Investigating entangled histories of urban development, appropriation and formalization: The Case of Mexico City

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This paper on appropriations of urban space locates societal interdependence inside the urban society of Mexico City. According to Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1987), interdependency between habitants provided with unequal access to goods and services is physically inscribed in urban space of Latin American metropolis and can be traced back until colonial times: "Muchos de los asentamientos y barrios de los pobres están físicamente segregados de la "ciudad legal", como lo estuvieron bajo el dominio colonial, pero la mano de obra, los bienes y los servicios baratos que proveen los habitantes de esos barrios, son fundamentales para la economía de la ciudad"(14). Yet, this perspective reflects the dominant view of informality as the "darker side" of formality or legality. The present paper intends to outline a research project that questions this dualism: How can the formalization of dwelling be conceptualized as historically embedded socio-political relation of inequality producing the city?[1] By speaking of "producing" the city I refer not only to a construction of the city in a material way, but also of constructing norms and technical knowledge by social, political and economical actors. This three-levelled perspective shall be operated by a discursive analysis of the processes of formalizing, what I call (and will explain later) "the places of one's own" around two events emblematic for the development of Mexico City: The earthquake of 1985 and the reform of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Both events contributed to the rehabilitation and modernization of those co-existing "places" as they opened discursive opportunities for the formation of new political, social and economical actors, to a re-figuration of the relation between society and government, the installation of new norms and designs of construction and to a transnational knowledge transfer and its unequal distribution among those "places". I part from the assumption, that formality/legality is reconstructed under these opportunities and thereby has different historical and regional origins: After the

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[1] This paper will relate first research results to my overall doctoral project. Those preliminary results want to strengthen the taken perspective on informality but do not claim to be gained by a proper discourse analysis. The collection and selection of the material to be analysed has to be completed; for now I can rely on literature, first collection of magazines and newspaper articles, interviews with experts and with habitants of a residential elite community in Mexico City.

earthquake transnational knowledge transfer on how to avoid the disastrous outcomes of its future repetitions influenced the formulation of new norms of construction. At the same time, the renovation programme (RHP) was designed to "formalize" property relations in the Centre districts and besides the reconstruction of 50000 homes it also included the re-location of 50000 families into the periphery. The constitutional reform of 1992 put to an end one of the most important achievements of the Mexican Revolution, the re-distribution of large private land-agglomerations (latifundios, see: Mackinlay 2004) into not-sellable ejidos. Due to this general deregulation of land appropriation large scale private investment and transregional knowledge transfer designed new forms of living; at the same time the reform's intention was to "formalize" the praxis of "illegal" settling on and re-selling of ejido-land.

In the next section I will argue for a locally focussed study of entangled histories as adequate spatial frame. After that I will present theoretical considerations regarding my category of inequality, the place of one's own: a spatially informed concept of "lifestyle" and resume the method to be applied. Then I will briefly view the debate in the literature on "informality" related to housing and argue in favour of a three-folded concept to study the time-/space-sensitive discursive formalization of the city. Finally, as far as my first research results allow for, I will present examples.

Mexico City and the entangled histories of Centre and Periphery

At a meeting with the ambassadors of the Latin American Countries in the White House on 13th of March 1961, US-President John F. Kennedy presented the ideas of the US-Administration on how to modernize and integrate all economies of the two continents, ideas, that were further elaborated during the Conference of the Consejo Interamericano Económico y Social (CIES) in Punta del Este, Uruguay in August of the same year. All countries except for Cuba signed the declaration with the title "Alianza para el Progreso" (ALPRO) that foresaw the investment of 20 Billions of Dollars in the economies of Latin America, a sum basically provided by the US-Aid-Agency, the private sector and the Inter-American Development Bank.

As Salvador Allende observed in 1967 in a speech at the University of Montevideo, the "Alliance" would not help the Latin American countries to escape the US-Hegemony, but further aggravate their dependency: "Nuestra dependencia del imperialismo norteamericano nos impide el acceso a un comercio mundial más amplio y más significativo" (Allende 1967). These opposing views, representatives of the two currents "modernization" and "dependencia", can be questioned by a perspective on

urban space and its internal inequality as produced by a multitude of actors and co-existing interdependent lifestyles and historical origins.

