage status in 1996, would beg to differ, as they struggled to cope with and combat local corruption and mismanagement of the heritage area (Abrín Frutos, 2008b).

Surely, there should also be a local assessment of sorts. What has the city gained from inscription, for instance? Has it created more problems? Is preservation being facilitated or are the effects negligible?

Applications that have yet to garner World Heritage designation would be another interesting and fruitful avenue for research. For instance, what do sites on the tentative list do to improve their position? What, for example, is San Luis Potosi doing or not doing to gain designation? What has prevented Pátzcuaro from being listed even tentatively? In the case of Pátzcuaro, Hiriart Pardo (2006b) argued that political considerations had interfered with the adoption of a master plan, which became a UNESCO requirement.

Equally, what are the implications for World Heritage after the city of Dresden lost its designated status in 2009 (Connolly, 2009). What is the narrative behind the city's designation and ultimately, its apparent preference for modernization over heritage? Are there lessons to be learned, for UNESCO as well as others? How did the citizens react and how
might this loss affect future German World Heritage applications? Did the federal government try to prevent the loss in any way? And is this precedent bound to lead to more losses of designation? It is up to the WHC to decide when delisting is necessary. Obviously, it has not happened very much, and the WHC should be loath having to resort to this strategy. Why? Because the more members defect, the entire list might be put into question.

A cross-country comparison, similar to the work of Anja Nelle (2007), who documented museality in different countries colonized by the Spanish, of World Heritage management would be useful, to gain a better understanding of heritage governance and whether or not, these areas were really converted into museums and if they were, whether local government was aware of the tendency and concerned about its implications.

Further research and in particular, an institutional ethnography of non-governmental organizations such as OWHC or the WHC would also be an important contribution to better understand the mechanisms that drive and sustain heritage. How have these organizations changed over time? How does OWHC measure its success? How does the WHCM cope with the politicization of World Heritage, while applications are simultaneously more technically complex than twenty years ago? If applications cannot be cut off, i.e., nominations continue, will it render World Heritage meaningless?

Even less is known about much of the corporate sponsorship of heritage sites; how are these decisions made? And who holds potential private donors accountable? With short political terms, private heritage investment projects would be difficult to monitor, certainly for local Mexican governments, and even for a state government. Again, issues of continuity arise. The lack of transparency as far as record-keeping is concerned is also of concern.

In the realm of tourism, more work is necessary in the areas of motivation. Does an urban World Heritage site such as Morelia really have similar attractive pull such as an archaeological site, for instance Chichén Itzá? I found awareness of World Heritage to be rather low, and understanding of what it means even less common, aside from the interpretation that it was an “honor” and a “privileged” position.
7.9 Final reflections

Why bother with World Heritage? For Mexico, it is clearly a badge of honor to have so many listed sites, even if direct benefits may seem few and far between. However, supporting World Heritage in Guanajuato did aid Arnulfo Vázquez further political career. Thus, supporting World Heritage may not immediately lead to personal gain, but it is simply an expedient way to garner more political support. Furthermore, for many architects who switched in and out of government jobs, information regarding preservation projects could be invaluable, either for their own private ventures, as in the case of Salvador Fonseca, the alderman in Guanajuato, or for close associates.

Much information simply wasn’t available, such as how many businesses operated in each of the historic centers at the time of my research or before. Much of the recent “official” history simply had been destroyed with changes in administration. Similarly, administrations set up new web sites when they come into office, and the old ones are removed. Apart from the odd cached version, this record then too, is lost.

What emerges is a picture of professionalization as well as politicization of World Heritage, and the tendency of politicians to intervene to leave a visible legacy or imprint on the historic center. Whether or not civil society will be able to penetrate these decisions more effectively remains to be seen, but Morelia gives some clues that greater level of participation is possible, yet it is difficult to sustain in the long-term. Interestingly, civil associations seemed to flourish in Morelia and Oaxaca, even though they had to operate under difficult and in Oaxaca, even dangerous circumstances. The comparative complacency in Guanajuato stands out.

Why do officials and politicians bother, if there is no direct financial gain? World Heritage designation is akin to membership in a club, albeit one that is slowly less and less exclusive, but nonetheless, officials maintain that it is important for Mexico to continue developing its World Heritage sites. There are some perks involved for officials, for instance, representatives from San Miguel de Allende traveled to Paris to hand-deliver the city’s application. Of course there are meetings of OWHC and various other heritage-related organizations that also require frequent travel. For politicians, fostering preservation projects is useful to underscore that they “getting things done” in the city, and particularly mayors
benefit in the longterm, as move on to state or even national political arenas.

In practice, UNESCO gives out its designation, but ultimately, the cost is born by the local community. The local government in particular has to make further decisions what is “done” with the designation: is more investment necessary, how to obtain more funding, how can the city capitalize on the designation, or, can it risk losing the designation, like Dresden? Clearly in Mexico, becoming delisted is not an option, as Jorge Cabrejos Moreno in Guanajuato said, “we are committed now, there is no turning back.”
Appendix A

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization meeting in Paris from 17 October to 21 November 1972, at its seventeenth session,

Noting that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction,

Considering that deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world,

Considering that protection of this heritage at the national level often remains incomplete because of the scale of the resources which it requires and of the insufficient economic, scientific, and technological resources of the country where the property to be protected is situated,

Recalling that the Constitution of the Organization provides that it will maintain, increase, and diffuse knowledge, by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's heritage, and recommending to the nations concerned the necessary international conventions,

Considering that the existing international conventions, recommendations and resolutions concerning cultural and natural property demonstrate the importance, for all the peoples of the world, of safeguarding this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever people it may belong,
Considering that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole,

Considering that, in view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, by the granting of collective assistance which, although not taking the place of action by the State concerned, will serve as an efficient complement thereto,

Considering that it is essential for this purpose to adopt new provisions in the form of a convention establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods,

Having decided, at its sixteenth session, that this question should be made the subject of an international convention,

Adopts this sixteenth day of November 1972 this Convention.

