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Mexico City: growth at the limit?

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MEXICO CITY GROWTH AT THE LIMIT?
BACK FROM THE BRINK

Mexico is the city that was always spoken of as if it was one day going to be the biggest settlement on the planet. It was probably the first of the 20th century’s monster cities to make an impression on the wider world, portrayed as an unstoppable eruption of humanity swampimg the landscape to reach the horizon in every direction. In the 1970s, predictions were made that it was well on the way to becoming a megalopolis of 30 million people or more. As it turned out, that has not happened. The city is still growing, and some of its denser historic areas have been in decline, an issue addressed by the formation of a special public-private partnership to encourage investment and development. What growth there is now concentrates in the urban sprawl beyond city limits in the administrative control of the State of Mexico. The lower-middle classes are moving out into areas where gated communities are not just for the privileged.

Certainly Mexico City grew fast from the 1940s when it began to lose its former incarnation as the Garden of Eden, blessed with a near perfect climate, reminiscent of the gold-entrenched, but shaped physically by the remains of its Aztec and its Spanish past as represented by flower studded baroque courtyards, the presence of the surrounding mountains, and the famous lake. The chemical smog that accompanied the discovery of the motorcar through the medium of the locally produced Volkswagens that once monopolised its streets made that growth look particularly threatening. That toxic haze was not helped by Mexico City’s extreme altitude, and its mountains, two elements that conspire to entrap the city’s pollution in the brown cloud that seems to thicken under the wings of descending aircraft.

Certainly Mexico City is huge, 18 million or so people now live in the sprawling metropolis. But that is a close match for Shanghai, New York and London – when their respective city regions are taken into account. All three have their own disparities in wealth, even if Mexico’s seem more violent, and more entrenched, and do not have the pervasive impact of 50 years of Mao and Marx to damp down the sometimes chaotic lawlessness of the country in the way in which China has.

There are street children and kidnappings and water shortages in Mexico City and a sewage system at the limits of its original design. But the metropolitan area never became the horror story that it sometimes threatened. For a start, its growth has started to taper off, almost to the point that one might begin to consider the idea that growth might be self limiting. And second, its reputation might have something to do with its accessibility and its proximity to the United States, and so its visibility. For those with a taste for the dizzying sense of staving into the urban abyss, Mexico City has plenty of metropoli
to get than Lagos, or Tharran, Dacca or Cairo. But Mexico City has nothing to be complacent about. It could deal with its two greatest problems: photochemical smog, caused by its infatuation with the car, and extremely low petrol prices, and water shortages that are the product of its profligate use of its underground reservoirs. But it has failed to address these issues, and between them, they could still render the city all but uninhabitable.

Mexico City has had more than the explosive growth of the flight of the dispossessed from the countryside to contend with. It has a fractured government system to deal with, divided between the Federal District – a territory that was tightly controlled by the federal government in the same way that Washington, D.C., and many other national capitals were until they began acquiring locally elected mayors and the surrounding municipalities of the State of Mexico until recently the two administrations have failed to come to a shared view of what the place needs to function properly. To complicate matters further, the whole country is having to deal with a gradual reawakening of a national democratic politics.

Mexico City has within it the elements of a global city and the visible impacts of a globalised economy, both negative and positive. It has slick business parks and boutique hotels, and it is loosing industrial jobs to both the NAFTA-boosted factories on the US border and more recently to China. An overvalued peso is not helping either. But it is also a city where what could be seen as pre-modern conditions still prevail in certain aspects of civic life. It displays the chronic symptoms of uneven development in its lurch toward the global economy, illegal land development in some areas, and the informal economy is far more than the all pervasive street traders and the 120,000 taxis on the city’s busy roads. The Federal District in particular has seen the impact of competing power centres. The five year track record of the left leaning Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador says a lot about what happens when a democratic politician has to juggle constituencies with radically diverging ambitions for a city. Yet recent agreements between the current mayor, Alejandro Encinas, and Enrique Peña Nieto, governor of the State of Mexico – each from opposing parties – to collaborate across boundaries to solve the city’s structural problems does give rise to some optimism about Mexico City’s future.

Obrador, who has recently stepped down to run for president in the national elections to be held in the summer of 2006, was the second elected mayor since the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) relaxed its three generation grip on the country and its capital. The presidential candidate of the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD), Obrador is now vying for the presidential palace with candidates from both the PRI and the National Action Party (PAN), the party of the current incumbent Vincente Fox. The PRD’s symbol is a highly charged Aztec sun, which might go some way to explain Obrador’s vigorous campaign as mayor against the national government’s imposition of daylight saving measures.

On the other hand, Mexico City is clearly also a part of the modern world. One of Obrador’s populist measures was to cancel Microsoft software licenses at city hall, and adopt Linux as a more open operating system instead. As mayor, he kept a punishing personal schedule with a working day that started at 5.00 am and included 6.30 am press conferences. While there have been allegations against party members and city officials, Obrador stoutly defends his personal reputation for incorruptibility. His two most visible legacies to the city reflect the extremes of urban life in Mexico. On the one hand, he has introduced dedicated bus lanes, modelled on the precedents of Curitiba and Bogotá, which have transformed public transport in the city and demonstrated that turning around a transport system does not have to entail crippling levels of expenditure. On the other, his personal grand projet, the massive and quixotic plan to transform the Peripheral Ring into a double-decker urban highway, asks more questions than it answers. It is enormously expensive but it appears to benefit only the relatively prosperous car owning residents of the wealthy areas through which it passes. Visually, the tangle of concrete columns threaded on top of existing surface roads is already a lurid scar on the landscape of the city. Indeed it is a curious outcome for a project initiated by a left leaning mayor. But then this is already a city full of unintended outcomes. When the city tried to restrict car use by introducing odd and even number plate only days, the response of the rich was of course to buy a second car. And all of this in a city in which commutes of three hours are forced on the maids who work for the rich but live in far distant settlements.

It seems that many of Mexico City’s infrastructure systems have failed to address the implications of rapid growth and change. The city has a metro system that was its pride and joy when Mexico hosted the Olympics in 1968, an event that marked the country’s attempt at modernity. Originally planned to serve a regional mass passenger service, the line is now the backbone of the public transport system, and far from being a network, it is simply a set of parallel lines on the eastern side of the city. The metro was state of the art when it was built, but has failed to adapt to what has been going on around it and the city has outgrown it. Mexico City has a historic centre that was transformed into a modernist vision of a car based society. Indeed the pre-NAFTA economy was highly dependent on car exports and the maids who work for the rich but live in far distant settlements. It has an urban development pattern that seems to recall that of Los Angeles: a city in which commutes of three hours are a fact of life.

The city has been growing chaotically for long enough to have already revealed the limits of modernisation.

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THE COMPLEXITIES OF CHANGE

The Metropolitan Zone of Mexico City (zmcm) is the most valuable, monumental and complex work that the country has constructed in its entire history: in 2005, almost one third of the gross domestic product was concentrated in this area. Its urban sprawl covers approximately 2,000 km², home to 19.5 million residents. The zmcm is currently the second most populated city on the planet, although its economic scope is that of a secondary global metropolis, the function of which is to link up Mexico’s urban system with the main super-cities worldwide.

Mexico City has always been the economic centre of the country, although this predominance has been diminishing in recent years. Having increased its share of the gross domestic product (GDP) from 35-38% between 1960 and 1980, the crisis of the 1980s had a greater effect on the city than on other parts of the country, and its share of the GDP fell to 32% in 1988. After Mexico’s inclusion in the global economy, this index has been modernising themselves with the implementation of the macroeconomic dynamics of the zmcm explain its urban growth and the evolution of the labour market which, in the early 21st century, are facing one of the greatest challenges of their modern history. The intermittent crisis since the 1980s and economic opening-up have affected them significantly, dramatically reducing the real income of its population in the 1990s. In addition, the collapse of federal public investment in the city makes it impossible to modernise its infrastructural framework and it is therefore hard for the zmcm to aspire to compete with European and Asian cities which are modernising themselves with the implementation of mega projects of worldwide importance. In a comparative classification of levels of productivity and competitiveness of 66 metropolitan regions from various countries according to the real GDP per capita, as the basic measure of productivity, the zmcm comes 63rd. This situation is explained by the low levels of human capital, research, innovation and technology and by an insufficiently competitive market.