Mexico City incorporates different intertwined legacies.[2] To show that, a methodology is needed that proceeds historically and synchronically (Spohn 2004), a way of analysing the fragmentary and conflictive processes of appropriating urban space whose result are spatial forms. With the concept of history as entanglement (Conrad/Randeria 2002) these forms can be understood as built by the interaction and exchange, or: "the circulation of goods, human beings and ideas" (17) across regions. Modernity in urban space then becomes not a linear progressive development but a concept to understand urbanization in its plural, conflictive and heterogeneous lines of development. Urban spatial formations – or "the places of one's own" – develop interdependently and the existence of different "types" is neither a universally describable fact nor a symptom of completely segregated and broken apart urban society in divided sub-cities. Rather its interdependence shall be conceptualized as an ongoing process of entangled histories in mutual influencing processes of interaction and socially constructed relations of perception and representation.

The rapid growth of Mexico City, like most of the Latin American big cities from the 1930's on, was due to an urban centred industrialization. The large agglomerations attracted migrants that settled mostly on their peripheries building self-constructed houses converting rural into urban land in a long socio-political process of negotiating the right to shelter and adequate homes. In their respective beginnings they lacked services, construction licenses and land titles, what brought them the dominant definition as "informal settlements". Beginning with the 60's and with the decline of the "Import-substituted Industrialization" financial headquarters were installed, skyscrapers were built, high-class residential areas for the upcoming transnational business circles were created, and social housing for workers´ families took place in large apartment building areas. After 1961, at a large scale, investment started to convert housing into an object of speculation, and besides the liberalisation of other market branches, it was the beginning of the real estate market in Latin America. The impact has been devastating for collective forms of housing as ALPRO gave rise to the dominance of one form: the property of housing as a product of the capitalist free market. The installation of international financial agencies allowed for housing developments financed by mortgages as the dominant concept of urban development

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[2] An illustrative albeit dualistic urban example of socio-spatial power relations can be taken from colonial times when the Spanish conquistadores established their administrative centre in Mexico in 1521 as imposition of the old Tenochtitlan and re-located the former inhabitants on the outskirts of their appropriated city, still depending on their services, agricultural labour and cultural knowledge to extend their power on the continent.

thereby neglecting other, historically established forms of creating and maintaining property.[3]

Yet, despite this dominance of formalized property, in Mexico City different forms of lifestyles co-exist. As for example Pezzolli (1998), Connolly and Cruz (2001), Moctezuma (2001), Friedman (2002) and Wigle (2010) show with case studies on appropriation of urban space, what the Mexican Constitution defines homogenously as "private property" in fact has to be differentiated according to historically established forms of settling in the urban area.[4]

Urbanization has been the most important transformation of the Mexican society in the 20th century (Azuela 2006). While the Constitution of 1917 saw a rural Mexico and its settlements basically in rural area as three quarters of Mexican population lived rural, the relation now is reversed. The "Ley General de Asentamientos Humanos" promulgated by President Echeverría in 1975 gave this societal development a constitutional frame, as this law led to an important change in the Art. 27 of the Constitution: it reinforced the Executive to intensively plan and regulate urban growth in a social and sustainable manner. This socially beneficiary impetus has been contradicted ever since and can be seen in an imposition of the centre districts of Mexico and a growing periphery: The Centre has lost 40% of its population between 1970 and 1995), while population in the same period triplicates in the peripheries (Coulomb 2000 and Benlliure 2008).[5]

What can be observed as two interrelated processes are, first, a commercialization of the centre, loosing importance for social or affordable housing and a concentration on renovation of the buildings as mere cultural capital and, second, a growing periphery in heterogeneous forms of housing that comprise elite residential developments, large-scale urban projects of state-financed social housing and auto-constructed settlements, as will be shown in more detail in the following. The developments of the centre districts and periphery are entangled: While property and commercialisation have become the driving engines of urban development and of a transformation as well of the centre districts as of the periphery, the earthquake in 1985 and the constitutional change in 1992 have opened new opportunities for appropriations of the city, reinforced societal actors demanding for adequate housing but also led to

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[3] In Mexico for example it was the beginning of the end of social housing in renting (Garcia Peralta 2011, forthcoming) as with the Fondo de Operación y Financiamiento Bancario a la Vivienda (FOVI) an instrument was created in 1963 that subjected social housing to speculation logics.

