The London School of Economics and Political Science

Square holes for round pegs: 'Street' children's experiences of social policy processes 2002-2005 in Puebla City, Mexico

Sarah Thomas de Benitez

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

Abstract

A growing body of sociological and anthropological literature recognizes 'street children' as a socially constructed category. Social policy research highlights the dynamic and political nature of policy-to-intervention processes. Children who live on urban streets ostensibly benefit from a range of social interventions, but street children as targets of social policy are under-researched. This thesis explores experiences of 'street' children in their take-up of social interventions and the policies that lie behind them. Adopting a layered case study approach, focused on Puebla City, Mexico, between 2002 and 2005, I used qualitative research methods (interviews, observation, documentation) to build a rich picture of social policy processes through exploring experiences of 24 street-living children, families, service providers and policy-makers.

This thesis argues that government research and policies relating to Puebla City constructed simplistic notions of 'street children' as children whose lives play out on the streets. My findings suggested public spaces occupied a limited part of children's lives while street-living children and their families remained connected, but social interventions proved resistant to reuniting them. Specialist NGO interventions appeared to provide a better 'fit' for street-living children and families than interventions designed for larger populations of vulnerable or deviant children. Unregulated self-help groups were left, unsuccessfully, to bridge the gap of treatment for child substance abuse. My thesis suggests that social policy processes construct and then deconstruct 'street children' to fit available social interventions, disregarding children's experiences and outcomes, forcing street-living children (round pegs) into social interventions designed for other populations (square holes). This distorts higher order policy goals with the stated aim of including children in mainstream society; with the illusory benefit of saving resources in the short term but with further exclusionary effects for street-living children. Recommendations include recognizing children as service end-users, and acknowledging families and service providers as key stakeholders.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis represents the culmination of several years of academic study, which built in turn on many years working in public service and civil society. Friends and family, colleagues, children and their families, have all shaped my understanding of the world and therefore my approach to this study. I owe them all deep thanks.

Glossary

Audit trail is a step-by-step record by which data can be traced to its source, and in this thesis refers to a schematized and narrative systematic accumulation of monthly spreadsheets recording all data sources by date and type

Calasanz Homes (Hogares Calasanz) is a registered civil society organization (CSO) in Puebla City which forms part of the Catholic Church Calsanz order's charitable work. Calasanz has 3 long-term homes for abandoned, orphaned and abused boys, including some street children

Child Rights Law 2000 (CRL 2000) *Ley de Proteccion de los Derechos de Ninas, Ninos y Adolescentes* literally means "Law for the Protection of the Rights of Boys, Girls and Adolescents" and is a federal statute promulgated in 2000 relating to children's rights

Children's & Teenage Shelters (Casa de la Niñez y Casa de la Familia) are 2 short-term shelters run by Puebla State Welfare for abandoned, orphaned, abused boys & girls, aged 0-13 and 14-17

Civil Society Organization (CSO) is also sometimes known as NGO or Non-Governmental Organization and is a legally registered non-profit–making association

Coding refers to the attachment of index words (codes) to unit segments of a record such as an interview or field note (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 353)

Confidence building is 'a feature of good quality research. Reliability and sample size in quantitative research, and triangulation, transparency, corpus construction and thick description in qualitative research are measures to build confidence in the audience about the research results.' (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 354)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international legal instrument created within the United Nations which entered into force in 1989, has been almost universally ratified (all countries except Somalia and USA) and guarantees individuals aged 0 to 18 years of age a range of rights to survival, development and participation

Corpus construction refers to 'the process of collecting materials in qualitative research.' (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 354) It involves maximizing the variety of unknown representations in the population

From the Street to Life (De la Calle a la Vida) – A social programme 2000-2006 launched by Mexico's federal welfare authorities to target 'street children' and implemented in Puebla City under the auspices of Puebla State's welfare authorities

Gatekeeper is understood in this thesis to refer to a person invested with power to grant or deny, and to supervise access to street children and/or to information about them

Informant is understood in this thesis to refer to a person well positioned, because of his or her experiences, to provide contextual and corroborative information about interviews, observation and/or documentation

IPODERAC (Instituto Poblano de Readaptación Social Asociacion Civil) also known as Nolasco Village (Villa Nolasco) is a registered civil society organization (CSO) on the outskirts of Puebla, dedicated to street children, which provides a long-term home for boys who have been abandoned or lived in the street and need long term residential care

JUCONI (Junto Con Los Niños y las Niñas) literally 'Together with the Children' is a Puebla-based registered civil society organization (CSO) dedicated to street children, which provides a

range of services for street children including a transitional home for boys who have lived in the street

Living Hope (Esperanza Viva) is the Puebla City branch of a US-based Evangelical Church, and as a registered civil society organization (CSO) provides a long-term home for abandoned, orphaned and abused boys and girls, including some street children

MESE - Programme for Children in Extraordinary Situations (Programa para Menores En Situacion Extraordinaria), a national Welfare social programme 1987-1993 which aimed to develop a national methodology of intervention for street children

Night Shelter – Puebla City's night shelter was run by City Welfare to provide temporary shelter for indigent adults and children with their families

No More Coins (No Más Monedas) was a social programme 2002-2005 launched by Puebla City's welfare authorities to target 'street children' and their families

Opportunities (Oportunidades) was the 2000-2006 flagship national social development programme created by the Social Development Ministry to target children in very poor households, deploying a combination of educational and nutrition grants, parent education and health service access for families.

PAMAR (*Programa de Atencion para Menores y Adolescentes en Riesgo)* literally the Programme of Attention for Children and Adolescents at Risk, was the name of Puebla State Welfare's Social Programme aimed at adolescent children at risk of survival sex, STIs and addictions

PAN - National Action Party (Partido Accion Nacional) won Mexico's national Presidential elections for the first time in 2000, breaking a monopoly held for over 70 years by the Institutional Revolutionary Party *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). The 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis was the first experience in power sharing in Puebla between a national PAN President, a State PRI Governor and a City PAN Mayor.

Policy maker is understood in this thesis to refer to a person invested with the power to create or change policies affecting street children

PRI - Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) has controlled Puebla State for an unbroken 70 years. Governor Melquiades Morales' PRI electoral term (1999-2005) was supported by absolute PRI majorities in Puebla's State Congress for the 54th Legislature from 1999-2002 and the 55th Legislature from 2002 to 2005, continuing a long-standing tradition

Programme of Action for Children 2002-2010: A Mexico appropriate for childhood and adolescence (Programa de Acción 2002-2010: Un México apropiado para la infancia y la adolescencia) set out the overarching social programme for children of President Fox's national administration, intended to set children's rights as its beacon

Puebla City Development Plan 2002-2005 (Plan Municipal de Desarrollo de 2002-2005) set out Mayor Paredes' public policy strategy for Puebla City. Within 100 days of taking office, a City Mayor is legally required to publish his or her Development Plan setting out the main policies and programmes for his or her 3 year tenure.

Puebla City Welfare or Puebla City DIF (Sistema Municipal de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) for Puebla City, literally "Municipal System of Integral Development of the Family" is organized along the same guidelines and objectives as those of Puebla State Welfare and is tasked with executing social welfare programmes within its geographical jurisdiction.

Remand Home (Centro de Observación y Readaptación Social para Menores Infractores de Puebla - CORSMIEP) is a secure residential facility run by Puebla State Government's Interior Ministry for young offenders & girls and boys at risk through antisocial conduct or misdemeanours

Puebla State Development Plan 1999-2005 (Plan de Desarrollo Estatal de Puebla 1999-2005) set out Governor Morales' public policy strategy for Puebla State. Within 100 days of taking office, a State Governor is legally required to submit a Development Plan to his State Congress, setting out the main policies and programmes for his or her 6 year tenure.

Puebla State Welfare or Puebla State DIF (Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia del Estado de Puebla) literally "System for the Integral Development of the Family of the State of Puebla" is legally responsible for the implementation of social welfare in Puebla State

Puebla State Social Welfare Law 1986 (PSSWL 1986) (Ley sobre el Sistema Estatal de Asistencia Social) literally "Law relating to the State System of Social Assistance" provides the legal framework for social policy processes and interventions for street children in Puebla State. Under this law, children living on the street are designated as targets of social welfare

Reach Glory (Alcance Victoria) is the Puebla City branch of a US-based Evangelical Church, and as a registered civil society organization (CSO) provides 5 long-term homes for adults and children in search of shelter, mainly men, women and young people with addictions, including some street children

Respondent validation is a marker for relevance in qualitative research which refers in this thesis to transcripts being confirmed by interview respondents

Return to Life (Regresar a Vivir) is a non-registered self-help group in Puebla City run by ex-addicts which has a short-stay 'Annex' (see self-help group Annexes) for alcoholics and drug-users, males & females of all ages, and 'uncontrollable' children and youth

Self-help group Annexes (Anexos) are secure (lock-up) residential facilities designed for and run by adult addicts, to which addicts voluntarily admit themselves or are forcibly admitted by families to address their alcohol or drug addictions together with other addicts in similar situations. Annexes are modelled loosely on Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) tenets, but they are not recognized by AA as legitimate members of the AA movement.

SNDIF - National System for Integrated Development of the Family (Sistema Nacional del Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) is the Federal Welfare Department, a decentralized department within the Federal Health Ministry, responsible for the coordination and supervision of implementation of Social Welfare

(Social) construction or construct is a term that highlights the role that language plays in creating our social worlds as opposed to merely reflecting or depicting them (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 354)

Social Development Law 2004 (SDL 2004) or literally the 'General Law on Social Development' provides the legal national framework for social policy processes and interventions for poor and vulnerable groups, identifying as its target population 'every person or social group in a vulnerable situation' (SDL 2004, Art. 8)

Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) is the Federal Ministry, responsible for the coordination and supervision of implementation of Social Development

Social interventions are understood in this thesis to refer to front-line organized services (including for example education, health, shelter) delivered to individual street children, and for which street-living children met eligibility criteria.

Social policy is a contested term, understood in Latin America at its most expansive as encompassing all state measures and methods aimed at improving social well-being, justice and social peace, with universal access to services (Mendez, 1992) to its narrowest expression as a targeted measure taken in a social sector, intended to respond quickly and in a palliative manner to the demands of a specific population (Stahl, 1994).

Social programmes are understood in this thesis as referring to the instrumentation and the systematic operationalization of a social policy, or an element of social policy, in the shape of

deliverable, time-bound, plans of action usually accompanied by objectives and strategies which set out to make a direct and positive contribution to the quality of life of a specified population (Maingnon, 1992: 11).

Social welfare refers in Mexico to 'the combination of actions intended to improve those social circumstances which hamper an individual's personal development and to provide physical, social and mental protection for people in need, until they have been incorporated into a full and productive life' (Social Welfare Law 2004, Art. 3).

Social Welfare Law 2004 (SWL 2004) or literally "Social Assistance Law", replaced an earlier SWL of 1986, provides the legal national framework for social policy processes and interventions for street children. Under this law, children living on the street are designated as targets of social welfare

Solidarity with Adolescents (Solidaridad con los Adolescentes) is a registered civil society organization (CSO) in Puebla City, led ostensibly by Franciscan missionaries although Puebla's Catholic Church does not recognize them as belonging to the Franciscan order. Solidarity has a long-term home for abandoned, orphaned and abused teenage boys, including some street children

Street Children Programme 'Programa Niños de la Calle' (2002-2005) was the name of Puebla City Welfare's social programme for street children, linking up all existing Welfare social programmes aimed at 'vulnerable' beneficiaries, so that a child entering Puebla City Welfare could access all its social programmes

Street children (Niños en Situación de Calle) are also known as 'children in street situations' or children for whom the street is a reference point and has a central role in their lives. The term is used as a collective label to describe or at least include 'street-living' and 'street-working' children. The term came into common use in the 1970s, when large numbers of children living or working in public spaces became visible in Latin American cities

Street-living children (Niños y niñas de la calle) – definitions are contested but they are understood for the purpose of this thesis as 'those [under 18 year olds] for whom the street forms their daily habitat, and who sleep in wasteland, bus terminals, sewers, markets or hiding places in tourist and commercial areas [...] what defines their category is the fact of living in the street' (SNDIF & UNICEF, 1997: 14).

Street-working children (Niños y niñas en la calle) – definitions are contested but they are understood for the purpose of this thesis as under 18 year olds who work on the streets in the day but who return to the family home at night.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was developed for 11 to 16 year olds as a behavioural screening device (Goodman et al, 1998), referred to in this thesis as a guide for the researcher to assess interviewed children's emotional states.

Thick Description refers to 'detailed descriptions of situations, events and experiences as revealed in interviews, observations or documents' and is a marker of good practice in qualitative research (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000 : 366)

Topic Guide is a set of broad questions or themes based on the research question used to structure the conversation in an interview (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000 : 366)

Triangulation is understood in this thesis using multiple sources and combining methods, to compare and contrast evidence, leading to contradictions on which to reflect during the course of the research

With You (Contigo) is the name of the 2000-2006 national social policy strategy launched by Mexico's President Fox, which drew together national education, health and social development policies for the first time into an explicit social policy strategy

Youth Integration Centres (Centros de Integracion Juvenil) are decentralized Health Ministry entities offering out-patient counseling services to recovering young addicts

Youth to Paradise (Jóvenes al Paraiso) is a non-registered self-help group run by ex-addicts in Puebla City which has a short-stay 'Annex' (see self-help group Annexes) for alcoholics and drug-users, males & females of all ages, and 'uncontrollable' children and youth

28 of October (La Unión Popular de Vendedores Ambulantes (UPVA) 28 de Octubre) literally 'The Popular Union of Street Sellers' and often referred to as 'el 28', is a Puebla-based union of street market workers which has since the 1980s opposed Puebla State's government, carrying out periodic street protests and taking possession of unused land on the urban fringes of Puebla City.

100 Cities studies (Los estudios en cien ciudades de niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores) literally 'The studies in 100 cities of working girls, boys and adolescents', were carried out in 1999 and 2004 under the auspices of the national Welfare Department in Mexico's largest urban centres excluding the national capital (SNDIF et al, 1999; SNDIF, 2004). In these studies, street-working and street-living children were folded into a larger population of 'urban working children', who were the main subject of these 2 studies.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Research and Research Methods

1.1 Introduction to the Research

The Area of Research

Street children have been a focus of intense academic interest and welfare concern since the 1980s. Targeted by local civil society organizations and national governmental programmes, street children are also an international social policy issue (UNICEF, 2002; Volpi, 2002; WHO 2002). This thesis drills down from the international discourse around street children, through national and local contexts to explore individual children's experiences of social interventions in the central Mexican City of Puebla. The context is complex: definitions and numbers of street children are contested, and little is known about children's departures from the streets or the effectiveness of policies and programmes intended for street children. This thesis reports and interprets the findings of research designed to find out more about how street children, as end-users of public and civil society services, experience social interventions and social programmes within a multi-layered context.

Research and services for street children have experienced a paradigm shift during the past decade: ideas of street children as abandoned victims, living chaotic lives, who need to brought under adult control have transformed to perceptions of children who use street spaces meaningfully, have changing 'careers' and are active agents in their own lives (Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003). Concepts of space, time and children's agency have been introduced into recent research. This thesis builds on these

advances in the research with street children in order to explore those social policies and programmes designed to improve their well-being.

Motivation for the research

Motivations for undertaking the research for this thesis were grounded in insights provided by the literature about street children and by the researcher's work experience during many years in and with programmes designed to improve street children's lives.

Sociological enquiry into children as independent social actors has a relatively short history. Sociological theorizing about the socially constructed nature of the term 'street child' (Glauser, 1990; Luiz de Moura, 2002) has been fundamental to appreciating 'street children' as a collective label used in advocacy and social policy. At the same time, advances in child-centred research have shown ways in which children's involvement in research can contribute to understanding their world (Earls and Carlson, 1999; Christensen and James, 2000; Chan et al, 2003). The knowledge gap between a collective 'street child' identity constructed in social policy and the resourceful individual child as service beneficiary was intriguing as a research topic.

Meanwhile, at practical working level, more than a decade of work establishing and developing civil society organizations (CSOs) for street children in Mexico and Ecuador, followed by several years' experience providing technical assistance on street children to governments and civil society organizations in Latin America, Africa and Asia, led the researcher to question the targeting and benefits to street children of social interventions. Social policy discourse about helping street children to access their rights translated into programmes and services which seemed designed more to

protect the public than to protect children. In my practical experience of programmes with street children, children's own experiences of social interventions were rarely sought or used to inform social policies.

Motivations for the research therefore can be understood as representing an intersection between the researcher's work experiences with street children and social policy, and recent sociological literature about childhood and street children

Fig. 1.1: Representation of motivations for the research
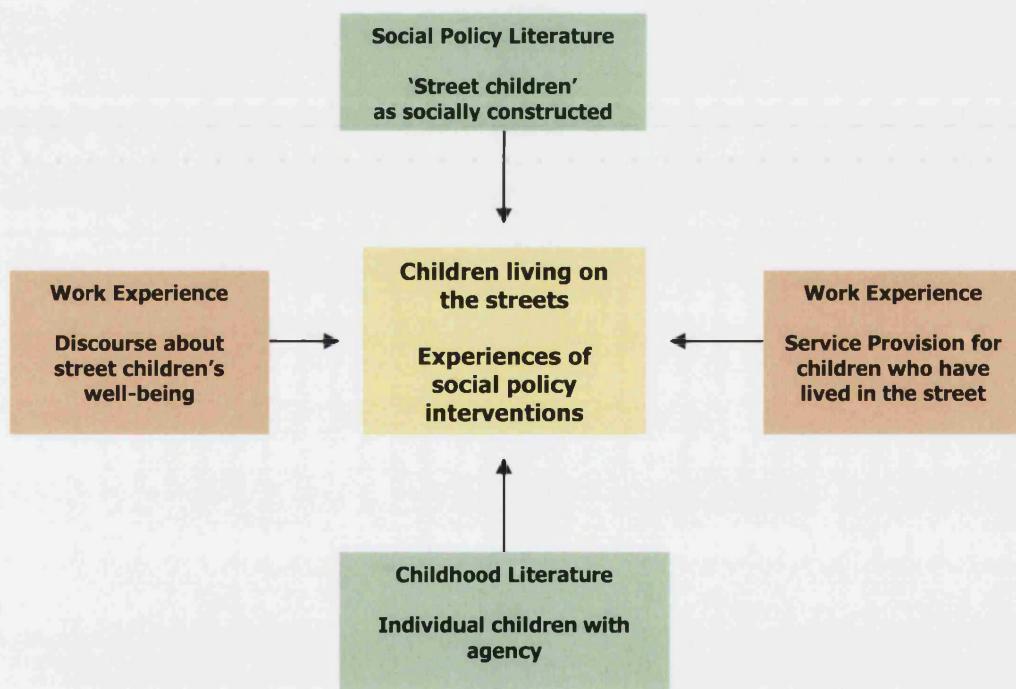
The Research Question

The research guiding this thesis sought to examine the following question: ***How are social policies for children formulated, implemented and experienced by children who live or have lived on the streets?*** This central research question was unpacked into 5 sub-questions:

1. *How do social policies approach street-living children?*

2. *What forms of social programme and social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*

3. *How do 'street' children experience social interventions when they live on the streets?*

4. *How do 'street' children experience residential social interventions?*

5. *What other forms of support do they experience?*

A diagram of the research framework designed to help structure the study needed to answer these questions is provided in figure 1.5 below.

Contribution of this Thesis

This thesis aims to make an original contribution to social policy research and practice by exploring experiences of children who live or have lived on the streets as end users of social interventions and social programmes, as manifestations of social policy, designed to improve their well-being. By conducting a city-level exploratory case study, new knowledge is surfaced about street children's access to social interventions and about their experiences within them. In addition, independent critical power is brought to bear on previously analyzed areas of social policy and street children. The thesis extends understanding of social policy processes by exploring experiences of a group of service end users who have traditionally been regarded as beneficiaries rather than active agents in social interventions. At the same time, the thesis extends understanding of children who live in the streets by exploring their engagement with formal social interventions as part of a wider system of formal and informal support structures. This combined approach permits identification of implications for children of the socially constructed categories into which they are shoe-horned for service

provision and for social polices (the square holes of this thesis' title) of conducting evidence-based research with street children (the 'round pegs' in this thesis).

Thesis Outline

In this introductory Chapter 1, the research design and methods used to develop this thesis are set out. This introductory section includes an examination of academic perspectives on conducting research with children and their implications for the practical orientation of this research study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on childhood, street children and social policy needed to answer the research question, setting out the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, summarizing the current state of international empirical knowledge about street children, social policies and social interventions. Chapter 3 drills down from the international context to the social policy context surrounding street children in Puebla City, representing the second 'layer' of this exploratory case study (see Figure 1.2 below). Chapter 3 sets out the legal, political and social policy dimensions in Puebla City within which social programmes and interventions were implemented for street children during the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis. It addresses sub-research question 1: '*How do social policies approach street-living children?* by setting out social policy discourse, plus social programmes and social interventions as they appear in the planning.

The middle chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis each addresses findings about street-living children's lives in relation to their experiences of social interventions: in the street, their families and in residential programmes. Chapter 4 explores '*How do social policies approach street-living children?* by focusing on the governmental social welfare research on street-living children, then turns to children's on-street experiences, asking '*How do 'street' children experience social interventions when they live on the streets?*'

and '*What forms of social programme and social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*' Chapter 4 sets out knowledge about Puebla's street-living children drawn from public research designed to inform social policies for street children at national and local levels. Findings from my exploratory case study, drawing on interviews with 24 street-living children, both enrich and challenge public findings about the characteristics and circumstances of children living in the streets in Puebla City. Within this context, Chapter 4 looks at the 24 interviewed children's experiences of social interventions while living on the street and as part of their on-street structures.

Chapter 5 addresses sub-question 5: '*What other forms of support do they experience?*' exploring the role children's families and neighbourhoods play in street children's lives and social interventions, and the nature and continuity of 'street' children's home-based relationships, then identifying implications for social interventions. Chapter 6 explores sub-questions: '*What forms of social programme and social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*' with a focus on residential social interventions and '*How do 'street' children experience these social interventions?*' exploring the 24 interviewed children's experiences of residential service provision in Puebla City together with service provider perspectives.

Chapter 7 takes up again sub-research questions 1 and 2, addressed from the discourse perspective in Chapter 3 asking '*How do social policies approach street-living children?*' by exploring their practical application in *What forms of social programme and social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?* in the light of the evidence presented in Chapters 4 to 6 about the experiences

of 24 children who had lived on and off the streets of Puebla City during the period covered by the research. Chapter 8 draws together the chapter conclusions and relates them to the larger body of international evidence and theories concerning street children and social policy. Higher level conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for research and social policies for street children.

1.2 The Research Design

The research question *'How are social policies for children implemented and experienced by children who live or have lived on the streets?,* asks about processes (how) focused on a particular contemporary phenomenon (street children) within in a complex setting (service manifestations of social policy) in which the researcher does not have control over events. In these circumstances a case study design presents the best strategy for responding to this question, understanding the case study as *'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence'* (Robson, 1993: 52).

For this thesis, a single exploratory case study design was chosen, reflecting both the potential complexity of street children's interactions with social policies and the scarcity of evidence-based data available about these relationships. Allowing research to *'retain a holistic approach reflecting the characteristics of real life'* and to incorporate new findings as they emerge (Yin, 1994: 13), an exploratory case study design offered an iterative strategy appropriate to exploring in depth the perceptions, behaviours and relationships underpinning implementation and take-up of social interventions by 'street' children. A single city case study design was chosen in recognition of both the limited resources of doctoral research and the complex nature of street children's

relationships with social policy, a situation in which *'boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'* (Yin, 1994: 13). Neither survey nor experiment would have been appropriate designs to respond to my research question: a survey strategy, although well suited to identifying patterns, is not an efficient or effective way of exploring processes and requires prior knowledge of the data to be collected and about the street child population which were not available (although this will be explored in more depth in Chapter 4); an experimental design, although well suited to exploring causality and answering questions about process, would have required controlled allocation of samples to different experimental conditions, a feature not available to researchers exploring how social policies affect street-living children.

My case study was exploratory, rather than descriptive or explanatory, aiming to uncover interactions and outcomes within the chain from policy-making to implementation to children's experiences, seeking insights into social intervention processes, in order to find associations between social policy, intervention and end-user in a new light, from the perspective of children who lived on the streets. Information available about policy to outcome processes pertinent to street children was too limited for a descriptive study, much less an explanatory study. Opportunities for such studies should increase as data for research becomes available following implementation of transparency legislation in Mexico and as more is understood about how social policies for children are implemented and experienced by street children.

The single city exploratory case study for this thesis took a 'layered' approach (Patton, 1990) with the outermost layer as the international issue of 'street' children and individual children who had lived on city streets at the core (see Figure 1.2). The layered approach was chosen in recognition of: the subject of the research as complex

cases within cases; its flexibility to incorporate rich, detailed and multi-sourced materials and accommodate developments during the case study; its strengths as a way to organize data collection and data analysis at and between different levels of the policy process.

Fig. 1.2: A 5-layered case study approach to street children and social policies
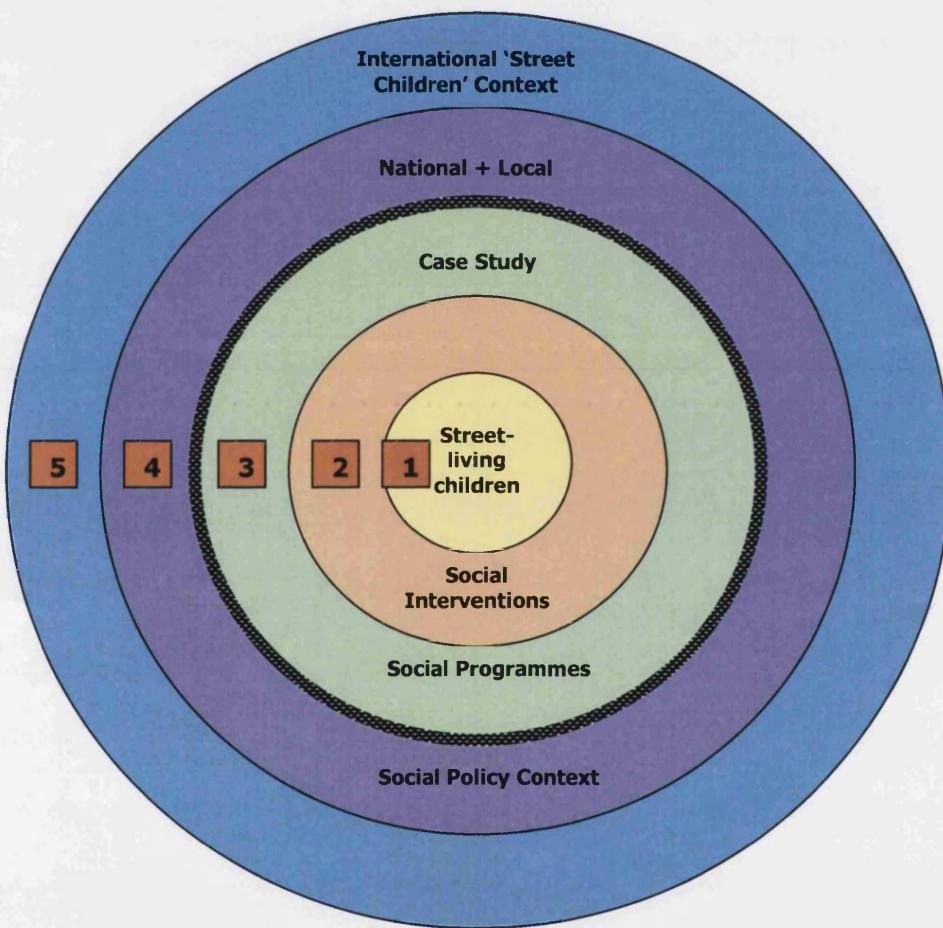
This layered approach provided an organizing device for the research design, approaching street-living children by drilling down from the international context through social policies, programmes and social interventions to reach children's experiences, before surfacing children's experiences through the contexts of interventions, programmes and social policies to set them in a relevant international context. To explore relationships between social policies and street-living children's

realities for this thesis, social policy processes were conceived as having 4 interrelated stages (see Figure 1.3): social policy (formulated strategy); social programme (strategy instrumentalized for implementation); social intervention (implemented service delivery); and street-living children (service delivery experienced).

Fig. 1.3: Social policy process: a framework for analysis

Social Policy - formulation

Social Programme instrumental-ization

Street-living children - experiences

Social intervention - delivery
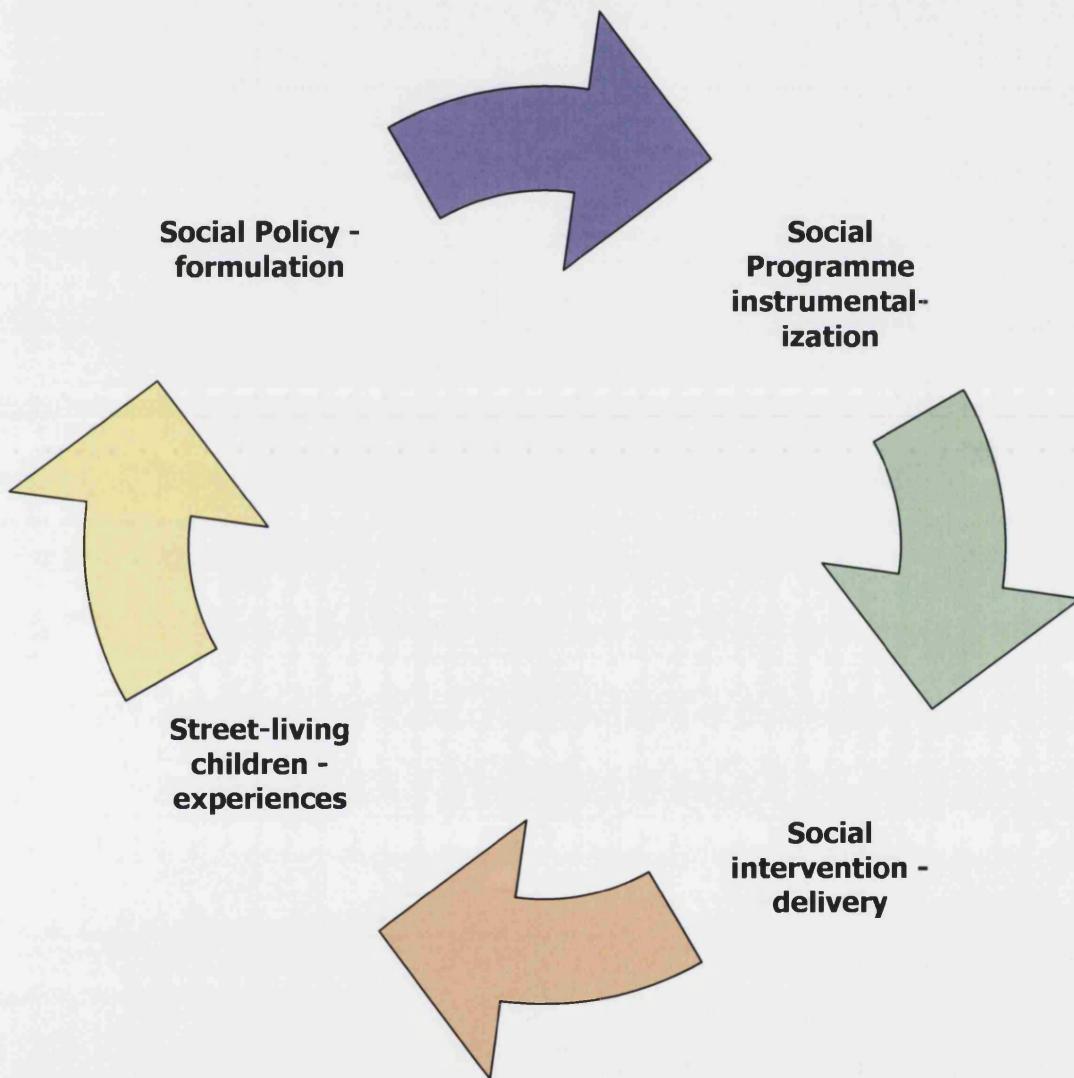
Units of Analysis

Following Yin's advice, I used common definitions of units of analysis for the case study, only making them different in clear, operationally defensible ways where they need, for reasons of clarity, to deviate from the standard (Yin 1994: 25).

Street-living children represented the core layer (layer 1) or core unit of analysis in the case study for this thesis. Definitions are contested, as discussed in Chapter 2, but the official understanding of street-living children [*niños de la calle*], discussed more fully in Chapters 3 and 4, as relevant to the time and place of this study, was: '*those* [under 18 year olds] *for whom the street forms their daily habitat, and who sleep in wasteland, bus terminals, sewers, markets or hiding places in tourist and commercial areas [...] what defines their category is the fact of living in the street*' (SNDIF & UNICEF, 1997: 14). By sleeping and surviving on the streets, these 'street-living' children are distinguishable from other children who work on the streets in the day but who return to the family home at night, known as 'street-working' children [*niños en la calle*]. Street-living and street-working children are folded, with others, into the collective *niños en situacion de calle*, literally 'children in street situations', and also referred to in this thesis as 'street children', both terms used interchangeably in Mexican social policy. This first unit of analysis included children's relationships on the street and with their families, using a dynamic approach to time and space.

The next layer (layer 2) or the 2nd unit of analysis is represented by 'social interventions' which are understood for the purpose of this thesis as organized services delivered to street children, and for which street-living children met eligibility criteria. Social interventions could be implemented by provincial Puebla State or Puebla City local authorities or by registered civil society organizations (CSOs), or by self-help groups. They could be made available to children in open public spaces and/or in closed residential spaces.

A single city case study and its 'social programmes' [*programas sociales*] formed layer 3, as the 3rd unit of analysis. The Puebla City research setting is described below in

section 1.4. As a unit of analysis, Puebla City [*Ciudad de Puebla de Zaragoza*] refers to the politically defined limits of the municipality of Puebla City. 'Social programmes' are understood to mean time-bound, documented, strategies presented as vehicles to operationalize social policies.

Layer 4 understands as contextual for the case study those national, provincial and municipal policies commonly considered to be *social* policies, derived from the established national, provincial and local legal and political contexts and have been determined in the fields of education, health, social development, social welfare and social protection as directed at improving human well-being.

Finally, the case study's 5th and outer layer is formed by the international political and academic contexts surrounding 'street children', understood as framing understandings in Puebla City of social policies and street children.

The Research Setting: Puebla City

The case study setting for this research was Puebla City, the capital city of Puebla State, an important industrial and commercial centre, home to 1.35 million inhabitants, which lies 75 miles to the east of the national capital, Mexico City (see map at Figure 1.4). Street children had been visible in and around Puebla City since the 1970s (Garcia Duran, 1979). At the start of the research period in 2002, Puebla City was home to at least 2 civil society organizations (CSOs) providing services dedicated to street children and 2 social programmes targeting street children: national initiative 2000-2006 'From the Street to Life' [*De la Calle a la Vida*]; and local Puebla Welfare 2002-2005 Programme 'No More Coins' [*No Mas Monedas*]. Puebla was 1 of 6 Mexican States invited by the national authorities to participate in 'From the Street to Life', an invitation reflecting high numbers of children found working in Puebla's 3 main cities in

a 1999 national study of working children. Some 3,000 working children had been found in Puebla City, forming the 6th largest concentration of working children in the country (SNDIF 1999: 19). Several other social programmes and services were also available to street children in the city.

The choice of Puebla City as a case study setting for this research reflected a combination of: the City's relatively high and persistent visibility of 'street children'; the existence of governmental social programmes which targeted or included street children among their beneficiaries; and the presence of various governmental and non-governmental social interventions for street children. The various options available to street children in this research setting introduced the potential for choice: street children able to choose between social interventions as well as social interventions able to choose between potential beneficiaries. The choice of Puebla also had practical components: the researcher had lived and worked in Puebla City as co-founder and director from 1988 to 1994 of the JUCONI CSO, 1 of the City's 2 CSOs providing services for street children, becoming a naturalized Mexican in 1996 and representing Puebla's CSOs on the first national programme committee for 'From the Street to Life' in 2000, experiences which offered historical insights into social policies and street children in Puebla and also facilitated access to a wide range of interviewees.

Chapter 3 sets Puebla within its national setting, social interventions are profiled in Chapter 6, and social programmes are sketched out in Chapter 3 before being considered again in some depth in Chapter 7 in the light of evidence from the intervening chapters.

Fig. 1.4: Map of research setting: the case study site of Puebla City, capital of Puebla State

Research Framework

Within the layered case study design, an organizing framework for the research was developed, identifying the relationships between street-living children and social interventions as the central pivot of the research. Recalling advances in the literature recognizing that children use spaces, have changing 'careers' and are active agents in their own lives, the research framework acknowledged 'street-living' children as potential users over time of social services, not just in the streets but also at home and in residential care homes. Social interventions designed to be delivered to children in public spaces, in the family home or neighbourhood, and through residential institutions, were all likewise recognized as representing services for 'street-living' children. This link implied flexibility in use of time and space: children participating in the research did not need to be living on the street at the time of data collection, but

had to have lived on the streets somewhere in Puebla City at some time during the 2002-2005 period to be considered `street-living children' for social interventions and therefore for the case study.

The research framework, outlined in Figure 1.5 below, recognizes that street-living children do not experience social interventions in isolation, but as part of wider interactions, some based around their family homes others developed on and around their streets environments, both of which are also considered as dynamic environments. Social interventions are directed (downward arrows) at supporting children, while relationships with on-street and family networks may be mutually supportive (two-way arrows). The framework recognizes that children may experience social interventions differently, both from each other and from ways intended, leading to information collection systems about street-living children for social intervention and programme monitoring and evaluation, and which may also feed into social policies (dotted-line arrows).

The framework additionally considers that street-living children may experience social interventions through their family or street relationships. Also, social interventions experienced by children can be governmental, CSO or self-help groups, with capacity to act within social programmes and policies, but also with capacity to act independently. Thus, children's moves between spaces and across social interventions can be tracked within a limited time window, allowing additionally for social interventions to be linked through children's moves.

Fig. 1.5: Research framework for this single city case study
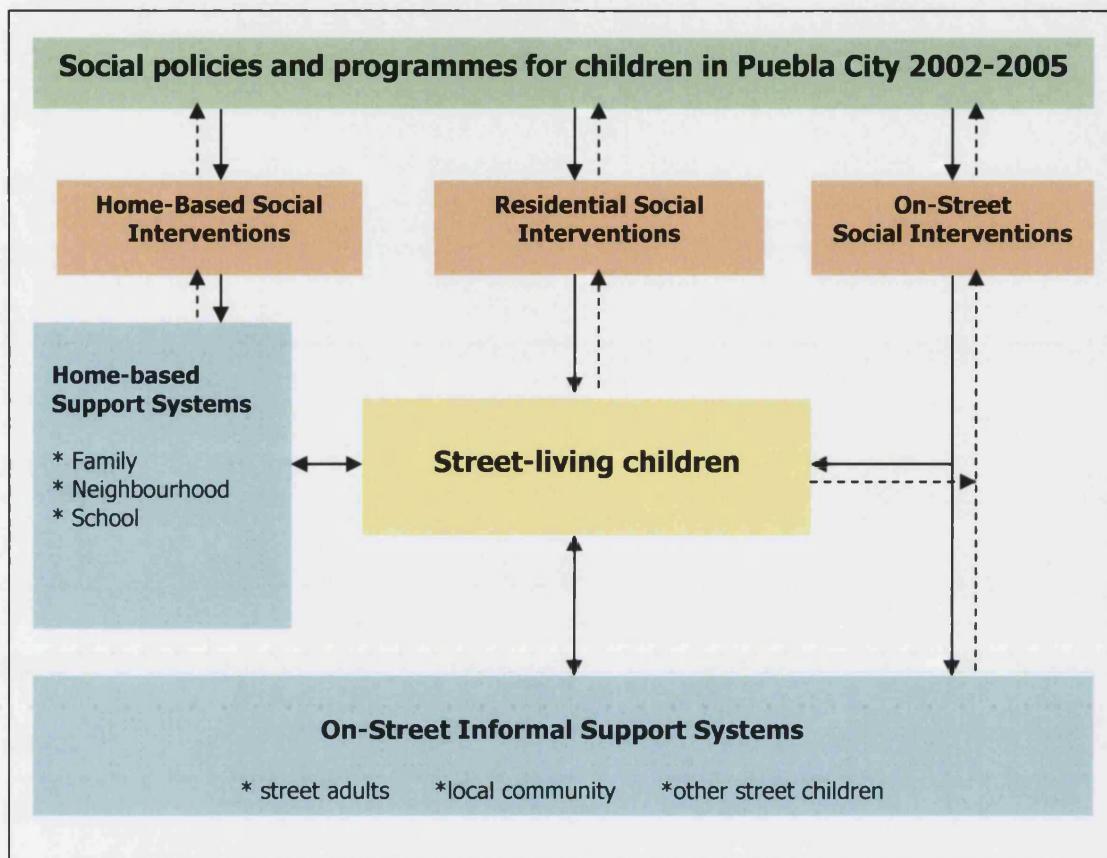
The research framework contemplates social policies as filtered through social programmes for the purpose of this research. Understanding social policy-making and implementation as complex and iterative processes, which reflect a range of legal, socio-political and economic constraints and priorities at national, provincial and local levels, this research focuses on social programmes as the time-bound and resource-constrained expression of social policies, available for analysis alongside street-living children's experiences of social interventions.

1.3 Considerations for Research Method selection

Street Children's Participation in Research

Historically, children's perspectives and voices were ignored, even in research about children (James and Prout, 1990) and families (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996). Children's perceptions are not always necessary or reliable sources of information, just as residents' perceptions of housing may not be good reflections of purchasing outcomes, and women's perceptions of their health status may contradict national statistics on morbidity (Oakley, 1999). But research that seeks to understand social policy processes and outcomes for children would be in danger of missing key information about children's experiences and understandings if they were not regarded as central informants (Hood et al, 1999). Children who live and have lived on the streets are well placed to report their own experiences of social programmes and interventions. Indeed they are arguably uniquely placed to do so since, unusually among children, they have spent periods unaccompanied by families, teachers or other adults, using spaces and undertaking activities in ways that pass unreported through society's systems. Records kept about them as individuals can be scattered across the country, with perhaps only the children themselves able to identify all the elements in their personal paper trails. Research of this nature, which puts children as central informants, recognizes children's agency and resourcefulness, considering them capable of constructive commentary and of expressing beliefs and perceptions that may differ from those held by adults.

Research has also recognized the value for social policies of exploring experiences of service users whose voices are not easily heard: Britton et al (2002) found how socially excluded ethnic minority youth perceived UK state welfare services and how they could

'disappear' from official support structures, leaving education for no employment or training. In the same way, children who live or have lived on the streets can be encouraged to express their perceptions of programmes and services, so that adults can be made aware of their experiences as end-users.

If research with children is understood as a means to increase knowledge about children's experience, knowledge and views, the critical research issue becomes the linking of theoretical study with exploration of children's experiences. For this case study it was important to find ways to link children's and adults' perceptions of children's realities *'An important means towards linking child and adult stories is to think of research for children as being research with children; an interactive, participatory, reflexive activity'* (Hood et al, 1999: 14). Widely quoted in research concerning children, Hart's (1992) ladder metaphor for children's participation started with the bottom three rungs as non-participatory (manipulation, decoration, tokenism) followed by increasing levels of child-adult engagement; the highest level of participation being child-initiated and decisions shared with adults, representing a shift in the role of researcher from plunderer of information to facilitator enabling children to actively voice their concerns (Hood et al, 1999). Street children's participation in research has been increasingly active, including in roles as co-researchers (for example, Save the Children UK, 2000 in Bangladesh; and Redes Rio Crianza, 2007 in Brazil). The pre-defined focus and doctoral scope of this study however indicated that the appropriate level of children's participation was as central informants about their experiences with social programmes and interventions.

The selection of research methods for this case study took account of the potential for mixed views by street children about participating in research: from disenchantment

about being involved in research which does not lead to change (Reddy, 1992), enjoyment of talking about their survival methods (Dallape, 1988), to satisfaction about conducting research on an issue of direct interest to them, such as police treatment of street children (Save the Children UK, 2000).

Power and relationships

Two additional issues discussed in the literature about children in research were of particular relevance to the selection of research methods for this case study: power disparities and children's relationships with family.

Power relationships within research about children were contemplated from different perspectives in the selection of research methods for this case study: power of 'gatekeepers' to grant and supervise access to 'street' children in services and family homes (Hecht, 1998) needed to be recognized and negotiated; and understanding researchers as *'interested strangers who, having established trust and encouraged disclosure, can then move on'* perhaps consigning the interviewee to a heightened awareness of their social alienation (Hey, 1999: 107), forced consideration of the potential effects on street children of in-depth interviews. Disparities in power and status between adult researcher and child (Morrow and Richards, 1996) had to be addressed, while understanding that data collection could also become empowering for children (Save the Children, 2000).

Although family-based research in sociology traditionally ignored or denied children's agency and the newer sociological study of childhood has tended to distance itself from family studies, there has been a move to reconcile the fields, to relocate children in the family, but this time with children as active subjects (James and Prout, 1999; Brannen and O'Brien, 1996). Research exploring children's perceptions of family suggests that

children see families not just in terms of structure, but also in terms of the roles and relationships involved in family life, and the provision of emotional and material security (Morrow, 1998). Much of the research on street children has focused on their relationships with public spaces, referring to families as a source of children's problems, with irregularities in family structure credited with deviant child behaviour, than actively valued as a part of their children's social and cultural identity (Cerqueira Filho and Neder, 1998). This case study recognizes that as street children's voices make an important contribution to research, so family perceptions provide important complementary perspectives, representing involved but potentially different standpoints and interests: '*pluralism is about encouraging these different positions to be expressed, and finding ways of managing conflicting views in a constructive manner that shows respect for diversity.*' (Stainton Rogers, 2001: 32). Thus, although family views may conflict with children's or gatekeeper accounts, this does not negate their value, but rather recognizes them as valid contributions to a richer, fuller account. This pluralist position is consistent with social constructionism, recognizing competing perspectives and interests with none inherently better than another (Howe, 1994; Stainton Rogers 2001).

Ethics of research with children and disempowered people

Understanding that research has a political function '*to describe and so expose the unacceptable with the aim of shifting policy and practice*' (Hood et al, 1999) it necessarily has an ethical dimension. Discussion of ethics in research with children centres on three issues of protection, consent and confidentiality, each of relevance to this case study about 'street' children, who are unusually positioned in relation to research.

Research involving children as key informants faces ethical implications of protecting children from pressures attributable to the power imbalance of the researcher-child relationship, including reactions to invasion of privacy, conflict, guilt, fear of failure and threats to self-esteem (Beresford, 1997). Children who may be found in particularly exposed and vulnerable situations, such as street-living children, present additional moral difficulties to researchers, whose primary ethical consideration must be to prevent harm or wrong-doing to children during the research process. This consideration should extend to families, whose members may also feel threatened, or that their privacy has been invaded, by research focused on their 'street' children.

On the issue of informed consent, there is general agreement that research methods should respect children. Sensitive but unambiguous explanation of the nature and purpose of the research is proposed to ensure full understanding. Participation should be voluntary and power to end participation should be held throughout the research process by the child (Beresford, 1997; Morrow and Richards, 1996). Recognition that children and families or other 'gatekeepers' may have conflicting views about participation (Solberg, 1996) suggests complexities in securing informed consent. Explicit consent may also be appropriate not just for interviews, but also for observation and examination of files concerning research participants (Robson, 1993).

Social researchers recommend that children also be apprised of the confidentiality of their responses, children's consent should be sought for disclosure of sensitive information to others, presentations of findings should be negotiated with children, perceptions of children should not be distorted and dissent should be clearly registered (Beresford, 1997; Morrow and Richards, 1996).

Maximizing the quality of the research design

Choice of research methods was also contingent on maximizing the quality of the case study design. This research took into account the four standard aspects of social science case study design: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability; adapting these general measures through the functional equivalents of validity and reliability for public accountability of, respectively, 'relevance' and 'confidence' recommended for qualitative research (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 344).

Following Bauer and Gaskell's lead, markers for relevance (validity) in this thesis are understood as corpus construction, local surprise, respondent validation and contextualization. Triangulation and reflexivity, transparency and corpus construction and thick description have been taken as the markers for confidence about the findings (reliability). These markers have been variously applied and recommended, sometimes using other terminology, in sociological and psychological research with street children across the world (see Lucchini, 1996; Stephenson, 2001; Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003). Understandings and manifestations of markers for relevance and confidence for the purpose of this thesis are set out in Figure 1.6.

Fig. 1.6: Maximizing the quality of case study design

Area of Research Design Quality	Quality Marker	Meaning attributed	Evidenced in the research for this thesis
Relevance	Corpus construction	Maximizing the variety of unknown representations in the population	* Audit trail * Interview transcripts
	Thick description	Recording of detailed descriptions	* Interview transcripts * Field diary
	Local surprise	Confirming and disconfirming expectations	* Audit trail * Field diary * Topic guides (with amendments)
	Respondent validation	Transcripts confirmed by interview respondents	* Transcript addendum
	Contextualization	Placing research in the setting, allowing readers to draw parallels with other settings	* Audit trail * Interview transcripts * Field diary * Document catalogue * Literature review
Confidence	Triangulation and reflexivity	Using multiple sources and combining methods, to compare and contrast evidence, leading to contradictions on which to reflect during the course of the research	* Audit trail * Interview transcripts * Field diary * Document catalogue
	Transparency	Detailed recording of research process, including selection and characteristics of interviewees, and selection of other sources	* Audit trail * Field diary * Interview transcripts * Topic guides * Interviewee files * Interview materials * Interviewee database
	Corpus Construction	Maximizing the variety of unknown representations in the population	* Audit trail * Interview transcripts
	Thick Description	Recording of detailed descriptions	* Interview transcripts * Field diary

Source: Adapted from Gaskell and Bauer, in Bauer and Gaskell (2000: 336-350)

1.4 Research Methods

As a research design, the single city exploratory case study is inherently qualitative. However, research design and data elicitation methods are increasingly recognized as separate methodological dimensions (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000), and quantitative methods were incorporated into the case study where feasible and appropriate. Choice of data collection methods was guided by the single-city 5-layered case study research design (Figure 1.2) and framework (Figure 1.5), together with considerations about design quality, children's participation, power and ethics.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected to create a corpus using a select, analyse, select, analyse by strata and function strategy, seeking to extend the range and variety of information obtained in a systematic way (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). The core methods used were standard collection devices: semi-structured interviews; field observation and collection of documents, as summarized in Figure 1.7 below. Organization of the research was conducted through schematized and narrative monthly reports which included work plans, summarized data collection and timings aimed at ensuring fieldwork was well-paced and progressing in keeping with projected times, thereby creating an audit trail of my research organization, procedures and stages.

Forming the core of the case study's data collection were over 130 hours of semi-structured interviews with 24[1] children and 53 adults over the period of one year, September 2004 to August 2005, illustrated in Figure 1.6. Interviews with the 24

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[1] An additional 3 street-working children were also interviewed, but their data was not included after an early decision to focus interviews on street-living children. And 4 more interviews were started but discontinued after the first session revealed that children's characteristics did not match the case study criteria (1 was aged 21; 2 had not lived on the streets; 1 had not lived on the streets in Puebla City).

children were conducted as 3 one-hour sessions to provide a 3-hour interview per child over the course of a month (usually 1 interview per week). Children's interviews were each conducted on a one-to-one basis with the researcher in a private room within the social intervention where children were currently resident (a total of 8 social interventions: 4 governmental; 3 CSOs; 1 self-help group). Figure 1.9 gives photos and basic information about each of the 24 children.

The first 6 children were selected for interview in 2 social interventions using purposive sampling to maximize variety of basic characteristics: sex, age, ethnicity, disability, although little heterogeneity was found at this level: 22 of the 24 interviewed children were boys, the 2 interviewed girls were the only street-living girls found in residential programmes; 13 interviewees were aged between 9 and 13, 10 were aged 14 to 17, 1 had just turned 18; 1 boy self-identified as belonging to a minority ethnic (*mixteco*) group but all 24 were mono-lingual Spanish speakers. Snowballing was used to identify different life experiences based on recommendations from interviewed children, gatekeepers and street informants. All 24 informants had used Puebla City streets as their habitual home as children at some time during the 2002-2005 research period. All children approached in the research agreed to be interviewed.

Interviews with adults, averaging 1 hour per interview, were conducted wherever possible in their own living or working environments: 8 of the 10 families were interviewed in their homes (the exceptions were 1 mother interviewed in Puebla State prison and 1 family of 2 parents and 2 children interviewed in a social intervention, JUCONI CSO, during their visit to Puebla City), sometimes with their children present and usually over 2 sessions spread over 2 to 3 weeks; the 27 gatekeepers were all interviewed in their places of work, 5 on repeat occasions; 8 of the 9 policy makers

were interviewed in their offices (1 in a restaurant); 6 of the 7 informants in their places of work and home, 5 on repeated occasions.

Fig. 1.7: Summary of data collection methods for this case study

Methods	Subjects	Techniques	Materials Used
Interviews (semi-structured) with Children	24 street-living children 3 street-working children	- 3 x 1 hour sessions, over 1 month - Varied, using to stimulate discussion: sorting and making lists; games; taking photos; maps and stickers	* Sony Hi-MD recorder & external mic. * 3 x Topic guides * Ethical Code * Laminated boards & cards (3 sessions) * Dominos (3 sessions) * Digital camera (session 1) * SDQ questionnaire (session 2) * Puebla map with stickers (session 3)
Semi-structured interviews with Adults	10 families 27 gatekeepers 7 informants 9 policymakers	With gatekeepers, informants and policy-makers: following topic guide With families: Games; taking photos with families; joining in household activity	* Sony Hi-MD recorder & external mic. * Topic guides by category of interviewee With families: * Ethical Code * Dominos * Digital camera
Observation	Street – all zones, Puebla City Family Homes Social Interventions	Simple - non intrusive Participant – to explore family and social intervention practices	* Sony Hi-MD recorder & external mic. * Camera * Field Diary
Official Research Data	Welfare 100 Cities Study 2004 – Puebla City data	Secondary analysis to disaggregate data on street-living children	CD of Puebla database Methodological guide to research and database Questionnaire
Document Collection	Official data Academic material Street child literature Organizational documents Children's files	Mexico City and Puebla City official archives; University of the Americas, Puebla, Library Street children CSO reference centres Mexico and Puebla; Government and CSO service providers in Puebla	* Reference catalogues * Requests to State Congress and government offices * Requests to CSO and reference centres
Other	CSO and academic networks	Seminar presentations with questionnaire	* Power point presentation * Questionnaire

Sources: Case study audit trail and field diary spreadsheet

Observation combined simple, non-intrusive observation and participant observation: 70 hours of field observation of children in the streets of Puebla City, driving round the city, taking buses, walking, meeting street informants, sitting and watching; and 50 hours helping children in social interventions, supervising journeys to and helping in

family homes, helping gatekeepers. Observation was written up in 46 numbered field notes, describing contexts, behaviours, activities and interactions, processes and procedures as they were experienced by the researcher in practice.

Documents collected and logged on a document catalogue spreadsheet included: contextual national and provincial legal, political and policy documents, books and press coverage about street children; material about social programmes and interventions, governmental reports and CSO publications; internal documents on procedures and organization of social interventions, implementation reports, programme evaluations and children's files. Files on 22 of the 24 interviewed street-living children were made available for the research by 6 of the 7 social interventions in which children were resident at the time of interview (the only exception was a self-help group which did not keep individual records on residents). In addition, Puebla State Welfare gave access to survey material on street children in Puebla State collected and analysed for the national 100 Cities study undertaken by Welfare Department in 2002-2003 (SNDIF, 2004). The survey questionnaire (SNDIF, 2003), methodology manual (SNDIF & UNICEF, 1997) and database for Puebla City (SNDIF, 2003a) were made available for this research.

Finally 2 seminars on the research elicited perceptions and experiences from Puebla's CSO *Red para la Infancia y Adolescencia de Puebla* [Network for Puebla's Children and Adolescents] and from academics at the *Instituto de Políticas Públicas* [Public Policy Institute] of the *Universidad de las Américas de Puebla, UDLA* [Puebla's University of the Americas].

Data Collection Interview Techniques

Interview techniques with children used in this study drew heavily on techniques recommended in research as encouraging street children to participate in a relaxed and open way: interviews within the context of or alongside an everyday activity (Beresford, 1997; Gigengack, 2000); communication through paintings, Venn diagrams, making lists, drawings and stories (Swart-Kruger and Chawla, 2002); 'radio workshops', using tape recorders and microphones (Hecht, 1998); plus use of games and photographs (Young and Barrett, 2001). Equipment also needed to be portable, adaptable for a range of physical conditions offered for interviews including open-air, and usable by children who may have had no formal education. Final choices for this research combined: laminated sheets of paper and cards; dominos; a digital camera (see Figure 1.7). Sessions were semi-structured, focused on gaining information about case study layers 1, 2 and 3, facilitating the generation and exploration of new ideas. Activity sequence and content were open to adjustment by interviewees, to enhance children's enjoyment and control over the proceedings.

Recognition of disparities in power, status, age and expertise between researcher and children led to adoption for this case study of a 'citizenship' approach (Earls and Carlson, 2002), recognizing the interviewed child's status as citizen with the rights that entails, as a basis for overcoming power disparities. In addition, research techniques allowing children to feel part of the research process were introduced to help reduce researcher power, in line with ideas that power is embedded in the 'doing' of research rather than as an adult-child dichotomy (Christensen, 2004).

Ethical considerations of protection, consent and confidentiality were taken seriously in light of the contested nature of understandings about street children's mental health,

with some research suggesting street children have low levels of mental illness but low self-esteem, depression and self-hatred found to be characteristics of street-living children and youth in other settings (Jones et al, 2007; Kidd, 2007; Aptekar, 2004). After early consultations with government, CSO gatekeepers and street informants, this study adopted a policy of only interviewing street children currently living in residential social interventions. This aimed to reduce post-session and post-interview children's feelings of abandonment by the researcher and ensure that children were accompanied by adults alert to the possibilities of emotional alterations caused unintentionally by the interview. At the end of their first session, children were also asked to complete a self-reporting Spanish-language Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) developed for 11 to 16 year olds as a behavioural screening device (Goodman et al, 1998). The SDQ was used primarily as a guide for the researcher in 2nd and 3rd sessions to assess children's current emotional state as a tool to guide researcher probing in interview.

Interview session 2 included a Question Area 5 (see Figure 8 below) of potential sensitivity for children's emotional well-being, concerning triggers which had caused children to leave home for the street. This question area was addressed in the government's 100 Cities study (SNDIF, 2003) as a survey format question with closed responses. Research with street children however has suggested that such formats are unlikely to produce information sufficient to explain family break-ups, for which questions need to be asked in different ways and need to be contextualized so as to have the child *"recapitulating past experiences in such a way as to focus them upon the continuity of action"* (Lucchini, 1997:4). Wishing to probe beyond the standard responses, the researcher assessed children's emotional state on ethical grounds, probing more deeply only when children were assessed as within normal emotional boundaries.

Children's consent to interview was requested at the start of every session, using an ethical code drawn up by the researcher (at **Annex 1**) in response to concerns in the literature and in consultation with gatekeepers.   At the end of each session, children were again asked for permission to conduct a following session.   Confidentiality was also considered within the ethical code in order to protect the child's identity. The recorder was placed within the child's reach, and the child was responsible for turning on, pausing and stopping the recorder, in order to maintain control over the interview recording and to be able to make non-attributable comments 'off the record'.