I Definition of the Cultural and Natural Heritage

Article 1

For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered as “cultural heritage”:

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
**Article 2**

For the purposes of this Convention, the following shall be considered as “natural heritage”:

- **natural features** consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;

- **geological and physiographical formations** and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;

- **natural sites** or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

**Article 3**

It is for each State Party to this Convention to identify and delineate the different properties situated on its territory mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 above.

**II National Protection and International Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage**

**Article 4**

Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that State. It will do all it can to this end, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with any international assistance and co-operation, in particular, financial, artistic, scientific and technical, which it may be able to obtain.
**Article 5**

To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavor, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country:

1. to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes;

2. to set up within its territories, where such services do not exist, one or more services for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and possessing the means to discharge their functions;

3. to develop scientific and technical studies and research and to work out such operating methods as will make the State capable of counteracting the dangers that threaten its cultural or natural heritage;

4. to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage; and

5. to foster the establishment or development of national or regional centres for training in the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in this field.

**Article 6**

1. Whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the States on whose territory the cultural and natural heritage mentioned in Articles 1 and 2 is situated, and without prejudice to property right provided by national legislation, the States Parties to this Convention recognize that such heritage constitutes a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate.
2. The States Parties undertake, in accordance with the provisions of this Convention, to give their help in the identification, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 if the States on whose territory it is situated so request.

3. Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 situated on the territory of other States Parties to this Convention.

Article 7

For the purpose of this Convention, international protection of the world cultural and natural heritage shall be understood to mean the establishment of a system of international co-operation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve and identify that heritage.

III Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Article 8

1. An Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, called “The World Heritage Committee”, is hereby established within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It shall be composed of 15 States Parties to the Convention, elected by States Parties to the Convention meeting in general assembly during the ordinary session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The number of States members of the Committee shall be increased to 21 as from the date of the ordinary session of the General Conference following the entry into force of this Convention for at least 40 States.

2. Election of members of the Committee shall ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world.
3. A representative of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), a representative of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and a representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), to whom may be added, at the request of States Parties to the Convention meeting in general assembly during the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, representatives of other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, with similar objectives, may attend the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity.

Article 9

1. The term of office of States members of the World Heritage Committee shall extend from the end of the ordinary session of the General Conference during which they are elected until the end of its third subsequent ordinary session.

2. The term of office of one-third of the members designated at the time of the first election shall, however, cease at the end of the first ordinary session of the General Conference following that at which they were elected; and the term of office of a further third of the members designated at the same time shall cease at the end of the second ordinary session of the General Conference following that at which they were elected. The names of these members shall be chosen by lot by the President of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization after the first election.

3. States members of the Committee shall choose as their representatives persons qualified in the field of the cultural or natural heritage.

Article 10

1. The World Heritage Committee shall adopt its Rules of Procedure.
2. The Committee may at any time invite public or private organizations or individuals to participate in its meetings for consultation on particular problems.

3. The Committee may create such consultative bodies as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

**Article 11**

1. Every State Party to this Convention shall, in so far as possible, submit to the World Heritage Committee an inventory of property forming part of the cultural and natural heritage, situated in its territory and suitable for inclusion in the list provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article. This inventory, which shall not be considered exhaustive, shall include documentation about the location of the property in question and its significance.

2. On the basis of the inventories submitted by States in accordance with paragraph 1, the Committee shall establish, keep up to date and publish, under the title of “World Heritage List,” a list of properties forming part of the cultural heritage and natural heritage, as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of this Convention, which it considers as having outstanding universal value in terms of such criteria as it shall have established. An updated list shall be distributed at least every two years.

3. The inclusion of a property in the World Heritage List requires the consent of the State concerned. The inclusion of a property situated in a territory, sovereignty or jurisdiction over which is claimed by more than one State shall in no way prejudice the rights of the parties to the dispute.

4. The Committee shall establish, keep up to date and publish, whenever circumstances shall so require, under the title of “List of World Heritage in Danger,” a list of the property appearing in the World Heritage List for the conservation of which major operations are necessary and for which assistance has been requested under this Convention. This list shall contain an estimate of the cost of such operations. The list may include only such property forming part of the cultural and natural heritage.
as is threatened by serious and specific dangers, such as the threat of disappearance
caused by accelerated deterioration, large-scale public or private projects or rapid
urban or tourist development projects; destruction caused by changes in the use or
ownership of the land; major alterations due to unknown causes; abandonment for
any reason whatsoever; the outbreak or the threat of an armed conflict; calamities
and cataclysms; serious fires, earthquakes, landslides; volcanic eruptions; changes in
water level, floods and tidal waves. The Committee may at any time, in case of urgent
need, make a new entry in the List of World Heritage in Danger and publicize such
entry immediately.

5. The Committee shall define the criteria on the basis of which a property belonging
to the cultural or natural heritage may be included in either of the lists mentioned
in paragraphs 2 and 4 of this article.

6. Before refusing a request for inclusion in one of the two lists mentioned in para-
graphs 2 and 4 of this article, the Committee shall consult the State Party in whose
territory the cultural or natural property in question is situated.

7. The Committee shall, with the agreement of the States concerned, co-ordinate and
courage the studies and research needed for the drawing up of the lists referred
to in paragraphs 2 and 4 of this article.

Article 12

The fact that a property belonging to the cultural or natural heritage has not been included
in either of the two lists mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 shall in no way be
construed to mean that it does not have an outstanding universal value for purposes other
than those resulting from inclusion in these lists.