[4] Further examples of alternative concepts are the cooperatives and associations Palo Alto in Cuajimalpa, of Uprez in Iztapalapa and Cerrada Xochitl in the delegation Tlalpan.

[5] For example, the characteristic form of living that came up with the installation of a broad working class in the end of the 19th century in the centre, the vecindad, has, due to the lack of inversion and the transformation into commercial uses of the buildings (shops, offices, hotels) declined (Melé, 1998).

further eviction into the periphery. Different lifestyles have been formalized: The search for a life far away from the density, closeness and heterogeneity, pollution, noise and insecurity of the city, a movement of high-class habitants seeking distance to the "Other" into highly secured "gated communities"; in the Centre, a growing privatisation (Slim City) and the governmental programmes of the "Patronage City" (Renovación Habitacional Popular (RHP), Bando Uno/Dos) are examples of renovation and modernisation that can be traced back to 1985.

I want to go further in the analysis of these entangled histories and argue that the formalization of "places of one's own", as a category, that I will develop in the next section, is based on different historical "origins", is due to transnational knowledge transfer and that the urban space is marked by appropriation processes of a multitude of local and transnational actors.

Unequal Representations and representations of Inequality: The Category

For the purpose of the thesis on a co-existence of interdependent "places of one's own" with different historic and regional origins the category has to be studied time- and space-sensitive. Further, in this paper inequality is understood as reinforced by unequal representation of urban spaces.[6] Using the term "spatiality" as referring to the representation of space as having certain effects (Agnew 1994:55), this paper understands the place of one's own as a spatial category to study urban inequality that is discursively constructed. The analysis of informality as spatial concept needs to involucrate an analysis of the locally articulated power relations dominating the construction of formality.

Following Barlösius and Kreckel, inequality is defined as "limitation of the possibility to gain access to generally available and desirable social goods and/or social positions, which are formed by unequal power relations and/or possibilities of interaction, which leads to constraining or promoting certain individuals, groups or societies" (Kreckel 1992: 17, cit. in Barlösius 2004: 11, own translation). What should be studied, following this definition, are those power relations that organize the possibility to gain access to public goods and positions. The notion of power[7] shall be applied from Norbert Elias whose theory of civilization, as Barlösius (2004) shows, can be taken as a starting point to relate inequality and power. Power in Elias´ sense characterizes actor relations that help certain actors to take control of those relations to maintain or

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[6] For example: Self-help housing, squatter, illegal, irregular, pirate settlements, invasions, slums or shantytowns all share one characteristic: they are depictive names to represent urban spaces in precarious economic, jurisdictional and architectonical status.

[7] to make it short, as a broad discussion of theories on power has to wait for another contribution

widen particular advantages. Power therefore necessarily depends on a continuing interdependence between dominating and dominated actors because dominating actors only maintain their positions with the help of the dominated.[8]

As can be argued with Lefebvre (1991, especially 364ff.), the problematic of urban space as produced by the contradiction of a basic dialectic relation between use and exchange value, incorporates its representation, a representation that has to be aware of the homogenizing effect of labelling: an effect of silencing contradictions and conflicts in actor-relations in urban spaces.[9] According to him, representation of space forms part of an ongoing process of socio-political inequalities. Following Lefebvre the present research proposal therefore understands the production of urban space as conflictive process between a material praxis, the "true space", in itself not conceivable, and the representations that research and planning make of it, the "truth of space"; its dialectical relation leads to a third level, the lived spatiality, that shall be understood as inhabiting the contradictions between heterogeneous practices of appropriation and its reductive representations.

For an analysis of power relations in socio-spatial formations a category is needed that does not view distinct appropriations as independent entities. For that the category of the place of one´s own is understood as such a relation of interdependence and power that shows the unequal representations and the unequal access to possibilities of representation in the city. The place of one´s own I understand as social position of an individual or group that he/she/it has appropriated and negotiated in a historical process. Borrowing the concept "imposition"[10] from Bourdieu one can understand the place of one's own as an inhabited social position that defines and limits the actors´ access to limited recourses distributed in space. For the purpose of the study of entangled histories in urban space the category of Bourdieu needs to be located in a historical process, that is, in the "impositions" of different historical processes. Lefebvre sees two mutually related time-subjected processes, the domination, which refers to the political and technical "transformation" (1991: 164) of the public space,

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[8] A viewon segregation of urban space as broken apart society would not allow for a study of power.