The urban sprawl of Mexico City is made up of a vibrant amalgam of 4.2 million homes (2000), a total of 529,000 commercial and services buildings and 53,000 industrial places of business (2003), all of which is joined together by a system of highways, facilities and infrastructure. All these elements constitute 1,826km² of urban area, presenting an average density of 9,300 residents/km² (2000). However, the magnitude and characteristics of its future urban growth will depend on the economic dynamics and the labour market of the zmcm. The particularities of the labour structure are summarised below, to complement this vision of the city as a productive social force.

In 1960, the zmcm contained 17% of the country’s economically active population (EAP), 22% of secondary sector workers and 34% of tertiary sector workers. Thereafter, its de-industrialisation meant that in 2003, secondary sector labour fell to 19% and tertiary sector labour to 25%. Within its labour structure, an increasing trend towards the tertiary sector can be seen; the proportion of the population working in services then rose from 58% in 1960 to 75% in 2003. In the last year, the EAP in the zmcm totalled 7.7 million. The major inequalities in the income from the various occupations are given concrete form in sharp socio-economic contrasts within the metropolitan area. According to the spatial disintegration of the zmcm into more than three thousand Basic Geo-statistical Areas (BGA), 17% of the population are concentrated in the upper and upper-middle socio-economic classes, 39% in the middle classes and 44% in the lower classes.

It is estimated that within the zmcm, there were 33 million journeys/person/day in 2005, with an average journey time of 47 minutes; this totals 26 million travel hours per day. These totals represent the equivalent of 3.2 million eight-hour working days, or one day’s work by 42% of the active population in 2003. This data exemplifies the economic impact of the inadequacy of the urban services. Improving them is vital in order to have more efficient and productive cities.

In a scenario of moderate economic growth, it would be hoped that the zmcm will increase its population by 4.2 million between 2000 and 2020. To cope with this expansion, 37,000 hectares of new developed space will be required. The political and economic future of the country will depend on Mexico City being able to have the public and private investment necessary to achieve this urban expansion with the appropriate infra-structure and facilities in order to join in, on a competitive basis, with cities worldwide because if it does not, its future will be very uncertain.

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CONGESTION AT THE LIMITS?

Behind the serious transport problem in the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City (AMCM) lies the predominance of low-capacity vehicles both in collective and in private transport. Around 50,000 minibuses and microbuses handle the majority of journeys in the city. Added to these are over 103,000 taxis in the Federal District and probably over 160,000 throughout the city, along with approximately 450,000 vehicles carrying loads. These units use the highways intensive and their fragmented and "home-made", corporate structure is highly inefficient with low productivity, both for the users and for the carriers and for the city in general. Meanwhile, private transport handles only 19% of journeys but uses 95% of the vehicles, which exceeds the 4 million units in circulation and uses the highest proportion of road space in the city as a whole.

The result of the above is extreme congestion and journey stress, particularly serious along the main highway corridors and access roads of the city and during rush hour. One third of all journeys are made in the morning rush hour alone, and these journeys are taking longer and longer. In the second half of the 1990s, we saw the determining dominance of longer and longer journeys made in Low-Capacity vehicles. A decade before that, only one third of journeys were done in Low-Capacity vehicles; this rapid and negative transformation of the composition of the urban transport service was the result of the application of erroneous government policies, which, for example, decided on the freezing and subsequent removal of the service of 4,000 buses in Mexico City, known as Ruta-100 and the promotion, to offset this, of vans, taxis and minibuses as alternatives for saving public resources, for self-employment and for collective transport. In other words, there was a dismantling of a collective transport system based on government-owned high-capacity resources, promoting in return deregulation, privatisation and fragmentation, further reducing the efficiency and productivity of high-capacity collective transport.

THE PROMOTION OF PRIVATE MOTORISATION

During the 1970s and 1980s, the city saw accelerated demographic growth which, above all, was translated into territorial expansion. This led to the reinforcement of the “horizontal extensive growth” of the AMCM, which incorporated increasingly outlying areas with less access to infrastructure and services. This was translated into longer, delayed and costly journeys to get to work, schools and services, which make metropolitan journeys and the rise in motorisation one of the most significant aspects of this problem in the city. The oil “boom” of the mid-1990s promoted the purchase of cars. This trend deepened with the signature of the NAFTA, from the second half of the 1990s onwards, the growth in car assembly was explosive.

THE EXPLOSION OF THE CAR

The impressive dynamics of the car industry has been translated, for the AMCM, into an explosive growth of new vehicles which, at the end of the 1990s, was calculated at between 250,000 and 300,000 additional vehicles on average per year. Considering that during this period, the population growth index for the AMCM was reduced to just 1.5% per year on average, the growth rate of the total number of cars in the city is four times greater than the population rate. Under these conditions and after nearly fifteen years of non-construction of major roads, the current Federal District Government (GDF) decided to push forward a rapid road programme, given that the deficit calculated from the same totals 25%. This programme forms part of the sector’s Integral Programme and is complemented by various collective transport measures.

TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS

As part of this Programme, the most impressive works are the road bridges located in the ravines on the west side, the “Two Tiers of the Ring Road”, the Eje Vial 5 Poniente, the San Antonio motorway exit, giving traffic alternatives in the strategic west zone of the city. We should also mention the progress of the other motorway exits of the Eje Tropical Metropolitano Oriente. Alongside, in collective transport, we have seen renovation of the infrastructure of significant stretches of underground, lines 2, 5 and 9, and nine trains have been introduced on line 2. In addition, the transport capacity of the public bus company Red de Transportes de Pasajeros (RTP) has increased by 50% and 19.4 km of Metrobus have been introduced. Metrobus has 34 stations and runs 80 articulated buses running on low-emission engines along Insurgentes, one of the city’s main avenues. A Cycle Path Project has also been set up, to cover 90 km. In addition, a Suburban Train Project has been decided on, to the north-west, covering 25 km, using the existing rail-line.

AND WHAT ABOUT MOBILITY?

Metrobus and the Cycle Paths are brand-new initiatives that lack additional investment in facilities, stations, signposts, dissemination and maintenance in order to allow for their more efficient and optimum use. Also, in contrast with other major cities, there has been no cultivation of a culture of the added value of collective transport, even less of alternative transport; only 5% of the users of Metrobus and the underground also own cars. Also, with the exception of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, none of the city’s universities has infrastructure or programmes that promote alternative transport. This is particularly serious when the city is expanding territorially in a greater proportion than the population, favouring dispersion and disintegration. As a result, there are elements that are indicative of the fact that metropolitan mobility is being organised along urban corridors that limit the possibility of enjoyment of the city by the citizens. A new type of segregation and confinement is being promoted, even for those who have the privilege of mobility in transport.

Bernardo Navarro Benítez is a Professor at the Autonomous Metropolitan University.
MORE HOUSING OR A BETTER CITY?

How do we recover the loss of housing in central areas without increasing segregation in the city? How do we respond to the housing needs of the low-income population? If building is forbidden in outlying neighborhoods and a significant segment of the population cannot access housing in the center, then where exactly do people live?

The answers are increasingly complex, largely due to the lack of any co-ordination between the Federal District (FD) and the State of Mexico, patently clear in the housing sector. In addition to working with different town-planning programmes and norms, in the FD, measures have been adopted to regulate housing production and promote a more balanced urban development, without considering that the FD forms part of the metropolitan area; it does not have the resources to buy land to dormitory zones of the city.

How do we recover the loss of housing in the city center, thanks to programmes of the Housing Institute (INVI-DF), with its high subsidy levels. The solution put forward by developers in the districts raises new problems for public transport on already saturated highways.