Sessions were planned and set out in 3 topic guides designed to elicit children's experiences and perceptions of potential relevance to the research question and sub-questions.   Three question areas in the study were built around questions asked in the official 100 Cities survey of street children (SNDIF, 2003) – on experiences in the streets, experiences of interventions on the streets and reasons for leaving home - but in open-ended formats.   Eight main question areas (QA) were spread over 3 sessions each of around 45 minutes to 1 hour.   Activities were matched to each question area, with changes of pace and materials anticipated, to increase children's enjoyment of the sessions while keeping each new activity simple, to sustain momentum.

Techniques (question areas, materials, activities, timings) were piloted with children 1 (Pedro) and 2 (Rafa), whose interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Techniques were modified in light of their interviews and activities created which could be modified according to children's perceptions, behaviour and experiences. Significant adjustments were made to the children's 3 session topic guides (reduction of questions within the areas and change of approach for some question areas), materials were rationalized to this end and new open-ended questions introduced

obtained from analysis of the 2 transcripts and the observation and documentary notes. The resulting session formats are summarized in Figure 1.8 below. Some logistical adjustments were also made after the initial sessions to improve data collection: tape recorder use needed to become more efficient (division into 'sound tracks' for analysis, more care taken to eliminate external noise, better positioning of the external microphone); large external headphones were purchased to allow for use by children and families so they could play back their interviewees; the digital camera was repositioned from visual recorder to include fun use by children and families.

Some drawbacks were implicit in the techniques used. Importantly, access to children had to be negotiated with gatekeepers because all children were, at the time of interview, residents in off-street care. Children were interviewed on residential service sites where they may have felt threatened, inhibited or distracted, and they were interviewed as central informants rather than as co-participants, both with potential effects for validity of data collected (Van Beers, 1996). However, these were outweighed by other advantages: organizational children's files were available; gatekeepers who knew children well could be interviewed; interview sessions were easy to organize in stable off-street environments and attrition between sessions was potentially limited (in practice there was no attrition); children were not under the influence of drugs; and data collected about children boosted the possibilities of tracking down the same children for longitudinal research in future years.

Fig. 1.8: Children's interviews - topic guide content and session structure

Interview Session	Activities (all or some)	Materials Used	Main Intention of Activity
All	Rules of the (interview) game	Sony Hi-MD recorder Código Ético	Comply with ethical code
	Evaluation of session Permissions and end	Dominos	Comply with code; wind down
1	Who are we? (Interviewer and Child basic info)	None	Matching child to criteria and icebreaker
	QA 1 Street needs & attractions (Identify & prioritize)	'La Calle I' Laminate and cards (including blanks to fill in)	Experiences on the street
	QA 2 Street friends & enemies (Identify & group)	'La Calle II' Laminate and cards (including blanks to fill in)	Experiences of interventions on the street
	Taking photos (Child and interviewer)	Digital Camera	Record of child; & thank you
	Self-application of SDQ	SDQ format photocopy in Spanish	Assess child's emotional state for interview
2	Delivery of photos to child to keep	2 x photos 6" x 4" of child, commercially printed and laminated	Interviewer-child relationship
	QA 3 My Home (Where, who lives there, good and bad relations)	ˋMi Casa' Laminate and cards (including blanks to fill in), with child's photo placed in centre	Experiences of family relationships
	QA 4 My Neighbourhood (Where, buildings and people important to child)	'Mi Comunidad' Laminate and cards (including blanks to fill in), with 'Mi Casa' laminate and child's photo in centre	Experiences of local community relationships
	QA 5 Why I leave/left home?	Cards using options from 100 Cities Study (DIF 2004) plus blanks to fill in	Triggers for leaving home
	Our favourite fast food (crisps, biscuits, fruit etc)	None	Relaxation
3	Share food item	Favourite food or close substitute brought in	Interviewer-child relationship
	QA 6 Places I know in Puebla	Map of Puebla and stickers	Experiences of interventions and verifying earlier information
	QA 7 Social Interventions (Access)	Map of Puebla and stickers	Experiences of residential interventions
	QA 8 Social Interventions (Experiences)	'Mis Derechos' board and cards	Experiences of residential interventions
	Snowballing (Recommendations)	Names & institutions retrieved	Candidates for interview
	My Family (Asking permission to visit)	None	Aim to visit family for interview

Source: Case study child interview topic guides, modified 13/01/05

Recognizing that interviewed children might have reason to feel threatened by family involvement in research (Brannen and O'Brien, 1996), family visits were organized, at the request of the researcher, only with both child's and family's consent (sometimes taking weeks to arrange) and accompanied by the child. Care was taken when interviewing the 10 families to respect potential power imbalances and confidentiality and seek consent, using similar techniques as with their children. Dominos, a cake, digital camera and photos of the interviewed children were taken as icebreakers. The researcher also joined in household activities (making tortillas, peeling chillis, packing boxes etc), ferried children to school and accompanied family members to a health centre, local market and a visit to a sick grandmother. Photo portraits were taken, composed in line with interviewees' requests. A topic guide was used with families, addressing case study layers 1 and 2, along with questions emerging from children's interviews, but family interviews were more free-ranging and on the terms set by the member or members of the family being interviewed (See **Annex 2** for family members interviewed).

Interviews with 27 service gatekeepers (see **Annex 3**) used a topic guide format appropriate to interviewing professionals, in order to explore social policies, social programmes and implementation level of social interventions (layers 4, 3, and 2), followed where appropriate by a set of questions specific to an interviewed child or children (layer 1). Child-specific questions were generally asked during the 3 to 4 week period of a child's interview, after the first or second session, in order to be able to revisit a child with questions emerging from gatekeeper interviews. Nine policy-makers from national, state and municipal authorities were interviewed (see **Annex 3**) about social policies, social programmes and social interventions (layers 4, 3 and 2 of the case study) using standard principles for interviewing elites and an appropriate

topic guide format. Seven government, academic and street informants (see **Annex 3**) introduced 3 other features to the case study: holding of knowledge distinct and complementary to that provided by interviewees, to verify, challenge and enrich understandings of the subject throughout the case study process; good rapport with the researcher; and willingness to be considered a regular informant in the research process. Interviews were free-ranging, used to triangulate data collected from semi-structured interviews and addressing case study layers 1, 2, 3 and 4 as pertinent to the informant's knowledge and the research.

Data Analysis

Consistent with the research design, data analysis was iterative in nature, using a select, analyse, select, analyse by strata and function strategy which sought to extend systematically the range and variety of information (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). Analysis passed through 3 identifiable stages: initial analysis of piloted materials after 1 month of fieldwork in October 2004; iterative selection and analysis during the fieldwork with an interim summary analysis after 4 months fieldwork in January 2005; and the final post-field study data analysis period from Sept 2005 to August 2006. I drew particularly on guidance relevant to an exploratory single-city multi-layered case study from Robson (1993), Patton (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Bauer and Gaskell (2000) with the aim of being systematic in coding and classification.

Initial analysis comprised assessment of: data collection system (tape recorder; camera; audit trail; field diary) and data techniques (emanating outwards from the interview topic guide and activities for children). For the analysis, I transcribed the first 2 tape-recorded children's interviews, partially transcribed 2 gatekeeper interviews and prepared summary sheets of my observation field notes, the documents collected and

notes taken on documents. This initial analysis focused primarily on the core 'layer' of the case study: individual children's cases. I began manually coding collected data, conceptualising data into themes (first-level coding) and identifying key categories of concepts as question areas (second-level coding). Interview transcripts were analysed manually, using a simple word cluster system to identify common themes raised by children and a colour coding system developed by the researcher to organize material by question areas. An excel workbook was created as a fieldwork database to import and store information by child (row) and sub-question area (columns) to highlight responses for common themes. A bank of columns was used for basic reference data about the child. A 'surprises' column flagged up new ideas emerging from children's responses. An observation column imported behavioural 'tags' which referred to numbered field notes. Document columns were used similarly to 'tag' enriching data from children's files (apparent contradictions between interview, observational and documentary data were entered as 'surprises' and used subsequently to clarify with children or gatekeepers as appropriate). A final spreadsheet within the workbook kept track of and referred to the instruments used with each child: interview sessions, interviews with gatekeeper & family, observation sessions and documents collected. I then used cross-case analysis to compare the 2 children's responses and experiences, identifying broad commonalities, differences and obvious data gaps.

Data input from transcripts and field notes continued alongside and as a regular part of fieldwork, allowing data analysis of transcripts, observation and document notes to feed into later sessions of data collection. In this way, information about each child gradually accumulated, 'puzzles' were identified and solved or at least better understood, and chance comments were further explored. By leaving family interviews until later in the field study, the researcher was able to use those occasions to revisit

partial understandings with child and or family, and to build contextualized understandings of children's experiences.

Four months into fieldwork, in January 2005, an interim summary analysis was conducted to explore the progress made in data collection and ongoing analysis to date, set within the expected time frame of the research, against the quality markers established for the research design (Figure 1.6). For this summary analysis, I used the audit trail monthly memos and field study timetable as the main framing tools. Using a data accounting sheet I checked data collection activities (interviews and field dairy notes) for 'thickness' of description (multiple sources) within each layer of the case study, and between layers, identifying gaps and potential imbalances. I also checked the excel workbook for changes in the incidence of 'surprises' and for the success in pursuing new ideas emerging from children. There were 3 main findings: data collected from children and gatekeepers were rich and evidenced thick description, but data from families and policy makers were thin; data collection pace exceeded research capacity to transcribe interviews; documents facilitated by the Welfare Department's 100 Cities study about Puebla City (SNDIF, 2003 and 2003a) provided useful survey data about street-living children and the large population of street-working children. In these circumstances, the researcher decided not to follow the original plan of interviewing 10 street-working children, but rather to focus on street-living children and on developing the thickness of description at case study layers 2,3 and 4 needed for a balanced field study. In addition, some transcriptions were shelved until the post-field analysis phase, using brief interview notes to jot down 'surprises' and new ideas in order to continue corpus construction. A new field diary 'spreadsheet' was also introduced to link field diary notes (observation and document analysis) with my monthly audit trail memos, identified as a gap in the paper trail.

Post-field study data analysis was the final stage of analysis, during which transcripts were completed, analysed and used to complete the excel workbook tabulation carried out during the field study. Question areas and themes were re-assessed in the light of all the tabulated data, firm patterns were established, narrative descriptions began to drafted, examples of representations identified by child (core case study layer), by social intervention and social programme (layers 2 and 3 respectively), and quotations extracted to illustrate key findings. During this process, children's and families' accounts were triangulated carefully with institutional files and interviews with gatekeepers, observational visits to homes, local communities and social interventions. Data collected for one case study layer was triangulated as appropriate with data collected for an adjacent case study layer, providing rich evidence within and between case study layers. In this way, findings were organized by case study layer, starting with individual children's experiences, then across case study layers to form a data chain from children to Puebla city-wide social policies.

Triangulation

Triangulation was found to be vital to understanding children's experiences. Contradictions and gaps were a huge challenge in children's interviews, ranging from omission to misrepresentation, from embellishment to invention, from inarticulacy to putting up smoke-screens. In addition, the difficulties of accurate recall by interviewees of events which may have happened several years ago are well known. Interviewed children were found to substantially change their version of an event mid-stream, between sessions, after gatekeeper or family interview or in light of a researcher question. And yet some data, which in interview could easily have been interpreted as fabrication, were, sometimes amazingly, corroborated by other informants. For example, child interviewee 7, Lalo, considered by service gatekeepers as a child prone

to fantasize, described dropping a match into an empty tin, burning his face, being taken to hospital by passers by and being found swathed in bandages by his family on New Year's Day. Evidence of embellishment and some invention had been found through contradictions within Lalo's interview, but the burnt face and hospital story was corroborated, in detail, by his parents in a subsequent interview. Table 1.1 shows multiple sources of data for triangulation to build rich, multiple source case studies of individual children's experiences in this research.

Table 1.1: Multiple data sources about 24 street-living children

Child No.	Individual Interview	Verifica-tion session	Family Interview	Gate-keeper Interview	Home / neighbour-hood Observa-tion	Social Interve-ntion Observa-tion	Social Interven-tion Child File	No. of types of data source
1	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	6
2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
3	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
4	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
5	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
7	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	6
8	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	6
9	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
10	√	X	X	√	X	√	√	4
11	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	5
12	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	7
13	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	5
14	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	5
15	√	X	X	√	X	√	√	4
16	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	6
17	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	6
18	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	5
19	√	X	X	√	√	√	√	5
20	√	X	X	√	X	√	√	4
21	√	X	X	√	√	X	√	4
22	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	5
23	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	5
24	√	X	X	√	√	√	X	4
Total	24	12	10	24	19	24	22	n.a.

Source: Case study audit trail

The 'jigsaw puzzle' evidence constructed about the 24 street-living children in this study supported Riccardo Lucchini's conclusion that '*knowledge implies reflection and conscious evaluation. Yet, only a part of know-how is expressed in knowledge and thus in the discursive consciousness. It is therefore essential for the researcher to have access to the child's diverse know-how and to the contexts in which they may be seen.*

Thanks to the observation of the child in different contexts and thanks to the triangulation of the testimonies, the researcher is then able to correctly interpret the knowledge expressed by the child.' (Lucchini, 1996: 170)

Reflections on Research Methods in Practice

As noted in the section on data collection above, interview techniques (question areas, materials, activities, timings) were piloted with Pedro and Rafa (children 1 and 2) and modified for use with the remaining 22 children. Most notably, materials were simplified, made more flexible and emphasis on their use was reduced. For example, the idea of using different coloured threads to link on-street experiences with on-street interventions (QA1 and QA2 – see Figure 1.8 above) was quickly abandoned, after interviewees and researcher became thoroughly confused... The multi-coloured threads did however find a niche: responding to an initial request from Pedro, lengths of threads were cut off by each child and taken away for use in making friendship bracelets, sometimes shown to the researcher in a subsequent session, but not always, since many were given away or traded among care home residents. Although research started with a selection of games on offer (including checkers, cards and dominos), dominos became the only game used, after piloting showed that they outstripped other games in combining advantages for interviewees: All the children knew how to play dominos, enjoyed them and felt they could win; while for the researcher dominos represented a game which could be played under any conditions, was quick and easy, helped redress power imbalances (I almost always lost) and allowed sessions to end with a request for a return match. In general, interviews became progressively less reliant on games or complicated techniques, less dominated by researcher interventions, and more flexible in order and content, as the researcher recognized children's interest in talking about themselves, and allowed them to take increased

control of available materials and the sessions. Family interviews, which began after several children's interviews had been completed, also benefited from the researcher's shift to more simple techniques, increased flexibility in interview content and more relaxed interviewing style. Interestingly, the researcher found that most children and family members, when asked what pseudonyms they would like to be used for this thesis, said they wanted to use their real names (all children wanted their chosen photo to be included). On that basis, the names used in this thesis (see Figure 1.9) are those chosen by the interviewees and thus may be real or pseudonyms.

Changes to data analysis in practice are addressed in the relevant section above, following pilot interviews with children 1 and 2, and an interim summary analysis 4 months into the fieldwork. It is worth reflecting on the case study's balance between data collection and data analysis: despite a decision at interim analysis stage (January 2005) not to continue interviewing street-working children, an increase in emphasis on 'thickness' of data from 24 street-living children, together with an increase in pace of interviews with families and policy-makers, actually increased both the intensity of data collection and the amount of data to be written-up and transcribed. The result was that many (particularly adult) interviews were transcribed in the post-research stage, and some field diary notes in the March to June 2005 period were more sketchy than earlier notes, creating unevenness in the analysis. A better balance may have been achieved by introducing a second interim summary analysis stage in March or April, which may well have resulted in reduced observation and a more efficient selection of gatekeepers for interview in the second half of the case study field work. In the event, post-fieldwork analysis took some months longer than originally planned, with knock-on effects for thesis write-up.

Finally, it is important to recognize impacts on the research in practice of the researcher's previous experience, some years earlier as a CSO leader of one of the 2 'street children' organizations in Puebla (CSO JUCONI). On the positive side, doors were opened that may otherwise have been difficult to open: status as research associate at Puebla's University of the Americas (UDLAP), allowing access to a good academic library, was granted on the basis of JUCONI's reputation; as was access to some policy-makers and gatekeepers, access to children inside some institutions, introductions to some families, and access to State Welfare internal data (pursued further in Chapter 4). Other gatekeepers and policy-makers were attracted less by JUCONI connections than with the researcher's understanding of the difficulties inherent in their work. More negatively, a few doors were closed by gatekeepers who were probably suspicious of the researcher's motives. This happened rarely: 1 CSO for vulnerable children provided an excellent gatekeeper interview but subsequently denied the researcher access to resident children; and 1 Puebla State Welfare policy-maker did not find time for an interview during 6 months of repeated requests. Children were, in practice, much less interested in the researcher's background than was feared – none of the 24 interviewees had known me as a CSO leader and the few who commented on my JUCONI connections showed interest only in my knowledge of other street-based inhabitants known to them. Once interviews began, children and families were absorbed with their own stories rather than the researcher's background.

1.5 Chapter Conclusion
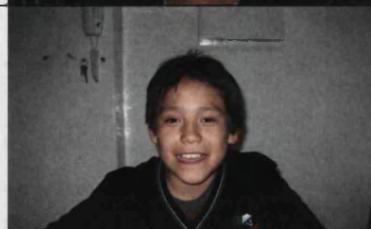
This chapter has argued that a single city 'layered' exploratory case study is the most suitable research design, in a situation where little data is available, to uncover relationships between street-living children and social policies, through social

programmes and social interventions as intermediary devices. The research setting of Puebla City presents opportunities for exploring street-living children's experiences in a range of social interventions and governmental social programmes. Framing the research are: the socially constructed 'street children' label as social policy device; and 24 individual children who had lived between 2002-2005 on the streets and were now resident in Puebla City social interventions. This thesis reveals new knowledge about street children's access to and experiences within social interventions. A critical analysis is brought to bear on relationships between social policy and street children.

This thesis is based on the findings of research carried out primarily around interviews with 24 street-living children who form the research's core layer. Observation, documentary evidence and extended interviews with 10 families, 27 gatekeepers, 7 informants and 9 policy makers are used to create thick descriptions of the children's experiences with social interventions and social programmes. Care was taken to fully respect ethical dimensions raised in the literature and to enhance children's and families' participation – which improved during fieldwork as the researcher gained experience. Names (chosen by the children) and photos (self-portraits) of the 24 interviewed children are available at Figure 1.9. Data collection and analysis were brought together in an iterative process throughout the field research, which on reflection could have achieved a better balance but did stimulate strong corpus construction both by layer (unit of analysis) and between layers of the case study. Qualitative data collection was organized using an audit trail and field diary; data analysis tabulated and triangulated data collected from multiple sources. In this way, the complex area of social policy and street children in a single city in Mexico, Latin America was gradually uncovered, from which new findings are drawn for children, families, social interventions and social policies as discussed in the following chapters.

Fig. 1.9: Photos and basic data about the 24 street-living children in this Case Study

Child No.	Self-Portrait Photo (hand held or using self-timer)	Name chosen by Child for Case Study	Basic data
1		Pedro	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 13** **Age first lived on street: 11**
2		Rafa	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 14** **Age first lived on street: 9**
3		Abraham	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 12** **Age first lived on street: 8**
4		Aureliano	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 13** **Age first lived on street: 11**
5		Cásares	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 16** **Age first lived on street: 9**
6		Hector	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 13** **Age first lived on street: 9**

Child No.	Self-Portrait Photo (hand held or using self-timer)	Name chosen by Child for Case Study	Basic data
7		Lalo	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 12** **Age first lived on street: 7**
8		Giovanni	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 10** **Age first lived on street: 9**
9		Roberto	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 18** **Age first lived on street: 8**
10		Tzoni	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 9** **Age first lived on street: 5**
11		Toño	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 14** **Age first lived on street: 8**
12		Cristián	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 12** **Age first lived on street: 7**

Child No.	Self-Portrait Photo (hand held or using self-timer)	Name chosen by Child for Case Study	Basic data
13	Photography not permitted in Remand Home	Wendy	**Sex: Female** **Age at interview: 15** **Age first lived on street: 12**
14	Photography not permitted in Remand Home	Ricardo	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 12** **Age first lived on street: 7**
15	Photography not permitted in Remand Home	José Mario	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 15** **Age first lived on street: 12**
16		Juan	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 15** **Age first lived on street: 4**
17		Raul	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 16** **Age first lived on street: 9**
18		Berenice	**Sex: Female** **Age at interview: 14** **Age first lived on street: 8**

Child No.	Self-Portrait Photo (hand held or using self-timer)	Name chosen by Child for Case Study	Basic data
19		Leonel	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 11** **Age first lived on street: 9**
20		Oscar	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 10** **Age first lived on street: 5 or 6**
21		Daniel	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 13** **Age first lived on street: 10**
22		Guillermo	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 16** **Age first lived on street: 6**
23		Edgar	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 14** **Age first lived on street: 13**
24		Roberto	**Sex: Male** **Age at interview: 12** **Age first lived on street: 10**

Chapter 2

Theoretical Approaches and the International Panorama:

A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a theoretical and empirical international context for the research question *How are social policies for children implemented and experienced by children who live or have lived on the streets?*, and as such corresponds to the outer ring or 'layer' of the case study design set out in Chapter 1 figure 2. First the literature on childhood and street children is reviewed and reflected upon, before attention is turned in the second half of the chapter to social policies, programmes and interventions.

This chapter puts forward the case that an exploration of street children, social policies and interventions requires an understanding both of the nature of the collective term 'street children' and of empirical knowledge of the individual children who live in the streets. This chapter aims to explore international research and understandings of street children.

2.2 Childhood and Urban Children

Approaches to Childhood

An understanding of street children and the social policy-making processes that affect them is necessarily informed by the lens through which childhood is perceived and understood. It has been argued that childhood is simply a 'natural' phenomenon,

marking the time between birth and adulthood, a stage of life in which biological immaturity is the overriding factor (Heywood, 2003). But a growing body of literature about the nature of childhood has challenged this, developing from early controversies in the eighteenth century through an emerging understanding of childhood as an area of study launched by French historian Aries' book *Centuries of Childhood* (1962), to an emerging paradigm of childhood as a social construct at the start of the twenty first century (James and Prout, 1990; Heywood 2003; Pufall and Unsworth, 2004; Jenks, 2005; Wyness, 2006).

Hendrick (1990) identified a range of concepts surrounding childhood over time in Britain (see Fig 2.1), noting that in some instances opposing views have been voiced during the same period. The historical variability highlighted by Hendrick suggests that childhood has been anything but universally understood.

Fig. 2.1: Shifting interpretations of childhood

Conceptualization of childhood	Period when view most popular	Characteristics of child as conceptualized
Sinful child	Pre-1700s	Child as inheritor of original sin, justifying corporal punishment. In 1700s Methodist John Wesley advised parents to 'break the will of your child'
Romantic child	1700s	Child as 'tabula rasa' (Locke), 'innocent' (Rousseau), natural. Having one's own nature, not simply in apprenticeship to adulthood
Evangelical child	1800s	Child with a 'corrupt nature and evil disposition, which it should be the great end of education to rectify' (More) to become an acceptable adult
Factory child	Early 1800s	Child as industrial worker, whose brutalization contributed to the dehumanization of a social class. 'Childhood ceases' at age 13 (Royal Commission 1833).
Delinquent child	Mid-1800s	Child 'brought up to vagrant habits' (Carpenter, Hill, May, Worsley). Self-reliant, knowing too much, submitting to no control and asking for no protection, he has 'much to unlearn' (Hill)
Schooled child	Mid-1800s	Ideologically related to the delinquent child, education was needed to prevent the 'dangerous classes' from reproducing their 'malevolent' characteristics and returning to their 'true position'.
Psycho-medical child	Late 1800s	Emphasis on the social, educational and psychiatric importance of understanding the child. Child defined in a 'scientific' manner, particularly with regard to individual development and mental condition
Welfare child	End 1800s early 1900s	Welfare bureaucracies of government and philanthropy imposed class-dominated and 'expert' formulations of childhood as a period of vulnerability in which the child needed protection.
Psychological child	Early to mid 1900s	Child constituted by problems deemed to be within. Childhood determined by professional psychologists and psychiatrists. 3 themes popularized: the mind of the child, the child in the family, and child management
Family child	Mid-1900s	New emphasis on the home environment, primacy of the family, and parent-child relationship. Child as dependent, malleable and raw material of the future
Public child	Mid to late 1900s	Child in institutional/fostering situation 'helpless' and vulnerable to maltreatment, legitimate target of concern and public intervention

Source: Drawn from Hendrick (1990: p. 35-55)

Similar shifts in perceptions of childhood have been recorded in Latin America, particularly in the late 19th and 20th centuries as attitudes of public authorities and legal definitions of childhood changed (Guy, 2002: 139). Ideologies of childhood in Brazil for example have shifted over the last 100 years from the "child saving movement" of the 1890s (Rizzini, 2002: 168-171) with its emphasis on protecting impoverished

children from vice for the good of the nation's future, to current perceptions of children as citizens with rights (Rizzini et al, 2002). In Mexico, perceptions of childhood varied historically by class and gender: from Aztec notions of childhood, including expected behaviours of the perfect girl and boy, which were set out in speeches by elders as *'huehuetlatolll* (Lipsett-Rivera, 2002: 53), to late 18th century Mexican conceptions of boys as future citizens (ibid: 65).

Current understandings of childhood worldwide are shaped by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which has been almost universally ratified (193 States Parties - all countries except Somalia and USA), guaranteeing individuals aged 0 to 18 years of age a range of rights to survival, development and participation (UNICEF, 2007). Nevertheless, while all societies have a *concept* of childhood, there is considerable evidence that they differ in *conceptions* of childhood that specify the ways in which children can be distinguished from adults, leading to contrasting ideas of how long childhood lasts, what qualities mark out adults from children and what importance is attached to these differences (Archard, 1993).

An important distinction weaving through interpretations of childhood is between the view of children as incomplete organisms - in which childhood acts merely as a preparatory stage for adulthood - and the contrasting understanding of children as social beings in their own right, active in determining their own lives and the lives of those around them (James and Prout, 1990; Pufall and Unsworth, 2004). This does not deny the preparatory stage, but adds a new dimension of children as agents. This constitutes a key element of the paradigm of childhood as a social construction, a basic feature of which is that children *'are and must be seen as active in the construction*

and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live' (James and Prout, 1990: 8).

The approach is not however without limitations: What is the role of biological influence? And how does one discover insights into children as individuals when the emphasis is on the plurality of social construction? Is there a danger of dismissing real problems, real suffering and real people? Postmodernism offers insights around the concept of discourse: Conflicting images of children, for example happy and innocent versus menacing and anti-social, can be seen as based on two different *'discourses of childhood'* (Stainton Rogers, 2001: 29), each generating and fostering a different reaction towards children. This suggestion of pluralist images has implications for understanding adult society which, it is argued, *'cannot easily or usefully be disentangled from childhood.'* (Hecht, 2002: 7).

In this research study I have taken full account of 'childhood' as socially constructed and therefore open to interpretation, while acknowledging some limitations of this approach. Recognizing children's agency, I also understand the frame of powerlessness, in which childhood is not perceived as a legitimate recipient of political, civic and economic power but is rather subjected to what Michel Foucault (2000) calls *'pastoral power'* (p.334): the exercise of power through governance by others in the name of their own health, well-being, and security. Pluralist insights recognize the validity of differing, sometimes conflicting, perceptions of children and adults. Perceiving childhood as a socially constructed variable also anticipates experiences differentiated by gender, ethnicity, age and social background.

Understanding Children in Cities

While childhood is an abstraction, referring to a stage in the life cycle, children are the real people bound by the term. Of the world's population of 6.5 billion, some 2.18 billion people - just under 34% - are under 18 years of age (UNICEF 2006: 20) In 2007, for the first time in history, the world's urban population will exceed the rural population (UN-Habitat, 2006) and urban growth will continue, at a global rate projected for 2005-2010 at 2% per annum (UN-Habitat, 2006). By 2020, based on current trends, 1.5 billion people will be living in slums (UN-Habitat, 2003). Many will be children. In Latin America 75% of the population already lives in urban areas, 134 million of whom live in slums, making up 14% of the world's total slum inhabitants (UN-Habitat 2006).

Urbanization, coupled with changes in population structure and the tendency of poorer families to have more children than richer families (Birdsall et al, 2001), has yielded concentrations of the young in developing country cities living in poverty, particularly in informal settlements, slums and squatter camps. In many cases the under 18 year olds form the majority of these slum populations (Chawla, 2002).

Changing dependency rates or the proportions of dependents (under 15s and over 65s) to people in the workforce shift as longevity improves and child mortality declines. As urbanization continues and birth rates fall, the phenomenon of fewer children, who are expected to live long lives and in the future support social services for the elderly, is argued to encourage a new degree of emotional and economic investment in children, which discourages child labour in favour of improving livelihood opportunities over the life cycle (Chawla, 2002). Countries in the earlier phases of demographic transition experience rapid population growth; as people begin to live longer and fewer

children die, under 15s can form up to 50% of the population (UN, 2004). Where dependency rates are high, children can be perceived as important household assets – either as economically active workers or by taking charge of younger siblings and domestic responsibilities to release adults for work outside the home. The total economically active child population (aged 5 to 17) was estimated in 2000 at 352 million children, of whom 246 million were thought to be involved in child labour, including street work; child labour excludes domestic work, light work for the 12s and over, and all but hazardous work for the 15s and over. On average, more boys tend to be exposed to child labour than girls (ILO, 2003).

Although it was traditionally assumed that absolute poverty was concentrated in rural areas, there is awareness that both scale and depth of urban poverty has been underestimated and that the worst disparities and deprivations may exist in towns and cities (Bartlett et al, 1999). For the first time, UN Habitat's State of the World's Cities Report 2006/7 showed that the urban poor suffer from an urban penalty that leaves slum dwellers in developing countries as badly off, if not worse off, than their rural relatives (UN Habitat, 2006: 1). Overcrowding, poor sanitation, limited and expensive access to water, and having to survive in a cash economy are distinctive features of urban poverty. And while health statistics suggest urban dwellers are healthier than their rural counterparts, aggregate figures hide the realities in low-income urban neighbourhoods, where challenges to health are often greater than in rural areas (Bartlett et al, 1999).

In education, although urban areas have more schools per child than rural areas, most low-income urban children cannot access fee-charging schools or those with hidden payment systems (Watkins, 2000). The families of many children who cannot afford

uniforms or equipment may have access to overcrowded, poorly equipped schools, where victimization and humiliation are sometimes standard responses by overworked and under-trained teachers (Watkins, 2000). While many statistics refer to school drop outs and absentees, school exclusion has alternatively been proposed as reflecting the role of the school as determinant in children being out of school, rather than simply a result of poverty (Swart-Kruger and Chawla, 2002).

Other aspects of life in poor urban neighbourhoods may also be experienced differently by children and adults: Children tend to spend more time at home than adults and are therefore more exposed to health dangers caused by unsafe, overcrowded and underserved housing with inadequate sanitation, water provision, food storage and cooking facilities. At the same time, the smaller sizes of children's bodies make them more vulnerable to the effects of toxins and polluted environments (Bartlett et al, 1999). Children can also be more affected by lack of safe places to play, proximity to traffic, and daily exposure to insecurity: *'Low-level illegal activities such as drug-dealing, prostitution and robbery are pushed into excluded areas, where they will not bother 'decent citizens', putting children of slum dwellers at considerable risk, as visibility of these activities makes them commonplace and access to these 'earning opportunities' is made easier for the young and gullible.'* (UN Habitat, 2003: 77).

On the other hand, some child-centred research points to positive experiences of urban living. In Boca-Barracas, one of the oldest and lowest income areas of Buenos Aires, researchers found resident children enjoying a culturally rich environment, experiencing a much higher degree of spatial freedom than children in more affluent environments, and more interaction with peers, neighbourhood adults and their physical environment, from which children gained positive identification and higher

self-esteem (Cosco and Moore, 2002). Children's creative play and free individual expression in turn was felt to enrich the culture of Boca-Barracas.

Urban realities for large numbers of children are likely to be more complex and multi-layered than aggregate figures and adult-centred research suggest. The ecological approach proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to explain children's development allows for such complexities, identifying separate, but interacting and ecologically 'nested', components of children's environment. Tan (1991) sums up the approach as recognizing '*the interaction between the individual and the environment, and the joining of the person and the environment to form an individual's own personal "ecological niche" or "place" within which behavior and development arise.*' (Tan et al, 1991: 85). This model allows for children's experiences to be understood as formed within and by interrelated family, community and societal systems, with implications for framing of research with street children.

2.3 Understanding Street Children

This section explores the literature surrounding definitions and numbers of street children, their causes and characteristics, providing a contextual setting of theoretical and international empirical evidence within which a case study of social policies for street children in a Mexican city can be helpfully framed.

There are accounts of children wandering urban streets throughout recorded history (Ennew and Milne, 1989) and the term 'street children' is not modern: there are descriptions of its sporadic usage alongside 'street urchin', 'waif' or 'street arab' dating back to the 19th century (Jones, 2004; Hecht, 1998). 'Street children' as a term came

into common use in the 1970s, when large numbers of children living or working in public spaces became visible in Latin American cities (Ennew & Milne, 1989). 'Street child' was promoted as a label particularly by agencies in Brazil, anxious to replace the prevalent 'delinquent minors' label used to describe all dirty-looking children seen begging or hanging around in the streets and to generate a more sympathetic public view of children's problems (Szanton Blanc, 1996; Rizzini, 2002). Much of the research on 'street children' in the 1970s and 1980s focused on Brazil and Colombia, spreading to other Latin American countries as rapid urbanization, high birth rates, and high dependency rates led to large numbers of children on the streets of cities across the continent (see for example: Meunier, 1977; Felsman, 1981; Taçon, 1982; Boyden, 1986; Aptekar, 1988; Valverde & Lusk 1989).

Use of the term 'street children' spread rapidly, to become part of the accepted discourse of international agencies, governments and civil society around the world in the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, although some civil society organizations and the public continue to push the cause of 'street children', international agencies and academics have begun to question the usefulness of the term. It has been argued that rather than forming a distinct group or groups, street children are instead young people considered by the public to be 'out of place' (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1994; Ennew, 2000), constituting a subject constructed through discourses in the literature that in reality does not form a clearly defined, homogeneous population or phenomenon (Glauser, 1990; Lucchini, 1997; Luiz de Moura, 2002).

Defining 'street' children

Definitions of 'street children' remain contested and leading agencies such as UNICEF, ILO and Save the Children have reworked their definitions several times (Thomas de

Benitez, 2007). Some commonly used definitions of street children include children who work on the streets but live at home with their families (Black, 1993), while others have focused more narrowly on those children who have weak or no links with their families and live on the streets (Ennew, 1994).

Fig. 2.2: 'Street Children' as a term subject to overlapping definitions

Some, or all, of these have been considered by different sources and at different times to be 'street children':

- ☐ Children at risk – urban poor working children
- ☐ Children who work on the streets and live at home
- ☐ Children who live on the street, or in shelters, without family support
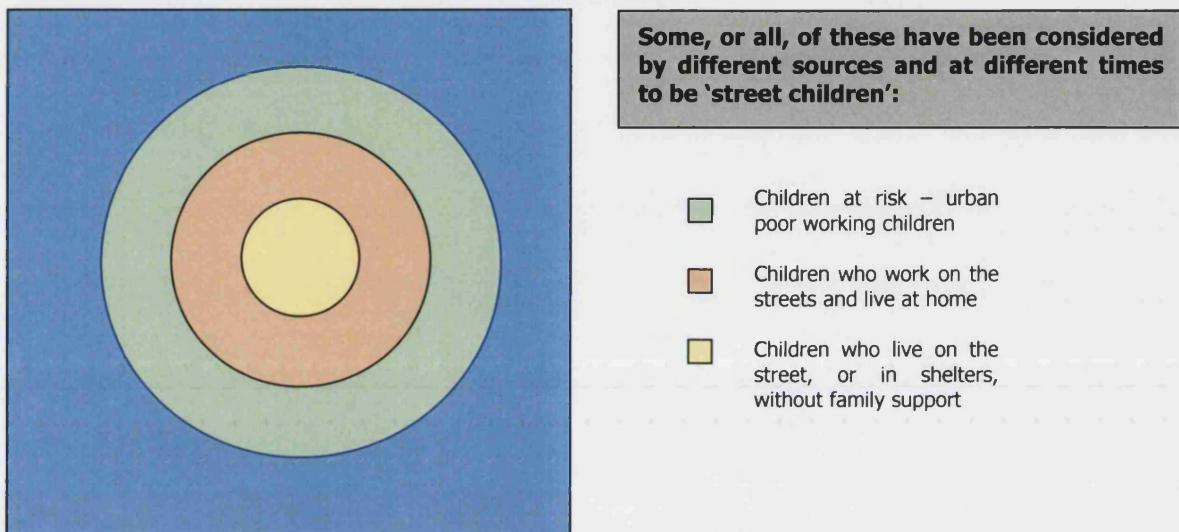
UNICEF, the leading UN agency on children, developed from its work in Latin America the first internationally mooted definition, still frequently quoted in research today, which identified 2 categories of street children: children *'of'* the street (also commonly known as street-living children), who slept in public spaces; and children *'on'* the street' (also commonly known as street-working children), who worked on the street during the day and returned to the family home to sleep (Szanton Blanc, 1996; Gomes da Costa, 1997).

These UNICEF definitions still commonly frame government and civil society action across the world. Street children in Kenya are '*children who live in the streets with few or no ties with their families; children who work in the streets who have a home to return to; children born and bred in the streets'* (Kenya Office of the Vice President, 2001: 43). And similarly in Asia, in Laos '*the term 'street children' refers to several*

categories of children who spend a significant part of their time on the streets; street living children - children who have cut ties with their parents and live on the streets; street working children - children working on the streets during the day or night but returning home on a regular basis; children of street families - children who live or work on the streets with their parents.' (Stern, 2006)

Research with children has, however, revealed wide variations in experience which have complicated issues of definition (Panter-Brick, 2002). And definitions continue to evolve to capture fluidity and differences in children's circumstances, including terms such as *'street-connected children'* (Rizzini, 1996) and *'children for whom the street is a reference point and has a central role in their lives'* (Redes Rio Criança, 2007: 18), both developed in the Brazilian context. Figure 2.3 shows the range of emphasis in definitions to date. Some definitions give more weight to children's lack of protection, others to their links with family or wider society. Some are in conflict: for example street children as connected to their families or as disconnected from them; or street children as rejected or choosing a life on the streets, viewed on the one hand as powerless victims and on the other as agents making choices. Definitions can conflict during the same period even within countries: for example, in the 1990s, the Philippines government in a report sponsored by UNICEF proposed one understanding: *The very small percentage of urban poor children who are actually living alone, away from their parents, whom we shall call* street children*; and the other children seen on the street who regularly live with their families, whom we shall call either* street-based working children *or simply* working children *'* (cited in Szanton Blanc, 1996: 113), while CSOs reflected that *'In the Philippines, the term 'street children' is generally taken to mean children who spend most of their time on the streets who maintain some regular contact with a family'* (UNESCO, 1995:136).

Fig. 2.3: Understandings of the term 'street children'

Street children	Sources	Definition of street children
Children dependent on the street	UNICEF - Gomes da Costa (1997: 4)	Child who lives on street ('of' the street); child who works on street returning to family home at night ('on' the street); child who lives with family on street (street-family child)
Children as street inhabitants	IAPG (1990:5) in Hecht, (1998: 4)	Street children inhabit the public spaces of cities...[...] seen singing for change on public buses, begging in central squares and sleeping on doorsteps
Unprotected children	Black (1993)	Boys and girls for whom 'the street' (including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland etc) has become their home and/or source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised by responsible adults
Disconnected Children	Szanton Blanc, (1994)	Children who live on the streets have no, or very few, family links
Children connected to family	Green (1998: 64)	The vast majority of children on the streets of Latin America and the Caribbean have homes to go to, and most return there to sleep for at least some nights of the week
Child disconnected from services	Council of Europe, 1994	They have very few or no contacts with those adults, parents, school, child welfare institutions, social services with a duty towards them
Children 'missing' from services	UNESCO (1995: 12-13)	Children of an age to be at school but who find themselves outside any social, educational, or even reinsertion, institution... the concept of the street is polymorphous, it is an area of survival, a 'non-place'
Children whose behaviour does not correspond to societal norms	Cosgrove, 1990	A street child is any individual under the age of majority whose behaviour is predominantly at variance with community norms for behaviour and whose primary support for his/her development needs is not a family or family substitute'.
'Rejected' children	Ayuku et al (2004)	Children who flee the home because of family conflict, bad social relationships and alienation; children who are rejected by their parents, or are forced to leave home; and children who are the products of rejection by society.
Children who 'choose' the street	(Aptekar, 1988)	Children who live on the streets usually maintain some sort of contact with their families and are not always the victims of family abandonment, but have left the barrios to seek a different kind of life
Children who are 'out of place'	(Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1994)	A street child is, like our definition of dirt, soil that is out of place. Soil in the garden is clean, a potential garden; soil under the fingernails is filth. A poor, ragged kid running along an unpaved road in a favela or playing in a field is just a kid. That same child, transposed to the main streets and town plazas, is a threat, a potentially dangerous 'street kid'

Sources: Various, provided in the second column

None of these definitions make clear when a 'street child' stops being a 'street child'.

Is it when he or she sleeps away from the street with his or her family, or moves into a residential centre? Or does the label stick, once having lived or worked in on the streets, until the age of 18? Even age is not universally accepted as a defining characteristic of street children. The European Network for Street Children Worldwide

(ENSCW) proposes that '*Street children are children and adolescents,* mostly *[my emphasis] younger than 18, who live and/or work on the streets – victims of extremely difficult conditions of life – such as abandonment, exploitation and sexual abuse – and who consequently are in need of specific protection*' (ENSCW: 2003).

Increasingly, researchers have come to perceive 'street children' as socially constructed through discourse rather than as forming an identifiably homogeneous population (Glauser, 1990; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1994; Ennew, 2000). These social constructionist perspectives help to explain the problematic nature of defining street children through their connectedness, use of place or characteristics, and alert us to the idea that '*the need to attach an adjective to 'child' connotes a problem'* (Wyness, 2006: 81), to the extent that some researchers have rejected 'street children' as a useful term for analysis (Ennew, 2000).

However, as real children continue visibly to live, work and hang out on city streets around the world, multiple pressures, including pressures to meet obligations assumed under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are brought to bear on governments to put policies in place to help 'street children'. The contested nature of definitions of 'street children' has implications for the scale and nature of policies as well as for the orientation of research to inform them.

Numbers of street children

Some 'street' children are excluded from official statistics because, if living away from home, they do not appear as members of households, the common base unit for official data collection. This omission, combined with diverging definitions, helps to explain how large discrepancies have emerged between estimates of numbers of street children around the world, as children in different circumstances are included in or

excluded from the assessments (Agnelli and Rizvi, 1986; Lusk, 1992). Numbers fluctuate even within a single city, reflecting street children's mobility and elusiveness (Bose, 1992; Lusk, 1992), families' economic stresses and migration patterns (Altanis and Goddard, 2003), school holidays and even time of day (Green, 1998).

The difficulties of counting are reflected in the global estimates. In 1989, UNICEF estimated 100 million children were growing up on urban streets around the world (Campos et al, 1994). 14 years later UNICEF reported: '*The latest estimates put the numbers of these children as high as 100 million'* (UNICEF, 2003: 37). And even more recently: '*The exact number of street children is impossible to quantify, but the figure almost certainly runs into tens of millions across the world. It is likely that the numbers are increasing as the global population grows and as urbanization continues apace'* (UNICEF 2006: 40-41). The 100 million figure is commonly cited (Panter-Brick, 2002; Forselledo, 2002) but repeated references to the 'increase' in numbers is at odds with the 100 million figure cited both in 1989 and 2006, despite the 17 year gap.

Ennew (1994) argued convincingly that although large numbers are often cited at the beginning of descriptions of street children, they are rarely referenced to counting methods and usually have '*no validity or basis in fact'* (p. 32). This has been particularly well demonstrated in Brazil, source of much of the literature on street children, where Ress and Wik-Thorsell (1986) claimed 30 million children were living on the streets, an estimate downsized to 20 million within four years (Connolly, 1990), and reduced to 7 million 'hard-core' street children in the 1990s, a figure cited frequently by institutions, journalists and academics but attributed to hearsay (Hecht, 1998). Set against these estimates, researchers in 1995 found fewer than 1,000 children sleeping on the streets of Rio and Sao Paolo (Green, 1998). Numbers of children living on the streets may therefore be much more modest than first estimates

suggest. Mixed quantitative-qualitative method studies and CSO headcounts in cities around the world have counted more modest numbers, ranging from dozens to hundreds of children sleeping in public spaces in the largest cities, and sometimes several thousand children engaged in street work. A UNICEF study in Malawi involving over 750 children in 3 cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu estimated a modest total population of 2,000 street children (Osman and Ali, 1999); and a 2001 study by CSO Mith Samlanh in Cambodia found 1,050 sleeping on the streets plus 670 returning home at night in the city of Phnom Penh (Consortium for Street Children, 2007).

The difficulties in counting numbers means, as the UNICEF estimates suggest, that it is unknown whether *numbers* of street children are growing globally or whether it is the *awareness* of street children within societies which has grown. Chapter 3 explores the numbers of children believed to be in street situations in Mexico, before Chapter 4 focuses in on numbers of children living in the streets of Puebla City, as estimated by different stakeholders, from children who have lived on the streets, through street-based informants to government welfare studies.

Causes of street children

There are controversies in the literature around the causes of children's moves to the streets. Two identifiably different theoretical strands are evident: the first espouses linear causality; the second suggests that children have less predictable 'on-off' relationships with the street over time.

Linear theories of causality take up UNICEF's 'slippery slope' proposition that working children in poor families are candidates for the street, some of whom become street-working children, a small proportion of these eventually becoming street-living children

(Ennew and Milne, 1989; Szanton Blanc, 1994). Under the linear reading, street children are the result of a chain of adverse factors, from neighbourhood poverty to family abuse. Living in slums and shanty towns, their families suffer extreme poverty and live in overcrowded conditions (Dallape, 1996; Ress and Wik-Thorsell, 1986), parents have died, families have been deeply stressed by armed or other societal conflict, and extended families have collapsed (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989; Le Roux, 1996; Ogwal-Oyee, 2002). Finally, as the linear theories have it, children are affected by combinations of 'push' and 'pull' factors (Green, 1998: 64; Kilbride et al, 2000; Dybicz, 2005: 765) which on the 'push' factor side can include individually experienced traumas such as neglect, sexual or physical abuse at home (Rizzini, 2002; Dybicz, 2005: 765) and on the 'pull' side include surrendering to the 'temptations of the street' (Campos et al, 1994: 327) and finding better opportunities to earn money (Dybicz, 2005: 765).

But empirical evidence has cast serious doubts on the assumed linear path and its inevitability (Lucchini, 1997a; Ennew, 2000). Some researchers have argued that children move back and forth between their families and the street, sometimes spending long periods at home, before leaving and then returning (Hecht, 1998; Gigengack, 2000; Luiz de Moura, 2002; Burr, 2006). In Lucchini's words, talking about street children in Latin America:

> *'One of the major difficulties in the analysis of the dynamics of leaving home is that they are not linear. The movements between the familial accommodation and the street are constant and numerous, and the total break-up between the child and the family remains exceptional. In most of the cases, leaving home is a means and not a goal.'* (1997a: 11)

The street may represent a transitional stage between arrival in the city from a village and assumption of a more stable livelihood in the informal sector (Evans, 2006). And a more circular 'street life path', in which children move between public spaces, homes, institutions and other cities, has been argued from empirical findings in different continents (Lucchini, 1997; Van Blerk, 2005). The more recent non-linear conceptualizations of children's street involvement suggest that time, space and agency are all important variables for research with street children.

There is general recognition that home-based abuse is an important part of the multi-causal package (Panter-Brick, 2002) from countries as culturally diverse as Bangladesh (Conticini & Hulme, 2006), and South Africa: '*In common with runaway youth in North America, South African street children describe their home environments as rejecting, deficient, and disorganized; their parents as punitive and unsupportive; and their scholastic lives as full of difficulties and failures.*' (Swart-Kruger and Chawla, 2002: 37). Similarly, running away to the streets in high-income countries is commonly seen as motivated less by economics or adventure-seeking and more as a way to escape family abuse, rejection or indifference (Shane, 1989; The Children's Society, 1999). At the same time, however, domestic violence is found in all parts of society and only rarely leads a child to the street. The role of family, then, is important to integrate into research about street children's experiences but cannot be considered in isolation.

Attention has been drawn to larger structural causes (Scheper-Hughes, 2004), citing macro-economic policies as causing a 'domino effect' (Magazine, 2003) responsible for creating conditions that push children onto the streets. The collapse of rural economies and migration to overburdened urban areas (Lusk, 1992; Richter 1988), high unemployment (Magazine, 2003) and urban planning, housing and social security

policies (de Vylder, 2000) have all been cited as instrumental in causing children to take to the streets.

On the other hand, framing of street-living as 'choice' has been proposed by several researchers: Hecht (1998) rejects the question 'what causes street children?' as framing street children '*as something akin to a disease*', arguing it is more productive to examine the alternative of staying at home where, at least in Brazil, '*home is a shack and home life is steeped in hunger, deprivation and violence.*' (p.25). Aptekar (1988) and Kilbride et al (2000) also highlight children's agency in opting to live on the streets in Colombia and Kenya, and it has been argued that for some children the streets present '*their best possibility for survival and happiness*' (Costa Leite and Abreu Esteves 1991: 130). Rizzini and Lusk (1995) argue however '*When asked about reasons for leaving home, almost no Latin American children speak of adventure or the desire for freedom*' (p. 393).

Much of the research explores multi-causality. Interplay between family and individual has been proposed in the UK as a 'matrix effect' in which problems at home involving particularly high levels of family disruption combine with personal issues such as alcohol, drug use, mental health and/or offending and where any one issue could spark off others, provoking departure from home (The Children's Society, 1999). Relative poverty, social inequality and family dysfunction have been considered together as driving forces behind street-living (Glasser & Bridgman, 1999; Young, 2004; Van Blerk, 2005), but others, in similar vein to Lucchini's argument about domestic violence, caution that poverty and abuse cannot explain why some children leave home when siblings and others in similar circumstances do not (Aptekar, 1988; Hecht, 1998). Neighbourhood influences have been found to exacerbate home-based problems (Van

Beers, 1996; Gigengack, 2000), as children in the locality who work or live on the streets recruit others to join them. In Peru, Ordoñez (1996) suggested that within a cultural context that sanctions physical violence and set against a background of poverty, individual children can become 'scapegoats' within families in conflict, triggering their departure to seek acceptance and safety outside the home.

For this thesis, 'leaving home' is approached as a potentially complex process, whose length and nature vary, involving at least: children's characteristics and identity; their relationships, material conditions and organization both in the home and the neighbourhood; institutional services on the street and in residential interventions.

Characteristics of street children

Street children's experiences play out in a more public way than most other urban youngsters. Research has progressed from an emphasis on classifying children through their on-street activities to exploring ways in which gender, age, ethnicity and disability differentiate children's access to the street and their experiences once on the street (Beazley, 2002; Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003; Ruvero and Bourdillon, 2003; Evans, 2006). Most empirical research has found fewer girls living on the street (Ennew, 1994; Panter-Brick, 2002) although reasons for their invisibility are less well understood (Railway Children, 2006). These variables were explored for street-living children in Puebla City for this thesis and findings are presented in Chapter 4.

There has been some research into risks to health associated with street lifestyles. Street children are reported to be more vulnerable than most urban poor children to violent trauma, accidents, suicide and murder (Raffaelli, 1999) and studies suggest that street children are at higher risk than their peers of engaging in psychoactive drug

taking, survival sex and contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Raffaelli, 1999; Scanlon et al 1998), with some evidence of higher reported HIV rates for adolescent street children than for other groups of adolescents (Knaul and Barker, 1990). Studies drawing attention to street children's social exclusion (West, 2003) and vulnerability (Lalor, 1999) have been challenged by others which have found street children to be resilient and resourceful (Stephenson, 2001; Aptekar 2004; Ungar, 2004) in development of street survival skills and negotiation of space (Stephenson, 2001; Swart-Kruger and Chawla, 2002; Aptekar 2004; Ungar, 2004). Lucchini (1997) concluded that 'children's relationship with the street is, above all, utilitarian and instrumental' (p. 107).

Street children have been depicted as alone and unsupported, but ethnographic studies have revealed the importance to children of on-street support structures. Children's relations within gangs or groups of street-living peers have been explored (Aptekar, 1988; Connolly 1990; Lucchini, 1997; Stephenson, 2001) and recent studies have explored children's social networks on the street with adults such as night watchmen, shopkeepers (Evans, 2006) and café owners (Burr, 2006). In light of these studies, street-living children's on-street social networks in Puebla City together with questions of children's agency are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.4 Social Policy and Street Children

This section examines theoretical perspectives and frameworks of relevance to exploratory research about social policy processes and street children.

Understanding social policies

Social policy in itself is a contested term (Jansson, 1994; Dean, 2006). Alcock et al (1998) propose *'social policy is the term used to describe actions aimed at promoting well-being'* (p.7) which can be interpreted to include other areas of public policy, from economics to foreign policy. A somewhat narrower definition would be *'social policies aim to improve human welfare and to meet human needs for education, health, housing and social security'* (Blakemore, 1998: 1). Within Latin America, social policy is similarly contested, understood at its most expansive as encompassing all state measures and methods aimed at improving social well-being, justice and social peace, with universal access to services (Mendez, 1992) to its narrowest expression as a targeted measure taken in a social sector, intended to respond quickly and in a palliative manner to the demands of a specific population (Stahl, 1994).

Policy has been conceptualized both as linear and non-linear: linear models in essence contemplate policy as a problem-solving process in which 'the public interest' can be rationally and neutrally determined (technical rational models); non-linear models assume continuous negotiation and compromise between values and objectives throughout the decision-making process (politically rational models) or understand politics as important but not necessarily in the public interest (public choice models), (Bulmer, 1982; Weiss, 1986; Dudley and Vidovich 1995: 16-18). More nuanced models build on recognition that problem definition for policy-making *'is never simply a matter of defining goals and measuring our distance from them. It is rather the strategic*

representation of a situation.' (Stone, 2002: 106). Crystallizing this idea in a 'What's the Problem' approach, Carole Bacchi (1999) rejects the 'problem-solving' nature of approaches to focus on the representation of problems, challenging the assumptions behind 'social problems' to focus on the *'discursive construction of policy problems and on the effects, including the lived effects, of the policies which accompany particular constructions'* (p. 48). This approach recognizes the socially constructed nature of social problems, drawing attention to the idea that descriptions or representations of a problem should be material for exploration and analysis.

Social policies for children

Substantive areas of social policy for children in the USA have been proposed as including child welfare, education, health, developmental disabilities, substance use, and juvenile justice (Jenson and Fraser eds., 2005). Meanwhile, social policies for children in Latin America, [*políticas públicas o sociales de infancia* or *políticas públicas o sociales de niñez y adolescencia*] are often described in terms of children's rights, linked firmly to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Cardeña Dios: 2001; Eroles et al: 2001) as the overarching legal instrument for children in the region, which all Latin American governments have domesticated through national legislation.

All social policies are built on theoretical foundations of some description, even though the theories may not be made explicit (O'Brian and Penna, 1998). Lorraine Fox Harding (1997) groups theories underlining social policies directed toward children into four broad perspectives. Each theoretical perspective reflects a different conception of children with its own implications for policy and social interventions, as set out in Figure 2.4 below.

Fig. 2.4: State perspectives on children and policy implications

State Perspectives	Conception of Children	Policy Implications	Implications for Social Interventions for children
Laissez faire and patriarchy	Parents know child's best interests so make decisions on child's behalf. Child does not have own wishes, or are not in his/her best interest	Power of the family should be disturbed only in very extreme circumstances. Role of the state should be minimal. Children have dependent status	Minimum intervention in parent-child relationship. Possible harm and emotional abuse excluded because of verification difficulties. Reduced public expenditure on child care
State Paternalism and Child Protection	Child is dependent, vulnerable and different from adult. Child's needs for nurture and care are dominant	Parents have primary duty of childcare. State intervention legitimated to protect and care for children where injuries/ disorders are evidence of neglect and abuse by parents State intervention may be authoritarian and biological family bonds undervalued	Quality of childcare is judged by professionals and experts. Intervention with substitute care, possibly institutional, if care of biological parents is assessed as inadequate. Requires adequate state resources to ensure planning, decisions & substitute care
Modern defence of birth family and parental rights	Child needs strong emotional bonds with parents Child can trust parents to express needs	State intervention legitimated as support to defend & uphold birth families Bad parenting is linked to social deprivation and pressures on the family	Help for parents = help for child. Intervention to address deprivation through day care and financial support for families
Child Rights and Child Liberation	Child as subject, with own view points and wishes, which he / she is entitled to express	Children as agents, persons with own rights that the State must uphold. Children to be freed from adult oppression – State role unclear	Children to be listened to, treated with respect as individuals. Children entitled to rights to work, vote, freedom of association and participation

Source: Adapted from Perspectives in Child Care Policy (Fox Harding, 1997)

Fox Harding's categories provide a theoretical framework within which to understand the construction and representation of social problems and the relative weightings that may be allocated, explicitly or implicitly, to the roles of child, family and state in the development and delivery of social policies relevant to children.

A range of cross-cutting ideological perspectives is known to drive social policy development for children, affecting social interventions and intended implications for children (see Fig. 2.5 below). An exploratory study of social policies from the perspective of street children's experiences must recognize the multiplicity of ideological perspectives and their potential to affect social policies accessible to street children.

Fig. 2.5: Ideological perspectives, interventions & implications for children

Ideological Perspective	Social Intervention Purpose	Implications for Children
Modernisation and Human Capital (see eg Schultz 1993)	Increase national productivity and boost economic growth	Increased access to formal education - attendance may become compulsory Emphasis on preparation for the workforce
Welfare and antipoverty (see eg Gordon 2002)	Protection from effects of destabilization of labour markets Poverty-alleviation	Targeted protection for disadvantaged families and children Children as adjuncts to workers or families
Nation-building (see eg Watkins 2000)	Increase political / national unity	Transmission through schooling of a common language, unified curriculum, national ideology. May discriminate against children from marginal ethnic communities and over-ride local needs
Human Rights and Social Justice (see eg Sen, 1999)	Guarantee access for all to basic services and livelihood opportunities	Increased legal guarantees to allow all children to access education, health and other social services Emphasis on participation and capability-building
Feminism (see eg Fottrell 2000)	Gender mainstreaming to improve women's well-being and enhance women's position in society	Improve children's survival and development opportunities by improving mothers' situations Children as adjuncts to parents Emphasis on improving situation of girls to achieve parity in access to education and health services
Social Exclusion and Social Capital (see eg. Hills et al 2003)	Support unemployed, others 'excluded' from participation in the market/society to join in. Develop stronger links across society to enhance safety nets	Targeted support for disadvantaged families and children Children may be given personalized support, possibly stigmatised

Sources: drawn from Schultz (1993), Watkins (2000), Fottrell (2000), Gordon (2002) Sen (1999), Walby (1990); Hills et al (2003)

Social policies targeting street children

Street children have been targeted as a international policy issue variously by organizations such as UNICEF, the World Bank and World Health Organization (UNICEF 2002, Volpi 2002, WHO 2002). Attention was claimed to have reached such heights in the 1990s that '*as a target for policymakers, street children have hijacked the urban agenda, together with associated planning budgets, to the detriment of other groups of disadvantaged children*' (Ennew, 2000: 169), drawing attention to the high global visibility of 'street children' and the potential for international pressure on governments to address street children through public policies.