[9] In the same calling for a tempered use of seemingly neutral categories, Centeno and Lopez-Alves raise a plea for taking into account local conditions: "Since the names we give to things help define them, inappropriate labelling using alien categories can and will lead to critical misreadings" (Centeno/Lopez-Alves 2001), and see Barloesius reminds social scientists to be aware of effects the use of categories to measure inequality can have on their reinforcement (2004).

[10] In "Efectos de Lugar" (1999) Bourdieu says: "…los diferentes espacios sociales físicamente objetivados, tienden a superponerse" (1999:120). This imposition implies a mixed use and access of actors in social space, which in the terminology of Bourdieu means a conflictive inscription in the physical space. The position of the actors in social space (and with it, rendering a place in physical space) depends on the various forms of capital, the actors inhabit. The conflict results in evictions and "flights" (huida) of those actors that do not cope with the dominating habits, demanded by the proper space.

and the appropriation[11], which refers to the individually or collectively organized "modification" (1991: 165) of space to cover the needs and possibilities of the appropriating group. The place of one's own is both a result of appropriation and a limiting possibility to appropriate the dominating processes that "shape" it. [12]

Method

For the investigation of entangled histories that make-up the actual urban space I need to develop tools of a time and space-sensitive discursive analysis. This looks for the coexistence and mutual dependence of modernizations of places shaping the urban space for that the events have been significant. The materials of interest are political speeches, media reports (documentals and newspapers), memories of incorporated social and political actors, such as groups of urban movements and activists that formed or reformed around the events and programmes and evaluations of (international) NGOs, experts' statements such as of engineers, architects and seismologists, commercials and announcements of real estate promoters as well as statements of residents of high-class housing developments. Where interviews do not yet exist, they will have to be conducted. These materials must be explored questioning their contribution to the thesis on opportunities for new actors and new influences of knowledge transfer in the modernizations of Mexico City, that is, as far as they can be used to discover coherent rules of new and historically based speech-positions and the transregional influences of knowledge in these processes.

The relation of appropriation-domination as I said before is seen along the line of formalizing the city. The place of one's own shall be studied as discursively constructed category parting from a Foucault-based methodology, made applicable by Diaz-Bone (2006, scheme taken from 1999:125). The analysis has to start proclaiming the effect of certain discursive rules that sustain socio-political reality. In the context of the thesis presented above these are located around the events of 1985 and 1992 when new opportunities for formalizing the city have opened and formalization can be traced back to different regional and historical origins. Said hypothetically formalization is embedded in discursive rules that divide the modern, secure, business- and world-oriented legality from a city of the informal, poor, dangerous and traditional. So the discursive construction of formalization circulates around a "modernization of the city"

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[11] Concept, that Lefebvre following Marx clearly distinguishes from mere property (1991:165).
[12] As a further discussion of these sociological-philosophical concepts on "dwelling" will be done in the course of the dissertation I thankful for constructive advises on the theoretical section.
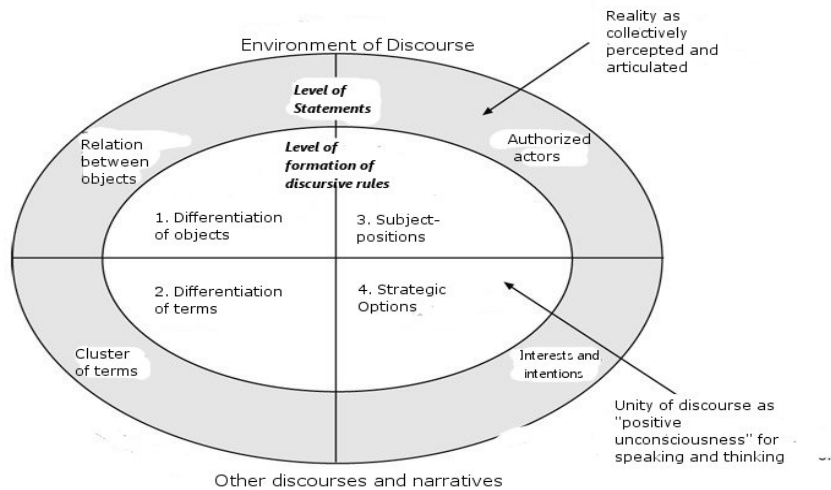
Diaz-Bone 1999

as rule of (technical, knowledge-based, economical and political) domination of space vs. a "right to the city" as rule of appropriating space. Both rules are formed by terms, subject positions, intentions with different historical and regional origins and relate to material manifestations of places, i.e. housing. Construction norms and technical as well as lifestyle knowledge can be placed into the environment of the discourse to which statements relate to and together with which they form the "socio-political reality".[13]

