# *Introduction*

This story starts with petitions—countless handwritten letters and petitions found in twine-bound bundles and boxes in the Historical Archive of the Municipality of Morelia (Archivo Histórico del Municipio de Morelia). The voices of people who lived in Morelia, the capital of the State of Michoacán, Mexico, more than a century ago come to life in the words, requests, concerns, justifications, and pleas detailed on these thin, preserved papers. A noisy symphony of voices rises from those dusty sheets, the voices of street vendors, theater entertainers, policemen, neighborhood residents, shopkeepers, shoe shiners, porters, market sellers, and city council members, among others. Rooted in thousands of pages of written correspondence between city residents and local authorities, mostly with the city council of Morelia (ayuntamiento of Morelia), this book tells the story of how petitioning opened channels for a multitude of city residents to negotiate and politick over everyday matters.

Between 1879 and 1932, petitions created a platform for residents to assert and legitimize a broad range of claims and identities related to their lived experiences in the city. They leveraged identities and negotiated with authorities to advance their own needs, visions, and claims to the city, to its spaces, services, spectacles, and experiences. In the process, Morelians from a range of backgrounds positioned themselves as the urban public to whom authorities should be accountable. The rhetoric and arguments of resident and city council dialogues often highlighted

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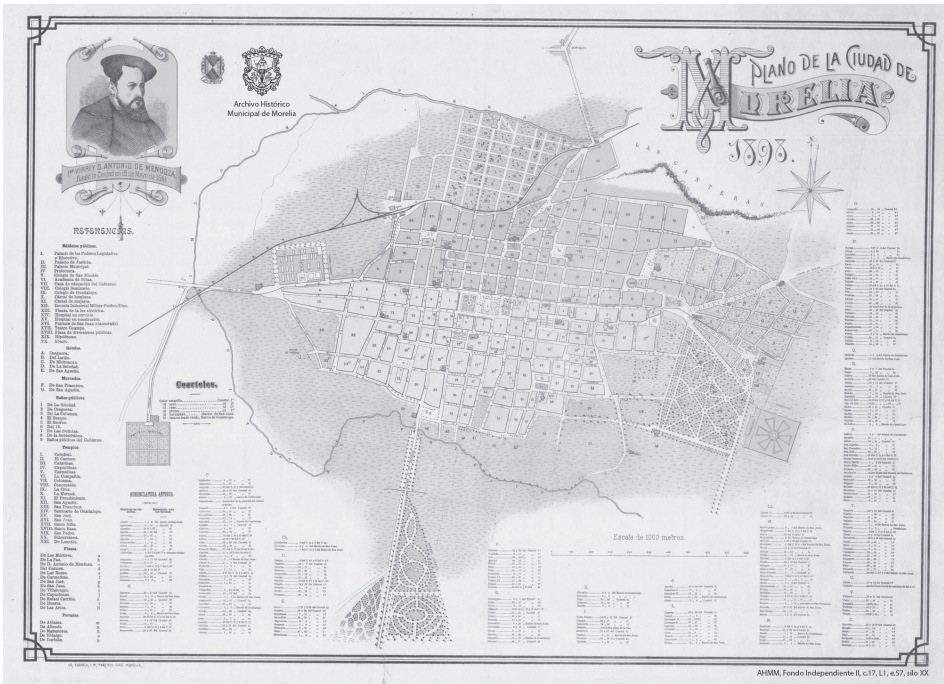
Figure I.2. Map of the city of Morelia, 1898. Credit: AHMM, Fondo Siglo XIX, Caja 17, Leg 1, Exp 57, 1898. Plano de la ciudad de Morelia 1898. Thanks to Magali Zavala García and the staff at the AHMM for their assistance.

a person's or group's contributions to the public good, effectively positioning petitioners as deserving and contributing members of the urban public. This book tells the tale of how Morelia's residents—particularly those from popular groups and poor circumstances—claimed (and often gained) basic rights to the city, including the right to both participate in and benefit from the city's public spaces, its consumer and popular cultures, its modernized infrastructure and services, its rhetorical promises around good government and effective policing, its dense networks of community, its countless opportunities for negotiating to forward one's agenda, and its urban promise for a better life. These claims, negotiations, and identities both generated and reinforced a modern, liberal-oriented, participatory urban culture among many residents in the city. Eric Van Young's definition of culture in the context of early nineteenth-century Mexico is an insightful starting point: culture embraces "those intergenerationally transmitted codes and symbols by which groups of people im-
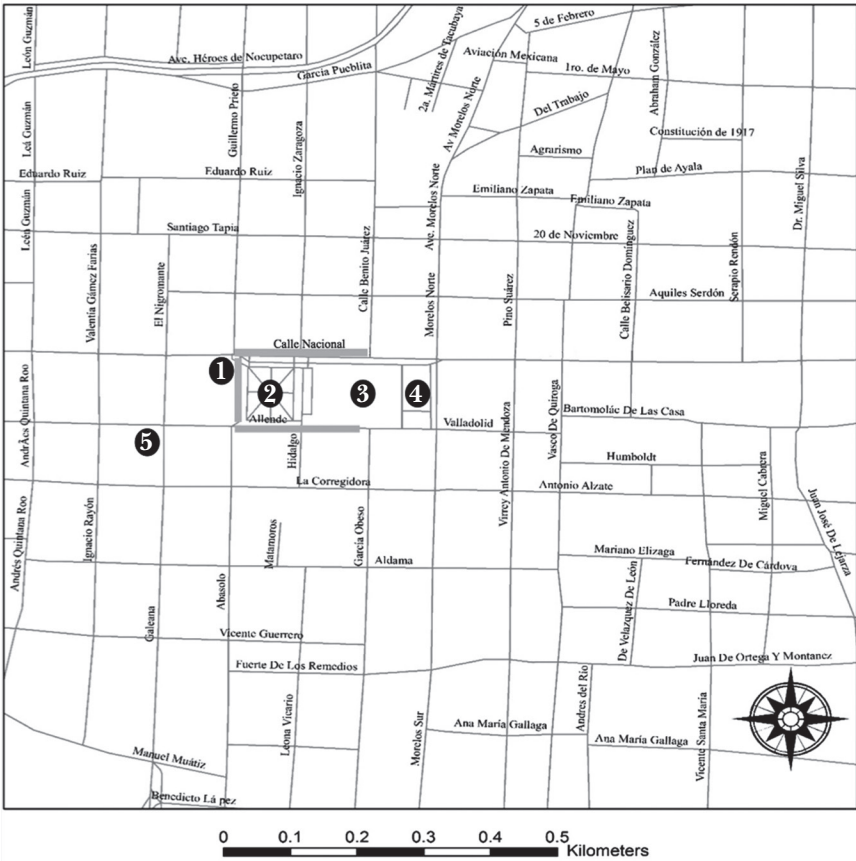
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Figure I.3. Map of downtown Morelia streets. Credit: Ryan B. Fridmanis, Wayne T. Doyle, and Kathryn DePalma. Thanks to Barbara Headle and Michael Larkin for their assistance.

pute meanings to the world of humans, things, and forces around them, and by which they convey that information to each other; by which they understand, represent, reinforce, or contest relations of power and domination; and above all through which they define their own identities by the stories they tell about themselves."[1] Morelians told many stories about themselves to each other and to the local authorities in the everyday micro interactions that politicized daily life. The emergence of a vocal, mul-

tidimensional urban public in Morelia was rooted in an urban political culture from prior generations and similarly created a platform for the transformations of the next generation. So, while centering on the years from 1879 to 1932, this book engages themes, dynamics, and connections grounded in and resonating through much longer urban and political cultural contexts.

