Statecraft

The chip is not mandatory. There is no law that requires people to get a chip. The motivation [for people to get the chip] is passing through the toll [area] free of charge with the tag.

—Carlos Aguilar, REPUVE Sonora employee

The chip helps me avoid wasting time in line like all the other vehicles. You arrive in your lane, and the reader automatically reads the chip and lifts the gate. So it saves time.

—REPUVE registrant in Sonora

5.1 STATES OF SUCCESS

During December 2013, an odd daily ritual took shape at the Public Registry of Vehicles (REPUVE) installation at the old Santa Rita market in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Each morning, dozens of local residents lined up in hopes of securing a REPUVE chip before the end of the year. As the days passed, and demand for the chip increased, the lines grew longer, and arriving early in the morning to queue for the radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag no longer sufficed. Residents began camping for nights at a time in freezing temperatures and without toilet facilities for a chance to join the program. Describing her predicament, Martha Oliveros Hernández, a young mother in a green Dodge Caravan, explained to reporters, "I arrived at three in the morning. I'm going to stay through the night until tomorrow morning. I don't want to do it. But I need it [the chip]. They say that it's important because next year it [the chip] will be required and they are going to give fines. The cold is intense. But we're going to spend the night all the same. We don't have an alternative."[1]

To meet the demand and leave parking spaces for drivers arriving to renew licenses and complete other transactions at the complex, REPUVE employees implemented a number system to allow drivers to hold their place in line. Each day, 120 numbers were distributed. But this failed to quell the queues, employees reported. "The same people come and line up despite [our] informing them that they don't need to. They have the number corresponding to them placed on their vehicle. We are taking measures so that only half of the parking lot is occupied and the other part is available for those people who are getting plates for the first time."[2]

The cause of this sudden demand for the REPUVE program was simple enough. As Ms. Oliveros alluded to, a rumor had circulated in Juárez that the chip would become obligatory in 2014, that it would have a cost, and that those without it would be subject to fines. "I came now because it's free," explained Guadalupe, another young woman spending the evening in her vehicle. "In the coming year, who knows?"[3]

The rumor was fed by employees at the REPUVE site, who had noted earlier in the year that sanctions would be imposed on those without chips. But now faced with the sudden surge of local residents desiring a chip, administrators sought to clarify that there was no need to line up for tags, since there were no plans to make the chip obligatory, more registration centers would be established in the coming year, and a publicity campaign was forthcoming to explain the program to drivers. "It is important to emphasize to the community of Chihuahua that there is not any rush to enlist in the public registry of vehicles," explained Idalí Mariñelarena, an administrator with REPUVE Chihuahua, "because drivers can come throughout the year without any problem."[4]

Given the various setbacks endured by the telephone registry, national identity card, and automobile registry from 2010 to 2012, the scene at the Santa Rita market might come as a surprise. But Juárez's experiences were not without precedent. A similar scenario had played out a year earlier in the state of San Luis Potosí, one of the early adopters of the Public Registry of Vehicles program.[5] The state of Quintana Roo, home to the tourist resorts of Cancún, had to expand its hours of service to the weekends to facilitate demand once it began distributing chips.[6] And the governor of the state of Coahuila faced popular pressure from civic organizations for failing to enlist the state in the REPUVE, a neglectful oversight they felt placed their property at risk.[7]

These vignettes help underscore that the Public Registry of Vehicles, while facing considerable challenges, has in fact met with some success. By summer 2012, nearly every automobile manufacturer and

importer in Mexico was applying tags to their vehicles, which meant that 1,737,573 tags had been applied to new vehicles and 7,366,856 vehicles had been added to the national registry's database. The *sujetos obligados* (obligated subjects) contributed a mountain of digital files to the REPUVE database as well—financial institutions contributed some five million sales records; insurers, some twenty-six million notices of policy changes. The number of states applying tags rose from six in 2011 to fourteen in 2012.

But more significant was that the REPUVE had modestly begun to penetrate the daily lives of Mexican drivers. The call center established to handle people's inquiries about the status of their vehicles received 24,000 calls in the first half of 2012. A small cottage industry sprang up at *tianguis,* the open-air car markets with a reputation for dealing in goods of questionable provenance, where enterprising individuals with laptops and printers charged prospective buyers thirty pesos (about three dollars) to check the REPUVE website for the legal status of vehicles up for sale. State and local police also set up terminals outside the *tianguis* as both a service to car buyers and a deterrent to retailers of stolen vehicles.[8] And throughout the country, the REPUVE database became a centralized source of information about vehicles that police officers on patrol could use to identify stolen cars.[9] Thus, if the program was not fully operational across the country, there was a real sense that the REPUVE was finding its legs.

Something similar could be said of the Citizen Identity Card (CEDI) by summer 2012. In 2011 and 2012, some three million personal identity cards were distributed. However, in a modification to the program's original design, all of those cards were distributed to minors, such as Leslie García Rodríguez, the young girl mentioned at the start of the second chapter. In January 2011, the federal government, under the leadership of Interior Secretary Francisco Blake Mora, decided to issue personal identity cards to Mexicans under the age of eighteen and to postpone issuing them to adults, to accommodate the concerns of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE).[10] To relaunch the card, which was rebranded the Identity Card for Minors (Cédula de Identidad para Menores), President Felipe Calderón appeared at a public event in his home state of Michoacán and championed the card as an achievement of the Mexican government in fulfilling the obligations of the 1990 Population Law.[11] As part of the relaunch, the card was recast as a security measure that would protect children from kidnappings and human trafficking as well as facilitate registering for school, accessing health

care, or obtaining a passport. The Identity Card for Minors began being distributed at schools in the states of Baja California, Colima, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Nuevo León. At a school in Baja California, María Isabel Miranda de Wallace, head of the organization Stop the Kidnapping, kicked off a ceremony titled "There is No One Like You" by telling the audience,

> The Identity Card gives us an official identity so that we know who we are before the state of Mexico and whichever authority. . . . My name is María Isabel Miranda Torres [maiden name]. I have the certainty that although another person may exist with the same name, that person doesn't have my fingerprints, doesn't have my eyes, and this gives me a unique identity. . . . And what I want to say to the parents of the families is that no one wants to risk having a child get lost and not be able to locate him. May we never, ever lose any child. May no child ever be subject to trafficking. The people who entrap on the Internet, sometimes they capture children by making them believe that they love them. But really they want to abduct them. May we never have to experience that. But it is important that we have this identity [card] because it would help locating them. If a child is lost, this will be the difference. Dear parents: This identity card truly has infinitely more advantages than whatever the political debate says. Don't let yourselves be fooled. Sometimes politicians . . . bring things into the political arena that shouldn't be brought in. This is a matter of security. This is a matter of security and safety of our children. May we come to implement this identity nationally, for the children and the adults.[12]

In contrast to the REPUVE and the Identity Card for Minors, by summer 2012 the National Registry of Mobile Telephone Users (RENAUT) was no more. In April 2011, in response to the lack of progress in verifying the identity of phone users who had registered with the program, the Senate voted to abolish the RENAUT.[13] While the program passed into history, organizations such as the Federal Institute for Information Access and InfoDF pressed the government to ensure the destruction of the RENAUT database, to prevent it from falling into criminal hands.[14] There also remained the question of what to do about the tracking of cell phones going forward. On April 19, 2013, the Interior Secretariat reported that it had completed destruction of the RENAUT database, thus bringing to a close the peculiar history of Mexico's mobile telephone registry.[15] But the question of what would replace the RENAUT remained unanswered.

These summaries of the REPUVE, CEDI, and RENAUT programs illustrate a fundamental point concerning state formation and the implementation of surveillance technologies to fight crime in Mexico.

If the technologies met with various types of resistance that threatened the designs of those in power, that resistance did not decide the programs' fates. Some programs and technologies survived and were slowly adopted across society, while others withered away. What explains these differences?

The simplest answer to this question is that many Mexicans simply saw benefits in some of the programs and not in others. In the REPUVE, a more secure and remunerating hold over vehicles could be imagined. In the RENAUT, by and large, a similar secure, promising future could not. But, this chapter argues, such outcomes are not given in advance and involve more than personal predilections. Central as well has been the manner in which program administrators have responded to the resistance posed by citizens, companies, and state officials. That is, the trajectories of these monitoring programs were a function not simply of how people perceived and reacted to them but also of how authorities reacted to those reactions. This chapter provides an inventory of the various strategies taken by administrators to overcome resistance to their programs. These include building *technical resilience* into the operation of programs to make them less onerous or more user-friendly for those obligated to participate; *providing quality service* to *sujetos obligados* and other individuals to address their concerns and illustrate program benefits; making *threats* and offering *incentives* to motivate peoples' participation; building a *critical mass* of participation to preserve and bulwark the programs against future setbacks; *allowing the levying of taxes* by state actors to incentivize their participation; *piggybacking* programs onto existing state infrastructures and institutions; and, when all else fails, *circumventing the state* altogether to build a new infrastructure of governance in collaboration with private actors.