Several policy approaches targeting street children can be identified in the literature. In Europe, three categories of approach were recognized (Council of Europe, COE, 1994): a repression-oriented approach, a protection-oriented approach and a human rights-oriented approach (see Fig. 2.6 below). Rizzini and Lusk (1995)'s classification of approaches to policy-making for street children in Latin America was similar: a correctional model (comparable to the CoE's repressive approach); a rehabilitative approach (equivalent to protection-oriented); outreach strategies and preventive approaches, which can both be understood as human rights-based. Each approach is based on different assumptions about street children, summarized in Figure 2.6.

Fig. 2.6: Social policy approaches to street children

Social Policy Approach	Conceptualization of street children
Correctional or repression-oriented model	**Deviants** - threats or potential threats to public order whose deficient characteristics differentiate them from other children assumed to be 'normal', inviting a repressive response to individual children
Rehabilitative or protection-oriented model	**Victims** - in which the deficient conditions of street life are emphasized, those whose basic rights to food, shelter, education and health are continuously violated, inviting a more protective approach towards the children in these situations
Human-rights based model (reactive and preventive approaches)	**Citizens whose rights have been violated** - A group of people who are discriminated against and whose access to rights as citizens and as children are denied or unsecured by society

Sources: drawn from Thomas de Benitez (2003), Council of Europe (1994), Rizzini and Lusk (1995), Luiz de Moura (2002)

Literature on policy responses to street children in the 1970s and 1980s manifested a correctional / repressive approach, not just in Latin American countries such as Brazil and Colombia, where street children first came to the world's attention, but also in the USA, Hungary and across Western Europe (Lusk, 1989; Cosgrove, 1990; Winterdyk, 1997; Council of Europe, 1994). Some countries, in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which they are party, permit penal consequences for the act of being on the street, for example: children are routinely arrested for homelessness or vagrancy in Tanzania (Evans, 2002; Thomas de Benitez, 2007); and

in Egypt children can be convicted for street begging as a status offence and detained in 'corrective' institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Hussein, 2005).

A rehabilitative or welfare approach emphasizes rescuing children from the street, envisaging street children primarily as victims. Rizzini and Lusk (1995) detected the influence of clergy throughout Latin America on policies manifesting this approach, although similar strategies have also been recorded in a range of countries where welfare is not dominated by Catholic clergy, including Vietnam, Kenya, India and UK (Burr, 2006; Kilbride et al 2000; Dallape, 1996; Hutson & Liddiard, 1994).

A rights-based approach sees street children as citizens who are discriminated against (Pare, 2003). Emerging first in Brazil as a policy approach to street children, this model built on Paulo Freire's educational model which emphasized political liberation (Lusk, 1992), claiming that street children's access to rights as citizens was denied and unsecured by society (Earls and Carlson 1999). Since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force in 1989, the human rights approach has gained momentum across the globe, although some research has found that its inclusion in many countries' national planning documents has remained at the level of discourse, with few demonstrable actions by governments to make the necessary structural changes (Ennew, 2000; Klees et al, 2000; Hammarberg & Santos Pais, 2000).

Empirical research has found all 3 approaches present in social policies impinging on street children. In Brazil, Irene Rizzini (2002) reported that although a rights-based, outreach approach dominated Brazilian law and social movements, the national system of residential care treated street children as objects of welfare, and the police, with some impunity, continued to treat the same children as a threat to public security.

Studies in other countries have also suggested fragmented and conflicting social policies towards street children, as strategies used by the police and welfare departments diverge (see Burr, 2006 in Vietnam; Van Blerk, 2005 in Uganda; Beazley, 2002 in Indonesia).

Social policies towards street children can be clearly understood therefore as comprising Bacchi's (1998) 'discursive' and 'lived' components, confirming descriptions or representations of a 'street children' problem as valid material for exploration. The existence of differences between legal instruments, ideological perspectives and social policy approaches to children established in this section also suggest that a contextual exploration of social policies, envisaged as layer 4 in the case study design must include legal and political contexts in order to understand street children's experiences of social policies.

2.5 Social Programmes and Social Interventions

Considering the research question posed by this thesis: '*How are social policies for children implemented and experienced by children who live or have lived on the streets?'*, Bacchi's approach encourages exploration of the area between how street children are constructed in social policies and how individual children experience their effects. Embedded in the approach is the idea of social policy as process. Accepting that interactions between social policy planning and implementation are complex and are intimately related, it is helpful for this thesis to distinguish 2 stages of the social policy process: a 'social programmes' stage and a 'social intervention' stage.

Social policies to social programmes

For the purposes of this thesis, 'social programme' can be understood in the Latin American context as referring to the instrumentation and the systematic operationalization of a social policy, or an element of social policy, in the shape of deliverable, time-bound, plans of action usually accompanied by objectives and strategies which set out to make a direct and positive contribution to the quality of life of a specified population (Maingnon, 1992: 11). Social programmes comprise the third layer in the case study for this thesis (see Figure 1.2).

Power has been highlighted as a key dimension of the social policy process in the sociological literature (Dean, 2006: 69-73). Antonio Gramsci (1971) coined the term 'hegemony' to capture the ways in which world views held by the dominant class tend to eclipse alternative perceptions of the world held by subordinate classes. Michel Foucault developed further the idea of power as 'immanent' or inherent to all human relationships, and that 'technologies' of power have evolved which determine 'normal' behaviour (Foucault, 1986), coining 'pastoral power' to denote the exercise of power through governance by others in the name of their own health, well-being, and security (Foucault, 2000: 334). In circumstances where social policy to programme processes are not transparent or explicit, this thesis understands social programmes to be vulnerable to the exercise of elite political power and to impositions of socially constructed perceptions about children and street children.

Social interventions for street children

This thesis understands social interventions as organized collective services delivered to street children, and for which street-living children met eligibility criteria,

representing front line service provision for street children, shown as the second layer in the case study design (see Figure 1.2).

Attention has been drawn in the empirical social policy literature to the key role of 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 1980) as the deliverers of front-line public services, forced by daily pressures to bend the rules or develop their own rules (ibid), and to the varying agendas of different stakeholders throughout public service delivery, along with their implications for the efficiency and equity of service delivery (Glennester et al, 1994). Specialist expertise or superior knowledge of service providers, whether in public service or civil society organizations, can also locate them in a potentially powerful position of normative power (Clarke and Newman 1997: 63) in relation to service users, particularly those who are vulnerable and relatively powerless. These factors suggest street children's access to and experiences in social interventions may be mediated by organizational and service level decisions and actions not consistent with the discourse. Such distortions may not be entirely unfavourable to street children: as individual gatekeepers could wield power to withhold or restrict service access, so poor services could be improved for street children by committed front-line workers.

Although street children have been assumed traditionally to be relatively powerless in terms of the nature and level of service provision they receive, some findings evidence street children's agency, for example in the very act of running away from shelters (Rizzini, 1996; Stephenson, 2001), or 'shelter hopping' to take advantage of the 'best' activities available from each service provider (Staller, 2004), or using services in quite different ways from those intended by the host organizations, for example accessing care home programmes in order to get a new set of clothes or to avoid confrontations

with parents (Gigengack, 2000). It has also been pointed out that runaway youth must actively navigate their way through social interventions to healthy outcomes, a sign of underlying resilience (Ungar, 2004).

As suggested by the variation in social policy approaches towards children, the literature on street children has distinguished between correctional, rehabilitative and rights-based interventions. Prisons and juvenile detention facilities have traditionally been closely associated with the 'correctional' approach in which services ostensibly aim to reform children, either to prevent them from offending or to deter them from re-offending. Correctional facilities have come under more criticism than other types of intervention for abuse of street children (Human Rights Watch, 2003), with torture and even killings of interned street children reported (Save the Children UK, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 1999; Hecht, 1998).

Similarities have been drawn between initiatives to rehabilitate street children and correctional facilities (Impelizieri 1995; Ennew, 2000), since both attend to the child's behaviour as a 'social problem' to be resolved and some institutions have been criticized for poor quality of care to a degree denounced as 'inexcusable harm' (Ennew, 2000: 178). Rehabilitative social interventions have also been criticized for misunderstanding family organization and thereby failing to capitalize on family strengths to benefit street children (Cerqueira Filho, 1998).

Governments and CSOs are increasingly concerned to reflect rights-based thinking in the discourse around social interventions. Outreach services which seek to restore rights to street children foster children's participation as a core element (Rizzini, 2002). Some rights-based social interventions have been highlighted as promising models of

good practice for street children (Volpi, 2002; UNESCO 1995), but poor data collection and storage have meant that evidence is largely anecdotal (Klees et al, 2000). Rights-based service models have included street children as advocates for their rights and in participatory research (Human Rights Watch, 2003; Save the Children UK, 2000).

Governments have been encouraged to address 'street children' by making sectoral social programmes more inclusive, particularly promoting universal access to health services (WHO, 2002) and education (UNESCO, 2001), in line with the Millennium Development Goals. At the same time as implementing these essentially preventive strategies, governments and civil society have continued to provide targeted social interventions, recognizing street children as subjects for protection who need support for their reintegration. Targeted social interventions have however been criticized on the one hand for stigmatizing children by labeling them as 'street children' (Panter-Brick, 2002) and on the other for their inability to scale up: in Brazil successful programmes for street children have been termed 'jewel boxes' (Myers, 1991) on the grounds that they reach a tiny proportion of street children and the few replications tried on a large scale were not successful (Klees et al, 2000).

Street children's experiences of social interventions

If childhood, 'street children' and policy-making are understood as socially and discursively constructed, then researching experiences of individual children as end users of social interventions should provide valuable insights into the policy-making process. There are reasons to listen to the views of all children, not just children who have lived on the street, about their experiences of social interventions, neatly summarized by Nigel Thomas (2001: 104-105): children have a right to be heard and have their views taken into account in decisions that affect them, expressed in Article

12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; creating opportunities for children to influence what happens to them can make them feel more in control of their lives; and finally there is some evidence that allowing children to influence decisions that affect them improves the quality of those decisions. In addition, Howe (1994) reminds us of the need to gather information not just about what children say, but also about what they do.

There is some evidence of street children's views and experiences being taken into account in civil society-led social interventions: for example Allen, Obdam and Zelleke respectively (1998) describe experiences in Jamaica, Tanzania and Ethiopia; and Save the Children (2000) used street child researchers to explore street children's experiences of violence at the hands of police in Bangladesh. And the Colombian government's 2003-2006 national initiative for street children 'Support programme for street youth and children in Colombia' [*Programa de apoyo a jóvenes, niñas y niños de la calle en Colombia*] was designed to include consultations with participating children at local level through the development of city-based alliances to coordinate local programmes and interventions for street children (EC-ICBF: 2002).

By distinguishing between social programmes as the operationalization of social policies, and social interventions as front-line service delivery to street children, this thesis attempts a more nuanced exploration of street children's experiences of social policies. Such an approach, focused on revealing children's experiences of social interventions and social programmes, promises to contribute to improving understanding about the socially constructed nature of 'street children' and the discursively constructed nature of service delivery for children.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to the socially constructed nature of childhood and of 'street children' as a collective target for social policy. Empirically, on peeling away the label, individual 'street' children are found not to form a homogeneous group. Definitions, numbers and characteristics, as well as causes for and ways of leaving home are all contested, creating tensions for social policy formulation and implementation. At the same time, discussion of perspectives on child development suggests that individual street-living children should be viewed not in isolation, but rather through their interactions with family, community and wider societal systems.

Discussion of theories surrounding social policy and children reveals a framework for identifying the respective roles of children, families and state, providing a theoretical tool for exploring the social policy context for this case study which homes in on street children in Puebla City. Discussion of power and agency suggests that although traditionally viewed as powerless, street children have manifested agency in their use of services; at the same time, power is a recognized facet of social policy processes with potential for altering street children's access to social interventions. As a way to understand social policy process 'street' children experiences, social programmes and social interventions are identified as separate elements in the process, with social programme understood as the tangible operationalization of social policy and social intervention understood as service delivery experienced by street children.

Chapter 3

Social Policies and Programmes for Street Children in Puebla City 2002-2005

3.1 Introduction

Drilling down from the international and theoretical contexts established in Chapter 2, this chapter addresses sub-research question 1: '*What forms of social programme do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*', by setting out the national and local social policy discourse and social programme parameters for street children in Puebla City during the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis. This chapter brings together discussion of case study layers 4 (national and local social policies) and 3 (social programmes), drawing on policy maker and social programme gatekeeper perspectives as well as documentary evidence. Mexican and Pueblan literature, combined with interviews with policy-makers and gatekeepers, were drawn on in developing this chapter.

An introduction to Mexican and Pueblan socio-economic conditions is followed by outlining street children as a subject of social policy. Recognizing that social policies are heavily intertwined both with legal instrumentation and political life, this chapter identifies the main legal and political parameters of social policy-making for street children in Puebla during 2002-2005, drawing attention to relationships between national, provincial and city levels. Social policies at national and local levels are then identified before government social programmes are distinguished – those specifically targeting street children and broader based programmes for which street children were eligible. This chapter concludes that street children were constructed primarily as a

social welfare problem and positioned for support from social welfare programmes designed within a relatively weak, highly politicized, legal and social policy framework.

3.2 Mexico to Puebla City: setting the scene

Recognizing the interrelated nature of national and local social policies in Mexico, this thesis, on a Puebla City case study, requires an introduction to national and state level socio-economic conditions before turning attention to the legal and political parameters affecting street children.

Economic situation in Mexico and Puebla State

Mexico's annual growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was healthy in the last decade: the Mexican economy is at the time of writing the largest in Latin America and the eighth largest in the OECD (OECD, 2007). Within Mexico, Puebla State is a strong macro-economic performer: as the 6th largest contributor (of 32 states) to the Mexican economy, Puebla was responsible for 3.6% of national GDP in 2004 (INEGI, 2007). And Puebla's economy has been growing at a relatively healthy rate by international standards, averaging 3.26% per annum in the period 1993-2004, ranking only 15th of the 32 Mexican states, but well above the national average of 2.83% per year.

However, Mexico registered the worst poverty rates of the OECD countries (OECD, 2007 using 2005 figures): 20.3% of the total population and 24.8% of the population aged under 18 were registered as living in poverty (identified by OECD as equivalised disposable income less than 50% of the median income). Mexico also had a 36% poverty gap - OECD's highest - where the poverty gap is measured as the percentage difference between the average income of the poor and the 50% of median income

poverty threshold (Förster and Mira D'Ercole, 2005). Puebla has historically contributed significantly to Mexico's poverty rates, and continues to have very high levels of poverty, ranked 6th poorest of 32 in poverty rankings and classed as having 'severe' poverty problems by UNDP (PNUD, 2006).

Income distribution was highly unequal both nationally and in Puebla State. Even though income inequality declined in Gini coefficient terms from a high of 0.53 in the mid-1990s, when Mexico was among the 15 countries with the worst concentration of income in the world by this measure (Roman and Aguirre, 1998), high income inequality across society has persisted. Mexico's Gini coefficient of 0.48 in 2000 marked the highest level of household income disparity of any country in the OECD, which across its membership averaged just over 0.30 (Förster and Mira D'Ercole, 2005). Within Mexico, Puebla was the fourth most unequal state in terms of household income, with a Gini coefficient of 0.602 registered for 2004 (PNUD, 2007: 13).

Quality of life in Mexico and Puebla

The Human Development Index (HDI) as the principal measure used by the United Nations to assess and compare human development (UNDP, 2006) combines life expectancy, adult literacy rates and enrolment levels at each level of education, with income per capita on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis. Mexico's HDI was 0.821 in 2004, combining Mexico's average longevity (75.3 years), adult literacy (91%) and GDP per capita (US$9,803) (UNDP, 2006). Mexico's human development is high by international standards: its HDI of 0.821 placed the country 53rd in the UN's 2006 HDI rankings, within the 'high development' group of 63 countries registering HDIs of 0.800 or more (UNDP, 2006: 285), although Mexico ranks lower than the other OECD members. Mexico's HDI ranking had steadily improved since 1975 (0.691), through

1985 (0.757) and 1995 (0.784) to the latest figure of 0.821, improving 2 positions since 2003 from a rank of 55th (UNDP, 2003) to 53rd of 177 ranked countries (UNDP, 2006).

Within this national picture, Puebla State's HDI has however been consistently well below the Mexican average, although Puebla has improved from a very low base in the 1960s relative to other Mexican States: in 1960 Puebla ranked 3rd from the bottom in Mexican HDI rankings (at 0.08 assessed as 'extremely marginalized'), moving to 5th from bottom in 1980 (0.38) and again in 1990 (0.55) (Jarque and Medina, 1998). By 2000, Puebla's HDI had improved to 0.756 and to 7th from bottom, in 25th place of all Mexican states (Lopez-Calva and Velez Grajales, 2003:10). It has remained in 25th place since (PNUD, 2006:393). Despite a higher ranking (19th) in terms of GDP per capita, Puebla's 25th ranking of 31 states reflects its poor performance in health and literacy (Lopez-Calva and Velez Grajales, 2003:10).

Demographic picture in Mexico and Puebla State

The most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world, Mexico reached a total population of more than 105 million people in 2005, although the birth rate of 2.2% continued its steady decline (OECD, 2007). Puebla State had a population of 5.4 million, or 5.2% of the total Mexican population in 2005 with a slightly higher 2.4% birth rate than the national average (INEGI, 2005).

The country is now reaching an advanced stage in its demographic transition towards population stability. This follows an unprecedented increase in numbers of children in Mexico during the 1970s and 1980s, but since 1990 the total number of children aged under 5 has declined and in 1999 numbers of 6 to 12 year olds also began to decline

(CONAPO, 2001). Thirty one percent of the population was still aged under 15 in 2005 (INEGI, 2005). Puebla State is at an earlier stage of its demographic transition relative to the national average: total number of children aged under 12 have begun to decline, but 35% of Puebla State's inhabitants were under the age of 15 in 2005 (INEGI, 2005).

Mexico's dependency ratio (ratio of under 15s and over 65s to the productive age group 15 – 65 years of the population) has declined from 64.26% in 2000 to 57.22% in 2005 and is expected to reach 48.13% by 2015 (World Bank, 2006), presenting increasing opportunities for Mexico's economic growth. Puebla's dependency ratio is higher than the national average, ranked 7th out of Mexico's 31 states, declining in line with the national average (INEGI, 2005) and is expected to reach 50% by 2030.

By 2005, 76.5% of Mexico's population was living in urban areas (INEGI, 2005). Urban growth rates were slowing, predicted to drop from 1.62% annualized urban growth rate for the 2000-2010 decade to 1.35% in following 10 years (UN-Habitat 2003). Puebla's urban population was a lower proportion than the national average, at 70.6% in 2005 (INEGI, 2005), but in line with national patterns, urban growth rates are slowing in Puebla and are predicted to drop to 1.4% in the following decade (ibid).

Puebla City in context

Puebla City's economy is by far the largest in Puebla State, with a GDP of US$12.6 billion in 2000 and an adjusted income per capita of US$9,358 for the same year (PNUD, 2007a). According to UNDP's 2000 Municipal Indicators, Puebla City has a high human development index of 0.83, reflecting high health and education levels held back by a lower income per capita index (PNUD, 2007). Home to over 26% of Puebla

State's population, Puebla City has 1.35 million inhabitants, of whom 32% are aged under 15 (PNUD, 2007).

In broad socio-economic terms then, Mexico and Puebla State enjoyed healthy economies but high poverty and high income inequality levels persisted during the 2002-2005 period discussed in this thesis, with Puebla City continuing to be the economic motor of Puebla State. As high quality of life overall in Mexico continued to improve, as assessed by the HDI, quality of life in Puebla City kept pace, but Puebla State was within the lowest quarter of the country's provincial rankings, reflecting high income inequality levels in Puebla State as a whole. Demographic trends were favourable for economic growth and social development, with birth rates in decline and a declining dependency rate at both national, state and city levels.

3.3 Mexico's street children

Definitions of street children

Official definitions of street children dated back to 1992, issued by the National System for the Integral Development of the Family [*Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*] hereafter referred to as 'National Welfare' or 'SNDIF', in a joint publication by National Welfare, UNICEF and the Mexico City authorities. 2 types of street child were identified and defined, child *of* the street and child *on* the street respectively, corresponding roughly to UNICEF's international definitions presented in Chapter 2.3. Children of the street [*niños de la calle*] were understood as: *children of either sex who, having broken the family link either permanently or temporarily, sleep in the public thoroughfare and survive by undertaking marginal activities within the*

informal street economy. They are children who confront risks derived from adult criminal and antisocial activities such as prostitution, drug addiction, robbery, alcoholism etc.' (COESNICA 1992: 10). Children on the street [*niños en la calle*] were: *children of either sex who maintain the family link, who tend to study and go on to the street to undertake marginal activities within the informal street economy for their own maintenance or to help their family. Their main risks are street-based dangers and the possibility of falling behind in their studies.'* (COESNICA,1992: 10).

Within Mexico these definitions are contested: some CSOs dedicated to street children in Mexico have developed their own definitions, including complex and detailed profiles of street children (for example Quiera et al, 1999), or extended the age of street 'children' to include over 18 year olds, on the basis that '*Young adults can be considered street children because they find themselves in the same predicament of vulnerability without family support'* (Magazine, 2003: p 247). UNICEF's terms were however in common use by the Mexican authorities and CSOs, and are used to explore government social policies towards street children in this thesis. For reasons of clarity and personal preference, 'street-living child' will be used instead of 'child of the street', both terms translating as '*niño de la calle*' in Mexican Spanish.

Numbers of street children in Mexico

By the mid-1980s, UNICEF estimated there were at least 1.5 million street children in Mexico (UNICEF, 1986). However these figures were, as in the rest of Latin America, largely 'guesstimates' generated by back-of-the-envelope exercises in instant demography using hazy definitions (Ennew and Milne, 1989: 56). CSOs working directly with street children also inferred large estimates from their own experiences: Alejandro Garcia Duran, known popularly as Padre Chinchachoma, and perhaps

Mexico's most famous advocate for street children, also talked of 1.5 million street children. Chinchachoma calculated in 1979, on the basis of work with several hundred street-living boys, that 50,000 children were living permanently on the streets of the national capital, with at least a further 25,000 in Acapulco and 10,000 in Monterrey (Garcia Duran, 1979: 182).

Most attention has focused on Mexico City, one of the world's largest cities with a population of over 20 million. In the 1970s, a 'guesstimate' by the Mexican authorities suggested that 200,000 children were 'roaming the streets of the capital' (Agnelli and Rizvi, 1986: 34), but three later street surveys between 1992 and 2000 found numbers of street children (understood as both street-living and street-working children) to be only between 15% and 20% of that number (see Table 3.1), despite assertions that numbers were growing (COESNICA 1992 & 1996).

Table 3.1: Official estimates of numbers of street children in Mexico City

Street Children Categories	Years in which Estimates Calculated							
	1981 'Guesstimate'		1992 street count		1996 street count		2000 street count	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Street-working children	n.a	n.a	10,000	91	11,450	86	13,350	93
Street-living children	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	9	1,850	14	950	7
Total Street Child Population	**200,000**	100	**11,000**	100	**13,300**	100	**14,300**	100

Sources: Agnelli and Rizvi, 1986; COESNICA 1992; COESNICA 1996; DIF-DF-UNICEF 2000

Looking more closely at the figures presented in Table 3.1 for street-*living* children as the core unit of analysis of this thesis: 950 street-living children were found in Mexico City in 2000 (DIF-DF-UNICEF, 2000).

At national level, government research into street children took the form of two studies, commonly known as the '100 Cities' studies, carried out in 1999 and 2004 in Mexico's largest urban centres excluding the national capital (SNDIF et al, 1999; SNDIF, 2004), which are explored in some depth in the next chapter. In these studies,

street-working and street-living children were folded into a larger population of urban working children, described in the 2 studies as 'children in a street situation' [*niños y niñas en situación de calle*], a term used interchangeably with the term 'street children', AND children working in self-service chains and supermarkets. As shown in next chapter's Table 4.1, the first study counted 114,500 such working children of whom 2,300 were living on the streets (SNDIF et al, 1999), and found smaller populations 5 years later of 95,000 urban working children, of whom 1,500 were identified as street-living children (SNDIF, 2004).

Conservative estimates could be made of the total number of street children (working and living) and the sub-set of street-living children in Mexico by using the 2000 Mexico City and the 1999 '100 Cities' results, to estimate around 100,000 street children of whom some 3,000 or 3% would have been identified as street-living children. Around 2,000 urban working children were counted in Puebla City in the 1999 '100 Cities' study (number of street-living children unknown), rising to just under 3,000 in the second 100 Cities study (SNDIF, 2004) of whom an estimated 70 (around 2.3%) were street-living children. Numbers and other 100 Cities findings about street children in Puebla are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Street children as national social policy target

UNICEF began supporting provincial Welfare departments and individual CSO initiatives for street children in the capital city and around the country in 1982 (SNDIF, 1993). By the mid-1980s, the Mexican government, supported by UNICEF, recognized street children as a national social issue, creating in 1987 a Programme for *Menores En Situacion Extraordinaria 'MESE'* (Children in Extraordinary Situations), which aimed to develop a national methodology of intervention for street children (SNDIF, 1993: 5)

and ran from 1987 to 1993. From these beginnings, street children were recognized as subjects of 'social welfare' and therefore the legal responsibility, along with all other social welfare subjects, of National Welfare or SNDIF.

While MESE was a predominantly government venture, CSOs were recognized by UNICEF and SNDIF as important independent service providers for street children with which MESE could interact in developing their national methodology. By the end of the MESE Programme in 1993, 80 CSOs were registered in Mexico City as service providers for vulnerable children including street children, 15 of which focused on street children and 11 of these exclusively targeted children living on the streets (COESNICA, 1996). Many CSO services sprang up around the country dedicated exclusively to street children or including them in the children receiving their services. In the same year of 1993, the National Association of Bankers created its own philanthropic foundation 'Quiera' dedicated to supporting and professionalizing CSO initiatives for street children (Quiera et al, 1999), a sign of the continuing national focus on street children.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child added international support for action by the national government, recommending that the federal authorities: *'increase measures to reduce economic and social disparities, including between urban and rural areas, to prevent discrimination against the most disadvantaged groups of children, such as girls, children with disabilities, children belonging to indigenous and ethnic groups, **children living and/or working on the streets** and children living in rural areas.'* (CRC/C/15/Add.112: 10/11/1999 – my emphasis)

The 1994 to 2000 period saw no federal programmes for street children as President Zedillo's administration focused social investment on launching the internationally

acclaimed *Progresa* 'Progress' social development programme, which continued under the name *Oportunidades* 'Opportunities' throughout Vicente Fox's 2000-2006 period in office. But in 2000 a new national government under President Fox launched a second Mexican Programme for street children, called From the Street to Life [*De la Calle a la Vida*] for the period 2000-2006. This thesis focuses on street-*living* children, as a small, identifiable proportion of the street children population, and their experiences of social policy processes in the central Mexican city of Puebla from 2002 to 2005, during the life of the From the Street to Life national programme.

3.4 Street Children: the legal framework

In common with most of Latin America and Europe, Mexico's legal system is based on civil law which centres on the 1917 Mexican Constitution. Mexican federal laws apply to all Mexican States but each State has its own Congress to enact local legislation.

National laws for all children:

Since Mexico's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in September 1990, CRC provisions have automatically been enshrined in Mexican law, under the terms of the 1917 Constitution. The 1917 Mexican Constitution, as amended, and the Federal *Ley de Protección de los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes* of 2000, literally 'Law for the Protection of the Rights of Boys, Girls and Adolescents', hereafter referred to as the Child Rights Law 2000 or CRL 2000 (Congreso de los Estados Mexicanos, 2000) together form the legal platform which underwrites Mexican children's rights to survival, protection, development and civil liberties (UNICEF, 2006).

All three levels of government - federal, State and Municipal authorities — are responsible for securing the protection and exercise of the rights of girls, boys and adolescents, and for taking necessary measures for their wellbeing, bearing in mind the rights and obligations of their mothers, fathers, tutors, guardians or others responsible for them (Article 7). However, while the Child Rights Law 2000 sets out children's rights to health, education, recreation and freedom of expression, and establishes that all children should be able to enjoy all rights (Article 8), it does not identify mechanisms under which access to rights are to be secured and has no budgetary attributions.: '*The law talks about a range of concepts that are not viable in practice... rights to health, education and whatever sounds great, but the law does not establish mechanisms to put them into practice. It sets out the what, but not the how...*' (René Hernandez, Director of Legislative Projects, Puebla State Attorney's Office, interview of 10/11/04).

On family matters, Mexican law contemplates '*protection of the organization and development of the family*' (Mexican Constitution, reformed 1974, Art.4) and also directs state education to '*reinforce in the pupil,... appreciation for the dignity of the person and integrity of the family.*' (ibid, Art. 3, IIc). There is no further federal legislation to operationalize these norms and Mexican States have diverse local codes concerning family attributions (Goddard, 2006: 35)

Street Children and Social Welfare Law

In legal terms, it is the federal *Ley de Asistencia Social* 2004 (literally "Social Assistance Law") hereafter referred to in this thesis as the 'Social Welfare Law' 2004 or 'SWL' 2004, replacing an earlier SWL of 1986 (Congreso de los Estados Mexicanos, 2004a), which provides the legal framework for social policy processes and interventions for

street children. Under this law, children living on the street are specifically designated as targets of social welfare (ibid Art. 4.If). Social welfare is understood as: '*the combination of actions intended to improve those social circumstances which hamper an individual's personal development and to provide physical, social and mental protection for people in need, until they have been incorporated into a full and productive life'*(ibid Art. 3).

The SWL 2004 identifies SNDIF, a decentralized department within the Health Ministry, as responsible for the coordination and supervision of the Law's implementation. However, like its predecessor, the SWL 2004 fails to specify mechanisms for planning, delivery or evaluation of social interventions. It also has no binding powers and no budgetary attributions, permitting each level of government and relevant ministry to '*allocate funds according to their availability'*(ibid Art. 28).

Laws on Social Welfare and Social Development

The key federal statute relating to social welfare, the SWL 2004, has been introduced and discussed above. The key federal statute relating to social development is the *Ley General de Desarrollo Social* (literally the 'General Law on Social Development' and hereafter referred to for the purposes of this thesis as the 'Social Development Law 2004' or 'SDL 2004'). The SDL 2004 came into force in January 2004, some 9 months before the SWL 2004 (Congreso de los Estados Mexicanos; 2004b), identifying as its target population *every person or social group in a vulnerable situation* (ibid Art. 8), and subject to principles set down in '*Social Development Policy and norms established for each programme'* (ibid Art. 7). While there are similarities between target populations, there are fundamental differences between the SWL 2004 and the SDL 2004. These are set out in Figure 3.1 below.

Fig. 3.1: Comparison of 2004 laws for social welfare and social development

Themes	Social Welfare Law (SWL) 2004	Social Development Law (SDL) 2004
Popula-tion	Individuals / families with physical, mental, legal or social 'conditions' requiring specialized services to gain wellbeing (Art. 4)	Individuals / social groups in vulnerable situations; eligibility criteria by programme (Art. 5)
Goals	Social protection and welfare (Art. 3); Integrated development of the family (Art. 5); Regulation and coordination of social welfare services	Restitution/guarantee of human rights (Art. 1) Multidimensionality of wellbeing and needs over the human lifecycle
Govern-ment body in charge	Non-cabinet: Welfare Department (Art. 9) decentralized, own assets, accountable to Health Ministry (Art. 27), no higher representation	Cabinet level: Social Development Ministry (Art. 39); Secretary of State is a member of the Federal Government's Executive Cabinet
Organiza-tion	SNDIF (National System of Public and Private Social Assistance) (Art. 9). Subdivisions include: (1) a Council to issue opinions, recommendations and guidelines for action (Art. 25); (2) a Consultative Citizens' Council to issue opinions and recommendations about SNDIF's national policies and programmes (Art. 40). No organizational requirements for policy coordination, evaluation, planning, integration, auditing	SNDS (National System of Social Development). Subdivisions include: (1) Social Development Commission to coordinate policy and programmes (Art. 49); (2) Council for policy evaluation (Art. 72-80), a decentralized, autonomous entity (Art. 81-85); (3) Inter-ministerial Social Development Commission to integrate federal actions, power to impose agreements across federal government (Art. 51-54); (4) Consultative Social Development Council to emit recommendations (Art. 55-60); (5) Social Auditor to monitor progress and application of resources (Art. 69-71)
Regional Reach	Guidelines given for establishing areas of competence of federal, states and municipalities (Art. 14 to 21; 44 & 45) but no more	Specific federal, state and municipal competences established (Art. 43 to 46)
Policy guidelines set out in relevant law	Norms for policies & programmes issued by Health Ministry & implemented by SNDIF (Art. 7) SNDIF required to: (1) Promote creation of private & civil organizations for delivery of social welfare (Art. 48); (2) Create National Directory of Public & Private Social Welfare Institutions (Art. 9 & 56-62); (3) Organize National Information System on Social Welfare (Art. 28); (4) Research causes and effects of social welfare problems (Art. 9)	Establishes principles, objectives, priorities and planning mechanisms of National Social Development Policy (Art. 3 and 11-14) Social Development Ministry responsible for general policies & national planning (Art. 39) State governments for programme planning & supervision of budgetary allocations (Art. 41) Municipal governments for development and application of programmes (Art. 42) All levels of government to publish annual, budgeted, social development programmes (Art. 16 and 17)
Budgets and transpa-rency	Encouragement for the responsible entities to earmark 'necessary' resources for social welfare programmes (Art. 41) Encourages responsible authorities to make fiscal incentives for private and civil society provisions of service delivery (Art. 49) No requirements for transparency of budgets, performance indicators, or register of beneficiaries	Federal budget allocation, minimum pegged to previous year's social spending, increasing in same proportion as GDP (Art. 20). Federal spending by programme published in Federal Annual Budget (Art. 22). Commitment to make budget distribution transparent and non-discretionary (Art. 21). State governments to publish budgetary allocations by municipality (Art. 26). Commitment to indicators of effectiveness, quantity & quality in all spending (Art. 23), using integrated beneficiaries register (Art 27)

Sources: Congreso del Estado Mexicano (2004ᵃ and 2004b)

In sum, in terms of political organization, Social Development has Ministerial status while Social Welfare is the responsibility of a decentralized Department. At the level of powers and budgetary attributions, social development policies are enforced across federal government and have minimum budgets linked to GDP growth, while social welfare enjoys neither legal powers nor any guaranteed budget. At organizational level, the SDL 2004 institutionalizes professional and transparent policy coordination, planning, evaluation and auditing mechanisms, while the SWL 2004 has no such arrangements. The SDL 2004 establishes a national social development policy framework of principles, objectives, priorities and planning mechanisms; the SWL 2004 does not - providing only a non-exhaustive list of social welfare services. These 2 laws were passed by Congress in 2004, both targeting vulnerable populations: the first, the SDL 2004, had a clear policy framework, binding powers and guaranteed resources; the second, the SWL 2004, included no policy framework, no binding powers and no guarantee of resources.

National legal framework for street children

Street children, as under 18 year olds, are legally protected by the CRL 2000, which does not, however, provide mechanisms for the enforcement of rights. 'Street children' are directly targeted by the SWL 2004 for whom National Welfare is therefore responsible, even though street children also clearly fit the target population criteria of the SDL 2004 as individuals and a social group in vulnerable situations.

2 other national laws, covering child labour and juvenile justice, have also helped shape policies and social interventions for street children. The Federal labour law *Ley Federal de Trabajo* 1970 prohibits all under 14 year olds from working, allows 14 to 15 year olds to work only with special protection, and makes street work illegal (Congreso

de los Estados Mexicanos, 1970). Meanwhile, a street child's age could determine his or her treatment by government: children aged 11 or more who committed a federal offence could during the 2002-2005 period of this thesis be sentenced under the *Ley para el Tratamiento de Menores Infractores* 1991 'Law for the Treatment of Young Offenders 1991' but children aged 10 or below were treated as social welfare subjects (Congreso de los Estados Mexicanos, 1991).

Puebla laws framing policies for street children

Puebla State, as one of 31 federated Mexican States has its own 1917 constitution (*Constitución Política del Estado Libre y Soberano de Puebla*) and its own legislative body, the Puebla State Congress, which enacts local legislation within the framework of the federal Constitution and federal laws.

Since Puebla State's legislature has not yet operationalized the normative federal CRL 2000, legal access to children's rights is not enforceable in Puebla State. Family attributions have however been operationalized through Puebla's *Código Civil* 1985 Civil Code, amended in 2004 (Congreso del Estado de Puebla, 2004). Under the Civil Code, Puebla State undertakes to support and protect the family, legally and socially, paying special attention to children, women, the sick, the disabled and elderly (ibid, Art. 291). The same Article grants children the right to grow up in their own home (Art. 291.II), the obligation of all to avoid use of family violence (Art. 291:IV) and states that any child can be taken in to be protected and cared for by Puebla State's Welfare Department or '*other similar organization*', until minimum conditions are in place for a return or, if needed, a substitute home can be found (Art. 291: V). In Puebla State therefore, children's treatment within the family can be understood as subject to closer legal scrutiny than children's legal access to their human rights.

Puebla's State's *Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia del Estado de Puebla* (literally "System for the Integral Development of the Family of the State of Puebla" and hereafter for the purposes of this thesis "Puebla State Welfare" or 'Puebla State DIF' is legally responsible for social welfare in Puebla State. Puebla State legislation relating to social welfare is governed by the 21-year old *Ley sobre el Sistema Estatal de Asistencia Social* (literally "Law relating to the State System of Social Assistance" and hereafter for the purposes of this thesis, the "Puebla State Social Welfare Law 1986" or 'PSSWL 1986'), which has also yet to be reformed to reflect the federal SWL 2004. But even if and when it is, there will be few implications in terms of policies or social interventions for street children: neither the PSSWL 1986 nor the federal SWL 2004 provides a policy framework, binding powers or obligations on relevant institutions or the provision of guaranteed resources. The PSSWL 1986 does not make specific reference to street children, including them only implicitly within its target population of abandoned, maltreated, malnourished and working children (Congreso del Estado de Puebla, 1986: Art 4).

Other Puebla State laws were also relevant to street children in the 2002-2005 thesis period. The 4 most important ones were: a 1981 Young Offenders Law (*Ley del Consejo Tutelar para Menores Infractores del Estado Libre y Soberano de Puebla: 1981*) providing for protection and rehabilitation of offenders under 16 years of age; a 1992 Law for a Puebla's Children's Hospital (*Ley del Hospital para el Niño Poblano*) to provide health services for children, particularly children in poverty; a 2000 Education Law (*Ley de Educación del Estado de Puebla*) obliging parents or guardians to guarantee children's completion of primary and secondary education; and a 2001 Law against Domestic Violence (*Ley de Prevención, Atención y Sanción de la Violencia*

Familiar para el Estado de Puebla) which sought to protect children from home-based violence.

Puebla City and laws for street children

Puebla City, the State's capital city, is governed by Puebla State laws. Puebla State's 2001 Municipality Law (*Ley Organica Municipal, 2001*) establishes the guidelines for the government of Puebla City – the largest of Puebla State's 217 municipalities - setting out the Mayor's powers, municipal administrative guidelines, financial rights and obligations. At the level of social welfare, PSSWL 1986 provided for establishment of a decentralized *Sistema Municipal de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* for Puebla City (literally "Municipal System of Integral Development of the Family" and hereafter for the purposes of this thesis, 'Puebla City Welfare' or 'Puebla City DIF'). Puebla City Welfare organizes itself according to the same guidelines and objectives as those of Puebla State Welfare and is tasked with executing social welfare programmes within its jurisdiction. Public education, health, juvenile justice and social development policies for Puebla City are run by Puebla State-level government ministries.

3.5 Street Children: the political framework

National politics

In 2000, the conservative, Christian democratic National Action Party *Partido Accion Nacional (PAN)* won Mexico's national Presidential elections for the first time, breaking a monopoly on national power held for over 70 years by the Institutional Revolutionary Party *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). President Vicente Fox's PAN government (2000-2006) came to power in 2000 with a manifesto of change,

promising to reform government structures, eliminate corruption and listen to the people. However, PRI maintained control of both Houses (Deputies and Senate) in the national Congress during the 6 year administration, forcing a PAN Executive and PRI-dominated Legislature to negotiate national reforms, programmes and budgets. In terms of legislation relevant to street children for this thesis, the Child Rights Law (CRL) 2000 was enacted by the previous PRI government, while the SDL 2004 and SWL 2004, both discussed in the previous section were passed in the middle of President Fox's tenure.

The relationship between federal and state politics is complex: on one hand, Puebla is constitutionally a free and sovereign state, but on the other hand economic policy and fiscal management have traditionally been highly centralized in the hands of the federal government. Around nine tenths of Puebla's public finance came from the federation during the period covered by this thesis, as set out in **Annex 4** (INEGI, 2005). Negotiations between state leaders and the federal government take place on an annual basis to determine the following year's state budget. In 2004, for example, only Mex $2,834'302,700 (equal to around £141 million)[2] or 9.8% of Puebla State's total public income of £1.45 billion came from state sources (state taxes, rents, licences, fines, donations), while 90.2% (£1.3 billion) came from what are designated federal 'shares' and 'contributions'. While some of the annual budget is guaranteed, based on historical precedent, other elements are subject to negotiation for specific projects. Although Mexican law prohibits political negotiation of state budgets, the politically charged nature of state budgets is readily understood: *'Look, it's against the law for* [State] *Governors and their officials to lobby politically to increase their slice of*

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[2] Using Exchange rate of £1 = Mex $20.10 as official rate at 31 December 2004 (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 30/12/04

the cake, but in practice each and every budget that is subject to negotiation has a strong political component' (Joan Sala, Sub-director for Federal Expenditure, Finance Ministry, interview of 18/09/04).

Puebla State politics

When President Fox began his 6 year tenure as Mexican President for the PAN party in 2000, PRI's Melquiades Morales had been recently elected Governor of Puebla State for the 6 year term 1999-2005, continuing the PRI's unbroken dominance of Puebla State for 70 years. Governor Morales was the first Puebla State Governor to work alongside a national PAN government. And when Morales stepped down in 2005, his successor was another PRI politician, Governor Mario Marin. Both PRI-led State Executives were accompanied by absolute PRI majorities in Puebla's State Congress for all of the relevant legislature tenures (the 54th Legislature from 1999-2002, the 55th Legislature from 2002 to 2005, and the 56th Legislature from 2005 due to continue until 2008), continuing a long-standing tradition. This has allowed successive Pueblan Governors to count on general support from the Puebla Congress for major legal and policy initiatives.

Puebla City Politics

Puebla City's elected Mayor serves a 3 year term. During the period of interest for this thesis, PAN candidate Luis Paredes became Puebla City Mayor (2002-2005), only Puebla City's second PAN Mayor. Puebla City's previous Mayor, for the 1999-2002, was PRI's Mario Marin, who was subsequently elected Governor of Puebla State, as described above, for the 6 year 2005-2010 term. The period covered by this thesis 2002-2005 therefore corresponded to the first experience in power sharing between a national PAN President, a Puebla State PRI Governor and a Puebla City PAN Mayor.

The Politics and Organization of Social Welfare in Puebla

National social welfare policy guidelines were established by the SNDIF, which also provided operational funding and technical assistance for federal initiatives. Puebla State Welfare and Puebla City Welfare received operational funding and technical assistance for those federal initiatives which they were invited to join or chose to access and also pursued their own local social welfare agendas. State and City Welfare budgets for overheads and running costs were usually funded by the respective State and City governments, including local private donations. Most social programme funding came from federal contributions.

Social welfare has traditionally been regarded by all parties in Mexico as a political vehicle designed to attract popular votes. Reflecting this, the head of Welfare is a political position, appointed by the incumbent political leader and has traditionally been the preserve of the elected leader's spouse: the Mexican President's wife has traditionally served as SNDIF President of the Board; Puebla State Governor's wife is Puebla State DIF's President; and the Puebla City Mayor's wife heads up Puebla City DIF. President Fox broke with this tradition nationally, appointing a career PAN politician, Ana Teresa Aranda (coincidentally from Puebla) as Executive Director of SNDIF in 2000, a position she held for the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis, responsible directly to the President. In Puebla, however, the tradition remained in force: PRI Governor Morales' wife Maria del Socorro led Puebla State DIF's Board (1999-2005); and PAN Mayor Paredes' wife Patricia led Puebla City DIF (2002-2005). For these political and usually unpaid positions, DIF presidents have traditionally not been required to demonstrate any relevant experience or professional qualifications.

The senior executive post in Welfare of Executive Director has also traditionally been, at state and city levels, a political appointment. The DIF Executive Director post has traditionally been coveted as a high profile stepping stone to senior posts in party politics. Executive directors were not obliged to have social welfare or development management experience during the research period:

> '*By institutionalizing the DIF Directors' performance norm, we're trying to prevent each administration from being reinvented every 3 years, and we're encouraging directors to have appropriate experience and to respond to the prioritized objective of the organization, because social welfare should no longer be considered as 'charity' but should instead be professional and based in systematic studies.*' (Lic. Jose Luis Jurado, Puebla City DIF Director 2002-2005, Press Bulletin, Atlixco City DIF, 20 July 2005 www.atlixco.gob.mx)

Senior to middle management DIF staff – from programme directors down to programme coordinators – are recruited as political appointees or '*Personal de Confianza*' as allowed for in Puebla State's SWL 1986, with the longest contracts expiring at the end of a Mayor's or Governor's electoral term, in the case of Municipal and State Welfare respectively.

The political nature of Welfare's leadership and management, together with a weak legal social welfare framework has discouraged continuity between administrations at both State and City levels. There is no obligation to continue programmes started by the previous city administration, and one administration has little incentive to follow a predecessor's programmes unless they have been earmarked to receive continuing federal or State resources, not least because the administration is required to close

down its management and deliver full accounts *'rendir cuentas'* at the end of its electoral term:

> *'When I arrived, I didn't even find any computers. There was nothing, nothing. Not even a database of who had been given welfare support. We had to start everything from scratch. I don't even now have* [the last administration's] *results; I don't really know what they did. What I do know is that when I got here, there wasn't even a database of the people on welfare support.'* (Patricia Paredes, President, Puebla City DIF 2002-2005, interview of 02/02/05)

Such ruptures were not limited to Welfare handovers between rival political parties; similar upheavals were commonly reported at the end of each political administration, even during the unbroken PRI years in office. Policy-makers recognized that lack of continuity between administrations hampered social welfare provision: *'It's a little difficult that we only have 3 years, because in 3 years you can just about start to see results with children, but without a doubt it's a job that needs continuity.'* (Patricia Paredes, President, Puebla City DIF 2002-2005, interview of 02/02/05)

Social welfare accountability has also been very limited. Monitoring and evaluation are subject to the guidelines of each social programme, and generally focus on financial spending and numbers of beneficiaries. According to senior Welfare staff, no social welfare performance indicators were in use to measure impact or assess targeting of children in Puebla State or City DIF during the period covered by this thesis, nor was service end user feedback required:

> *'...reports are needed only if resources change hands, and they're focused on checking how the money is used and who received what. In the case of* [Puebla] *State DIF, they apply resources for example to the area of school*

breakfasts, which is a federal programme that comes down through Branch 33 [earmarked federal contributions] *to the State. The State then divides up the 'food' resources by municipality and [...] we have to submit very specific reports usually with very tight deadlines: saying where you delivered, how you delivered, signed delivery chits, local census copies, all that. In the case of Street Children, we're operating 2 State programmes – both for grants – one food and one education – within the 'From the Street to Life' national programme – so we have to submit information on names and quantities to the [Puebla] State.'* (Sub Director of Programme Tracking and Evaluation, Puebla City Welfare, Ana Montiel, interview of 31/01/05)

Public access to information pertaining to Welfare at State and City levels was, during the period of the research, limited exclusively to the various Welfare Departments' published annual reports of activities, which contained no information on finances or measurable performance indicators.[3] In sum then, the social welfare context in Puebla can be understood as highly politicized in organization, highly dependent on federal finance, not accountable to end users and with general accountability limited to finance and numbers of beneficiaries.

3.6 Social Policies and Street Children in Puebla City

Federal Social Policy Framework

'With You' or *'Contigo'* was an ambitious national social policy strategy launched by President Fox for his 2000-2006 term in office. 'With You' drew together national

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[3] Puebla State's Transparency Act 2004 entered into force only in 2006

education, health and social development policies for the first time into an explicit social policy strategy; it envisaged putting people at the centre of social policy with the joint objectives of eradicating poverty and enabling all Mexicans to access '*full development*'. The PAN government's discourse took a multidimensional view of development, aiming to facilitate access by all Mexicans to quality health and education services and adequate nutrition to enable '*all citizens to develop their capabilities*'. 'With You' promoted better income opportunities and social insurance. It also introduced a human lifecycle approach, encouraging prenatal support through to services for the elderly. For the first time, all Mexican social policies were grouped under a single strategy in order to identify common problems, eliminate gaps between programmes, avoid duplication of efforts, exploit potential synergy, and articulate joint programmes (www.contigo.gob.mx accessed on 05/10/05).

In relation to children, 'With You' set out to: improve the capabilities of girls, boys and adolescents; guarantee for their families opportunities for income-generation, asset-building and social protection; and build an environment of safety and progress for children and adolescents (Fox, 2001). 'With You' was the policy strategy through which the SDL 2004 and SWL 2004 were intended to filter to develop federal social programmes (www.contigo.gob.mx accessed on 05/10/05).

National social welfare policy in Mexico has traditionally been oriented to promoting family integration and unity, as evidenced in the name *Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* 'DIF' [Integrated Development of the Family]. SNDIF's mission within the 'With You' policy was expressed as: '*To direct public social welfare policies towards fostering the integrated development of the family...*' (www.dif.gob.mx/quienes consulted 13/07/06). For street children, a targeted federal social programme was introduced called *El*

Programa de Prevención y Atención a Niñas, Niños y Jóvenes en Situación de Calle 'De la Calle a la Vida (literally 'Programme for the Prevention and Treatment of Girls, Boys and Youth in Street Situations 'From the Street to Life') commonly known as *De la Calle a la Vida* 'From the Street to Life' which ran from 2000 to 2006. See section 3.7 below for a description.

Puebla State Social Policy

Within 100 days of taking office, a State Governor is legally required to submit a Development Plan to his State Congress for approval. The Development Plan must set out the policies and programmes for his 6 year tenure. Puebla's *Plan de Desarrollo Estatal 1999-2005* 'State Development Plan 1999-2005' set out Governor Morales' public policy strategy for Puebla State. Morales' Plan recognized that the state suffered extreme poverty and social inequalities in urban and rural areas, lagging behind the national average in significant aspects of social development such as high illiteracy rates, a low proportion of housing connected to the water, sewage and electricity grids, and poor health indicators (Morales 1999: 4 and 11). However the Puebla State Development Plan manifested no overarching social policy strategy and indeed made only one explicit reference to social policy: '*One of the most effective social policy instruments is investment in basic infrastructure'* (ibid. 139), while making no claims for what he hoped to achieve under the rubric of social policy.

On social welfare, Governor Morales stated in the Development Plan that the State's Welfare Department was the '*principal government organism charged with executing the social welfare programmes'* for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (Morales, 1999: 121). His Development Plan stated that it intended to promote social development by focusing on promoting educational opportunities for children (ibid, p.

132), defence of children's rights and help for young offenders to integrate into society (ibid, p. 30). Street children were identified as a priority group needing special attention '*whose social welfare demands the government commits itself to dealing with in an integrated way, promoting a culture of inclusion and avoiding any kind of discrimination*' (ibid, p. 131).

Annual reports on social welfare by Puebla State DIF did not set explicit social welfare policy goals, instead laying out 4 broad lines of action to be pursued: family integration; community development; combating malnutrition; treatment for people with disabilities (Alfaro de Morales, 2005). Street children were included as beneficiaries of the DIF's *Programa de Atencion para Menores y Adolescentes en Riesgo* (literally the Programme of Attention for Children and Adolescents at Risk referred to in this thesis by its acronym in Spanish 'PAMAR') (Alfaro de Morales, 2005:24-26), see section 3.7 below.

Puebla City Social Policy

At City level, Mayor Paredes (2002-2005) also published his City Development Plan (*Plan Municipal de Desarrollo*) within his first 100 days in office in accordance with State law. The City Development Plan serves as the administration's main policy instrument (Articles 78 and 107 of Puebla State's 2001 Municipality Law). Paredes' Plan paid scant attention to social welfare policies other than to note, in keeping with legal requirements, that they should be geared to helping the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, but specifying neither the form nor content of that help.

During Paredes' term (2002-2005) Puebla City Welfare developed a social welfare policy aimed at promoting children's rights and family integration:

> '...with welfare helping each person to have dignity, to get to know their capabilities and their rights, and also their obligations. It's been a policy of integrated welfare – I mean with all the family, so that the family - not just one member – can move forward.' (Patricia Paredes, President, Puebla City DIF 2002-2005, interview of 02/02/05).

Only at the end of Paredes' term did a policy link emerge between Puebla City's social welfare and social development policies:

> 'When you've resolved your food supply, your education and your health care, then you should start to develop material assets – your little house or your little patch of land – and we're starting to look at that part now. That corresponds to another part of government, probably not Welfare. But we need to make sure we're linked in to that, so that families who are still very poor and fragile continue to be supported' (Patricia Paredes, President, Puebla City DIF 2002-2005, interview of 02/02/05).

Fig. 3.2 Links between Legal, Policy and Programme Instruments for Street Children
(children targeted in parenthesis)

National Legal Framework

Federal Constitution of 1917- amended

* 2000 Federal Law for Protection of the Rights of Boys, Girls and Adolescents (*all children*)

+

* 2004 Social Assistance Law (*Street children*)
* 2004 Social Development Law (*Vulnerable children*)
* 1970 Labour Law (*Working children*)
* 1991 Law for treatment of young offenders (*children age 11+ contravening federal law*)

National Social Policy 'With You' 2000-2006

*National Development Plan 2001-2006
*Programme of Action for Children 2002-2010
(all children)

+

Social Programmes
*'From the Street to Life' (*Street children*)
*SEDESOL Opportunities (*Vulnerable children*)

Puebla State Legal Framework

State Constitution of 1917- amended

* 1985 Civil Code (*Minors needing custody and protection*)
* 1986 Social Defence Code (*Young offenders*)
+
* 1986 Social Welfare Law (*vulnerable children*)
* 2001 Law against Domestic Violence (*abused children*)
* 1981 Young Offenders Law (*young offenders*)
* 1992 Law for Puebla's Children's Hospital (*all children*)
* 2000 Education Law (*all children*)

Puebla State Policy Framework 1999-2005

* State Development Plan 1999-2005
* DIF Programme of Action 1999-2005 (*vulnerable children*)
+
Social Programmes
* DIF From the Street to Life (*Street children*)
* DIF PAMAR (*Vulnerable children*)

3.7 Social Programmes and Street Children in Puebla City

The federal Government's *Programa de Acción 2002-2010: Un México apropiado para la infancia y la adolescencia* 'Programme of Action for Children 2002-2010: A Mexico appropriate for childhood and adolescence' declared its intention to set children's rights as its beacon, alongside the 'With You' social policy strategy as its compass (Fox, 2002: 14).

Street children were identified as 1 of 13 priority groups needing targeted attention within the 2002-2010 Programme of Action (Fox, 2002: 113), for which an inter-institutional and inter-sectoral strategy was favoured, in recognition of the multiplicity of risk factors to which children were exposed (ibid, p. 114). Key policy goals to help street children were expressed as: strengthening coordination of initiatives; strengthening family integration and educational opportunities; reducing poverty; development of specific initiatives to give street children and families tools to improve their quality of life; raising public awareness about street children and ways to help them; highlighting gender differences; and strengthening research and treatment of domestic violence (ibid, p. 116).

National Programme for Street Children: 'From the Street to Life'

De la Calle a la Vida 'From the Street to Life' was launched by Mexican President Vicente Fox on his first day in office. This national social programme aimed to coordinate public, private and social efforts to find '*integrated solutions to the street child phenomenon*' (SNDIF, 2005: 2).

Led by SNDIF, From the Street to Life as a social welfare initiative shared basic features with its predecessor 'MESE', the 1993-1999 social programme for street

children under President Salinas de Gortari. Both programmes offered technical support and a budget stream from National SNDIF to participating State DIFs and both specifically targeted children who lived and worked in the streets. In addition, From the Street to Life encouraged inter-sectoral coordination, participation by civil society organizations and integrated solutions. While MESE had been implemented across the country, only 6 provinces including Puebla State were selected to pilot From the Street to Life. The 6 States were selected on the basis of relatively high numbers of working children found in the government's first 100 Mexican Cities research study of urban working children in 1999.

In 2001, National DIF established an inter-sectoral committee with CSO representation from each of the 6 selected States, in order to prepare for the launch of From the Street to Life in each State in 2002. Subsequently the committee was dissolved, From the Street to Life national management moved inside SNDIF and State DIFs were required to coordinate and administer the programme locally. National guidelines set out the Programme's main aim as: '*to promote the connection and coordination of efforts between public, private and social sectors which prevent and treat the phenomenon of children in street situations and their families, in order to contribute to resolving and giving integral treatment, in the medium and long term, to this problem'* (SNDIF, 2005: 37).

'From the Street to Life' for Street Children in Puebla State

The first national 100 Cities study found over 5,700 urban working children in Puebla State, just under 3,000 of whom were in Puebla City, forming the 5th largest concentration of urban working children in the country outside Mexico City (SNDIF et al, 1999: 19). On the strength of this, Puebla State authorities were invited to join the

Programme and in 2002, Puebla State DIF established the *Comite Estatal de Operacion del Programa 'De la Calle a la Vida* [Puebla State's Steering Committee for From the Street to Life].

Led by Uzziel Avalos, Coordinator of Puebla DIF's PAMAR Programme (*el Programa de Atención a Menores y Adolescentes en Riesgo),* From the Street to Life was the first Puebla State Welfare Programme to invite CSO participation on its Steering Committee, alongside representatives from Puebla State ministries of Health, Finance, Social Development, Labour and Education and Puebla City's Welfare Department (Alfaro de Morales: 2005). Detailed rules from SNDIF governing Programme planning, implementation and evaluation in each State were subsequently published on the internet (SNDIF: 2005).