During the colonial period in Mexico, urban dialogue and interaction on the streets and in shared spaces of the city constituted a vital, often hidden, dynamic of the city's political culture, where interests were articulated, identities were reinforced and performed, and connections were made. Jay Kinsbruner concludes: "Agency was built into the colonial Spanish American political system and was available to everyone, either as individuals or as members of corporate bodies. . . . Daily and long-term discourse was enabled and nurtured by the many and varied institutions that embodied agency, such as every corporate entity, including guilds and municipal councils. . . . Dialogue was easier to carry out in the urban setting because of the prevalence and immediacy of the mechanisms of agency and the number of people willing to participate."[2] Mexicans, including those from popular groups, had participated in savvy grassroots politicking and negotiating for centuries.[3]

From the 1870s on, however, changes to the regulated, beautified, modernized, commercialized, and bureaucratized city created new physical, political, rhetorical, social, and economic spaces for the assertion of the urban public. The clever, persistent, and strategic petitioning and politicking around city spaces in the late nineteenth century connected to broader revolutionary-inspired politics in Mexico in the 1910s and 1920s. That is the story I tell here. Let us start with an early example from this earlier period. Take the 1879 petition of forty-nine *vecinos* (neighbors) from two barrios (neighborhoods) on the outer edges of the city. These residents wrote to the city council of Morelia about their waterless public fountain. They explained, "When the City Council arranged to build the fountain, named La Fuente de La Mulata Cordova [Fountain of the Cordova Mulatto], we all contributed to the project of our own free will [*franca voluntad*] with the amounts that our poverty permitted in order to carry out the completion of the fountain, knowing the fountain would be of such benefit as a necessity for the domestic relief of our families and the public in general."[4] Three months after enjoying water in the fountain, the water service stopped because the faucet valve broke. The neighbors described how they collected the money among themselves to fix the valve and have the water turned back on. After the repair, however,

water ran in the fountain for three days, then stopped again. In their petition, the neighbors explained that during the three months that had since passed, "the rainy season helped us a lot and mitigated our thirst." They requested that the city council restore water service to their fountain. Archived documents suggest that another fountain was granted the water supply that originally flowed to this fountain.

One year later, in October 1880, neighbors of these same barrios wrote another letter, but this time to the governor of Michoacán. They explained their initial plea to the city council, retelling the story of their generous contribution of a little less than three hundred pesos for the construction of the fountain at the invitation of the ayuntamiento. This original contribution was made "in the interest of immediately having the water which would provide domestic relief to [their] families." They condemned the indifference displayed by the city council, writing: "Our just petition, therefore required us, *vecinos* [neighbors], to bother the higher attention of this Superior authority." They asked that if water was not going to be restored to the fountain, then "please order it to be removed since in its state of idleness, it does not serve for any purpose other than covering wickedness of crimes of incontinence committed in it." Lastly, they requested that the "Municipal Body return to us the amount of money we contributed, being justified by the fact that it was for this improvement, from which they have received no benefit."[5] In a second letter, the neighbors posed a challenge to the governor, demanding accountability from "higher superiority." Before concluding the letter, the neighbors explain: "The man in charge of the water piping declared in clear and precise words that the Fountain of the Cordova Mulatto does not have water because the vecinos of it do not give him money for liquor [*aguardiente*]." They continued, "We will do this if necessary, but we consider it a mere caprice that he does not give us the water we are asking for." Unfortunately, there is no documented response to these letters, although the city council did reply to most petitions in the late nineteenth century.[6]

These 1879 and 1880 petitions reveal the typical astute engagement of residents in their negotiations for material improvements that impacted their daily lives. After the neighbors of the Fountain of the Cordova Mulatto invested their own money to build a public fountain near their barrios, they expected the municipal government to do its part to facilitate the success of the project. In their "just" or justice-seeking petition, they directly critiqued the arbitrariness, incompetence, and political "caprices" of the public employees who undermined their efforts to modernize and sanitize their neighborhood. Residents used their own responsiveness to

the government's request for financial contributions as a way of justifying their demands (and subsequent critique) of the city council. They invoked the rhetoric of public health and decency to bolster their demands, the idea of political caprices to condemn the municipality's inaction, and the lack of accountability to set standards and expectations (often outlined in official regulations) to highlight their just and righteous position. While representing a particularly colorful interaction, these types of written dialogue between residents and authorities were quite common.

Employing similar strategies in their petitions, Morelia's residents not only demanded modernized urban infrastructure and accountable governance but also pursued just policing practices, a standard enforcement of urban regulations, the protection of the public health of neighborhoods, the expansion of affordable entertainment, and many other changes to city life that are typically associated with progressive state and elite visions of modern Mexico. Everyday politicking captured in petitions, letters, and other historical documents show how popular groups (meaning non-elite, working- and lower-middle-class residents) created and exploited opportunities to engage with and to expand liberal, modern, and urban discourses around "the public." Many of the opportunities for dialogue and negotiation resulted from the demands and requirements set forth in urban regulations and municipal codes.

Petitioning also increased in the late nineteenth century in response to a political and bureaucratic change: the rising number of government regulations. Through the mid-to-late nineteenth century, city governments in many countries, including Mexico, promulgated specific regulations and codes governing urban life. As Lisa Keller explains for the United States and Britain: "The nineteenth century was . . . the time in which the framework for public-order law was constructed, with virtually every aspect of daily life subject to state regulation. By 1900, public order existed not as a concept but as a mandated way of life."[7] Similarly, in Mexico, urban regulations, municipal codes, mandatory registration systems, and policing practices aimed to maintain order and to deter potentially harmful practices. Morelia's rich archive of municipality-state-citizen correspondence partially resulted from the mandates of many nineteenth-century urban regulations. For example, in 1881 the city promulgated the *Bando General para el Arreglo de la Policia Urbana en la Municipalidad de Morelia*, referred to herein as the 1881 Edict of Police. The edict required inhabitants to obtain written permission from the city council before embarking on a variety of urban activities. Residents wrote

their requests in letters to the municipal government and often received a response. In their requests, petitioners regularly cited Article 7 of the 1857 Constitution, which guaranteed the "right to petition authorities and to get a response." City residents used the prevalent notions of regulation and obligation in Morelia's political culture to highlight their contributions to the public good, rooted in their competence, honesty, and accountability as members of the urban public. In return, they expected local government to treat them accordingly. These exchanges cemented residents' position in everyday urban politics, a largely unseen aspect of Mexico's urban political culture during these years.

Political culture is "the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. . . . A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences."[8] For the context of Mexico, Peter Guardino explains that political culture also captures how local peoples employed a range of diverse discourses, practices, and repertories in inventive and improvised ways.[9] My work shows how lower-class residents, who were typically excluded from any formal political participation, used their constitutional "right to petition authorities and get a response," to access the political sphere, to engage in the participatory aspects of Morelia's political culture, and to stake claim to the promises made to the Mexican public. These promises—spanning the Porfirian, revolutionary, and postrevolutionary governments—included popular access to modernized public services (e.g., urban utilities in their neighborhoods); the right to participate as urban consumers, entrepreneurs, and spectators; the promise of sanitary and regulated city spaces; the benefit of accessible public spaces to use; and the right to accountable government and just police practices. This book explores how the residents of Morelia inserted themselves into the notion of the urban public by obligating municipal and state officials to uphold regulations and promises that protected the interests of a wide spectrum of urban residents, not just the interests of the restrictive category of Mexican elites, Mexican "citizens," and *gente decente* (culturally educated persons from upper and middle classes). By utilizing the rhetoric and ideas of public good, public protection, and public health, a wide range of urban residents actively positioned themselves as deserving members of the urban public. What emerged was a broad-based urban public as a vital political force in Mexico throughout the twentieth century.