Two lessons can be drawn from reflecting on these strategies for countering resistance to surveillance. First, the success of surveillance programs owes not only to the plans of authorities or the design of technologies. Rather, in good measure it owes to the dexterity of bureaucrats to go off-script and find strategies central to successful implementation. These bureaucrats engage in what can be called *statecraft,* practices in the art of governance that help give shape to the state.

Second, if improvisational tactics allow the Mexican state to get a hold on collective agencies, it is not the prohesive hold authorities had envisioned. Rather than using the RFID chip to instantaneously locate vehicles throughout the country, authorities in Sonora employ it as a tolling solution. In place of distributing identity cards to all Mexicans

to simplify identification, the state only issues the CEDI to schoolchildren. And in the face of an ineffectual state bureaucracy unable to manage the RENAUT, the federal government turns to the private sector to deputize phone companies to maintain surveillance over mobile communications. Thus, the shape of state reformation through surveillance technologies cannot be known in advance, whether through the dictates of state leaders who adopt them or the investigations of scholars who study them. That shape instead emerges in time through the interplay of the resistance that arises to the technologies and the accommodations of statecraft.[a] In this sense, the state—despite its structured arrangement of institutions and roles, laws and regulations, authority over a fixed geographic area, and coercive technologies—is not a static entity, but a stochastic one whose interactions of power are patterned on the past but cannot be predicted or determined a priori. If this uncertainty concerning the impact of surveillance technologies on contemporary governance in Mexico leaves our social-scientific desire for certainty unfulfilled, it can also be read optimistically as evidence of the continued influence of human agency on the emerging technoscientific security state.

5.2 PERCEIVED BENEFITS

As noted above, the different outcomes experienced by the REPUVE and RENAUT owe to the fact that people liked the REPUVE and disliked the RENAUT. Returning to the survey I conducted, only 43.3 percent of those asked (42 of 97) supported the RENAUT, while 76.3 percent (74 of 97) supported the REPUVE. Respondents' answers help explain this difference. While the RENAUT, as noted in the last chapter, aroused fears about personal privacy and data security, the REPUVE connected to people's desire to protect their property. For example, respondents noted the following about the REPUVE:

I believe my auto is more secure from robbery and it would be
    easier to locate it.
You would know if the car was stolen or if they used it improperly.
This would help to more quickly locate vehicles that are stolen.

a. In explaining state formation through a "dialectic of resistance and accommodation," this chapter borrows from Andrew Pickering's description of science and technology as a "mangle of practice" (Pickering, *Mangle of Practice*).

This concern with protecting property aligned with what registrants in Zacatecas told me about their motivations for participating in the program:

When they register the car, they check all of the documents, all the papers, to make sure they're in order. This ensures that all the cars have valid documentation, the documents for the car are in order. I think if they applied this to everyone, there would be more coordination over all the cars. There wouldn't be stolen cars.

Simply because I go on excursions sometimes with my family to Aguascalientes, to get to Rancho Nuevo Morenos. That's where I go, I take my family in the truck. That's the reason. The insecurity that exists. [Criminals] will take your things whenever they want. Maybe with these chips that they put on, one can travel with more security. Maybe they'll be able to locate the vehicle.

I'm here because of robberies. There is a lot of insecurity and they take our trucks. There is a lot of organized crime here. We live up in the villages, I'm a farmer. They come and hold us up with pistols and everything. The hope that we have with the chip is that they can locate [stolen vehicles] immediately.

"I believe in the PAN [National Action Party]. The PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] scares me. And we're in for many years of PRI. In December [when the PRI would assume control of the presidency], the country is fucked. . . . This technology is state of the art, never before did we have chips or radar. Before, it was by the grace of God, pure good will. In addition to that, a month ago a lady hit me. I got her license plate, she left, but she left her plate number. Ten years ago, even with the plate number, it would have taken fifteen days to find the car. Now, in five minutes I had her name, and address. So, we're talking about this [vehicle registry] making things more agile.

These comments by drivers in Mexico express a clear confidence that the Public Registry of Vehicles, through its registration and inspection of vehicles and subsequent regulation through advanced surveillance technologies, will help ensure the security of one of their most valued possessions: automobiles.

This faith in the REPUVE program and its RFID chip extended to the business community as well. Groups such as the Mexican Association for the Automobile Industry and the Mexican Association of Automobile Dealers (AMDA) supported the program to increase car sales; it protected the domestic market from low-cost imports from the United States, colloquially known as *chatarra*, or junk heaps.[16] Already in talks with the government about restricting the importation of older vehicles, the Mexican automobile industry saw the REPUVE as a possible

tool for serving its constituency. "We need a second step related to the establishment of the Public Registry of Vehicles," AMDA president José Gómez Báez announced to the press, "as an axis of control over plates for the purposes of public security, vehicular control, mechanical inspections, and pollution emissions."[17]

My interviews with Sucaro and the Velocity Motor Corporation (VMC) representatives, if mainly capturing their unhappiness with the costs of the REPUVE, also revealed support for the idea behind the program. Agustín Sandoval, from Sucaro, the car importer, echoed individual drivers in describing how increasing security over vehicles would support Sucaro's business. "It complicates things for thieves," he argued, "because those cars that are stolen the most are the new ones. So, for us, it [REPUVE] helps because last year the industry suffered thefts of new cars from carriers. They didn't even reach the dealers. Now that they have chips, it helps. Maybe just a little, but it helps. If they steal six cars, it's not as easy for you to just put plates on them because it's reported to REPUVE."

Felipe Ibarra, also with Sucaro, painted a similarly positive picture of what the REPUVE could do for car companies. He saw communications with REPUVE's Relations with Obligated Subjects Directorate as a benefit, one that helped build trust in the program and contrasted with previous automobile registries and the RENAUT, which was very much in the news at the time of our conversation. "The REPUVE was born much more solidly than the RENAVE and its predecessor," he told me, "in terms of having clearer plans for confidentiality. They took us to installations. When the program was launched, the secretary of public security took us to the Iztapalapa Airport. So, I think that from when it was born up to now, the steps have been a little slower than we would have liked, all of them, but they have functioned well." Ibarra later came to the case of the RENAUT:

> There is an example, completely opposite, that hasn't functioned, and that's the one with cell phones. At its core, the cellular registry has never stopped being a failure, it didn't work and then it didn't work. I don't think they [the cell service providers] understood it as a benefit, but only as a detriment. And it affected their market. In the case of cellular service providers, the majority of their clients are anonymous. But the problem was more about the user than the identity. They [the users] didn't have confidence in it [the RENAUT]. "I'm going to give my data, who knows who I'm giving it to?" My sister works for a telephone company, for example, I'm not going to say which, but she shared stories about clients who would buy cards and when it was time to enter their data, they would say, "Put down Mickey

Mouse, Donald, and Pluto. Put it down or I'm not buying anything." In addition, everything was cash. And in whose name? "Pancho Pantera" [an iconic advertising cartoon character who sells sugary breakfast cereal]. Things like that.

Christian Ruiz of VMC, meanwhile, told me how his company viewed working with the REPUVE as an advantage:

> We participated as a work group with the REPUVE. A REPUVE [team] came, the law was already passed, with all of their requirements: "Have this and that," "You should comply with this and that," "And this is what you're going to do." So, VMC was the pilot, because it was the first corporation to implement the process. And being the first, obviously we were able to run the first tests, the first pilots, to see how it works, where to place the sticker, how to comply with everything that they were telling us.

For VMC, then, volunteering to work with REPUVE administrators at an early stage provided the advantage of getting ahead of its competitors in learning how to implement the program efficiently.

State officials, for their part, also supported the program for its potential to secure automobility. Officials in Tamaulipas, for example, used the REPUVE database to estimate that there were at least ten thousand stolen vehicles with reports of theft circulating in their state.[18] At the REPUVE installations themselves, technicians had uncovered handfuls of stolen vehicles attempting to register for tags. As Ignacio Meza, who oversaw REPUVE Zacatecas, informed me, "We have detained various vehicles here with altered serial numbers or with reports of theft. Some situations were uncovered while checking the vehicle." Rodrigo Domínguez at the REPUVE Sonora site described a similar situation: "We have a good relationship with the people from [the] stolen vehicles [desk] at the prosecutor's office. I communicate with the prosecutor personally and he comes [here] to see what the problem is. It's not like in the movies, busting down doors and threatening people. He comes, more than anything, to see what the situation is, to interview the person, to determine whether he is guilty or not, if he has documents that show whether the vehicle was bought legally." In this sense, even absent the installation of RFID readers at transit points to instantaneously locate vehicles circulating with reports of theft, the REPUVE provided states an increased capacity to identify and capture stolen vehicles.