From the Street to Life in Puebla State amounted to a small slice (0.7%) of Puebla State's total Welfare Programme resources, averaging Mex $1'179,150 (around £80,680) per year over the period 2002-2005 (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2: From the Street to Life annual budgets as % of Puebla State Welfare Budgets 2002-2005

Year	From the Street to Life as % of Puebla Welfare Programme Budget	Puebla State Welfare Programme Budget Mex $	From the Street to Life Annual Budget for Puebla Mex $	From the Street to Life Annual Budget for Puebla £
2002	0.7	138'585,572	1'000,000	68,422.85
2003	0.7	146'203,766	1'000,000	68,422.85
2004	0.6	163'776,409	1'000,000	68,422.85
2005	0.8	207'992,282	1'716,600	117,454.66
Annual average 2002-2005	**0.7**	**164'139,507**	**1'179,150**	**80,680.80**

Source: SNDIF 2006; Note: At end 2005, £1 = $ 14.615 Mexican pesos (Diario Oficial de la Federacion 30/12/05)

Funds were allocated nationally for Puebla's From the Street to Life in annual rounds. Organizations eligible for funding were Puebla State and City DIFs and CSOs in Puebla

which targeted '*vulnerable children at risk, aged 0 to 18, as well as those that live and /or work in the street*' (ibid: 32). In accordance with national Welfare regulations (SNDIF 2005: 6), Puebla State and City Welfare Departments together received 60% (which split in turn into 40% for projects, 30% for grants to children 'in street situations', 30% for research and publicity) and the remaining 40% was distributed among participating CSOs (50% for projects, 30% for grants, 20% for research). Puebla State Welfare covered Programme overheads and human resources using existing infrastructure and human resources under the State's PAMAR Programme (Uzziel Avalos, Puebla State DIF Coordinator of PAMAR, interview of 20/09/04). Children's experiences of From the Street to Life in Puebla are explored in Chapter 7, focusing on the grants for children in street situations noted in the paragraph above.

'From the Street to Life' in Puebla City

Puebla City DIF 2002-2005 inherited a street children social programme started several City administrations ago, each since adopting its own approach to this 'social problem'. Most recently, between 1999 and 2002, under Mayor Marin, Puebla City's Street Children Programme had focused on providing opportunities to work. Mayor Paredes' 2002 election coincided with operational start up of 'From the Street to Life' Programme in Puebla State funded with federal resources. Puebla City DIF developed its '*Programa Niños de la Calle*' Street Children Programme for 2002-2005 with 2 facets: participation in 'From the Street to Life'; plus a home-grown 'No More Coins' '*No Más Monedas*' campaign.

Puebla City Welfare's Street Children Social Programme absorbed From the Street to Life within itself. The 2002-2005 programme linked up existing Welfare social programmes run previously as separate initiatives all aimed at larger populations of

'vulnerable' beneficiaries, so that a child entering Welfare could access all City DIF Programmes. The Street Child Programme offered: compensatory education; regularization of official documents; free medical care; use of a job centre; and productive and therapeutic workshops (Paredes, 2005: 47). In a policy change from the previous administration's Street Children Programme, City DIF allocated From the Street to Life funding to help individual street children stop work and go back to school:

> 'we said, everyone under 15 years of age, put down your paint brushes and your shoe-shining kit and come back to school. Some said no – they were vaccinated against school, others said yes but is it going to affect my wage? No. You'll still get it, but instead of calling it a wage, we're going to call it a grant. And the only requirement is that you study.' (Coordinator of Puebla City's Street Children Programme 2002-2005, Israel Gonzaga, interview of 20/09/04).

Puebla City's Street Children Programme, including their participation in 'From the Street to Life' was designed primarily for street-working children who lived with their families (Paredes, 2005).

An additional facet of City DIF's Street Children Social Programme was the City night shelter. Set up in Mayor Marin's term of office, the night shelter was intended to provide temporary shelter for 'indigents' in Puebla City. During Paredes' 2002-2005 electoral term, the night shelter was folded into the Street Children Programme, although it was mainly intended for families and adults in street situations. Under Puebla State's SWL 1986, the City's night shelter was prohibited from accepting unaccompanied children, so unless they were accompanied by adult family members, street children were to be referred to the State authorities except in exceptional

circumstances either for emergency one-night stays or as a temporary measure to keep families together.

'No More Coins' in Puebla City

Another facet of Puebla City Welfare's Street Children Programme 2002-2005 was a public campaign under the title *No Mas Monedas* 'No More Coins', aimed at dissuading the public from giving money to children on the street and encouraging children to leave the street, inviting them to use Welfare's integrated services where necessary:

> *'We feel that when kids see an economic benefit in the street, then it's difficult to get them out of there. By giving money we are, in a way obliging them to stay, making them become street-dependent* [callejerizados]. *So we decided to be radical - so ok, big signs saying 'No More Coins' on the streets, with the secondary idea of referring kids to the city DIF – here we have a range of different services.'* (Israel Gonzaga, Puebla City Welfare Dept. Coordinator, Street Children Programme, interview 20/09/04)

'No More Coins' was based on the premise that 'easy money' attracted children and adults onto the streets, but that people would in fact prefer other, less risky options if they were available.

All Social Welfare Programmes available to Street Children in Puebla City

Street children in Puebla City were nominally eligible for several other broader-based Social Programmes as summarized in Figure 3.3 below, run by DIF, at City and/or State levels , some with earmarked federal funding. From 1999 to 2005, some 85% of Puebla State Welfare Department's resources were allocated to a State-wide school-based breakfast Programme for children, the flagship welfare initiative of Governor Morales (Alfaro de Morales, 2005).

Fig. 3.3: Puebla State Welfare Social Programmes for which street children eligible 2002-2005

Child Populations Targeted	Named Social Welfare Programmes available in Puebla City		
	Run by Puebla City DIF	Run by Puebla State DIF	Earmarked funding from Federal SNDIF
Girls, boys and young people at risk of or in street situations	Street Children No More Coins	From the Street to Life	From the Street to Life
Working children		Minors and Adolescents at Risk (PAMAR)	Eradication of Urban Child Labour
Adolescent children at risk of survival sex, STIs and addictions	Health Clinic Dental Clinic	Minors and Adolescents at Risk (PAMAR); Health & Dental Clinics	Attention to Child Health
Socially neglected children with recognized disabilities	Disabilities	Disabilities	Disabilities
Orphaned, rejected, abandoned, abused girls & boys; or whose parents / guardians are ill or in prison		Children's Shelter and Teens' Shelter	
Children without identity documents or with legal problems	Legal Aid	Legal Aid	Legal Aid
Malnourished children in primary and pre-primary schools, located in marginalized zones	School Breakfasts	School Breakfasts	School Breakfasts

Sources: Paredes (2005) for Puebla City; Alfaro de Morales (2005) for Puebla State; and (www.dif.gob.mx accessed 05/05/06) for National SNDIF Welfare Programmes

Other Social Programmes available to Street Children in Puebla City

Compensatory schooling schemes aimed at securing access by all children in Puebla City to compulsory primary and secondary basic education. Puebla's public health policies 1999-2005 included '*combating alcoholism and drug addiction'* (Morales, 1999) and although not aimed at children, young people aged 14 could access these Puebla City-based Programmes: *Centros de Integracion Juvenil* Youth Integration Centres which offered an out-patient Counseling Programme to recovering young addicts; Puebla State's Drug Detoxification and Rehabilitation Unit. Emergency medical assistance was offered by Puebla's Institute for Public Welfare IAPEP, and by Puebla's Children's Hospital. Meanwhile, the Social Development Ministry's *Oportunidades*

Opportunities Programme targeted children in very poor households, deploying a combination of educational and nutrition grants, parent education and health service access for families. A Social Programme was also available for young offenders and children displaying antisocial behaviour through the Interior Ministry's Remand Homes

Fig. 3.4: Puebla State non-welfare social programmes for which street children were eligible 2002-2005

Child Populations Targeted	Non-Welfare Social Programmes available in Puebla City (by Ministry)	
	Puebla State Programme	Earmarked Federal funding
Out of school children	Compensatory schools (Education Ministry)	Compensatory schools (Education Ministry)
Adolescent children, aged 14 and over, with addictions	Drug Detoxification and Rehabilitation Unit (Health Ministry) Youth Integration Centre counselling (Health Ministry)	Drug Rehabilitation (Health Ministry)
Children in need of emergency medical help	Children's Hospital (Health Ministry) Pueblan Institute for Public Welfare IAPEP (Health Ministry)	None
Children living in household poverty	Opportunities (Social Development Ministry)	Opportunities (Social Development Ministry)
Young offenders and children displaying antisocial behaviour in need of protection	CORSMIEP Puebla Remand Home (Interior Ministry)	Federal Remand System (Interior Ministry)

Sources: Morales (1999) and Fox (2002)

3.8 Chapter Conclusions

The setting for this thesis is Puebla City, which in the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis had a buoyant economy and a high level of high human development, but lies within a State suffering chronic high poverty and high income inequality. Street children had had a visible presence in Puebla City from the 1970s and were targeted by various national, provincial and city-level social programmes from the 1980s and throughout the 2002-2005 period. Around 3,000 urban working children were counted in Puebla City by government research conducted in 2002-2003 (SNDIF, 2004), around 70 of whom (2.3%) were found to be street-living children.

In the research period, social policies for children were not harmonized across national, state and local levels, nor at times were they even publicly articulated. Despite public enthusiasm for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and enactment of a federal Child Rights Law 2000, there was no overarching Children's Strategy, no mechanisms for consultation with children, no mainstreaming of children's issues, no Ombudsperson or Children's Commissioner to defend children's interests. In Puebla, no local legislation had been passed to enforce children's access to their rights. Family integration was however a subject of local legislation, including children's treatment within the home.

Street children were positioned in social policy both as 'vulnerable' children and as subjects of social welfare, nationally and throughout Puebla State including its capital, Puebla City. These positions had important implications for the nature of social policies and the resulting social programmes designed to help them. Social welfare had a weak legal framework, no guaranteed resources, no accountability to end users and heavily politicized organizational structures from national to local levels, in stark contrast with social development – also designed for 'vulnerable' children - which enjoyed strong legislation, clear policy guidelines, binding powers and guaranteed resources. Implications in practice for street children's positioning as welfare subjects rather than seen as subjects of development are explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

Although there was no explicit social policy for street children, social welfare policy was implicitly expressed in the form of 2 social programmes which targeted street children in the research period in Puebla City: 'From the Street to Life' *[De la Calle a la Vida]* a 6 year nationally funded initiative encouraging an integrated approach to street

children which was implemented in Puebla City by State and City DIFs (Welfare departments); and No More Coins [*No Mas Monedas*], a 3 year city-level initiative encouraging the public not to give money on the streets and coaxing children away from public spaces through a variety of social welfare services. The application of both social programmes in practice is discussed in Chapter 7, through the experiences of 24 street-living children explored for this thesis in the following chapters.

During the period of the study, street children in Puebla City were also eligible for other social programmes, positioned variously as 'vulnerable' children in social welfare and development, as out-of-school children, drug users, and young offenders. But street children were not positioned as children with families, a key issue explored further in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapters 6 and 7 explore street-living children's take up of official social interventions and programmes in Puebla City.

Chapter 4

Children's experiences of living on Puebla City streets

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore children's experiences of living on Puebla City streets. Of particular concern for this thesis are children's contacts with social interventions and other support structures. Three elements of the main research question are addressed: *How do social policies approach street-living children?; How do these children experience formal support structures on the street?* and *What other forms of support they experience on the street?*

First, data on street-living children is drawn from official research designed to inform social policies for street children, in order to explore how this research approached street children. The strengths and limitations of this data for understanding street-living children in Puebla are assessed, before findings from my exploratory case study are introduced. In contrast with the mixed quantitative-qualitative methods used for the official research, my case study draws exclusively on qualitative methods, namely multi-sourced triangulation of materials from observation, semi-structured interviews with 24 street-living children and their gatekeepers, and children's files. My exploratory case study findings serve to challenge and enrich official research findings about the characteristics, circumstances and support experienced by children living in the streets in Puebla City.

4.2 Government research on children in Puebla City streets: the '100 Cities' studies

Research on street children, national to Puebla City

Mexico's SNDIF, the national body responsible for social welfare has, with UNICEF support, undertaken nationwide 2 surveys during the last 10 years of urban working children. Formally referred to as *Los estudios en cien ciudades de niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores* (literally 'The studies in 100 cities of working girls, boys and adolescents', referred to hereafter as 'the 100 Cities studies') these 2 surveys set out, in 1997 and 2002-03 respectively, to improve understanding of the living conditions and characteristics of working children, including street children, in Mexico's largest 100 cities, excluding the national capital. The main findings were published each in the form of an executive report (SNDIF et al, 1999 and SNDIF, 2004).

The 100 Cities studies' target population was described as comprising 2 categories: the first, identified as '*Niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores en situacion de calle*' (working girls, boys and adolescents in street situations) referred to the population of children who worked for money in the streets or other public spaces; a second category of child workers was identified as *Niñas, niños y adolescentes que trabajan en espacios publicos* (girls, boys and adolescents who work in public spaces), where public spaces were defined: '*such as markets, supermarkets, wholesale markets, bus terminals, cemeteries, entertainment centres*' (SNDIF et al 1997: 14). Introducing 'supermarkets' as a form of public space, and differentiating streets from other public spaces both represented departures from earlier government studies, which had interpreted children in street situations more widely and loosely to include children working in such places as street markets, wholesale markets, bus terminals, cemeteries

and parks. Interestingly, other city-based working children were not included in this new category, for example those working in factories or workshops - which could presumably be considered public spaces in the same way as supermarkets and self-service shops could. Reasons behind the change in classification were not specified in the reports. The new category of child workers in 'public' non-street spaces represented over a quarter of children counted in the first study and almost 40% of those counted in the second (see Table 4.1 below).

Table 4.1 Number of urban working children counted in national '100 Cities' studies 1999 and 2004 in Mexico

Working Child Category	1st 100 Cities Study 1999		2nd 100 Cities Study 2004	
	Number	%	Number	%
Children working on the street	80,491	70.3	56,403	59.5
Children working in self-service shops or supermarkets	31,716	27.7	36,875	38.9
Children living on the street	2,290	2.0	1,517	1.6
Total population of urban working children	114,497	100	94,795	100

Sources: SNDIF et al (1999 and 2004)

The reclassification evidences the socially constructed nature of the 'working children' category, and in so doing raises questions about whether street-living children can usefully be considered as part of the urban working child population, a point developed later in this chapter.

Both 100 Cities studies used a common methodology, devised in 1997 by UNICEF and SNDIF, combining a population headcount of children in Mexico's largest 100 urban centres (excluding Mexico City) with a survey of a stratified random sample of urban working children (SNDIF et al, 1999: 15-16). Recognizing the likelihood of finding very few street-living children, and '*given the difficulties of working with a population that presented important differences*' (SNDIF et al, 1999:62), the study's authors

determined that all children registered as 'living in the street' should be interviewed, in other words '*a census of this sub-population should be undertaken*' (ibid:63).

This thesis argues that the 100 Cities census methodology had important limitations as a design for understanding street-living children, particularly regarding: reliability of 'headcounts' as an indicator of numbers; appropriateness of the survey as a data collection tool with street-living children; relevance of a survey designed for a much larger group of children from whom the small sub-population of street-living children differed in significant ways; and reliability of the data obtained in conditions where street-living children may feel threatened or disengaged. These points will be developed throughout this chapter and later in the thesis.

Elsewhere in Mexico, similar official city-wide surveys of children in street situations had already been carried out, particularly in Mexico City (see COESNICA, 1992 and 1996), and smaller scale surveys had been conducted by CSOs and researchers in several other Mexican cities, but the two 100 Cities studies were the first designed to find out about the national dimensions of children working in street situations and other public spaces.

The 2nd 100 Cities study, carried out in 2002-2003, within the thesis period of 2002-2005, found Puebla City, the 4th most populous city in Mexico, to have the 5th largest concentration of working children (excluding the Mexican capital), after Monterrey, Guadalajara, Tijuana and Leon (SNDIF, 2004:19). This represented an increase both in absolute numbers and in the city's ranking on the first study's findings: 1,968 working children were counted in the 1997 study, rising by exactly 50% to 2,952 in 2004 (ibid:25), in contrast to the declining numbers reported between studies in most

cities. Puebla therefore moved from 15th to 4th rank in absolute numbers of children considered as urban working children in the studies. At the same time, numbers of counted working children had also grown in a second city in Puebla State - Tehuacan, which moved up from 16th to 10th place nationally, from 1,652 children reported in 1997 to 2,036 in 2004 (ibid: 25), representing almost a 25% increase.

According to SNDIF and Puebla DIF gatekeeper understandings, on the strength of the first 100 Cities study findings, Puebla State was one of the 6 States invited to participate in the 2000-2006 National Programme 'From the Street to Life' for street children, described earlier in Chapter 3.7. At both national and Pueblan levels, children in street situations (street children) formed a majority of the working children counted in the 1999 and 2004 study reports, but street-living children represented a very small minority (2% and 1.6% respectively) of the total urban working child populations (see Table 4.1).

100 Cities studies' data used for this chapter drew on: the published national executive reports on the findings of both studies (SNDIF et al, 1999 and SNDIF, 2004); the SNDIF methodology manual used for both studies (SNDIF et al, 1997); the national survey questionnaire and database guide (SNDIF, 2003); and the Puebla State database for the second 2002-2003 study, which allowed for extraction of data specifically on children registered as living on the street in Puebla City in 2002-2003 (SNDIF 2003a). The questionnaire and database guide were provided for this research by SNDIF; the database for Puebla State was provided by Puebla State DIF. According to information from SNDIF staff: no databases were available for the first national study because of problems with the software used for the study; and the national database for the second study was not in a format suitable for secondary analysis at

the time of this study's field research in 2004-2005. No data from the 100 Cities studies was published on SNDIF's website.

Street-living children in Puebla City: the 2nd 100 Cities Study

The 100 Cities studies employed definitions for *Niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores en situacion de calle'* (children in street situations or street children) compatible with, but not the same, as those adopted by national Welfare in 1992 (see Chapter 3.3; COESNICA 1992). The 100 Cities studies used conventional UNICEF terminology to distinguish 2 groups of children 'in street situations': *niños en la calle* (children in the street, also known as street-working children) and *niños de la calle* (children of the street, also known as street-living children. But the distinction for 100 Cities is drawn by where children *sleep*: in a 'home' environment (*street-working children*) or in public spaces (*street-living children*) so children who sleep in public spaces *with their families* are considered street-living children. This differs from the earlier 1992 DIF definition which understood street-living children as children who *'having broken the family link either permanently or temporarily, sleep in the public thoroughfare'*. Street-living children (*niños de la calle*) for the 100 Cities studies were defined as:

> *'those for whom the street forms their daily habitat, and who sleep in wasteland, bus terminals, sewers, markets or hiding places in tourist and commercial areas [...] what defines their category is the fact of living in the street'* (SNDIF et al 1997: 14).

Street-working children (*niños en la calle*) were defined as children who: *'go on to the streets to work, but they have a home to live in'* (SNDIF et al 1997: 14), representing a similar shift, from DIF's 1992 definition of street-working children as: *children of either sex who maintain the family link...'* (COESNICA,1992: 10). This definitional shift

implies a growing understanding that street-living children maintain connections to their families, even when sleeping in the street, although no statement is made in the reports to this effect. This is considered further in Chapter 5 in a discussion of findings from my case study about street-living children's relationships with their families.

Turning to the 100 Cities data collection techniques, field researchers were required, after a preparatory street mapping process, to carry out a headcount of children in their working/street living spaces, 3 times a day over a 7 day period (SNDIF et al 1997: 20)[4]. They had to distinguish between the 3 defined categories of children: street-working children; street-living children; and children working in public spaces (SNDIF et al 1997: 27, variable I.2.4), and were instructed to do this through observation confirmed by direct questioning of the child. While it would have been fairly easy to identify and count children working in 'public spaces' – identifying them by the space he or she occupied (supermarket, self-service shop) and counting children in routine working hours, it would have been more difficult to find and distinguish between street-working and street-living children, even with using the techniques suggested in the methodology manual. Street children's elusiveness, geographical mobility and unpredictable use of time cast doubt on the reliability of any headcount. Additional doubts emerge about reliability of children's answers to the question: '*Where do you currently live?*', for which available response options were: 1 - Home; 2 - Shelter; 3 – Centre of work; 4 – Street (ibid: 30, Q1.8). Disparities in power and status between adult researcher and child inherent to any survey, alongside stigma or bravado and

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[4] The manual specified that the headcount of street-living children should be: '*in the place they spend the night, for which a special team of observers should be assigned, preferably [experienced] street educators en each state, because the living characteristics make these children a sector of the population which is difficult to access. The headcount will be carried out at night, 3 times: at the beginning, middle and end of the week. During the day, the assigned team should go to the places where these children have indicated they spend the day, and to other meeting points at which other observers have registered the existence of 'street children*" (SNDIF et al 1997: 21)

other issues attached to admitting or living or claiming to live on the street, and lack of triangulation using other data collection methods threaten the reliability of the veracity of answers to this question.

Numbers of street-living children in Puebla City

A total of 67 children were registered in the 2nd 100 Cities study Puebla City database as street-living children, representing around 2% of the counted population of 2,952 working children (SNDIF, 2004). Forty six of the 67 were registered as aged 6 to 17 years of age, the age group for which the survey questionnaire was designed (0 to 5 year olds were not interviewed, considered as accompanying members of street families). These 46 accounted for 1.7% of the total 2,677 working children counted for that group in Puebla City, around the same proportion as the reported national average (SNDIF 2004: 35). With a reminder of the threats to reliability of the 100 Cities studies' numbers of street children, Table 4.2 shows numbers of street-living children found in the headcount, relative to the larger population of 'working children' in Puebla City.

Table 4.2: Street-living children in relation to urban working children population, by age group, Puebla City 2002-2003

Children's age range	Street-living child population counted Puebla City		Working child population counted Puebla City		Street-living children / working children in Puebla City
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**%**
6-13	31	46.3	1,253	42.4	2.5
14-17	15	22.4	1,424	48.2	1.0
Subtotal Aged 6-17	**46**	**68.7**	**2,677**	**90.7**	**1.7**
0-5	21	31.3	275	9.3	7.6
Total 0-17	67	100.0	2,952	99.9	2.3

Source: Extracted from DIF (2003ª) database: Puebla City Spreadsheet

Despite methodology guidelines instructing field researchers to interview all 6-17 year old street-living children counted, only 32 of the 46 children counted as living in the street self-identified in interview as living in the street (SNDIF, 2003: Q 1.8). In other

words, in 14 cases, researchers and children appear, then, to have held and/or expressed different views about the nature of the children's street situation. Table 4.3 explores this anomaly.

Only 32 or 70% of the total number counted as street-living children aged between 6 and 17 appear to have been interviewed. In addition, separating children by age group (6-13 and 14-17) shows a mismatch between street-living children counted and those interviewed: the data suggests (impossibly) that more 14 to 17 year old street-living children were interviewed than counted.

Table 4.3: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study Puebla City: counted 'street-living' children compared to those interviewed, by age group

Children's age range	Children recorded as street-living in Puebla City: Headcount		Children recorded as street-living in Puebla City: Sample Survey		Street-living children sampled as percentage of street-living children counted
	No.	%	No.	%	%
6-13	31	46.3	13	39.4	41.9
14-17	15	22.4	19	57.6	127.7
Subtotal Aged 6-17	46	68.7	32	97.0	69.6
0-5	21	31.3	1	3	4.8
Total 0-17	67	100.0	33	100.0	49.3

Source: Extracted from SNDIF 2003ª database: Puebla City Spreadsheet

Such an anomaly between the headcount and survey results, considering the small population of street-living children found, is reminiscent of errors found in international research studies to count and understand street children. Street-living children's fluid circumstances and false reporting (of age or situation) are possible causes of anomalies, while power disparities in street child-researcher relationships, blurred definitions and/or lack of triangulation may have contributed as inappropriate research techniques with street children to failure to detect and remedy anomalies.

Characteristics of street-living children in Puebla City

The following discussion of characteristics must be qualified by known threats to veracity and therefore reliability of the data, with few characteristics identifiable purely from observation[5].

Seven (15%) of the 46 children aged 6-17 counted as street-living were recorded as girls. They represented less than 1% of the 990 urban working girls counted in Puebla City, compared to street-living boys who formed 2.3% of the 1,687 working boys counted (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study Puebla City: street-living children distributed by age and sex

Age range	Boys living in streets/all working boys	Girls living in streets/all working girls	Number of working children counted		Number of street-living children counted	
	%	%	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
6-13	3.0	1.5	840	413	25	6
14-17	1.7	0.2	847	577	14	1
Subtotal 6-17	2.3	0.7	1,687	990	39	7
0-5	7.1	8.1	140	135	10	11
Total 0-17	2.7	1.6	1,827	1,125	49	18

Source: Extracted from SNDIF 2003[a] database; SNDIF 2004

However questionable the reliability of the Puebla City findings about distribution by sex, they do match reported 100 Cities national findings: The 37% of Pueblan working children reported to be girls matched the 35% female working children found nationally (DIF, 2004: 16); and the 0.7% of Pueblan working girls reported to be street-living matches the 0.8% national average reported (ibid: 35). The Puebla findings of very small numbers of girls among street-living child populations was supported by evidence from this case study and is also commonly reported in the

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[5] *CSO gatekeepers interviewed for this study told of a 12 year old girl who passed herself off as a boy for several months before a medical exam dismantled her disguise. Her explanation for publicly assuming a male identity was that she was protecting herself from the harm to which she thought being known as a girl would expose her.*

international literature, although whether the apparent absence of girls denotes female 'invisibility' on the streets or girls accessing off-street options, is unclear.

Data on street-living children's distribution by age was not available in the national 100 Cities reports level. In Puebla City, a higher proportion of working boys and girls in the younger 6-13 year age group was recorded as street-living: 3% of boys and 1.5% of girls; compared to the older 14-17 year age group in which only 1.7% of adolescent working males and 0.2% of females were registered as living in the street. This will undoubtedly reflect, at least in part, the higher age of children working in supermarkets (almost 1 in 3 of the working children counted, see below), who should be at least 14 to be eligible for work in supermarkets.

The 100 Cities data found a small number of working children in Puebla City from ethnic minorities: at 4.3% below the 6.2% reported nationally (SNDIF 2004: 17). A higher percentage (15%) of street-living children counted in Puebla City was reported as belonging to an ethnic minority, mirroring national findings (ibid: 17), but the number (7/46) is too small and unreliable to be able to discuss intelligently.

Children's working activities were divided into 3 main categories: work packing bags (*cerillos*) in supermarkets and self-service outlets; selling food and other goods on the street and in markets; or 'helping' (opening taxi doors, carrying shopping bags etc for tips) and begging. The 2nd 100 Cities study reported different income levels and levels of protection for each type of work at national level: supermarket child workers received the highest wages and most protection; children helping or begging earned

least and enjoyed least protection (SNDIF, 2004: 27 & 32)[6]. In Puebla City, as at national level, 100 Cities data attributed to street-living children found these children were lower paid and less protected than other urban working children as shown in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study Puebla City: work by street-living children and the larger population of working children

Type of work carried out by children in Puebla City aged 6-17	Street-living children interviewed in Puebla City		Working children interviewed in Puebla City	
	No.	%	No.	%
Supermarket packer	1	3.1	201	28.1
Street or market production and/or sales	4	12.5	348	48.7
Helping and / or begging	26	81.3	161	22.5
Unknown/ Other	1	3.1	5	0.7
Totals	32	100	715*	100

Sources: Extracted from SNDIF 2003a database.
* Note: 715 (26.7%) were interviewed of Puebla City's recorded 2,677 urban working children aged 6 to 17

On access to social interventions, 100 Cities study data found 57% of Puebla City working children attended school (SNDIF, 2003a), lower than the reported national average of 71.6% (SNDIF, 2004: 42). Most supermarket workers could be assumed to be in school, since schooling is a legal requirement for children working in supermarkets. 6.3% of street-living children in Puebla City were found to be in school, mirroring national findings (SNDIF, 2003a), implying that some access to school was possible even from the street, a finding which will be explored further below and in other chapters.

The 100 Cities studies collected data about children's drug use and asked whether children had accessed support for drug rehabilitation (SNDIF 2003, Q11.9). The 2nd 100 Cities study reported that, in general, drug use including alcohol was very low among working children (although higher use was reported in Puebla City). While 18%

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[6] *These findings are not surprising: children working legally in supervised shops can expect more protection in a more formal environment, and all purchases are bagged in supermarkets by cerillos, presumably resulting in more tips than those received by their street-based peers*

of Puebla working child respondents reported having used drugs (see Table 4.6) a much higher 65.6% of interviewed street-living children were recorded by the 100 Cities study as having used drugs.

Table 4.6: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study Puebla City: reported drug use by 6-17 year old street-living children and working children

Reported Drug Use by Respondents	Interviewed street-living children		Interviewed working children	
	No.	%	No.	%
Have used drugs (including alcohol)	21	65.6	127	17.8
Have never used drugs	10	31.3	395	55.2
Unknown	1	3.1	193	27.0
Total	32	100	715	100.1

Source: Extracted from SNDIF 2003ª database

Sixteen (76%) of the 21 street-living children reported in Puebla City as having experienced drugs reported their first use of drugs aged under 14. First drug used by over 70% of these 21 children was reported as a solvent (glue or paint thinner), matching 100 Cities national figures for street-living children, and in contrast with national and Pueblan findings about the wider working child population, for whom alcohol was the most popular as the first drug (ibid: 54).

While these findings about children's drug use are subject to at least the same threats to reliability as the other findings above, an interesting observation relates to the social policy dimension and specifically to the omission of these findings about drug use from the 100 Cities executive report's recommendations. The notion that over 60% of street-living children used drugs, the majority starting under 14 and most using solvents, suggests a case for exploring service provision needs among this population. A focus which assumes added importance in light of the finding that no child counted as a street-living child appeared in the database for Puebla City as having accessed support for drug rehabilitation. Drug use and access to rehabilitation services are explored further in Chapters 5 to 7.

In spite of undoubtedly serious questions of validity and reliability, other data collected can be usefully approached in a similar way: to reflect on the implications for social policy of findings from research designed to inform social welfare policies.

At national and Puebla City levels, almost half the street-living children interviewed were reported as citing abuse at home as the main reason for leaving home for the street (see Table 4.7). National 2nd 100 Cities report concluded: '*abuse received at home is the reason for which almost 1 in every 2 children decide to abandon their homes*' (SNDIF 2004: 38).

Table 4.7: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study: responses by street-living children to the survey question '*Why did you start to live in the street?*'

Main reasons cited for leaving home for the street	Interviewed street-living children Puebla City		Interviewed street-living children nationally
	No.	%	%
Abuse at home	15	46.9	45
I like it	4	12.5	19.7
My friends invited me	1	3.1	11.5
Mother's death	3	9.4	10.8
I had no family	2	6.3	4.5
Father's death	0	0	3.5
I was born here	0	0	1.3
Sexual abuse	0	0	1.1
Other factors	7	21.9	2.6
Total	32	100	100.1

Sources: Extracted from DIF 2003ª database and DIF 2004: 38

Families were not otherwise, however, a topic about which street-living children were questioned (SNDIF, 2003). They were not asked about continuing contacts with families, support received from families or ways in which reintegration might be pursued, topics discussed below, from children's perspectives and in the next chapter including family and gatekeeper views.

The 1st 100 Cities study found 14% of working children had been detained by police and reported that '*physical and verbal abuse, mockery and extortion are references to how children perceive their daily relations with the police*' (SNDIF et al, 1999: 36). The

2nd study's report did not discuss findings about police, but the data for Puebla City showed 47% (15) of the interviewed street-living children as having reported that they had been detained by police, with most reporting experience of some kind of abuse when detained (see Table 4.8). However, the order of possible 7 responses as presented in the questionnaire to children (as given in Table 4.8) was negatively biased[7], focusing on abuse:

Table 4.8: 100 Cities 2002-2003 study: responses by street-living children to the survey question 'How did the police treat you when they detained you'?

Survey options provided:	Number of reports by street-living children	% of responses
1. Physical abuse	10	35.7
2. Verbal abuse	7	25.0
3. Sexual abuse or harassment	3	10.7
4. Extortion to release you	6	21.4
5. Extortion for other reasons	0	0
6. Concern about you being on the streets	1	3.6
7. Other	1	3.6
Total no. of responses	28*	100

Source: Extracted from SNDIF 2003ª database. * Respondents were able to choose multiple options. The 28 responses were from 15 street-living children

Use of drugs reportedly topped the list of reasons given by street-living children in Puebla City in answer to the survey question 'Why did the police detain you? with vagrancy the second most-cited cause. 6 (40%) of the 15 detained street-living children cited both as the reasons for their detention (SNDIF 2003a).

Neither of the 2 100 Cities reports presented findings specifically about street-living children's contacts with social interventions. These were explored in survey questions (SNDIF, 2003: Q 11.7 - 11.10) but in Puebla City the response rate to these questions was very poor: only 16% (5 boys, no girls) of interviewed street-living children were noted as having answered questions on institutional contacts. None of the 5 respondents to these questions was reported as having received support services on-

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[7] The 100 Cities survey questionnaire offered children 6 response options, with a negative order and content bias: options 1, 2 and 3 concerned physical, verbal and sexual abuse; only 1 option, option 6, was positive 'concern for your being on the street' (DIF 2003a).

street, 3 of the 5 institutions named were self-help groups for drug abuse, explored

further in Chapter 6, and the remaining 2 were Welfare shelters.   No contacts were

recorded with juvenile justice or school systems.   Poor response rates possibly reflect

children's unease about discussing support systems they had used, and apparently left,

under survey conditions.   Street-living children's access to services was explored more

successfully in the case study for this thesis using qualitative data collection methods,

as shown below and in Chapter 6.

In the 100 Cities surveys, interviewed children were asked: '*Qué tipo de ayuda crees*

que necesitan los menores? What kind of help do you think children need? (SNDIF

2003a: Q12.1). The 2002-2003 data for Puebla City survey suggested that working

children in Puebla recognized multiple needs (each child averaged more than 3

responses), with street-living children citing particularly: food, health care, housing,

education, drug prevention and clothing (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: 100 Cities in Puebla City 2002-2003: responses by children to the survey question *"What kind of help do you think children need?'*

Tick box option responses provided	Responses from interviewed street-living children		Responses from interviewed urban working children	
	No.	%	No.	%
Health	18	18.4	361	15.4
Drug Prevention	10	10.2	276	11.8
Education	12	12.2	379	16.2
Housing	17	17.3	241	10.3
Clothing	10	10.2	203	8.7
Food	19	19.4	361	15.4
Entertainment	6	6.1	145	6.2
Shelter	4	4.1	121	5.1
Work	0	0	1	0.0
Work for Parents	1	1.0	227	9.7
Other	1	1.0	25	1.1
Total responses	98	100	2,340	100
Total children interviewed	32	-	715	-
Average number of responses per child	3	-	3	-

Source: Extracted from SNDIF 2003ª database

The 100 Cities studies and street-living children: a summary

Concerns about reliability and validity of the 100 Cities studies data were raised around discoveries of anomalies in age distribution and reduced numbers (32) of street-living children interviewed (considering instructions that all counted – 46- should have been interviewed), and a very low response rate to the only question asked about street-living children's experiences of institutional contact. I have argued that use of survey methods with street children was inappropriate without triangulation with other data collection methods. The usefulness of a survey designed primarily for working children, with only slight adaptations made for street-living children, was also questionable as a research tool, in light of known differences in characteristics and circumstances between the 2 groups: *'in general their situations and problems are extremely different from those of other working children'* (SNDIF et al, 1999).

However, the very confirmation of differences across dimensions offers a powerful argument for recommending that street-living children be considered separately, in both research and social policies, from the urban working child population. In Puebla

City, the 2nd 100 Cities study found street-living children, relative to the larger urban working child population, to be (see Table 4.10): scarce, male, younger, more ethnically diverse, more experienced in drugs, out of school, lower paid and in more poorly protected work.

Table 4.10: 100 Cities in Puebla City 2002-2003: Differentiators found between street-living children and other urban working children

Universe studied in Puebla City	Comparative dimensions						
	% of children targeted	% girls	% 6-13 year olds	% from ethnic minority groups	% in lowest paid, least protected work	% in school	% had used drugs
Street-living children	1.7	15	67	15	80	6.3	66
Working Children	100	37	47	4.3	23	57	18

Source: Extracted from SNDIF (2003[a]) database

Despite serious reservations about the data, the 100 Cities studies allowed helpful insights into social welfare policy research, through questions asked and omitted, and the choice of findings highlighted in the 100 Cities executive report (SNDIF 2004). Questions asked were directed to discovering street-living children's characteristics and were biased towards negative responses in the limited questions about their families, despite use of a definition of street-living children which allowed for continuing family contact, and contacts with the police (SNDIF 2003), serving to confirm existing prejudices rather than explore possibilities of support. Findings about street-living children's limited access to education and drug-related services were highlighted in the report, but no recommendations were made to address them or the findings about family and police abuse. The report's conclusions and 3 central recommendations (SNDIF 2004: 59-60) were directed at working children living at home and attending school: work with families and communities to prevent child work; professionalize teachers and make curricula more flexible; prioritize awareness raising about sexuality and drug use among 14 to 17 year olds. All 3 recommendations missed the study's own findings about street-living children, mention of whom in the conclusions was limited to noting that they formed a very small proportion of working children.

4.3 The '100 Cities' studies and Case Study's findings about children's 'on street' experiences in Puebla City

This section using findings from the case study field research undertaken for this thesis to discuss further the '100 Cities' findings about street-living children. Comparisons of children's experiences are tentative because of: doubts expressed above about 100 Cities validity and reliability; the purposive nature of the Case Study sample of 24 street-living children, who are not claimed to be representative; and the difference in interview settings, with 100 Cities surveys taking place at street level and interviews in the Case Study being carried out in institutional residential settings. Nevertheless, findings about social welfare policy implications are illuminating and not subject to the same limitations.

First, the case study found that the 100 Cities understanding of street-living children (see 4.2 above), used also to frame the Case Study selection of children for interview, was not consistently used by key stakeholders in social welfare policy for Puebla City's street children. SNDIF, responsible for commissioning and using the 100 Cities study, was discovered on occasion to use findings about street-living children and working children interchangeably, despite the differences outlined above. SNDIF's press bulletin of 3rd March 2006 stated that the 100 cities studies had: '*proven that the presence of street-living children* [niños de la calle] *had been already reduced by 17.2% from 114,497 in 1997 to 95,795 in 2002.*' (SNDIF 10/03/06). These figures, however, correspond to 100 Cities studies' numbers for the larger universe of working children, not the 2% minority of street-living children.

Puebla State DIF also distorted the studies, and in so doing highlighted differences between social welfare discourse and practice on street-living children:

> *'UNICEF had a programme, did research here in the [Puebla City] municipality called 'Estudio de niños, niñas y adolescentes trabajando en 100 ciudades' Study of boys, girls and adolescents working in 100 cities [...] 2 studies actually, in Tehuacan, Cuetzalan and Puebla. As a result of that work, SNDIF created the programme for 'los niños de la calle' (street-living children). [...] I think the problem, in our [Puebla] city and our [Puebla] State is of children **in** the street, not **of** the street [...] But what happens is that the Governor's [...] Welfare Programme for Puebla is called 'Children **of** the street' because we are bound by a [national] programme which is for children **of** the street.'* (Luz del Carmen Jaimes, Head of Rehabilitation Models, Puebla State Welfare Department, interview of 12/04/05)

The relatively small numbers of street-living children reported in the 100 Cities studies seem to have focused social welfare attention at implementation level away from street-living children and towards working children, while DIF discourse continued to be trained on street-living children.

The 2nd 100 Cities study counted 67 children living in Puebla City streets in 2002-2003 (SNDIF, 2003a). The case study for this thesis did not set out to count children, but did explore perceptions of numbers of street-living children and trends, finding a large variation in understandings, with estimates as low as 12 and as high as 5,000. Puebla State and City DIF policy makers and gatekeepers understood numbers to be low and decreasing, in line with 100 Cities findings: *'I calculate between 30 and 50* [street-living children in Puebla City]. *No more. The rest are working children.'* (Uzziel Avalos,

Coordinator of Street Children Programme, Puebla State DIF, interview of 10/01/05)
and:

> *'The time we counted most, there were about 40 cases. Of course, it's very*
> *difficult to do an accurate headcount, because for example 12 kids arrive in a*
> *group from Mexico City, they're reported to me, we make contact but within a*
> *week, tops, they've vanished. [...] But in truth, the headcount has been going*
> *down. At the moment we're working on an average of 12 kids.'* (Israel
> Gonzaga, Coordinator of Street Children Programme, Puebla City DIF, interview
> of 20/09/04).

Puebla's 2 CSOs specializing in street children agreed. *'There are very few now [...]*
there has been a steady decrease in the numbers of children who live on the streets in
Puebla, so we no longer have groups of children in the street – we have to actively go
looking for one or two.' (Alison Lane, Director General, CSO JUCONI, interview of
09/09/04).

Perceptions from the other gatekeepers found in this study to have provided residential
services for street-living children in Puebla were however quite different (social
interventions are named in Chapter 6, Figure 6.1 and institutional profiles are available
in Figures 6.2 to 6.4). According to senior staff in residential social interventions for
'vulnerable' children and addictions: *'There are still many street-living children... before*
it was only boys, but there are many more girls now than 5 or 6 years ago.' (Jenny
Anzuara, deputy director, CSO Living Hope, interview of 21/09/04); and *'Maybe 5,000.*
Yes, there are plenty, plenty [of street-living children] here' (Father Tomás, deputy
director, CSO Reach Glory, interview of 31/05/05). *'I don't know how many, honestly,*
but we get loads of street-living children in here... there must be hundreds, maybe
thousands' (Monica Ruiz, Sub-director, Puebla Remand Home, interview of 17/05/05)

CSOs working in Puebla City with other kinds of disadvantaged children (such as orphans, children with disabilities and indigenous children), who had regular contact with social programmes and services for street children, estimated 500 to 8,000 children living on the streets, reaching a collective estimate of 2,000 (question posed in writing to members of Puebla's Network for Children in a meeting on 18/10/04, with resulting 20 responses discussed and verified orally).

Using triangulated methods, case study findings from my own observation, interviews with children and street-connected adult informants support lower estimates of under 50 children living on the streets at any one time, as part of a larger pool of perhaps 100 children circulating in time and space between street, home and institutions. Discrepancies between these lower and the higher CSO estimates are likely to reflect different understandings of 'street-living children'; staff in institutions managing relatively large numbers of children may also have conflated street-living children with other disadvantaged children accessing their services.

My combined data suggested that numbers of children arriving onto the street may not have changed, but the length of time children stay on the street does seem to have shortened over the years. '*Police are stricter and they pick them up now. They lock up the older ones. They don't do anything to the younger ones really, but they move them on, don't let them work... That kind of thing'* (Lorenzo, adult street informant and ex-street-living child, interview of 26/05/05) and '*now there's hardly anyone in the street... because Welfare or the police or someone's picked them up, or they've gone home*' (Cásares, child 5).

When interviewed children were invited to name other children whom they knew personally and who 'lived on the streets', 6 people (all male), were frequently named: 4 were now adults, *El Gusano* (Worm), *El Sombras* (Shadows), *el Güero* (Blondie), *El Payaso* (Clown); and 2, *El Gato* (Cat) and *El Pescado* (Fish) were under 18. During a year of Case Study fieldwork, I observed and talked to all 6, one of whom became a street-based informant (Julio, *el Güero*), and I observed 18 other verified street-living children in on-street situations (recorded in Case Study field notes).

Characteristics of Case Study street-living children, in light of 100 Cities findings in Puebla City

As noted in Chapter 1, twenty two of the 24 children interviewed for this case study were boys and the 2 interviewed girls were the only girls found in residential programmes during the year of fieldwork to have lived on Pueblan streets. This supports 100 Cities' and international findings of street-living as a disproportionately male phenomenon, although this does not mean necessarily that few girls move onto the street but perhaps that girls move more quickly off the streets. Only 2 other girls were observed living in Puebla City streets in a year of fieldwork undertaken (both declined to be interviewed) and street informants reported no others known to them. Interviewed children reported very few on-street contacts with girls: only 2 named 1 girl each among their street-living contacts. Service providers and street informants together recalled knowing fewer than 20 girls who had lived on Puebla City streets at some point in the 3 year period 2002-2005 explored by the thesis.

In age, 13 case study interviewees were 6 to 13 years old, 10 were aged 14 to 17 and 1 had just turned 18, slightly older on average than children registered as street-living in the 100 Cities study. Ages of case study children were all verified either through

documentation held by service providers or, in 3 cases, by developing a time line with a child to cross-check orally reported ages. On ethnicity, only 1 interviewee in the case study, Leonel, child 19, self-identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group (*mixteco*) from the centre of Mexico (Oaxaca, Guerrero, Puebla), and understood the mixtecan language which was spoken at home, but spoke Spanish as his first language.   And only 1 interviewee self-reported as having a disability: Roberto (child 24) had a congenital condition which caused deteriorating eyesight and left him partially sighted.

On street work, most case study interviewees (87%) were found to have worked in activities found in the 100 Cities study to be lowest paid and least protected, a similar finding to the 2nd 100 Cities study (see Table 4.11)

Table 4.11: Type of work reported by street-living children in Puebla City

Type of work carried out by children in Puebla City aged 6-17	Street-living children on street in Puebla City: 100 Cities Study 2002-03		Children who had lived in the streets of Puebla City: Case Study 2004-2005	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Supermarket packer	1	3.1	0	0
Street or market production and/or sales	4	12.5	3	12.5
Helping and / or begging	26	81.3	21	87.5
Unknown/ Other	1	3.1	0	0
Totals	**32**	**100**	**24***	**100**

Sources: Extracted from SNDIF (2003ᵃ) database and Case Study database. * Note: the 24 children were interviewed while living in Puebla City services, not on the streets

No child in the case study had, while living on the street, satisfied requirements for work in supermarkets or self-service outlet work which included identification papers, parental consent and evidence of on-going school attendance.

In access to education, 2 of the 24 case study interviewees reported attending school while living on the street, a similar finding to that of the 100 Cities study, and explored

in more detail below. On drug use, 50% of case study children reported having used

drugs, compared to 65.6% in the 100 Cities study (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Drug use by street-living children in Puebla City

Drug Use reported by Respondents	Street-living children on street in Puebla City: 100 Cities Study 2002-03		Children who had lived in the streets of Puebla City: Case Study 2004-2005	
	No.	%	No.	%
Have used drugs (including alcohol)	21	65.6	12	50
Have never used any drug	10	31.3	12	50
Unknown	1	3.1	0	0
Total	32	100	24	100

Source: Extracted from SNDIF (2003ª) database and Case Study database.

The 12 case study children who had experienced drugs reported first using drugs,

usually (83%) some form of solvent (glues such as *cemento, activo or resistol*, paint

thinner or gasoline), under the age of 14. Drug use and implications for social policy

are explored below and developed in subsequent chapters.

Case study children were asked '*Why did you start to live in the street?*' mirroring the

question asked of street-living children in the 100 Cities survey, but using a semi-

structured interview open-ended question format, which included the closed response

options offered by the 100 Cities survey as possible options and allowed children to

discuss more widely. In both studies, more children cited abuse in the home than any

other reason for leaving as reported in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Responses by street-living children in Puebla City to the question `Why did you start to live in the street?'

Main reasons cited for leaving home for the street	Street-living children Puebla City: 100 Cities Study 2002-2003		Children who had lived on Puebla City streets: Case Study 2004-2005	
	No.	%	No.	% of children citing this reason
Abuse at home	15	47	18	75
I like the street	4	13	11	46
My friends invited me	1	3	4	17
Mother's death	3	9	0	0
I had no family	2	6	0	0
Father's death	0	0	0	0
I was born here	0	0	0	0
Sexual abuse	0	0	1	4
I was bored at home	n.a.	n.a.	5	21
To search for family members	n.a.	n.a.	4	17
New step-parent	n.a.	n.a.	2	83
Other	7	22	9	38
Total responses	32	100	54*	n.a.

Sources: Extracted from SNDIF 2003ª database; and Case Study database. *Case study respondents averaged 2 to 3 responses each

However, 9 case study children who cited abuse in the home gave additional important reasons alongside abuse as to why they had moved on to the street (see reasons by child at **Annex 7**). Various factors known in the street children literature as 'pull' factors were cited, such as invitations from friends, freedom, earning money, drug availability, travel, adventure or wanting to find another family member, but only 1 child (Rafa, child 2) reported street attraction as the *only* reason for leaving home (although he added family abuse as a reason after a family interview with his grown-up sister, discussed in Chapter 5). Around half cited only 'push' factors, such as abandonment, death of a key family member, harsh working conditions, harsh punishments and sexual abuse, and half cited both 'push' and 'pull' factors (summarized in Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: Categorization of responses by Case Study children to the question `Why did you start to live in the street?':

Reasons given by children for living on the streets	No. of children	%
Only 'Push' factors cited for leaving home for street life	11	46
Only 'Pull' factors cited for leaving home for street life	1	4
Both 'Push' & 'pull' factors cited for leaving home for street life	12	50

Source: Case Study database and Annex 7

The multiplicity of responses together with a focus on home-based abuse, echoes other qualitative research findings with street children (eg Lucchini, 1997; Panter-Brick, 2002), but understanding children's perceptions as only part of the story and understanding child abuse as representing a range of expressions of home-based violence (ISPCAN, 2006), family and gatekeeper views were sought and are discussed in Chapter 5.

Most case study children (83%) said they had been detained by police at least once, but reported abuse less frequently than was found by the 2nd 100 Cities study, and recognized some helpful treatment by police. The 24 interviewed case study children were asked '*How did the police treat you on the street?*' mirroring the question asked of street-living children in the 100 Cities survey, using a semi-structured interview open-ended question format with different response options to those offered by the 100 Cities survey, to eliminate content and order bias and to allow children more free-ranging discussion. All 24 interviewed children were asked about their relationships with police, not just the 20 who had been detained, in contrast with the 100 Cities studies' survey format. As Table 4.15 shows, although almost half (11) interviewed children recalled police officers as 'always unhelpful', 3 children found police consistently helpful, and 8 reported varied treatment.

Table 4.15: Responses by street-living children in Puebla City to the question '*How did the police treat you on the street?*'

Police treatment as reported by street-living children	No. of street-living children	% of responses
Always helpful	3	13
Always unhelpful	11	46
Always indifferent	2	8
Treatment varied	8	33
No contact	0	0
Total number of children	24	100

Source: Case Study database

The finding that all children reported some contact with police suggests police as important 'front-line' officials in relationships with street-living children, with potential implications for social policy. Case Study respondents also reported police treatment as varying by police force: the majority reported being ignored by traffic police, referred to as '*los cafes*' The Browns, the colour of their uniforms; and more children found '*los azules*' The Blues city police helpful than '*los zorros*' The Foxes, Puebla State police.

Table 4.16: Street-living children's reported experiences of police treatment, Puebla City by branch of police

Police treatment as reported by street-living children	Branches of police in Puebla City					
	State Police Foxes *Los Zorros*		City Police Blues *Los Azules*		Traffic Police Browns *Los Cafes*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Always helpful	3	12.5	8	33.3	4	16.7
Always unhelpful	9	37.5	10	41.7	4	16.7
Always indifferent	12	50.0	5	20.8	15	62.5
Treatment varied	0	0	1	4.2	0	0
No contact	0	0	0	0	1	4.2
Totals	24	100	24	100	24	100

Source: Case Study database

Case Study findings, although non-representative, suggest more nuanced relationships between police and street-living children than 100 Cities findings, with implications for a potentially more supportive role in social policy by police forces.

In contrast with the low (16%) response rate of the 100 Cities studies about street-living children's contacts with social interventions, 19 (79%) of the Case Study respondents reported that they had been contacted by some kind of institution – some by several - during their time living on the street in Puebla City. 8 children reported approaches from Welfare staff, 8 from the JUCONI CSO for street children, 6 from CSOs or self-help groups for drug abuse and 1 was contacted by an CSO for vulnerable children. Two reported being taken to hospitals by the Red Cross. Admissions and experiences of residential institutions are explored in depth in Chapter 6, but children reported on-street contact with institutions as mainly directed at motivating them to

leave the street and inviting them to join residential services, except in the case of the Red Cross which provided emergency access to hospital for Abraham and Berenice (children 3 & 18). City Welfare was unusual in being reported as providing children living on the street with access to school and on occasion to the City night shelter. Children's admissions to services while living on Puebla City streets are explored below.

Comparing '100 Cities' and this case study's findings about street-living children's experiences: a summary

Street-living children in Puebla City as identified by the 100 Cities and those interviewed for the Case Study manifested situations (work, school and drug use) much more in common with each other than with the wider population of working children studied in the 100 Cities research (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Findings on street-living children and working children in Puebla City

Populations studied	Comparative dimensions					
	% girls	% 6-13 year olds	% from ethnic groups	% in lowest paid, least protected work	% in school	% had used drugs
Street-living children - Case Study	8	54	4	87	8.3	50
Street-living children 100 Cities	15	67	15	80	6.3	66
Total Working Children 100 Cities	37	47	4.3	23	57	18

Source: Extracted from SNDIF (2003[a]) database and Case Study database

In addition to recognizing these important differences between working and street-living children, Case Study data challenges 100 Cities' inclusion of street-living children as a working child population sub-set since research conclusions and recommendations did not address street-living children, focusing exclusively on working children living at home and in school. Case study findings suggest that, although ignored in 100 Cities recommendations for social welfare policy, street-living children were highlighted, inaccurately, as beneficiaries of social policies, in the social welfare discourse.

Case study findings suggest that the 100 Cities' survey was an inappropriate research method for exploring complex processes, evidenced by the case study, in street-living children's living conditions and relationships. In addition, questionnaire bias served to reinforce existing prejudices about street-living children rather than to explore new avenues for support.

Case study findings support 100 Cities' conclusions that numbers of street-living children are small. However, other Case Study data challenge 100 Cities one-dimensional findings about street-living children's relationships with family and police. While recognizing the importance of violence in the home as a factor in children leaving home, evidence of more complex reasons suggested the need to bring families into research for more substantive findings (followed up in Chapter 5). Similarly, 100 Cities findings of police as abusive to street-living children were challenged by more nuanced findings in the case study which tentatively suggest that treatment may vary by branch of the police force and by individual officer. Initial findings about family and police and their implications for social policy are taken up in Chapters 5 and 7.

4.4 Street-living children and on-street support in Puebla City

Children's experiences on the street have been examined in the international literature as discussed in Chapter 2.3 from a number of perspectives particularly by: classifying children's street connections by characteristics and conditions; exploring differentiated access to the street by variables such as gender and age; identifying street-living children's exposure to risk; and uncovering evidence of resilience and coping strategies. Children's on-street informal support networks have also been investigated,

but links between children's on-street experiences and social policies remain under-researched.

This section explores street-living children's experiences of support on the streets in Puebla City, in the light of social policy intentions, programmes and interventions outlined in Chapter 3. Children's informal support systems are explored first, providing a context within which their access to services offered on the street by government, CSOs and other organized groups may be addressed. Children's accounts are given primacy: data were gathered from interviews with the 24 case-study children (22 boys and 2 girls) who had lived on Pueblan streets for varying lengths of time and on different occasions during the period 2002-2005 considered by this thesis. Street observation, children's institutional files, interviews with gatekeepers and families, and consultation with street-based informants were used as triangulation methods.

Negotiating public spaces in Puebla City

Most children reported moving constantly in and around Puebla City's public spaces, developing established routines. Several children were on the move for work, singing on buses for tips or selling products as they weaved through busy street markets. Others moved daily from sleeping area to a specific work place, whether a busy street intersection, a well-transited public square or park, staying in the same small area for much of the day. A few moved between several fixed places during the day to take advantage of different types of work, such as Cásares (child 5) who during one stint on the streets spent the early morning helping market sellers set up their stalls, then washed windscreens at street intersections in the morning, before helping out on

street food stalls at lunchtime, running errands for a mechanic's workshop in the afternoons, getting back to the market to take out garbage at closing time.

Despite this mobility, most interviewed children identified a single area of Puebla City to which they would usually return to sleep and which they viewed as a 'base'. Precise locations within the base area could vary, with children sleeping some nights in the bus station, others under a bridge or in an abandoned house, depending on weather, police presence or street activities, but each location would lie within the child's base area. In this way, children identified with specific physical and social environments which, while at times could be experienced as threatening, were also familiar, protective and supportive.

The 2 central base areas identified by the 22 boys, and 2 other outlier zones identified by the 2 interviewed girls as their street environments, are outlined in Figure 4.1 and shown on a map of Puebla City in Figure 4.2.

Fig. 4.1: Geographical areas of Puebla City serving as 'Base Camps' for street-living child interviewees

Zone	Key reference points in the zone for street-living children	Geographical location in Puebla City	No. & sex of children using the base area
A	CAPU bus terminal Hidalgo street market	1km to N of City Centre	18 boys
B	Morelos street market Pepsi factory/ distribution	1 km to E of City Centre	3 boys
C	Zaragoza district Military barracks	1 km to SE of City Centre	1 girl
D	Fuentes de Moratilla district Park and cemetery	3km to NW of City Centre	1 girl
E	Historical Centre	City Centre	1 boy

Source: 24 Case Study children's interviews and street visits, using Puebla City laminated map and markers

Fig. 4.2: Map of Puebla City showing 'Base Camps' Zones used by street-living child interviewees
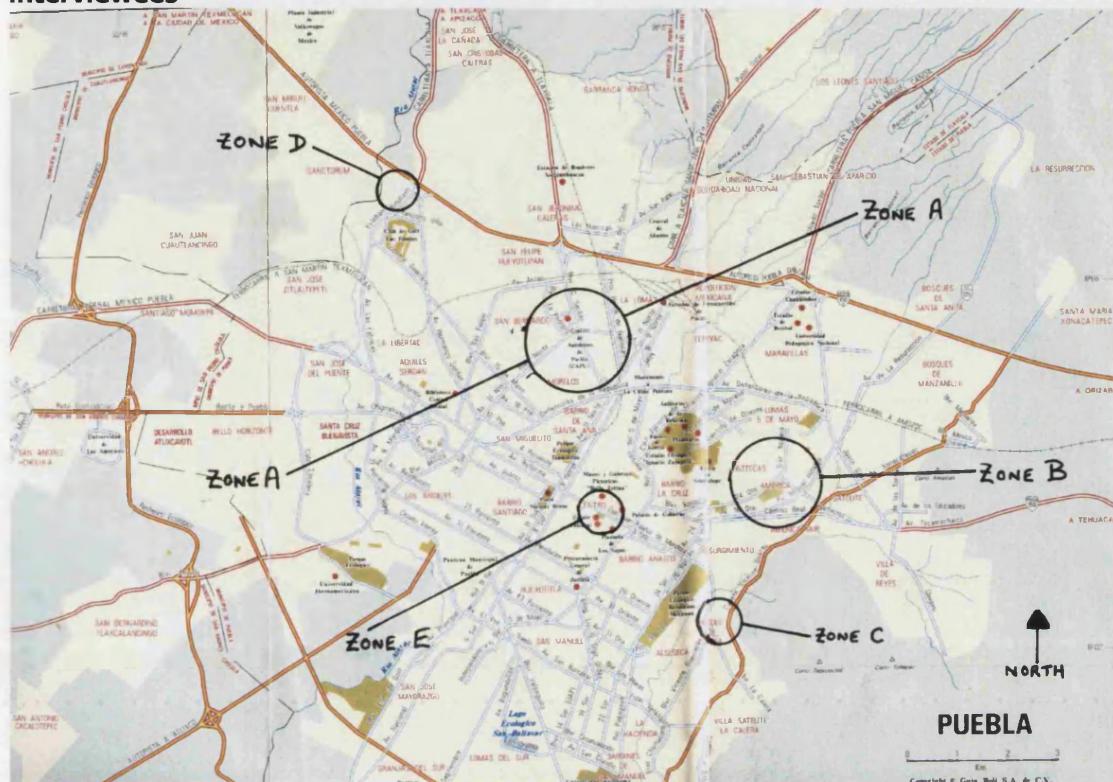
Source: Guia Roji Map No. 20 of Puebla City,printed in Mexico City © Guia Roji S.A. de C.V. 2004

By far the most significant base identified by case study interviewees was Zone A, centred on Puebla City's central bus station *'CAPU'* (*Central de Autobuses de Puebla*) and the sprawling Hidalgo street market. Eighteen (75%) of the interviewed children, all boys, slept, worked and hung out within this base area. Zone A is bounded by the Puebla-Mexico City highway to the west and the Mexico-City-East Coast highway to the north, forming a long, heavily transited, corridor – about 1.5 km by 0.5 km - which tracks the main *Boulevard 5 de Mayo* road from San Pedro shopping mall at the south-west corner, passing the *fayuca* (pirated goods market), travelling north-east to the CAPU (*Central de Autobuses de Puebla*) Puebla's main bus station, crossing the old north-south railway line where dozens of minibus routes are based, passing 2 American-subsidiary hyper-markets: Sam's and Wal-Mart; and finishing in the north-

east corner with the Hidalgo Market, from which 3 other street-market areas emanate. Zone A contains Puebla City's most important public transport terminals, its largest street markets and its oldest industrial corridor, as well as some areas of unused land, straddling the main rail and road arteries heading north out of Puebla City. Interviewed policy-makers and service providers all identified Zone A as the City's prime location for street-living children.