The scenario today is very different: the supply of free land in the city center has been reduced and has become more expensive; there is growing pressure on working-class housing due to its development potential for the construction of middle-class housing, and the FD does not have any reserves. According to Bando Dos, there will be no alternative for the development of working-class and social housing other than the metropolitan districts.

Bando Dos needs to be revised in light of its impacts both within and outside the limits of the FD, and on the living conditions of the average and low-income population. Tools need to be designed so that the FD can recover the added value that generates public investment in housing, in order to carry on producing housing other than the metropolitan districts.

With the new housing produced in the city centre between 2000 and 2005, just over 200,000 people stayed or returned; a positive balance for recycling of the area, which should be recorded with the results of the 2005 Housing Count.

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Since the 1950s, the urban area of the FD has exceeded the limits, accelerating the development of middle-class housing estates to the west, in districts bordering the State of Mexico. At the same time, the industrial zone to the north has been consolidated, and with this, the construction of public housing developments concentrated to the north and east of the city.

Whilst there is increasing deterioration and loss of housing in the working-class districts in the center, where the capacity for more profitable uses of the land is growing, the low-income population is increasing significantly, a population that is turning to the unofficial market in order to meet its housing needs. Thus, there has been a proliferation of clandestine estates and encroachment on neighbourhoods and districts to the east and south-east. Middle-class housing developments are located in the central band of the FD and the residential areas to the west and south; they make up the “city of the upper classes”, which extends to neighbouring districts.

The FD forms part of the metropolitan area; it does not have the resources to buy land to dormitory zones of the city. An example of these measures: the ban on the expenditures outside its limits and that, at the same time, these actions have repercussion both within and outside the limits of the FD, and on the living conditions of the average and low-income population. Tools need to be designed so that the FD can recover the added value that generates public investment in housing, in order to carry on producing housing other than the metropolitan districts.

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The solution put forward by developers in the districts raises new problems for the population: outlying locations that mean long, expensive travel and a lack of basic services and facilities. As for the city, it will continue losing its population, and the floating population will rise, along with the requirement for public transport on already saturated highways.

To cope with rising land prices, private developers have increased density in housing developments of social and working-class interest, which according to DeMet, rose from 350 housing units/hectare in 2000 to over 650 housing units/hectare in 2005. They have also reduced living space from 57 to 51m². The INVI-DF has used up its reserve of land in the city; it does not have the resources to buy land and depends on expropriation by the local government in order to continue working in this part of the city. With the new housing produced in the city centre between 2000 and 2005, just over 200,000 people stayed or returned; a positive balance for recycling of the area, which should be recorded with the results of the 2005 Housing Count.
There are few parks in the world with such a mixture of history, culture, and leisure in an exceptional way. Mexico City, bringing together history, cultural facilities, public gardens, squares, parks and nature reserves, constitutes a vacuum, a negative space that gives it form, organises, structures and embellishes the city, allowing it to breathe and live. Public spaces generate balance between what is built and what is private, opening up a space that society, by consent and by norm, has given itself in order to co-exist. In general terms, we can say that it does not matter how large, extensive or dense a city is, if in return, it allows its residents to access a variety of quality public spaces. In so far as we are able to stroll through its streets, gardens, squares and parks, we will have a more equitable and democratic city.

The breathing spaces of the city

Public open spaces are democratic city spaces par excellence; one place belonging to and for everyone. Streets, boulevards, cultural facilities, public gardens, squares, parks and nature reserves constitute a vacuum, a negative space that gives it form, organises, structures and embellishes the city, allowing it to breathe and live. Public spaces generate balance between what is built and what is private, opening up a space that society, by consent and by norm, has given itself in order to co-exist. In general terms, we can say that it does not matter how large, extensive or dense a city is, if in return, it allows its residents to access a variety of quality public spaces. In so far as we are able to stroll through its streets, gardens, squares and parks, we will have a more equitable and democratic city.

However, who is responsible for ensuring that the space that belongs to everyone is not violated, occupied, invaded, abandoned or ignored? How are marginal areas of the city affected by the absence or non-existence of public space and the lack of access to culture? Do social and economic differences become even greater?

Chapultepec is the largest public space in Mexico City, bringing together history, culture, nature and leisure in an exceptional way. There are few parks in the world with such a layering of historic and symbolic weight and an intensity of cultural offerings and facilities in a single place of such ancestral natural beauty. It is also a central space, easy to access from the metropolitan area using mass low-cost transport: Chapultepec gets between 15 and 16 million visitors a year, 46% of whom come from the Federal District, 35% from the State of Mexico and just 19% from the rest of the country and overseas. Chapultepec holds a huge attraction for visitors, faced with an urban landscape that offers little, and suffers enormous disparity and inequality in the distribution of public open spaces and cultural and leisure facilities. These absences are particularly marked in the north and east, areas with the highest population growth and territorial expansion in the metropolitan area.

What is most impressive in the initiatives and actions that have been implemented to reverse the gradual decline in the ecology, services and maintenance of Chapultepec is the fact that these have been promoted and called for by civil society. The institutional model of intervention, with significant citizen participation. This model, although not perfected, has demonstrated a capacity for leadership, drive and follow-up within the enormous complexity and simultaneity of factors and problems. Fund-raising campaigns have been launched with a level of participation unheard of in our society. The masterplan for Chapultepec has made possible the co-ordination, promotion and scheduled implementation of multiple actions, which go far beyond immediate or physical intervention. A level of citizen commitment and involvement has been established that is rarely seen in urban programmes in our country. This is the lesson it has learnt. How can we move from this towards a metropolitan strategy for public spaces and cultural offerings? I would like to use this forum to propose a vision that I have called “1, 10 y 100 – Espacios Abiertos y Culturales en la Macropolis de la Ciudad de Mexico” (1, 10 and 100 – Open and Cultural Spaces in the Macropolis of Mexico City).

The great opportunity for the configuration of a major system of open spaces and super-city nature reserves is the former Vaso de Texcoco, as various architects, town-planners and engineers have pointed out. I have here a unique opportunity for the region, given the availability of federal public land in the centre, of which an enormous urban sprawl has already been created. It would be possible to create a vast network of parks, lakes, wetlands and conservation areas complemented by public service facilities for the most vulnerable population. However, Texcoco could turn into a huge problem; these areas have been invaded and populated at a rapid rate.

The cycle track along the old Cuernavaca railway is to be completed, turning it into a lineal metropolitan park (1) connecting up a chain of public spaces to the west. Starting at the lakes and wetlands in Tlahuac to the south (2) and passing via the important archaeological remains at El Cerro de la Estrella (3) and El Cerro Texcocoingo (4), the lineal park will extend to metropolitan parks to the north, in El Olivar de los Padres (5) and La Cañada de Contreras (6), finishing up in El Cerro del Ajuzco (7). This vision of cultural and archaeological metropolitan parks is complemented by the zone of the Pirámides de Teotihuacan (8), where an extensive masterplan is required, for heritage protection and for urban parks that service visitors and residents. Proposals have also been made for Tepozotlan (9), to the north, for the configuration of a system of parks, open spaces and heritage sites. The old Arzapotzalco refinery (10) also constitutes a major reserve for the creation of a large park with metropolitan cultural and leisure facilities in the central-northern region of the Federal District, representing a significant offering that balances out over-use and concentration in Chapultepec.

However, an ordered system does exist within the context of all these problems, these inequalities and this chaos in Mexico City. Heritage is an equaliser of quality of urban life because of its history, its precedent. Mexico City is a huge galaxy or universe of chaos and construction (not necessarily architecture) with multiples oases. I refer to the fact that no matter how poor or extensive or outlying a zone of the city may be, we will always find wonderful oases in a small square, the historic part of the district, a little glimmer of history. That is to say, we live in a space that has already been inhabited, which we have transformed and combined in just one city, but which we will always come across and which is always here. This is not a conservationist or nostalgic vision, but a tool that initiates an ordered system of equality.

This is my proposal for 111 urban, civic, natural, historic, accessible and cultural spaces that could, significantly, create a habitable democratic super-city.