Article 13

1. The World Heritage Committee shall receive and study requests for international
assistance formulated by States Parties to this Convention with respect to property
forming part of the cultural or natural heritage, situated in their territories, and
included or potentially suitable for inclusion in the lists mentioned referred to in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11. The purpose of such requests may be to secure the protection, conservation, presentation or rehabilitation of such property.

2. Requests for international assistance under paragraph 1 of this article may also be concerned with identification of cultural or natural property defined in Articles 1 and 2, when preliminary investigations have shown that further inquiries would be justified.

3. The Committee shall decide on the action to be taken with regard to these requests, determine where appropriate, the nature and extent of its assistance, and authorize the conclusion, on its behalf, of the necessary arrangements with the government concerned.

4. The Committee shall determine an order of priorities for its operations. It shall in so doing bear in mind the respective importance for the world cultural and natural heritage of the property requiring protection, the need to give international assistance to the property most representative of a natural environment or of the genius and the history of the peoples of the world, the urgency of the work to be done, the resources available to the States on whose territory the threatened property is situated and in particular the extent to which they are able to safeguard such property by their own means.

5. The Committee shall draw up, keep up to date and publicize a list of property for which international assistance has been granted.

6. The Committee shall decide on the use of the resources of the Fund established under Article 15 of this Convention. It shall seek ways of increasing these resources and shall take all useful steps to this end.

7. The Committee shall co-operate with international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations having objectives similar to those of this Convention. For the implementation of its programmes and projects, the Committee may call on such organizations, particularly the International Centre for the Study of the
Preservation and Restoration of cultural Property (the Rome Centre), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), as well as on public and private bodies and individuals.

8. Decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

**Article 14**

1. The World Heritage Committee shall be assisted by a Secretariat appointed by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

2. The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, utilizing to the fullest extent possible the services of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (the Rome Centre), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in their respective areas of competence and capability, shall prepare the Committee’s documentation and the agenda of its meetings and shall have the responsibility for the implementation of its decisions.

**IV Fund for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**

**Article 15**

1. A Fund for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Value, called “the World Heritage Fund”, is hereby established.

2. The Fund shall constitute a trust fund, in conformity with the provisions of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
3. The resources of the Fund shall consist of:

   a) compulsory and voluntary contributions made by States Parties to this Convention,

   b) Contributions, gifts or bequests which may be made by:

      i. other States;

      ii. the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, other organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme or other intergovernmental organizations;

      iii. public or private bodies or individuals;

   c) any interest due on the resources of the Fund;

   d) funds raised by collections and receipts from events organized for the benefit of the fund; and

   e) all other resources authorized by the Fund’s regulations, as drawn up by the World Heritage Committee.

4. Contributions to the Fund and other forms of assistance made available to the Committee may be used only for such purposes as the Committee shall define. The Committee may accept contributions to be used only for a certain programme or project, provided that the Committee shall have decided on the implementation of such programme or project. No political conditions may be attached to contributions made to the Fund.

**Article 16**

1. Without prejudice to any supplementary voluntary contribution, the States Parties to this Convention undertake to pay regularly, every two years, to the World Heritage Fund, contributions, the amount of which, in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States, shall be determined by the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention, meeting during the sessions of the General Conference of the
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This decision of
the General Assembly requires the majority of the States Parties present and voting,
which have not made the declaration referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article. In no
case shall the compulsory contribution of States Parties to the Convention exceed
1% of the contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization.

2. However, each State referred to in Article 31 or in Article 32 of this Convention
may declare, at the time of the deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance or
accession, that it shall not be bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article.

3. A State Party to the Convention which has made the declaration referred to in para-
graph 2 of this Article may at any time withdraw the said declaration by notifying the
Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Orga-
nization. However, the withdrawal of the declaration shall not take effect in regard
to the compulsory contribution due by the State until the date of the subsequent
General Assembly of States parties to the Convention.

4. In order that the Committee may be able to plan its operations effectively, the con-
tributions of States Parties to this Convention which have made the declaration re-
ferred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, shall be paid on a regular basis, at least every
two years, and should not be less than the contributions which they should have
paid if they had been bound by the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article.

5. Any State Party to the Convention which is in arrears with the payment of its com-
pulsory or voluntary contribution for the current year and the calendar year imme-
diately preceding it shall not be eligible as a Member of the World Heritage Com-
mittee, although this provision shall not apply to the first election.

The terms of office of any such State which is already a member of the Committee shall
terminate at the time of the elections provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1 of this Con-
vention.
Article 17

The States Parties to this Convention shall consider or encourage the establishment of national public and private foundations or associations whose purpose is to invite donations for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of this Convention.

Article 18

The States Parties to this Convention shall give their assistance to international fundraising campaigns organized for the World Heritage Fund under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. They shall facilitate collections made by the bodies mentioned in paragraph 3 of Article 15 for this purpose.

V Conditions and Arrangements for International Assistance

Article 19

Any State Party to this Convention may request international assistance for property forming part of the cultural or natural heritage of outstanding universal value situated within its territory. It shall submit with its request such information and documentation provided for in Article 21 as it has in its possession and as will enable the Committee to come to a decision.

Article 20

Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 of Article 13, sub-paragraph (c) of Article 22 and Article 23, international assistance provided for by this Convention may be granted only to property forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee has decided, or may decide, to enter in one of the lists mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11.
**Article 21**

1. The World Heritage Committee shall define the procedure by which requests to it for international assistance shall be considered and shall specify the content of the request, which should define the operation contemplated, the work that is necessary, the expected cost thereof, the degree of urgency and the reasons why the resources of the State requesting assistance do not allow it to meet all the expenses. Such requests must be supported by experts’ reports whenever possible.