The second 'base' area, Zone B, used by 3 boys, centred on Puebla's Pepsi Cola factory and distribution point for the eastern-central part of Mexico, and the Morelos street market, lying to the east of Puebla City Centre. Smaller than Zone A, it nevertheless combines congested road corners, busy street markets, minibus route intersections and wasteland areas.

Zones C, D and E can be seen for this thesis as outlier areas, each serving as the base area for only 1 interviewed child. These zones were quite different from those of the boys' Zones A and B: Zone C in Zaragoza centred on Puebla's main army barracks to the south east of the City Centre, a well transited area known for its bars, night clubs and street-based prostitution was used by a girl, Berenice (child 18); Zone D in Fuentes de Moratilla is a *'barrio popular'* or working class residential neighbourhood in the urban fringe to the north-west of Puebla City, used by a second girl, Wendy (child 13). Cristian (child 12) lived with his mother on the streets of the historical centre of Puebla, designated Zone E in this thesis. Children did not change their base areas even after periods away from the street (at home, in a shelter, in another city), returning to familiar physical areas and social structures.

Children's on-street informal support networks

Diverse on-street experiences were reported, in which connections with children and adults living and working in and around public spaces played an integral part. All children were found to develop and maintain contacts in order to: gain and up-date street 'knowledge'; access protection, shelter and companionship; find work and smooth income insecurities. Two main types of support network were distinguished in the on-street experiences of interviewed street-living children: networks of street-connected children; and adult connections centred primarily on work. Differences in networking behaviour by sex were particularly notable but differences by age were not clear.

Networks of street-living children

Most boys quickly contacted other street-living and street-working children when moving on to the street, for what several children referred to as '*educación*' into local street life, translated in this thesis as 'street knowledge'. *'Well... for street knowledge, other street-living children helped me, when I started, telling me where to go and where not to go, where to be careful of transit police and things... so that when I was walking, I'd know where they are so that I could avoid them...'* (Daniel, child 21, Zone A). Street knowledge contained highly localized and immediate social, economic and political information important for physical protection (such as presence and habits of current adult street inhabitants, and changes in police presence), drug use (who's selling what and how to access, current police tactics) and work (controls on street corners, people in charge, immediate work opportunities).

Some had a single longer-term companion who interacted together with larger on-street groups of children. Brothers Roberto (child 24) and Daniel stayed together, as

did Rafa and Toño (children 2 and 11), during years on and off the street, drifting in and out of various on-street groups in Zone A, which in themselves were dynamic clusters of children and youth on the move. Wendy and an older friend Carolina (aged 14 and 16) whose families lived on the same street looked after each while attaching themselves to a larger, loosely connected neighbourhood group:

> *'I was in a gang called 'Los Rudos', but it wasn't violent or anything, it was just a big group of us who hung out in the park, playing football, drinking beer 'chelas' and having a laugh... Most of them lived in San Sebastian* [Zone D] *and we'd do a lot of drinking and some would sniff glue and things. Then me and Carolina would doss in the park or the cemetery or in an alley or something, but it was only us and one or two of the older lads who didn't go home at night'* (Wendy, child 13)

For younger children, temporary pairing up could afford protection and companionship without unwelcome group pressures: Leonel and Oscar (children 19 and 20) met aged 11 and 10 respectively, staying together in the Hidalgo market for some months; Edgar and Aureliano (children 23 and 4, aged 14 and 13 at the time of interview) travelled to Puebla together from their home town of Guadelupe Victoria, some 3 hours away by bus, hanging around the CAPU together and joining up periodically with groups of older youths. Several interviewed children knew *el Gusano* (the Worm) and *el Gato* (the Cat), also known as Carmelo and Marco Antonio, youths who had grown up together in Amozoc (18 km to the east of Puebla City) and had stayed together on and off the streets of Zone A for years, attracting younger street-living children to form larger but temporary street-based groups around themselves. Aged 17 and 18 at the time of this research, they frequently travelled home to Amozoc together, visited other

cities together and provided protection, if erratically and often under the influence of drugs, to younger children on the streets.

Nine (38%) of 24 child interviewees independently reported taking shelter and/or drugs, at different times, in the same half-built 2-storey house in Zone A, close to the City's main bus station and street markets. Invited to spend a night or 2 there by older street-living children, sometimes including *el Gusano* and *el Gato*, interviewees reported sleeping, hanging out and/or glue sniffing there, but groupings were flimsy and transitory, sometimes lasting only a few nights. Membership of large street-based groups was also reported as mercurial and frequently drug-based:

> *'There were around 30 of us I guess... I was one of the youngest. Some went home to sleep, but we all hung out together. And the next day 5 new ones would join that I didn't know, and others would leave town or go home. And so the people changed but it was still a big group. It was always a big group... Most of the time we slept in the same place – a ruined house near to Morelos market* [Zone B]. *But sometimes I'd go off home to sleep, and other times just a little group of us would go and get stoned together or go stealing'* (Raul, child 17)

Economic benefits were an important reason for street-living children sticking together:

> '*I had some friends... we did portering* [at the CAPU bus station, Zone A]... *and when we got paid I'd invite or someone else would, whoever had money and we'd take it in turns to pay for lunch like that. So, when we went back to work we'd say, hey remember it's your turn tomorrow. And that's how it is. You share with the others and they have to share with you.'* (Pedro, child 1)

Street-working and street-living peers introduced several children to ways of earning money: '*...they taught me how to sing on the buses, to clown at traffic lights, to sell chewing gum, all that. That's how I started'* (Raul, child 17). '*...and well when I needed work and sometimes some of them would be working and they told me who I could ask and where I could go... so that's how I found a bit of work on a stall in the pirated goods market* 'fayuca' *selling CDs'* (Daniel, child 21).

Only 2 children reported spending time in the street alone, identifying problems in street child networks as the reason: '*look, it's fine for a bit but... no way.... too many fights and people stealing your money.... better solo'* (Cásares, child 5)

> '*Apparently they were my friends but they were always on about 'take this drug' or try that glue. And I wasn't into that... Gilberto and another lad were always on about it... it really bothered me... I think they just did it to make me feel out of things, so I stopped hanging around with them.'* (Roberto, child 9).

However, children who experienced weak support links with other children tended to report strong support from their adult networks as outlined below.

Adult networks and work

Children's street-working activities, particularly in Zones A and B, were subject to territorial organization by adults. Street-based working activities at traffic junctions - washing vehicle windscreens, selling chewing gum or flowers, juggling and clowning – were regulated by groups of youths, families or unionized members of the local markets. Aureliano (child 4) had been allowed to join a group washing windscreens at the '*Jardineras*' traffic lights, one of the more lucrative traffic junctions in Zone A, on the strength of his older brother Gilberto's reputation, a young man who had lived on the street in Zone A some years earlier and was remembered there.

Street work in and around markets was regulated by Puebla's *28 de octubre* [28 of October, known as '*el 28'*] union of market workers. Putting out market stall garbage for municipal collection was a working activity commonly assumed by interviewed children and subject to *el 28's* control. Children given permission to do this and similar jobs in the market (unpacking boxes, cleaning, running errands) often received food and a small monetary payment from market stall owners. A child who tried to work without protection from a stall owner needed authorization from *el 28* and would often be required to pay a '*cuota'* to be allowed to work in a certain area during certain times of the day (although *el 28* leadership denied receiving payments from children).

> *'These men told me I hadn't asked permission from the ones who were in charge of carrying bags there, so they said I couldn't work, so I stopped going. But later one of them came over and asked 'why don't you come and work, I've been looking for you' he said. If they know you and you respect them, they'll let you work sometimes'* (Leonel, child 19)

'*El 28'* explained territorial control as important for keeping the local peace and bringing some organization to a chaotic area, asserting that they protected children in the locality (Xihuel Sarabia, deputy leader, 28 of October Union, interviewed 28/03/07).

Selling small goods or washing windscreens at traffic lights in other areas of the City could be subject to retaliation by adult competitors who had established their own form of control in an area: *'sometimes they took my money... and went through the things I was selling to see if they wanted any.'* (Lalo, child 7 in Zone A); *'...they took cash or made me pay something... they said that they were already on that street corner, that I couldn't work there* [washing windscreens], *that it was their street and that I should*

go somewhere else because I wasn't allowed to work there.' (Guillermo, child 22 working near Zone B's Morelos market).

Most children worked much of the time in low paid and poorly protected activities described in Table 4.11 as 'helping / begging', ranging from carrying people's shopping bags from market stall to their homes nearby, helping accommodate luggage in buses and taxis, singing on the buses for *'propinas'* tips. Sometimes a series of such jobs could be undertaken in the course of a day:

> '*In the mornings I'd work* [opening taxi doors and carrying luggage for tips] *in the CAPU* [bus station] *until around 3 in the afternoon, then I'd go to work at the wholesale fruit and vegetable market* [moving boxes], *and then in the evening I'd go to the Hidalgo Market as everything started to close, to take out the rubbish'* (Cásares, child 5, working in Zone A).

Over time, and with adult support, children progressed from marginal to more stable street work, suggesting commonly understood working aspirations:

> '*First off, I was going round the* [Morelos] *market throwing out rubbish* [for market stall owners] *and helping people carry... shopping bags... Then afterwards [...] people got to know me, they gave me work – helping in a car mechanic's shop... washing cars and looking after them in the main market car park, that's what I was doing.'* (Guillermo, child 22 in Morelos Market, Zone B)

Children were vulnerable to exploitation in various ways. Work was sometimes hard, for long hours, for little pay. *'they put me in charge of a food stall all day, selling sandwiches* [cemitas] *or something, and at the end all I'd get was something to eat'* (Cásares, child 5). Others complained of being easy scapegoats in times of trouble:

Leonel and Oscar were reported to the police by their market stall employer for stealing watermelons. By the time police officers arrived the thief had been found but too late to prevent 11 year old Leonel (child 19) and 10 year old Oscar (child 20) being detained.

Berenice (child 18) was 10 or 11 years old when she started working in an all-night bar in Zaragoza, Puebla's military barracks (Zone C). Interviewed when aged 14, Berenice spoke fondly of the owner of the bar: '...*he really helped me... I earned $350 pesos a day... I stayed sometimes from 5 in the afternoon until 4 in the morning... drinking in the bar with clients... and I didn't have to pay for food or drink or anything...'* Berenice still seemed unaware of the bar owner's exploitation, referring to her job as 'chatting with the clients', and insisting her employer never asked her to have sex with clients, even though she agreed that she had occasionally had sex with clients on the premises.

Ricardo and Raul (children 14 and 17) worked in adult-controlled, organized theft, which they recognized as a risky and illegal, but highly profitable, activity. Both had been detained twice in Puebla's remand home. Ricardo had enjoyed working with his older brother:

> '*We used to rip off wing mirrors and hubcaps... in certain streets in the Victoria and only ones you can take off in one piece and really quickly. They're the ones we get paid most for. Some years* [car models] *are better than others – easier, or you get a better price. The guys would tell us which ones to go for – which ones they wanted and how much we'd get. I worked with my* [older] *brother for his mate.'* (Ricardo, child 14)

Raul (child 17) was the youngest of a group of 4 children and youths who broke into homes at night looking for cash, jewellery and small electronics. Although he was street-based in Zone B, Raul was aware that the stolen goods were re-sold by his older companions in Zone A's pirated goods market near to Puebla's bus station. One night of house theft would, he said, grinning, allow him to live well for a few weeks, compared to a day selling chewing gum when he might earn enough only for a meal in the market.

Adult support and families

Several children reported developing longer term supportive relationships with market stall and other adults who allowed them to sleep in storerooms, were bought medicines when they were ill and given regular meals – particularly from market stalls and shops selling perishables or cooked foodstuffs. Roberto's job selling chickens in Zone A's Hidalgo Market brought additional benefits:

> 'When I started work there I didn't have proper clothes so they bought me working clothes [...] like an advance from my first week's wage, and I could leave them and other things there, so they'd be safe [...] and I'd sometimes get to sleep in their transit van.' (Roberto, child 9).

Temporary jobs running errands in carpentry, key-making and iron-making workshops often included occasional nights sleeping on the premises, a place to watch TV, meals with a family or other workers and a little money. Insufficient data were collected to understand why children left helpful arrangements, but children were unwilling to blame their employers, perceiving their departures as inevitable: *'they didn't have enough work, you know, no-one wanted to make furniture'* (Cásares, child 5 on leaving the carpentry workshop); or *'it was time to move on, that's all'* (Roberto, child 9 on leaving his job selling chickens)

There was some suggestion of children trying to forge longer-term relationships with employers. Several children talked of being taken to live in their employers' homes for days and sometimes weeks, with 2 children (Raul, child 17 and Daniel, child 21) claiming that their employers had intended to adopt them. But no evidence could be found for this and key informants in the research thought the claims dubious. Of interest to this thesis are the implicit searches for alternative home environments and contemplation of temporary employers as prospective substitute families.

Children's own families were also reported as playing supportive roles on-street, an idea explored further in Chapter 5. Cristian's (child 12) on-street relationship with his mother was clearly defined by their living together on the street. Dressed and painted as 'street clowns' they would carry out a 30 second clown routine at traffic lights, inviting car drivers to contribute coins in return for their entertainment. Cristian's participation increased the takings while Clara, his mother, provided protection. Lalo (child 7) relied on an adult cousin who worked in a local public baths to look after his stuff and provide the occasional meal, while Lalo's parents looked to their nephew for information on Lalo's physical well-being. Abraham's mother and grandfather would go in search of the boy to make sure he was alright and to persuade him to go home:

> *'Your family helps you when you're on the street... They come looking for me when I leave... in Tehuacan* [Abraham's home town] *and here in Puebla City too'*(Abraham, child 3).

Wendy (child 13) would go home at times when she knew her parents were out, to stock up on food, with the knowledge and approval of her mother. Berenice (child 18) maintained close contact with an old friend of her mother's, whom she referred to as

`mi abuelita' or grandmother, and therefore considered as family. When in trouble or ill Berenice turned to her *abuelita* who allowed her to stay, sometimes for weeks at a time, in her flat in a crumbling `*vecindad* collective housing, in the Zaragoza neighbourhood. Both the girls, Wendy and Berenice, were unusual in choosing street bases close to locations they could call home – in Wendy's case she generally slept within a 15 to 20 minutes walk from her mother and step-father's house, while Berenice lived in the streets of her family's old neighbourhood, near to her `*abuelita*'s home.

Other networks for children living on the streets

Other on-street networks were prevailed upon by children for information, protection and occasional food. In Zone A's Hidalgo Market, a street-working family shared control with a group of young adults, in uneasy negotiation with *el 28 de octubre,* of work washing car windscreens at a busy road intersection. The family's matriarch, Lety, travelled in minibus 3 or 4 days a week from the municipality of San Francisco Ocotlán, some 10 km to the north of Puebla City to sit in *las Jardineras,* to supervise her sons at work and protect the family. Four of Lety's sons usually travelled in with her to wash car windscreens in front of the Hidalgo street market, sometimes moving to the *Soriana* traffic intersection [named after the corner's supermarket] if avoiding trouble with *el 28* or rival groups. Two sons sometimes dressed as clowns or breathed fire to entertain car drivers in the evenings. Two daughters-in-law Edith and Angela, with baby son and daughter respectively, were also in evidence working, supervising, bringing food, and minding the babies. Several interviewed children had received erratic support from this group over the years: permission to work (usually during the family's absence); protection from other street adults; 'street knowledge' for new or returning children; and occasional invitations to eat or share an unexpected donation

of clothes or food items from a local shop owner or member of the public. In return, children were expected to respect Lety's family's control of the road junction and make an occasional contribution of money if and when requested.

Most children also received ad-hoc support from people in the locality: *'Working adults* [in the market] *looked after me... When I joined them they looked after me and sometimes helped me if the bags were heavy'* Giovanni (child 8); *'There were 2 helpers in the CAPU's café 'Las Delicias' who would give me a free sandwich whenever they saw me'* Roberto (child 9).

On-street support: a summary

Children negotiated their use of street spaces, demonstrating agency and competence in navigating complex on-street dynamics. Their attachment to a physical and social environment, a base, allowed them to familiarize themselves with and attach themselves to available support networks. Attaching themselves to larger, loose, groupings, often in pairs, gave emotional support and protection but avoided commitment to rigid group rules. Children supported each other for protection, companionship and income smoothing – sharing finance and work opportunities, and expecting others to do the same. Adult networks were more difficult to negotiate but potentially more rewarding, offering protection, potentially better paid and/or more stable work. Families were drawn on for support while children remained on the street.

4.5 On-street access to social programmes and social interventions

Chapter 3 outlined social programmes and their service delivery manifestations as social interventions which targeted street children or for which street-living children should have been eligible in Puebla City in the 2002-2005 period, according to criteria in government documentation (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). This section is concerned with identifying children's experiences *while living on the street* of access to these government social programmes and their service delivery expressions as social interventions. Chapter 6 will explore street-living children's experiences of residential or 'off-street' social interventions.

Figure 4.3 below adapts figures 3.3 and 3.4, adding 2 new columns to explore the nature of 'on-street' contact by case study children with social interventions provided through government social programmes, ordering rows by number of study children identified as having experienced these on-street contacts.

Fig. 4.3: Access to social interventions via governmental social programmes in Puebla City by case study street children 2002-2005

Social Programmes	Children targeted	Government provider of social intervention	On-street access experienced	No. of children experiencing On-street access
Remand Home	Young offenders and children displaying antisocial behaviour in need of protection	Interior Ministry	Access via police	13
Children's and Teens' shelters	Orphaned, rejected, abandoned, abused girls & boys; or whose parents / guardians are ill or in prison	Puebla State DIF	Access via State DIF outreach staff and police	6
Children's Hospital	Children in need of emergency medical help (hospitalization)	Health Ministry	Access via Red Cross	3
Street Children	Street children	Puebla City DIF	Walk-in access to night shelter	3
Compensatory Schools	Out of school children	Education Ministry	Access via Puebla City DIF	2
Legal Aid	Children without identity documents or with legal problems	Puebla State & City DIF	Access via Puebla City DIF	2
School breakfasts	Malnourished children in primary and pre-primary schools, located in marginalized zones	Puebla State & City DIF	Access via Puebla City DIF	2
From the Street to Life	Girls, boys and young people at risk of or in street situations	Puebla State & City DIF	Access via Puebla City DIF	1
Health and dental clinics	Children in need of emergency medical help (out-patient)	Puebla State & City DIF	Out-patient treatment	1
Eradication of Urban Child Labour	Working children	Puebla State DIF	None	0
Drug Rehabilitation	Adolescent children, aged 14 and over, with addictions	Health Ministry	None	0
Minors and Adolescents at Risk (PAMAR)	Adolescent children at risk of survival sex, sexually transmitted infections and addictions	Puebla State DIF	None	0
Indigent Welfare	Children in need of emergency medical help (equipment)	Puebla State Public Welfare Institute	None	0
Opportunities	Children living in poverty	Social Development	None	0

Sources: Combined information from Chapter 3 Tables: 3.4 and 3.5. Social welfare programmes: Paredes (2005) for Puebla City; Alfaro de Morales (2005) for Puebla State; and (www.dif.gob.mx accessed 05/05/06) for National SNDIF. Other social programmes: Morales (1999) and Fox (2002)

Access in practice by interviewed children to government social interventions provided under social programmes designed to target or include street children was very limited and of an unexpected nature.

The social intervention reported as accessed by the highest number of interviewed children when they had been living on the street in Puebla City was Puebla's Remand Home, which 13 children entered from the street, detained by the police for misdemeanours or more serious offences. In second place were Puebla State's Welfare Shelters, accessed by 6 children: 4 reported entering the children's or teens' shelter voluntarily after receiving an invitation by Welfare outreach workers while 2 had been detained by the police for protection.

Three children had been admitted to hospitals for emergency medical treatment, 2 brought in by the Red Cross: Abraham (child 3) was taken to Puebla's Children's Hospital after injuring a leg in a fall from a bridge when drugged; Berenice (child 18) was an emergency admission to Puebla State's General Hospital for a cesarean section at age 13 to have her first baby. Lalo (child 7) was admitted to a health ministry clinic (*IMSS*) for emergency treatment for burns to his face and neck, caused by dropping a lit match into a tin of paint thinner.

In total, 5 (21%) of 24 interviewed children accessed social interventions via Puebla City Welfare while living on the street. One child, Cásares (child 5) accessed 5 social interventions over a 3 month period, experienced as a package as: legal aid to be able to enrol in school; compensatory schooling (provided by the Education Ministry under Welfare auspices); breakfasts via the school; a 3 month grant under From the Street to Life for attending school; plus occasional access to the City night shelter: *'I was in the*

street when I went to that school. I went Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 9 to 12, and on Fridays they paid us Mex$200, there in the DIF [Puebla City Welfare]*... and they gave us breakfast there too'* (Cásares, child 5). Rafa (child 2) experienced City Welfare services for just one week, when he received legal aid to enrol into school, attended compensatory school (first year of primary) for a week and received breakfasts during that time, before giving up *'it made me really tired... it was hard to get there from the Hidalgo market'*. Cásares and Rafa were the only child interviewees who attended any school *while living on the streets*. Cristian (child 12) accessed the City night shelter with his mother, with whom he was living on the streets; as an accompanied child, Cristian was legally allowed to stay. 2 other children received one-off services: Hector (child 6) occasionally stayed overnight in the City welfare shelter; Guillermo (child 22) received medical attention on one occasion as an out-patient at the City's Welfare clinic, receiving treatment for food poisoning. Access to City DIF social programmes therefore, while involving diverse services, was limited to 5 children, 3 of whom received services for less than a week during the 2002-2005 period.

Interestingly in light of the 100 Cities research findings, no child had accessed Puebla State government's programmes for working children, children at risk or for children with addictions. Meanwhile, selection criteria excluded children from IAPEP's medical equipment programme *while they were living on the street* (on the grounds that an adult was required to assume responsibility for any equipment provided) and from Social Development's Opportunities programme (on the grounds that vulnerable children in poverty were selected on a household basis, thereby excluding children not living in a household).

Children's access to residential social interventions

Access to government residential interventions, shown above, was mediated primarily by police and in some cases by Welfare staff. Children also accessed CSO and self-help group social interventions directly from the street. Figure 4.4 summarizes the access as experienced by the 24 interviewed children to residential social interventions in Puebla City. Individual children sometimes accessed more than one intervention, following returns to street living.

Fig. 4.4: Residential social interventions accessed from the street in Puebla City by case study children, showing who mediated their access

Social Interventions in Puebla City	Number of times accessed by interviewed children	On-street mediator of access to Social intervention		
		Police	Institution Staff	No mediator
State Remand Home	19	19	0	0
State Welfare Shelter	10	7	3	0
City Night Shelter	3	0	2	1
CSO JUCONI	5	0	5	0
CSO Reach Glory	5	0	4	1
CSO Living Hope	1	0	1	0
CSO Solidarity with Adolescents	1	0	0	1
Self-help group Youth to Paradise	2	0	2	0
Total number of times accessed from the street	46*	26	17	3

Source: Children's interviews verified with service providers and institutional records.
* Note: Several children accessed more than 1 social intervention from the street and averaged access to 2 institutions from the street

Social interventions displayed in Fig. 4.4 are profiled in Chapter 6, Figures 6.2 to 6.4 and children's experiences within those interventions are the central topic of Chapter 6. Of interest for this current chapter, however, are: the significant role played by police in mediating street-living children's access to social interventions from the street, shown in Figure 4.4; the high profile of Puebla's Remand Home among the interventions accessed, bearing in mind that the Remand Home was not a service

designed to target street children; and the finding that only on 3 occasions did children gain access to social interventions from the street without an institutional mediator: Roberto's (child 9) twice accessed CSO homes and Cásares' (child 5) accessed Puebla City's night shelter.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

The findings of this Chapter suggest positioning street-living children in research as 'working children' has been very unhelpful to street-living children in terms of generating government social policies and interventions to meet their needs. Represented as a small (2%) subset of working children in the official 100 Cities research studies, despite known differences in characteristics and circumstances street-living children were poorly researched and their particular needs relegated to footnotes. Study biases served to confirm existing prejudices rather than explore possibilities of support. Analysis of the data found that street-living children in Puebla City, relative to the larger urban working child population, had left difficult home environments, showed high incidence of drug use, were out of school, and were low paid and in less protected work. Yet the 2nd 100 Cities report made no recommendations to address findings about street-living children's limited access to education, their drug-taking behaviour, their reports of family abuse and police abuse – indeed, made no recommendations relevant to the situations of children living on the street (SNDIF, 2004: 60).

Wide discrepancies were also found to exist between the elevated profile of street-living children at the level of social policy discourse, in which they were claimed as

social programme beneficiaries, and the lack of provision by social programmes and interventions for this population in the practice.

Case study findings support 100 Cities' conclusions that numbers of street-living children are small. However, other Case Study findings, using qualitative data collection methods and triangulation, challenge 100 Cities one-dimensional findings about street-living children's relationships with family and police. Compared to official research findings about abuse by families and police of street children, this case study produced more nuanced findings which suggested that families and police showed supportive capabilities, with implications for social policy and programmes.

Informal support networks were found to play a more important part in children's experiences of living on the street than social programmes or formal interventions. Children demonstrated agency and resourcefulness in developing on-street support networks with other street-based children and informal sector employers to enable them to negotiate public spaces.

Street-living children's experiences of formal social programmes and interventions while living on the street was found to be very limited and focused almost exclusively on taking children off the street for placements in residential institutional environments, the implications of which will be discussed in Chapter 6. A handful of children accessed on-street services provided by Puebla City Welfare, mainly for brief periods. No social interventions were accessed on the street under the From the Street to Life social programme designed to target street children, except by 1 child for 3 months under Puebla City Welfare auspices. Puebla City's Remand Home was the social intervention most accessed by children on the street in this case study and police

were the most frequently reported point of first official contact. Neither the Remand Home nor police were, however, contemplated in the social programmes targeting street children. CSOs and self-help group residential services were accessed more frequently by children on-street than were official Welfare services, although only on 3 occasions did children gain access to social interventions from the street without an institutional mediator.

Chapter 5

Street-living Children and Families

5.1 Introduction

Street children as constructed in the literature discussed in Chapter 2 have been assumed variously to have: broken all ties with families; few ties with families; maintained some kind of contact with families. The role played by families in causing children to leave home is also contested, although home-based violence is generally agreed to form part of a multi-causal package surrounding children's departures from home. Similarly, the positioning of family in social policies for street children is confused: families are constructed as 'social problem' within those perspectives which approach street children as 'victims' or 'deviants' (see Chapter 2 Figure 2.6) but may be treated as co-victims alongside their children under a rights-based perspective which contemplates street children as citizens whose rights have been violated or denied.

In Mexico, 'family' has occupied a central role in the social policy discourse within a legal context which defends, supports and protects the family. As set out in Chapter 3, Puebla's social polices during the research period promoted a culture of inclusion and integrated welfare, and social programmes including From the Street to Life aimed both to prevent 'street children' and treat children in street situations and their families. However, Chapter 4 argued that the government's 2nd 100 Cities research study (SNDIF, 2004) presented families uni-dimensionally as a 'problem' causing children to leave home for the street yet offered no recommendations to address

home-based abuse. Case study findings presented in that chapter suggest families play more complex roles, even including minor supporting roles when their children are living on the streets. Following Bacchi's advice, this chapter rejects the 'problem-solving' approach to focus instead on problem representation, challenging assumptions behind construction of family as a street child-causing problem to explore the '*the lived effects, of the policies which accompany particular constructions'* (Bacchi, 1999: 48).

This chapter approaches families from 2 perspectives: as an additional arena for data collection about street children's behaviour and part of the research method of triangulation; and secondly as a vital component of social policy-making for street children, addressed within the research sub-question '*What other forms of support do street-living children experience?'*. I explore the roles played by children's families in street children's lives and social interventions, setting families within their neighbourhood contexts, before addressing the nature and continuity of 'street' children's home-based relationships, identifying evidence of family participation in social interventions and their implications for social policies.

'The street' is traditionally held to be the place where the lives of street-living children play out. On-street mobility is often emphasized in the literature, but attention is drawn less frequently to street-living children's on-off street mobility and their relationships with family. Recalling the definition of '*niños de la calle*' or street-living children used by Welfare's 100 Cities studies, cited earlier in Chapter 4: '*those for whom the street forms their daily habitat, and who sleep in wasteland, bus terminals, sewers, markets or hiding places in tourist and commercial areas'* emphasizing that '*what defines their category is the fact of living in the street'* (SNDIF et al 1997: 14); the family has been displaced by the street. However this definition does not rule out

an understanding that children may maintain connections to their families, implying a shift from earlier Welfare definitions of street-living children as having 'broken' with their families (COESNICA 1992: 10, cited in Chapter 3).

This Chapter begins by exploring family situations and neighbourhood contexts of the 24 street-living children interviewed for this Case Study, for a fuller, richer account of children's moves to the street. Findings that families continue to play key roles in the lives of their children after these young people leave home to live in the streets of Puebla City are then explored, with children and families evidencing ongoing complex relationships sometimes in fraught circumstances. This chapter explores the nature and continuity of relationships between street-living children and their families. Finally the roles of families in children's access to and experiences in social interventions are addressed, drawing on the 24 case study children's accounts, information from service providers, neighbourhood observations and visits to local schools, home visits and full interviews with 10 families (see **Annex 2** for a list of family members interviewed).

A family was only interviewed after: its selection by the researcher; an invitation from a child to visit his home (sometimes located several hours away from Puebla City) had been received by the researcher; the family had given prior and considered consent; and information about child and family had been retrieved from organizational files. Only families of children currently resident in the JUCONI CSO (one of 2 CSOs working with street children in Puebla City and profiled in Chapter 6) were interviewed. This decision was made on ethical grounds: JUCONI provided home-based services to families of street children and could offer a supportive context to an interviewed family to manage any trauma caused inadvertently by the researcher during interview. This strategy had an important drawback of limiting the number and type of families

interviewed (in the same way as children interviewed were limited by both researcher selection and self-selection). Recognizing both these limitations and the potential for a pro-JUCONI bias in families' accounts, family interviews and home visits nevertheless were able to provide illuminating data to explore: veracity and partiality of street children's accounts; families' perceptions of their children; contacts between families and a range of social interventions; children's and families' behaviours in their home environment.

5.2 Families and neighbourhoods

The ecological approach proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to explain children's development was noted in Chapter 2 as recognizing *'the interaction between the individual and the environment, and the joining of the person and the environment to form an individual's own personal "ecological niche" or "place" within which behavior and development arise.'* (Tan et al, 1991: 85). This study explores street-living children's experiences of home and neighbourhood, understanding them to be formative and interrelated.

Household and neighbourhood poverty

Twenty two (92%) of 24 interviewed street-living children's families were assessed in the research to be living in poverty, although the majority were not living in extreme poverty. Using Mexican government poverty categories[8], 11 households were assessed

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[8] *ENIGH (National Income and Expenditure Households Survey) understandings of poverty were used. Patrimony poverty = households whose income by person was less than considered necessary to cover food needs and basic consumption in health, education, clothing, footwear, housing and public transportation. Capacities poverty = households whose income by person was less than considered necessary to cover food needs, and basic consumption in health and education. Food poverty = households whose income by person was less than considered necessary to cover food needs. Poverty levels were assessed using children's accounts, family visits and organizational files..*

to be in patrimony poverty, 3 in capacity poverty and 4 in conditions of extreme, or food, poverty (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Household poverty levels and neighbourhood locations of family homes

Household poverty levels of interviewed children	Neighbourhood locations			Total no. of children
	Urban	Peri-urban	Rural	
Food (extreme) poverty	2	0	2	4
Capacity poverty	2	4	1	7
Patrimony poverty	6	5	0	11
Not in poverty	2	0	0	2
Total no. of children	12	9	3	24

Source: Case Study database, summarized by child using ENIGH poverty definitions

Two exceptions were Lalo (child 7), whose parents had salaried, middle management jobs in Mexico's telephone company 'Telmex' and Wendy (child 13) whose step-father held a middle management job in a large insurance company. The 22 families living in household poverty manifested a range of survival strategies, all with insecure, low incomes in the informal sector: 7 depended on steady but poorly paid domestic, retail or building work; 6 families were subsistence farmers; 3 had their own small businesses; 5 were street or market vendors; 1 relied on theft of automobile parts.

Home locations were also varied. Lalo's family lived in an established middle class *fraccionamiento* (demarcated residential districts) in Puebla State's Tecamachalco City, while Wendy lived in a *'barrio popular'* (working class neighbourhood) Fuentes de Moratilla in the north-west of Puebla City. 10 children's families lived in the municipality of Puebla City and another 5 lived in conurbations around Puebla City. 6 came from other cities or villages in Puebla State, and only 3 children's families lived outside Puebla State: child 1 in Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico City; child 8 in an isolated village in Veracruz State; and child 10 in Tlaxcala State's town of Huamantla. 10 lived in low to very low income urban neighbourhoods, with 3 children coming from remote rural areas and 2 from middle income urban areas.

Most heads of family were found to be employed as casual labourers (in the building trade and farm work) or self-employed in the informal market (as street, market or fairground vendors) or were subsistence farmers.

Neighbourhood networks and extended families

Most street-living children's families in this study did not report strong neighbourhood or supportive extended family networks. Ten families (42% of 24 interviewees) had, in their children's early years, no extended family living in the area or any other obvious neighbourhood support, for a range of reasons. Lidia Luna, mother of Roberto (child 9), is an outgoing woman with an extrovert personality. She fled from a violent husband, taking their 2 toddler sons, to her mother's house in a nearby village:

> *'He came home really angry and really drunk, picking a fight, so I ran like the wind, out of the house, snatched them up and we left. I realized on the way that the kids had no shoes on... [...] I came back in the night, when he was asleep and took a ball of paper I'd stuffed into the wall* [which contained her small savings]. *If not, without that, I wouldn't even have had enough for the bus fare. I grabbed it and left. And we left the village and that was it'* (Doña Lidia, family interview 06/04/05)

Lidia married again within the year, to her husband's cousin Alfredo but, feeling vulnerable to continuing threats of abuse from her first husband, moved to a new settlement with no basic services, on the outskirts of the nearest large town, Amozoc, some 30 minutes from Puebla City. Lidia and second husband, Alfredo, had no family or contacts in Amozoc, but were drawn by very cheap land for housing and distance from Lidia's first husband. They began to buy and sell items of plastic kitchenware in a local market, using Lidia's knowledge of her ex-husband's small informal market business, and gradually, working long hours, they built a small but thriving business

together, traveling to 6 daily markets in the region selling plastic kitchenware. Lidia took her young sons with her, traveling every day to a different market, teaching José and Roberto to read and write during travel and downtime. Their long hours away from home meant Lidia and Alfredo did not build a network in their new neighbourhood for several years, relying on each other for mutual support. As José and Roberto accompanied their parents, they did not attend school or make friends locally. Their itinerant work effectively cut this young family off from potential sources of support in the household community.

Other families reported feeling excluded by local inhabitants. Raul (child 17), had no contact with either of his parents' families, living with his mother, Marta, and 2 younger sisters in a run-down tenement house *vecindad* in Puebla City's Loreto district. Marta's second partner maintained 2 families, spending most evenings at Raul's flat, his '*casa chica*' (literally 'small house' used commonly in Mexico to mean the house of his girlfriend or mistress, which he would be responsible for maintaining financially) before returning to sleep at his 'large' home, where his wife and 3 children lived just a few streets away. There was no contact between the 2 families, and Marta and her children were effectively isolated within the community, except for the semi-clandestine relationship with her partner on whom she was financially dependent. Marta's partner played no other role in Raul's or his sisters' upbringing, nor was the quantity or timing of his financial contribution secure.

Only 9 (37%) of the 24 children reported having members of their extended family living close by and lending some support to the household. But even families with strong local roots and local family had made few connections in the local neighbourhood:

'We've lived here for a long time, yes, but... how can I say this... we keep ourselves very much to ourselves. I know lots of people, but only to say good afternoon and the like to. That's what we're all like in this family. Many other people have close friends ['compadres', 'comadres'], *but we don't. No we don't. As I say, we're a very closed family, or perhaps we're very bitter...'* (Doña Teresa, mother of Aureliano, child 4, interview of 07/04/05)

Mothers of 6 children (25%) had moved in from other communities to live with new partners who had members of their own extended family living in the neighbourhood. All 6 (Pedro, child 1; Hector, child 6; Juan, child 16; Raul, child 17; Berenice, 18; and Leonel, child 19) cited abuse by their step-fathers as a main reason for leaving home. While the step-father's families may not have condoned the abuse, they do not seem to have stopped it. According to Juan:

'We went to live in my step-father's house [...] his parents lived there, and his sister and her son [...] and the rest of his family was in the same block [...] They treated me badly at home and they treated my mother badly [...] My step-father used to hit her... [...] his sister, my aunt Vasi [tried to stop him] but he never paid any attention to her [...] My grandfather tried to talk to him, but he didn't listen to him either' (Juan, child 16)

Rafa (child 2) and Toño (child 11) reported spending plenty of time with close family living nearby and good neighbours with whom they and their families had considerable supportive contact. But in general, while family and social networks might be expected to provide support for families in household poverty as parents seek to develop mutual support networks to reduce costs, and manage work and child care, this was not typical in the experiences of the 10 families interviewed of the 24 Case Study children.

Street-living children and neighbourhood schools

Very high rates of exclusion, drop-out and non-attendance at school were reported among the 24 children interviewed. Twenty (83%) of the 24 interviewed children reported receiving any formal schooling before leaving home for the streets, considerably lower than the national primary enrolment rate of 98% reported for 2000-2005 (UNICEF-Mexico, 2007). Two of the 4 children who had never attended primary school were home-taught (children 9 and 12) and 2 were keep home by families who did not believe their sons needed schooling (children 11 and 15).

In total, 18 children (75%) were already out of school when they started sleeping on the streets: 4 had never attended school; 5 had been excluded by their schools; 5 had dropped out because they didn't like school; and 4 more were withdrawn by their families. Only 6 children (25%) had still been in school by the time they left home and all 6 left their schools as a corollary of taking to the streets.

A common thread in parental reports of reasons for the exclusion of 5 children from school was problematization of their child's behaviour. Lalo's (child 7) middle class urban family felt unable to control him, complaining of insufficient information and support from school[9]; Aureliano's (child 4) semi-urban farming parents accepted exclusion as an inevitable school response to a 'problem' child who could not control his temper. Edgar's (child 23) mother Bonifacia thought Edgar had been born running and *'he just used to run everywhere and he got into real trouble at school with that... running across the patio... the teachers told him not to do it...'* (Doña Bonifacia, mother of Edgar, child 23, interview of 06/06/05)

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[9] Lalo was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) years later, during his residence in the JUCONI CSO

Doña Ninfa, Lalo's step-mother recounted several meetings with Lalo's 2nd year primary school teacher and subsequently with the school head, in which she was told of disruptive behaviour in class by her then 7 year old step-son. She said that she had been warned repeatedly that, if they continued, Lalo would be excluded. Half-way through primary year 2, Lalo was finally excluded for 'lack of discipline', although received his completed Year 2 certificate, as part of a compromise negotiated by his parents: Lalo would be allowed to 'pass' his year as long as he did not attend school. Ninfa reported feeling that she was being held responsible for Lalo's conduct at school, but did not know how to deal with it. Lalo's conduct was perceived by the school as a problem that his parents must correct.

In Aureliano's case, 3 quite different perceptions were apparent about reasons for his exclusion from school: his mother blamed Aureliano's inability to control his temper; his school blamed his parents' inability to control Aureliano; and Aureliano blamed other children for bullying him at school: *'So the problem was that if I fought with one, his mates ganged up on me* [...] *And for that I was expelled from school, because I fought with them'* (Aureliano, child 4). Three of the 4 children withdrawn from school by their families reported both financial difficulties and problems with learning – once both: *'they put me in school and I wasn't learning things and I got told off a lot [...] but also because well my mum had to pay the rent and couldn't pay the school'* (Guillermo, child 22). Berenice (child 18) reported being withdrawn from school because her step-father just didn't want her to attend. All four said they had enjoyed attending school. The 5 children who dropped out of school, on the other hand, said they had left against their parents' wishes:

'Well, I didn't like it. When they took me in, they'd walk me inside, but I'd jump the walls and run [...] because I don't like it [...] or well they made me sit and read and I didn't like that [...] the teacher told me off, told me to get down to work. But I'd just fall sleep.' (Abraham, child 3).

Nevertheless, 10 (50%) of the 20 school goers, including 2 excluded pupils, reported on the whole enjoying their schooling.

Street-living children in their neighbourhoods

Children's reports of their neighbourhoods and of their relationships with neighbours, peers and wider family varied considerably. A few, such as Rafa and Toño (children 2 and 11), reported having lots of friends, good neighbours and spending plenty of time playing football or hanging out on the local streets. Others, such as José Mario and Berenice (children 15 and 18) reported experiences of almost complete isolation, with no local friends or helpful neighbours. A common feature was exclusion, withdrawal or truancy from school, accompanied by a sense of contained boredom, typified as:

'There was nothing to do, just watch the telly and as we didn't go to school any more we got bored [...] *sometimes we didn't go out because there wasn't enough money, but sometimes just because we couldn't be bothered, or didn't want to because kids from town...* [in our school] *well, they're real fighters. And if you fight with one then 2 or 3 will attack you, and as there's only me and my brother...'* (Roberto, child 24)

Several children living in poor urban neighbourhoods reported low-level illegal activities such as drug-dealing and street-based sex-selling, plus violence in their neighbourhoods, but only 1 (Roberto, child 24) considered his to be a particularly 'bad' neighbourhood. Many spoke enthusiastically about their neighbourhoods, including the

fun of roaming around, playing street football and playing video games or '*maquinitas*'
available in local corner shops.

Families and neighbourhoods: a summary

Case study children's households were not all extremely nor uniformly poor. Their
neighbourhood locations were mainly low income, but varied from remote rural villages
to dense urban tenements. However, the majority of families did experience precarious
incomes and some social isolation within their neighbourhoods, including several
mothers who had moved away from their own family's support structures. Most
children and their families did not have a supportive school-based network. One
quarter of children were not in school because of a parental decision, but the families
of most interviewed children supported their children's attendance and tried to keep
them in school. Most children reported some low-level illegal activities in the locality
but also reported enjoying their neighbourhoods.

5.3 Why children leave home for the streets

The 100 Cities studies survey of urban working children in Mexico asked street-living
children:*¿Por qué motivo empezaste a vivir en la calle?*'Why did you start to live in the
street?' (SNDIF, 2003: 12), with responses discussed in Chapter 4 and summarized in
Table 4.7. Based on interviewed children's responses, the 2nd 100 Cities report
recognized the evidence as complex: '*on the one hand the suffering they live at home
and on the other the street as a place of enjoyment*', but concluded '*abuse received at
home is the reason for which almost 1 in every 2 children decide to abandon their
homes*' (SNDIF 2004: 38). Asking 24 street-living children the same question in a

semi-structured interview setting, with an open-ended question format, case study findings shown in Chapter 4 Table 4.13 did support street-living children's perceptions of abuse at home as a key factor in their decisions to leave home, but suggested triggers were more complex and multi-factorial. Most interviewed children cited at least 2 different reasons for leaving home, with some citing as many as 6 reasons: child 7, Lalo, said he had been abused and bored at home, an important carer had died (father's sister), he didn't like his new step-mother, wanted to find his mother and liked the street - all of which fed into his decisions to leave home at various points.

Family perceptions

Family perceptions were, perhaps unsurprisingly, sometimes at odds with children's perceptions in the 10 homes visited. Several parents and older siblings blamed children's behaviour, others pointed to family circumstances, others to neighbourhood influences. Most children on the other hand had said they had been beaten at home. Children's temperament and antisocial behaviour were held to be the main 'problem' in 2 cases: Lalo (child 7) was regarded as uncontrollable '*ingobernable*' by his father and step-mother; Hector (child 6) was described by his mother, Verónica, with a head-shaking, smiling, mixture of pride and despair as 'a free spirit'. Some other families thought children's behaviour was partially to blame. For example, Rafa (child 2) was thought by his older sister, Adriana, to be too stubborn:

> *'Someone would say 'don't do that, because it's bad' and he'd do it even more. More he'd do it - and more... And I think that's why my dad got desperate. And for that reason, every so often, dad would be like that with him, on his back all the time.'*(Adriana, older sister of Rafa, child 2, interview of 07/05/05).

Several families held abrupt shocks to home circumstances to be responsible for their children leaving for the streets. In 4 cases, mothers leaving home were held to blame: 2 were imprisoned and 2 left their families. None of the 4 children concerned had manifested these absences as important reasons for leaving home.

In 2 cases when mothers had left home, interviewed older siblings felt the remaining family had been unable to cope: *'My father won custody of us and didn't allow our mum to have any contact... But afterwards he couldn't cope...[...] He likes to think he did his best but really he closed his eyes, sent down a bit of money* [from the USA] *and then forgot about us.'* (Miguel, 18 year old oldest brother of Cásares, child 5, interview of 25/01/05). *'Well, our mother abandoned us. He* [Rafa] *was abandoned as a young kid. He was only 6 when she left [...] I don't know what her reasons were... [...] She didn't fight for custody though. No. She just went, and left us with my dad.'* (Adriana, older sister of Rafa, child 2, interview of 070505).

Two mothers blamed their own imprisonment as the main cause of their children's departure to the streets. The family stories of Abraham (child 3) and Giovanni (child 8) shared striking similarities: Both fathers were both serving life sentences in Puebla State prisons; both boys' mothers had never been to school and were from income-poor rural households; both women were caught carrying drugs for their husbands to sell inside prison, confessed and were given 5 year sentences for drug trafficking (a federal offence, drug trafficking carries no conditions for parole or early release in Mexico). Abraham's mother, Carmela, was released in 2002; Giovanni's mother, Leticia, was interviewed in Puebla State's female prison in 2005, waiting for her March 2006 release date.

Doña Carmela and Doña Leticia expressed deep distress at the effects they believe their imprisonment had on their children. Each described feelings of impotence and frustration as their children were divided up and moved between relatives and friends, sometimes far away from their mother's prison:

'I felt like I had stopped breathing... I couldn't do anything. Somehow I couldn't believe they would put me away. It was all my fault and I couldn't do anything for my babies [...] David, Abr'am and Ester all went with my mum, but she was bedridden and then she died and my dad took them... and, oh it was so crazy... and I was pregnant, Sara was born inside and then when she was 12 months I handed her over to my dad to look after her' (Doña Carmela, mother of Abraham, child 3, interview of 12/05/05)

Giovanni's (child 8) mother Leticia recalled calling out instructions in the courtroom to her family as she was taken away: *'You know, it sounds silly but it never occurred to me that they would put me away, even though I did what they said I'd done and everything... I don't know why but it doesn't occur [...] that you're going to let your children down'* (Doña Leticia, mother of Giovanni, child 8, interview of 19/01/05). Giovanni was parcelled off with older brother Agusto to live with relatives who scratched out a subsistence living in the rural highlands of Veracruz State. Giovanni's toddler brother and baby sister were sent to live with their maternal aunt, Pati, in Puebla City.

Giovanni talked openly in interview about his mother's imprisonment and his own moves between paternal relatives, assorted family friends and the street. Giovanni gave, as one of 3 reasons for taking to the streets, that he had come to Puebla City to search for and visit his mother in prison. For some months, while living on the streets

at the age of 9, he managed weekly visits to his mother, as prison warders and other inmates attested. Like Abraham however, Giovanni was protective of his mother and unwilling to attribute blame for their departures from home to their mothers' imprisonment. However, both mothers assumed full responsibility for their children's departures to the streets, blaming themselves for having committed crimes that took them into prison, and for leaving their children without adequate family support.

Most interviewed family members and children talked of significant disruptions to family structures, although few linked these as being instrumental to children's departures, except for cases of abuse by step-parents. Fifteen (over 60%) of the 24 families had become 'composite' families within the child's memory, in other words, comprising 1 biological parent plus a step-parent or partner, often with step- or half-siblings. Another 5 families were described as having fallen apart or disintegrated, with neither biological parent living with the child at the time of leaving home. 3 more children had lived in single parent headed families. In 20 households (83%), parents had separated during interviewees' childhoods, while in 2 cases the biological parents had never lived together, and only in 2 cases were the children's biological parents still living together. Table 5.2 summarizes the family structures within which interviewed children had been living prior to their departure for the streets. At the time of leaving home, only 2 children (Aureliano, child 4 and Edgar, child 23, both from the Pueblan city of Guadelupe Victoria) were living with both biological parents.

Table 5.2: Interviewed children: family structure at time of children first leaving home

Relationship of biological parents in children's home	Family Structure				
	Composite	Disintegrated	Single Parent	Nuclear	Totals
Living together	1	0	0	1	2
Separated	13	5	2	0	20
Had never lived together	1	0	1	0	2
Totals	15	5	3	1	24

Source: Case Study database

Fourteen (58%) of 24 children reported having spent some years in early childhood being cared for by a family member other than their biological mothers for a range of reasons: maternal imprisonment; lost custody; separation, divorce and/or re-marriage; grandparents raising children as young mothers moved away to work or live with another partner.

Four children reported, among their reasons for leaving home, searching for family members: Cásares (child 5) went looking for his 3 brothers who had been placed in different CSO care facilities after his mother had left home, his father had become alcoholic and had finally left for the USA, leaving his 4 children in the care of a local teacher who soon placed them in CSOs around Puebla City; Lalo (child 7) said he wanted to find his mother who had lost access to him after a bitter struggle for custody with his father; Giovanni (child 8) wanted to be close enough to visit his mother in prison; Leonel (child 19) wanted to find his father whom he had not seen since he was a 3 or 4 year old and who he thought lived in Oaxaca, but hoped would take him in, to escape an abusive stepfather.

Doña Teresa, mother of Aureliano (child 4) was one of several mothers to identify neighbourhood factors as negative influences, blaming her son's home-leaving, at least in part, on bad company and an obsession with video arcades:

> `The bad thing is there were times when his friends led him on and didn't let him come home like he should have. So what seduced him were the video arcade games. They showed him how to play and from then on he worked only to get money to feed the video games – nothing else.'

'Yes, those damn things... video games, video games, video games, [maquinitas] they were all he filled his head with. [...] I'd send him off to buy flour and he'd go in the

store on the way back and spend hours there – and my change!' (Doña Lidia, mother of Roberto, child 9, interview of 06/04/05). *'He'd be off, every day he'd be off doing things with someone in the area... we never saw him'* (Doña Bonifacia, mother of Edgar, child 23, interview of 06/06/05)

Comparing families' and children's perceptions

In only 2 of 10 sets of accounts could children's and families' views of the reasons for children leaving home be understood as similar: Cristian (child 12) and his mother Clara both reported poverty and consequent inability to pay the rent as the main reason they had been forced, together, on to the street; Cásares (child 5) and his older brother Miguel concurred that parental abuse, abandonment and a search for his brothers had led Cásares onto the street. In 5 families there was no common ground in children's and family reported perceptions: children emphasized physical abuse, boredom or a search for adventure; while mothers found their children incorrigible tearaways, or blamed themselves, or the neighbourhood for their children's behaviour. In 2 cases, children and their families agreed on some aspects but not others of reasons behind children's departures to the streets, with children blaming parental mistreatment and parents finding their children uncontrollable, and both recognizing the 'pull' of the streets.

Families were reluctant to talk about abuse in the home as a cause of their child's departure to street life. When the subject was raised in interview, all families acknowledged the use of physical punishment at home, usually framing the issue as one of parental 'discipline' in the face of children's 'disobedience'.

Lalo (child 7) blamed his running away on upheavals in his childhood including: being abandoned by his mother as a baby, then left by his father with his aunt Guadelupe, who became his main carer until her death; exclusion from primary school; and finally his father's strict discipline, including beatings, when Lalo moved in with him and a new step-mother. His parents said they sympathized but felt Lalo had not tried hard enough to curb his anti-social, behaviour and the father's beatings were aimed at 'controlling' the boy. '*Well, he was pretty much a tearaway before he came to live with us, and then he didn't get on with* [his sister and half-brother] *and we just couldn't control him really. And I think we were probably quite hard on him, you know, because well Amancio* [his father] *had a drink problem and I was depressed'* (Lalo's step-mother Ninfa, interview of 16/02/05).

Hector (child 6) attributed his running away to severe beatings by his step-father, a view rejected by Hector's mother, Verónica, although she agreed that Hector's step-father 'had a temper' and gave him a beating, a '*guamaso',* now and again, to keep him in line (Doña Verónica, Hector's mother, interview of 27/01/05).

Doña Teresa acknowledged her husband physically disciplined their children using his belt. Aureliano (child 4), her second son to run away to the streets, reported severe beatings by his father, which he saw as abuse '*me maltrataron'*: *'my father often beat me..[...] because I wasn't very obedient... [...] it was to punish my behaviour'.* Teresa agreed this had happened but felt it was for Aureliano's own good and was reasonable punishment for disobeying his mother by playing video games after running errands instead of coming straight home. Aureliano's older brother Gilberto had left home a few years earlier (although was now home again), also alleging physical abuse by his father. When asked why Gilberto had left home, Doña Teresa said it was '*something*

about the boys' in the family that they were too strong-willed and didn't accept discipline.

Some children's responses changed after interviews with their families. Rafa (child 2) was the only child in his personal interview to attribute home-leaving entirely to a taste for street life and adventure. But his older sister, Adriana, subsequently blamed their mother's abandonment of the home and their father's discipline:

> '*So he* [Rafa] *must have thought, he must have said to himself, well it's because my dad doesn't love me, but he should understand that he didn't do much himself to prevent that. It wasn't just my father's fault, he's also responsible, isn't he? One despaired, and the other didn't understand'* (Adriana, older sister of Rafa, child 2, interview of 07/05/05).

Rafa did not contest his sister's version of events, subsequently admitting finding his mother's leaving home very painful and of having a difficult, fearful, relationship with his father.

Abraham, child 3, gave various reasons in interview for leaving home: to be able to sniff glue; boredom at home following exclusion from school; he enjoyed street life; and friends had invited him on to the street. Although a friendly and articulate speaker he omitted to mention that his mother had been imprisoned for 5 years during his early years. However, once his mother had discussed her imprisonment with the researcher in a home-based interview, Abraham was willing to talk about it. He said he had been too ashamed to discuss it earlier and was anxious not to blame his mother, emphasizing that his mother's imprisonment had not been a reason for his leaving home to live in the streets.

Children leaving home for the streets: a summary

This chapter's findings support evidence that street children's accounts alone are not reliable or complete sources of information for finding causes of their moves to the street. Reasons for omission or supplying false information, even under relaxed interview conditions, included emotional self-defence and protecting family members. Assumptions made in the 100 Cities studies on the basis of a single question posed in the street as part of a mass survey must be accepted as, at best, questionable and as providing a partial and unreliable platform on which to make assessments for social welfare planning directed at street-living children. Family perceptions of their children's moves to the street were enriching, sometimes contradictory and illuminating. When analysed together with findings from children's interviews, with service providers' files on children, and observation on household and neighbourhood settings, a more robust understanding of some of the triggers which sent children on to the streets can be ascertained.

Findings about the home lives of street-living children in this case study suggest their families had been subjected to considerable, often multiple shocks and stresses over time to their structures, including death, imprisonment and changing membership. Absent mothers, whether imprisoned or refused access to their children, and new step-fathers, were evidently felt as important stresses by children and parents. Distinctions between discipline and abuse were also contested within families. The capacity of families to cope with children, within conditions of home-based violence, household poverty and feeling unsupported at neighbourhood or extended family level, evidenced severe strain and failure to cope in several cases. This chapter does not pretend to make a full analysis of the home-based causes behind children leaving for street life,

but rather calls attention to the diverse and multiple stresses evidenced by parents and families raising children.

5.4 Continuing family-child relationships

The idea that children break all links with their families when they take to street life is a pervasive one, but more nuanced research outlined in Chapter 2 has drawn attention to children's on-off street mobility and their on-going contact with their homes in a range of contexts. The Puebla City case study for this thesis provided evidence of considerable on-off street mobility and sustained contact over time between most of the 24 street-living children and at least some members of their families.

Twenty two of the 24 interviewed children had some form of contact with their families after they first left home for the streets, although the number and type of contact varied considerably. Two children who retained no family contact at all were both children with no siblings: Berenice, child 18, left home once and definitively after an argument with her mother who did not believe she had been sexually abused by her step-father; and José Mario, child 15, who reported leaving his grandparents' subsistence farm, having never known his parents, after years of neglect.

Fourteen children (over 58%) reported leaving home on more than 10 occasions: 7 of these returning home only for short visits and 7 more staying for prolonged periods with their families. Street informant Lorenzo, now aged 32, whom the researcher first met 20 years ago when Lorenzo had come to Puebla City as a young street-living child from the capital city, said he still went home regularly to Tepito in Mexico City, where

his parents and 7 brothers and sisters lived *'yeah, every now and again I go to see my mum…. Umm, every month.. I've always kept close and I get on well with my mum'* (Lorenzo, street informant, interview of 26/05/05).

Several children maintained regular contact with their families while they lived on the street, through extended family members working in the vicinity, by children phoning neighbours or sending verbal messages home through intermediaries, as reported in Chapter 4. Roberto's (child 9) mother would discreetly watch for him in the markets:

> *'I know Puebla's markets like the back of my hand, so I'd put out the word and wait for someone to catch sight of him and bring me some news […] When it was my day there* [to work in a specific market], *I'd check on him, from a distance you know, he couldn't see me, just to see how he was'* (Doña Lidia, interview of 06/04/05)

Several children reported going home during periods of illness, or to rest, and almost half interviewed children reported visiting home when they felt depressed. A few children and their families demonstrated extraordinary tenacity in keeping contact: Giovanni (child 8) travelled hundreds of miles from his relatives' home in rural Veracruz to live close to his mother's prison in Puebla City where he could visit her on Thursdays and Saturday mornings (visiting days in San Miguel women's prison); Cásares (child 5) spent years tracking down his 3 brothers, 2 of whom were in CSO care homes in Puebla, while the oldest was found living in USA; Cristian (child 12) and his mother Clara resisted repeated offers by Puebla Welfare Departments and CSOs to accommodate Cristian in a care home for children. Family searches for Abraham on the streets entailed his mother finding someone to care for her 3 other children and his grandfather forfeiting work to accompany her, as well as payment of bus fares between Tehuacán City and Puebla City.