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THE INFORMAL ECONOMY AS A WAY OF LIFE

I paraphrase Louis Wirth in his classic study of more than 60 years ago, we can affirm that the informal economy, in the context of Mexico City, has become a way of life. Mexico City is not the only city where this informal economy exists, nor the place where it is most exacerbated. However, it is perhaps where the density, scale and heterogeneity of the phenomenon most clearly show how this has altered the city both in its economic and social dynamics as well as in the production of urban space and everyday experience.

The informal is elusive, ambiguous, temporary and problematic. Today, it has become a kind of conceptual umbrella that covers forms and practices of production, consumption and social relations that make up the city. What is informal offers proof of what exists outside what is legal, regulated, taxed, controlled or lawful.

Both the definitions of informal and the attitudes to this have been changing, over time, in Mexico City. Forty years ago, the housing units built by Mario Pani were considered “Proper Housing”, whilst the hundreds of thousands of houses built in outlying districts like Ciudad Neza were considered “informal settlements” or “parachute settlements”. Today, official housing policies are more focused on supporting what used to be considered marginal than on repeating what was, before, “normative”. Today, the judicious and negative stigma of the informal economy has diminished and it has been taken on more as a problem, as a fact.

The informal economy covers the whole spectrum of the urban economic cycle, from elemental forms of production, to recycling. It includes goods and services such as housing, transport, the infrastructure, credit and occupation of space, extending as far as political negotiation. The whole informal activity features techniques, decisions and strategies that, although not very orthodox, entail a form of planning and organisation. They may be sophisticated and effective in the way in which they allocate resources, organise space and deal with both social and economic requirements.

The informal economy appears to be linked with official and regulated processes but even, more surprisingly, in some case, modifies these official processes and policies. The leading mobile telephone company, whose owner is the richest man in South America, employs sales and distribution techniques specific to the informal economy such as street selling on corners. Similarly, the mechanisms for financing, in the case of micro-credit, replicate the mutually binding and guarantee networks that have existed for years in the world of informal credit. Although some are rich and others poor, some pay taxes and others do not, the reality is that in Mexico City, we are all informal in that we benefit from it as much as we suffer.

The geography of the informal economy in Mexico City is both the historic centre and the outlying districts, both traditional public spaces – such as squares and parks – and transport interfaces. It occupies poor areas such as Iztapalapa or Chimalhuacán and privileged places such as Santa Fe. The core and periphery of Mexico City have been turned into the preferred space for the informal economy where products are sold (from telephone cards, sweets, food to pets), entertainment (mimes, clowns, acrobats), exchange of information (surveys, distribution of political propaganda), and services (cleaning windscreense or whole cars).

It has been affirmed that the informal economy has its origins in the mobility of the State and of the market to supply goods, services and employment to its citizens, acting as an escape valve; also mentioned is tolerance of disorder and crime, the lack of any simple regulation and the lack of economic policy reforms. Amongst its effects, people mention exploitation and labour abuse, privatisation of public space, erosion of standards of coexistence and civility and the loss of economic coherence. The basic question that should be asked is whether the informal economy and its effects are hindering or benefiting the urban economy as a whole.

The figures on the informal economy in Mexico City are elusive and statistically unspecified but to give an idea of the magnitude of the phenomenon, here are a few facts: – c. 60% of housing construction occurs in micro-credit; – over 60% of jobs are in the informal economy; – c. 25% of the 105,000 taxis are unofficial; – c. 25,000 street vendors operate in the Historic Centre alone, this number has increased by 40% in the last 5 years and doubles each December; – it is estimated that 65% of music sold in Mexico is pirate music.

The mantra of democracy and liberalism as prerequisites of development has been eroded by the informal economy, replacing this with the idea of regulation. In Mexico City, both the law and physical space are negotiated. It is not unusual to see that informal leaders, whether street selling or invading land, move on to party structures and elected positions. Social negotiation networks that are being woven in the informal economy are being transformed into clientele networks useful in politics.

It has been argued that the informal economy is neither good nor bad, it is simply a fact. Some see it as a problem, others as an opportunity. However, it is hard to avoid preconceptions and generate new perceptions of this urban phenomenon. Are we condemned to only making more or less intelligent, more or less marginal comments on the phenomenon? Is it possible only to work with the effects of the phenomenon, reducing its negative impacts and capitalising on its potential? Is it possible to have a taxonomy of the informal economy that better diagnoses the origin of urban policies and more effective responses? Perhaps it is possible to imagine that a new knowledge of the city might emerge from a better understanding of the informal economy as a driving and determining force in major cities.

José Manuel Castillo Olea is a Professor at the Universidad Iberoamericana

URBAN AGE CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2006
**CASE STUDIES: RECENT URBAN INTERVENTIONS IN MEXICO CITY**

1. **SANTA FE: FROM CITY DUMP TO GLOBAL NODE**
   The “corporate centre” of Lomas de Santa Fe, as locals know the area, is located in a hilly section of the sub-municipal district of Alvaro Obregón in the Federal District’s western edge. A new metropolitan centrality located 30 km from the Benito Juárez international airport and 40 km from Toluca airport in the State of Mexico, the redeveloped Santa Fe now has a completely different shape from what it did two decades ago: the area had first contained various sand mines and it subsequently became home to huge city dumps. The steep hills below the development, however, are still largely occupied by precarious popular settlements and low-income neighbourhoods.

   As part of the policies for the rehabilitation of Mexico City, Santa Fe was reconfigured from 1989 onwards. Via the Urban Development Master Plan (ZEDEC), Santa Fe was transformed into an urban mega-project which, multi-functional in nature, includes: various corporate towers where multinational corporations have set up their offices in Mexico City; large-scale commercial facilities; the campus of one of Mexico’s most prestigious private universities; and an up-market residential housing stock. Road infrastructure has been provided and Santa Fe has good connectivity with other metropolitan centralities, in fact some see the node as an extension of the corporate corridor along the Reforma Boulevard and Chapultepec. Santa Fe may be seen as a symbol of a modernising Mexico City and of the city’s rising status in the global economy.

   On the other hand, detractors may point to the highly exclusionary character of the area that is reflected in its introverted urban fabric of single-point blocks, big-box mall typologies and gated residential complexes. The reality is that Santa Fe is still growing and it may still be in order to question both the shape the area is taking and how this nodality interacts with the rest of the city.

2. **REVITALISING THE HISTORIC CENTRE**
   In the last 20 years, the historic centre of Mexico City has suffered serious economic, social and urban decay, chiefly after the earthquakes in 1985. Between 1970 and 1995; the central city zone lost approximately 40% of its population. In 1990, the Historic Centre Trust was set up with the mission of revitalising this central urban quarter and restoring its valuable yet rapidly decaying architectural heritage. The Trust’s board is made up of representatives of federal and city government, of private actors and of civil society organisations — critics argue, however, that the revitalisation process is now dominated by business elites and transnational real estate interests.

   The restoration plan underway has various objectives: to attract private investment, reactivate its unutilised building stock, ensure the economic revitalisation of the zone and to generate formal employment. On the social dimension, the aims are to improve the liveability of the area, attract residents back and solve issues of insecurity and congestion caused by the overwhelmingly large presence of street vendors. Although the plan has already begun to show positive outcomes, and there is a visible movement of employers and residents returning to the centre, several questions remain unanswered. What will be the most desirable mix of industries and activities for the area? What type of employment will be created? How will the new economy solve issues of informality? Will a revitalised centre keep a percentage of social housing? Will the most important civic space in the city maintain its socially mixed character or will processes of gentrification and displacement take hold and purge its diversity and vibrancy?

3. **REACHING FOR THE STARS: TWO-TIER MOTORWAYS**
   The Government of the City of Mexico has proposed the construction of two tiers over the Periférico (Ring Road) and the Viaducto (Miguel Aleman Viaduct) with the aim of expanding and improving the capacity of the main controlled access roads, improving journeys, reducing travel time and reducing contamination indicators.