2. Requests based upon disasters or natural calamities should, by reasons of the urgent work which they may involve, be given immediate, priority consideration by the Committee, which should have a reserve fund at its disposal against such contingencies.

3. Before coming to a decision, the Committee shall carry out such studies and consultations as it deems necessary.

**Article 22**

Assistance granted by the World Heritage Committee may take the following forms:

1. studies concerning the artistic, scientific and technical problems raised by the protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage, as defined in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 of this Convention;

2. provisions of experts, technicians and skilled labour to ensure that the approved work is correctly carried out;

3. training of staff and specialists at all levels in the field of identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage;

4. supply of equipment which the State concerned does not possess or is not in a position to acquire;

5. low-interest or interest-free loans which might be repayable on a long-term basis;
6. the granting, in exceptional cases and for special reasons, of non-repayable subsidies.

**Article 23**

The World Heritage Committee may also provide international assistance to national or regional centres for the training of staff and specialists at all levels in the field of identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage.

**Article 24**

International assistance on a large scale shall be preceded by detailed scientific, economic and technical studies. These studies shall draw upon the most advanced techniques for the protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of the natural and cultural heritage and shall be consistent with the objectives of this Convention. The studies shall also seek means of making rational use of the resources available in the State concerned.

**Article 25**

As a general rule, only part of the cost of work necessary shall be borne by the international community. The contribution of the State benefiting from international assistance shall constitute a substantial share of the resources devoted to each programme or project, unless its resources do not permit this.

**Article 26**

The World Heritage Committee and the recipient State shall define in the agreement they conclude the conditions in which a programme or project for which international assistance under the terms of this Convention is provided, shall be carried out. It shall be the responsibility of the State receiving such international assistance to continue to protect, conserve and present the property so safeguarded, in observance of the conditions laid down by the agreement.
VI Educational Programmes

Article 27

1. The States Parties to this Convention shall endeavor by all appropriate means, and in particular by educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention.

2. They shall undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of the activities carried on in pursuance of this Convention.

Article 28

States Parties to this Convention which receive international assistance under the Convention shall take appropriate measures to make known the importance of the property for which assistance has been received and the role played by such assistance.

VII Reports

Article 29

1. The States Parties to this Convention shall, in the reports which they submit to the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on dates and in a manner to be determined by it, give information on the legislative and administrative provisions which they have adopted and other action which they have taken for the application of this Convention, together with details of the experience acquired in this field.

2. These reports shall be brought to the attention of the World Heritage Committee.

3. The Committee shall submit a report on its activities at each of the ordinary sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
VIII  Final Clauses

Article 30

This Convention is drawn up in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, the five texts being equally authoritative.

Article 31

1. This Convention shall be subject to ratification or acceptance by States members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures.

2. The instruments of ratification or acceptance shall be deposited with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Article 32

1. This Convention shall be open to accession by all States not members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which are invited by the General Conference of the Organization to accede to it.

2. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Article 33

This Convention shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession, but only with respect to those States which have deposited their respective instruments of ratification, acceptance or accession on or before that date. It shall enter into force with respect to any other State three months after the deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession.
Article 34

The following provisions shall apply to those States Parties to this Convention which have a federal or non-unitary constitutional system:

1. with regard to the provisions of this Convention, the implementation of which comes under the legal jurisdiction of the federal or central legislative power, the obligations of the federal or central government shall be the same as for those States parties which are not federal States;

2. with regard to the provisions of this Convention, the implementation of which comes under the legal jurisdiction of individual constituent States, countries, provinces or cantons that are not obliged by the constitutional system of the federation to take legislative measures, the federal government shall inform the competent authorities of such States, countries, provinces or cantons of the said provisions, with its recommendation for their adoption.

Article 35

1. Each State Party to this Convention may denounce the Convention.

2. The denunciation shall be notified by an instrument in writing, deposited with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

3. The denunciation shall take effect twelve months after the receipt of the instrument of denunciation. It shall not affect the financial obligations of the denouncing State until the date on which the withdrawal takes effect.

Article 36

The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization shall inform the States members of the Organization, the States not members of the
Organization which are referred to in Article 32, as well as the United Nations, of the deposit of all the instruments of ratification, acceptance, or accession provided for in Articles 31 and 32, and of the denunciations provided for in Article 35.

Article 37

1. This Convention may be revised by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Any such revision shall, however, bind only the States which shall become Parties to the revising convention.

2. If the General Conference should adopt a new convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new convention otherwise provides, this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification, acceptance or accession, as from the date on which the new revising convention enters into force.

Article 38

In conformity with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, this Convention shall be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations at the request of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Done in Paris, this twenty-third day of November 1972, in two authentic copies bearing the signature of the President of the seventeenth session of the General Conference and of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and certified true copies of which shall be delivered to all the States referred to in Articles 31 and 32 as well as to the United Nations.
Ley Federal sobre Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos

(Publicada en el Diario Oficial de la Federación el 6 de mayo de 1972).

Al margen un sello con el Escudo Nacional, que dice: Estados Unidos Mexicanos.- Presidencia de la República.

LUIS ECHEVERRIA ALVAREZ, Presidente Constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, a sus habitantes, sabed:

Que el H. Congreso de la Unión se ha servido dirigirme el siguiente DECRETO

“El Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, decreta:

LEY FEDERAL SOBRE MONUMENTOS Y ZONAS ARQUEOLOGICOS, ARTISTICOS E HISTORICOS.

I Disposiciones Generales

Artículo 1

El objeto de esta ley es de interés social y nacional y sus disposiciones de orden público.

Artículo 2

Es de utilidad pública, la investigación, protección, conservación, restauración y recuperación de los monumentos arqueológicos, artísticos e históricos y de las zonas de mon-
umentos.