The Opening of Spaces and Shifting of People

Rose-hued stone facades and classic Spanish colonial architecture defined Morelia's central area, the colonial footprint. The city holds a prominent place in Mexico's colonial past, the nineteenth-century independence movements, and drawn-out struggle between liberals and conservatives for the heart of the nation. In the city's complex history, the year 1867 represents a significant point of change. As Gerardo Sánchez Díaz and other scholars of Michoacán recount, 1867 marked the triumph of the Restored Republic and sweeping application of the Laws of the Reform, which coincided with the emergence of Morelia as a modern industrial city. Both changes, liberalism and modern industry, spurred population growth and fundamental economic, political, and social readjustments. The city experienced these shifts at many levels—materially, spatially, culturally, politically, and economically.

The impact of liberal desamortization laws and the resulting civic takeover and private purchases of former ecclesiastical buildings, properties, and spaces literally opened up centrally located buildings, gardens, patios, and plazas in the city. The shift of religious buildings, spaces, and resources to the Mexican state generated countless new spaces in the city for urban development and transformation. Schools, libraries, hospitals, parks, and patios, among other spaces, became available for civic use in the city. As Gabriel Silva Mandujano explains: "The suppression of convents, exclaustration of nuns and expropriation and sale of ecclesiastical property were advantageously used by the victorious military and by the opportunist bourgeoisie. The extensive parcels were divided, subdivided and sold to the highest bidder, opening new streets. The large atrium-cemeteries became squares or markets, leaving small walled areas in front of the temples. The convent buildings and schools underwent a series of adaptations to repurpose them for less symbolic uses such as public offices, schools, prisons, barracks, hospitals, etc."[10] As a consequence, the aspiring liberal elite of the city had the physical space to implement their visions of modern urban functions and beautification projects. The establishment of industry, application of new technologies, and founding of other civic institutions situated Morelia in the modernizing world. Industries, such as the 1868 establishment of La Paz (The Peace) factory, Morelia's first modern, industrial manufacturing plant for yarn and fabrics, and new technologies, such as the arrival of the telegraph, railroads, and electric power, bolstered the economy, created jobs, pulled people to the city, and generated momentum for new experiences in urban life.

In late nineteenth-century Mexico, cities such as Morelia felt the impact of several national shifts, including the political consolidation under the Restored Republic and Porfiriato; the establishment of international trade and financial relations; the expansion of regional and national networks to facilitate travel, transport, and communication; the rebuilding and expansion of public infrastructure; the application of new technologies; and unprecedented population growth.[11] Before being integrated into a system of cities, united by transport, communication, and commercial networks from 1870 to 1910, Ian Scott described Mexico as "functionally divided into largely self-contained agrarian systems in which towns and cities served the limited commercial needs of their own rural areas and the needs of political and administrative control under successive forms of government."[12] As cities started to change, they had more and more to offer urban residents and rural inhabitants of the region, including midsize provincial capitals like Morelia.

Compared to the national capital, Morelia remained a modest-sized city; throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the urban population of the municipality grew from 23,835 in 1882 to approximately 40,000 in 1910 and continued to grow to nearly 60,000 by 1930.[13] The population of the District of Morelia, a larger territorial unit, increased from 111,000 in 1882 to around 200,000 inhabitants by 1930, an average expansion for a Mexican provincial capital and its hinterland during these decades.[14] Economically and politically, Morelia had long served as an administrative, service, and distribution hub for the diverse regional economy, which produced corn, chiles, beans, wheat, sugar, cotton, *aguardiente* (liquor), textiles, and livestock. New connections brought by railroads, roads, and communication systems further enhanced Morelia's role as a regional center. At the turn of the century, Morelia experienced other transformative changes as well, some of which are captured in the following list by Sánchez Díaz. He explains that

> the indicators most representative of the changes of progress and modernity in the city of Morelia took place between 1868 and 1910. They were:
>
> The first factory of yard and fabric, [La Paz] (1868)
> Ocampo Theater (1870)
> telegraphs (1870)
> public library (1874)
> pawn shop [Monte de Piedad] (1881)

railroads (1883)

urban trolley (1883)

Public Register of Property (1884)

State Museum of Michoacán (1886)

electric lighting (1888)

telephone (1891)

Industrial Military School "Porfirio Díaz" (1893)

Superior Council on Public Health (1894)

Academy of Jurisprudence (1895)

School of Medicine (1896)

first bank (1897)

cinema theatre (1898)

General Hospital (1901)

School of Teaching Pedagogy (1901)

water purification system (1904)

cement paving of the streets (1910)[15]

Many of these modern institutions in Morelia embodied the changes remaking other cities. The city became a beacon of new options and opportunities.

In the late nineteenth century, Mexicans were being pushed out of rural villages and resettling in growing cities, towns, and haciendas (large landed estates characterized by mixed production). Top among these push factors were the implementation of liberal laws in the countryside from 1850 to 1910; the commercialization and export orientation of agriculture under the rule of President Porfirio Díaz, also referred to as the Porfiriato (1880–1910); unchecked repression in many rural areas perpetuated by the rural police forces (*rurales*) and prefect system; continual food crises resulting in widespread hunger; population growth; and lack of opportunities for upward social mobility.[16] Most people had no land or opportunities; "in the country as a whole 85 percent of communal villages and 90 percent of rural families were landless, and fully 50 percent of the rural population was tied to the hacienda system."[17] Factors pushing people out of rural villages and pueblos continued from 1910 through 1930, when the instability and violence of the Mexican Revolution and then the Cristero Rebellion in Michoacán further displaced people from the countryside.[18] While all of these powerful forces were at play, the push factors only partially explain urban to rural migration.

The Mexican city came to represent the promise of modernity and the chance for a different life. Many people were drawn to the city by the

availability of modern infrastructural amenities, the increased access to public services, the ideas and rhetoric of liberalism, the desire for western-oriented consumer goods, and the increased affordability and accessibility of popular entertainment. Opportunities in the city were created, in part, by lopsided government spending in urban areas, and the city grew, demographically and physically. Silva Mandujano tells how, in Morelia, "the urban limits extended a bit more each year towards the periphery, elongating streets and gradually adding to the number of blocks; the first neighborhoods outside of the colonial footprint emerged, like the neighborhood of Vasco de Quiroga on the east side of Morelia. . . . Cities increasingly divided their organization into four quadrants, numbering blocks and partially changing the old colonial nomenclature to a more nationalist type where multiple heroes who rose to fame in the mid-century struggles found a place of exaltation in local memory."[19] As the 1898 Map of Morelia (Plano de la Ciudad de Morelia) shows, Morelia had expanded and was divided into four quadrants, or *cuarteles*. The footprint of the city grew and the identity of the city adapted to liberal, then revolutionary, rhetoric. People continued to arrive. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, postrevolutionary Mexican governments disproportionately invested in urban services and industries, drawing more Mexicans to towns and cities for jobs, modern amenities, and public services.[20] The urban public came to secure many concessions in the city, including the right to sell in the urban informal economy, access to affordable consumer goods in the vending economy, employment opportunities in government bureaucracies and in urban service economies, participation in urban consumer culture and leisure activities, and recourse to the state government through group organizations, such as labor unions and homeowners' associations.

Competing Visions and Inherent Contradictions

Throughout these decades, the arrival of more and more rural migrants to the city produced a clash of cultures, visions, expectations, and sensibilities. Mexican elites and politicians had a specific vision of modernity in the late nineteenth century, as Robert Buffington and William French eloquently describe: "During the Porfiriato, the *gente decente* sought to remake themselves and their urban environment as a means of both demonstrating and attaining modernity for themselves and Mexico. Not just examples of Mexico's modernization, but telltale signs that the country had indeed been blessed by the onset of modernity, they pointed to the social and economic changes that had resulted from the Porfirian version of

order and progress: the arrival of railroads, department stores, and movie theaters; the transformation of Mexico City's *Paseo de la Reforma* and urban space in general."[21] Aesthetically pleasing and clean urban public spaces and the free flow of people and goods in the city were central elements of this vision of the modern, orderly city.[22] These visions were connected to a national modernizing project that required the cultivation of a modern public—complete with the appropriate appearances, conduct, values, consumer tastes, and public consciousness—to complement the modern transformation of policies, economies, and the built environment.