Twenty two (over 90%) of the 24 interviewed children expressed strong affection for at least one member of their immediate family; the 2 who reported liking no-one were those who had retained no contact with home since leaving once and definitively for the streets. Four (17%) reported good relationships with everyone in their immediate family. When asked with whom they had the closest relationship, 9 (37%) named a sibling, 3 their mothers and 3 their fathers (see Table 5.3).

Some strong dislikes were also evidenced by interviewees. Four children strongly disliked their step-fathers and blamed them for their leaving home, but all still visited their families: Leonel (child 19) reported frequent visits home during the day to see his younger brother while their step-father was out at work; Pedro (child 1) periodically went home to visit his mother and half-sister, timing his longer stays for when he knew his step-father was out of town driving tourist buses.

Table 5.3: Case Study children's attitudes towards members of family in the household

Children's expressed attitudes	Immediate family member							
	Mother	Father	Sibling	Step-parent	Other	Every-one	No-one	Total children
Strongly like	3	3	9	1	2	4	2	24
Strongly dislike	3	1	4	4	4	1	7	24

Source: Case Study database

While making no judgements about the quality of child-family relationships, case study data evidenced most street-living children and their families maintaining contact long after children had first left home, sometimes in highly adverse conditions, with most children expressing strong positive feelings for at least one member of their immediate family.

5.5 Families and Social Interventions

Street-living children interviewed for this Case Study were found to have accessed and experienced a range of social interventions in Puebla City. This section explores families' contacts with governmental social programmes and interventions in light of potentially conflictive social policy goals of street child protection and family unity. Family contacts with CSO interventions and self-help groups are also explored for their social policy implications for street children.

Street-children's families and 'From the Street to Life'

Welfare's 100 Cities studies discussed in Chapter 4 made recommendations for improving conditions for working children including, as a central feature, the incorporation of family and community in social programmes (SNDIF, 2004: 40). This was, however, aimed at working children living at home; no proposals were put forward to address incorporation of family into interventions with street-living children, despite finding evidence of home-based abuse.

'From the Street to Life', the main Mexican social programme designed for street children in the case study period, set out in Chapter 3.7, drew on 100 Cities studies' findings to choose the 6 states as locations in which to develop the programme, but no steps were evident to address the role of family in this Programme. In Puebla, neither families nor parental associations were represented on the Programme steering group, despite From the Street to Life's national aim of encouraging the '*connection and coordination of efforts between public, private and social sectors which prevent and treat the phenomenon of children in street situations and their families*' (SNDIF, 2005: 37). Guidelines on Programme application did not prioritize families, either in research

or project and grant making (SNDIF, 2005) and the 4 CSOs invited to participate in the steering group and which received funding had contested views on the families of street children. For 2 of the CSOs, street children's families were the 'problem':

> *'I think the main cause of children living on the streets is family disintegration – definitely. And that causes poverty, frustrated mothers, total family disintegration [...]. The majority of street children are adolescents and they are fed up with their families and they go to the streets [...] they are people who want to get ahead. Their families don't. We provide an alternative, a chance to leave abusive families behind'* (Jenny Anzuara, deputy director, CSO Living Hope, interview of 21/09/04)

For the other 2 CSOs, families should be involved in finding solutions: *'JUCONI seeks to help each child participate fully in society by improving their family situations, their educational and working opportunities and their personal development'* (Alison Lane, CSO JUCONI, interview of 26/01/05). In their practice, the 2 CSOs specializing in street children, JUCONI and IPODERAC, sought to reunite street-living children with their families, while 2 CSOs for wider 'vulnerable child' populations, Living Hope and Calasanz Homes, sought to replace families with substitute care. In Puebla, then, From the Street to Life did not adopt a position on street children's families, nor did it prioritize research to address questions about families.

Two of the interviewed families had heard of the From the Street to Life Programme, from radio and television publicity spots, but no family had any direct contact with From the Street to Life.

Street children's families and government social interventions

Several interviewed children perceived Welfare care homes as a parental threat or punishment for leaving home: *'My dad took me to the DIF* [Welfare Department's Children's Shelter in Huamantla, Puebla State]*, because he wanted me to know what it was like. That's why I was there* [...] *because I used to run away from home.'* (Tzoni, child 10).

> *'They were going to put me into care* ['casa hogar']*. My mum was going to take me because I was on the streets and I hardly went to school...[...]... they were already doing the paperwork, so they were going to put me away that day...[...] So I said that I would go to school and they enrolled me again in primary...[...] because I didn't want to go into the DIF.'* (Roberto, child 24)
>
> *'All the family does, even if they want to help their son or whatever, what they do actually is frighten him. If you run away* [they tell you]*, you'll end up in an institutional shelter and there they'll hit you or whatever...[...] So a care home isn't a good option because, as I say, most families frighten their children so that they won't leave home'* (Roberto, child 9)

These perceptions, whether families were serious or not in their threats to have their children put into care, suggest family and child conceptualization of Welfare shelters as hostile and undesirable environments for children, rather than places of protection.

Some children found living in the streets were returned to their homes by social services, but handovers were brief, with no evidence of services aimed at helping families to improve home environments for children or ensuring children's protection in the future. Three interviewed children had been returned to their families from Puebla Welfare Shelter (several others escaped before their family details could be ascertained). The 3 children – Rafa, Abraham and Leonel (children 2, 3 and 19) –

were persistent runaways who were placed on 2 occasions in Puebla DIF's temporary children's shelter. Their families were then informed by State Welfare's social work department and attended scheduled appointments to discuss their children's situations.

Abraham's (child 3) mother and grandfather recalled being admonished by Welfare for not looking after the boy properly. This came after a home visit by a Welfare social worker to notify the family that Abraham was being held in the Welfare shelter in Puebla City and to schedule a next-day appointment with the DIF Attorney General's office. Carmela and her father took a bus from Tehuacán to Puebla City the following day and returned home with their son:

> 'When we arrived, they told us Abraham had been in hospital. He'd injured his leg on the streets and the Red Cross had picked him up [...]. That was like the week before. So when we saw him he had a big bandage on, he was limping. The DIF people told us we had to look after him better, because he was getting into trouble on the streets. We knew that, because he was always running away and sleeping on the streets.' (Doña Carmela, mother of Abraham, child 3, interview of 12/05/05).

According to Rafa (child 2) and older sister Adriana, his mother had come to collect him from the DIF shelter. 'She was so pissed off with me she put me straight into an annex [self-help group] after that [....] to cure my addiction'. Families and their contacts with self-help groups are addressed below.

Leonel (child 19) had stayed in the DIF shelter for several weeks on the first occasion, receiving occasional visits from his mother.

'My mum came for me and said 'come home'. She says: 'I've talked to Agustin',

my step-dad, that's his name, and that he's not going to bother [beat] *you*

again. So she took me home, but later... well, for about 2 weeks we were fine

but after that we started to have problems again [...] *No, we didn't have to go*

back or anything and they never came [from DIF] *to see us. That was all.'*

(Leonel, child 19).

Relationships between service providers and families are discussed in Chapter 6.4 in

the form or social intervention approaches to street children's families, but for the

purpose of this current chapter, children's and family perceptions of receiving no

support post-shelter were confirmed by service providers.

`*After the child returns home, he has to present himself every fortnight to the*

[DIF] Attorney General, for the social workers to see how reintegration is

working - to see if it's working. The parents are told – you have to come on the

17th or whatever, and they come for the first sessions and after that, when they

stop coming, well there it dies... Because there are so many cases that they

just can't chase everyone up. They should all be monitored but... well, they're

not. Practical constraints tell you it can't be done, it just can't...' (Carmen

Lastra, Head of Psychology, Puebla Welfare Shelters, interview of 11/05/05)

Families, particularly mothers, reported mixed feelings for their street-living children, of

responsibility towards them together with a lack of confidence that they would be able

to stop their children returning to the streets.

Fifteen (over 62%) of the 24 children in this study had spent some time in Puebla's

Remand Home, discussed further in Chapter 6. Seven were returned home after

serving their 3 to 6 month detention periods. All 7 reported being collected by family members who signed legal release forms committing them to report in person to the Remand Home twice-weekly during the customary 3 to 6 month parole period. Only 2 of the 7 children reported completing their 3 month parole period (Abraham, child 3 and Hector child 6):

> *'It gave us some headaches you know because I was working at a gas station and my partner wasn't here because he works in traveling fairs, so I had to get Hector to the Remand Home* ['Consejo'] *which is right across town [...] it takes us 2 buses* ['combis'] *and an hour to do it, then we had to come back, and I have 2 kids in primary as well, so I had to skive off work and get my sister in law to take the kids in...'* (Doña Verónica, mother of Hector, child 6, interview of 11/04/05)

The remaining 5 children reported running away before completing their parole periods: *'the first time, no. I still had about 6 'firmas' visits to go [...] but I ran away again so I didn't go to sign. But no-one came after me, I just disappeared. No-one went home to ask my mum where I was.* (Raul, child 17).

Relationships between families and government interventions while parents were in prison are also of interest in terms of their implications for social policy goals of promoting family integration. The cases of 2 children - Abraham, child 3 and Giovanni, child 8 - are explored in the following paragraphs.

Abraham's grandparents were left to care for him and his 2 siblings when their mother Carmela was imprisoned in Puebla City's San Miguel prison in 1998, 8 years before being interviewed for this research. Her parents were granted custody of 3 of their 4 grandchildren, receiving the fourth when she was a year old and under prison rules no

longer able to stay with her mother, Carmela in prison. The grandparents received no financial or other support from the State with which to raise the children. Neither did Welfare arrange for parent-child contact. Abraham's grandfather took him and his siblings on the 2-3 hour journey from Tehuacán City to Puebla State prison once a month to see their mother for the first 2 years of her 5 year sentence, until his wife died and neighbours alerted Welfare to the fact that 4 children were left at home all day alone while their grandfather went out to work. Abraham and a younger sister, Ester, were then placed by Welfare in CSO 'House of Sunshine' (*Casa del Sol*) a home for abandoned young children in Puebla City, where they lived for 3 years until their mother's release. During those 3 years, Abraham and his sister were visited by their grandfather and other relatives, but had no contact with their mother in prison.

Giovanni's mother, Leticia, described how her sister, who accepted the care of Leticia's 2 youngest children, had not brought them to see her during her 4 years in prison, arguing that prison visits would be unhealthy and traumatic for them. Leticia felt powerless with no means at her disposal to force her sister to maintain contact, since her sister had custody of the children. Meanwhile, Giovanni and oldest sibling Agusto had been sent hundreds of miles away to live with relatives on their subsistence farm in Veracruz State. Welfare made no financial or other contribution to the children's welfare. Giovanni and Agusto worked on the farm, losing access to school and their mother. Giovanni (child 8) ran away to Puebla City to keep in contact with his mother.

In both cases, relatives' custody orders had been approved by Welfare, but their precarious family structures and conditions of extreme poverty had not attracted any additional support from Welfare, either to raise the children or to ensure contact between children and their imprisoned parents. At the time of the case study research

for this thesis, Puebla State DIF had recently introduced visits for children living in Welfare Shelters to their mothers in prison:

> '*Another thing that's been achieved since I took on this job* [3 months ago] *is that we've started to take children* [in DIF shelters] *to visit their mothers in prison. Obviously we research the case, so that if their mothers mistreated them, well we won't take them…. [...] But we're doing this now.*' (Rozzina Dumit Bortolotti, Attorney General, Puebla State Welfare, interview of 14/06/05)

However, this support did not extend to children in similar situations placed in CSO care or in the custody of relatives.

There was one clear case among the 24 children of Puebla State and City DIF actively encouraging family unity in the case of street-living children: Cristian (child 12) had been allowed to live for a year (at the time of interview) together with his mother Clara in Puebla City's night shelter. At Cristian and Clara's request, Puebla State Welfare had referred them to the City's night shelter, so that Cristian could remain with his mother, rather than admitting Cristian to the DIF children's shelter or to an CSO care home. Welfare social workers had also traced Cristian's older siblings in attempts to strengthen family links. No institutional intervention was however in place to prepare night shelter residents for independent or family living and Clara gave no indication of having a strategy of independent living with her 12 year old son:

> '*I've always wanted to be independent. Yes. So that if my son wants a hot bowl of soup I can do that…[...] But here we are* [in Puebla City's night shelter], *here we can't demand any more than they give us, because they do enough for us already, don't they? By offering us shelter, no? And then I get*

to thinking, and the truth is that I want my independence.' (Doña Clara, mother of Cristian, child 12, interview of 27/05/05).

No families had participated in, or were even aware of, Puebla City's Family Violence and Family Emotional Health Programme, which offered elective workshops for families of at-risk children. This Programme was a newly introduced preventive strategy to help parents of working and other at-risk children provide supportive home environments. The Programme was not thought to be helpful for parents of street-living children who had *'deeper problems than a workshop can tackle – they're a bit 'light' for the kind of problems street children's families have'* (Israel Gonzaga, Puebla City DIF Coordinator, Street Children Programme, interview of 20/09/04).

Street-living children's families and social development interventions

One of the 10 interviewed families was found to have benefited from a social intervention by Puebla's Social Development Ministry: Aureliano's (child 4) family was registered in *'Oportunidades'* Opportunities, the national flagship social development programme created within the context of the 2004 Social Development Law (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1), which provided cash grants to low-income families enabling children to attend school and health services. However, Aureliano's exclusion from school before he left home meant that he was no longer eligible.

'Aureliano doesn't receive anything any more because he stopped studying and whatever... But they're still giving to us anyway because we have 2 younger ones at primary school still. And they give us a food basket. Well, they give us money to buy food really, for a month at a time.... [...] So there are the 2 of us parents, then there's Gilberto, Maria de Jesus, Mercedes, Aureliano, Angel and Rodolfo, but now that Aureliano's not here and Mari left school and Gilberto finished secondary, we're 5 now [...] How much we get every 2 months?... well

it's not a lot, it depends too on the children's school grades. If they get a 9 or 10 in any subject they give you more. They send a letter and say whoever got a good grade and so they increase by 10 or 5 pesos. And so on. But if they don't do well, they give you less. If someone doesn't go to school, they take money off, and if they're off for 3 days without a doctor's note, you don't get anything for them for the 2 months. [...] We've filled in about 3 pages that they call carnets, so that's 3 years we've been in the Programme [...] For this 2 months I received 1,000 pesos (about £50), so that's 500 pesos a month... it really helps for the children (Doña Teresa, mother of Aureliano, child 4, interview of 07/04/05).

Most families of interviewed children would have been eligible for participation in Opportunities on low-income grounds, but payments were dependent on children's stability at home and attendance at school, effectively disqualifying street-living children.

Families, street-living children and CSOs

Some families were found to have mediated their children's entry into CSO programmes: Guillermo (child 22) was introduced to CSO 'Reach Glory' (*Alcance Victoria*) by his mother and sister, who persuaded him to become a resident to kick his drug habit; Aureliano's (child 4) admission to CSO JUCONI from Puebla's Remand Home was negotiated with his parents as a 'half-way house' option; Lalo's (child 7) step-mother Ninfa had phoned CSO JUCONI from Tecamachalco City giving details about Lalo and the public places where he could usually be found, asking JUCONI to make contact with him in the street through JUCONI's outreach service.

Other parents exercised their legal rights to prevent children being admitted to CSO programmes: '*I want to go there* [to a CSO House for street children] *but... my mum won't let me. I told her the first time* [when I was in Puebla's Remand Home] *I wanted to go, but my parents said no, come home they said. And my dad came to fetch me.*' (Edgar, child 23).

In some cases, CSOs were mediating children's returns to their family home. Most of the street-living children resident in CSO JUCONI House expected to return to live at home within 2 years of residency. Aureliano's (child 4) family had already participated in a similar JUCONI-mediated process with an older son, Gilberto, who had returned to live permanently with the family in 2002, where he completed secondary school, following 2 years of residency in JUCONI House with a parallel year process working with the family to improve the home environment. Similar processes were underway with Pedro, Rafa, Abraham, Lalo and others.

Children interviewed in CSOs IPODERAC, JUCONI and Reach Glory expected either to return to live at home or to maintain links with their families. Juan (child 16) regularly visited his mother and aunt Vasi by taking a bus trip home on occasional weekends, at the encouragement of CSO IPODERAC, even though Juan was planning to live independently on leaving IPODERAC at age 18. Similarly, Raul (child 17), also an IPODERAC resident, took an hour's bus trip once a month to see his older sister Sandra in CSO Alto Refugio, for a half day visit. He also occasionally visited his mother and half-sister at home, reportedly getting on well with both despite a history of physical abuse by his mother during his childhood. Rafa (child 2) regularly visited some of his family from CSO JUCONI, taking a couple of minibuses to the outskirts of Puebla City to spend weekends with married sister Adriana and her family. Since his father's death

in 2004, Rafa no longer intended to live at home but kept in regular contact with his sisters, nieces and nephews.

There were occasional demonstrations by children of fierce attachments to family, even while resident in CSO programmes which did not encourage family connections. Cásares' (child 5) was one of 4 siblings abandoned by their parents in 1995, split up and distributed among 4 CSOs in Puebla City. None was told the others' whereabouts and contacts between them were not permitted by the CSOs. Cásares lived in a Franciscan-run CSO in Puebla City until finishing primary school, then ran away to try to find his brothers '*because they wouldn't let me look for my brothers when I was living there, but I had to finish primary school.*' Cásares enrolled Puebla City DIF's help during his brief participation in From the Street to Life described in Chapter 4, tracking down his youngest brother Felix to Puebla's Salvation Army (*Ejercito de Salvación*) children's home and another younger brother Alejandro to CSO Calasanz Homes (*Hogares Calasanz*). In 2004, CSO JUCONI helped Cásares track down his older brother, Miguel, to the USA. Miguel had run away from his CSO at a young age, making the illegal crossing into the USA at age 11, had traced two of his father's sisters living in New York and had been living with them since. An 18 year old US citizen at the time of the case study, Miguel travelled down to Mexico to reunite with his brother Cásares. Together they visited Felix and eventually Alejandro, although Salvation Army and Calasanz Homes discouraged frequent visits, concerned by Miguel's invitation to take the boys to live in the USA. The driving force in reuniting this family came from the 2 brothers, not Welfare or CSOs. Three established CSOs in Puebla City had not, until prompted by Cásares, discovered that they housed brothers of the same family; and after being alerted, were reluctant to encourage family bonding, seeing the 2 older brothers as threats to their younger brothers' development.

Families, street-living children and self-help groups for addicts

Several interviewed children had experienced self-help group residential programmes known as '*Anexos*' (literally 'Annexes', also referred to in this thesis as self-help groups). These are discussed as social interventions in Chapter 6, but here are explored for their connections with families of street-living children. Annexes are lock-up facilities designed for and run by adult addicts, to which addicts voluntarily admit themselves or (more commonly) are forcibly admitted by families to spend 3 months addressing their alcohol or drug addictions together with other addicts in similar situations.

Ten (42%) of the Case Study's 24 interviewed children had been admitted, all against their will, to an Annex on at least one occasion, at which time all were aged under 12. Half this number had been admitted by their families: 2 boys (Rafa and Abraham, children 2 and 3) to address their drug use, mainly glue sniffing; one girl, Wendy (child 13) to combat alcoholism; the second girl, Berenice (child 18) had accompanied her mother as a younger child to address the mother's marijuana addiction; and Lalo (child 7), had been admitted by his parents as 'uncontrollable' *ingobernable*, even though he had not used drugs or alcohol. All 5 had each spent 3 to 4 months in a lock-in Annex facility in Puebla State: 4 in Puebla City self-help groups, 1 located in Tehuacán City.

Street-living children as young as 9 had been admitted by their families to self-help group 'annexes' designed for adult addicts. Parents signed forms stating that they relinquished responsibility to the self-help group for the required 3 month period, and reported paying a '*cuota*' 'donation', sometimes in kind, such as food and clothing, sometimes in cash, as a pre-condition of admission before leaving their children: '*I was*

in for 4 months [...] the first time. That's the basic 3 months and then 1 month more... The first family visit is after 2 and a half months. They can't come and see you in the first 2 and a half.' (Rafa, child 2).

Parental accounts suggest they viewed Annexes as a last resort for children who had run away from home several times, were out of school and were felt by parents to be out of their control. Some children had already been in a Welfare shelter, Remand Home and/or CSO care home. Parents reported feeling under pressure from schools, Welfare, and sometimes from family and friends, to bring their children under control. Admission to a self-help group represented simultaneously a demonstration of parental control and a last ditch attempt to 'reform' their children. *'We'd already tried everything we could think of'* in the words of Ninfa, Lalo's (child 7) step-mother. She and Lalo's father Amancio had variously used physical punishment, changing schools, being grounded, professional psychological support and family therapy to stop Lalo's persistent running away to the streets. Puebla City's *'Regresar a Vivir'* Return to Life Annex, which they heard about through friends with alcoholic family members, offered Amancio and Ninfa a practical solution: reform of 9 year old Lalo's 'uncontrollable' behaviour by forcing him to confront and deal with the consequences of his behaviour, using a '12 step system' adopted from the international Alcoholics Anonymous movement.

Abraham's (child 3) grandfather had turned to the local Annex in Tehuacán at a neighbour's suggestion, after Abraham had been injured falling off a bridge when drugged, had been placed in Welfare and subsequently had spent time in Puebla's Remand Home. Abraham was 10 when his family paid for him to be admitted to the local Annex for a 3 month 'straightening out' regime.

Children's responses to the self-help groups were unequivocally negative and all returned to the streets after stints in an Annex. One child's account framed her Annex experience as a parental challenge:

> 'My mum put me in that Annex because I drank alcohol... I'd never taken any drugs. I tell you, it was a real eye-opener in there – I learned everything you can think of about drugs... you know, from people's testimonials? [...] By the time I got out, I was fired up to try something [hard drugs] just to get back at my mum for shutting me up in there.' (Wendy, child 13)

Some evidence also emerged of families and government interventions collaborating to admit street-living children to Annexes. Edgar and Roberto (children 23 and 24) were interviewed for this case study one month into their residency in Puebla City's 'Return to Life' (*Regresar a Vivir*) Annex. Both had been admitted by Puebla Remand Home staff, apparently with parental approval although the children seem to have been unaware of their families' agreement:

> 'Four of us were playing in the street and these policemen come up and could smell drugs, so they frisked us. And they found a PVC bottle on el Gusano (the Worm) [...] So they took us and started filling in forms and all 3 of them said that I didn't do drugs. And I told them too. But they said they couldn't let me go because my mum was at work so they didn't have anyone to hand me over to...[...] and they said we could say I had just taken a little PVC, so that they could take me along with the other 3 to the Remand Home and there our families could come and pick us up, and so I said yes....[...] And the next day, the Monday, my mum was going to come for me, but the guards at the Remand Home brought me here instead [to self-help group Return to Life], with the other 3 and with 2 more kids called Bernabé and Avelino...[...] we all

thought we were going home, we thought they were going to take us home,

because they said we were leaving, but they didn't say where to...' (Roberto,

child 24)

Return to Life's leaders Gustavo and Emma Taja corroborated the children's stories,

confirming that Edgar had been admitted for drug use and Roberto as 'uncontrollable',

(*ingobernable*) and showing parental consent as evidenced in signed forms. They

expected both children to be collected by their families at the end of the 3 month

period.

Families and social interventions: a summary

Street-living children's families were found to be peripherally involved with Welfare,

even in targeted social programmes for street children. Families did not experience

Welfare social interventions as supportive. Children returned home by Puebla State

Welfare or the Remand Home were not offered protection or follow-up support and

most ran back to the streets. Feeling under pressure to control their children, families

did not feel able or well-equipped to succeed. Some families turned to CSOs and self-

help groups, looking for help with their 'uncontrollable' or drug-using children. Only

one case was identified of Welfare working to keep families together within a support

structure, although there was no strategy in evidence for the family's post-shelter

independence. One case of family participation in a social development programme

demonstrated that street-living children's instability and lack of school attendance

disqualified them from participation.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

In line with 100 City studies' findings that many street-living children leave home because of abuse in the family, From the Street to Life, the central government social programme aimed at street children, relegated families to the periphery of social policy, positioning family as problem and dealing with street-living children in isolation from their families.   However, this case study found evidence of family members demonstrating responsibility and care for children, before, during and after their street-living experiences.

There was evidence that many families had been subjected to multiple shocks and stresses (separations, imprisonment, deaths, new partnerships and merged families) usually within contexts of income poverty at household and neighbourhood levels, and within weak social and family networks.   Families were, however, found to be tenacious in maintaining responsibility for children who had left home for the streets. And children showed resourcefulness, courage and perseverance in sustaining relationships with key members of their families.

Involving families in the case study research recognized that different actors construct their own realities and may have conflicting perspectives.   Family perceptions and knowledge enriched the data, challenging preconceptions and adding new information. Family interviews surfaced omissions in children's accounts which were sometimes designed to protect family integrity.

Despite social policy discourse goals about inclusion, family unity and integrated family development, this case study found little evidence of ruptured families being supported

by government. Social interventions experienced by street-living children were trained on 'reforming' the child, not on transforming or supporting the family. Family inabilities to cope and poor parenting skills were recognized by families and service providers, but social policy responses were ambivalent: families were problematized, but children rather than families were 'rehabilitated'. Precarious families in income poverty were awarded full responsibility for their children, but no government support was made available, financial or other, to help families maintain unity or promote integrated development of families. Street-living children were treated, at times, as 'hot potatoes', passed as an awkward responsibility from family to school to Welfare to Remand Home and back to families. Some families under pressure turned to CSOs and self-help groups as a 'last resort', assuming responsibility for their children (often paying for residential services) while at the same time demonstrating perceived need for external support.

Chapter 6

Street Children and Residential Social Interventions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to explore street-living children's experiences of residential social interventions in Puebla City, as perhaps the most tangible expression of social policies and where civil society is traditionally visible in filling social policy gaps. 'Social interventions' are understood for the purpose of this thesis as organized collective services delivered to individual street children, and for which street-living children met eligibility criteria, representing the front-line service provision for street children, and shown as the second layer or unit of analysis of this case study (see Figure 1.2). Two elements of the main research question are addressed in this chapter, as: '*What forms of social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*', and '*How do 'street' children experience residential social interventions?*'

Chapter 2 provided an international context for this question in discussion of the research into social interventions, identifying that street children's access to and experiences in social interventions may have been mediated by organizational and service level decisions and actions which were not consistent with the relevant discourse. Chapter 3 developed a social policy framework for Puebla within which residential social interventions can be understood as expressions of Pueblan social policy and local civil society services to support street children. Chapter 4 explored the 24 case study children's experiences of on-street social interventions and access from the street to residential programmes in Puebla City, while street children's experiences of residential social interventions as mediated by families were discussed in Chapter 5.

This current Chapter explores residential social interventions as accessed and experienced by the case study's 24 interviewed children in Puebla City.

A range of Puebla State government programmes were identified as eligible to street-living children in Chapter 3, outlined in Tables 3.3 and 3.4, including a number which were expressed as social programmes and articulated in practice as residential social interventions: 2 temporary shelters run by Puebla State Welfare – a children's welfare shelter and a teens' welfare shelter - a Remand Home and a Drug Rehabilitation Unit. SNDIF's national From the Street to Life social programme for street children also awarded grants to children resident in 4 CSO programmes in Puebla City (see Chapter 3's section 3.7). Other CSO and self-help group social interventions were also found to be serving street-living children during the course of the case study.

To help set the terms for an exploration of street children's experiences within these social interventions set in the social policy context relevant to Puebla City, this chapter recalls social policy goals identifiable as relevant to street children in Chapter 3. Children's rights have been firmly embedded into national legislation since 1990, federal social policy strategy 'With You' 2000-2006 aimed to give children the tools to improve their quality of life, Puebla State social welfare goals aimed at 'inclusion' for street children and 'From the Street to Life' as the social programme targeting street children did not set any additional policy goals in terms of individual street children. The main government focus then could be understood as gaining street children access to their rights and helping them towards inclusion into mainstream society, suggesting that state residential social interventions could be expected to work towards street-living children's inclusion in mainstream society. A second relevant policy objective, manifested at all levels of government for all children, was to foster the integrated

development of the family suggesting that residential social interventions could also be expected to promote street-living children's integration with their families. This Chapter explores 24 street-living children's experiences in residential services in Puebla City bearing in mind these policy objectives.

This Chapter's findings draw on individual interviews with 19 service providers and with 24 street children in 7 distinct residential service settings in Puebla City. Each child had lived in the street and in residential services in Puebla for varying lengths of time and on a number of occasions between 2000 and 2004. Evidence from street children as social intervention 'end-users' and from service providers as their 'gatekeepers' has been enriched by organizational documentation, participant observation in services and evidence from other key informants including children's families. At the time of interview, all 24 children were in a residential social intervention in Puebla City as provided by a government social programme, CSO or a self-help group 'Annex'.

First, those residential services experienced by street children in Puebla City are introduced and children's use of them is identified, including access to children's rights (6.2) Second, findings on service approaches to family reintegration are identified (6.3). Referrals between institutions provide new information on street children's experiences in residential care (section 6.4). Section 6.5 addresses the issue of street children running away from Puebla City social interventions, including repeated running and street children's 'immunity' to rehabilitation through residential social interventions. Section 6.6 presents conclusions based on this chapter's findings.

6.2 Residential social interventions and street-living children in Puebla

At least 12 social interventions in Puebla City were found to accept street children as residents during the period of the case study fieldwork for this thesis: 4 government institutions; 6 registered non-governmental organizations (CSOs); and 2 self-help groups (informal groups in civil society modelled on the tenets of Alcoholics Anonymous and Drug Addicts Anonymous).

These institutions did not share a common understanding of 'street children' and most did not define themselves as institutions for street children, but all were found to accept street-living children amongst their target populations, however defined. Indeed, Welfare, as the government department responsible for street children at social policy and programme levels did not register street-living children as 'street' children at all but, in line with social welfare and young offenders' legislation (see Chapter 3's Figure 3.2) distinguished between 'vulnerable' children and children showing 'anti-social behaviour' (also referred to in this thesis as 'antisocial' children), conventions which were found to play out among CSO social interventions. Cutting across this typology, 2 CSOs defined themselves as dedicated to 'street children' and were registered as such with Welfare and the Remand Home for the purposes of referrals of 'street' children. This chapter divides social interventions along the 3 typologies as a social policy-led device to explore the 24 street-living children's experiences within them.

Classification of organizations by legal status and approach to street children is shown in Figure 6.1.

Fig. 6.1: Names of known residential services accepting street children in Puebla City 2004-2006, by legal status and approach to street children

Legal Status		Residential Services by Approach to Street Children		
		For *'Vulnerable'* Children	For *'Antisocial'* Behaviour	For *'Street Children'*
Govern-ment	State Welfare Dept	1. Children's Shelter - *Casa de la Ninez Poblana* 2. Teenage Shelter – *Casa de la Familia Poblana*	1. Remand Home - *Centro de Observación y Readaptacion Social para Menores Infractores de Puebla*	-
	City Welfare Dept	1. Night shelter – *Dormitorio Municipal*	-	-
Civil Society	Registered CSO	1. Living Hope – *Esperanza Viva* 2. Calasanz Homes – *Hogares Calasanz* 3. Solidarity with Adolescents -*Solidaridad con los Adolescentes*	1. Reach Glory – *Alcance Victoria*	1. Together with the Children - *Junto Con Los Ninos (JUCONI)* 2. Nolasco Village – *Villa Nolasco (IPODERAC)*
	Non-Registered Self-help Group	-	1. Return to Life – *Drug Addicts Anonymous Regresar a Vivir* 2. Youth to Paradise *Drug Addicts Anonymous Jovenes al Paraíso*	-
	Total	6	4	2

Sources: Documents from each organization, confirmed by service provider interviews

Puebla State made a distinction between 'vulnerable' and 'antisocial' children who lived on the street for the purposes of referral to social interventions, according to the perceived characteristics of the individual child:

> '… *street children who are vulnerable, abused children, abandoned children, they enter Puebla's Children's Shelter, because of their situations, because they are subjects of social welfare […]. Street children also go into the Remand Home for protection, but their characteristics are different, they are children who are at risk or in danger of drug addiction, that already display antisocial conduct. So for that reason they enter for protection. But in the Children's Shelter we don't put children like that. There we put children who are subjects of social welfare because they have been abandoned, lost or abused'* (Yazmin Urbina, Child Protection Services Representative to the Remand Home, Puebla State Welfare, interview of 14/06/05)

Led by their typologies of 'vulnerable' and 'antisocial', the Pueblan government did not provide social interventions specifically for 'street children', but referrals could be made to CSOs which considered themselves to specialize in 'street children': *'JUCONI and IPODERAC are the 2 CSOs registered with us as willing to accept children with street-living profiles.'* (Rozzina Dumit, Puebla State Welfare's Children's Attorney, interview of 14/06/05).

Since first moving on the streets, 13 (54%) of the 24 interviewed children had spent time in at least one residential service for 'vulnerable' children; 18 (75%) had lived in at least one residential intervention for 'antisocial' conduct; and 14 (58%) had lived in one or more social interventions for 'street children'.

Services for street-living children considered as 'vulnerable'

Thirteen (54%) of the 24 street-living children interviewed for this study had spent time in residential services targeting 'vulnerable' children. Figure 6.2 profiles the 2 governmental and 3 CSO institutions in Puebla City which self-identified and were identified by interviewees as offering services to 'vulnerable' children including street-living children.

Fig. 6.2: Profiles of Puebla services for 'vulnerable' children including street-living children

Organizational characteristics	Children's & Teenage Shelters	Night Shelter	Living Hope	Calasanz Homes	Solidarity with Adolescents
Organizational Affiliation	Puebla State Government Welfare Department	Puebla City Government Welfare Department	CSO branch of US-based Evangelical Church	CSO Mexican Catholic Church, Calasanz order	CSO Franciscan Missionaries
Main funding sources	Federal and State Welfare Budgets	Federal and City Welfare Budgets	International donations – Church congregation	Local donations - Church congregation	City Welfare Budget and local personal donations
Residential services	2 short-stay shelters	1 temporary night shelter	1 long-term home	3 long-term homes	1 long-term home
Targeted Population	Abandoned, orphaned, abused boys & girls, aged 0-13 / 14-17	Indigent adults and children in families	Abandoned, orphaned and abused boys and girls	Abandoned, orphaned and abused boys	Abandoned, orphaned and abused teenage boys
Numbers in residence	c 150 in children's & 50 in teenage shelter	c 70-80 people/night – babies to elderly people	76 children – half girls, half boys	45 boys	25 boys
Street experience of residents	Some have lived on the street	Some adults work/surviv e on streets; few children have lived on streets	About half have spent a night or two on the street. 5 - 6 have lived for longer on street	Many have spent 1-2 nights on street. 3 - 4 have lived on streets in Mexico City	Some have lived on the street
Conditions of access	Involuntary: maximum 3 month stay	Voluntary: over-night or special conditions for longer term	Voluntary: child accepted if has no family or family cannot provide a home	Voluntary: child must commit to schooling and long-term residence	Voluntary: contract with family; or child admitted alone indefinitely
Access by street children	Brought in by police on street / brought in by families / referred by State Attorney	Request by children - only under special agreement	Referred by State and local Welfare Depts; occasionally via contact in the street	Referred by State Welfare Dept and Catholic institutions in Mexico City	Referred by City Welfare or families; occasionally via direct contact in the street
Gatekeeper description of core of service provision	A temporary shelter for children sent by the authorities because of family problems	For people who can't afford a hostel or who are picked up from the streets	Programme based on the principle of getting a child away from the streets	Accompanying the most wretched in their struggles	Provision of a loving home

Sources: Interviews with service providers, site visits and organizational documents

Services for 'antisocial behaviour'

Eighteen (75%) of the 24 street-living children interviewed for this study had spent time in residential services targeting 'antisocial' conduct. Figure 6.3 profiles the 1 governmental, 1 CSO and 2 self-help groups in Puebla City which self-identified as offering services to 'antisocial' children including street children.

Puebla State's Remand Home was the official provider of residential services in Puebla for children deemed to display 'antisocial' conduct. Puebla's Remand Home recorded the habitual sleeping place of children directly before entry, enabling detection of those children referred by State Attorney's office directly from the street. In 2004, 23 (4%) of the 531 Remand Home residents were recorded as street children, a figure which Remand Home staff reported as lower than most years, estimating up to 10% as the norm. Street children could be remanded if they have committed a misdemeanour:

> *'when a child commits a misdemeanour, like urinating in the street, taking drugs, painting graffiti on walls or something – or commits a more serious offence that would be a crime - like robbery, rape, murder, then he goes to CORSMIEP* [Remand Home]. *These children [...] need both protection and rehabilitation.'* (Yazmin Urbina, Child Protection Services Representative to the Remand Home, Puebla State Welfare, interview of 14/06/05)

One CSO and 2 self-help groups self-identified in this Case Study as providing residential services in Puebla City for 'antisocial' individuals, including children, who were considered to have alcohol or drug addictions or were *'ingobernables'* 'uncontrollable'.

Fig. 6.3: Profiles of Puebla services for 'antisocial behaviour' including street-living children

Organizational characteristics	Remand Home	Reach Glory	Return to Life	Youth to Paradise
Organizational Affiliation	Puebla State Government Interior Ministry	CSO branch of US-based Evangelical Church	Non-registered self-help group run by ex-addicts	Non-registered self-help group run by ex-addicts
Main funding sources	Federal and State Interior Ministry budgets	Local donations – church congregation; sales of goods & services	Families of residents, ex-residents, sales of goods	Families of residents and ex-residents, services by group members
Residential services	1 remand home	5 houses: 4 for males 1 for females	1 short-stay house	1 short-stay house
Targeted Population	Young offenders & girls and boys at risk through antisocial conduct or misdemeanours	Adults and children in search of shelter, mainly men and women with addictions	Alcoholics, drug-users; male & female; all ages; uncontrollable children and youth	Alcoholics, drug-users; male & female; all ages; uncontrollable children and youth
Numbers in residence	45 currently in residence	c 100 in residence	Max 90, currently 72 in residence	Max 60, currently 60 in residence
Street experience of residents	Many have spent at least 1-2 nights on the street	c 10 are boys who have lived for some time on the street	Many adults and children have spent time on the street	Many adults and children have spent time on the street
Conditions of access	Involuntary: children serve time stipulated by Guardianship Council	Voluntary: newcomers given 15 day trial, then sign up for rehab of 6–9 months, can be open-ended	Voluntary / involuntary: 3 to 4 month periods, renewable, resident or family signs admission	Voluntary / involuntary: 3 to 4 month periods, renewable, resident or family signs admission
Access by street children	Picked up by police on street, referred by State Attorney General to Guardianship Council	Weekly night street patrols; Introduced by family or friends; Referred by Remand Home or State Welfare	Admitted by families or Remand Home; previous referrals by State and City Welfare	Admitted by families or members of the public; direct contact on street; previous referrals by State Welfare
Gatekeeper description of core of service provision	Rehabilitation to help children develop as productive members of society	No doctors, no therapies, it's all in faith in the Word of God	Rehabilitation through the recuperation of values. Addicts helping each other.	Only addicts know what other addicts are like.

Sources: Interviews with service providers, site visits and organizational documents

Services for 'street children'

Two CSOs self-identified as specializing in 'street children' and accepted referrals of street-living children from the authorities and other organizations. Fourteen (58%) of the 24 street-living children interviewed for this study had spent time in these specialized residential services for street children. Figure 6.4 profiles the 2 CSOs in Puebla City specifically targeting street children.

Fig. 6.4: Profiles of Puebla specialized services for 'street children' including street-living children

Organizational characteristics	IPODERAC – Villa Nolasco	JUCONI - Together with the Children
Organizational Affiliation	CSO – Catholic	CSO - Mexican with international long-term CSO partnerships
Main funding sources	Own businesses; Mexican and international donations	International and Mexican grants and donations
Residential services	Long-term residential community – 6 homes; on-site farm, cheese and soap producing businesses carpentry workshop	1 limited-stay home for boys; street and Remand Home outreach; reintegration services with families.
Targeted Population	Boys who have been abandoned or lived in the street, in need of long term residential care	Boys who have lived in the streets
Numbers in residence	70 boys in residence	25 boys in residence
Street experience of residents	Most have spent some time living on the streets	All have spent some time living on the streets
Conditions of access	Voluntary: child accepted if family cannot provide a home, and long term residence is required	Voluntary: a 'contract' is agreed between child and JUCONI for max 2 years residency. Family agreement is sought
Access by street children	Referrals from JUCONI (after residential service there), CSOs in Mexico City, State Welfare and Remand Home	Contact through systematic street outreach service or outreach service in Remand Home and DIF shelters, sometimes on basis of referrals
Gatekeeper description of core of service provision	Offering severely marginalized boys real opportunities to become successful adults in society	Helping each child participate fully in society by improving their family situations, their educational and working opportunities and their personal development

Sources: Interviews with service providers, site visits and organizational documents

Street children's experiences by categorization

This study found that street-living children transcend the categories to which they are ascribed by service providers. Twenty one (88%) of the 24 street children interviewed for this study had spent time in more than 1 residential service: 15 (63%) reported residential spells in at least 2 of the different 3 categories of social intervention (as 'vulnerable', 'antisocial' or 'street children'); 8 (33%) had been treated on different occasions as 'vulnerable' and 'antisocial' while 6 (25%) had been categorized as 'vulnerable', 'anti-social' and 'street children'. So while children were constructed at social programme level as vulnerable *or* antisocial *or* street children, several children in this study (25%) had been considered as vulnerable *and* antisocial *and* street children.

Categorization of a child was also found to be arbitrary. For example, 12 interviewees who had no experience of drugs or record of misdemeanours were categorized as 'vulnerable' and placed in Puebla's Welfare shelters; but 3 others (children 4, 15 and 24) with very similar profiles were assessed to be 'at risk' and assigned 'for protection' to the Remand Home, to be treated as children with 'antisocial behaviour'. Similarly, 4 children admitted as 'vulnerable' to a Welfare shelter were subsequently re-admitted as vulnerable after running away from their families or substitute care to the street (children 16, 18, 19 and 20), but 4 others in similar circumstances (children 1, 3, 6 and 10), were subsequently re-classified as 'anti-social' and referred to the Remand Home. In addition, 8 interviewees were referred by the Remand Home and 1 by the Children's Shelter to the CSO JUCONI, implying re-categorization of these children in some way from 'antisocial' or 'vulnerable' to 'street children'. Finally, as a 14 year old heavy alcohol user, Berenice was an unusual resident in the DIF children's shelter, but by reason of giving birth to and nursing a baby she was classified as 'vulnerable' rather than as displaying antisocial behaviour.

The changing and arbitrary nature of categorizations of children who have lived in the street demonstrates that the socially constructed labels 'vulnerable', 'antisocial' and 'street children', while possibly useful for legal or social policy purposes, did not describe street-living children's lives. Crucially however, the label assigned to a street-living child was found to affect the nature of the services offered to him or to her, with implications for his or her access to rights and family.

Residential services for street children: access to rights

Chapter 2's international literature review highlighted approaches identified in social interventions towards street children, as correctional, rehabilitative and human-rights

based. Mexican law and social policy objectives pursue the human rights-based approach, and in this section I explore street-living children's access to their rights in social interventions. Children accessed their basic material rights (food and shelter) in all social interventions, despite variable quality of that access, but other rights were less secure. This section focuses on children's experiences of access to 2 areas of social policy found to be of relevance to children's on-street experiences and discussed in Chapter 4: education, as a social policy area to which all Mexican children are entitled under law to access; and drug rehabilitation, as a broad-based social policy area found to be of relevance to characteristics of the researched population. Access to basic education and drug rehabilitation are children's rights established in the UN CRC (Articles 28 and 33).

Access to education

At the time of their interviews in residential settings, 13 of the 24 children were enrolled in full-time formal education (see Table 6.1 for educational access by categorization). These 13 school placements were in Compensatory Schools provided by Puebla State Education Ministry for children who had fallen behind their peer groups to complete formal primary and secondary schooling to earn their basic education certificates. Twelve were resident in CSO social interventions for 'street children' and 1 was resident (with his mother) in Puebla City's Welfare night shelter, as a 'vulnerable' child.

An additional 6 children were in non-formal schooling, taking classes on-site in their residential institutions: 3 in Puebla State's Remand Home and 3 in State Welfare's Children's Shelter. However, these classes did not have formal education validity: Remand Home schooling was provided by the National Institute for Adult Education

(INEA) which was not mandated to provide education or primary certificates to children; and Welfare Shelter education had not been formalized because the shelters were for temporary residency not exceeding 3 months. Finally, 4 children receiving no schooling were resident in institutions for antisocial behaviour. Two of these were resident in a CSO, 2 in a self-help group, both designed to address addictions.

Table 6.1: Education in residential social interventions

Organizations by Service orientation	Children's enrolment in education in their current institution			
	Formal schooling	Non-formal schooling	Secondary (basic) schooling completed	No schooling
Vulnerable children	1	3	0	0
Antisocial behaviour	0	3	0	4
Street Children	12	0	1	0
Total children	13	6	1	4

Source: interviews with children and service providers

Categorization as 'street children' as explored with the 24 street-living children was found to provide a more secure route for children into formal education. Meanwhile, street-living children being treated for 'anti-social behaviour' offered, at best, non-formal classes without valid education certificates. And only under exceptional circumstances (a child resident with his mother) did a child categorized as 'vulnerable' access formal certificated education. Bearing in mind that this study's sample of children is small and non-representative, the findings have some validity because the educational access offered was dependent not on the child's characteristics but on his or her categorization for purposes of social intervention, with educational access granted by service providers. Thus, a street-living child categorized as 'antisocial' in Puebla was less able to access formal education because institutions for antisocial behaviour did not provide such opportunities, while the same child categorized as 'street child' had a greater likelihood of entering formal education because of policies adopted by the 'street children' CSOs.

Access to drug rehabilitation

Drug (including alcohol) use was reported in Chapter 4 as a common coping strategy employed by street-living children. Twelve of the 24 interviewees had used drugs, with 10 recognizing heavy use - all of whom had started their drug use in the street. Typically: *'I was on the street from when I was about 7... so I started drinking then... I was with older guys - we had a lot of laughs... we drank beer and spirits, anything they brought really, I'd just have some of whatever was going'* (Ricardo, child 14) and:

> *'Well, I spent money first on food and then later on glue, when I started to sniff*
> *glue - I started that when I hitched up with other guys doing it and I asked for*
> *some of what they had and tried it and I didn't even know what it was and I*
> *started like that.'* (Edgar, child 23)

Interviewed children experienced 2 kinds of therapeutic support in their residential interventions: periodic time-bound sessions with professional psychologists or psychiatrists over the course of residency; and immersion in therapeutic environments for the course of residency. These therapeutic approaches dictated the approach to the particular area of drug rehabilitation. Children's access to therapy was mediated by the social intervention in which they were resident, shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Access to therapy in residential social interventions

Organizations by Service orientation	Children's dominant experience of therapy within their current institution		
	Professional sessions	Therapeutic environment	No therapy
Vulnerable children	1	0	3
Antisocial behaviour	3	4	0
Street Children	0	13	0
Total children	4	17	3

Source: interviews with children and service providers

Seventeen (67%) of children were living in a therapeutic environment at the time of interview; 4 had received professional support periodically during their current residential programme and the remaining 3 reported receiving no therapy in their

institution. DIF Children's Shelter did provide professional therapy for resident children but only 1 of the 3 interviewees had accessed this support during their residency and the 1 resident in the Puebla City DIF night shelter had received no therapeutic support.

Ten of the 24 interviewed children, including both girls, self-identified as heavy drug users. At the time of interview: 5 were resident in social interventions for antisocial behaviour (2 in the Remand Home; 2 in Reach Glory CSO for addictions; 1 in Return to Life self-help group for addictions); 4 were resident in CSOs for street children; and 1 was in the DIF Children's shelter.

Therapeutic emphasis was varied among the social interventions for anti-social behaviour. Residents in Reach Glory CSO experienced a therapeutic environment centred on community prayer and vocational training, in which service providers aimed both to keep residents busy, including interviewees Daniel and Guillermo (children 21 and 22), with practical manual work such as carpentry and painting, and to encourage spiritual healing.

> *'First we provide them with a home. Love, they don't feel the love of their parents, sometimes they're orphans. They haven't found a way; they don't know what path to take. And here we give them a sense of belonging, direction. The belonging that we have is the truth of Jesus Christ'* (Father Tomás, Deputy Leader, Reach Glory CSO, interview of 31/05/05).

In self-help groups, children participated in daily therapeutic community meetings modelled on Alcoholics Anonymous international system, in which residents acted as 'witnesses', recounting their own stories, gaining strength from sharing and listening to the testimonials of other residents. Children's views of their experiences in self-help

groups were unrelentingly negative. '*…in an Annex you feel bad because it's for drunks not for children, it's for adults – it's scary. They accept children too but they have you there all day, locked inside, they don't take you out, you have to sit down all the time. […] I hated being there.*' (Abraham, child 3)

> *'All you do all day is listen to the talks – the experiences of the others – how they were living, how they got through withdrawal, all that. […] You see people that use paint thinner have nasty withdrawals, they come to the Annex hallucinating and they go all rigid, and they hit them on the soles of their feet to help them. I didn't arrive like that, so they didn't do that to me.'*
>
> (Rafa, child 2)

But this matched self-help group leaders' belief that conquering addiction was very tough, required immense commitment from the individual and needed intensive support of other addicts in an uncompromising environment of honesty.

> *'…when they realize they can't fool us, because we're all addicts here, and they can't fool us and suddenly they realize they've nowhere else to go, they can't keep fooling themselves. And that's when rehabilitation really starts…'* (Jose Luis Zeta, leader, Youth to Paradise, interview of 27/04/05)

Treatment for drug addiction was provided in the Remand Home by psychologists in individual and group sessions on a weekly basis, but while advocating the importance of professional support for children, staff made no claims to 'cure' children's substance abuse.

Children resident in the 2 CSOs for 'street children' experienced integrated approaches to emotional healing, including individual, group and family counselling, and participation in children's assemblies, treating drug use as one among various

symptoms of wider emotional distress. Service providers focused on helping children to reduce stress, manage conflict and develop emotional strength:

> 'street children can be deeply stressed, pretty intolerant and get restless very quickly, so you've got to help them and the other residents work on their social skills in the House and keep each one occupied as they settle in – otherwise you'll lose them to the streets again before you can start anything meaningful, especially if they have heavy drug use' (Albino Baltazar, head of JUCONI house, 08/10/04)

The specialist CSO institutions recognized that they lacked tools to deal effectively with addictions:

> `For example in the case of Toño [child 11], he has an addiction we could call 'light' –so he comes into JUCONI House and he can, if he's kept busy and given good developmental support, forget about drugs. But for Hector [child 6], who has a medium to heavy addiction, he goes into crisis when he stops taking drugs. He loves sniffing glue, has no willpower, and finds it much more difficult. He needs a more in-depth service and for longer. So for Toño, the Youth Integration Centre (CIJ) is workable – that's an out-patient service for addicts who live at home usually - and you go for an hour starting at one day a week – well Toño could manage that [...] But for Hector, that kind of 'light' treatment, when he has to come home to JUCONI House where he's living with other children who have their own difficulties, it's just not workable. When Hector goes into crisis he needs specialists round the clock working with him. That's hard for a programme like ours, which has more than 20 other boys all going through complex developmental problems in the same space' (Lulú Perez, JUCONI health specialist 13/12/05)

Similarly to the finding above on access to education, access to therapy and the form it took was dependent not on the child's particular situation but on his or her categorization. At the extremes, a child with an alcohol addiction (Berenice, child 18) received no therapy for her alcohol use because of her classification as 'vulnerable' while Roberto (child 24) who had never taken drugs received therapy designed for drug addicts, because he had been admitted to a self-help group on the grounds of 'uncontrollable' behaviour.

Street children's access to rights: a summary

Taken together, this section's findings suggest that discretionary categorization of a child who had lived in the streets as 'vulnerable', 'antisocial' or 'street child' affected his or her access to rights and the form of service received. Street-living children categorized as vulnerable, were unlikely to access education or to receive any kind of therapy, including drug rehabilitation. Children categorized as 'street children' accessed formal education and a therapeutic environment with access to (limited) drug rehabilitation services. Children categorized as antisocial had no access to formal education but generally high access to therapy aimed at conquering addictions.

6.3   Social interventions and family reintegration

Chapter 5 discussed family perspectives on social interventions. This section explores service providers' approaches to family reintegration and children's experiences of these approaches. Three distinct service approaches to family reintegration were discernible in this study: social interventions which did not seek to return street children to their families; those aimed at child rehabilitation followed by a return to

their families; and those geared to rehabilitation of child and family, followed by a child's return to his or her family. These differences in approach to families matched the differences in children's categorization, except for 'vulnerable' children for whom governmental and non-governmental service providers evidenced distinct approaches (see Figure 6.5 for different approaches). Care services for 'street children' aimed to rehabilitate both children and families, while social interventions for antisocial behaviour focused exclusively on rehabilitation of children before returning them to their families.

Fig. 6.5: Institutional approaches to street children's families

Organizations by Service orientation		Do not return street children to family	Rehabilitate street child, then return to family	Rehabilitate street child and family, then return
Vulnerable children	Government	-	X	-
	CSO	X	-	-
Antisocial behaviour	Government	-	X	-
	CSO	-	X	-
	Self-help groups	-	X	-
Street Children	CSO	-	-	X

Source: interviews with service providers, cross-checked in interviews with children

Rehabilitation of child followed by return to family

Most service providers described their social interventions as focusing on child rehabilitation, followed by a return home to the family. Government service providers for both vulnerable and antisocial children expressed their social interventions as favouring children returning to their family homes, in line with federal law and Pueblan State policies promoting family integration: '*We always search for relatives with whom to reintegrate the child and only if that's not possible do we give support so that he or she goes into a shelter for specialist treatment.*' (Rozzina Dumit, Puebla State Welfare Children's Attorney General, interview of 14/06/05).

Contact with parents of street-living children admitted to government Welfare shelters and the Remand Home followed a similar pattern: initial contact was made with families to explain the reasons why their children had been detained and to gauge 'fitness' of parents to assume responsibility for their children; parents were encouraged to visit their children during institutional residency and invited to attend training courses on parenting and family integration provided by Welfare; parents who were both willing and assessed as 'fit' parents signed an acceptance of formal responsibility when their children were returned to them; social workers were required to pay subsequent monitoring visits to families to check on children's situations.

In this case study, all interviewed children who had been returned to their families by institutions for vulnerable children (7 or 29% of children) or for antisocial behaviour (11 or 46% of children) had subsequently returned to living on the streets (see **Annex 5** for residential experiences by child). Government service providers expressed concern about the limitations of their own approaches for street-living children: *'here* [in Welfare shelters] *we do the most important therapies with critical children, including street children – we work on self-esteem and self concept and everything, but then we return them to the same family nucleus and, well, everything you work on falls apart…'* (Carmen Lastra, Head of Psychology, Puebla DIF Shelters, interview of 11/05/05). *'all we can do in the end with their families is put the fear of God into them and try to get them to understand they have a responsibility towards their kids […] But you know these families are often the cause of their children's problems, so that's difficult'* (Monica Ruiz, Sub-director, Puebla Remand Home, interview of 17/05/05).

Interviewed residents in CSOs and self-help groups for antisocial behaviour were also subject to child-focused rehabilitation processes aimed at changing attitudes and

behaviours that were deemed to have made life unbearable for their families. The aim of residential interventions was for children to confront and overcome their addictions and lack of self-control, building the self-discipline they would need to return home to their families as rehabilitated, although no interviewed child professed to have benefited directly from this approach.

Rehabilitation of child with no return to families

Three Pueblan CSOs for vulnerable children self-identified for this study as including street-living children among their residents. Three interviewed children reported having lived in such a CSO in Puebla and 1 interviewed child reported having lived in 2 of the 3 CSOs identified. However, none of these 3 CSOs permitted interviews of current residents, although their service providers provided interviews and allowed on-site observational visits for this study. All 3 CSOs confirmed that they did not seek to return street children to their parents and were not obliged by law to contact them. Parents of street-living children were perceived as unfit and damaging to their children's development:

> '...street children have been so badly damaged by their families. We've had burnt, battered, exploited and neglected boys in here. Their families abuse them or have no time for them. Most important, there's no love for them in their families. That's what we give children here – love and hope for the future. Their parents are in no condition to give them that.' (Father Rosalio, Head of Calasanz Homes, interview of 10/02/05).

Rehabilitation of child and family

CSOs for 'street children' in Puebla evidenced a third approach in which families were conceptualized as being in need of parallel rehabilitation to enable them to change

from 'unfit' to 'fit' parents able to support their children. This approach valued family reintegration for street-living children but assessed children's rehabilitation on its own as insufficient, since it did not address home-based causes of a child leaving home for the streets:

> *'It's not easy, but by helping parents and other family members learn ways to be more supportive of their child, the child can at least develop positive relationships with his family. And our experience shows that's what street children crave. The jackpot is getting children back home into supportive family environments. Sometimes we can't manage that, but we can at least get children and families into more constructive relationships where they can visit each other.'* (Alison Lane, Director General, JUCONI CSO, interview of 26/01/05)

Under this approach, family reintegration relies on rehabilitation of both child and family prior to a return home.

Children in the 2 street children institutions had regular contact with their families from an early point in their services: 12 of the 13 interviewees currently in Puebla's street children institutions reported making regular visits to members of their families, either for day trips or weekend stays. All 13 children reported participating in sessions with staff and family members to discuss home conditions, plan home visits and agree what improvements children and families would make.

Findings on approaches to family reintegration

In this study, street-living children characterized as vulnerable and resident in a CSO, received child-focused rehabilitation aimed at building a new life away from their original family. Children characterized as vulnerable and resident in a government

shelter did not receive rehabilitation but were encouraged to return home. Children categorized as antisocial received child-focused rehabilitation aimed at their returning home as changed individuals. Children characterized as street children received rehabilitation alongside their families and were encouraged to return home afterwards.

6.4   Referrals of street children between social interventions

Most interviewed children had maintained contact with their families while on the street (as described in Chapter 5) and service providers were committed to policies aimed at family reintegration, but several street-living children had been referred between residential social interventions instead of being returned home. Five types of institutional referral had been experienced in Puebla by the 24 children interviewed in this study, outlined in Table 6.3. Five (31%) of 16 total referrals were made within categorization ('vulnerable' children to another organization for vulnerable children, antisocial to antisocial, and 'street children' to street children CSOs); and 11 involved a change of categorization of children, from vulnerable to antisocial or from antisocial to street children CSOs. Most commonly experienced, by 9 children (38% of children interviewed), was referral from Remand Home to CSO for street children.

Table 6.3: Referrals of street children between residential interventions

Referrals FROM organizations by Service orientation		Numbers of referred street children received by Organizations by Service Orientation			
		Vulnerable children	Antisocial behaviour	Street Children	Total received
Vulnerable children	Government	1	2	0	3
	CSO	0	0	0	0
Antisocial behaviour	Government	0	2	9	11
	CSO	0	0	0	0
Street Children		0	0	2	2
Total referrals		1	4	11	16

Source: interviews with service providers plus institutional records

Only in 5 of the 16 referrals did children remain within their original categorization: Cásares (child 5) was referred as an abandoned child from a short-term Welfare

shelter for vulnerable children to a long-term CSO care home for vulnerable adolescents; Juan (child 16) and Raul (child 17) were both referred from one short-term residency CSO for street children to another equipped for long term residency in the absence of 'fit' parents; Edgar (23) and Roberto (24) were referred from the Remand Home, apparently with the support of the children's families, to a self-help group for drug and alcohol addictions, called Return to Life.