La Secretaría de Educación Pública, el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y los demás institutos culturales del país, en coordinación con las autoridades estatales, municipales y los particulares, realizarán campañas permanentes para fomentar el conocimiento y respeto a los monumentos arqueológicos, históricos y artísticos.

El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, de acuerdo con lo que establezca el reglamento de esta Ley, organizarán o autorizarán asociaciones civiles, juntas vecinales, y uniones de campesinos como órganos auxiliares para impedir el saqueo arqueológico y preservar el patrimonio cultural de la Nación. Además se establecerán museos regionales.

Artículo 3

La aplicación de esta Ley corresponde a;

I.- El Presidente de la República;

II.- El Secretario de Educación Pública;

III.- El Secretario del Patrimonio Nacional;

IV.- El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia;

V.- El Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura y

VI.- Las demás autoridades y dependencias federales, en los casos de su competencia.

Artículo 4

Las autoridades de los estados y municipios tendrán, en la aplicación de esta ley, la intervención que la misma y su reglamento señalen.
Artículo 5
Son monumentos arqueológicos, artísticos, históricos y zonas de monumentos los deter-
minados expresamente en esta Ley y los que sean declarados como tales, de oficio o a
petición de parte.

El Presidente de la República, o en su caso el Secretario de Educación Pública, expedirá
o revocará la declaratoria correspondiente, que será publicada en el “Diario Oficial” de la
Federación.

Artículo 6
Los propietarios de bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos históricos o artísticos, de-
berán conservarlos y, en su caso, restaurarlos en los términos del artículo siguiente, previa
autorización del Instituto correspondiente.

Los propietarios de bienes inmuebles colindantes a un monumento, que pretendan re-
alizar obras de excavación, cimentación, demolición o construcción, que puedan afectar
las características de los monumentos históricos o artísticos, deberán obtener el permiso
del Instituto correspondiente, que se expedirá una vez satisfechos los requisitos que se
exijan en el Reglamento.

Artículo 7
Las autoridades de los Estados, Territorios y Municipios cuando decidan restaurar y con-
servar los monumentos arqueológicos e históricos lo harán siempre, previo permiso y bajo
la dirección del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

Asimismo dichas autoridades cuando resuelvan construir o acondicionar edificios para
que el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia exhiba los monumentos arqueológi-
cos e históricos de esa región, podrán solicitarle el permiso correspondiente, siendo req-
u hipuesto el que estas construcciones tengan las seguridades y los dispositivos de control que
fija el Reglamento.

El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia podrá recibir aportaciones de las autori-
dades mencionadas, así como de particulares para los fines que señala este artículo.

Artículo 8

Las autoridades de los Estados, Territorios y Municipios podrán colaborar con el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura para la conservación y exhibición de los monumentos artísticos en los términos que fije dicho Instituto.

Artículo 9

El Instituto competente proporcionará asesoría profesional en la conservación y restauración de los bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos.

Artículo 10

El Instituto competente procederá a efectuar las obras de conservación y restauración de un bien inmueble declarado monumento histórico o artístico, cuando el propietario, habiendo sido requerido para ello, no la realice. La Tesorería de la Federación hará efectivo el importe de las obras.

Artículo 11

Los propietarios de bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos históricos o artísticos que los mantengan conservados y en su caso los restauren, en los términos de esta ley, podrán solicitar la exención de impuestos prediales correspondientes, en la jurisdicción del Distrito Federal, con base en el dictamen técnico que expida el instituto competente, de conformidad con el reglamento.

Los Institutos promoverán ante los Gobiernos de los Estados la conveniencia de que se exima del impuesto predial, a los bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos, que no se exploten con fines de lucro.
**Artículo 12**

Las obras de restauración y conservación en bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos, que se ejecuten sin la autorización o permiso correspondiente, o que violen los otorgados, serán suspendidas por disposición del Instituto competente, y en su caso, se procederá a su demolición por el interesado o por el Instituto, así como a su restauración o reconstrucción.

La autoridad municipal respectiva podrá actuar en casos urgentes en auxilio del Instituto correspondiente, para ordenar la suspensión provisional de las obras.

Lo anterior será aplicable a las obras a que se refiere el párrafo segundo del artículo 6.

Las obras de demolición, restauración o reconstrucción del bien, serán por cuenta del interesado. En su caso se procederá en los términos del artículo 10.

En estos casos, serán solidariamente responsables con el propietario, el que haya ordenado la obra y el que dirija su ejecución.

**Artículo 13**

Los propietarios de bienes muebles declarados monumentos históricos o artísticos deberán conservarlos, y en su caso restaurarlos, siendo aplicable en lo conducente lo dispuesto en los artículos 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 y 12 de esta Ley.

**Artículo 14**

El destino o cambio de destino de inmuebles de propiedad federal declarados monumentos arqueológicos, históricos o artísticos, deberá hacerse por decreto que expedirá el Ejecutivo Federal, por conducto de la Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional, la que atenderá el dictamen de la Secretaría de Educación Pública.

**Artículo 15**

Los comerciantes en monumentos y en bienes históricos o artísticos, para los efectos de esta Ley, deberán registrarse en el Instituto competente, llenando los requisitos que marca
el Reglamento respectivo.

**Artículo 16**

Los monumentos históricos o artísticos de propiedad particular podrán ser exportados temporal o definitivamente, mediante permiso del Instituto competente, en los términos del Reglamento de esta Ley.

Se prohíbe la exportación de monumentos arqueológicos, salvo canjes o donativos a Gobiernos o Institutos Científicos extranjeros, por acuerdo del Presidente de la República.