In addition to this, for state officials, the program lent itself to imagining how vehicles might be governed in new ways. As noted in chapter 2, Meza told me that "when Zacatecas made its first efforts

[with the REPUVE], there were various states that didn't view the program in good terms, because it doesn't represent a benefit, but a cost":

> But one has to see the public security aspect and how it could benefit states. For the finance ministries, with this program, the first benefit that it gives is having certainty over the vehicle roll. To clean it, to purify it. This is one of the objectives. The other is that you can pull products from this program, such as being able to control traffic violations, to do tax operations. A few administrations ago, the state of Zacatecas started a program called Secure Transit. It was primarily a public safety program, but it also contained provisions allowing Finances to verify payment due. So, two Transit officials would go out, one person from Finances, and another person from the State Comptroller, who would serve as an observer to prevent acts of ill gains, abuse of authority, and so forth. This program allowed the Transit authorities to monitor pollution emissions, tinted windows, seatbelts, and so on. . . . If every vehicle had a chip, we could start a new program of this type. With the scanner and chips, we could collect information on payments. And this would help the operation of such a program a lot. The other would be, like I was telling you, with traffic violations. Give a reader to traffic officials with a small printer and print out traffic infractions right there. They give you your ticket, and they would send you to the Traffic or Finance Secretariat offices.

Thus, in addition to increasing vehicle security, the REPUVE could facilitate tax collection and reduce corruption among unsupervised police officers, two fundamental obstacles to governance in Mexico.

As the preceding survey and interview responses suggest, the different destinies of the REPUVE and RENAUT can be explained by the opinions held about them by ordinary people and drivers, major global corporations, and local and state governments. But these perceptions were not formed in a vacuum. Rather, as Felipe Ibarra claimed, "the REPUVE was born much more solidly than the RENAVE [National Registry of Vehicles] and its predecessor," a comment reflecting the influence of the REPUVE Obligated Subjects directorate's efforts to win his company's support of the program. The sections that follow describe additional efforts taken by administrators to build backing for the programs and overcome the resistance they engendered.

5.3 TECHNICAL RESILIENCE

In their efforts to overcome resistance, program administrators had to be willing to alter their plans in order to accommodate the forces opposing them. One simple strategy the REPUVE administrators relied on to do this was technical resilience, or allowing changes to program

requirements to cultivate and maintain the participation of the *sujetos obligados*. For instance, as originally conceived, and as described in chapter 3, the application of tags to vehicles involved inputting a car owner's data into the computer database and then inserting a tag sheet into the printer to print out a tag and accompanying receipt. In effect, creating a tag generates two documents—a tag and a receipt—from an initial tag sheet. The REPUVE designers had anticipated having car producers place the receipts in vehicles, which would show car buyers that the vehicle was entered into the database and establish the REPUVE program as a presence in their minds. However, car producers balked at the complications this simple procedure would add to the production process. As Fernando Orozco with VMC explained during our tour of the company's facilities,

> At one time they [program administrators] imagined or thought that the data of the vehicle and registration would be printed out and that this paper would be placed with the owner's manual in the glove box. From behind a desk, it looks easy. It's easy to talk about. But doing it? That's the problem. When you begin to place yourself a little bit more into our production process, and everything that would be involved with having just one person going in manually and opening the door? These are all the things that would have to be changed. . . . VMC was one of those companies that said the most about this because we have everything automated, or, say, paperless.

Stressing the gap between how the world looks from "behind a desk" and "in the production process," VMC pushed to have the process for applying chips altered. And ultimately, they won.

Samuel Gallo, with the State and Federal Operations Implementation Directorate, remembered those negotiations during an interview: "We wanted those vehicles with stickers to also have a receipt that would be placed in the glove box, so that the person who bought the car would have it. It was such a problem that we finally said, 'Fine, don't include anything else. Just stick the tag on.' So, today, they just stick on the tags and they keep all of that paperwork. They destroy it. No one else keeps it." If Gallo's memory of the negotiations betrays a frustration with losing that element of the program, the willingness to alter requirements did help ensure VMC's participation.

The same flexibility defined other operations within the registry as well. The protocol for registering new vehicles specified twelve fields of data to be filled out. For vehicles already sold, Sucaro filled out this information in advance for each RFID tag it would apply. One day, however, as Agustín Sandoval told me, "we had a problem because

there wasn't a technician to go to Manzanillo. So the operation had to be done in Guadalajara. But things got complicated. Normally, the ship arrives, the next day it unloads, the following day is exclusively for putting chips on, and the next day, the train or car carrier is on its way. But when the technician for whatever reason cannot make it?" This left Sucaro in a bind. "You cannot create an invoice if fields 11 and 12 [the REPUVE file and tag numbers] are missing." But at the same time, Sandoval emphasized, "there's no way we're holding up a sale, right?" In this case, Sucaro was able to resolve the problem through a simple communication with the REPUVE: "We gave notice to the REPUVE as a contingency. And with the authorization of the REPUVE, we were allowed to start the paperwork and later update fields 11 and 12."

Technical modifications also extended to the positioning of chips. Tomás Ayala, with Procedures and Citizenry at the REPUVE, described the directorate's flexibility in this regard:

> We provide the most recommended and least recommended position for applying chips. But we leave things open in an effort to be negotiable, in order to not have so much resistance to the placement of the tag. So, the most recommended zone for sticking it on is obviously behind the rearview mirror. Why? If you are sitting inside the vehicle, you don't see anything. You see it outside. Maybe it's not the most aesthetic thing. But the most important thing is the security of the vehicle and driver. But this isn't always followed. There are two companies now that are sticking the tag on the lower part of the windshield.

While the administrators believed that a tag placed on the lower windshield threatened drivers' visibility, they allowed it to be put there to reduce the automotive industry's resistance to the program.

5.4 PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

Another simple and inexpensive strategy available to program administrators for cultivating compliance with the REPUVE was the provision of quality service, or anticipating, listening to, and addressing the concerns of those mandated to participate in the program. For example, regular communication was central to the interactions between the REPUVE Obligated Subjects directorate and the *sujetos obligados* responsible for applying tags, as the comments from car company representatives have indicated. Julieta Salazar, with the REPUVE Obligated Subjects directorate, stressed the scale of communications with *sujetos obligados*. A "key for maintaining the program's operation," she told

me, "is the help that we have provided in terms of consultations via telephone, electronic mail, and training. From 2007 to mid-2012, 173 training courses were given, with 2,015 *sujetos obligados* in attendance and a total of 4,243 users." In 2009, Salazar continued, the program's work with *sujetos obligados* focused "principally on the manufacturers, in order to be able to implement the process of applying and recording registration tags, which involved answering their questions, providing them procedures, doing checklists of the requirements they had to meet, arranging meetings with each of them to review their operation and to review how they were implementing the application and recording of tags. Accompanying them in the implementation has been key."

As VMC's Christian Ruiz commented, the REPUVE directors' demonstrations of the program provided his company an opportunity to conduct pilot tests and ensure his company's participation. Salazar expanded on this point:

> In order to optimize testing with the industry in terms of time and resources, the General Directorate of the REPUVE, together with Neology [the producer of tags], proposed taking one institution as a pilot . . . in order to guarantee the functioning of the component before making it available to all the manufacturers. Three manufacturers wanted to participate and different tests were conducted by Neology and the General Directorate of REPUVE. . . . It was important to involve the manufacturers, make them participants in what the problems were and [in] who was responsible so that we could work together.

Auto company representatives seconded this view. Felipe Ibarra, with Sucaro, explained that communication "has been the advantage. Communication between us is very close, between the director [of the Obligated Subjects division] and us, who bring the information up" the chain of command to Sucaro's executives in Asia. This close communication was critical in overcoming the automobile industry's resistance to the REPUVE. Agustín Sandoval, with Sucaro, noted that although "all of the automakers are applying the chip . . . at the beginning there was a lot of resistance on the part of the industry" because of the "operational and administrative costs" and the "problems that they had had with antecedents such as the RENAVE." Getting the industry on board "was a process that took years." In particular, the tests and presentations left a positive impression on the Sucaro representatives. "The chip itself, technologically, we view very favorably," Sandoval told me. "It has been impressive to see the wonders it can do. They did tests with other technologies. The truth is that we were pleasantly surprised with

the capacity of the chip. What we want is that they implement this nationwide, with all the cars and, above all, with the imported cars from the United States, the *chocolates* [cars imported into Mexico illegally], which is another problem" for national car sellers.