Formality is not only a question of property and licenses: The debate

"Informality" related to housing is usually defined by general degree and quality of material conditions, access to urban services as well as regulatory status in legalist terms, i.e. land titling (UN-Habitat 2003, Duhau/Schteingart 2002). This definition of the category does not allow understanding the conflictive processes in negotiating the conditions of formalization, the "informality" in the production of elite housing as privatisation of security measures or lobbyist bargaining for building licenses nor the non-compliance with norms of construction by far more developers than just the "self-building migrant" at the periphery. The linear orientation towards formality covers the interdependence of multiple origins of housing such as pre-hispanic towns, vecindades[14], gated communities and golf-clubs, colonias populares and closed

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[13] The caution, as Diaz-Bone (2006: 270f.) warns, in the selection of events as events is necessary because the investigator has to point out their explicative factor for the context. In the context of a modernization understood as influenced by heterogeneous time and space-origins, the events take their explicative factor from the fact that they shifted the actors landscape towards more transregional dimension and are themselves defined as change in jurisdictional frame (Art. 27) or in the sense of being a disaster as due to insufficient norms (of construction).

[14] INEGI (2002) defines vecindades as "housing of a fixed nature which forms part of a group of dwellings in which the occupants generally share facilities, such as water and washrooms". It is a form of

residential areas of middle-class borrows and has its blind spot where historically established power relations between several actors define what is "formal".

Three positions[15] shall be named here around which the debate on informality related to housing circulates: The Liberalist/conservative proclaiming the free market, the empowerment perspective giving the access to urban ground a notion of welfare and the state the task of contributing to social justice, and the epistemological perspective. The first position might be most renowned and influentially proclaimed by Hernando de Soto (1991 and 2000). As the Peruvian economist emphasizes in his ostensible empathetic search for an overall inclusion of "the marginal" into the beneficiary system of capitalism, the universal remedy for the "underdeveloped" is providing the "informal sector" access to a formalized economy by titling their property, understanding development as equal to a teleology of formalization. Behind this concept stands a strong presupposition of the State's activity as territorial sovereign power whose role is to help formalizing urban territorial expansion, thereby strengthening its market mechanism.[16] In this view on informality, integration into local markets and the transformation of "the excluded" into "small-scale capitalists" (Altvater 2004) and "extra-legal property" into "liquid capital" (de Soto 2000) will serve to enable people to improve their housing, give them the opportunity to access mortgages and allow for a life under global-local entrepreneurial logics. This view has been criticized by a vast literature (Linn 1983, Bromley 1994&2009, Gilbert 2001, Altvater 2004, Gonzalez 2009, Unruh 2007, Roy 2005, Portes 1994).

The second, "empowerment"- perspective is based on the observation that the market is not able to optimize its distribution even if it could actually maximize the absolute wealth of a society (Hobsbawm et al. 2000). Given the dominance of "formal markets" and its high prices, a major part of the population is seen as excluded from a "legal" access to it and forced into informal processes with little lower prices and hardly any services or juridical security (Benlliure and Eibenschuetz 2008). This position explains informality of housing as creative response and parts from the "historical embeddedness of informality in social relations" (Connolly and Cruz 2004). Informality is seen as key strategy of de facto secure tenure and therefore as quasi-equivalent to regularization rendering governmental programmes obsolete. Looking back into Mexico's history Varley (2002) shows that legalization can be applied to processes of gaining independence from such private sectors as credit institutes and banks and

appropriation of urban space that follows a concept of collective property and that is located in the centre districts of Mexico City, often in precarious legal and material conditions.

[15] Very much reduced, more detailed in a future chapter of my dissertation.