El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, promoverá la recuperación de los monumentos arqueológicos de especial valor para la nación mexicana, que se encuentran en el extranjero.

**Artículo 17**

Para la reproducción de monumentos arqueológicos, históricos o artísticos, con fines comerciales, se requerirá permiso del Instituto competente, y en su caso se estará a lo dispuesto en la Ley Federal de Derechos de Autor. Se exceptúa la producción artesanal en lo que se estará a lo dispuesto por la Ley de la materia, y en su defecto, por el Reglamento de esta Ley.

**Artículo 18**

El Gobierno Federal, los Organismos Descentralizados y el Departamento del Distrito Federal, cuando realicen obras, estarán obligados, con cargo a las mismas, a utilizar los servicios de antropólogos titulados, que asesoren y dirijan los rescates de arqueología bajo la dirección del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y asimismo entreguen las piezas y estudios correspondientes, a este Instituto.

Los productos que se recauden por los conceptos anteriores y otros análogos, formarán parte de los fondos propios de los institutos respectivos. La Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público cuidará que dichos Institutos tengan oportunamente las asignaciones presupuestales suficientes para el debido cumplimiento de sus funciones y responsabilidades.
Artículo 19

A falta de disposición expresa en esta Ley, se aplicarán supletoriamente:

I.- Los tratados internacionales y las leyes federales; y

II.- Los códigos civil y penal vigentes para el Distrito Federal en materia común y para toda la República en materia federal.

Artículo 20

Para vigilar el cumplimiento de esta Ley, la Secretaría de Educación Pública, la Secretaría del Patrimonio Nacional y los Institutos competentes, podrán efectuar visitas de inspección, en los términos del Reglamento respectivo.

II Del Registro

Artículo 21

Se crea el Registro Público de Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicos e Históricos, dependientes del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia y el Registro Público de Monumentos y Zonas Artísticos, dependientes del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, para la inscripción de monumentos arqueológicos, históricos o artísticos y las declaratorias de zonas respectivas.

Artículo 22

Los Institutos respectivos harán el registro de los monumentos pertenecientes a la Federación, Estados y Municipios y los organismos descentralizados, empresas de participación estatal y las personas físicas o morales privadas, deberán inscribir ante el Registro que corresponda, los monumentos de su propiedad.

La declaratoria de que un bien inmueble es monumento, deberá inscribirse, además, en el Registro Público de la Propiedad de su jurisdicción.
Artículo 23
La inscripción en los registros se hará de oficio o a petición de la parte interesada. Para proceder a la inscripción de oficio, deberá previamente notificarse en forma personal al interesado. En caso de ignorarse su nombre o domicilio, surtirá efectos de notificación personal la publicación de ésta, en el “Diario Oficial” de la Federación.

El interesado podrá oponerse y ofrecer pruebas en el término de quince días, contados a partir de la fecha de notificación. El Instituto correspondiente recibirá las pruebas y resolverá, dentro de los treinta días siguientes a la oposición.

Artículo 24
La inscripción no determina la autenticidad del bien registrado. La certificación de autenticidad se expedirá a través del procedimiento que establezca el Reglamento respectivo.

Artículo 25
Los actos traslativos de dominio sobre bienes inmuebles declarados monumentos históricos o artísticos deberán constar en escritura pública. Quien transmita el dominio, deberá manifestar, bajo protesta de decir verdad, si el bien materia de la operación es monumento.

Los notarios públicos mencionarán la declaratoria de monumentos si la hubiere y darán aviso al Instituto competente de la operación celebrada en un plazo de treinta días.

Artículo 26
Las partes que intervengan en actos traslativos de dominio de bienes muebles declarados monumentos históricos o artísticos, deberán dar aviso de su celebración, dentro de los treinta días siguientes, al Instituto que corresponda.

III De los Monumentos Arqueológicos, Artísticos e Históricos
Artículo 27

Son propiedad de la Nación, inalienables e imprescriptibles, los monumentos arqueológicos muebles e inmuebles.

Artículo 28(a)

Son monumentos arqueológicos los bienes muebles e inmuebles, producto de culturas anteriores al establecimiento de la hispánica en el territorio nacional, así como los restos humanos, de la flora y de la fauna, relacionados con esas culturas.

Artículo 28(b)

Para los efectos de esta Ley y de su Reglamento, las disposiciones sobre monumentos y zonas arqueológicos serán aplicables a los vestigios o restos fósiles de seres orgánicos que habitaron el territorio nacional en épocas pretéritas y cuya investigación, conservación, restauración, recuperación o utilización revistan interés paleontológico, circunstancia que deberá consignarse en la respectiva declaratoria que expedirá el Presidente de la República.

Artículo 29

Los monumentos arqueológicos muebles no podrán ser transportados, exhibidos o reproducidos sin permiso del Instituto competente. El que encuentre bienes arqueológicos deberá dar aviso a la autoridad civil más cercana. La autoridad correspondiente expedirá la constancia oficial del aviso, o entrega en su caso, y deberá informar al Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, dentro de las 24 horas siguientes, para que éste determine lo que corresponda.

Artículo 30

Toda clase de trabajos materiales para descubrir o explorar monumentos arqueológicos, únicamente serán realizados por el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia o por instituciones científicas o de reconocida solvencia moral, previa autorización.
Artículo 31

En las autorizaciones a que se refiere el artículo anterior, el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia señalará los términos y condiciones a que deban sujetarse los trabajos, así como las obligaciones de quienes los realicen.

Artículo 32

El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia suspenderá los trabajos que se ejecuten en monumentos arqueológicos sin autorización, que violen la concedida o en los que haya substracción de materiales arqueológicos. En su caso, procederá a la ocupación del lugar, a la revocación de la autorización y a la aplicación de las sanciones correspondientes.