REPUVE administrators saw quality service as critical in their interactions with car drivers as well. As Vicente Bautista, with the REPUVE Procedures and Citizenry Directorate, described, "We do not update the database. We coordinate the updates. Who actually does the updates are the judicial authorities in the country, including vehicle thefts and recoveries. . . . The citizens have to contact the prosecutors [to find out what happened]." However, in order to better serve drivers who contacted the program, Bautista noted that program administrators would often contact state authorities on their behalf. "Give us your information," they told callers, "and we, with the goodwill that we have, with our capacity to coordinate, if we have a relationship with the state prosecutor, we'll say, 'Hey, check whether this car isn't already recovered and hasn't been taken off the list [of stolen vehicles]' or 'Change the status please.' These are a lot of the requests that we get."

At the REPUVE registration sites where drivers have tags placed on their vehicles, providing quality service had particular value. The previous chapter noted how client interactions could quickly sour when disputes over paperwork and other matters arose. Rodrigo Domínguez, the manager of the REPUVE Sonora site, felt such conflicts could be avoided through timeliness and respect. "The average time we take in attending to a vehicle is twenty minutes. The person brings their documentation, it is entered into the system, it is validated, an inspection of the vehicle is done, all of that is a process that lasts twenty minutes," he explained. However, "there are some very isolated cases that last longer," having to do with "the third serial number or an inconsistency in the documentation or something strange." In these cases, "one of the philosophies that I have emphasized to my guys, to my technicians, is not only hitting your numbers, but also doing so in a proper way with a good face, with a good attitude. And in the end, you'll be happy. Don't get upset or upset the life of someone else. Do it the right way."

Good client service, Domínguez noted, had a special importance in a state like Sonora, where politics can infuse various aspects of daily life, including vehicle registrations. It "is something that in the long, long run will change every one of us," he told me. "How you treat people at work is how you will be able to plant a seed for saying, 'Listen, you know, this person, although I'm from the PRI, PAN, PRD [Democratic

Revolution Party], or Party X, or no party, he treated me well.' Seeds of change will be planted, seeds capable of generating change. And not directed to any party in particular, but simply toward creating a culture in which the public servant is there to serve the public and not to serve other types of interests."

"Other types of interests" within public service in Mexico include corruption, which was a primary concern for Domínguez:

> People are, let's put it this way, used to doing what they want with transactions like this, because of this cultural attitude of "it doesn't matter, this is Mexico." People may come with the idea that money solves things. Or they simply want to intimidate you in the sense of saying, "I know such and such administrator, I know or I'm a relative of such and such person." One time I had a case where the person had a bad document, we couldn't process it because the document was no good. Then he started to say, in an arrogant manner, being an asshole, "You are going to apologize to me." In this module, I am in charge of making sure, by talking with the guys, with the technicians, that this doesn't happen.

But combatting corruption and influence peddling at the REPUVE site involved more than training and leadership. In contrast to what I heard from workers in Zacatecas, Domínguez emphasized that "we are doing well in terms of structure, in terms of equipment, in terms of infrastructure." The salaries, he explained, "are very good, above average, because the conditions that were discussed, not by me but my boss, were, 'If the salaries aren't good, the workers would be given to asking [registrants] for money.'"

In a place like Sonora, where the desert climate routinely produces summer temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, the fight against corruption could also be bolstered through air conditioning. In contrast with the REPUVE module I visited in Zacatecas, which was housed in two semitrailers, one of which lacked climate control, the Sonora installation had its own building, with air conditioning (fig. 23). Domínguez added

> In addition to the question of salaries, the fact of having good buildings, the fact of having adequate equipment, having the help and support of the bosses in charge of the program, [this] helps make the workplace a pleasant environment. This helps, in some way, to clean up some forms of corruption. Not having people say, 'I'm giving you this for some sodas,' or 'Here, to speed things up,' or all of these types of things. For a technician or data specialist, this would mean losing that. In this region, to be in an enclosed, air-conditioned building, I'm going to be careful that my job isn't terminated, so that I'm not selling popsicles out on the streets.

FIGURE 23. REPUVE registration site in Sonora. Photo by Keith Guzik, © 2015.

The REPUVE building in Sonora also included a waiting area, where registrants could comfortably wait while having their vehicles inspected. In addition to client service, the facilities helped create a separation between drivers and workers, which deterred influence peddling. "In the inspection area," Domínguez finished, "only authorized people are allowed. And [with] any visit that occurs to that inspection area, an authorized person from REPUVE has to, let's say, babysit the visit."

5.5 STICKS AND CARROTS

Sujetos obligados who are already complying with program requirements and drivers who voluntarily register their vehicles present the least resistance to the REPUVE program. For states attempting to implement the program, the real obstacle was getting drivers to register their cars in the first place. To this end, a perhaps reflexive response for administrators was to threaten people for their insolence. In Zacatecas, where few drivers were enrolling, REPUVE employees told people passing by

the registration site that the program was "free and voluntary now" but would be "mandatory and carry a charge" later. The logic was simple enough—act now or risk losing money later.

This strategy reflected a broader belief among the team that the threat of punishment could bring people to the program. Ignacio Meza, who oversaw the site, explained that "right now, we are doing things on a voluntary basis, it's an invitation to the citizens, and they come voluntarily. . . . The federal government gave us a timeline of two years to get to 100 percent of the vehicle roll. Crunching the numbers, I don't think any state is going to reach 100 percent. But what we can achieve is not having the program be voluntary at the end of these two years. The traffic rules have to be modified to require vehicle owners to install the chip." Meza continued,

> With this modification to the traffic code, the citizen would be required, in some agreeable way, to put it like that, to come and register his vehicle. What would this look like? If you are driving your vehicle and the requirement exists, the police are going to detain you and give you a first warning, like, 'Go get your chip' and give you ten working days, or two weeks. If these two weeks go by, and you haven't come to complete the transaction, they are going to stop you again and give you three days to get it done. And if on the third time you still haven't done it, then the car is going to be detained and brought to the tow yard, and there they're going to install the chip once you present your documentation. This is the way to tighten things up.

Other states wrestled with similar issues. In Michoacán, for instance, Armando Ballinas Mayes, secretary of the State Council on Public Security, noted that the slow response to the REPUVE reflected "a culture of negligence by car owners in the state." To make the program work, he contended, it would have to be obligatory: "If we leave it to people's fancy, we run the risk that no one comes. We are looking at the law and the traffic code to make this registry obligatory and for the motorists to carry their stickers on their vehicles together with their registrations and driver's licenses."[19]

The legal status of the REPUVE as voluntary and free is interesting to consider. The federal REPUVE law clearly states that the "the registration of vehicles in the Registry is obligatory." It also notes that "the registration of vehicles, the presentation of notices, and consultations of the Registry will be free." Nevertheless, the federalist structure of the Mexican state provides states leeway in their adoption of federal laws.

In any case, as a tactic to strong-arm drivers to register their vehicles, the threat of future costs and obligations produced mixed results.

The ploy did not result in a noticeable increase in demand at the REPUVE site in Zacatecas. Perhaps the threat, made during the summer months, failed to strike fear. Only one driver I spoke with said that he was registering his vehicle in order "not to wait until the last minute and get stuck in lines, like we [in Mexico] always do," which was a primary complaint of both workers at the site and the Michoacán official. Drivers by and large stayed away. However, this same threat resulted in the rush on Ciudad Juárez's REPUVE installation, noted at the beginning of the chapter.

The stick of threatening people with fines and fees in the future can also be seen as giving people a carrot in the present: financial savings. In this vein, other states in Mexico sought to increase favorable reception of the program by offering incentives. In San Luis Potosí, where registration in the REPUVE database was to be tied to obtaining vehicle license plates and registrations, the state legislature voted to delay the REPUVE registration requirement for a year in order to give drivers more time to register with the program voluntarily.[20] In Zacatecas, after threats failed to have an effect, the finance secretary agreed to incentivize participation by offering drivers a 5 percent discount on their *tenencia* excise taxes if they registered.[21] In this way, states tried to offer drivers benefits in the form of additional time and financial savings to win their participation.

5.6 BUILDING CRITICAL MASS

REPUVE administrators tasked with enlisting the participation of states reluctant to cooperate with the program faced a distinct challenge. In contrast to the strategies employed with *sujetos obligados* or drivers, REPUVE's State and Federal Operations directorate could not threaten states into participating, since it lacked that authority under Mexico's federalist system. In addition, in summer 2011, the REPUVE leadership faced an upcoming presidential election that most believed would bring the PRI, and its candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, back to power. As noted in the last chapter, the expected transition raised concerns that the entire program could be lost. Looking toward the future, Samuel Gallo, with the State and Federal Operations directorate, told me that "2013 is critical for us. The new boss arrives and there could be some decisions that could really, all of the sudden, throw this program in which they [the federal government] have invested five hundred million

pesos in six years down the drain. And programs have disappeared in the past. . . . For me, it's a concern because, if we haven't shored up an increase in states that are implementing the program, practically speaking, in the next elections, they [the new administration] would say this program has presented more problems than solutions."