   The project has been controversial and citizens were even consulted for their approval. The year 2002 saw the beginning of the work which, planned over four separate stages, overall, totalled 35 km of road. An approximate total investment of 2,000 million pesos will be required. The first phase of the work is complete and measures 13.8 km in length. The construction of this stage has already required 1,500 million pesos, the equivalent of a significant percentage of the 2002 budget for transport and road programmes. The second, third and fourth phases consist of the design and construction of a second tier, in both directions, over other sections of the Periférico, the Viaducto and other urban main roads.

4. **THE SUBURBAN TRAIN**
   In the Metropolitan area of Mexico City, around 35 million journeys are made daily, and those who travel from the suburbs spend between five and six hours commuting each day. The Suburban Train Project, which will connect the Federal District to the State of Mexico, is the first step towards dealing with...
the need to improve a metropolitan transport infrastructure.

The project is being co-financed by three governments: the Federal government, the State of Mexico government and the Federal District government who are joining forces to start up the railway that will connect the old central railway station of Buenavista with suburbs in the State of Mexico. Its final destination will be Huixtoco, covering 240 km. Construction of the first 25 km, from Buenavista to Cuautitlán, has already begun. The suburban train will carry 320,000 passengers a day, mostly workers and students who will save more than 2.5 hours daily on each round trip. The fare will be equivalent to what people are paying today on other means of transport. The train will also contribute to reducing the road problem and will have a positive impact on environmental conditions in the area.

3. METROBUS: THE FUTURE OF COLLECTIVE TRANSPORT IN MEXICO CITY?

It is estimated that in the Federal District, there are already 3.2 million registered vehicles, which are responsible for 70% of the air contamination. With the central objective of reducing road congestion and contaminating emissions, the Federal District has promoted the construction of a dedicated-lane system since 2002. This initiative follows the success of the BRT systems (Bus Rapid Transit) in South American cities such as Curitiba, Bogotá, Sao Paulo and Quito. With the advantage that these use existing road infrastructures, the BRT systems have constituted an option that is economically more viable than other collective transport systems such as the underground, which requires approximately 10 times the investment.

Inaugurated on 19 June 2005, Metrobús required an estimated investment of 48 million pesos in road works and approximately 212 million pesos in coaches. It has approximately 85 articulated buses that travel along the same 20 km of Avenida Insurgentes at an average speed of 21 km/h. It has 34 stops and 2 terminals (Dr. Gámez and Indios Verdes). On its busiest section, Metrobús carries around 5,500 passengers per hour.

4. URBAN PARKS

It seems almost unnecessary to mention the vital importance of parks, green and open spaces in dense urban areas. Urban parks beautify their surroundings and are fundamental as aquifer recharge zones, for producing oxygen and for reducing contaminants. Green spaces in the Federal District cover only 12,828 hectares. The green space average is 1.5 m²/resident if we take into consideration both private and public green spaces and this figure falls to only 0.2 m²/resident if limited to public green spaces. The green space per capita in Mexico City therefore is not only much lower than that available in European cities but it also falls considerably below levels achieved in other high-density cities with comparably large populations such as Shanghai.

Because of these shortages, many green spaces have suffered serious damage due to overuse. A case in point is Chapultepec Park. With 686 hectares of woods, the largest regional park in Latin America is visited by 15 million people a year and up to 17,000 visitors each Sunday. Because this space had been invaded by street vendors, waste and contamination, the Chapultepec Park Trust was set up for its restoration. The aim was to gather resources and draft a masterplan to restore every corner of this urban asset, which is also one of the few remaining public squares in the city. Other ambitious initiatives include the proposal to recreate the dried-up lake in the Vaso de Texcoco zone; to produce a new ecological park on the former Azcapotzalco Refinery and join it to other parks along a green linear corridor; and to distribute pocket parks throughout the city.

Mexico City seems to be rediscovering the importance of high quality green spaces and, in this respect, taking the same path shown in initiatives such as London’s Green Grid or the Mayor’s 100 Public Spaces, or the initiatives to revitalise the Los Angeles River and to develop an armature that could rearticulate the disjointed urban landscape of Southern California.

5. THE FARO (LIGHTHOUSE) TO THE EAST OF THE CITY

In Mexico City, the supply of public space and cultural facilities has been concentrated in a narrow area bordering the centre and south-west of the city, where the most privileged social groups live. As a result, the eastern zone of the city suffers from both economic disadvantage and cultural neglect. With the intention of decentralising and democratising the access to culture, the city government decided to create a cultural centre in the east. In 1998 a project was approved to create a cultural centre in an abandoned property that had been built years ago by the architect Alberto Kalach, who was also commissioned to refurbish the site for its new purpose. Since its opening in the year 2000, the Fábrica de Arte y Oficios de Oriente (Factory of Arts and Crafts of the East) offers workshops to around 1,700 children, youngsters and adults; gives access to film screenings; and other cultural activities – all free of charge. It also hosts huge concerts and youth-oriented events for nearly 10,000 people a time. These events are known for their safety. Not a single accident or hazard have been reported, even though the facilities sit in a high-crime area with several opposing gangs active. Middle-class young people are beginning to attend these events regularly.

The FARO is located in the borough of Iztapalapa, one of the poorest and troubled areas of the Federal District, just a few blocks from the city’s largest dump, in a popular neighbourhood built over the dried-up Texcoco Lagoon. The FARO has been described as a socially inclusive and culturally alternative space, and although its ability to respond to the lack of cultural facilities in the east of the city is limited, this initiative, now being replicated in other parts of the city, hints at the potential that social inclusion and cultural production offer to revitalise cities.


In December 2000, the then Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador issued Bando Dos (Informative Decree 2), a policy initiative to promote the de-ensification of the Federal District’s four core boroughs of Cuauhtémoc, Miguel Hidalgo, Benito Juárez and Venustiano Carranza and to curtail development in peripheral zones, particularly those with a high degree of environmental sensitivity. The initiative responds to three main concerns: population losses at the urban core; that generate conditions of underutilised infrastructure; urban sprawl over land to be potentially developed; and decreasing levels of local water supply from within the metropolitan area. From the 1970s onwards, Mexico City experienced a gradual decline in the population living in central zones and a rapid expansion of peripheral neighbour-hoods. Between 1970 and 2000, the four core boroughs lost over one million residents and their share of the city’s total population fell from 73% in 1950 to 20% in 2000. At the same time the city was progressively losing its capacity to retain rain water to replenish its aquifers due to the multiplication of impervious surfaces, increasing quantities of potable water were being wasted because of leakages through the overextended pipe system.

Stricter growth controls in outer bor-oughs and a streamlined process to grant building permits at the two main policies announced by the Bando Dos. In the five-year period since the initiative was first implemented, the four core boroughs have witnessed both a construction boom and steep hikes in housing prices which have also impacted on the rest of the metropolitan housing market. There has also been a prolif-eration of low-density subdivisions and gated communities at the edges of the metropolitan zone in the State of Mexico. Far from the re-de-ensi-fication of the core an achievement of the Bando Dos or was it already underway before the initiative? Are the negative metropolitan dynamics unintended consequences of the policy? There is a wide range of opinions from both detractors and supporters of this contro-versial re-de-ensification initiative. The case also illustrates wider debates on the relation-ship between urban densities and housing affordability, the need to consider the role of design in re-de-ensification initiatives, and the limits of territorial policies in taming sprawl when they are not implemented within wide regional frameworks.

7. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

(PROGRAMA DE MEJORAMIENTO DE VIVIENDA – PMV)

The PMV dates back to 1998. It was jointly designed by the city government and representa-tives from the various NGOs from the Habitat Coalition-Mexico to address the acute housing problems of popular settlements, which were originally informally developed and cover more than half of the metropolitan surface. The PMV grants loans to low-income families living in the Federal District (heads of household earning less than US$ 600 per month) and it provides technical assistance to programme participants concern-ing design issues and spatial arrange-ments within the housing unit. It was first co-financed by the city’s administration and NGOs and it has now been put under the entire supervision of the Federal District’s Housing Institute.