As many historians have demonstrated, indigenous, poor, or working Mexicans who did not fit this vision were presented as problems for the nation, not as members of the Mexican public. Scholarship has well established the widespread, exclusionary definitions of the Mexican public during these decades—an idea embedded in late nineteenth-century scientific politics, liberalism's uplift and educational agenda, and Alan Knight's developmentalist agenda.[23] The policing, regulation, and marginalization of the threatening "other" by the state meant the suppression of the poor, the rural migrant, and the indigenous—all in the name of aesthetics, morality, and public health. Modernizing liberals, reformers, and elites sought to "civilize" the social, cultural, and political practices of lower classes in the city, often amounting to a cultural uplift project to civilize the "Indian" (*indio*) out of the urbanite, to "de-Indianize" Mexico's urban public in contrast to notions of the rural Mexican people (*pueblo mexicano*). In the eyes of the state and elites, the Mexican people had to be transformed into a rational, competent, moral citizenry who could conduct themselves according to the best interests of the "public good."

Ironically, this national project of educating, reforming, and transforming the Mexican population encompassed a basic contradiction. "Uneducated," "uncivilized," and otherwise marginalized Mexicans were presented both as the subjects of this transformation and as obstacles and threats to the overall success of the project.[24] On the one hand, the aim of the nineteenth-century, liberal, modernizing project—to create an engaged, enlightened public—entailed changes such as the expansion the public sphere, increased access to national education, a more inclusive political culture, and shared notions of national belonging among a broader spectrum of Mexican society. On the other hand, this same project justified, even necessitated, the regulation, exclusion, and all too often repression of some members of Mexican society based on their social origins, ethnic and racial identities, and public and private conduct. In short, poorer, indigenous, ruralized Mexicans, in particular, found them-

selves both the subjects of reform and targets of exclusion. The two-sided approach provided reformers and authorities the ability to justify either type of action: reforming or repressing. Pejorative attitudes about some urban inhabitants were clearly rooted in hierarchies of race, class, culture, and gender. However, rather than condemning popular classes using the distinct language of race, authorities in Morelia justified the suppression of popular groups based on conduct and a moral aesthetic code, which interconnected individual morality with cleanliness and appearance.

Yet, the story does not end there. In Morelia, popular actors manipulated this two-sided approach to position themselves as reputable, responsible, contributing members of the community despite their "notorious poverty" or "lack of resources," as they often described in their letters. By voicing their contributions to the city and public good, members of the poor classes and popular groups articulated a competing vision of the city, one where they were included in the urban public as vecinos and citizens. This vision of and hope for a more just, accountable, and equitable Mexico for all Mexican citizens undergirded revolutionary calls for change in many different regions.

Contrary to top-down, state-centered studies of citizenship and modernization, this book describes how the ideas of liberalism and modernity were used in daily interactions by a wide range of urban social groups, from policemen to street vendors to neighborhood builders to city councilmen. Urban politics over rights and spaces demonstrate how modernization and the emergence of modern Mexican citizenship were not solely elite and state agendas but rather processes impacted, negotiated, and driven by urban residents. The space of the city created a distinct foundation for popular engagement with these processes. Consider the history of the invocation of liberalism by popular actors as they mobilized in rural areas, a history well established by Mexican scholars.[25] Yet when historical studies shift to focus on the engagement of popular groups with modernizing projects, the emphasis is often on popular resistance to modernization. In the countryside, popular liberalism was often utilized as a means to protect local community autonomy from the invasion of the state. Therefore, state-driven modernization projects, particularly those that entailed an invasion of private, familial, or communal spaces, were viewed as direct challenges to family authority, patriarchy, religious beliefs, or indigenous traditions. These types of modernization projects included mandatory public education for children, birth and death registration, civil marriage, modern burial practices, personal military service, a slew of urban sanitary regulations, mandatory medical inspections for the sick and for prosti-

tutes, vaccination campaigns, and participation in state-sponsored public rituals such as parades, patriotic celebrations, and state funerals.[26]

In expanding urban areas, however, local autonomy, community persistence, and familial well-being meant that many non-elite Mexicans supported and demanded modernization projects in their localities, particularly in terms of modernized urban infrastructure and public services. Residents of Morelia not only embraced but often initiated efforts to modernize, commercialize, sanitize, and beautify the city. These projects involved the construction of sewers, public water fountains, drainage pipes, paved roads, and street-lighting; urban renovation plans for plazas and gardens; and efforts to expand advertising spaces. Popular classes actively pursued modern changes, demanded accountable government, and utilized notions of reputability and cleanliness often associated only with middle- and upper-class concerns. As discussed in chapter 2, private resident investment and popular initiatives thus literally modernized, commercialized, and opened to the "public" significant portions of city space and urban infrastructure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[27]

These popular social actors evoked the liberal idea to demand accountable government, just policing, and other rights and benefits associated with citizenship. In the late nineteenth century, popular and elite notions of Mexican citizenship (implying certain political rights) and the urban public (implying a certain kind of political culture) stemmed directly from the ideas of early and mid-nineteenth-century liberalism. Liberal notions— such as popular sovereignty, liberty, autonomy of reason, civil rights, rule of law, and free market economics—associated with the 1812 Constitution of Cadiz, the 1857 Mexican Constitution, and the 1867 Restored Republic laid the political foundation for revolutionary notions of the "public" and Mexican citizenship in the early 1900s and 1910s, notions further crystalized during the postrevolutionary period of the 1920s. However, while "the law is traditionally held to be the guarantor of these rights," Lisa Keller points out that "for most of the nineteenth century, the law was either secondary or a passive participant in terms of rights. The application of law was an interpretative process, so one must turn to the agencies that enforced them in order to see how law was interpreted and how policies that helped shape laws were created."[28] Indeed, nineteenth-century liberalism and other earlier notions of community created a fertile and complex seedbed for the ideals, rights, and legitimate claims articulated in the Mexican Revolution, the 1917 Constitution, and for many of the political, economic, and social changes that transformed Mexico between 1850 and 1930.

Here we get to liberalism's complex and contradictory sides. A persisting narrative in nineteenth-century Mexico centers on the devastating effects of certain liberal reforms, such as the 1856 Ley Lerdo, on rural peoples. Indigenous communities came under direct assault by a series of liberal laws and other counterliberal trends, such as increased state authoritarianism, censorship, political repression, and the assertion of federal authority at the expense of local autonomy. Due to the many negative consequences of liberal ideas as applied in Mexico, liberalism is often conflated with the conservative liberalism and scientific politics espoused by the *científicos* and President Porfirio Díaz. Demands for accountable and responsive local government—promises of classic liberalism—were betrayed under the conservative liberal regime of Díaz. For decades, Morelians denounced "Porfirian caprices" on the part of public officials if they suspected unjust treatment. Denouncements of "Porfirian abuses" served to unify Mexican revolutionaries, who rallied popular groups with calls for local autonomy or "*municipio libre*" and "*no relección*." As Jamie Rodríguez concludes, "Although the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and subsequent postrevolutionary governments transformed the country's political system, concentrating power in the capital and in the president, the ideals of popular sovereignty, local rights, and representative government remained the ideals of the Mexican people."[29] Rodríguez speaks to the parallel emergence of a controlling centralized state and active claims of the Mexican public (both urban and rural) to just and accountable government, as rooted in classic liberal ideals. Many of the apparent contradictions of liberal thought in Mexico stem from the proliferation of various forms of liberalism, ranging from classical liberalism to an economically focused liberalism to the conservative liberalism of the científicos.