Faced with this time constraint and lack of progress, Gallo and the rest of the directorate saw the REPUVE's survival as tied to building a critical mass of participation. As Gallo explained it,

> Our objective in the area of operations is to advance as much as possible into the middle of the next year [2012]. . . . Right now, at the moment, we have fourteen states and are calculating to see if we can close with twenty states operating. We are talking 60 percent of the country working with the program. . . . If some states get on board, and some others have already invested in it, it's going to be difficult if there is a change of administration at the federal level to throw this away. Why? Because some states are going to jump up and say, "Hey, I already invested so many millions of pesos, so I can't throw this in the trash. Besides that, it's helping me do this, that, and the other thing."

If program could take root and begin to bear fruit, REPUVE administrators could better ensure its continuity into the future.

Reaching a critical mass of state participation involved some of the same tactics used to gain *sujetos obligados'* and drivers' support. Communication was again critical. Addressing this point, Gallo explained, "We have been able to talk with governors, with governmental secretaries. We have put ourselves where we don't belong in order to get the project going. . . . We have national forums, which prosecutors and governors attend."

During summer 2012, I attended one of these national forums, convened by REPUVE's State and Federal Operations directorate. Representatives from seventeen states attended the forum, held at the Convention Center in Tlaxcala, one of the states championed by the directorate as exemplary in its progress with the registry. Seated around a horseshoe-shaped table, the representatives listened to presentations from REPUVE Veracruz and REPUVE Sonora, which had successfully implemented the tagging program. Following the presentations, a question and answer session, and a finely prepared lunch, the representatives were led outside to the Convention Center's parking lot, where a trailer similar to the one used in Zacatecas was set up to give a demonstration of the process for applying tags to vehicles.

FIGURE 24. Video screen displaying REPUVE camera feeds at a REPUVE national assembly in Tlaxcala. Photo by Keith Guzik, © 2015.

As a recruitment tool, the forum emphasized the security situation facing the country. "In Mexico, in the last few years, we have had a surge of insecurity in all states," the presider emphasized. "In 2009, there were, if I remember correctly, 67,000 vehicle thefts, and in 2011 we had almost 80,000. And these are insured vehicles. There are many that are not insured and are not in the statistics . . . and this leads to a lack of citizen confidence in authorities. Therefore, we have to join forces to stop it [the insecurity]. We have to communicate. We have to use new techniques. We have to try to combat it head on and prevent these crimes."

To demonstrate the REPUVE's potential to fight crime, the forum organizers arranged for a car that had been entered into the registry as stolen to pass through a toll installed with a camera and RFID reader. Through a video link set up at the toll area (fig. 24), attendees watched as the vehicle was detected as stolen and police cars were deployed to stop it. The demonstration provided a clear vision of the secure future to which the REPUVE could carry Mexico.

If the potential of the REPUVE to strengthen governance was something conference attendees had heard before, the Tlaxcala meeting also showed that it could done. The program was viable, as REPUVE Veracruz and REPUVE Sonora demonstrated. The Operations Implementation

team told attendees, "The fundamental objective of this event is to demonstrate and in some way make visible that the program is a reality, that the program functions, that the program is being implemented in our states. We have fourteen states at the national level that are already working in this process, and the reality is that this is a benefit for the citizens of your states. . . . We have a database that contains all of the work" from the states, vehicle manufacturers, and customs offices. "In total, this is almost thirty-three million vehicles. All of these registrations have the same quality and same authentication of data. Of these thirty-three million vehicles, no [vehicle identification] numbers are repeated. There is not a single repetition in the Public Registry of Vehicles. All have been verified, which allows us to say to you that there are no false entries. The database has integrity." The REPUVE representatives continued on this theme: "What motivates us to be here and speak to you about how the program functions is that the program is already working, that we have really been meeting our goals. . . . We have practically 50 percent of the states at the national level applying registration tags."

Such talk of progress conveys a program with momentum. But the presentation in Tlaxcala was also calculated to pressure states to join. On another occasion, Samuel Gallo, who had helped put the Tlaxcala event together, described to me the national forums in general: "Graphs are presented and then you can say, 'You haven't completed your task. You haven't completed your work.' In this country, what hurts the most is when you tell me in front of everyone that I didn't do my things. It works like this. 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do,' as the saying goes. And if you don't like it? Go do your job. Because I'm going to be here every three months in the meetings that we have with executive secretaries, with prosecutors, with governors, and the statistics will be presented." By demonstrating other states' progress to key decision makers, the REPUVE planners felt better able to push other states to participate.

Taking this idea of shaming further, the REPUVE State and Federal Operations directorate also tried to reach a critical mass of state participation through publicity. This strategy is counterintuitive, since states rather than drivers are being targeted. But as Gallo explained, "We are trying to implement a strategy that consists of a webpage—we are going to have it ready soon—in which we will report the situation of every state in the REPUVE. So, there will be states that have 50 percent

implementation, or states that have 80 percent, or states that have 0 percent. This [web]page is for citizens' consultation. People are going to enter [the website] and they're going to see that the REPUVE in some states is already applied and in other states no." This public reporting, Gallo believed, would lead citizens to pressure their state governments to join the program. "If mine isn't there," he imagined people thinking, "I'm going to apply social pressure, so that the government carries out its job. Because if not, I'm not going to pay taxes to you. I'm going to pay them to a neighboring state that is already applying chips and get plates there. And I don't give a damn. . . . If my government isn't concerned about security or protecting my interests, then I as a citizen don't want you here. Then, we [the citizens] are going to start a blog, we are going to post questions." In this scenario, Gallo not only imagines the program as one in demand among ordinary Mexicans, which my survey data partially support, but also calculates that popular dissatisfaction with authorities could be turned to the program's favor.

5.7 ALLOWING LEVIES

The ability of the REPUVE leadership to force states to participate in the vehicle registry was, as mentioned previously, legally limited by Mexico's federalist system of government. Similarly, the program's ability to incentivize states' participation was limited by scarce resources. As the Operations Implementation team told representatives at the Tlaxcala conference, "We have to carry out the program in a mindful way. However much money they give us, it's not going to be a billion pesos, or two billion pesos. So we have to do origami, work in stages, work with concrete plans, and strategies." In lieu of a good stick or large enough carrot with which to impel state authorities to adhere tags, the directorate had to consider other options.

During summer 2011, news reports circulated that customs offices at Mexico's northern border would begin charging $54 for a "new security hologram for automobiles" imported into the country.[22] The fee would be charged "for the inspection, physical review, sticker, and subscription in the REPUVE."[23] "Importers of vehicles would have to pay Banjército," the National Bank of the Army, Air Force, and Navy, which is, as its name suggests, a banking institution for members of the Mexican armed forces.[24]

Smaller car importers in Mexico, who make their living transporting vehicles from the United States for sale in Mexico, and residents of

the border areas, who were accustomed to crossing the border to purchase cheaper vehicles in the States, were furious with the new regulation. Raúl Quintanilla, an importer, complained that Mexican customs agents had "pulled this out of their sleeve" and that the measure would "harm us even further. This sticker is supposedly for registration in the REPUVE. . . . This is going to affect the number of imports that we do. We are already having problems doing forty cars a day. The nearly nonexistent importation of cars will be severely affected by this new charge. Importing cars is out of reach."[25]

Business associations, such as the local branch of the National Chamber of Commerce (CANACO) and the Independent Union of Car and Truck Sellers (UIVAC), added their voices to the chorus of complaints about the import charge. Besides the new import fee, these organizations bemoaned the poor quality of service at the customs offices. Emilio Girón, president of the local CANACO chapter, complained that "with this, the costs are higher and the operations slower. We know that [before] they could complete eight thousand operations per month and finish each one in a minute. Now it's going to be thirty minutes to put on a sticker. Banjército doesn't have enough people, and they don't do their work adequately, and the quality of the sticker is awful."[26] Alfonso Delgado, president of UIVAC, denounced the fee as "an unjust charge because the [REPUVE] law specifies it [the tag] as free." In addition, Banjército was collecting the fee in US dollars and giving receipts without an official stamp or a breakdown of the value-added tax. Finally, more than a month after paying for the inspection of vehicles, Delgado said, cars were still appearing on the REPUVE online portal as "not registered."[27]

Mexican customs offices' charging for registration in the REPUVE illustrates another tactic by which the REPUVE State and Federal Operations directorate won the backing of state actors: by accommodating their power to tax. Allowing customs offices to collect fees for the REPUVE is interesting because, as Delgado correctly noted in his criticism of the fees and as has been noted before, the REPUVE law says that "the registration of vehicles, presentation of notices, and consultations in the Registry will be free." What's more, this provision of the law directly responded to the controversy surrounding REPUVE's failed predecessor, the RENAVE, which charged a subscription fee for its (absent) security services.