The PMV’s main objectives are to create better living conditions for socially disadvan-taged families; to deal with problems of over-crowding; and to improve the quality of life, affordability, the need to consider the role of design in re-de-ensification initiatives, and the limits of territorial policies in taming sprawl when they are not implemented within wide regional frameworks.

The suburban train will carry 320,000 passengers a day, mostly workers and students who will save more than 2.5 hours daily on each round trip. The fare will be equivalent to what people are paying today on other means of transport. The train will also contribute to reducing the road problem and will have a positive impact on environmental conditions in the area.
Urban Age is a worldwide series of conferences investigating the future of cities

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JOHANNESBURG/JULY 2006
BERLIN/NOVEMBER 2006

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FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY

National Museum of Art (MUNAL), Tacuba 8, Historic Centre

08.15 to 08.30 Opening Session
Welcome
Wolfgang Nowak, Spokesman of the Executive Board, Alfred Herrhausen Society
Urban Age Project: The story so far
Ricky Buddett, Director, Urban Age, London School of Economics

08.30 to 09.30 The Urban Age context
Cities: An international perspective
Chair: Ricky Buddett, Director, Urban Age, London School of Economics

Sao Paulo
10 mins
José Terra, Mayor of Sao Paulo

New York City
10 mins
Amanda Burden, Chair, Planning Commission, New York City

Barcelona
10 mins
Josep-Achibue, Chief Architect, City of Barcelona & CEO, Barcelona Regional

London
10 mins
Tony Travis, Director, Greater London Group, London School of Economics

09.30 to 10.30 Introducing Mexico City
MEXICO CITY: GROWTH AT THE LIMIT?
Chair: José Luis Corral Delgado, Dipl.-Arch, Bärummerssa University
Mexico City: Economic Development
10 mins
Guadalupe Sánchez Villalobos, Prof., El Colegio de México

Mexico City: Urban Form
10 mins
Enrique Norten, Director, Ten-Arquitectos

Mexico City: Society and Culture
10 mins
Noel Garcia Canclini, Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University

Open discussion
30 mins

10.30 to 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 to 12.30 Labour market and workplaces

URBAN CENTRALITIES, OLD AND NEW: THE HISTORIC CENTRE AND SANTA FE
Chair: Diana Doria, Associate Dean, School of Architecture & Planning, MIT

The Santa Fe node: its beginnings
15 mins
Iorge Gambino de Buen, Director General, Grupo Danhos

The regeneration of the historic Centre
15 mins
Adrian Pandoli, Director General, Mexico City Historic Centre Foundation

Responses
5 minutes each
Dieter Läpple, Prof. of Regional and Urban Economics, TU Hamburg

Jenny Saltz Cohen, Secretary, Economic Development, Government of the FD

Ricardo Lagarreta, Director, Lagarreta + Lagarreta

Oscar Terávezas, Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University

Juan Costadini Bosc, Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University

Frank Duffy, Principal, DGVLC, London

Open discussion
30 min

12.30 to 12.00 Coffee and snacks

13.00 to 14.30 Mobility and transport

CREATING PROSPERITY: TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE METROPOLIS
Chair: Andy Altman, Partner, LeftBank Development Company, New York

Opening Statement
Guy Bell, founding partner, Bell McCarthy, London

Presentations
The key transport projects
15 mins
Bernardino Navarro Benitez, Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University

Design and mobility
15 mins
Felix Labad, Coordinator Special Projects, National Autonomous University Mexico

Responses
5 minutes each
Hermann Knoflacher, Prof. of Transportation Planning, TU Vienna

Claudia Schenkelbaur Paolo, Secretary, Environment, Government of the FD

Aaron Dychter, Sub-Secretary of Transport, Mexican Government

Clara Salame Cruz, Prof., El Colegio de México

Osvaldo Díaz Diaz, Director, Port of Puebla Querétaro Foundation, Baja California Sur

Getum Txirriar, TRIP's Chair & Associate Prof., Indian Institute of Technology

Open discussion
30 min

14.30 to 15.15 Lunch

15.15 to 16.00 Panel 01 - Metropolitan Governance
GOVERNING THE MEGA CITY
Chair: Manuel Pedró Cohen, Prof., National Autonomous University of México

Opening Statement
Tony Travis, Director, Greater London Group, London School of Economics

Panel
Alejandro Encinas, Mayor, Federal District
Enrique Pita Nieto, Governor, State of Mexico
José Luis Luján Tamayo, Senator, Environment, Mexican Government

Geraldo Frag, Louis D. Brandeis Prof. of Law, Harvard University

Allison Khawar Iqracha/Cenecorta, Prof., El Colegio de México

Roberto Efimovtch Hartman, Prof., Metropolitan University

Open discussion
30 min

16.30 to 17.30 Dinner hosted by Government of the Federal District
Torre Mayor, 52nd floor, Paseo de la Reforma 505, Col. Cuauhtémoc
Welcome
Alejandro Encinas, Mayor, Federal District
José Azkuehaz, Chairman of the Management Board, Deutsche Bank
Ricky Buddett, Director, Urban Age, London School of Economics

URBAN AGE
MEXICO CITY
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
23–25 FEBRUARY 2006

THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY
Rufino Tamayo Museum of Contemporary Art, Chapultepec Park

18.30 to 20.30 Reception
Welcoming ceremony of the Urban Age Mexico City conference and inauguration of the reflecting pool of the Chapultepec Park
In the presence of Vicente Fox, President of Mexico

Speakers
Josef Ackermann, Chairman of the Management Board, Deutsche Bank
Marinda Servety, President, Trust for the Chapultepec Park
Bruce Ramsey, Board of Trustees, Alfred Herrhausen Society
Alejandro Encinas, Mayor, Federal District

URBAN AGE CONFERENCE CONTACT
M +52 (044) 55 2498 0867
CONFERENCE LOCATION
National Museum of Art (MUNAL) Tacuba 8, Centro Historico

RECEPTION AND DINNER LOCATIONS
Rufino Tamayo Museum of Contemporary Art, Chapultepec Park
Torre Mayor, 52nd floor, Paseo de la Reforma 505, Col. Cuauhtémoc
Parque España 47, Col. Condesa

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY
National Museum of Art (MUNAL), Tacuba 8, Historic Centre

09.00 to 10.45 Public life in a urban space

ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY
Chair: Darren Walker, Director, Working Communities, Rockefeller Foundation

Opening Statements
Enrique Petkus, former Mayor of Bogotá
Rafael Vélez, Principal, Rafael Vélez Architects

Presentations
Towards a parks strategy
15 mins
Mario Gonzalez, Director, Fábrica de Artes y Oficios de Oriente

FARO de Oriente: Concept and programmes
10 mins
Benjamin Gonzalez, Director, Fábrica de Artes y Oficios de Oriente

Open discussion
30 min

10.45 to 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 to 12.30 Housing and urban neighbourhoods
HOUSING FOR THE DENSIFYING CITY: THE POTENTIAL OF PLANNING AND DESIGN
Chair: Ed Soja, Prof., London School of Economics & University of California Los Angeles

Opening Statement
Alejandro Zárraga-Polo, Joint Director, Foreign Office Architects

Presentations
Bando Due
15 min
Felix Bründlinger, Vice Director, Urban Planning & Market Assessment, Development Metropolitana S.C.