Building on the work of scholars who have illustrated the popular uses of liberalism in peasant villages and the central role of liberal ideas in the changing political demands of middle-class groups and organized workers, this book demonstrates how, by the 1880s, liberal rhetoric was well entrenched in the political dialogue of Morelia's urban residents of many social classes as well.[30] Certainly, some of the confusion about liberalism's impact on local residents stems from the contradictory nature of these ideas of equality and justice within such an unequal and unjust society. The specific mechanism of liberalism functioned *locally* based on one's social reputation and notions of belonging. The nature of liberalism during the Porfiriato must be understood not just as a top-down process, however. Rather, I argue that popular engagement with liberal rhetoric and with notions of "rights" and "obligations" of the public

were grounded in new and older forms of community participation and identification.

By mapping shifts in the urban political culture of a provincial city through these decades, the analysis herein highlights certain continuities, changes, and contradictions between the Porfiriato (1876–1910), Revolution (1910–1920), and postrevolutionary (1920–1930) eras. Some of the most notable examples are found comparing state and church rhetorics. Rationalist-inspired, anti-church, social philosophies such as liberalism, scientific politics, positivism, and neo-Lamarckian eugenics all echoed the moralizing agenda of the Catholic missioning project and the paternalist discourses of the Catholic Church, clearly connecting nineteenth-century liberalism to the colonial past and to entrench Catholic ideas.[31] These political and ideological philosophies (liberalism and Catholicism), while diametrically opposed, both embraced the "civilizing" impulses deeply rooted in both the Spanish colonial project and the Mexican nationalist project. Both religious and state actors articulated the paternalist rationale of moral authority and protecting the people as a way to legitimate their visions of the Mexican people, citizenry, and nation.

Connections between religious and secular institutions and identities furthered this blending. In Mexico, "colonial religious institutions also provided a partial framework for local republican politics," according to Matthew O'Hara, "since municipal jurisdictions were often a product of boundaries between parishes and doctrinas, with parishes serving as the basic electoral unit in early elections."[32] The mapping of political and municipal boundaries onto parish districts created a spatial overlay of the colonial and national. Colonial repertories of negotiation, collective action, and cultural syncretism emerged in other ways as well. O'Hara explains that "native peoples claimed community and individual rights afforded to them as republican citizens alongside those offered to them as 'colonial Indians'"; however, the "common ground" for nation-building was not those newer political identities but rather "religious-community practices that simultaneously offered a locus of social identity, a natural vehicle for community representation, and a way of articulating the local to a broader political community."[33] Needless to say, religious identities persisted in the liberal republican era, including the Porfiriato and through the Revolution and postrevolutionary periods as illustrated by the Cristero Rebellion in Michoacán and other parts of the nation. Religious institutions generated their own bureaucracies of power increasingly separate from secular ones.[34] Yet religious institutions also served as transformative spaces.[35]

Apart from religious identity, other important distinctions and nuanc-

es exist across these broad periods as well. For instance, in contrast to the colonial period, when a person's status (namely, a racial/ethnic designation as *indigena* [indigenous], *indio* [Indian], or *esclavo* [slave], for example) marked their place in the social order, the modern liberal project shifted the focus from one's racial/social designation to an individual's conduct. In the nineteenth-century city, a person's behavior and reputation, associated with external appearance, internal morality, and social networks, were used to justify their rights and privileges, or lack thereof, as a deserving member of the public. Morality, rooted in religiously derived notions of honor, decency, and virtue from the colonial period, continued to play a central role in liberal notions of the modern Mexican public and citizenry recast as notions of reputation, responsibility, competence, and good behavior. In the 1910s and 1920s, many occupation-based unions, socialist unions, and labor confederations echoed and reinforced these values of respectability, order, education, and discipline remolded in the service of the unified working class. Similar to the ways that morality circumscribed one's social boundaries in earlier periods, a person's legitimate inclusion into the modern public or urban citizenry in Morelia depended on one's "competent" adherence to regulations and conformity to the reputable, moral behavior for the common good, or public good.

El Pueblo Mexicano (the Mexican People), the Public, and Urban Popular Groups

What is meant by the phrase "making an urban public"? Who were the urban public? In this book, I argue that notions of the urban public drew upon older forms of community identity and connections, such as vecino, *vecindad* (neighborhood), paternalism, and moral economy. Residents engaged local authorities in daily dialogues about the state's obligations and vecino responsibilities. While vecino literally means "neighbor," it also connotes a sociopolitical status of community membership, like proto-citizenship, similar to the European concept of a burgher.[36] Vecino identity provided urban Mexicans with malleable categories to hold the governing political elite accountable by leveraging notions of moral authority, public good, reputation, responsibility, and public contributions. The research for this book illustrates how popular groups—meaning residents from diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and racial/ethnic backgrounds, often from poorer circumstances—also participated in this kind of politicking. They leveraged a range of rhetorical strategies and tapped into new and older ideas in their petitions.

Echoes of the moral economy emerge in some letters.[37] "Moral economy" is a term that historians have used particularly when discussing colonial and early nineteenth-century peasant and indigenous communities in Mexico and their sense of outrage and righteousness when unable to meet their basic needs, often leading to social unrest. The concept has been applied to other types of relationships in diverse historical contexts as well, making a common definition of the term challenging to find. For my purposes, I use the definition articulated by Elizabeth Mauritz: moral economy is "as a community centered response, arising from a sense of common good, reinforced by custom or tradition, to an unjust appropriation or abuse of land, labor, human dignity, natural resources, or material goods; moreover, it is the regular behaviors producing social arrangements that promote just relations between unequal persons or groups within a community to achieve long-term social sustainability. . . . It is not an ethical theory, but a system of practice. Moral Economy is guided by a commitment to the ethos of the common good."[38] By highlighting the connection between social relations and the ethos of the common good, I suggest that the concept of the moral economy certainly resonates in the petitions and rhetoric of nineteenth-century Morelians. Another scholar, James Carrier, notes that E. P. Thompson and James Scott, the authors most often associated with the concept, use the term "moral economy" to refer "not to values but to obligations, those that arise from interactions between people." Carrier continues,

> There are many such obligations other than those that concerned Thompson and Scott . . . [such as] the obligations that co-workers and that neighbours can have. Durkheim pointed to this when he said that the different groups in societies of a high division of labour become bound to each other because they cooperate in order to survive. This is true at the level of empirical reality but, he argued, it is also true at the level of consciousness. . . . To call an act moral in this sense is to point not only to the obligation that it expresses, but also to its basis, the relationship between the actor and someone else.[39]

In the context of my research, the key relationship evoked is that between urban resident and the local government, which implied mutual obligations to protect the public good. While not squarely focused on the economy, community subsistence, or collective needs, as the classic concept of the moral economy suggests, city dwellers did regularly voice their sense of injustice to local authorities, particularly when the injustice embodied an

affront to public accountability and the public good. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Mexican cities, the rhetoric of the public good, and less so common good, spoke directly to the way urban politics and government accountability should reflect the government's and citizen's mutual obligations, a concept certainly connected to the long-standing customs around that relationship.