But within the national REPUVE offices, the controversy over the customs fees was viewed less critically. When I asked Samuel Gallo

about the matter and the seeming contradiction between the law's calling for the REPUVE to be free and the actions of the customs offices, he responded, "The law tells us that the printing, recording, and application of the tag cannot have a cost. It's free. So we cannot charge for this process because the law says so. However, some states are taking advantage of the fact that the physical inspection done to vehicles and the inspection of documents can be charged for." Allowing for the apparent contradiction, Gallo conceded,

> At the end of the day, there are funds and there are expenses. So, in some way, this [inspection fee] offsets that part. They [the states] imagined covering costs with the FASP [Support Funds for Public Security], from that support fund from the federal government. But it was insufficient. The projects are large. There are many other priorities as well, the certification of police, the program to create a uniform police force. There is a large number of projects for which there isn't enough [funding]. In this sense, the money is lacking. So some states have started charging for it [the tag]. There is a clear line between the application of the chip and the physical inspection.

By distinguishing between the actual application of tags and the procedures needed to authorize their application, the REPUVE directorate was able to mark off a sphere of activity in which fees could be levied while remaining consistent with the letter, if not the spirit, of the law.

Speaking specifically to the situation with the customs offices, Gallo said,

> When we went to the Finance Secretariat, we said, "Look, by law it's your job to give me the information on imports, both permanent and temporary." . . . We had been negotiating with them for seven years until last year, when the decision was made to really begin with the program. Their argument was that, "I don't have the ability to carry out the process that you are asking for. I don't have the capacity or the space or the infrastructure. I don't have the personnel to do it." With such a tone, it was very complicated. The Support Funds for Public Security are only for the states. . . . They told us, "Well, there's no money, I don't have the people, I don't have the capacity."

In this logjam, the resources and operational capacity of Banjército offered a solution. "Banjército had already been operating a program for years," Gallo told me, "putting stickers on vehicles imported temporarily. In this way, the possibility arose that it could be Banjército that would assist the Finance Secretariat. An agreement was reached. Banjército said, 'I will help you, but I'm going to charge for the service. I'm going to contract people, buy equipment, put up installations, create an infrastructure in order to be able to meet this

requirement that you can't.' This is practically what they said to the Finance Secretariat."

While this presented a solution that would get the customs offices on board with the program, the potential fallout from the inspection fees created a predicament. In response, Gallo explained, "Our position was, 'I don't have a problem with it so long as you don't say it's REPUVE charging.' Because the law says that it's free. So, 'You have to be very clear with everything. What you're charging for is the process of the physical inspection and registration of the vehicle. You're not charging for the subscription to the Public Registry of Vehicles.' For me, it's totally transparent so long as it's not appearing [as a fee] from REPUVE. The moment it appears from REPUVE, then we're going to stop it."

Asked whether the Banjército fee made the REPUVE a burden for people, Gallo continued, "At the societal level, it's relative. Whoever is going to buy a vehicle on the other side is going to get it for $3,000 or $4,000 at most. Add to that whatever it costs to import the vehicle, to pay the import taxes and the fees, to legalize the vehicle, and now REPUVE." In other words, those who cross the border to buy a vehicle would still be coming out ahead. Thus, importers really did not have a strong leg to stand on when complaining about the charges. Further, it is worth remembering that both the Mexican Association for the Automobile Industry and the Association of Mexican Automobile Dealers had supported the REPUVE precisely for its potential to exert tighter control over the import of cheap vehicles from the United States, which hurt domestic sales. In this sense, allowing state entities to levy taxes, an improvisational tactic to reach a critical mass of governmental support for the REPUVE, fulfilled some of the program's promise for national business organizations.

5.8 PROGRAMMATIC PIGGYBACKING

Up to this point, this chapter has focused on the strategies used by state authorities to overcome resistance to the REPUVE. Turning attention to the CEDI and RENAUT, however, offers additional insights into the tactics program administrators used to counter resistance. To return to the challenges confronting the Citizen Identity Card, from the time of its launch, the Calderón administration faced strong opposition from the Federal Electoral Institute, which feared that the new identity card would be confused with the country's voter card. Attempting to find a way out of the impasse, in late 2010–early 2011, Francisco Blake

Mora, the interior secretary, convened talks with members of the IFE to resolve their differences. Blake addressed the IFE's mistrust of the administration by making Manuel López Bernal, ex-executive secretary of the IFE, the director of the National Population Registry, the organization responsible for implementing the CEDI. López Bernal resigned the following year. But Blake repeated his maneuvering by replacing him with Alberto Alonso y Coria, who had directed the Federal Registry of Voters for nine years and was the most vocal opponent of the CEDI.

In addition, Blake announced in January 2011 that the CEDI would be distributed to the entire Mexican population as planned within five years, but it would be restricted for the time being to those not currently in the voter registry, that is, Mexicans under the age of eighteen.[28] Leonardo Valdés, president of the IFE, denounced the government's decision. "The decree is undoubtedly legal," he said, "but inopportune electorally from my point of view. . . . For over a year we have been saying that the creation of the identity card would negatively affect the two pillars of our political system: the voter roll and the voter card."[29] Interestingly, though, the issuance of identity cards to minors was not an immediate point of conflict.

Blake's strategy to begin the CEDI with Mexicans under the age of eighteen contains an element of building critical mass. By beginning with only a segment of the population, the administration could hope to gradually grow the program while the conflict with the IFE resolved itself. And if the conflict could not be resolved, the CEDI would already be in public circulation.

But the move to fashion the CEDI into a Identity Card for Minors had other dimensions relevant to this discussion of power and resistance. By recasting the identity card as one for minors, the government was able to reframe the technological object. If the CEDI was imagined as a technology that would integrate other forms of identification in Mexico, thereby simplifying people's daily transactions, the Identity Card for Minors would serve as a technology to protect children from kidnappings and trafficking, as well as to facilitate their registering for school, accessing health care, or obtaining a passport. This reframing eluded the point of resistance with the IFE—if the CEDI was not being issued to voters, it could not threaten democracy. But more than this, it provided the CEDI a purpose that few could disagree with: the protection of children. As a result, the government's actions legitimized the technology in a way that the original identity card failed to do. On January 13, 2011,

only days after Blake's announcement, Susan Sottoli, a representative with UNICEF Mexico, expressed her support for the Identity Card for Minors, qualifying it as a fundamental measure for guaranteeing the right to identity for children, for exercising their full rights to education and health programs, and for protecting them from trafficking.[30]

Beyond its legitimation as a security tool for children, the CEDI was also aided by the institutional associations accompanying childhood. The card was to be distributed at Mexico's public schools, an institution that enjoys a high level of support in Mexico.[31] As the events highlighted at the beginning chapter 2 illustrate, the launching of the Personal Identity Card for Minors made conspicuous use of public schools.[32] In sum, to overcome the resistance of the IFE to the CEDI, the interior secretary of the Calderón administration sought to *piggyback* the questionable program onto an institutional and ideological framework that already enjoyed legitimacy with the Mexican people.

Institutional piggybacking occurred with the REPUVE as well. Never was the program's RFID tag imagined as having an application outside providing "legal certainty" through the registration, inspection, and regulation of vehicles. However, in the state of Sonora, the tag came to possess another purpose: a technological solution for the state's tolling system, referred to as the Libre Tránsito (Free Transit) program. Under Libre Tránsito, residents in certain areas of southern Sonora are able to travel on the federal highway free of charge. Three toll plazas—the Don, Fundición, and Esperanza stations—are covered by the program. Given the toll of sixty-five pesos (about six dollars) charged at each plaza, the program provides significant savings to motorists.

The REPUVE's refashioning into a tolling solution has a peculiar history, as Carlos Aguilar, an employee with REPUVE Sonora first described to me. Article 11 of the Mexican Constitution stipulates that "every person has the right to enter the Republic, exit, travel its territory, and move residence, without needing a security card, passport, letter of safe passage, or other similar requirements." This has been interpreted to mean that a toll road cannot exist where there is no other alternative for road travel. In most parts of the country, this does not pose a problem. The federal toll roads, which are generally high quality and well-maintained, have been constructed alongside older roads. Thus, "free transit" is always available for those unable to afford the costs of traveling on the federal highways. In Sonora, however, as Aguilar explained to me, "they constructed the toll road over the free road. So, if one travels, there is only the tollway. You always have to pay."

Winning the right to travel freely on the federal highway became a cause célèbre in southern Sonora, attracting residents' ire and shaping politicians' agendas. Eventually, through negotiations between the governor's office, state representatives, and the federal Communications and Transportation Secretariat, an agreement was reached in 2011 whereby the REPUVE tag would be used to provide free passage through the three tolls to more than 700,000 residents.[33] Thus, finished Aguilar, "if you resister in the REPUVE, and if you meet the requirements of Federal Roads and Bridges [the agency in charge of tolling on federal highways], which constructed the highways, they grant free passage. And when you come with your vehicle to the toll plaza, the antenna at the toll plaza recognizes the vehicle, and if you are registered as a resident with us, the antenna lets you pass without paying a peso" (fig. 25).