Artículo 33

Son monumentos artísticos los bienes muebles e inmuebles que revistan valor estético relevante.

Para determinar el valor estético relevante de algún bien se atenderá a cualquiera de las siguientes características: representatividad, inserción en determinada corriente estilística, grado de innovación, materiales y técnicas utilizados y otras análogas.

Tratándose de bienes inmuebles, podrá considerarse también su significación en el contexto urbano.

Las obras de artistas vivos que tengan la naturaleza de bienes muebles no podrán declararse monumentos artísticos.

Podrán ser declaradas monumentos las obras de artistas mexicanos, cualquiera que sea el lugar donde sean producidas. Cuando se trate de artistas extranjeros, sólo podrán ser declaradas monumentos las obras producidas en territorio nacional.

La declaratoria de monumento podrá comprender toda la obra de un artista o sólo parte de ella. Igualmente, podrán ser declaradas monumentos artísticos o quedar comprendidas dentro de las zonas de monumentos artísticos, obras de autores cuya identidad se desconozca.
La obra mural de valor estético relevante será conservada y restaurada por el Estado.

**Artículo 34(a)**

Se crea la Comisión Nacional de Zonas y Monumentos Artísticos, la que tendrá por objeto dar su opinión a la autoridad competente sobre la expedición de declaratorias de monumentos artísticos y de zonas de monumentos artísticos.

La opinión de la Comisión será necesaria para la validez de las declaratorias.

La Comisión se integrará por:

a) El Director General del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, quien la presidirá.

b) Un representante de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología.

c) Un representante de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

d) Tres personas, vinculadas con el arte, designadas por el Director General del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura.

Tratándose de la declaratoria de monumentos artísticos de bienes inmuebles o de zonas de monumentos artísticos, se invitará, además, a un representante del Gobierno de la Entidad Federativa en donde los bienes en cuestión se encuentran ubicados.

La Comisión sólo podrá funcionar cuando esté presente el Director General del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura y más de la mitad de sus restantes miembros. Las decisiones se tomarán por mayoría de votos de los presentes y el presidente tendrá voto de calidad.

**Artículo 34(b)**

Cuando exista el riesgo de que se realicen actos de efectos irreparables sobre bienes muebles o inmuebles con valor estético relevante, conforme al artículo 33 de esta Ley, la Secretaría de Educación Pública, por conducto del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, sin necesidad de la opinión a que se refiere el artículo 34(a) podrá dictar una declaratoria provisional de monumento artístico o de zona de monumentos artísticos,
debidamente fundada y motivada de acuerdo con la misma Ley, que tendrá efectos por un plazo de 90 días naturales a partir de la notificación de que esa declaratoria se haga a quien corresponda, en la que se mandará suspender el acto y ejecutar las medidas de preservación que resulten del caso.

Los interesados podrán presentar ante el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura objeciones fundadas, dentro del término de 15 días contados a partir de la notificación de la declaratoria, que se harán del conocimiento de la Comisión de Zonas y Monumentos Artísticos y de la Secretaría de Educación Pública para que ésta resuelva.

Dentro del plazo de noventa días que se prevé en este artículo, se expedirá y publicará, en su caso, en el Diario Oficial de la Federación, la declaratoria definitiva de monumento o de zona de monumentos artísticos. En caso contrario, la suspensión quedará automáticamente sin efecto.

**Artículo 35**

Son monumentos históricos los bienes vinculados con la historia de la nación, a partir del establecimiento de la cultura hispánica en el país, en los términos de la declaratoria respectiva o por determinación de la Ley.

**Artículo 36**

Por determinación de esta Ley son monumentos históricos:

I.- Los inmuebles construidos en los siglos XVI al XIX, destinados a templos y sus anexos: arzobispados, obispados y casas curales; seminarios, conventos o cualesquiera otros dedicados a la administración, divulgación, enseñanza o práctica de un culto religioso; así como a la educación y a la enseñanza, a fines asistenciales o benéficos; al servicio y ornato públicos y al uso de las autoridades civiles y militares. Los muebles que se encuentren o se hayan encontrado en dichos inmuebles y las obras civiles relevantes de carácter privado realizadas de los siglos XVI al XIX inclusive.

II.- Los documentos y expedientes que pertenezcan o hayan pertenecido a las oficinas y archivos de la Federación, de los Estados o de los Municipios y de las casas curiales.
III.- Los documentos originales manuscritos relacionados con la historia de México y los libros, folletos y otros impresos en México o en el extranjero, durante los siglos XVI al XIX que por su rareza e importancia para la historia mexicana, merezcan ser conservados en el país.

IV.- Las colecciones científicas y técnicas podrán elevarse a esta categoría, mediante la declaratoria correspondiente.

IV De las Zonas de Monumentos

Artículo 37

El Presidente de la República, mediante Decreto, hará la declaratoria de zona de monumentos arqueológicos, artísticos o históricos, en los términos de esta Ley y su Reglamento.

Las declaratorias deberán inscribirse en el registro correspondiente, a que se refiere el artículo 21 y publicarse en el “Diario Oficial” de la Federación.

Artículo 38

Las zonas de monumentos estarán sujetas a la jurisdicción de los Poderes Federales en los términos prescritos por esta Ley y su Reglamento.

Artículo 39

Zona de monumentos arqueológicos es el área que comprende varios monumentos arqueológicos inmuebles, o en que se presuma su existencia.

Artículo 40

Zona de monumentos artísticos, es el área que comprende varios monumentos artísticos asociados entre sí, con espacios abiertos o elementos topográficos, cuyo conjunto revista valor estético en forma relevante.
Artículo 41
Zona de monumentos históricos, es el área que comprende varios monumentos históricos relacionados con un suceso nacional o la que se encuentre vinculada a hechos pretéritos de relevancia para el país.