Two children admitted to Welfare as vulnerable children were subsequently referred to the Remand Home for antisocial behaviour: Cásares (child 5) and Pedro (child 1). Service providers attributed these referrals to the children having run away from a Welfare shelter, which meant they were uncontrollable and therefore in need of protection through the Remand Home. Thus, running away from a shelter had in itself been interpreted by Welfare service providers as antisocial behaviour.

Finally, 9 interviewed children had been referred from the Remand Home to a CSO for street children. Intentions behind these 9 transfers were qualitatively different: under a formal agreement between the Remand Home and CSO JUCONI, those 'street children' identified as in need of further rehabilitation were referred from the Remand Home to JUCONI's residential care home. Such an agreement recognized that, in the eyes of service providers, street children required a longer period and possibly a more targeted rehabilitation than the Remand Home could provide. However, children's and parents' consent was necessary for a referral to take place.

Children's experiences of referrals

Exploring the 3 cases of referral from service providers for vulnerable children, this study found that none followed Welfare's stated policy of returning children to their

families. One child (Cásares, child 5) was referred from a temporary Welfare shelter (city dormitory) to a long-term CSO for vulnerable children, but left shortly after when the CSO (Solidarity with Adolescents) did not support him in his search for his brothers. Welfare knew Cásares had at least 2 brothers in other institutions in Puebla City and had helped him to locate one brother in CSO Calasanz Homes, but had referred him for residency to a CSO which was not geared to family reintegration. Welfare's account of this and other transfers suggested a Welfare department under pressure to make quick rather than appropriate transfers, in which CSOs for vulnerable children were a default option:

> 'We try to refer street children to IPODERAC and JUCONI [CSOs for street children], which in my opinion are the most organized institutions. Their procedures are very clear but their entry processes can take a long time. That's a problem for us, because under the law we have to refer children really quickly. The institutions that accept children really quickly are Solidarity with Adolescents and Calasanz Homes. Although it's not straightforward: I took a very violent child to Calasanz one time and he started kicking everything to pieces. Soon all the residents were reacting violently – so I can understand the difficulties a quick handover can cause, but what was important to me at the time was the boy – what could I do with him...? I would have been the happiest man if IPODERAC or JUCONI would have lent me a hand, but because I had to work fast, well - I had to go begging to Solidarity [a Pueblan CSO for vulnerable boys].' (Israel Gonzaga, Puebla City DIF Coordinator, Street Children Programme, interview of 20/09/04).

In turn, the CSOs for vulnerable children were often uneasy about the speed of Welfare referrals of street-living children:

'They [Welfare Department officials] *just send us a report, they tell us the child's situation and they ask for our support by accepting this child. And that's it. And for a street child who's not being sent to us because he wants to be here, well he's not likely to stay is he?'* (Jenny Azuara, administrator, Living Hope CSO, interview of 21/09/04).

The 2 referrals of vulnerable children to the Remand Home for 'antisocial' behaviour, made on the grounds that they had run away from a Welfare shelter, illuminated a decision-making process aimed at containing children, rather than promoting family integration or finding long term substitute care.

An additional 2 referrals of children categorized as 'antisocial' between the Remand Home and self-help group Return to Life were not made to pursue family reintegration directly or for placement in a substitute home, but to target rehabilitation for children assessed to have a drug addiction (Edgar, 23) or be uncontrollable (Roberto, 24). Described earlier in Chapter 5.5, Roberto repeated several times during the course of his case study interview that he had never taken drugs:

'They [police] found us in the town square, we were outside the video arcade and Edgar, Worm and my brother were sniffing glue. And I was play-fighting with the Worm so the glue smell stuck on my clothes, when I don't even take drugs or anything. [...] No, no, I don't do drugs [...] Then the police saw us and asked us what we were doing. Nothing, we were just playing, but they came up and smelt us and checked us and found the Worm's PVC bottle... They took all 6 of us and they were doing the papers and right to the end I told them I didn't do drugs. But they said, we can't let you go because there's no-one at your house and they said, we could say you were sniffing a bit of glue, so then we could take you to the Remand Home and then your family can come

for you. And so I said yes. But they brought me here [self-help group] *instead on 2ⁿᵈ May. But that same day, it was Monday, 2ⁿᵈ May, my mum was going to go for me, but instead they brought me here... the Remand Home guards, they brought me. [...] And they brought all the others - Edgar, my brother David, Worm, Bernabe and Abelino.[...]'* (Roberto, child 24)

Involuntary referrals to self-help groups by the Remand Home and Welfare were not uncommon according to service providers:

'We get children from the State Police and the Remand Home. They are children that leave their homes and live in the wasteland behind the markets [...] *At the moment we have 9* [children] *from the Remand Home. [...] The official in charge of sentencing to the Remand Home talks to their families. What happens is that sometimes their offence is not serious. Maybe their offence was just to be picked up on the street, so it's like a misdemeanour. And so they talk to the family and they do some psychological tests and they discover that the child is contaminated by drug addiction and they send him here...'* (Gustavo Taja, leader of Return to Life self-help group, interview of 26/05/05).

The case study found that street children as young as 9 years of age had been admitted to several self-help groups in Puebla City, including street children referred by Puebla State and Puebla City Welfare Departments:

'I started to work with the DIF here, here in 25th [name of the street in which Puebla State Welfare's mental health department is located] *and they brought me children of 10, 12 and 15 years of age who had lived on the street, sleeping rough, you know. [...] The official in the DIF signed the paperwork, then it was*

Marisela. Before it was Silvia Carvajal, who is in 17th [street] *now – I worked a lot with her.'* (Emma Taja, Founder and Leader of self-help group Return to Life, interview of 17/06/05)

Referrals to self-help groups were geared to family reintegration.

The 9 referrals from the Remand Home to 'street children' CSO JUCONI were voluntary admissions, in which children participated in an outreach service conducted by the CSO in the Remand Home, sometimes lasting several weeks:

'Ernesto [JUCONI street educator] *showed me photos of children camping and doing sports and things – and I knew some of the kids so that made me trust him* [...] *and then I visited JUCONI House before I went there so I knew what it was like* [...] *and I had to agree to the rules of the House and everything before I went'* (Raul, child 17)

During the outreach period, each child decided whether or not he wanted to be referred and the CSO assessed whether or not it was able to accept the child:

'We have certain criteria for entrants to JUCONI House which we have developed from our own experience – we'll only accept children whom we think we have the tools to help. So we have to assess the degree of difficulty if you like for us in working with each child – a 10 year old who hasn't been long on the streets, doesn't take drugs and hasn't been in other institutions is obviously going to be more responsive to our help than a 15 year old who's in the Remand Home for the second time and has a drug problem etc. And then we have to look at the mix of children already in the House – is the potential new entrant going to fit in well? (Alison Lane, Director General, CSO JUCONI, interview of 09/09/04).

At the time of interview, all 9 children referred to JUCONI CSO by the Remand Home were in contact with their families and 7 were engaged in rehabilitation services for both child and family, in the expectation of being reintegrated into their families.

Two further children were referred by 1 CSO for street children to another when, as a result of rehabilitation services for child and family, the 2 children opted to live away from their families and were referred voluntarily to a CSO for street children equipped for long-term residency as a substitute home.

Findings on referrals of street children

This study found that children's categorization for social intervention purposes, as vulnerable, antisocial or street child, affected the nature of their referrals between social interventions. Most referrals in this study were made from organizations for antisocial behaviour and were aimed at prolonging children's rehabilitation through a more targeted phase of intervention, before a return to the family home. Referrals for children categorized as vulnerable were less predictable, with no clear evidence of aiming for family reintegration. Only the referrals to interventions for street children were voluntary admissions.

6.5   Street children as 'runaways' from social interventions

All Puebla City service providers interviewed for this study identified street-living children as children more likely to 'escape' from care than other vulnerable or antisocial children. Gatekeepers frequently attributed street children's running away to an internalized normalization of flight, following years of running away from their families,

in which running away becomes a habitual response to crisis whether at home or in care.

In this study, incidence of street children running away from social interventions varied by children's categorization, as shown in Table 6.4 below: more interviewed street children had run away from institutions for vulnerable children (77%) than from those for antisocial behaviour (33%) and fewer (21%) children had returned to the street after services for 'street children'.

Table 6.4: Interviewed children in social interventions – incidence of 'runaways'

Service orientation	Number of children who ran away from a service	Total number of children who received a service	% of children who ran away from the service provided
Vulnerable children	10	13	77
Antisocial behaviour	6	18	33
Street Children	3	14	21
Totals	19	34*	

Source: interviews with children, cross referenced with service provider records
* Although the total number of children interviewed was 24, several children experienced more than 1 type of social intervention.

This finding, however, does not take account of the reduced opportunities for escape from social interventions for antisocial conduct where guards, secure installations and locked doors prevent children's escape. None of the 15 children who had been residents in the Remand Home had escaped from there and only 2 (20%) of the 10 interned in self-help group Annexes had run away. However, analysis of the incidence of these children running away after being returned to their families on service completion shows that all 11 interviewed children who had been locked into a secure residential service for antisocial conduct and had then been returned to his or her family, subsequently ran back to the streets. Table 6.5 shows incidence in this study, by categorization, of children running away from care and subsequently from the family home if returned there by their service providers:

Table 6.5: Interviewed children in services – incidence of 'runaways' from services and post-service home placements

Service orientation	Children who ran away from a service at least once	Children who ran away from home again after being returned home	Children who ran away from care and/or after being returned home	Runaways / Children in social interventions	
				No.	%
Vulnerable	10	4*	12	12/13	92
Antisocial	6	11**	12	12/18	67
Street Children	3	0	3	3/14	21
Totals	19	15	34		

Source: interviews with children, cross referenced with service provider records
* 2 of these children had previously run away from a service for vulnerable children
** 5 of these children had previously run away from a service for antisocial behaviour

Most children when categorized as vulnerable had run away from their services and/or subsequent home placements (92%), while the majority of children when in services for antisocial behaviour had run away again after being returned home (67%). These initial findings suggest that children categorized as vulnerable and antisocial were likely to return to the streets either while in care or after a return home, while institutions for children characterized as street children had some success in preventing returns to the street.

Children's perceptions of running away

Children's expressions of their reasons for running away from services are subject to the same room for error and bias as those expressed for running away from home discussed in Chapter 5. However, in the same way, their perceptions have some validity when triangulated with behavioural evidence. In interview, children's explanations of their reasons for running away from services focused not on attractions of the street but rather on problems with other children and missing their families.

> 'I escaped because well... you know what the kids are like there... I had some trouble with the other kids.' (Oscar, child 20)

> 'I wandered around for half a year on the street and from there I went to Living Hope [CSO] and from there I escaped several times. [...] I wasn't badly

treated, but I didn't like some things... there were too many of us and I was a tearaway, so I didn't like the control... [...] And finally they told me I couldn't keep running away and coming back, so when I went the last time I knew they wouldn't take me back, so I didn't go' (Roberto, child 9)

'I wanted to see my mum – I hadn't seen her in ages and I couldn't stop thinking about how she was getting on.' (Guillermo, child 22)

'They wouldn't let me search for my younger brothers. I knew they were in homes in Puebla – from Miguel [my older brother] *– and I wanted to find them but they wouldn't let me, so I ran away.'* (Cásares, child 5)

This intimates that triggers causing street-living children to run away from care may be more related to dynamics in social interventions and their approaches to families than to attractions of the street. Such an account would be consistent with high rates of running from services which do not encourage family contact (those for vulnerable children). However, more behavioural evidence is needed to balance children's perceptions. One such behavioural facet open for exploration is length of time spent, voluntarily, in social interventions.

Time spent in social interventions

Insights into street children's propensity to run away can be found by exploring the lengths of time interviewed children spend in social interventions by their categorization and whether they were admitted voluntarily or not. Table 6.6 shows the length of time children had spent in their most recent services by type of admission. **Annex 6** provides a list of case study children by the number of times they wee admitted to different types of residential social intervention.

Table 6.6: Average length of time spent by interviewed children in their most recent service by type of admission and service orientation

Type of Admission	Specialist institutions for street children		Vulnerable children institutions		Antisocial conduct institutions		Totals	
	No. of street children	Average time in months	No. of street children	Average time in months	No. of street children	Average time in months	No. of street children	Average time in months
Involun-tary	0	-	3	2	6	3	9	3
Voluntary	13	18	1	12	1	12	15	17
Total	13	18	4	4	7	4	24	12

Source: interviews with children, cross referenced with service provider records, see Annex 5

Children who chose to be admitted to their current services (voluntary admissions) had remained in these services for considerable periods of time, averaging 17 months at the time of interview. These times are substantially longer than would be reasonable to meet children's immediate needs and suggest that children are not leaving services because they are attracted to street life. All 15 children who had been admitted voluntarily to their current services had run away from other services, or had run away from home back to the streets after being placed in care. Raul (child 17), has been living in his current placement for 2 years. Sentenced twice as a young offender to the Remand Home, and a heavy alcohol user, Raul had run away from home to the street on many occasions before being referred voluntarily from the Remand Home to CSO JUCONI, and after a year in JUCONI opting for a placement in CSO IPODERAC:

> 'At the age of 11, 12, I was in the Remand Home – for the second time. Then JUCONI gave me an invitation to change my life, to support me through school, give me a place to live, 3 meals a day... And in return I had to work hard at school and make some real big changes. So of course I took it' (Raul, child 17)

Cásares (child 5) had spent the past 2 years in CSO JUCONI, his 7th institutional placement, after running away from 2 of his 3 involuntary placements and from 2 of the 4 services to which he had been admitted voluntarily. Rather than indicating a desire for street life, Cásares reported his moves from institution to institution as

motivated more by a desire to find and reunite his brothers. He reported running away from prior services because they did not allow or help him to find his brothers but had stayed 2 years in his current service because he had been able to pursue lost family contacts:

> 'Even here [JUCONI] I only see my brother Felix, my aunt and my 4 – no 3 – cousins because 1 left last month to the US. But I get to phone Miguel [older brother] in the US and my mother, and we tracked down Alejandro [remaining younger brother]'(Cásares, child 5)

A current resident in CSO Reach Glory for antisocial behaviour, Daniel (child 21) stressed the importance of voluntary admission to his staying off the streets:

> 'The first time they [my family] brought me here. But as I didn't really understand and there was another person in charge, I left. But I came back again at my own decision. I've been here for a year now, but I was here for 6 months last time. But after I got home, well quite a while after I went back to drugging myself just for a week. I mean I left it [drug use], because they told me and told me and so I left it, but like I was a rebel, well sometimes I'm still a rebel, but I came back and now I've been here again just coming up to a year. And I feel good. I'm not anxious now, I don't get cravings, my body doesn't demand it any more.'(Daniel, child 21)

Findings about street children as runaways from care

Findings of this study suggest that even after repeated incidents of running away, children ran away from care not as a habitual response to crisis but rather in response to having been forcibly admitted to those services or to the nature of their rehabilitation, including service approach to families. Several children in this study who were repeat runaways were found to settle for periods of at least 1 to 2 years in residential social interventions under conditions of voluntary admission, with a rehabilitation process and family contact encouraged.

Multiple entries to social interventions and 'immunity' to care

Street children in this study showed high incidence of admission to different social interventions: 20 interviewees (over 80%) had been admitted to at least 2 different residential services and 6 (25%) interviewees had spent time in at between 4 and 6 residential institutions (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Number of times interviewed children were admitted to residential social interventions

	Number of institutional admissions							
Children	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**Total no. of children**
Number of interviewed children	3	3	8	3	2	3	2	**24**
Number of children admitted to *different* institutions	4	6	8	1	2	3	0	**24**

Source: interviews with children, cross referenced with service provider records

This data could be interpreted as a sign of children using services as convenient, leaving when immediate needs have been satisfied. And several children reported meeting up again in different institutions:

> '.... with Juan and Hector... because I knew them in the street and also in the Remand Home, oh... and in the DIF.... all going round and round.... And in Reach Glory [CSO], yes Juan and Hector and me, we were.... it looks like we were going round in circles. [...] I would leave and another would come in.

Then he'd leave and the other would come in. And that's how we were, going

round in circles, until we met up again here [in JUCONI CSO]' (Rafa, child 2)

However Table 6.6 shows that children voluntarily admitted to their current social

interventions had spent on average 17 months there, a much longer length of time

than would be consistent with meeting their immediate needs or being attracted to

street life.

Some authors have asserted that there are so many CSOs in Mexico City whose street

educators work independently of each other that they '*compete to gain children's*

attention' (Villamil, 2001: 37). As a consequence of such competition, street children

in Mexico's capital city are said to sample different services in order to meet their short

term practical needs, returning to the streets once these needs have been satisfied.

Thus the ability of services to respond to children's long-term strategic needs has been

compromised. In this way, street children are considered to have become 'immune' to

service-providing institutions (Griesbach and Sauri, 1997).

Street children's notoriety for repeatedly running away is taken as key evidence of this

'immunity' to services. Under this perspective, street children choose to live in the

street, using services to meet immediate needs such as medical care, protection,

shelter from bad weather and running away after a few days or weeks once those

needs have been satisfied; enrolling in another service when another immediate need

emerges, from which they will also run back to the streets once that need has been

met. Discussion of street children's 'immunity' to services assumes that children are

free to make choices about entry into and exit from care. Findings from this case

study presented in Table 6.6 about the lengths of time children stayed in their

(voluntarily entered) current service does not support the idea of street children

becoming immune to services in Puebla City. Taking together the evidence of multiple entries to social interventions with their long stays in their current services and children's own expressions of their reasons for running away, this study's findings suggest children are not 'immune' to care, but rather move between institutions in search of services which meet longer term personal development needs and contacts with family.

6.6 Conclusion

Street-living children's access to service provision through social interventions was mediated by ways in which they were characterized by service providers. The categorization process was however non-standardized, with the exception of clarity around the legally defined concept of 'young offender', and was therefore reliant on discretionary assessments of gatekeepers responsible for allocating children to services. In effect, individual street-living children (round pegs) were 'reconstructed' to fit the available social interventions (square holes) conceived for 'vulnerable' children, 'antisocial behaviour' or 'street children'. A street-living girl with an alcohol addiction who had a baby could, at 14 years of age, be positioned as 'vulnerable' and remitted to Welfare's children's shelter for 0 to 12 year olds (Berenice, child 18); a street-living 14 year old boy with no history of drug use or other misdemeanours could, however, be constructed as 'anti-social' and remitted for protection to the Remand Home on the strength of running away from a Welfare shelter (Cásares, child 5). While flexibility in the labeling of children who had lived on the streets could be argued to represent sensitivity to individual children's circumstances, case study findings suggest that dominant sensitivity was towards existing social interventions. Children's

labels were changed to enable them to be fitted into available social interventions; but behind the label a real child's characteristics and circumstances may be at odds with the services provided.

Conceptualization of a street-living child as '*vulnerable*', as manifesting '*anti-social behaviour*' or as '*street child*' for social intervention purposes was found to carry implications for that child's access to his or her rights and for the approach taken to his or her family relationships. Children's access to basic education, as a universal right established under the UN CRC and a Mexican social policy goal was affected by their categorization. Street-living children considered as 'antisocial' were unable to secure access to formal education, while those categorized as 'street children' could be confident of securing such access. Access to therapy in general and drug rehabilitation therapy in particular was also dependent on children's classification: 'antisocial behaviour' guaranteed access to one of several therapeutic options available (including, bizarrely, the use of drug rehabilitation therapy for children who had not used drugs), but 'vulnerability' did not secure access to therapy.

Children's experiences of family reintegration, a stated social policy goal for children in Puebla, were also mixed. Street-living children categorized as 'vulnerable' could be returned home by Welfare shelters while those in CSO social interventions discouraged family contact. Children categorized as 'antisocial' received child-focused therapeutic rehabilitation aimed at children being reintegrated, with modified behaviour, into the family home. Children characterized as 'street children', however, received child-and-family focused therapeutic rehabilitation aimed at children being reintegrated with modified behaviour into a modified family home. Social interventions designed for 'street children' matched social policy goals of family integration more closely than

those designed for street-living children classified as vulnerable or displaying antisocial behaviour.

Length of time spent in social interventions, type of access (voluntary versus involuntary) and the nature of access to therapeutic services also provided clues to understanding why street-living children ran away from services. Street-living children categorized as 'vulnerable' were more likely to run away from services; those categorized as 'antisocial' were likely to run away from home again after completing a spell in residential care; but those categorized as 'street children' were less likely to run away from care. This finding suggests that social interventions involving a therapeutic process involving child and family may reduce children's stress and family-related anxieties and thereby lower incidence of running away. Findings about referrals between social interventions also suggest service provider recognition that residential processes targeting 'street children' prevent street-living children from running away repeatedly from home.

This chapter's findings suggest that street-living children continued to run away from care less as a habitual response to crisis or pulled by attractions of the street but in response to the nature of access to and experience of social intervention provided. Repeat runaways in this study were found to have settled for at least 1-2 years in social interventions under conditions of: voluntary admission; therapeutic process; contact with families. This chapter's findings argue that street children in Puebla did not show symptoms of 'immunity' to services as is speculated to have occurred elsewhere, but instead ran away from social interventions which failed to respond to their therapeutic needs and did not facilitate contact with their families.

Chapter 7

Street Children: from Social Policy to Practice

7.1 Introduction

As part of this thesis' response to the research question *How are social policies for children formulated, implemented and experienced by street-living children in Puebla City?* this Chapter explores how social policies for children were experienced in practice by street-living children in Puebla City during the 2002-2005 period. Chapter 3's discussion of social policies and programmes for street children in Puebla City is re-visited here in light of case study children's experiences of life on the streets (Chapter 4), within family relationships (Chapter 5), and in Puebla City residential social interventions (Chapter 6).

The first half of this Chapter is trained on the 2 governmental social programmes targeting street children in Puebla City, as the most focused expression of social policies for street-living children during the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis. These programmes ran concurrently in Puebla City during the period: national programme From the Street to Life *De la Calle a la Vida* (2000-2006) and a small local Puebla City programme No More Coins *No Mas Monedas* (2002-2005). Each programme explicitly included a significant component aimed at individual children in street situations: grants were awarded to children by From the Street to Life and access to integrated services was advertised in the case of Puebla City's local programme for street children, No More Coins. From the Street to Life in Puebla City was run by the provincial Puebla State government using national finance, while No More Coins as a local initiative was run and financed by Puebla City's municipal

authorities. This Chapter explores the experiences of 24 interviewed street-living children within these 2 programmes.

The second part of this Chapter widens the research lens from social policies targeting street children to broader based social policies available to all children, drawing on experiences of the 24 interviewed street-living children and building on the findings and arguments developed in Chapters 4 to 6. Two social programmes are explored: drug rehabilitation as a social policy area found to be of particular relevance to street-living children's situations; and basic education as a social policy area of relevance to all children as legally obligatory.

7.2 'From the Street to Life' for street children in Puebla City

All 24 interviewed children lived on the streets of Puebla City at some time during the 2001-2006 operation of From the Street to Life and had also lived in residential services provided by Pueblan authorities and/or CSOs in the City during the same period, so can expect to have been eligible for support under the Programme. Since children's participation in From the Street to Life was conditional on their being registered beneficiaries of selected social interventions (DIF 2005:3), this section begins by exploring service provider involvement, before turning to Programme grants and children's experiences of them.

Participation by Service Providers

This was the first State-level programme for street children in Puebla to invite CSO participation in its Steering Committee (see Chapter 3.7) and 4 CSO members were

recruited in practice: 2 CSOs for 'street children'– IPODERAC and JUCONI (profiled in Chapter 6 Figure 6.4); and 2 CSOs for 'vulnerable' children – Living Hope and Calasanz Homes (see Figure 6.2). At government representation level, Puebla City Welfare was a member while Puebla State Welfare coordinated the Steering Committee. These 4 CSOs, Puebla City Welfare and Puebla State Welfare were the 6 institutions to receive Programme funds disbursed in Puebla.

The findings of previous Chapters suggest however that important sectors were excluded from the Programme in Puebla while institutions for 'vulnerable' children were over-represented. In particular, institutions providing services for street children with 'antisocial' conduct were not included: Puebla's Remand Home and Reach Glory CSO had not been invited, both profiled in Chapter 6's Table 6.4, which between them had provided residential services to 16 (67%) of this study's interviewed street children. Nor had self-help groups been invited, shown in this study to provided residential services for 10 (42%) of the 24 street children interviewed (2 of these groups are profiled in Chapter 6's Table 6.4). In total, 18 (75%) of the 24 interviewed children had received services from institutions addressing antisocial conduct, none of which were represented in the From the Street to Life Programme in Puebla. Also excluded were other sectors of society found in this study to have strong and direct links with street-living children, notably the police and market unions (Chapter 4) and families (Chapter 5).

The 2 participating CSOs for 'vulnerable' children in From the Street to Life were not registered with Welfare as service providers for street children, although had provided residential services in the past to 2 of the study's 24 interviewed children: Roberto (child 9) in Living Hope and Oscar (child 20) in Calasanz Homes. Over-representation

of social interventions for 'vulnerable' children in the Programme (4 of 6 participants) could be justified under From the Street to Life's national eligibility requirements that recipients of Programme funding be '*Vulnerable children at risk, aged 0 to 18, as well as those that live and /or work in the street*' (SNDIF 2006a: p.32). A further justification could be found in the 'preventive' aspect of From the Street to Life, whose full title was: 'Programme for the Prevention and Treatment of Girls, Boys and Youth in Street Situations 'From the Street to Life' [*Programa de Prevención y Atención a Niñas, Niños y Jóvenes en Situación de Calle 'De la Calle a la Vida*'] (SNDIF, 2005). Organizations for 'vulnerable' children could therefore be conceptualized as preventing children from taking to the street as well as, or perhaps instead of, providing treatment for street children.

Access of street children to Programme benefits can be understood, argued in Chapter 6, as being conditioned by the label applied to them by service providers: a child considered 'vulnerable' was more likely to be able to access Programme support than one considered a 'street child'; a child considered 'antisocial' had no access to From the Street to Life. This meant that access to the Programme was restricted at times or denied completely to 75% of interviewed street-living children during the 2002-2005 period under review.

From the Street to Life in Puebla: grants for street children

Chapter 3.7 set out the budgets for this social programme in Puebla (see Table 3.2) and specified limits on the use of funds for each of the 3 programme streams (project, research and grants). A grant for 1 child in a 'street situation' for 1 full year amounted to Mex $12,000 (£820) per year (at the regulated Mex $1,000 or £68 per month). Total resources made available for grants in Puebla City during one year (using the

2002-2005 annual average) amounted to Mex $353,745 (c £24,200), allowing 30 children to receive grants: 18 through Welfare (Mex $212,247 or £14,520) and 12 through the 4 CSOs (Mex $141,498 or £9,680).

As Table 7.1 shows, approximately 1 in 25 eligible children within the 6 participating organizations in Puebla City could be allocated a full grant in any one year.

Table 7.1: Distribution of From the Street to Life grants per year, using annual average 2002-2005 resources

Named service provider in Puebla City Programme	Average number of children resident	Total number of children eligible	Categorization of target population	Average no. of grants allocated	Ratio of grants to eligible population
State Welfare	200	200	Vulnerable	14	1:14
City Welfare	20	40*	Vulnerable	4	1:10
CSO Calasanz Homes	45	45	Vulnerable	3	1:15
CSO Living Hope	75	75	Vulnerable	3	1:25
CSO IPODERAC	70	70	Street children	3	1:23
CSO JUCONI	25	325*	Street children	3	1:108
Total	435	755		30	1:25

Sources: Tables 6.3 and 6.5 for columns 1 & 2; information from service providers and DIF 2005
* Note: Differences between children resident and children eligible are accounted for by non-residential services for street-working and other street-connected children eligible under the terms of the Programme

A reading of Table 7.1 shows that 24 of the estimated 360 children classed as 'vulnerable' could expect to receive Programme grants, or 1 in 15 children. However, only 6 of the estimated 395 eligible 'street children' or 1 in 66 children could expect to be in the same position and no child classed as antisocial could hope to receive a grant. Programme grant awards intended for *'girls, boys and young people in street situations'* (SNDIF 2005: 8) were therefore biased in Puebla towards children considered as 'vulnerable'.

While Programme rules laid down criteria for the selection of CSO service providers (ibid, article 4.4), no criteria were laid down for the selection of children. Responsibility for selecting children as grantees was implicitly held by each service

provider. Conditions for grants included: a minimum award of 3 months which could be requested for up to 12 months and could be renewed in the following annual financial round; children's legal registration and other background details to be provided; a child could substitute for an unexpectedly departed grantee, with additional reports to be submitted (ibid, formats F6a and b) on the departed child and the incoming substitute child (ibid, p.7). There was, in practice, no requirement to demonstrate that a grantee had been or was currently in a 'street situation' since reporting formats identified participating children by their 'treatment phase', identified as: 'preventive', 'street outreach', 'day centre' or 'institutionalized' (ibid, format F6) rather than by their connectedness or otherwise to the street.

CSO gatekeepers, faced with choosing between 1 in 15 and 1 in 108 of their beneficiaries, reported selecting grantees on the basis of children's perceived stability in services, to comply with the minimum grant period of 3 months and to avoid the more onerous reporting requirements for substitution. Children whose legal documents were in order and whose background details were known were more desirable from the reporting perspective. Service providers' understandings of street-living children as more likely to run away from care than other 'vulnerable' children (see Chapter 6.6) suggest street-living children might be less desirable candidates for a grant, while long-term residents or children with no history of running away would be most desirable. The Programme's grant allocation mechanism therefore produced bias against children with profound street connections and towards children with limited to no street connections.

Experiences of street-living children in the grant scheme

Interviewed children showed limited understanding of From the Street to Life as a social Programme. Six (25%) had learned of the Programme through TV and radio adverts aimed at raising public awareness about street children and encouraging the public to invest in *From the Street to Life:* Rafa and Cásares (children 2 and 5) could recall television spots; Raul (child 17) described a radio spot; others had vaguer recollections. All 6 had understood From the Street to Life as aimed at helping children who were living alone in the street, rather than children participating in institutional social interventions: *'It's for kids in the street.... isn't it? It's not like for when you're in somewhere like here [IPODERAC], because we're already getting help aren't we...?'* (Raul, child 17).

No interviewed child was aware of having received a From the Street to Life grant. However, service providers confirmed that 4 (17%) of the 24 children had at some time been Programme grantees: Cristian and Cásares (children 12 and 5) had each received a grant from Puebla City Welfare, Cásares for 3 months in 2004 and Cristian for the whole of 2004; and 2 interviewees (Pedro, child 1 and Lalo, child 7) in CSO JUCONI had received educational grants in 2004 and 2005. Cristian and Cásares received their grants in the form of a monetary payment of Mex $200 (about £13.70) on completion each week of attendance at Welfare's compensatory primary school; both had understood these payments as rewards from Welfare. The 2 children in JUCONI CSO received their grants in kind, as school uniforms, bus money and educational materials and were similarly unaware of their status as Programme grantees, even though they signed monthly receipts as required by the Programme (SNDIF, 2005: format F/5).

Two of the 4 interviewed children awarded grants during the 2002-2005 period had not experienced any change in their access to education or in the nature of the schooling services as a result of being grantees. Lalo (child 7) and Pedro (child 1), interviewed in JUCONI, had been enrolled and attending formal compensatory schooling for a year before the period of their grants, during which time all their schooling costs had been paid by JUCONI. As grantees they had the same access to uniforms, school materials and transport as they had done previously and as did their peers resident in JUCONI House. Cristian (child 12), a resident with his mother in Puebla City's night shelter had also been attending school and experienced no change in his access to education or to the nature of schooling support received, when becoming a grantee. He did however experience 1 significant change: he stopped working on the street during the day as a condition of receiving a cash payment from Welfare at the end of each school week. Cásares (child 5) experienced change to access: he gained access to formal schooling while living on the street and received a payment sufficient to pay for his transport and cover lost income during school hours. However, Cásares' participation came to an end after 3 months when he stopped attending school.

Service provider experiences of From the Street to Life

From the Street to Life had no operational or funding mechanisms specifically to promote collaboration and coordination of efforts. Service providers in Puebla reported experiencing low impact on their efforts to prevent and treat children, from their participation in the Programme:

> `National DIF – with From the Street to Life – tried to unite us and we do have meetings and that's been good, but really the organizations haven't collaborated. Instead, each has received money and put it to work, which in

one sense is good because there is truthfully so little time, and there isn't a central person that brings all this together...[...] Our vision was to work together, each organization with its own profile but together to address this issue, this phenomenon of street-living children. And that's not happened [...] the organizations take the money with a 'thanks very much' then we almost turn our backs on each other, do our own work and each produce our own reports...' (Jenny Azuara, administrator, Living Hope CSO, interview of 21/09/04).

Although From the Street to Life funds were welcomed by all the social interventions involved in this Programme in Puebla, especially for their symbolic value, since they represented the first stable funding made available by DIF to CSOs, amounts received were too small to generate significant changes in social interventions for participating children. CSO JUCONI in 2003 received Mex $36,000 (about £2,463) from the Programme for grants, representing financially about 0.6% of JUCONI's annual income for 2003 of Mex $5,854'420 (about £400,580) (JUCONI, 2004). During that year, 3 children received Programme grants in JUCONI, less than 1% of the 325 children reported as beneficiaries for the year (JUCONI, 2004). In this context, Programme grants represented only a small, if welcomed, support from government to continue existing service provision.

From the Street to Life: An assessment of grants for street-living children in Puebla City

Numbers of children who had lived on the street and who benefited from the Programme in Puebla are unknown, because service providers were required to identify participating children by their 'treatment phase' (SNDIF 2005: format F1), rather than

by characteristics or situation. Findings of this chapter, however, suggest street-living child beneficiaries may have been only a few of a much larger pool of vulnerable children: a heavy Programme bias towards children categorized as 'vulnerable' produced a limited pool of street-living children eligible for Programme grants; children could be awarded grants on criteria unrelated to their connections to the street; and reporting incentives biased choice of grantees against children with strong connections to the street. Under these conditions, it is reasonable to assume that organizations for vulnerable children would award grants to street-living children only in exceptional cases (such as Cristian, child 12) and that CSOs for street children would select some grantees who had not lived on the street. An estimate favourable to the Programme would be that 3 to 6 (10 to 20%) of the 30 available grants per year over the 2002-2005 period might have been allocated to street-living children. In the light of research findings reported in Chapter 4 that suggest street-living children formed a very small proportion (less than 2%) of urban working children (SNDIF, 2004), a 10 to 20% of street-living child grantees might be considered over- representation; but these children's situations were also more extreme than their working child peers (see Table 4.16) and were not targeted by any other social Programme.

Experiences of the 4 interviewed children found to have received grants, although not claimed as representative, when analyzed together with gatekeeper views from the 6 service providing institutions, suggest that in Puebla City the Programme did little to improve grantees' access to or experience of services. By operating through the medium of existing service providers and supporting children already participating in those services, Programme grants would not have been expected to significantly improve children's access to and experience of food or education.

This Programme operated within a period of social policy discourse which variously aimed at: developing children's capabilities (national social policy strategy 'With You'); promoting a culture of inclusion (Puebla State's social welfare policy towards street children); and integrated welfare, family unity and empowerment (City social welfare policy). Of these policy goals, From the Street to Life's grant scheme could, through educational grants, be understood as contributing to developing children's capabilities and promoting their inclusion, although links between policy and implementation were not explicit. However, the net contribution of the Programme to this scheme, when distinguished from the contribution of service providers, was financial. At the same time, issues of family and drug use found to be of significance to street-living children, in national research and this study (see Chapter 4, Table 4.16) were not addressed by the Programme. From the Street to Life grants in Puebla can therefore at best be understood as including, but not as targeting, street-living children.

7.3 No More Coins – a Puebla City social programme for street children

Service provider participation

No More Coins was a City Welfare initiative. It was not conceived or run as a collaborative exercise and active involvement by other institutions was not sought, although Puebla State Welfare had attempted to draw No More Coins formally into From the Street to Life:

> 'We told Israel, who's in charge of the municipal Programme, you know it's fine
>
> that campaign of No More Coins of yours, but it needs to be more grounded…
>
> And we could do that by putting it at the heart of the From the Street To Life

Steering Committee and going for it together – all of us - and all of us could help shape it. But you know the 'this is mine' syndrome... So it's only been a very limited collaboration if anything, because of the politics really... (Uzziel Avalos, Puebla State Welfare Department, Coordinator of From the Street to Life interview of 20/09/04)

Puebla City's Welfare 'No More Coins' initiative was run by a small team of 3 staff members and 2 volunteers, who had no dedicated financial resources for the Programme. Responsibility and costs for publicity, comprising TV and radio spots, street posters and flyers, were assumed by the City Mayor's communications office.

'No More Coins' offered an access point to integrated services for street children and their families. and included: medical and legal services; a job centre; skills workshops; support for disabilities; a compensatory school and the City night shelter. None of these services was geared exclusively to street children, but No More Coins introduced 2 innovations aimed at benefiting street children. First, a child entering one Welfare service could automatically gain access to all other Welfare services set out in Chapter 3's Table 3.3. Second, Puebla City Welfare's access to From the Street to Life grants outlined above was to be applied to children entering Welfare's compensatory school from the street, in the form of a weekly payment made in return for giving up street work. No More Coins included a street outreach component to make children and families on the street aware of the Programme.

Street-living children's experiences

All 24 interviewed children lived on the streets of Puebla City at some time during the 2002-2005 life of this Programme, so were eligible for engagement with No More

Coins. Twenty (83%) of the 24 case study children reported seeing No More Coins campaign posters displayed prominently at major road junctions in Puebla City, but only 1 (Cristian, child 12) reported being approached on the street about the Programme.

Five children (21%) accessed services advertised by Puebla City Welfare as part of No More Coins. The most prolonged engagement was by Cristian who, together with his mother Clara, accessed the City's night shelter after being invited by a Welfare official who found them sleeping on the steps of a church in Puebla's historic centre:

> 'He was from the Welfare and he said 'How can you sleep here at night with your little one. Haven't you thought how cold it is?' - It was really cold out then – 'You should do something to live before you die of cold'. And I said 'Ah, sir, the truth is I don't like the night shelters.' Even now I don't like them, I mean, I put up with them, but…. So he said, 'Look, go to the night shelter on 5th East Street – that's the city shelter. Tell them I sent you. Because you can't stay here, it's too cold and the police will send you there anyway…' And he gave me his card to take. And so we went into the shelter' (Clara Sosa, mother of Cristian, interview of 27/04/07).

Clara and Cristian were still residents in the night shelter a year later, at the time of this study's fieldwork. Through access to the night shelter, Cristian also accessed: legal aid to prepare his papers for enrolment in school; compensatory schooling; school breakfasts; and a From the Street to Life grant.

Four more children had a more limited engagement with No More Coins, after learning about City Welfare services through their informal on-street networks described in Chapter 4.4: Cásares (child 5) accessed a similar set of services to those experienced

by Cristian, although only for 3 months in 2002: legal aid to assemble paperwork for school enrolment; compensatory schooling, school breakfasts; a From the Street to Life grant; and occasional overnight stays at the night shelter. Hector (child 6) accessed the skills workshop for a week or so and stayed at the night shelter on a couple of occasions; Rafa (child 2) accessed - but for only one week: compensatory school; a Mex $ 200 payment; and school breakfasts. Guillermo (child 22) paid a single visit to the City Welfare clinic. Children were not aware that payments offered by Welfare for attending school were related to the From the Street to Life Programme.

With the exception of Cristian, street-living children's experiences of Welfare's integrated services were limited. Although No More Coins was well-publicized among street children, engagement with services was low and retention of the street-living children interviewed was poor.

No More Coins: An assessment of integrated services for street-living children in Puebla City

Puebla City Welfare staff believed the main success of their No More Coins Campaign had been to raise public awareness: *'the middle class has begun to question why they give money in the street and what it achieves for children. But even better are the debates we've been hearing on the local radio – people are really starting to wake up and think about the issue.'* (Israel Gonzaga, Puebla City Welfare Dept. Coordinator, Street Children Programme, interview of 20/09/04). But no baseline or explicit goals had been developed against which to measure the effectiveness of the No More Coins campaign, and since it followed public campaigns in the previous 2 Puebla City administrations directed at raising public awareness about street children, claims for results need to be recognized as anecdotal.

At service level, City Welfare gatekeepers recognized that No More Coins had produced few achievements for street children: '*I think we managed to do well on the first part, raising awareness in Puebla, but we weren't given the time and resources to really address the second part – making a difference to the services we offer to street children.*' (Israel Gonzaga, City DIF Coordinator, Street Children Programme, interview 20/09/04). Staff acknowledged that No More Coins at service level had focused on street-working children rather than street-living children, despite publicity which appeared to target children in both situations.

Street-living children were not targeted by the integrated services offered under No More Coins, although they were included among potential beneficiaries. Take up and retention were limited: 5 (21% of) interviewed street-living children were found to have accessed these services, and although 4 children experienced multiple services in what might be interpreted as an integrated approach, only 1 experienced one or more services for longer than 3 months. With the exception of 1 child, the experiences of interviewed children and gatekeeper views from City Welfare together suggest that in practice No More Coins added little value to pre-existing Welfare services for street-living children.

Looking at connections to wider social policy issues: educational access was addressed in an innovative way through integrated services although not sustained by interviewed children; drug use, an issue identified as important for street-living children was not addressed by No More Coins. The Programme could however be understood, on the limited experiences of this study's interviewees, as coherent with Puebla City's social welfare policy discourse aimed at integrated welfare, family unity and empowerment.

Access to multiple welfare services when linked to From the Street to Life grants could be understood as both integrated welfare and empowering, although poor retention suggests that any gains for empowerment were quickly lost. Two street-living children also experienced limited support in favour of family unity, as City Welfare: kept Cristian (child 12) and his mother Clara together (see Chapter 5.5.2) through extended residency in the City's temporary night shelter; and helped Cásares (child 5) locate 1 of his brothers in CSO care in Puebla City. In neither case however, were longer term strategies for family unity evident: Welfare staff had not formulated plans which would enable Clara and Cristian to live together beyond the shelter; and no systematic contact with family members was arranged for Cásares. In each case, City Welfare's activities could be interpreted as coherent but too limited in scope to achieve policy goals of family unity.

7.4 Broad-based social policies: street-living children and drug rehabilitation

Alongside From the Street to Life and No More Coins, the 2 governmental programmes targeting street children in Puebla City in 2002-2005, other broad-based social programmes were in place of potential relevance to street-living children's situations and experiences. This section explores case study children's access to drug rehabilitation services, as a social policy area not addressed by the 2 targeted programmes but found in this research to be an important facet of street-living children's experiences.

Broad-based programmes for which street children were eligible in Puebla City, including drug rehabilitation, were set out in Chapter 3 Tables 3.3 and 3.4. Broad-based social policy programmes for which street-living children were eligible, by categorization of the target populations, in Puebla City are summarized in Figure 7.1 below.

Fig. 7.1: Summary of Broad-based Social Programmes in Puebla City for which street children were eligible, by categorization in the period 2002-2005

Programme	Categorization of target population	Lead Department/ Ministry	Government service provision in Puebla City
Minors & Adolescents at risk (work/health/migration/disability)	Vulnerable	Welfare	City and State
Legal Aid	Vulnerable	Welfare	City and State
Health Clinic	Vulnerable	Welfare	City
Disabilities	Vulnerable	Welfare	City and State
School Breakfasts	Vulnerable	Welfare	City and State
Shelter	Vulnerable	Welfare	City and State
Fam. Violence & Emotional Health	Vulnerable	Welfare	City
Indigents	Vulnerable	IAPEP*	State
Drug Rehabilitation	Antisocial	Mental Health	State
Opportunities	Vulnerable	Social Dev't	State
Compensatory Schools	Vulnerable	Education	City and State
Remand Homes	Antisocial	Interior	State

Sources: Chapter 3, Tables 3.3 and 3.4
Note: * IAPEP is the Pueblan Institute for Public Welfare *Instituto de Asistencia Pública del Estado de Puebla*

Some of these Programmes have been discussed in previous chapters: access to residential Shelters and the Remand Home were explored in Chapter 6; access to compensatory schools (including school breakfasts and legal aid) was discussed on-street in Chapter 4 and off-street in Chapter 6; access to the Social Development Ministry's Opportunities Programme was explored in Chapter 5 through families. Almost all of these Programmes targeted 'vulnerable' children. Only 2 broad-based social programmes addressed anti-social conduct: the Remand Home and Drug Rehabilitation.

Drug Use and street-living children

Government descriptions of street-living children cited in Chapter 3, included reference to their high exposure to '*risks derived from adult criminal and antisocial activities such as prostitution, drug addiction, robbery, alcoholism etc.*' (COESNICA 1992: 10). The 100 Cities study reports produced for Welfare evidenced and highlighted high rates of drug use among street-living children when compared to other urban working children in Puebla City and nationally (SNDIF 1999a: 8; and DIF 2004): 66% of street-living children in Puebla City reported use of drugs compared to 18% of the larger population of urban working children (see Chapter 4 Table 4.6). Seventy six percent of the street-living children interviewed for the 100 Cities study reported first using drugs before the age of 14 (SNDIF, 2003a). And children's need for help with drug prevention was the second-most flagged response by street-living children in the same sample (see Table 4.9). Drug use also topped the list of reasons given by street-living children in Puebla City in answer to the 100 Cities' survey question '*Why did the police detain you?*' In this context, drug rehabilitation can be understood as a social policy area of substantive, recognized importance for street-living children.

Drug Rehabilitation Social Programme in Puebla

Drug addiction was given scant reference in Puebla State's social planning for 1999-2005: no clear objectives were set and relevant government lines of actions were summarized as '*addressing alcoholism, nicotine and drug addictions*' (Morales, 1999: 126). Public health sector rehabilitation treatment for addicts was available through Puebla State's Mental Health Centre's well-equipped and professionally staffed residential Drug Detoxification and Rehabilitation Clinic [*Clínica de Desintoxicación y Rehabilitación de Adictos*], which opened in 2002. In addition, Puebla's Youth Integration Centre (*Centro de Integración Juvenil*) offered out-patient professional

counseling for substance users. Both services formed part of Puebla State's Health Ministry Drug Rehabilitation Programme, coordinated by Puebla's State Council against Addictions (*Consejo Estatal Contra las Adicciones de Puebla - CECA*), which also brought together registered self-help groups and other civil organizations supporting addicts in the State.

Admission to Puebla's Detoxification Clinic was voluntary, means-tested and was followed by a 6 week programme: '*The first 2 weeks are for detoxification and the second part, which is another 4 weeks, is for rehabilitation. For detoxification of the patient, we have a medical team, medicines, everything that we need medically so that the patient does not have physical withdrawal problems*' (Dr Pérez Garcia, Director, Puebla's Mental Health Centre interview of 27/01/05)

Both residential and out-patient governmental services for drug addicts accepted children aged 14 and over, for whom parental or guardians' agreement and support were required over a course of rehabilitation:

> '*Our age limit has been defined on the basis that the percentage of young addicts is much higher above 14 years of age than below. Now, that's a worry because there are increasing numbers of 11, 12 year olds already with addictions. But the unit we have is a first step, and we can't mix 13, 12 year old kids with men of 30, 40 can we?*' (Dr Pérez Garcia, Director, Puebla's Mental Health Centre, interview of 27/01/05)

Service providers from the Clinic and the Youth Integration Centre confirmed that street-living children aged 14 and over in principle were eligible for admission, since they could be exempt from payment under means tests applied, although would need

their families or CSO service provider with guardianship facilities to sign for and support them. *'Someone would need to be supporting a street child through rehab, on the outside, I mean, otherwise it won't work, will it? He needs to go back to a supportive environment that helps him resist and build a new lifestyle. That won't happen if he's in the street'* (Silvia Durán, senior social worker, Youth Integration Centre, interview of 06/01/05)

At the same time, government service providers believed drug use among young people was increasing and age of first drug use was falling (Sylvia Duran, CIJ, interview of 06/01/05 and Psychologist Benito Romano, head of Puebla's Council on Addictions interview of 26/04/05). And increasing numbers of drug-using street children were reported in the Remand Home:

> *'A higher percentage of children take drugs nowadays and more street children are detained in the Remand Home for that reason. The problem is exacerbated when we appreciate that there is nobody properly equipped to respond to this issue. The problem of the child who is already immersed in drug use needs specialized treatment.'* (Rene Hernandez Ibarra, ex-Director of Puebla's Remand Home and currently Puebla State Attorney General's Office, interview of 10/11/04).

Neither the Clinic nor the Youth Integration Centre (YIC) recorded admissions of 'street children' but YIC staff had provided drug counseling for 'a few' street children within residential CSO programmes (Sylvia Durán) while the Clinic had not knowingly treated a street child (Dr Perez García).

Street-living children's experiences of drug rehabilitation services

Chapter 4's exploration of experiences of drug use among the 24 street-living children interviewed for this thesis, found 12 (50%) of the 24 interviewed children had used drugs and all 12 reported first using drugs under the age of 14. A summary comparison between the 100 Cities study and this case study (Table 7.2 below) show more and slightly older users in the 100 Cities study than in the case study for this thesis. However, both studies support the case that the majority of street-living children use drugs, the majority of whom began taking drugs below the age of 14.

Table 7.2: Drug use by street-living children in Puebla City – 100 Cities Study and Case Study data

Drug Use reported by Respondents	Street-living children on street in Puebla City: 100 Cities Study 2002-03		Children who had lived in the streets of Puebla City: Case Study 2004-2005	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Used drugs	21	66	12	50
First use of drugs before age of 14	16	76 (of users)	12	100 (of users)
Total	32	n.a	24	n.a

Source: Extracted from SNDIF (2003ª) database; and Case Study database.

Also, 10 children (8 boys and both of the interviewed girls) from this case study's purposive sample recognized themselves as heavy and regular drug users while living on the streets and all 10 reported forming their alcohol/drug habit on the street.

Nevertheless, while living on the street, no interviewed child reported receiving from public service providers: information about drug use or its treatment; out-patient support; invitations for referral to government residential treatment. At the time of interview, 6 of the 12 drug-using street-living children in this study were still not eligible, as under 14 years old, for Puebla State's drug rehabilitation services and none of the 12 would have been eligible at the age when they first started using drugs[10].

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[10] *The minimum age for admission to Puebla's Drug Rehabilitation Clinic was raised in 2006, after fieldwork completion, to the age of 18 (SSEP bulletin 10/11/06), eliminating access to Puebla's governmental drug rehabilitation programme by all children*

Neither had any interviewed child been referred by another government department to Puebla's Clinic or out-patient services, despite reported opportunities. Two of the 10 heavy drug using children in this study, Abraham (child 3) and Berenice (child 18) had been admitted to hospitals in Puebla City for other conditions, but neither was subsequently referred for counseling or other treatment related to their substance abuse. Abraham was admitted at the age of 10 to Puebla State's Children's Hospital, taken by a Red Cross ambulance after he injured a leg falling from a bridge while stoned on glue. Puebla State Welfare covered the cost of treatment for his injured leg and contacted his family to allow for his return home, but no treatment was offered, residential or out-patient, directed at his drug use (described from Abraham's family's perspective in Chapter 5.5). Berenice, (child 18), was admitted at age 13 to Puebla's General Hospital for an emergency caesarean operation before being moved into care at Welfare's Children's Shelter. She received support aged 14 as a young mother and guidance on sexual health, but her heavy alcohol use remained untreated.

No interviewed child had been referred from the Remand Home or Welfare Shelter to government drug rehabilitation services, despite staff knowledge of children's drug use. Remand Home services included on-site drug prevention and rehabilitation counseling for residents, but the limited nature of this support was recognized by staff and implicit in referrals of drug-using children: 2 interviewed children had been referred from the Remand Home to a self-help group for addicts (Edgar, child 23 and Roberto, child 24) and gatekeepers confirmed that other street-living children had been referred from the Remand Home and Welfare to CSO and self-help group services for drug rehabilitation (see Chapter 6). Drug-using children were also referred to CSOs for street children such as JUCONI which recognized that they lacked tools to deal with children with severe drug addictions (see Chapter 6).

Referrals of drug using children by government services to CSO and self-help options demonstrate service provider demand for drug rehabilitation services. And CSO JUCONI use of Youth Integration Centre's out-patient services demonstrated demand for support by service providers experienced in support for street children. In addition, 5 children had accepted invitations on the street from the Reach Glory CSO for addictions and a further 2 had been forcibly removed from the street to a self-help group for drug rehabilitation.

High minimum age limits and an understanding shared by service providers that the State's Drug Rehabilitation Clinic was '*not right for street children, they'd be running out the front door in minutes*' (Monica Ruiz, Sub-director, Puebla Remand Home, interview of 17/05/05) meant that street-living children had not been referred to the Puebla government's drug rehabilitation programme.

Evidence was provided in Chapter 5 of families of street-living children choosing self-help groups or CSOs specializing in addictions to rehabilitate their drug-using children: and Chapter 6 explored interviewed children's experiences of these non-governmental and self-help group environments. In total, 11 drug-using interviewees had been resident in these settings[11]: 9 had experienced self-help groups and 7 had accessed CSOs, of whom 4 had experienced both types of environment.

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[11] A further 2 interviewees had been placed in self-help groups as 'uncontrollable' but were not drug-users (Roberto, 24 and Lalo, 7).

Drug Rehabilitation of street-living children: a social policy failure

It could be argued that self-help group and CSO provision of drug rehabilitation services were together sufficient to bridge the service gap between government social programmes and street-living children's situations. However, at least 3 concerns arose from street-living children's experiences in this study with implications for social policy towards drug rehabilitation. These relate to: children's experiences; design of social interventions; and supervision.

First, experiences in self-help groups were reported by children in unremittingly negative terms, flouted a range of children's legal rights enshrined in Mexico's Child Rights Law 2000 (including access to education, recreation and living with family) and, recalling the evidence provided in Chapter 6, had not been successful in addressing case study children's addictions, street-living situations or other antisocial behaviour.

Second, both CSO and self-help group services had been designed for adults to address their addictions, not for drug-using children. Self-help group services are modelled on the international Alcoholics Anonymous movement's 'twelve-step to rehabilitation' approach and supporting literature. The approach and services have been designed for adults. However, in the Puebla City experiences, resident children experienced the same activities as adults, whether self-help group testimonials or CSO collective prayer. Children in Annexes also spent their time in the company of adult addicts, a situation the Government service provider had worked to avoid, recalling the words of Puebla Mental Health Centre's director: '*the* [drug rehabilitation] *unit we have is a first step, and we can't mix 13, 12 year old kids with men of 30, 40 can we?*' (Dr Perez García, Director, Puebla's Mental Health Centre, interview of 27/01/05)

Third, although CSO Reach Glory was legally registered as a civil society organization and as such subject to governmental supervision, self-help groups operated beyond legal limits. This presents a double-faceted problem. First is the relationship of self-help groups with the officially registered Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Drug Addicts Anonymous (DA) movements; second is the legal status of self-help groups as residential health providers.

Self-help groups in Puebla City claim affiliation to the officially registered Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Drug Addicts Anonymous (DA) movements (Gustavo Taja of AA/DA group Return to Life, interview of 26/05/05; Jose Luis Zeta of DA group Youth to Paradise, interview of 02/05/05; Rafael Lavalle of AA group Las Americas, interview of 12/09/04), an impression reinforced by certificates hung in self-help group offices. However, in line with the tenets of their respective international movements, Puebla's officially registered Alcoholics Anonymous and Drug Addicts Anonymous movements do not permit their affiliated members to run residential services, limiting rehabilitation activities to day-time sessions (Public Information Officer of Alcoholics Anonymous, Central Committee Puebla, interview of 26/04/05 and AA documents). None of the 5 self-help groups visited for this Case Study appeared in Puebla's official AA or DA movement registers of affiliated member groups.

On the second point, self-help groups have no legal status in Puebla as residential service providers for children, and as such operate outside the legal and supervisory powers of the Puebla State health service. The policy of Puebla's State Council against Addictions (CECA) was to convince self-help groups to register voluntarily with CECA by granting registered groups access to State-funded medical support in return for State supervision of group premises (Psychologist Benito Romano, head of Puebla's Council

on Addictions interview of 26/04/05). This policy was generating some successes in practice: by March 2006, 23 self-help groups had been 'certified' in this way as complying with the guidelines of State Norm 028 which regulated treatment models in rehabilitation of addicts (Congreso del Estado, 2006). However, State Norm 028 and certification was restricted to services for adults; services for children still remained outside legal framework. Dr Romano estimated in his 2005 interview that *'well over 50 self-help groups were active in Puebla'* and that numbers were growing.

This study's findings evidence that government social programmes, whether targeted or broad-based, fail to provide access to drug rehabilitation services for street-living children in Puebla City, despite uncontested research evidence of high drug use among street-living children and evidence of demand from service providers. Self-help group drug rehabilitation interventions were bridging the programme gap from outside the social policy framework, but their service provision for children was illegal in structure, not designed with children's development in mind and had failed to show positive results for case study street-living children.

7.5 Street-living children and education: a second social programme experience

Findings about street-living children's experiences of education evidenced a different model of broad-based social programme access. A key objective contemplated within social development was to ensure access to basic education for all Pueblans (Morales, 1999: 109). By the 2002-2005 period covered by this case study, compensatory programmes had been introduced into certain primary and secondary schools in

marginalized urban schools of Puebla City with federal support from a National Council of Educational Promotion (CONAFE) programme aimed at reducing the rate of children falling behind in their basic education studies. For the purposes of this study, significant differences between 'normal' basic education and 'compensatory' programmes were that children could be enrolled in school grades which did not correspond to their chronological age and could take grade exams at half-yearly intervals (such that a 10 year old child whose chronological peer group had completed 4th grade but who had only completed 1st grade could take his or her 2nd grade and 3rd grade exams within a single year, or could take 2nd grade over 2 years). But enrollment requirements for compensatory educational programmes were the same as for all primary and secondary schooling in Puebla and dependent on: submission of birth certificate and annual school certificates plus forms signed by parents or guardians able to accept responsibility for the child being enrolled into school.

In spite of enrollment conditions, 2 of the 24 interviewed children had accessed a compensatory education programme through Puebla City DIF while living on the streets. Rafa (child 2) and Cásares (child 5)'s access was however conditional on prior access to Puebla City Welfare's integrated services for 'vulnerable' children, as advertised by the City's No More Coins social programme discussed in Section 7.3 above. Retention had been poor: Rafa left the primary grade 1 class to which he had temporarily been assigned *oyente* [observer] status before his enrolment was completed; Cásares, who had finished his primary schooling in CSO care in Puebla, completed enrolment and attended 3 months of first year secondary, before disappearing back to the streets.

At the time of interview, when all 24 children were living in residential interventions, educational access was found to be conditional on children's categorization, as discussed in Chapter 6.2 and summarized in Table 6.1. 12 street-living children categorized as 'street children' were enrolled in compensatory programmes or had already been integrated into normal basic education (primary or secondary) in state schools. 'Vulnerable' street-living children had mixed access: Cristian (child 12) was enrolled in City Welfare's compensatory programme, by gaining access through his residency in the City night shelter; but the 3 children in State Welfare's shelter simply attended on-site classes with no formal education credits. 4 of the 7 children categorized as 'antisocial' had no access to any kind of schooling (2 in CSO Reach Glory and 2 in self-help group Return to Life), while the 3 children in the Remand Home accessed on-site education for no formal education credits.