[16] The obstacle usually is seen in the State's technical disabilities (Alegría 2004, Huamán 2000).

public institutions as regularization offices, by instead relating oneself into social ties, reinforcing them. Empowerment therefore means questioning the primacy of the market to regulate or formalize living in settlements with insecure legal status. This position distances itself from the first by its assumption, that the poor sectors first needed a strong self-organization to contest the political and economical power structures and institutions that could control the setting of national and municipal development aims. In this sense Janice Perlman (1976) with her ethnological study in favelas of Rio de Janeiro has presented an enlightening view into the mutual interdependence of favelas and its "formal" counterparts giving rise to the question of power that produces the difference. The approach follows the influential research agenda of Wayne Cornelius (1975).[17]

As Lomnitz (1988) argues, informality – opposing the Weberian burocratic rationality – is deeply rooted in formality: "It is an adaptive mechanism that, simultaneously and in a vicious cycle, reinforces the shortcomings of the formal system"(2).[18] While Lomnitz (1978) accepts the duality of formality/informality as factual reality[19], Varley (2002) questions the power of representation when she argues that "the opposition between 'legal' and 'illegal' captured in these metaphors reflects the power of the dualisms that have shaped western thought" (450).

The "epistemological" position goes further in that direction. It parts from the insight that urban planning processes are marked by the withdrawal of the State from the agendas of social responsibility to mitigate the unequal access to planning process. Thus, legal frameworks and planning programmes have to be questioned in their impact on the (re)production of informality, but have to be framed into trans-local processes. Beyond the legal framework of the Nation-State power relations in the urbanization processes become a variable of modernization. "It is well established that modern states, be they democratic or authoritarian, produce and manage informality as a way of underwriting capitalist accumulation and securing political legitimacy." (Roy&AlSayyad 2004) Opposing the duality, the arbitrary construction of legality is criticized: "Informality then is not a set of unregulated activities, that lies beyond the reach of planning; rather it is planning that inscribes the informal by designating some activities as authorized and others as unauthorized[...]" (Roy 2009: 10). In the city a

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[17] Cornelius´ focus were different levels of "institutionalization" of local politics in there social surrounding and the power relations that where produced and reproduced along formalization of the squatted lands in negotiating between local leaders and party politicians.
[18] Informal elements – as they respond to the lack of formal practices to cover everyday needs, the scarcity of material goods– motivate to study the real functioning of the political system as an abstraction and contradiction of its legal framework.
[19] Lomnitz defines informality in a "sector"- manner, the informal sector being the most marginalized in comparison with three formal sectors (public, labour and private) of the structure of urban society.

multitude of public and private, local and transnational actors influence in the urban development, its rules and norms of expansion and its spatiality. The territorial sovereignty of the state via public institutions seems questionable and the formalization turns out to be a construction under relations of power, which must be studied leaving behind the Nation-State as spatial entity and the city as planned by public institutions and actors. From this perspective, neither a linear development of global liberalism (the first position), nor a mere historically enriched analysis of local power structures (second position) serve as theoretical frame. The "epistemological" position is sceptical towards the ability or will of governmental planning actors.

Instead of assuming a material factual dualism for the present purpose it is more adequate to seek for the power of defining (in)formality and therefore to speak of processes with different historical and regional origins that work on formalization of the "Places of one's own" and its power relations. I see the discursive effect of formalization on inequality as conditioned by the

1. formation of social, political and economical actors in the course of articulating demands and rehabilitation/modernization programmes (speech positions)
2. establishing of new construction norms and the control over their application (power of normalizing)
3. transregional knowledge transfer, gain and distribution among the actors.

The study of formalization of places of one's own proceeds by an analysis of discursive elements and investigates their historic and regional origins.

The Cases[20]

The rehabilitation and modernization of Mexico's historic centre and the development of the periphery shall be analysed around two events, the earthquake in 1985 and the reform of Art. 27 of the Mexican Constitution in 1992. The analysis of the formalization of places of one's own proceeds discursively focussing on three levels: actors, norms and knowledge and parts from the assumption that those events have opened new opportunities for formalizations and appropriations in the urban development.