Artículo 42
En las zonas de monumentos y en el interior y exterior de éstos, todo anuncio, aviso, carteles; las cocheras, sitios de vehículos, expendios de gasolina o lubricantes; los postes e hilos telegráficos y telefónicos, transformadores y conductores de energía eléctrica, e instalaciones de alumbrados; así como los kioscos, templetes, puestos o cualesquiera otras construcciones permanentes o provisionales, se sujetarán a las disposiciones que al respecto fije esta Ley y su Reglamento.

Artículo 43
En las zonas de monumentos, los Institutos competentes autorizarán previamente la realización de obras, aplicando en lo conducente las disposiciones del capítulo I.

V De la Competencia

Artículo 44
El Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia es competente en materia de monumentos y zonas de monumentos arqueológicos e históricos.

Artículo 45
El Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura es competente en materia de monumentos y zonas de monumentos artísticos.
Artículo 46

En caso de duda sobre la competencia de los Institutos para conocer un asunto deter-
mínado, el Secretario de Educación Pública resolverá a cual corresponde el despacho del
mismo.

Para los efectos de competencia, el carácter arqueológico de un bien tiene prioridad sobre
el carácter histórico, y éste a su vez sobre el carácter artístico.

VI De las Sanciones

Artículo 47

Al que realice trabajos materiales de exploración arqueológica, por excavación, remoción
o por cualquier otro medio, en monumentos arqueológicos inmuebles, o en zonas de mon-
umentos arqueológicos, sin la autorización del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e His-
toria, se le impondrá prisión de uno a diez años y multa de cien a diez mil pesos.

Artículo 48

Al que valiéndose del cargo o comisión del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia o
de la autorización otorgada por éste para la ejecución de trabajos arqueológicos, disponga
para sí o para otro de un monumento arqueológico mueble, se le impondrá prisión de uno
a diez años y multa de tres mil a quince mil pesos.

Si los delitos previstos en esta Ley, los cometen funcionarios encargados de la aplicaciónde
la misma, las sanciones relativas se les aplicarán independientemente de las que les corre-
spondan conforme a la Ley de Responsabilidades de Funcionarios y Empleados Públicos.

Artículo 49

Al que efectúe cualquier acto traslativo de dominio de un monumento arqueológico mue-
ble o comercie con él y al que lo transporte, exhiba o reproduzca sin el permiso y la in-
scripción correspondiente, se le impondrá prisión de uno a diez años y multa de mil a
quince mil pesos.
Artículo 50
Al que ilegalmente tenga en su poder un monumento arqueológico o un monumento histórico mueble y que éste se haya encontrado en o que proceda de un inmueble a los que se refiere la fracción I del artículo 36, se le impondrá prisión de uno a seis años y multa de cien a cincuenta mil pesos.

Artículo 51
Al que se apodere de un monumento mueble arqueológico, histórico o artístico sin consentimiento de quien puede disponer de él con arreglo a la Ley, se le impondrá prisión de dos a diez años y multa de tres mil a quince mil pesos.

Artículo 52
Al que por medio de incendio, inundación o explosión dañe o destruya un monumento arqueológico, artístico o histórico, se le impondrá prisión de dos a diez años y multa hasta por el valor del daño causado.

Al que por cualquier otro medio dañe o destruya un monumento arqueológico, artístico o histórico, se le impondrá prisión de uno a diez años y multa hasta por el valor del daño causado.

Artículo 53
Al que por cualquier medio pretenda sacar o saque del país un monumento arqueológico, artístico o histórico, sin permiso del Instituto competente, se le impondrá prisión de dos a doce años y multa de cien a cincuenta mil pesos.

Artículo 54
A los reincidentes en los delitos tipificados en esta Ley, se les aumentará la sanción desde dos tercios hasta otro tanto de la duración de la pena. La sanción para quienes resulten delincuentes habituales se aumentará de uno a dos tantos de la que corresponda al delito mayor.
Para resolver sobre reincidencia y habitualidad se estará a los principios del Código Penal para el Distrito Federal, aplicable en toda la República en materia federal.

Los traficantes de monumentos arqueológicos serán considerados delincuentes habituales para los efectos de esta Ley.

La graduación de las sanciones a que esta Ley se refiere se hará tomando en cuenta la educación, las costumbres y la conducta del sujeto, sus condiciones económicas y los motivos y circunstancias que lo impulsaron a delinquir.

**Artículo 55**

Cualquier infracción a esta Ley o a su Reglamento, que no esté prevista en este capítulo, será sancionada por los Institutos competentes, con multa de cien a cincuenta mil pesos, la que podrá ser impugnada mediante el recurso de reconsideración, en los términos del Reglamento de esta Ley.

**VII Transitorios**

**Artículo Primero**

Esta ley entrará en vigor a los treinta días de su publicación en el “Diario Oficial” de la Federación.

**Artículo Segundo**

Se abroga la Ley Federal del Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación el 23 de diciembre de 1968, publicada en el “Diario Oficial” de la Federación del 16 de diciembre de 1970 y se derogan todas las disposiciones que se opongan a la presente Ley.

**Artículo Tercero**

Las declaratorias de monumentos que hayan sido expedidas al amparo de leyes anteriores, así como sus inscripciones, subsisten en sus términos.
**Artículo Cuarto**

Se respetan los derechos adquiridos conforme a leyes anteriores, debiendo los titulares cumplir con las obligaciones que las mismas les imponen.


PUBLICACION: 6 DE MAYO DE 1972

REFORMAS A LEY FEDERAL SOBRE MONUMENTOS Y ZONAS ARQUEOLÓGICOS, ARTÍSTICOS E HISTÓRICOS

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