From the late 1870s on, residents dialogued with municipal and state officials from their positions as vecinos and citizens, prioritizing their relationship to the municipal government in these petitions. They also prioritized their relationship with the city rather than with the nation in their letters. Let us focus briefly on these two related concepts: citizen and vecino, which are discussed further in chapter 1. Citizenship is a challenging concept in nineteenth-century Morelia, because while some Morelians were official citizens of the Mexican nation-state, many (including all women) were not. In a comparative study of the history of citizenship, Frederick Cooper argues that while citizenship can be viewed "as a divisible and flexible bundle of rights and obligations in relation to a political entity . . . [there are] varied kinds of political units in which citizenship could be exercised and contested, including cities, empires, federations, and culturally-defined communities as well as nation-states."[40] Cooper draws the important parallel between citizenship and urban-based identities, reminding us that a "classic theme in European history and sociology . . . [is] the citizen as city dweller."[41] He explains how "both Latin-based and Germanic vocabulary, with the overlap of city and civic, civil, and citizen, Bürger, Bügerschaft, Staatsbürgerschaft, and hence bourgeois and bourgeoisie—sew city life into the fabric of social categories."[42] These conceptual and rhetorical connections are evident in the historical petitions and documents in Mexico, where the idea of "the public" at times overlapped with ideas of "civil society" or "cultured society," which assumed a certain level of transformation from an "uncivil," "pre-civil," or "uncultured" society. While these notions may be partially rooted in liberalism's "civil" imperatives, they are also a product of the entrenched urban—rural and parallel Spanish—indigenous divide of colonial and modern Latin America. Cooper again notes that when we turn our attention away from the colonial dynamics of empire, citizen, and subject "to other kinds of units—the city, the province, the nation-in-the-making—it takes us from the rule of an emperor to the sovereignty of a people."[43] In this sense, Cooper concludes that "citizenship is not just a status, but a construct used to make claims."[44] That was definitely the case in Morelia, where the concepts of the public and the vecino were

central to popular claims for belonging and accountability within the Mexican public much earlier than the concept of citizen. Vecino identity, clearly rooted in notions of contributing to and belonging within the network of people and groups of a specific city, embodied a kind of proto-citizenship, predating popular inclusion in state-based notions of citizenship in Mexico. For these reasons, among others, claims to the public provided a vital transformative space for popular claims.

Here we come full circle. The word and concept of *el público* (the public) had been used in petitions since the 1880s, often referring early on to discussions of public health and public protections, and gradually more to rights associated with various public identities. A range of residents used the idea of "civility" or "civilized" as well as "el público" in their letters. They often mentioned other social identities, such as their occupation, familial situation, or place of origin, but those were typically secondary to their self-presentation as city residents, as Morelians. In their letters, they did not primarily position themselves as Mexicans, nor employees of a certain company or industry, nor as members of specific social classes. Instead, the primary, self-presented locus of their identity in their petitions was their connection to the city—as residents and vecinos, people who live and work in Morelia.

Based on their various identities associating them with the city and on notions of their rights as either Mexican nationals or Mexican citizens under the constitutions of 1857 and 1917, Morelians invoked just claims to certain rights, benefits, or protections they could expect. What clearly did exist was popular consciousness about their civil and public rights, echoing a late nineteenth-century urban version of the moral economy concept. Poor, working-, and middle-class residents demonstrated an awareness of their ability as residents to hold authorities accountable for their public rhetoric. Throughout the book, the term "rights" means not just those explicated by the law but mainly privileges or benefits broadly claimed by urban residents based on their performance of certain duties and stances as vecinos of Morelia. In fact, a specific language of rights (*derechos*) did not emerge in the municipal-level documents of Morelia until just prior to the 1910 Mexican Revolution. More typical was an invocation of protections warranted and guaranteed under the constitutions of 1857 and 1917. These constitutions differentiated qualifications for Mexican "citizen" and Mexican "national." While many did not fall under the former category, most fell under the latter. Mexican nationals were a category of people who were guaranteed certain protections and rights under the law. In the 1910s and 1920s, the concept of *el pueblo mexicano*

(the Mexican people), or simply *el pueblo* (the people), began to appear regularly in letters sent from urban residents to the municipal government. The phrase "el pueblo mexicano" encompassed the idea that all Mexican people were part of the broadly defined Mexican public to which governing officials were accountable under the auspices of liberal republicanism and popular sovereignty. El pueblo evokes a notion of justice for the people of the country, the homeland, the *patria*. Using this idea, people positioned themselves as justified and deserving in their claims for rights vis-à-vis the government and other powerholders. Walter Mignolo has written about the differences between the "right[s] of the people" and the "rights of men and of the citizen." He notes that "one of the important differences between the two is that the first is at the heart of the colonial, hidden side of modernity and looks for the articulation of a new frontier. The second, instead, is the imaginary working within the system itself, looking at the 'universality' of man as seen in an already consolidated Europe, made possible because of the riches from the colonial world flowing west to east, through the Atlantic."[45] By directly connecting the Mexican people to the Mexican public and their rights as citizens, nationals, and vecinos, petitioners rhetorically expanded notions of the public to include all Mexicans regardless of their social class, ethnic heritage, or rural origins. The public increasingly referred to Mexican people of all classes, not just the cultured classes. The people were the public, and the public was the people. These concepts were foundational in connecting ordinary Mexicans' local experiences to the revolutionary struggle and then to a more broadly defined national citizenship under the 1917 Constitution and a postrevolutionary Mexican identity.

During the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), fundamental political mobilizations and transformations occurred in Mexico. In this book, I suggest that political and social changes in the city generated a distinct foundation for the implicit benefits and explicit opportunities of modern life in the postrevolutionary period. Shifts in local, popular, and municipal politics brought the revolution to life in everyday negotiating and politicking in the city. The contestations of the city served to embed notions of "rights," "justice," and "the public" as concepts tied to the revolutionary struggle and postrevolutionary state's promises. These rhetorical frameworks and inclusive concepts were foundational in connecting ordinary Mexicans' local experiences to the revolutionary struggle, to national citizenship under the 1917 Constitution, and to a postrevolutionary Mexican identity. Morelians also leveraged these distinct and overlapping city-based social identities, such as that of neighbor, worker, family pro-

vider, upstanding citizen, contributing vecino, and reputable community member—identities rooted in notions of Morelia's civic identity and civic culture—to ground their calls for representation and accountability in national politics as well.[46] In this fundamental way, the decades of political and urban contestation over public space and commerce contributed to the making of an urban public in Morelia before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution.

Municipal Autonomy and Subnational Spaces

The choice of Morelia, Michoacán, as the focus of my study is central to the book's larger contribution because urban history, particularly in the case of Latin America, has centered on national capitals. Much of the historiography of popular urban activism from 1880 to 1930 has focused on Mexico City and the experiences of the industrial working class, politics of the informal vending economy, and popular protest of the expansion of capitalism and foreign investment in Mexico.[47] Moreover, many studies of the popular mobilization and grassroots activism during these decades have focused on revolutionary movements in the national capital.[48] As a state capital and provincial city with a long colonial past, Morelia, Michoacán, represents an ideal city to illustrate how the concepts of vecino, citizen, public, nation, and modernity were negotiated in the subnational space—the precise space where the nation was instantiated. Morelia's position as a provincial city dramatically reinforced its identity as a modern urban center in contrast to the surrounding "backward" countryside. By situating a history of the Porfiriato, revolutionary, and postrevolutionary periods in Morelia, this book offers a much-needed shift away from the dominant rural, agrarian history of these decades, and particularly of the Mexican Revolution. Morelia—like many Mexican cities—was largely spared from revolutionary violence despite being surrounded by upheaval engulfing the countryside; nonetheless, urban politics were revolutionized by drawing upon the strong tradition of popular political engagement in the city during the Porfiriato. Revolutionary groups and the postrevolutionary state built directly on local urban processes and the subnational networks of the Porfiriato in Morelia, and likely in other regional cities as well. By taking the city seriously in the nineteenth century, I discuss how and why the city is situated at the center of modern life in Mexico.