Popular settlements: The Housing Improvement Programme
15 mins
Hilton Rojas, Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University & former General Director, Federal District's Housing Institute

Responses
5 minutes each
Arturo May y Yarini, Colegio de Arquitectos de la Ciudad de México

Georgina Sandoval, Director, Casa y Ciudad Prof., Metropolitan Autonomous University

Enrique Ortiz, President, Habitable International Coalition

Javier Sánchez, Founding Partner, Higuaín & Sánchez

Darren Walker, Director, Working Communities, Rockefeller Foundation, New York

Andy Altman, Partner, LeftBank Development Company, New York

Open discussion
30 min

12.30 to 13.00 Coffee and snacks

13.00 to 14.30 Panel 02 - Informality
INFORMALITY: PROBLEM OR SIMPLY A REALITY
Chair: Tasia Sassen, Ralph Lewis Prof. of Sociology, University of Chicago & Centennial Visiting Prof., London School of Economics

Opening Statements
Diet Ott, Prof. of Regional & Urban Economics, TU Hamburg

Panel
José Manuel Castillo Olea, Prof., Bärummerssa University

María Edith Pacheco Gomán, Prof., El Colegio de México

Getum Txirriar, TRIP's Chair & Associate Prof., Indian Institute of Technology

Rudy Cruz, Prof., University of California, San Diego

Gareth Jones, Senior Lecturer, Development Geography, London School of Economics

Open discussion
30 min

14.30 to 16.00 Lunch

16.00 to 18.00 A vision for Mexico City

Opening Statement
Yasuko Sassen, Ralph Lewis Prof. of Sociology, University of Chicago & Centennial Visiting Prof., London School of Economics

Deyan Sudjic, Dean, Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture, Kingston University

Statements from Urban Age experts
Enrique Norten, General Director, Ten-Arquitectos

Sophie Bedy-Gendret, Director, Centre for Urban Studies, Sorbonne

Casimir Lasnelli Fernandez, Prof., Monterrey Institute of Technology, Mexico City

Hermann Knoflacher, Prof. of Transportation Planning, TU Vienna

Henry Davis, Founding Partner, Metropolis 2025

Diet Ott, Prof. of Regional & Urban Economics, TU Hamburg

Closing Remarks
Wolfgang Nowak, Spokesman of the Executive Board, Alfred Herrhausen Society

19.30 to 21.30 Cocktails hosted by Enrique Norten, Ten-Arquitectos

Parque España 47, Col. Condesa
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LSE Cities Programme

The LSE Cities programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science is an interdisciplinary centre that links urban research to society and the wider public realm through a range of activities. The Cities Programme is responsible for running the Urban Age project at the LSE and the annual European Mayors Conference.

Alfred Herrmann Society, the International Forum of Deutsche Bank

The Alfred Herrmann Society is a centre of independent thinking that seeks to identify tracks of the future in the present, and thereby raise public awareness of the directions in which society is moving. As Deutsche Bank’s socio-political think tank, the Herrmann Society brings together people who are committed to working for the future.

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URBAN AGE CITY LOCAL PARTNERS

Government of the Federal District

In 1997, the Government of Mexico City ceased being an administrative department of the federal government, where the president elected the local authorities. Since then, the first time in the history of the city its authorities were democratically elected, the new mayor of the Federal District continues to push forward the social programs, public works, economic development policies and projects to public security which have characterized the democratically elected governments of the capital.

Government of the State of Mexico
This university was founded in 1823. It is divided into 123 municipalities and it is above 15 million, mainly concentrated in the Mexico Valley. It has been cited as one of the most important cities in the world. The capital of the Federal District (and the Federal District) is the main city of the Valley. Its main economic activities are industry and services, although rural areas contribute to the urban economy of its territory. It is the most populous city in the world. The metropolitan area has more than 10 million people. The current mayor of the city is Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, elected for the period 2015-18.

National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

UNAM is the educational institution with the longest academic and cultural tradition in the country. It dates back to 1551 and was officially founded in 1810. It has trained many of the most illustrious names in the sciences, humanities, social sciences and arts, from Mexico and Latin America. UNAM is a pioneer in scientific research in fields such as genomics and technology, and in the policies towards public security which have characterized the democratically elected governments of the capital.

National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

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URBAN AGE CIUDAD DE MÉXICO PROGRAMA DE LA CONFERENCIA 23 AL 25 DE FEBRERO DE 2006

JUEVES 23 FEBRERO
Hemiciclo de Arte Contemporáneo, Palacio Tlatelolco, Paseo de la Reforma 505, piso 36, Col. Cuauhtemoc

08.00 a 09.00 Sesión de apertura

Palacio de Bellas Artes, Paseo de la Reforma 505, piso 36, Col. Cuauhtemoc, Ciudad de México

08.30 a 09.30 El contexto de Urban Age

09.00 a 10.45 Vida pública y espacio urbano

América Móvil, Hemiciclo de Arte Contemporáneo, Paseo de la Reforma 505, piso 36, Col. Cuauhtemoc, Ciudad de México

10.30 a 11.00 Receso

11.00 a 12.30 Almuerzo

12.45 a 14.30 Panel 01 – Gobernanza metropolitana

13.00 a 14.30 Vialidad y transporte

14.30 a 16.15 Almuerzo

16.15 a 18.00 Panel 01 – Gobernanza metropolitana

18.30 a 20.30 Recepción

19.30 a 21.30 Cene cortesía del Gobierno del Distrito Federal

22.00 a 00.00 Cine en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo

VIERNES 24 DE FEBRERO
Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL), Tacuba 8, Centro Histórico

08.00 a 09.30 Presentación de Ciudad de México

09.30 a 10.45 Vida pública y espacio urbano

10.45 a 12.00 Panel 01 – Ciudades y éxito económico

12.00 a 14.30 Panel 01 – Ciudades y éxito económico

14.30 a 16.15 Almuerzo

16.15 a 18.00 Panel 01 – Ciudades y éxito económico

18.30 a 20.30 Recepción

20.30 a 22.00 Cine en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo

22.00 a 00.00 Cine en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo

SÁBADO 25 FEBRERO
Museo Nacional de Arte (MUNAL), Tacuba 8, Centro Histórico

10.00 a 12.00 Sesión de apertura

Palacio de Bellas Artes, Paseo de la Reforma 505, piso 36, Col. Cuauhtemoc, Ciudad de México

10.30 a 11.00 Presentación de Ciudad de México

11.00 a 12.30 Vivienda y urbanizaciones

12.45 a 14.30 Panel 02 – Informalidad

14.30 a 16.15 Almuerzo

16.15 a 18.00 Panel 02 – Informalidad

18.30 a 20.30 Recepción

20.30 a 22.00 Cine en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo

22.00 a 00.00 Cine en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Rufino Tamayo
La Ciudad de México está cerca a los Estados Unidos, y también a China. Han tenido influencia en la ciudad, pero no han tenido el impacto perdurable.

En 1960 la ZMCM concentraba el 17% del PIB de México, pero durante las últimas décadas ha bajado al 10.5% en 2005. En las dos últimas décadas, la ZMCM ha visto un desplazamiento hacia áreas en que las ciudades tienen un crecimiento demográfico más rápido, pero en el área de la ZMCM, el crecimiento demográfico actual se divide en dos áreas principales: la ZMCM y la Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México (ZMCM).

En general, la Ciudad de México ha construido en toda su historia: en 2000, un total de 4.2 millones de viviendas (2000), un total de 5.3 millones de trabajadores, con una participación en el producto interno bruto del 35 al 38% entre 1960 y 1980, la ciudad con un 35% de su población ha sido desplazada hacia áreas en que la industriación y la economía han crecido más rápido. Hoy vemos que tales predicciones han sido desmentidas. La Ciudad de México ha sido desplazada hacia áreas en que la ciudad bajo el control administrativo del Estado de México. La ciudad ha sido desplazada hacia áreas en que los terrenos pueden ser utilizados de manera más eficiente, y por lo tanto, es más difícil que la ciudad pueda expandirse hacia áreas en que las infraestructuras sean más complejas, en gran medida por la falta de estos recursos.

De acuerdo con el programa de transporte colectivo, el transporte colectivo se convierte en más eficiente, y por lo tanto, es más difícil que la ciudad pueda expandirse hacia áreas en que los terrenos puedan ser utilizados de manera más eficiente, y por lo tanto, es más difícil que la ciudad pueda expandirse hacia áreas en que las infraestructuras sean más complejas, en gran medida por la falta de estos recursos.