This study provided evidence that street-living children in Puebla City could in practice access formal education: while living on the street - although access was conditional on participation in other services; and in residential care – although access was conditioned by service provider categorization of children. In spite of the fact that this study's sample of children was small and non-representative, findings could be generalized beyond the sample by using triangulation with service provider reports and institutional documents. Children categorized as 'street children' in Puebla City had a greater likelihood of accessing compensatory schooling because of practices implemented by 'street children' CSOs, but children categorized as 'antisocial' had no prospect of accessing formal schooling through their residential services in Puebla City. Also, and perhaps surprisingly in light of social policy goals for access to education, street-living children resident in CSOs were more likely to access compensatory or normal basic education than were their peers in governmental care.

7.6 Conclusion

Chapter 3 set out social policies and social programmes identified as targeting, or including within larger populations, children who lived on the streets in Puebla City. These policies and programmes were framed by a complex legal and political environment. For the research for this thesis, a layered case study design was adopted to allow study of the lived experiences of children who had lived on Puebla City streets, comparing these with the discourse and the practice of social policies and programmes. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 produced findings about 24 children's access to social interventions on the street, involving their families and in residential placements. This chapter has presented findings about street-living children's lived experiences of social programmes targeting street children and others chosen to exemplify children's experiences of broad-based policies and programmes.

Social policies towards children were framed within the 'With You' strategy which aimed respect rights and improve the capabilities of girls, boys and adolescents (Mexican Government, 2001). Puebla State's policy objectives were to integrate street children, named as a vulnerable group needing special attention, avoiding discrimination and promoting personal development (Morales 1999: 131). Puebla State and City social policies also encouraged family unity. This chapter's evidence on social programmes suggests however that they failed to deliver social policy objectives for street-living children in Puebla City in the 2002-2005 period covered by this thesis.

There was very little evidence in Puebla of From the Street to Life, as the national government's main social programme target street children, achieving its aims of coordinating efforts to find 'integrated solutions to the street child phenomenon' (DIF,

2005: 2). First, significant service providers did not participate, particularly those addressing antisocial behaviour (found in this case study to have provided residential services to 75% of interviewed street-living children), and other key stakeholders in street children's lives such as families, police and street children themselves were not represented in the Programme. Second, the Programme in Puebla City practice did not encourage collective working between social interventions so coordination was reduced to dividing up Programme funds. Third, within these limited parameters, Programme resources were too small to make an impact on quantity or quality of service provision.

The Programme also failed to target individual street-living children effectively. Over-representation of organizations for 'vulnerable' children and lack of representation of bodies targeting anti-social behaviour meant that 75% of the interviewed street-living children's eligibility for grants under From the Street to Life was restricted or even denied during the period covered by the report. On the other hand, with no clear selection criteria established for children, vulnerable children did not need to have any street connections to be eligible for a grant because grants were awarded on the grounds of their residency in organizations participating in From the Street to Life. Reports on implementation of From the Street to Life, although thorough in their quest for financial accountability, did not require identification of children as 'street-living' and therefore numbers of street-living children reached by the Programme as a whole are unknown and effects on street-living children cannot be gauged. An estimated 3 to 6 street-living children may have been reached a year but with no evident impact on their well-being.

In its practice, From the Street to Life as a national initiative to help children leave the streets was reduced in Puebla City to a £25,000 annual subsidy supporting 6 service providers for vulnerable and street children.

City-led social programme No More Coins was found to be disarticulated organizationally from other levels of government and CSOs. As a limited initiative in financial and human resources terms, the Programme streamlined access for street children to the range of pre-existing social welfare programmes. Street-living children's connections with No More Coins were very limited and 4 case study children who participated in the Programme did not provide support for the premise that 'easy money' attracted children onto the streets: Only 1 stayed beyond 3 months (Cristian, child 12), who had a powerful non-financial, family-based incentive to stay in the programme.

From the limited evidence of this case study, No More Coins added value to pre-existing Welfare services by evidencing personalization of strategies for street-living children, visible in 3 demonstrations: first introduction of a single point of access for street-living children to a variety of welfare services; second enrollment of street-living children in formal school while living on the street – the only service provider identified to achieved this; third keeping a mother and son together through innovative use of the City night shelter. These innovative ideas had merit both as responsive to children's situations and as being in line with social policy goals of inclusion and family integration.

Findings about the lack of governmentally-provided or -supervised rehabilitation options available for street-living children are suggestive of wider disarticulation

between social policy research and social programmes. Street-living children showed a high incidence of drug use at young ages in both the 1999 and 2004 100 Cities studies designed to inform social welfare policies. Yet neither of the 2 targeted Programmes for street children addressed drug use in Puebla City. Nor had Puebla State's drug rehabilitation programme designed a response for children under 14 years of age, despite growing concern among the policy-making and service provider communities about rising numbers of young addicts. This case study found a single CSO and an unknown number of self-help groups bridging the programme gap, but they were largely unregulated, were not designed for children and infringed a range of children's rights.

Compensatory education was found to be a more articulated social policy, as street-living children in the case study were able to access formal education from CSO residential social interventions and even while living on the street. Social policy discourse about ensuring access to education by all children had some resonance in practice: street-living children resident in CSOs were found to have regularized and some had even completed their basic education through compensatory schooling; and City Welfare had joined forces with the Education Ministry to make compensatory basic education available to subjects of social welfare. Impacts on individual children were measurable in annual education certificates. However, street-living children in governmental social interventions for vulnerable children (Welfare shelter) and antisocial behaviour (Remand Home) could not access compensatory formal education, drawing attention to a disarticulation between basic education policy, State DIF and the Interior Ministry.

Evidence of disarticulation was identifiable at different levels in the social policy process, between: social policy discourse and social programme; between social programme and social intervention; and finally between social intervention and social policy. At the first level, social policy discourse around family integration and access to children's rights had not been developed into coherent social programmes as experienced by street-living children. At the second level, drug rehabilitation had been articulated as a social programme but its practice as a social intervention was not appropriate for street-living children. At the third level, evidence from or about street-living children as end users of social interventions was not sought to help formulate social policies for street children, and findings from government-sponsored research were used to enhance the discourse more than to improve policy and programme design. In addition, social policy was evidenced as disarticulated across sectoral lines: despite being street-living children's first point of contact with the authorities, police (interior ministry) were not involved in social programmes for street-living children (welfare department). Similarly, Remand Home and Welfare had no joint social programmes for street-living children, despite their presence in both institutions. However, evidence of intersectoral articulation in the field of education points a way forward to position street-living children as subjects of social policy and social development as well as social welfare.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In the first half of this chapter I review the body of findings from the case study presented and discussed in Chapters 4 to 7, in relation to the central research question (Chapter 1) and to the theories and broad themes of this thesis established in Chapter 2's theoretical framework and literature review. Achievements of the research, from findings which increase understanding of street-living children's lives and relationships, to those which improve exploration of social policy processes for street children are highlighted. Pulling together the main themes of this research and connecting key messages across chapters, I identify how this thesis advances professional discussion of street children and of the social policies aimed at helping them. In the final part of this chapter, I make recommendations for policies and future research and relate my research themes to higher order social policy issues where controversies exist.

8.2 Discussion of research findings

This thesis set out theoretical concepts and a review of literature important to framing an exploration of social processes and street children's experiences of them (Chapter 2). Drilling down from the international context towards 'street' children's lived experiences, Chapter 3 presented and discussed national and local contexts within which social policies for street children can be understood, the policy 'discourse' within

which street-living children's experiences in practice could be explored and research findings could be assessed.

The research study sought to examine the following question: **How are social policies for children formulated, implemented and experienced by children who live or have lived on the streets?** This question was developed to address gaps in our understanding between the collective 'street child' identity constructed in social policy and the resourceful individual child as service beneficiary. This central research question was unpacked into the following 5 sub-questions:

1. *How do social policies approach street-living children?*

2. *What forms of social programme and social intervention do social policies take for children who live or have lived on the streets?*

3. *How do 'street' children experience social interventions when they live on the streets?*

4. *How do 'street' children experience residential social interventions?*

5. *What other forms of support do they experience?*

Chapters 1 to 3 set up the context in which to explore these 5 sub-questions, followed by chapters 4 to 7 which addressed them by focusing respectively on 'street', 'family', 'social interventions' and 'social programmes'.

'Street child' – the gap between policy and reality

Critical to the research is an understanding of 'street children' both as collective label and as individual children. The design of this research study considered the socially constructed nature of 'street children'. Rather than forming a distinct group, street children are, it has been theorized, young people considered by the public as 'out of place' (Scheper-Hughes 1994; Ennew 2000), constituting a subject constructed in the

literature and in public discourse that does not in reality form a clearly defined, homogeneous population or phenomenon (Glauser, 1990; Lucchini, 1997; Luiz de Moura, 2002 ; and others). This study's findings contribute evidence that policies in Puebla are formulated for a socially constructed group labelled 'street children', a collective which is then, this study suggests, deconstructed and reconstructed during the social policy implementation process.

However, real, individual children are also visible living and working on the streets of towns and cities across the world. Puebla City is no exception – girls and boys have been visible living and working on the City's streets since the 1970s. There has been considerable research into 'street children' as individuals – their characteristics, circumstances, how experiences differ by age, sex, ethnicity and other variables, their experiences over time and through space – but very little is known about relationships between the collective 'street child' term and the individuals targeted by social policy processes.

This research has chosen to focus on a particular group of 'street' children, those commonly known in the literature as children 'of' the streets, or 'street-living' children. Although definitions are contested, I have used this traditional terminology throughout the thesis, reflecting its use by the public and within social policy processes. This choice of focus is narrow but touches the core of 'street children'. Children who live on the streets are the least protected by families and by wider society of all street-connected children and are the most exposed to risks in public spaces. They have been consistently shown to represent only a small proportion of all the children who work or hang out on the streets, who are street-connected. Research on their lives as individuals consistently reveals experiences of violence at home, in their

neighbourhoods and in public spaces. They are children described variously as hard to reach, excluded, vulnerable, marginalized. Their access to well-being and to their rights as children is deeply compromised. These are the children conjured in the public imagination when the collective term 'street children' is used; these are the children for whom the gaps between policy discourse about protection, service provision, development and participation and their daily realities are, this study suggests, widest. Social policies aimed at helping 'street children' are aimed, in the discourse and the illustrations at least, at these real individuals, and can therefore be expected to work towards closing the gap between street-living children's realities and their access to rights and wellbeing.

A single city 'layered' exploratory case study was adopted as the most suitable research design, in a situation where little data was available, to uncover relationships between street-living children and social policies, through social programmes and social interventions as delivery vehicles (as visualized in Fig. 1.3). The research setting of Puebla City presented opportunities for exploring street-living children's experiences in a range of social interventions and governmental social programmes. The following paragraphs set out conclusions drawn from the research findings, beginning with an overview at Figure 8.1, then addressing conclusions starting with the case study core of street-living children's experiences moving outwards to social policies.

Fig. 8.1: Overview of Research Conclusions by Chapter

Thesis Chapter	Summary of Puebla City case study conclusions	Brief description of Puebla City case study findings
Across Chapters 4 to 7	*Social policies generally failed street-living children, but examples of good practice, with wider applicability, were found of programmes and mediators able to reach them*	*Social policies were found to highlight street-living children collectively in the discourse, but to sideline them individually from social programmes and interventions. Numbers of street-living children were found to be small, but individuals were hard to reach. Within a generally fragmented approach, examples of good practice were found in Social Development (at structural level), Education (compensatory education) and CSOs specializing in street children.*
Ch 4. Children's experiences of living on Puebla City streets	1. Government research forfeited street-living children in favour of working children	Mexican '100 Cities' government research folded street-living children into a much larger population of working children, with quite different characteristics and circumstances. 100 Cities' social policy recommendations targeting working children were at the expense of street-living children
	2. Government research methods reinforced prejudices about street-living children	Survey methods were crude and unbalanced, producing overly simplistic and unreliable data about street-living children's relationships with their families, police and social interventions
	3. Children's on-street contacts with formal social welfare interventions were very limited	Police and non-governmental groups were found to have more contact with street-living children than had Social Welfare. Contacts focused on persuading or forcing children to leave the street
	4. Adults were key sources of on-street support	Adults, particularly employers, were found to be important sources of on-street support for street-living children, from knowledge-building to protection, alongside support networks of children
Ch 5. Street-living Children and Families	5. Families maintained contact with their street-living children	Street-living children were found to stay in contact with their families during their time on-street, when families were a source of contingency support. Despite evidence of home-based violence, children and families were found to work at maintaining their relationships in adverse circumstances
	6. Street-living children became social policy 'hot potatoes'	Responsibility for street-living children was found to pass between family, school and social welfare in a framework of inadequate social support. Families assumed responsibility in conditions unfavourable to children's development
	7. Families were ignored in social programmes for street children	Social programmes From the Street to Life and No More Coins, both targeting street children, did not include street-living children's families in planning or service delivery
	8. Street-living children and families were distinct entities under social policy	Street-living children were found to be treated narrowly as a social welfare issue, under Social Welfare Law 2004, while families were treated as a social development concern under Social Development Law 2004. No bridging mechanisms were found to exist between these areas, effectively dividing children from families

Thesis Chapter	Summary of Puebla City case study findings	Description of Puebla City case study findings
Ch 6. Street Children and Residential Social Interventions	9. Categorizing or 'reconstructing' individual street children changed their access to services	Individual street-living children were found to be re-categorized, sometimes implicitly, as 'vulnerable', 'antisocial' or 'street children'. Categorization was at service provider discretion, and had significant implications for children's access to social interventions and experiences of services
	10. Practice on street children's rights and family integration did not match social policy discourse	Children's access to their rights and family integration featured highly in the policy discourse around children. But this research found that street-living children's experiences and family membership were less embedded in government practice than in 'street children' CSO approaches
	11. Education was a policy hit, drug use was a policy miss	Street-living children were found to be able to access formal education, even while on-street and with some restrictions, but did not access any government or government-sponsored interventions for drug use
	12. Children as shelter runaways because of stress and anxiety	A conventional idea that street-living children run away from services because they have 'normalized flight' was challenged by this research. Findings suggested children ran away from social interventions which did not lower children's stress and their anxieties around families
Ch 7. Street Children: from Social Policy to Practice	13. Targeted programmes for street children did not target street-living children	The only government social programmes ostensibly targeting street children in Puebla City, From the Street to Life and No More Coins, were found to focus on the wider population of 'vulnerable' children, at the expense of street-living children
	14. Broad-based programmes showed mixed performances for street-living children	Street-living children were able to access formal education but not governmental drug rehabilitation – not least because of minimum age restrictions - as a result of which street-living children were treated in unregulated self-help groups for addicts, using methods designed for adults
	15. Street-living children were marginalized by fragmented service approach	Starting from inadequacies in the Social Welfare Law 2004, social welfare discourse to practice evidenced a fragmented approach to street children through levels and across sectors, which resulted in street-living children being further marginalized
	16. Street-living children's experiences did not feed into policies	Street-living children were not found to be perceived as service end-users. Their views and experiences in social interventions were not collected by government and could not therefore be expected to influence social policy design

8.3 Street-living children's experiences

Children living in the street

This thesis is based on the findings of research generated primarily around 24 street-living children who form the core layer of the research, building a corpus of knowledge formed around interviews, observation and documentation using triangulation methods. The 24 children selected for this Puebla City case study, 22 boys and 2 girls, lived on the streets and in residential services for varying lengths of time during 2002 – 2005. This case study's findings about the characteristics and circumstances of these children supported recent international and national evidence and contributes new insights.

In support of Lucchini's sociological theorizing of 'clustered dimensions' of street children's experiences (1993), the research for this thesis found most children had accumulated a set of experiences within identifiable dimensions, with all children demonstrating most of the dimensions, but with street-sleeping as the only fully common factor. The attributes found as common to most were: experience of abuse in the home; members of income poor, precarious and composite families which were relatively isolated within their neighbourhoods; excluded from education by family or school; engaging in activities considered by the authorities as antisocial, including drug use. No single child fulfilled all these characteristics, nor did a consistent pattern of individual characteristics emerge from psychological profiling. Notably, very few girls were visible on the streets or in social interventions in Puebla City, an issue which merits further research. Additional insights provided by this case study focus on children's use of street support networks and their continuing relationships with family.

This study found, in line with other research on street-living children's experiences (Lucchini, 1997; Hecht, 1998; Gigengack, 2000; Van Blerk, 2005; Burr, 2006), that the street did not occupy a permanent or even necessarily a central place in the lives of children designated as 'street-living children'. Children were found to move between their families, social interventions and the street, often spending long periods off-street. They were found to demonstrate agency and resourcefulness in developing strategic on-street support networks with other street-based children and informal sector adults. These support networks enabled children to negotiate public spaces by updating their 'street-knowledge', introducing them to work, smoothing income vagaries and offering protection.

This study found little evidence of the gangs of street children described elsewhere in the literature (Agnelli and Rizvi, 1986; Lucchini, 1997; Lalor, 1999). Instead interviewed children tended to form and maintain relationships with a few key people, children and/or adults who played strategic roles in their on-street living. Children reported stronger bonds with a single other child, who acted as street companion, or with an adult employer, who could provide a more integrated package of work, shelter and protection.

Children's contact with social interventions while on the street

This case study supported official research findings that numbers of street-living children are small. Street-living children's experiences of formal social programmes and interventions while living on the street were found to be very limited. Most contact was initiated by gatekeepers who invited - or forced - children to leave the street for placements in residential institutional environments. Children were detained by police, invited by CSO staff to consider off-street living or occasionally forced into self-help

group environments for addicts. Exceptionally, access to formal education in a compensatory school run jointly by the Education Ministry and City Welfare, was experienced by children while they lived on the street. Although few street-living children accessed this service and duration of access was sometimes briefly, this link across sectors was at least found to reach children while living on the streets. Children living in the street were not reached by the main government programme targeting street children, From the Street to Life, with a single exception: for 3 months a child attended compensatory school, received welfare support and received an educational grant under From the Street to Life. This single case illuminated an incipient capacity for intersectoral and cross-level support for hard-to-reach children, involving Puebla State Education and Puebla City Welfare, with funding from a national social programme, delivered through Puebla State Welfare.

The social intervention most accessed by children from the street was Puebla's Remand Home, and the police were children's most frequent point of government contact, irrespective of whether they had committed an offence. Children reported mixed experiences with police, challenging other research findings including from the Government's 100 Cities studies, of police as consistently negative towards street children. More children accessed CSO care homes and self-help group residential services than accessed official Welfare services. Very few children gained access to a social intervention from the street without institutional contact, a finding which supports the view of outreach as a helpful social work tool to reach street-living children and mediate their access to on-street and off-street interventions.

Street-living children and their families

Family relationships were found in this study to be pivotal to understanding the experiences of street children. As predicted in the literature, home-based abuse was found in this case study to be a prime reason for children leaving home, often repeatedly. Most children were also found to have experienced significant upheavals in their family's structure and composition. However, the assumption that street-living children had severed links with their families was not borne out in this study. On the contrary, evidence was found of children and families struggling to maintain contact even in adverse circumstances. The 2 children who rejected all contact with family were found to have suffered in one case sexual abuse by a step-father and in the other, extreme neglect by grandparents – neither child had other siblings or close family members. Most abuse at home had, however, been physical and psychological, and in these cases, interviewed children generally sought to sustain relationships with their families, or with certain members of their families, long after first leaving home for the streets. Even in the face of precarious and composite family structures, household poverty and social exclusion, most parents and siblings assumed responsibility for their children's behaviour and demonstrated commitment to their street-living children.

At the same time, families demonstrated little awareness of the effects of physical and psychological violence on their children, and proposed no alternative strategies to improve home-child relationships. This was particularly evident when schools, Social Welfare or the Remand Home called parents to account for the situations of their street-living children. In these exchanges, street-living children became 'hot potatoes' for whom no-one was willing to accept full responsibility, although families were held responsible for their children under law and were therefore required to accept to

'resolve' their situations or face the possibility of losing their children to Welfare. Families demonstrated that, on the one hand, they did not want to lose access to their children but, on the other, did not know how to 'resolve' their children's situations. Nevertheless, and crucially, no government support was provided to help families address this complex dilemma. CSOs specializing in street children were working to fill this gap between families assuming responsibility and being capable of addressing street-living children's needs through family-centred social interventions. Exploratory fieldwork suggested that creating support in the family home was a process requiring investment of time and experienced human resources. However, bearing in mind stated social policy objectives of integrating families, these CSO practices could be more widely applied.

8.4 Social interventions and street-living children

In this case study, children's access from the street to and experiences of institutions varied according to how 'street' children were deconstructed at the individual level and then reconstructed through categorization by available service provision. This deconstruction-reconstruction decision-making process was not standardized and found to be subject to gatekeeper discretion. Decisions could be arbitrary and children were often moved between categories. Children's categorization, however, determined access to interventions. Social interventions aimed more generally at 'vulnerable' children - whether run by Welfare or by CSOs - were found in this study to be unsuccessful in keeping 'street' children in services and off the streets, suggesting that street-living children may need more specialized services. Children placed forcibly on premises catering for 'anti-social behaviour' also resumed life on the streets on release. On the basis of this case study's exploratory evidence, specialist organizations

designed for street children were able to keep children off the streets for longer than would be consistent with simply meeting children's immediate needs.

Children's patterns of running away from shelter were found to vary by type of institution and, although this thesis does not claim that children in this study were representative of all street-living children in Puebla, it offers the encouraging idea for social policies that children's running away indicates a mismatch between type of service provided and general needs of street-living children, rather than any normalized flight mechanism of a particular child or a child's inherent or learned inability to stay in social interventions. An implication is that adequate changes to services could reduce children's running incidence.

A number of explanations may lie behind children's running behaviours. First, access by children to education and drug rehabilitation services, mediated by children's categorization, was found to be better guaranteed by specialized CSOs. This finding is surprising, since education and drug rehabilitation are defined more broadly as children's rights and could therefore be expected to be a focus of government interventions. Second, the specialist CSO focus on personalized services for children in street situations included helping children to manage stress and address anxieties about their families. Third, specialist CSOs were unusual in approaching family reintegration as a service requiring both child and family rehabilitation, and by doing so may be filling the gap identified earlier, between families assuming responsibility and being capable of addressing street-living children's needs. All three issues around access, personalized services and family integration suggest themes for future research.

8.5 Social Programmes for street children

Targeting street children

Mexico's flagship national Programme for street children *From the Street to Life* was discovered in this Puebla City study to have sidelined individual street-living children, through a combination of: widening the target population to encompass the much larger population of 'vulnerable' children; filtering operations through social interventions (CSO and governmental) and programme regulations which biased support in favour of vulnerable or working children over street-living children; and reporting regulations which did not require service providers to target hard-to-reach street-living children. Few children in the case study benefited from grants under the programme, and no changes to social intervention approaches, services or activities were identifiable.

The Programme in Puebla, on the findings of this case study, failed to achieve its stated aim: '*to promote the connection and coordination of efforts between public, private and social sectors which prevent and treat the phenomenon of children in street situations and their families, in order to contribute to resolving and giving integral treatment, in the medium and long term, to this problem*' (SNDIF, 2004a: 37). Several important social interventions experienced by street-living children were not represented in the Programme: service providers addressing antisocial behaviour; police; and drug rehabilitation were all excluded. Families were also marginalized by lack of representation at any level of planning or evaluation, and at service level by institutional approaches taken by some participants not to promote family integration for street-living children.

Local Welfare's 'No More Coins' Programme, also designed for street children, in practice focused service provision on street-working children and their families, with individual street-living children invited to join if they wished. Although there was evidence that this approach reached some street-living children, their access was generally not sustained as key street-living child circumstances were overlooked: drug use was not addressed, nor were relationships with family, and insecurities brought about by street living were not addressed through protection services.

Of interest for future programmes, however, was the finding that City Welfare's No More Coins programme facilitated street-living children's access to a range of welfare services. Although these services pre-existed No More Coins, this Programme allowed children attracted by the publicity campaign to access all Welfare services through a single access point. This change allowed children to access school, shelter, grant payment, shelter and other support services and was successful in attracting some interest from street-living children. Evidence from the social interventions section above suggests that a more personalized and intensive approach to surmount additional street-working children's hurdles to integration might have brought about longer participation.

Broad-based Programmes

Gaps identified in service provision by social interventions for street-living children, most notably drug rehabilitation and family reintegration, reflected lack of coordination between social programmes. From the Street to Life and No More Coins as targeted programmes for street children could have helped drug-using street-living children by developing direct contacts with Puebla's broad-based drug rehabilitation social programme. An inter-sectoral approach could have identified gaps between street-

living children's needs, based on their drug use from a very young age, and the lack of drug rehabilitation services available for that age-group. Case study findings suggest that such an approach was already in use between education and social welfare to provide compensatory education programmes which reached street-living children through social welfare interventions and also through CSO programmes.

An intra-sectoral approach to social welfare programmes would likewise be well placed to detect inconsistencies between a social welfare policy approach promoting family integration and a targeted social welfare programme for street children which did not encourage family reintegration. Evidence that social welfare provided workshops for families on emotional health and violence prevention, suggested that capacity existed within the system, at least at design level, for social interventions to support street-living children's families and facilitate reintegration.

8.6   Social Policies

The findings of this case study evidenced a fragmented social policy approach to street children. Both the targeted social programmes for street children, From the Street to Life and No More Coins, were disarticulated and no evidence was found of policy articulation between either of these programmes and broad-based social programmes of relevance to street children. In practice, social programmes and social interventions were found to work independently of each other except through bilateral referrals or arrangements between two institutions.

Chapter 3's discussion of the Social Welfare Law 2004 (SWL 2004) and the Social Development Law (SDL 2004) found that the SWL 2004, like its predecessor of 1986 before it, failed to specify mechanisms for planning, delivery or evaluation of social interventions, had no binding powers and no guaranteed budgetary attributions. The SWL's situation was compared and contrasted in Figure 3.1 with the SDL 2004 which established a national social development policy framework of principles, objectives, priorities and planning mechanisms, with binding powers and guaranteed budgetary attributions. Although this thesis did not set out to compare the effects of the 2 legal instruments, the case study findings suggest that the weak legal framework surrounding social welfare policy weakened the capacity of social programmes and social interventions to deliver effective services to street children. At the same time, the existence of the SDL 2004 suggests that social welfare policy framework could be strengthened and lessons learned from social interventions developed within the SDL framework might be usefully applied to social welfare.

The social policy process was conceived for this thesis as a circular process (see Figure 1.3), in which social policy was instrumentalized through social programmes, delivered through social interventions, experienced by street children and informed by street children's experiences. While appreciating the weakness of the social policy legal framework, lessons can be learned from problems identified within the circular process, using the core of this case study – street-living children's experiences of social interventions. In light of the identified policy failures (for example, drug rehabilitation, family integration) detected in this case study, feedback into policy making can be understood as critical to raise awareness of the issues and take corrective action.

Feedback into social policy-making has long been recognized to have several facets, from how data is collected, analysed and presented, to policy-maker receptivity and opportunities to influence the policy-making process (eg Bulmer, 1982; Weiss, 1986)

In this study, there was little evidence of data collection around street children's experiences for social welfare policies with the exception of the 100 Cities research study findings. Chapter 4's findings suggested that positioning street-living children in research as 'working children' was unhelpful to street-living children in terms of generating government social policies and interventions to meet their individual needs. Representing a small, perhaps 2%, subset of working children in the '100 Cities' research, and with known differences in their characteristics and circumstances from the great majority of working children, street-living children were clumsily researched and their particular situations relegated to report footnotes (SNDIF et al, 2004). Study biases in question design and the use of a survey as the main research tool served largely to confirm existing data and prejudices surrounding street-living children. 100 Cities simply found that street-living children were abused by their families and by police; no recommendations were made on how to address these particular problems, or others confirmed by the study such as street-living children's high average drug use, low school attendance and marginalized working conditions. Nor were recommendations made on the wider issue of how to enable children to leave street living. 100 Cities' recommendations were trained exclusively on working children living at home and in school (DIF, 2004: 60).

However, although these studies can be criticized for inappropriate methodology and biased research design, they did report findings of particularly high incidence among street-living children of drug use, of poor school attendance and of difficulties with

families, suggesting that relevant data and interpretation had been made available to policy-makers about street-living children. Nevertheless, it is not easy to see how such knowledge was used in designing the targeted social programmes and their resulting social interventions.

Evidence of 100 Cities research as a whole influencing policy was demonstrable in the choice of Puebla as a participant city in 'From the Street to Life' (on the basis of the numbers of working children reported in both studies) and in Welfare's use of these studies in publicity for that Programme. But evidence of street-living children's particularly complex needs being met did not emerge from this study. On the contrary, From the Street to Life was found to have implicitly reconstructed street children to fit into a larger target population (vulnerable children) using activities (grants for education and food) which missed key priorities of street-living children (such as access to family and drug rehabilitation). With the exception of the 100 Cities research, Welfare's internal data collection systems for monitoring and evaluation of social programmes were discovered to be limited to head-counts of beneficiaries and financial accounting. Such systems favour beneficiaries for whom inputs are low and outputs are high – in other words, children with low complexity problems which can be easily resolved. Street-living children's situations are, as reported in the literature and fully supported by this case study, multi-layered.

Welfare also had no mechanisms in any of its social programmes to consult end-users or otherwise systematically gather qualitative information about their experiences in social interventions. This sits in contrast with Social Development's systematic data collection and analysis requirements, including a transparent and cumulative register of beneficiaries (passed from one administration to another) and regular consultation with

both end-users for evidence-based input and independent academics for transparency. And although Welfare policy-makers expressed interest in this case study in finding models of good practice with street children in order to help policy formulation, no systems were in place to identify such models, no institutional memory was available to build criteria or assess impact of previous programmes for street children, and no consultation had been established with specialist CSOs or other stakeholders to foster collective learning and sharing of experiences.

With little evidence-based learning available to guide policy-making, and operating within a weak social welfare legal framework, it is safe to conclude that policy-making during the 2002-2005 period of the research was driven by policy-makers' and their advisors' own perceptions and understandings of street children. Social welfare policy was formulated on the premise of a socially constructed group of 'street children', a group that was 'deconstructed' into individuals during policy implementation in order to distribute street-living children amongst existing social services. All street children were constructed by Social Welfare as 'vulnerable' and therefore legitimate subjects of social welfare, buttressed by government-sponsored research which confirmed rather than challenged the dominant view of street children as vulnerable. In so doing, individual street-living children were further marginalized from the policy process.

This argument concludes that policy makers lacked information about: the depth of complexity of street-living children's situations; the particularity of their circumstances; and existing service delivery experiences which suggest that street-living children may benefit from being targeted independently of other groups of children, and in personalized formats which view them more holistically, in order for those children to be able subsequently and in parallel to access services more broadly available.

8.7 Advancing the discussion of social policies for street children

The design of this case study has allowed research of a set of complex and unusual circumstances: drilling down from international level, to explore individual children's experiences of a city's social interventions and programmes before moving upwards again to assess social policy discourse in the light of children's experiences. By linking areas of research usually considered independently of each other – the street, families, social interventions, social programmes and social policies - the study was well positioned to identify links and fault-lines in the process from policy formulation to service delivery. By studying street children's experiences the study was well placed to surface matches and gaps between policy discourse and end-user experiences and, more tentatively, to explore comparative service effects for street children. By bringing family and service provider views to bear in creating 'thickness' around data collected from street children, this study drew attention to the importance of recognizing family, police and other stakeholder involvement as important to take into account for policy-making and in research about street children.

Research findings suggesting street children may be better off in the street than at home (Hecht, 1998) and that the streets may present *'their best possibility for survival and happiness'* (Costa Leite and Abreu Esteves 1991: 130), which have relied almost exclusively on children's own stories, are challenged by this thicker research which suggests that children may be better off at home, if adequately supported by social interventions able to be responsive to children's and family circumstances.

On the other hand, an assertion made about policies for street children that '*as a target for policymakers, street children have hijacked the urban agenda, together with*

associated planning budgets, to the detriment of other groups of disadvantaged children' (Ennew, 2000: 169) can be understood, in the light of this study's findings, as a reading of policy discourse, rather than of the planning budgets or the social programmes and interventions experienced by street children in practice.

Noticeable in the literature is the fault line between sociological and psychological research: psychological studies have tended to focus on the individual child, whether in the streets or in relation to family or services; while sociologically-based studies have focused more on street children as beneficiaries of governmental or community-based services. This case study calls into question the lack of crossover between research on the individual and society, by suggesting that street-living children and services are inextricably linked, with implications that a psycho-social approach to research may be more suited to inform social policy-making concerning children in street situations.

8.8 Recommendations

In making recommendations about street-living children, it is important to remind ourselves that numbers of street-living children, borne out in the 100 Cities studies' conclusions and supported by this case study findings, are relatively small. A second conclusion from the case study is that street-living children's complex circumstances reflect multi-layered exclusion and are not easily or quickly addressed.

Recognizing street-living children as social policy end-users

In order to respond to street-living children's characteristics and circumstances, they can be engaged as individuals rather than as a collective of 'street children'. By putting them at the centre of rehabilitation-based policy-making, rather at the end of a trickle-

down process, they are less likely to be sidelined and more likely to benefit from social interventions and programmes. Understanding street-living children as resourceful end users, a finding from this case study, means they could be more productively treated as active participants in social interventions instead of passive beneficiaries. Data should be collected about their perceptions and their behaviour in and as a result of social interventions, to ensure they are not being marginalized by social policy processes and to assess how processes are helping them to address core needs.

Recognizing families as key relationships for children

Mexican law and social policy encourage family unity, and this case study's evidence suggests that many families and street-living children want to find ways to live together, or at least maintain supportive contacts. Social policies should work to make this happen. While families must be held accountable for abuse towards their children, social programmes and interventions need to support families adequately, so they can create supportive home environments, and at the same time prepare children for reintegration. In other words, parents need help to learn how to guide and support their children, while children need help to address their experiences with violence, addictions and being out of school. These processes, which should be linked together, will require investment of time and human resources, but should produce savings in the short and longer terms in costs of maintaining children and young people in institutional environments.

Social interventions as support structures for families

Social policies at local level should focus on helping families and children build relationships with each other and within their communities to counteract intra-family turbulence and find longer-term support in social networks. This suggests personalized

interventions aimed at giving people both safety and encouragement in moving gradually from exclusion to participation. Outreach programmes designed to engage children on the streets should be led by social workers and should involve police, on-street adults and CSO providers, as well as government welfare services, building coordinated networks to enable children to access a range of relevant services once contacted.

Evidence from this case study suggests that street-living children and their families would benefit from overlapping or integrated access to services: drug rehabilitation, formal education and emotional therapy, set within a social development context. For social interventions to be sustainable, families need options for social and economic development appropriate to their situations. In Mexico this could mean linking street-living children and their families into existing social development programmes such as 'Oportunidades' [Opportunities], with social welfare as a support network fostering relationship building and parental guidance, using lessons from CSO experiences.

Joined-up policies and social programmes

The above recommendations speak to making firm links across government sectors, with CSOs, and from national through to local levels. Potential increases in costs of personalized, intensive social interventions with street-living children and their families should be offset by later savings as street children leave care and return to supportive families or to independent living with supportive family links. Pooling resources among sectors and introducing collaborative working mechanisms focused on working together towards the social inclusion of small numbers of excluded children should prove an effective investment in children, families and society.

Research

This study's findings suggest that evidence-based evaluative research needs to be incorporated as a permanent feature of social policy processes for street-living children. Qualitative research is needed to explore more carefully potential lessons in good practice, such as access to compensatory education and CSO experiences of personalized interventions with street-living children and with families. Quantitative research would be important to assess trends in service delivery for street-living children over time. Ongoing research should include periodic consultation of street children as end-users of social services, along with other key stakeholders particularly parents and service providers, possibly through purposive sampling using semi-structured interviews and focus groups. As researchers have found elsewhere, a real challenge is how to enable adults to listen to children's opinions and integrate their views into decision-making at a range of levels (Morrow, 1998). In-depth research on impacts for street children will, on this study's findings, be more useful to policy planning than research on numbers and characteristics of children on street corners. Cost-benefit research, requiring transparent planning and evaluation systems, should enable comparisons between the impacts and costs of different options for service provision, allowing policies to cost and guarantee resources for effective service provision. Psycho-social research should be encouraged to explore relationships between children and social contexts, including service provision, in order to better inform social policies aimed at social inclusion of street children and also to signal exclusionary effects of broader-based policies in order to prevent children moving on to the streets.

8.9 Relating this study to higher order debates

'Street children', agency and rights

This study contributes to the literature which shifts emphasis from street to the child in 'street child' and re-positions the child within meaningful relationships, particularly within the family and with respect to service provision.

In the first case, re-positioning the street as a limited facet of a child's life supports the conceptualization of child as agent, in which he or she negotiates the streets instead of falling passive victim to them. Children '*are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live*' (James and Prout, 1990: 8), a view supported by advocates of children's rights who, at the extreme, idealize children as completely free agents.

In the second case, however, this study repositions street children within a family context, with or without social service intervention, in which the notion of child as agent is moderated by his or her relations with family members and parent-child responsibility, with family as a dominant theme reducing the child's autonomy. This finding is less comfortable for advocates of children's rights to freedom, since it questions the effects of children, even abused children, 'released' from family obligations. The family as central to street children supports views from clinical and social psychology about the understanding the complexity of attachments between abused children and family witnesses and perpetrators. Service provision as central to supporting children and family adds a sociological perspective about understanding the partially-attached child as a social responsibility.

Children's agency and exerting family rights are not incompatible and this study contributes to the growing body of literature which recognizes the interdependency of children's development of agency with family rights and obligations (see for example Tomison and Wise, 1999 and Georgas et al, 2006). This case study supports ideas and research on parenting of current relevance in Britain, which suggest that *'relationships are at the heart of support'* (Quinton, 2004: 28), a perspective which does not exclude, and this case study argues should actively include, relationship support from social interventions and programmes.

Social 'problems' of homelessness and exclusion in social policies

This study also contributes to wider controversies about the role of social policy with respect to homelessness and social exclusion. This study's findings are consistent with theorizing about the construction of 'social problems' to reflect hegemonic ideologies and their development into *'interventions which sustain the status quo of social inequalities'* (Luiz de Moura, 2002). Construction of 'street children' as a social problem in Puebla City has positioned them as 'vulnerable', rather than as children whose rights have been denied, or as children who have been repeatedly excluded from mainstream services. Evidence from my case study suggests, in line with Bacchi's (1998) 'What's the problem? approach, that 'street children' and their families are variously represented as 'the problem', but that these are symptomatic of entrenched income inequalities in Mexican and Pueblan societies which can leave children and women in poor families and poor neighbourhoods unprotected and without resource to appropriate support. Puebla City is a wealthy, thriving urban hub, part of a large and buoyant Mexican economy. While Mexico and Puebla City have high human

development levels, many parts of the country, including Puebla State also has high and deeply rooted levels of social and economic inequality.

Recent research into social housing and homelessness has suggested that a variety of relatively low-cost but sensitively designed initiatives are preventing homelessness in Britain, noting that *'they do not start from the assumption that there is a single solution, to be chosen by administrators on behalf of those who make it to the end of the rationing process.'* (Hills, 2007). This case study offers support for multi-faceted initiatives for excluded sectors of society which emphasize the views of end-users as integral to their development.

Ethical Code (modified) for use with case study child interviewees
Código Ético para aplicar en entrevistas con niños, niñas y jóvenes:

Compromisos de Sarah Thomas de Benitez (entrevistadora):

(1) BUSCAR ACUERDO DEL ENTREVISTADO:

(a) Al principio de cada sesión, explicar y pedir el permiso del entrevistado para poder grabar su entrevista en audio, explicando que:

- se puede poner en 'pausa' la grabación en cualquier momento y resumirla según las indicaciones del entrevistado

- su participación es voluntario y se puede parar la entrevista en cualquier momento según el deseo expresado por el entrevistado

(b) Al final de la entrevista, explicar que si haya comentarios suyos en la entrevista que quisiera citar, el entrevistado estará consultado antes de usarlos, para checar:

- se preferiría poner la(s) citación(es) bajo su propio nombre o usar un nombre ficticio

- que se captó adecuadamente, sin distorsión, lo que quería el entrevistado expresar

(2) CONFIDENCIALIDAD:

(a) Al principio de cada sesión, explicar y asegurar que el entrevistado entienda las condiciones de privacidad de la información generada en la entrevista, especialmente que:

- la grabación en audio estará almacenada en un diskette y luego transferido a un PC, para tener un registro fiel de lo que decimos, por la entrevistadora y nadie mas tendrá acceso a esos archivos

- la entrevistadora no hablará del contenido de esta entrevista, ni lo hará llegar, con ninguna otra persona

(b) Al final de la entrevista, explicar que:

- para citaciones suyas, el entrevistado y la entrevistadora pueden acordar un nombre ficticio que le represente y se puede lograr acuerdos sobre cambios de detalles que podría llegar a identificarlo

- cuando la entrevistadora termine toda la investigación, un escrito de su grabación se juntará con los demás escritos de las grabaciones para mandarlas a un 'banco de información' que otros investigadores universitarios podrían llegar a consultar. Y su grabación se quedará con la entrevistadora.

(3) PROTECCION:

(a) Al principio de cada sesión, explicar que el entrevistado entienda que:

- la entrevistadora esta sujeto a las reglas de profesionalismo y ético de la Universidad de Londres y que esta capacitada tanto en códigos de conducta vigentes para hacer entrevistas con personas bajo la edad de 18 años como en los derechos de los niños

- la entrevistadora busca entender al entrevistado, no tiene ningún interés en juzgarle

- el entrevistado no necesita contestar a ninguna pregunta ni hace algo que le hace sentir mal o incomodo

(b) Al final de cada sesión, pedir su permiso para:

- hacer una segunda sesión, bajo las mismas condiciones, en la siguiente semana

- platicar juntos con una persona indicada, si en la entrevista se generó información delicada que podría ir en contra de los derechos del entrevistado

Si el entrevistado no da su permiso, entonces se da por terminado la entrevista, sin problema.

Si da su permiso, acordamos con el educador responsable la fecha, hora y lugar de la siguiente sesión

List of Family Members Interviewed

Case Study Child No.	Name chosen by Child for Case Study	Family Members Interviewed
2	Rafa	Older sister Adriana (aged 26) Older sister's husband Antonio (aged 28) Their daughter Ixchel (aged 8)
3	Abraham	Mother Carmela Grandfather Eustolio (mother's father) Step-father Crecencio Older brother David (aged 15)
4	Aureliano	Mother Teresa Grandmother Eudiosa (father's mother) 1 older (ex-street-living) brother Giblberto (19) and his wife Annie (18) 2 older sisters Marie & Meche (aged 16 & 15) 2 younger brothers Angel & Rodolfo (aged 10 & 6)
5	Cásares	Older brother Miguel (aged 18) Aunt Mila (father's sister)
6	Hector	Mother Verónica 2 half-brothers Daniel & Jaime (aged 8 & 7) Aunt Griselda (step-father's sister)
7	Lalo	Father Amancio Step-mother Ninfa Older sister Anali (aged 14) Younger half-brother Jonathan (aged 8)
8	Giovanni	Mother Leticia Older brother Agusto (aged 12)
9	Roberto	Mother Lidia Step-father Alfredo 3 younger brothers Marcos, Mario & Luis (aged 16, 14 & 10)
12	Cristián	Mother Clara Oldest brother José (aged 32)
23	Edgar	Father Juan Mother Bonifacia Uncle Gustavo (father's brother) Older brother Pablo (aged 19) Younger sister Sara (aged 11)

Source: Field diary spreadsheet and case study audit trail (see Fig. 1.9 for photos and basic data about the 24 street-living children in this Case Study)

Annex 3

List of Gatekeepers, Policy-Makers and Key Informants Interviewed

Interviewee Category	Interviewee Posts	Interviewee Chosen Names
Gatekeepers (27)	Puebla State Welfare – PAMAR - Coordinator, and From the Street to Life Puebla State - Coordinator	Uzziel Avalos
	Puebla State Welfare's Children's and Teenage Shelters - Head psychologist	Carmen Lastra Vaught
	Puebla State Welfare - Child Protection Services Representative to Puebla State's Remand Home	Yazmin Adriana Urbina García
	Puebla State Institute of Public Welfare (IAPEP) – Sub-director of Charity	Claudia Olivares Rodriguez
	Puebla State Remand Home (CORSMIEP) – Director	José Enrique Flores Banuelos
	Puebla State Remand Home (CORSMIEP) – Technical sub-director	Mónica Ruiz
	Puebla City Welfare - Coordinator Street Children Programme	Israel Gonzaga
	Puebla City Welfare - Sub Director of Programme Tracking and Evaluation	Ana Montiel
	Puebla City Welfare - Educator Street Children Programme	Lorena Barquin Garcia Villoslada
	JUCONI CSO – Director General	Alison Lane
	JUCONI CSO - Head of Outreach	Ernesto Portillo
	JUCONI CSO – Head of Educational Department	Paco Margolis
	JUCONI CSO – Health Specialist	Lulú Perez
	IPODERAC CSO - Executive Director	Fernando Balli
	IPODERAC CSO - Educational Director	Luisa Samaniego
	IPODERAC CSO – Head of House, ex-street child graduate from JUCONI and IPODERAC	Arturo Garcia Rosas
	Reach Glory CSO – Deputy Leader	Father Tomás Camacho
	Calasanz Homes CSO – Director, Puebla	Father Rosalio
	Living Hope CSO – Deputy Director and Administrator	Jenny Anzuara
	CSO Solidarity with Adolescents – Deputy Leader	Rafael Limón
	Chavos Banda CSO – President, lawyer	Tonatiuh Martinez
	Return to Life self-help group - Founder-leader	Emma Taja
	Return to Life self-help group – Deputy, Leader of male interns	Gustavo Taja (son of Emma Taja)
	Puebla State Centre of Youth Integration – Senior Social Worker	Sylvia Durán
	Puebla State Congress - General Secretary	Jorge Mora Acevedo
	Puebla State's Human Rights Commission - Chief of Training and Educational Promotion	Jose Victor Vasquez Juarez
	AA Puebla State's Central Office, Head of Public Information	Armando Munoz

Policy-Makers (9)	Puebla State Welfare Department - Head of Rehabilitation Models	Luz del Carmen Jaimes Echanove
	Puebla State Welfare Department - Attorney General	Rozzina Dumit Bortolotti
	Puebla City Welfare Dept - President	Patricia Sanchez de Paredes
	Puebla State Remand Home (CORSMIEP) – President and ex-head of Puebla State Welfare's Legal Department	German Escobar
	Puebla State's Mental Health Institution - Director	Juan Carlos Perez García
	National Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) - Delegate to Puebla State	Ramon Mantilla
	National Social Development Ministry (SEDESOL) – Planning and International Relations Unit - Chief	Gustavo Merino
	Puebla State Council against Addictions, CECA - Coordinator General	Benigno Romano
	Local PRD (*Partido Revolucionario Democrático*) Congressman in LVI legislature; President of Health and Disabilities Commission	Miguel Cazares García
Key Informants (7)	Street-based informant – ex-street-living child, known aged 14to the researcher, now married, father of 2	Lorenzo (aged 30)
	Street-based informant – married to street-worker and mother of 2	Edith (aged 21)
	Street-based informant - street-working, at times street-living youth	Julio *'El Güero'* (aged 22)
	Youth to Paradise self-help group for young addicts - Founder-leader	Jose Luis Zeta
	National Finance Ministry - Sub-director for Federal Expenditure	Joan Sala
	University of the Americas Puebla (UDLA) Centre of Regional Development - Director	Olga Lazcano
	Puebla State Attorney General's Office - Director of Legislation and ex-Director of Puebla's Remand Home	René Hernandez Ibarra

Source: Field diary spreadsheet and case study audit trail

Puebla State income 2000-2004, federal and state resources by year

Fiscal Years / Income Categories	2002 Mex $	2003 Mex $	2004 Mex $
Total State Income	23,873'824,400	29,074'594,200	29,023'936,800
Federal Shares (1)	8,437'168,300	9,364'399,200	10,090'366,800
Federal Contributions (2)	12,228'012,900	14,555'386,000	16,099'267,300
Federal to State	8,039'336,200	8,450'203,784	9,291'225,000
Basic & Normal Education	6,292'107,500	6,516'280,700	7,113'731,000
Health Services	943'366,100	1,212'948,300	1,371'826,600
Social Infrastructure	215'175,400	210'763,184	135'785,800
Multiple Uses	391'125,300	294'744,200	401'686,700
Adult and Technical Education	127'694,800	131'470,800	137'369,700
State Public Security		83'996,600	130'825,200
Federal to Municipality(3)	2,439'745,200	2,449'528,416	2,902'774,800
Social Infrastructure Fund	1,351'977,700	1,324'255,116	1,641'887,500
Municipal Strengthening Fund	1,087'767,500	1,125'273,300	1,260'887,300
Federal Resources re-assigned (4)	1,748'931,500	3,655'653,800	3,905'267,500
State Sources (State tax, license, rent, fines)	3,208'643,200	5,154'809,000	2,834'302,700

Source: INEGI (2005) *Finanzas Publicas Estatales y Municipales de México 2001-2004* published on www.inegi.gob.mx pp.248-340

Notes:

(1) Federal 'Shares' represent one of the State's largest funding sources. They are resources derived from binding agreements between federal, state and municipal levels to the National System of Fiscal Coordination. They aim to avoid double or triple taxation of the same activity - for example to tax workers' earnings at federal, state and local level. The formulae for distribution, regulation of delivery and other dispositions about the management of shares are found in the Fiscal Coordination Law (INEGI 2005: p.25)

(2) Federal Contributions came into force in 1995, and they have increased since then to become the largest source of State funds. These contributions are established as resources that the Federation channels to State treasuries, conditioning their spending on carrying out and reaching the objectives that are established for each type of contribution in Chapter 5 of the Fiscal Coordination Law...[...] They are regulated by technical criteria which determine budget assignation, implementation and control (INEGI 2005: p.25)

(3) Municipalities receive federal shares and contributions via the State (INEGI 2005: p. 25)

(4) Federal resources reassigned by agreement are subject to individual agreements, and they must be applied in line with the specificities laid down in the agreement (eg for the maintenance and movements of federal prisoners held in State Social Readaptation Centres). They are classified as additional Federal Contributions. (INEGI 2005: p.25)

Annex 5

Interviewed street children's experiences of residential services by number, programme, access and length of time in most recent service

Child Ref No.	Experience of residential services (earliest 1, up to most recent, 2,3,4... at top of column)	Service Access: Voluntary / Involuntary	Service accessed where and by whom	Time in latest service in months
1	4 – JUCONI NGO 3 – Puebla Remand Home - protection 2 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 1 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter	4 - Voluntary 3 – Involuntary 2 – Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	4– Referral 3– Referral 2– On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by City DIF staff	18
2	6– JUCONI NGO 5 – Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 4 – Puebla State DIF's children's shelter 3 - San Felipe Self-Help Group Annex 2 - Jóvenes al Paraíso Self Help Annex 1 - Alcance Victoria NGO	6 - Voluntary 5 – Involuntary 4 – Involuntary 3 - Involuntary 2 – Involuntary 1 – Voluntary	6 – Referral 5 – On street by police, referred by MP 4 – On street by police, referred by MP 3 – Interned by family 2 - Interned by family 1 – On street by ex-resident	12
3	6 – JUCONI NGO 5 - Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 4 – Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 3 - Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 2 - Alcance Victoria NGO 1 - Tehuacan AA Annex	6 - Voluntary 5 – Involuntary 4 - Involuntary 3 – Involuntary 2 - Voluntary 1 – Involuntary	6 – Referral 5 - On street by police, referred by MP 4 - On street by police, referred by MP 3 – Referral 2 – On street by NGO staff 1 - Interned by family	6
4	3 – JUCONI NGO 2 – Puebla Remand Home -protection 1 - Alcance Victoria NGO	3 - Voluntary 2 – Involuntary 1 – Voluntary	3 – Referral 2 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by NGO staff	6
5	7 – JUCONI NGO 6 – Puebla Remand Home -protection 5 - Puebla State DIF children's shelter 4 - Puebla State DIF children's shelter 3 – Puebla City night shelter 2 - Casa Solidaridad c/Adolescentes NGO 1 - Franciscan Orphanage Xanenetla NGO	7- Voluntary 6 – Involuntary 5 – Involuntary 4 – Voluntary 3 - Voluntary 2 - Voluntary 1 – Involuntary	7 - Referral 6 – Referral 5 - On street by police, referred by MP 4 – On street by State DIF staff 3 – On street by City DIF staff 2 – Referral by Puebla City DIF 1 – Interned by family	24
6	7 – JUCONI NGO 6 – JUCONI NGO 5 - State Remand Home -misdemeanour 4 - State Remand Home -misdemeanour 3 – Puebla City night shelter 2 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 1 – Jóvenes al Paraíso AA/DA Annex	7 - Voluntary 6 - Voluntary 5 – Involuntary 4 - Involuntary 3 – Voluntary 2 - Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	7 – On street by NGO staff 6 – Referral 5 – On street by police, referred by MP 4 – On street by police, referred by MP 3 – On street by City DIF staff 2 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by self help group staff	10
7	3 – JUCONI NGO 2 - Regresar a Vivir Self-Help Group Annex 1 - Regresar a Vivir Self-Help Group Annex	3 - Voluntary 2 – Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	3 – Referral Tecamachalco City DIF 2 - Interned by family 1 – Interned by family	24
8	1 – JUCONI NGO	1 – Voluntary	1 - Invited in street	12
9	3 – JUCONI NGO 2 – Esperanza Viva NGO 1 – Caritas Centre for Children NGO	3 – Voluntary 2 – Voluntary 1 – Voluntary	3 – On street by NGO staff 2 – On street by NGO staff 1 – Walked in from street	36
10	3 – JUCONI NGO 2 – State Remand Home -protection 1 – Huamantla City DIF children's shelter	3 – Voluntary 2 – Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	3 – Referral 2 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – Interned by family	12
11	5 – JUCONI NGO 4 – JUCONI NGO 3 - Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 2 – Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 1– Jóvenes al Paraíso Self-Help Annex	5 - Voluntary 4 - Voluntary 3 - Involuntary 2 - Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	5 - On street by NGO staff 4 – Referral 3 – On street, referred by MP 2 - On street, referred by MP 1 – On street by self-help group staff	12

12	1 - Puebla City DIF night shelter	1 – Voluntary	1 – On street, with mother, by State DIF staff	12
13	2 - Puebla Remand Home (misdemeanour) 1 – San Sebastian Self-Help Group Annex	2 – Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	2 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – Interned by family	5
14	5+ -Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 4+ - Puebla Remand Home -protection 3+ – Mexico Remand Home -protection 2+ – Alcance Victoria NGO 1+ – Unidentified NGOs in Mexico City, Cuernavaca, Veracruz	5 - Involuntary 4 - Involuntary 3 - Involuntary 2 – Voluntary 1 – Voluntary	5 – On street by police, referred by MP 4 – On street by police, referred by MP 3 - On street by police, referred by MP 2 – On street by NGO staff 1 – On street by NGO staff	3
15	1 – Puebla Remand Home –protection	1 – Involuntary	1 – On street by police, referred by MP	3
16	3 - IPODERAC NGO 2 – JUCONI NGO 1 – Tlaxcala State DIF Children's Shelter	3 – Voluntary 2 – Voluntary 1 – Involuntary	1 – Referral 2 – On street by NGO staff 3 – On street by police, referred by MP	36
17	4 - IPODERAC NGO 3 – JUCONI NGO 2 - Puebla Remand Home -young offender 1 - Puebla Remand Home -young offender	4 – Voluntary 3 – Voluntary 2 - Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	4 – Referral 3 - Referral 2 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by police, referred by MP	24
18	3 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 2 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 1 – Unnamed Self-Help Group Annex	3 – Involuntary 2 - Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	3 – Referral 2 - Referral 1 – Interned with mother	3
19	2 - Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 1 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter	2 – Involuntary 1 - Involuntary	1 – On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by police, referred by MP	1
20	3 - Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter 2 – Hogares Calasanz NGO 1 – Puebla State DIF Children's Shelter	3 – Involuntary 2 – Involuntary 1 - Involuntary	3 – On street by police, referred by MP 2 – Interned by family 1 – On street by police, referred by MP	1
21	3 – Alcance Victoria NGO 2 - Alcance Victoria NGO 1 – Unnamed Self-Help Group Annex	3 – Voluntary 2 - Involuntary 1 – Involuntary	3 – Walked in from street 2 - Interned by family 1 - Interned by family	12
22	6 – Alcance Victoria NGO 5 – Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 4 – México City Borstal -young offender 3 – Pro Niños Cuernavaca 2 – Pro Ninos Mexico City 1 – México City Alcance Victoria NGO	6 – Involuntary 5 - Involuntary 4 - Involuntary 3 - Voluntary 2 – Voluntary 1 – Voluntary	6 – Interned by family 5 – On street by police, referred by MP 4- On street by police, referred by MP 3 - Referral 2 – On street by NGO staff 1 – On street by NGO staff	0.5
23	4 - Regresar a Vivir Self-Help Group Annex 3 - Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 2 - Puebla Remand Home -misdemeanour 1 – México City Alcance Victoria, NGO	4 - Involuntary 3 - Involuntary 2 - Involuntary 1– Voluntary	4 – Referral 3 – On street by police, referred by MP 2 - On street by police, referred by MP 1 – On street by NGO staff	2
24	2 - Regresar a Vivir Self-Help Group Annex 1 - Puebla Remand Home –misdemeanour	2 - Involuntary 1 - Involuntary	2 – Referral 1 – On street by police, referred by MP	2

Sources: children's interviews checked with service providers and institutional records

Street children's experiences of admission to Puebla City residential services

Children by Number	Number of admissions as 'vulnerable' children		Number of admissions as 'antisocial' children			Number of admissions as 'street children'	Total number of admissions
	Government	NGO	Government	NGO	Self-help group	NGO	All kinds of service
1	2	0	1	0	0	1	4
2	1	0	1	1	2	1	6
3	1	0	2	1	1	1	6
4	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
5	3	2	1	0	0	1	7
6	2	0	2	0	1	2	7
7	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
8	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
9	0	2	0	0	0	1	3
10	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
11	0	0	2	0	1	2	5
12	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
13	1	1	3	1	0	0	6
14	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
15	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
16	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
17	0	0	2	0	0	2	4
18	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
19	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
20	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
21	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
22	0	0	2	2	0	2	6
23	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
24	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total no. admissions	19	6	23	9	12	19	88
Total no. of children by type of institution*	12	4	15	7	10	14	62
Total no. of children by conceptual approach*	13		18			14	45
Total children	24						24

Source: interviews with 24 street children, cross referenced with service provider records

Case study interviewed children's responses to the question: '*Why did you start to live in the street*?

Child Ref. No.	Reasons cited for starting to live in the street							
	'Push' factors				'Pull' factors			
	Abuse at home	Bored at home	Other 'push' reasons	New step-parent	Liked street / travel	Invited by friends	Search for family members	Other 'pull' reasons
1	X							
2					X			
3		X			X	X		To sniff glue
4	X							
5	X		Abandoned				X	
6	X							
7	X	X	Key carer (aunt) died	X	X		X	
8		X	Found work very hard				X	
9	X		Stole/scared to go home					
10	X							
11	X	X						
12			Mother had no money		X			
13			Privacy invaded by family		X			
14	X			X				
15	X							
16	X				X	X		
17	X							
18	X							
19	X				X		X	
20	X				X			
21	X					X		
22	X				X			
23			Family made him work		X			
24	X	X			X	X		Accompanied his older brother
Total respon-ses	**18**	**5**	**7**	**2**	**11**	**4**	**4**	**2**

Source: Case Study database

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