Provincial cities like Morelia were embroiled in a nationwide struggle as the centralized federal-state structure imposed itself over the local municipality. Cities emerged as the networked nodes of the Mexican

nation-state in the postrevolutionary period while municipalities struggled for fiscal and political autonomy. In this book I illuminate the municipal side of this poorly understood process by describing how the state government of Michoacán usurped the political authority, administrative branches, regulatory power, and revenue base of the municipality of Morelia. While the city escaped the worst of the Revolution, the municipality suffered due to fundamental realignments between municipal, state, and federal powers at play in the 1890s that accelerated after the Revolution in the 1920s. These realignments proved particularly visible in state capitals, such as Morelia, where the Municipal Palace sat only a few blocks away from the state governor's office (*palacio de gobierno*). After 1900 municipal governments gradually lost political power and leverage. The rise of the Mexican federal-state government structure in the 1910s and 1920s crystallized the shifting of revenue streams and political jurisdictions from the Municipal Palace toward state-level agencies and administrative branches. The ayuntamiento became financially impoverished and politically marginalized. Notably, *municipio libre* (liberated municipality) became a rallying cry of Mexican revolutionary forces after 1910. This popular nostalgia rallying support for the municipality, as voiced during the 1910 Revolution, stemmed from the accessibility and accountability associated with more autonomous municipal politics and popular engagement of the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

While this book maps popular engagement with the municipality in Morelia, the call for municipal autonomy emerged in many parts of Mexico. Colin MacLachlan and William Beezley describe how calls for municipal autonomy and liberal reform by Francisco Madero in his Plan de San Luis Potosí courted northern supporters while avoiding many of the deeper problems the country faced. Madero touted "democratic politics and municipal autonomy as the keys to the appropriate reform of Porfirio's authoritarian manipulation" while also knowing that "the autonomous municipality served as a backbone of northern state camarilla politics in which local cliques ruled their own towns and bartered political loyalty to those above them in the hierarchy for economic preferment."[49] Local elections following Madero's reform served as the litmus test for these claims. In Morelia, as in other cities, Madero supporters were dismayed to find that local elections often meant the "imposition of Porfirians in Maderista clothing."[50] Morelians lodged similar complaints after the revolutionaries took power in the city, as discussed in chapter 3, reminding the city council that the people had been promised just treatment and accountable state representatives. The Revolution provided the broad,

popular platform for the call for municipal autonomy, but the revolutionary outcome did not necessarily respond to this revival of municipality.

In the wake of the Revolution, the decline in municipal power and the rise of the postrevolutionary federal-state network fundamentally altered the political culture of Mexico by compelling citizens to organize in group associations, such as unions and neighborhood associations, as a method of effectively asserting demands on the Mexican state. Social groups drew upon horizontal and vertical networks to mobilize collectively in a manner typical of political urban activism in the prerevolutionary era. In certain contexts, however, accountability between the government and the public was diminished, as people had to negotiate with the state through intermediaries and networks of power that sidestepped the municipality, thus circumventing the locally generated political culture and urban version of the moral economy of the previous era. In this way, the postrevolutionary state accelerated the centralizing trend of the Porfiriato, leaving municipalities increasingly debilitated and dependent on the federal-state structure, not "liberated" as hoped for by the popular rallying cry of the Revolution for a municipio libre. In the post-1917 revolutionized city, "rights" were increasingly secured through networks, which both expanded popular access to the state and simultaneously created a political process susceptible to and intricately embedded in a dense web of patron-client relationships, replicating dynamics of the Porfiriato. While the Mexican Revolution effectively expanded the national polity to include the previously marginalized "masses" through the extension of political rights and expanded access to state resources, the structure created to do so also reinvented the clientelist aspect of nineteenth-century Mexican politics in the postrevolutionary world.

The revolution created broad openings for new kinds of mass politics through social movements and civic organizations, ranging from feminist leagues to political parties to workers unions. People organized into unions based on preexisting collective traditions, like the practices of group petitioning by vendors and homeowners, mutual aid societies, municipal registries, and trade unions. The early phase of union formation built on the upward linkages and participatory practices generated in the vertical relationship between residents and the city council and the culture of negotiation and dialogue around regulations, petitions, and registrations. Hilda Sabato's work on Argentina reaches similar conclusions. Frederick Cooper explains how Sabato argued that "citizenship rights in fact were exercised via networks, the development of association in cities and towns, and patron-client ties, a combination of 'horizontal' connections and 'strong vertical components.' . . . Both vertical and horizontal

social ties and the possibility of making claims as a body of citizens—as a people—have shaped the vagaries of politics in nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century Spanish-speaking America."[51] I make a parallel argument in Mexico where social networks set up a practice of demanding rights and asserting claims. Throughout these decades, the municipal government served as supporter, sponsor, and arbiter for these associations in many cases. These newly formalized institutions (e.g., workers unions and neighborhood associations) drew upon the decades-long historical precedent of popular collective petitioning and organizing in the city. Nonetheless, they emerged as the new civic institutions, enabling popular participation in mass, democratic politics, even when channeled through the corporatist and populist model of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR; National Revolutionary Party) and postrevolutionary Mexican state structure. The 1917 Constitution, as Thomas Benjamin describes, "proved to be a powerful goal and instrument. It was the bridge between the popular mobilization of the decades after 1910 and the revolutionary reforms of the 1920s and 1930s. The victorious revolutionary generals used it to justify a new political order that included organized peasants and workers. Ordinary people allied with populist political leaders used the constitution to rebuild the nation."[52] Public claims to the promises of the Revolution became identified with both the 1917 Constitution and the new collective institutions of the revolutionary state.

In the late 1910s and 1920s, workers, peasants, and organized urban groups engaged intensely in local and regional politics, debating the real implications and outcomes of the revolutionary struggle and the new 1917 Constitution. Various revolutionary factions and emerging political leaders, such as Álvaro Obregon and Lázaro Cárdenas, supported people's organization into unions, leagues, and associations that were poised to support their specific political agendas, nationally and regionally. Most histories point to the historical foundation provided by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the 1912 Casa del Obrero Mundial (House of the World Worker), and late nineteenth-century labor syndicates. In the early years of the Revolution, the number of unions and syndicates increased as Madero's reforms legalized and validated unions (although many continued to be suppressed by specific industries). By 1918 the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) emerged, unifying workers across labor sectors. Confederation politics occurred in regions across Mexico. In Michoacán Governor Lázaro Cárdenas harnessed the power of the mobilized, organized, and newly institutionalized popular groups—peasant and workers—to support his regional agenda of suppressing the Cristeros

and consolidating control under a broad regional confederation, the Confederacíon Revolucionaria Michoacana de Trabajo (CRMDT).

The Mexican Revolution is often presented as generating a multitude of new associations, political networks, and popular forms of political engagement. While the Revolution certainly did usher in enormous changes, my research highlights how popular networks and urban politics in the prerevolutionary period laid a vital foundation for these revolutionary transformations. Horizontal and vertical urban networks transformed urban politics in the prerevolutionary period and thus were direct predecessors of the formalized group associations. For instance, traditional municipal registries for service workers, a holdover from the colonial period in some cities, served as a foundational organizing space for workers unions in Morelia. Unionization, however, is closely identified with revolutionary and postrevolutionary political culture in Mexico. The emergence of the postrevolutionary state represented not only state and elite designs but also the visions and demands of popular groups, both urban and rural, to be seen, heard, and supported from the mid-nineteenth century onward.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, the same years associated with the state-driven cultural revolution in Mexico, many city dwellers enacted their own versions of political transformation, albeit within the public opening of the postrevolutionary state. Within the city, the revolution fundamentally changed how people connected to regional and national politics by acknowledging the role of collective associations of all types and officially connecting these groups to both regional and national confederations as well as to the new PNR. The union movement complemented the rise of state government as a channel for collective demands via postrevolutionary state structure. Thomas Benjamin sums up the outcome: "This new society and economy would be guaranteed by a new system of mass politics. All ejidos and unions, as well as the army and the state bureaucracy, would join an official revolutionary party. Through it, the peasant and labor sectors would advance their interests, negotiate their differences, and choose their state governors and their representatives for Congress and the various government departments."[53] The emergence of these state-society networks fundamentally shifted dynamics of politicking in Morelia (and likely in other Mexican cities) to officially recognized group associations.