As might be expected, free travel provided a strong incentive to residents to get tags on their vehicles. When I spoke with drivers at one of the two REPUVE sites then operating in Sonora, both in the southern part of the state, all of the drivers mentioned the potential savings as their reason for registering:

> The program gives you the benefit of not having to pay the toll. There are three tollbooths around Obregón. You save money.

> The program works well. Why? Because, before, passing through the tolls exacted a price. It's 60 pesos here in Fundición, 60 on the way back—120 pesos. And if I travel to Guaymas, the same.

> The tollbooth is expensive. And when I moved here, gasoline got more expensive as well. You have to invest so much just to get to a place that's an hour away, I pay fifty pesos in gasoline and seventy in tolls. So it's expensive for me.

Reflecting on the REPUVE program, Rodrigo Domínguez, manager at the Sonora site, opined, "It's important to correct the errors of the past. I see this program, speaking specifically in the state of Sonora, as a solution to a very old problem that is about twenty years old, since the tollbooth was installed in Fundición. For more than twenty years since they installed them, the cities of Navojoa and Obregón were enclosed by these toll plazas and international highways. It was a fairly simple and viable solution to guarantee the constitutional right of the residents of the south of Sonora to travel on the federal highways."

Similar to the Citizen Identity Card, *piggybacking* the REPUVE onto the existing tolling infrastructure in Sonora legitimized the program by framing it within a larger public issue that already had salience for the local population. In addition, as with the Identity Card for

FIGURE 25. REPUVE toll lanes in Sonora. Photo by Keith Guzik, © 2015.

Minors, which made use of Mexico's schools, the tolling infrastructure in Sonora ensured that many of the physical requirements for the REPUVE program, such as gates and arches from which to position chip readers, were already in place. The result of this piggybacking was a more successful and seamless implementation of the REPUVE than occurred elsewhere.

5.9 CIRCUMVENTING THE STATE

The strategy of piggybacking, or enfolding surveillance programs and technologies into existing state infrastructures, assumes the existence of infrastructures to tie into. Sometimes, however, these are not available. Mexico's National Registry of Mobile Telephone Users reached a impasse when it could not be determined who, whether the Federal Commission of Telecommunications (COFETEL) or mobile service providers, had the responsibility for verifying the phone numbers registered with the government. Eventually, as frustration with the phone registry continued, the Senate voted in April 2011 to terminate the registry,[34] and the Interior Secretariat destroyed the data it had collected in April 2013.[35]

This did not exhaust the government's attempts to govern mobile telephony, however, the original reason RENAUT was launched.

Already in May 2010, in the midst of the controversy over the requirement to register cellular lines with the government, two mobile service providers, Telcel and Movistar, announced that they would begin deactivating phones that their clients reported as stolen. But in contrast to the RENAUT, which sought to gain a grasp of mobile telephony via the phone numbers and biometric data of users, the service providers would instead disable units through their IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) codes, the unique fifteen-digit identification numbers, similar to an automobile's vehicle identification number, which identify devices on mobile networks.[36] Later that year, in December 2010, this private initiative led to the Agreement to Avoid Reusing Stolen Cellular Telephones, an accord between the Citizens' Council for Public Security and Justice Provision in Mexico City and mobile companies to expand the initiative to include additional providers. Under the plan, users would not need to make an official report of a stolen phone, but simply report the theft to their service provider so that the device's IMEI could be blacklisted and the device blocked. Jorge Arreola, director of compliance with Telefónica México, feted the agreement as a collaborative effort between the Mexican citizenry and private sector.[37] And by August of the following year, Telcel and Movistar were reporting a monthly deactivation rate of twelve hundred units.[38]

While the private sector was moving to provide an alternative means for controlling stolen mobile phones, others were pressing the federal government to consider alternatives to the RENAUT. In April 2011, Alejandro Martí, the businessman who founded the organization Mexico SOS following the kidnapping and murder of his son, began pushing for legislation that would require service providers to permanently block units reported as stolen and require units to have GPS capabilities and "panic buttons."[39] In March of the following year, Congress passed what came to be known at the Geolocation Law, which requires mobile service providers in emergency situations—kidnappings, extortions, or medical emergencies—to provide law enforcement with the location of the person's telephone without a judicial warrant.[40]

The Geolocation Law evoked anger from many of the same groups that expressed concerns about the privacy and security implications of the RENAUT. The Electronic Frontier Foundation, for instance, criticized the Geolocation Law as having "a significant potential for abuse" and demanded that the Mexican government "be more sensible to the fact that mobile service companies today record detailed imprints of our daily lives."[41] But for the purposes of this work, the actions of

service providers and the Mexican legislature demonstrate another way in which authorities improvise to overcome resistance to their plans. In the case of regulating mobile telephony, Mexican authorities and stakeholders attempted to push past the resistance that led to the failure of the RENAUT by trying to contravene the state altogether. Unable to create a state infrastructure that would be able to register, inspect, and regulate mobile telephony as set out in the RENAUT law, authorities simply legislated the burden of regulating phones onto private service providers and the private infrastructures through which mobile communication occurs.

5.10 STATECRAFT

The preceding pages have sketched out some of the strategies that authorities in Mexico have pursued to overcome resistance to the Public Registry of Vehicles, Citizen Identity Card, and National Registry of Mobile Telephone Users. Confronted with corporate actors skeptical of the costs of complying with new regulations, governmental authorities maintained close and regular *communications* to increase understanding of the programs and permitted *technical modifications* to their operation to make them less onerous. To counter individuals' resistance, authorities aimed to achieve good relations with users through quality *client service* and experimented with combinations of *threats* and *incentives* to bring new users into the fold. To answer resistance from the political structure tasked with carrying out the programs, authorities required more imaginative tactics. Facing political turnover that could threaten program continuity, authorities sought a *critical mass* to provide a beachhead of programmatic progress able to withstand the ebbs and flows of democratic governance in Mexico. To achieve that critical mass, authorities again turned to *incentives,* such as the promise of security, but also to the authorization of *levies* that increased the appeal of programs to state actors. Or they *piggybacked* unpopular programs onto existing state infrastructures that already enjoyed legitimacy. Or, most extreme, they *contravened the state* altogether, relying on the expertise and infrastructure of the private sector to implement operations that might otherwise fail.

   These strategies all share the quality of being improvised responses hatched on the fly to counter resistance. To surmount the inability of the COFETEL to successfully implement the RENAUT, Mexican authorities went outside the state to follow mobile phones. To work

itself out of the conflict with the IFE regarding the CEDI, the Calderón administration redirected the identity card through Mexico's schools and rebranded it as a measure for youth. To get the customs offices in Mexico to begin applying chips to vehicles, the REPUVE allowed the Banjército to charge for inspections. None of these actions had been planned in advance. Like the agronomists of the 1930 Agrarian Census who had to resort to exchanging water for data from *campesinos,*[42] these measures were embraced by authorities to pursue control over collective agencies that persisted in their resistance.

These findings contribute to thinking about the state in Mexico and state formation in general. Research on Mexico has tended to emphasize the role of capital and coercion[43] and cultural hegemony[44] in the creation of the state. National state formation has varied across Mexican history in relation to the accumulation of coercion and capital in regional centers and the concentration of cultural power in the Catholic Church, processes that have worked against the centralization of state power. Against this backdrop, the national state can be understood to fluctuate historically along the axes of its strength (strong/weak) and its relation to dominant class interests (independent/dependent). The Porfiriato was primarily a weak, small state captured by the capitalist class, while the postrevolutionary regime of Lázaro Cárdenas was a large, strong state autonomous of capitalist class interests. The abandonment of the revolutionary project by the PRI in the 1980s and the party's embrace of neoliberal political economy, meanwhile, reduced the size of the state and brought it back into the service of the country's capitalist class, whose economic interests now operate at the global level.[45] And it is this phase of state formation that has occasioned the growth of organized crime in the country.

Borrowing from recent work on the role of science and technology in the "co-production"[46] or "composition"[47] of the state, this study has examined the federal government's adoption of surveillance technologies as an effort to reform the state by remaking its coercive capacity through *prohesion.* If the previous chapter revealed resistance to this project of state reformation, then the present chapter describes a set of activities—improvisational tactics launched by program administrators, state officials, and ordinary employees in their meetings with company representatives, conferences with state leaders, and interactions with everyday drivers—that helps decide the fate of state reformation.