Finalmente, en el 2010 el gobierno del Distrito Federal decidió impulsar un programa de transporte colectivo. Este programa de transporte colectivo, complementado con diversas acciones en el entorno, busca eliminar el transporte colectivo. Es decir se desmanteló un sistema de transporte colectivo...
Cada ciudad tiene diferentes estrategias de planeación para luchar contra la congestión, pero en general, las medidas incluyen:

1. **Investigación y planeación urbana**: Antes de implementar alguna estrategia, los planes urbanos deben ser exhaustivos y considerar todos los factores que contribuyen a la congestión.

2. **Enfoque en el transporte colectivo**: En muchos casos, el transporte público es mejorado para atraer a más usuarios. Esto puede incluir aumentar la frecuencia de los horarios, mejorar el servicio o ampliar el sistema de transporte colectivo.

3. **Establecimiento de zonas peatonales**: En áreas donde las calles son especialmente transitadas, se puede implementar el establecimiento de zonas peatonales para reducir el tráfico y mejorar la seguridad para los peatones.

4. **Uso de tecnología**: La implantación de sistemas de rastreo de vehículos y aplicaciones de navegación puede ayudar a equilibrar el tráfico en diferentes momentos del día.

5. **Reducción de la velocidad en las áreas residenciales**: Emprendimientos que disminuyen la velocidad pueden reducir el número de accidentes y el tiempo de viaje.

6. **Programas de carpooling**: Fomentar el uso de vehículos compartidos puede reducir el número de vehículos en las calles y por lo tanto, la congestión.

7. **Uso de bicicletas y peatones**: En ciudades con buenas infraestructuras para ciclistas, este es un medio alternativo eficaz para reducir la congestión.

8. **Control del tráfico en el transporte público**: Mantener un control efectivo en la circulación de los buses y trenes puede ayudar a mantener un flujo constante de vehículos y prevenir congestionamientos.

9. **Abastecimiento de agua como consecuencia del crecimiento posterior de la ciudad. La Malinche, en la periferia de Ciudad de México, parecía más violenta y más fotoquímico que hizo que tal crecimiento
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**VIVIENDA O**

En el 2000 el gobierno del Distrito Federal (DF) redujo a 2% el impuesto predial de los inmuebles que no se usan, pero incluso así, las ofertas privadas de vivienda de interés agrupado son escasas. De acuerdo con el Programa Integral del sector y se

**CONGESTIÓN AL LÍMITE?**

La Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México es uno de los espacios urbanos más complejos y con más problemas que la ciudad ha construido en todo el mundo, en 2005: un total de 3 millones de usuarios, que en promedio, utilizan 150 millones de unidades de energía cada día. No hay una relación directa entre la cantidad de energía que se utiliza y las condiciones de la congestión, ya que la congestión se mide en función del nivel de tráfico y de la eficiencia con la que se utiliza la energía. En general, el transporte publico es más eficiente que el transporte particular en cuanto a la cantidad de energía que se utiliza.

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¿Es posible gobernar la megametropole?...
Espacios para que la ciudad respire

Los espacios abiertos públicos son esenciales para hacer de las áreas urbanas lugares más vivos y más saludables. Permiten que el espacio público se convierta en un espacio de vida, de encuentro, de juego, de trabajo, de ocio y de diálogo. Son espacios que necesitan de cuidado, que deben ser recorridos, que deben ser transitados, que deben ser vividos.

La informalidad abarca todo el espectro de los espacios económicos, desde la más compleja financiera hasta la más sencilla, como el reciclaje. Las políticas de vivienda y de espacio urbano son cruciales para el desarrollo de la ciudad.

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La densidad demográfica general del municipio de Ciudad de México (CDMX) es de aproximadamente 10 000 personas por kilómetro cuadrado. Esta cifra es comparable a los altos valores de las metrópolis orientales de Estados Unidos. La CDMX es una de las muy pocas áreas urbanas en el mundo que experimentó un aumento per cápita de sólo 6 metros cuadrados por persona en las últimas décadas. Las condiciones urbanas de la ciudad son extremadamente densas, con un alto nivel de actividad económica y social.

El transporte público en la CDMX es una parte integral de su infraestructura, con un amplio sistema de buses y trenes que cubren la mayoría de la ciudad. Sin embargo, la congestión del tráfico y el underfinanciamiento del sistema de autobuses y trenes han sido problemas recurrentes. El metro de la CDMX es uno de los más extensos del mundo, pero su capacidad para transportar a millones de pasajeros diariamente es limitada. El sistema de autobuses es aún más desafiante, con largas demoras en los viajes y congestionamiento en las principales vías de la ciudad.

La falta de espacio y la densidad demográfica de la CDMX presentan desafíos significativos para el diseño y desarrollo urbano. El crecimiento de la urbanización ha llevado a una explosión demográfica, con un aumento significativo de la población en la ciudad. La ciudad se ha visto obligada a adquirir terrenos adicionales a lo largo de los años para satisfacer la demanda de vivienda.

Estudios de caso: intervenciones urbanas recientes en la ciudad de México

A inicios de junio de 2005, el Metrobús tuvo una inversión estimada de 48 millones de dólares y más de 500 millones de pesos mexicanos. Cuenta con más de 20 estaciones de servicio, la mayoría de las cuales se encuentran en el centro de la ciudad. El sistema cuenta con una eficiencia superior al 30% y es considerado un hipermetro.

El metrobús transporta alrededor de 5 600 000 pasajeros diariamente, lo que demuestra su importancia en la movilidad de la ciudad. El sistema ha sido una solución eficaz para el congestionamiento del tráfico en la ciudad, con un aumento significativo en la calidad de vida de los residentes de la ciudad.

En comparación con otras ciudades del mundo, Ciudad de México supera a las más desarrolladas en términos de movilidad. La ciudad cuenta con un sistema de transporte público eficiente, con más de 20 líneas de metro y 250 rutas de autobuses.

El metrobús es parte de un esfuerzo más amplio para mejorar la movilidad en la ciudad. El gobierno de la CDMX ha implementado varias iniciativas para reducir el congestionamiento del tráfico y mejorar la calidad del ambiente. Estas iniciativas incluyen la promoción del uso de la bicicleta y el transporte público, la implementación de zonas peatonales y la creación de carriles exclusivos para autobuses.
La densidad demográfica del municipio de México es una cuestión de importancia sobre la cual se han tenido que preocupar en el pasado. La densidad inicial fue de menos de 8 metros cuadrados por persona. Hacia 2000, la densidad estaba en aproximadamente 16 metros cuadrados por persona, un aumento significativo en tan sólo 20 años.

En comparación con otras ciudades del mundo, las zonas más densamente pobladas no solo tienen una población alta, sino que además están muy acondicionadas. En el caso de Nueva York, la densidad es de aproximadamente 16 mil personas por milla cuadrada, lo que refleja la escala de crecimiento y el uso eficiente del espacio.

La ciudad de México, en cambio, tiene una densidad media de 16 mil personas por milla cuadrada, lo que es mucho más bajo que la densidad de Nueva York. Sin embargo, la ciudad de México sigue siendo una de las más densamente pobladas del mundo.

El crecimiento demográfico también ha llevado a una mayor contaminación del aire en la ciudad de México. El uso intensivo de vehículos privados y la falta de transporte público eficiente han contribuido a la emisión de grandes cantidades de gases contaminantes en la ciudad.

Para enfrentar esta problemática, el gobierno de la ciudad de México ha implementado varias medidas para reducir la contaminación del aire. Entre ellas, se ha promovido el uso de árboles y espacios verdes en la ciudad, así como el desarrollo de transito liviano para la ciudad, que puede disminuir la contaminación del aire en un 40%.

En conclusión, la problemática de la densidad demográfica en la ciudad de México es un tema importante que requiere la atención de los gobiernos y las autoridades para encontrar soluciones viables y sostenibles.
La Fundación Deutsche Bank Américas está comprometida a trabajar por el futuro de la sociedad civil. Fundada en 1992,”Alfred Herrhausen Society” se dedica a mantener y formar jóvenes, esta constantemente involucrado en distintas formas de labor profesional y académica, que incluye encar-