The 1931 Federal Labor Law cemented these networks between local unions and the federal government, for better or worse, by granting the national administration the power over union formation and negotiations. The Federal Labor Law represented another move undercutting

the power and authority of both the municipality and state governments. State-organized confederations, such as the CRMDT, were subverted with the newly central role of the federal government in union formation and labor negotiations. Juntas de conciliación y arbitraje, or labor boards, were newly reconstituted under federal jurisdiction, a process gradually implemented in Morelia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As Nora Hamilton describes, "The Federal Labor Law of 1931 implemented several provisions of Article 123 of the 1917 Constitution favoring labor; at the same time, along with labor boards which gave the government veto power with respect to labor disputes, it was a means of both channeling and containing labor demands."[54] The Revolution was not televised—it was institutionalized.

A fundamental shift also occurred in the language, rhetorical exchanges, and dynamics of negotiation after the Mexican Revolution. Revolutionary ideals and rhetoric enabled residents to negotiate with the postrevolutionary state based on the stated "promises" of the Revolution. Social justice became identified as a core promise of revolutionary change and increasingly appeared in popular petitions, such as those of street vendors discussed in chapter 7, after 1910. Calls for social justice placed popular groups at the center of discussions around who the revolution would represent and what resources and promises would be associated with the revolutionary political agenda and cultural legacy. Yet, while the revolution institutionalized popular access to the state, both through group associations and through the establishment of revolutionary rhetoric and a revolutionary legacy to which popular groups continued to appeal throughout the twentieth century, the postrevolutionary political culture of the city imposed significant limits on Morelians.

The emphasis on popular engagement in associations and the adoption of ideals of vecino identity is another example of how elites were able to co-opt urban residents, encouraging them to think in terms of liberal rights and to contain their demands within civic groups and then formal political institutions. In other parts of Mexico, including rural Michoacán, the Mexican Revolution opened opportunities for more radical forms of politics and revolution. Yet in 1920s Morelia, it appears that the forms of politics remained largely reformist, with a few notable exceptions. Popular agency had real limits when faced with the hegemonic structures of the state. Some of those limitations were most directly a consequence of the rise of the group associations and unions as the primary vehicles for local access to state power. In the 1920s and 1930s, urban unions, guilds, neighborhood associations, and other organizations emerged as signifi-

cant power brokers for Morelians of all social classes, connecting them to both the municipality and the postrevolutionary state-federal political network of the PNR. Parallel networks enabled the co-optation of certain unions and organizations and the suppression of independent unions. While these networks created limits and eventually facilitated state control, they were also channels for negotiation and representation in the postrevolutionary political landscape.

Ironically, the cities that embodied transformative spaces for Mexicans and Mexican citizenship became increasingly devoid of power, losing their municipal autonomy through the 1930s. Nonetheless, while municipalities may have lost out in terms of fiscal and political autonomy, cities certainly emerged as significant "winners" in the postrevolutionary period by forming nodal points for the federal-state political network. In response, increasing numbers of Mexicans migrated from rural towns and villages to Mexican cities, thus buying into (and conversely taking advantage of) what the "revolutionized," networked city of modern Mexico had to offer them. Ironically, *municipalities* emerged from the 1920s significantly diminished as political units, while *cities* exploded in the post-1920s era, certainly a result of changes in the countryside as well as the tantalizing promises they represented for the increasing number of Mexicans migrating to them.

While organized thematically, the chapters in this book also follow a gradual chronological progression from the late 1870s to the early 1930s. Various elements of the aforementioned ideas are interwoven throughout chapters. In this sense, the chapters fit together by overlapping themes and perspectives, like a tapestry. Chapter 1, "The Petitioned City," centers on the political culture of the city council and the dynamics of resident-government dialogues. The capacity, practice, and tradition of petitioning created a foundation for the effective political organization and negotiation for urbanites. The chapter outlines the principal research approaches used throughout the book by highlighting the centrality of the petition, urban regulations, the protocols of state-citizen correspondence, and the functioning of the municipal government. Chapter 2, "The Modernized City," sets the stage of the city in the late nineteenth century. The impact of technological innovations, ideas about beautification, and the expansion and improvement of urban infrastructure literally created a platform for some of the most persistent popular demands. Chapter 2 demonstrates the multiple ways residents strategized, negotiated, and networked to modernize their own urban spaces. Chapters 3 and 4, "The Suppressed City" and "The Policed City," respectively, shift the discussion to the repressive and exclusionary dynamics of urban politics, often re-

ferred to as developmentalist politics, aimed at reforming and controlling the poor, mestizo, and indigenous people or other perceived public threats in the city. Both chapters also explore the justifications used to expand regulating bureaucracies, such as police forces, as well as to assert state-level entities over municipal-level authorities. One consequence was the creation of state umbrella organizations and revenue collection away from the municipality. Chapter 5, "The Spectacular City," describes the myriad ways in which urban residents experienced and participated in the emerging consumer and popular cultures of the city. Chapter 6, "The Reputable City," centers on the politics of reputation in connection to notions of vecino responsibilities and contributions to the public good. Resident disputes over the maintenance (or lack thereof) and regular cleaning of household latrines and toilets reveal how the rhetorics of public good and personal reputation were mobilized by a wide range of urban inhabitants. Chapter 7, "The Contested City," charts both the emergence of the informal vending economy rooted in city streets and plazas and the rise of vendors' unions in the 1920s. The chapter uses a general overview of the impact of the Mexican Revolution in Morelia as a backdrop to the history of vending politics and contestations over urban public space. Utilizing liberal and revolutionary rhetoric, sellers connected their rights to sell to their rights to the city to their rights of citizenship as an urban public in postrevolutionary Mexico. Eventually, with the new constitution and popular policies of the state after 1917, vendors reorganized themselves politically into collective associations and unions in the 1920s. The emergence of vendor associations and unions in the 1920s and the support they garnered from government officials further demonstrate this trajectory. Finally, chapter 8, "The Networked City," picks up several threads from previous chapters and illustrates how popular and middle-class Morelians mobilized collectively for their own interests, using an array of urban networks. The chapter focuses on the ways in which various kinds of group associations created a platform for the formation of workers unions, including unions among poor street-level service workers, and the formation of neighborhood associations. These unions and associations emerged as significant entities in post-1920s urban commercial politics and persisted through the mid-to-late twentieth century with the explosion of the informal, city-centered vending economy. These decades of popular activism cemented the public's right to urban space as part of the populist agenda of the postrevolutionary state in Morelia.

By centering on the engaging and negotiating power of the petition, this book explains how liberalism, primarily associated with repressive

and exclusionary policies in turn-of-the-century rural Mexico (e.g., the land dispossession of indigenous communities), also created empowering opportunities for *urban* residents to claim their rights to the spaces, services, and identities of the city and the nation. Therefore, while the Mexican Revolution did cause fundamental realignment of state power vis-à-vis the Mexican people, I argue that the meaning of the Revolution was very different in urban and rural areas precisely because of the distinct consequences of the application of liberal laws in the city and countryside during the late nineteenth century. During the Mexican Revolution, however, several of these liberal constitutional rights were subsumed into revolutionary rhetoric and thus resurfaced in the 1910s and 1920s as rights associated with the Mexican Revolution and the postrevolutionary state. This story suggests why and how (despite negative depictions of the liberal policies of 1890–1910) these liberal rights served as a unifying foundation for the national mythology of the Mexican Revolution, and thus for the cultural politics of the postrevolutionary Mexican state. Popular Mexicans seized on the political, physical, social, and rhetorical openings of the nineteenth-century city to voice their claims as the Mexican urban public to the spaces, opportunities, and promises of the city. This is their story.