That authorities and state workers in Mexico improvise to meet their goals should not surprise us. For all the explanatory weight that Charles

Tilly placed on "capital and coercion" in the emergence of the national state, he also noted that "rarely did Europe's princes have in mind a precise model of the sort of state they were producing" and that "the principal components of national states [are] . . . usually formed as more or less inadvertent by-products of efforts to carry out more imme-diate tasks, especially the creation and support of an armed force."[48] This inventive element of state formation has been noted within Mexico as well, as scholars have noted that "the stable, centralized rule of the PRI . . . rested on a series of tacit deals and trade-offs."[49] In this sense, the Mexican state is a "negotiated state."[50]

These processes of negotiation and improvisation are important to consider, not only because they are so central to state formation, but also because they draw attention to a human element in state formation beyond capital, coercion, culture, and technology. That is, REPUVE administrators had to have the ability to negotiate with Banjército to overcome barriers to customs offices' participation in the program. CEDI planners had to have the wisdom to know that programs tied to Mexico's schools held greater legitimacy with the populace. And fed-eral legislators, with no state-based options for controlling cell phones, had to have the flexibility to abandon a failed plan and redirect the governance of mobile telephony through the private sector. In brief, the histories of the REPUVE, CEDI, and RENAUT demonstrate that reforming the state through surveillance technologies requires a good dose of managerial tact from program planners and administrators.

To give proper emphasis to these skill-based improvisational activi-ties that are integral to the fate of state projects, it seems appropriate to name them formally. To this end, we might repurpose the word "state-craft." Statecraft is a term that has traditionally denoted international diplomacy. But the term itself, in accentuating craft, or work requir-ing particular skill, captures well the practical, hands-on dimensions of state formation. Thus, to apply that term here, it could be said that Mexico's experiences in trying to adopt surveillance technologies to fight insecurity reveal the importance of statecraft in state formation.

Identifying the role of statecraft in state formation is not to argue that the fate of the state is decided by statecraft alone. The notion of art or improvisation inherent in the term indicates the lack of control that those practicing statecraft have as a condition of their work. In the cases of the RENAUT, CEDI, and REPUVE, the availability of resources, the extant organization of the state, the positions of major businesses rela-tive to the programs, the opinions of the public, the technical designs

of the programs, and so forth were all forces that conditioned program outcomes. But what statecraft underscores is how state administrators and planners are still able to problem-solve and construct the state when confronted with such obstacles.

The improvisational nature of statecraft lends state formation an unpredictable character. That is, if tactics such as those outlined in this chapter give authorities a hold on automobility, mobile telephony, and personal identification, they are not the holds that were planned. In Sonora, where the application of chips has been successful, the REPUVE program functions and is understood, as the quotations at the start of this chapter indicate, as a technology allowing local residents to pass freely through federal tollbooths rather than a program for locating suspicious vehicles or ensuring "legal certainty." In Baja California, Colima, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Nuevo León, personal identity cards have been distributed to Mexicans, but only those under the age of eighteen, and are thus understood as tools to facilitate youth access to schools and public services rather than tools for all Mexicans to integrate and secure various forms of personal identification. Mobile telephones, meanwhile, while intended to be secured by the government's Interior Secretariat, end up being the responsibility of private actors considered better situated and skilled to handle them.

Uncertainty does not mean that statecraft is random. In the modifications made to programs, state administrators take advantage of extant ideas and arrangements of the state that are already operational. This is clearest in the practice of programmatic piggybacking, where institutions that enjoy popular legitimacy (public schools) and material infrastructures that are in use (tollbooths) are employed to advance fledgling programs. But it can also be seen in encouraging state agencies' authority to tax (the case of Banjército) or accommodating the legal claims of citizens (Free Transit in Sonora). So, then, if statecraft entails uncertainty, it is a patterned uncertainty that gravitates toward past and present state forms.

Saying this, past performance does not guarantee future results. And whichever hold that statecraft allows authorities over collective agencies in society cannot be permanent. For instance, the Calderón administration's attempt to circumvent the state by deputizing cellular service providers to track mobile devices was met with strong public opposition[51] and challenged by the National Commission on Human Rights before the Supreme Court. Although the law was ruled constitutional,[52] once Enrique Peña Nieto assumed the presidency in 2013, his administration

sought to make its own imprint on the governance of telecommunications by pursuing the Telecom Law, a series of reforms widely criticized as a threat to net neutrality.[53]

The Personal Identity Card for Minors, meanwhile, was met with skepticism and confusion by those it was intended to benefit: the parents of Mexican schoolchildren. "How do I know that they won't misuse our children's data?" asked Verónica López, mother of one child whose school was registering students. "A lady said that this would help a lot because something like this is already done in Europe. But, for us, it's new."[54] For its part, the lower house of the Mexican Congress sued to halt the program on the grounds that collecting iris scans and fingerprints from minors represented a violation of privacy.[55] The Supreme Court upheld the program's constitutionality, but the new administration eventually halted distribution of Identity Cards for Minors and launched an investigation of the program's use of state funds,[56] all while reemphasizing the federal government's intention to realize a national identity card for all Mexicans.[57] Meanwhile, the Federal Electoral Institute, in its attempt to maintain its voter card as Mexico's primary form of personal identification, went forward with a redesign of the card that would meet the security requirements demanded by the federal government.[58]

Finally, the Mexican government's attempts to implement the REPUVE at border crossings by allowing Banjército and customs officers to charge for inspections led to lawsuits sponsored by the PAN.[59] The lawsuits resulted in Banjército's suspending the program at those sites, leaving vehicles crossing into the country outside the registry.[60] Thus, despite the efforts of authorities to improvise different ways to implement these surveillance technologies, the government's hold on mobile telephony, personal identification, and automobility remains tenuous.

These considerations, like the histories shared in the second chapter, suggest a metamorphic and temporal quality to state formation. The tactics that succeed in gaining a hold over collective agencies are defined and transformed by the resistance they encounter. And the success of these tactics can be fleeting as new forces push back against state arrangements to control them. New tactics must then be adopted to provide a grip over collective agencies anew.

What results from the state's adoption of surveillance technologies is not prohesion, then, whereby the state attaches itself to the materiality of collective agency en masse and brings its diverse assortment

of governmental agencies together into a single network, but a further hybridization of strategies and tactics that mocks the unifying impulse of prohesion. This does not mean that prohesion has failed to take root in Mexico. The REPUVE database exists and is used by public authorities and private actors to provide "legal certainty" about the provenance of certain vehicles. Vehicles circulating in Sonora, crossing over the Mexican-US border, operating in Zacatecas, Tlaxcala, and other states, and purchased from new-car dealers have tags attached to them. And arches able to read tags have been installed in select sites.[61] But the vision of a technologically secured future, such as that presented to forum attendees in Tlaxcala, remains a distant reality as the REPUVE is blended into existing modes of governance and governmental infrastructures—tolling systems in Sonora and customs houses at the border—in order to make the program work. Rather than unifying the identification of individuals under a single biometric standard, the Personal Identity Card for Minors adds another level to personal identification and more bureaucracy to its governance. And the Geolocation Law fails to bring governmental agencies together at all, casting the responsibility for security over mobile telephony outside the state. Thus, the power of the state is not a static force or entity that maps onto the state's political blueprints, but a stochastic one that emerges through authorities' statecraft with other actors, forces, and modes of governing.

In the end, the true importance of statecraft lies in what it reveals about the continued influence of civic engagement in the formation of the security state. In Sonora, political pressure from ordinary citizens and local politicians translated into the realization of a constitutional right that had previously been ignored. And at the border, that same pressure resulted in the suspension of import fees. Thus, the story of surveillance technologies is one in which ordinary people can remain central to the outcomes that these technologies help produce. In this sense, statecraft can be read as an opportunity for ordinary Mexicans to continue to have a voice in the shape of government. And it is to this point that the concluding chapter turns.

Grasping Surveillance

It's not easy to believe in the government. But we have to
believe in something. We need to come together to make
the government better, to trust it more. I have to take on
my responsibility independent of whether I believe in the
government or not. We have to meet our responsibility. So,
I see this program independently of whether the authorities
do what they're supposed to. We as citizens should fulfill our
obligation. At the end of the day, we have to think of the
future, in our welfare, independent of the difficulties. And
that means acting with values, involving ourselves in social
activities and programs. Without participation, it would be
worse for everyone.

—Zacatecas resident registering with the REPUVE

6.1 THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . .

Having left office at the end of 2012, Felipe Calderón and his crusade
against insecurity have passed from the public stage in Mexico. But the
problem of insecurity has not. During his campaign and first years in
office, Enrique Peña Nieto sought to shift the public's attention away
from security issues and toward economic and social policy. The hall-
mark of this effort was the Pact for Mexico, an accord signed by the
president and leaders of the three major political parties to put aside
political differences and move the country forward through coopera-
tion in five key areas. These included agreements for (1) "a society of
rights and liberties," which "achieves the inclusion of all social sectors
and reduces the high levels of inequality that exist today between the
people and regions of our country"; (2) "economic growth, employ-
ment, and competitiveness," whereby the "state should generate the
conditions that permit for economic growth that results in the creation