Remembering crisis, reconstructing memories: The Centre Districts between eviction, modernization, rehabilitation and the un-controllable

Today's vulnerability of Mexico City in cases of earthquake can be traced back to early planning efforts taken by the Spanish Conquistadors in 1521: The decision to build on the lake of Texcoco, drying it out, has been the beginning of an urban development that is highly vulnerable to earthquakes, because ground consists of pure mud. Those

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[20] First collections of materials around the two events for the subsequent discourse analysis.

areas of today's Mexico City that form its Centre and that have been urbanized first, will be the most effected by a repetition of the 1985's event and are considered by seismologists the "zona 3". It is the zone, where arriving waves of shaking ground from the telluric movement originating from the Pacific Coast cause the highest effect (Castanos and Lomnitz 1995). The dating back of political decisions to colonial times shall not be deepened here but can be used to claim, that the earthquake of 1985 as well as its virtual repeatability have to be considered as a relation of natural and societal powers, that the effect of a probable earthquake is rendered by a complex of societal, economical and political relations and construction norms, their application as well as by a transfer of knowledge and the access to it. These levels of what I called above the formalization of Places of one's own shall be used to structure the discursive analysis of the event. The intention is to show the co-existence of heterogeneous places of one's own, the importance of the disaster as memorial event and in its virtual repeatability for their formalization and for the future transformation (rehabilitation and modernization) of the Centre Districts. Formulated as questions the impact of the earthquake on formalization shall be investigated asking:

- Which are the ever present actors-positions created discursively around the earthquake working on a formalization of those Places?

- Which sources of technical knowledge on secure construction, disaster prevention and vulnerability can be related to the formalization?

- What strategy can be pointed out analyzing the relation to knowledge and norms by the actors? How do the historical and regional relations influence a proclaimed understanding of modernization/right to the city? What is the role of remembering the crisis in the construction of a modern and disaster-resistant city?
Materials:

- newspaper reports on the occasion of anniversaries ("the 19th of Septembers")

- Monographs by city chroniclers (Poniatovska, Monsivais, etc.)

- Interviews with experts (seismologists, engineers), politicians (such as the directors of the rehabilitation programme, RHP), NGOs, habitants and activists

- Rehabilitation and modernization programmes and their academic evaluation

- Real estate announcements and homepages propagating new luxury lifestyles in the Centre
Related topics seem to be (first survey):

- The function of remembering crisis: heroism and sovereignty
The undecided question on the number of victims caused by the earthquake seems still a political question and differs between 5000 and 40000.

There is an apparent contradiction between the being-sufficient of the steps taken since 85 in securing the city by the government and the pessimistic expertise of seismologists and engineers. It seems to be a theoretical dispute incorporating political and personal relationships.

After the earthquake in 1957 the engineer Emilio Rosenblueth, one of the first scientists specialized on earthquake-resistant construction, a Mexican having studied in the US and therefore an example of transregional knowledge transfer, was in charge of formulating secure construction norms. His firm financed and supervised the construction of the social housing apartment blocks at Tlatelolco designed by architect Mario Pani. Yet one of his buildings crashed on September 19th of 1985 and 400 people died. He publicly announced his failure after the earthquake but nevertheless was again put in charge to formulate the construction norms that are valid until today.

- Role of the government in disaster management: The absence and incompetence of the government, the creation of the actor "civil society" and the subsequent self-organization.

Neighbourhood organizations came up, strong discourse proclaiming the Civil Society, earthquake as antecedent to the decline of the PRI-hegemony. Positions against: Manuel Aguilera Gomez (PRI and director of RHP), Fernando Perez Correa (Ex-director of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas, UNAM: "the fairy tail of the absent government")

As Cinna Lomnitz stated in a personal interview "Well, for at least three days the mayor claimed, that the high-rise buildings could not have collapsed, but that was sonsense, yet they lay about." (6.10.2010, own translation, conducted in German)

Cuauhtemoc Abarca and "el Pino", communal leaders of the Tlatelolco neighbourhood organizations both remember the governments absence and emphasize the neighbours led by them as de facto self-governed movement.

- Renovation, Reconstruction, expropriation and their necessity

The importance to rescue cultural patrimony was the official aim of RHP: to combat private investment in the central districts and increase quality of housing. The high vulnerability of old buildings needed renovation. At the same time, the Centre Districts have been renovated/modernized by subsequent political programmes such as "Bando Uno" and "Bando Dos", both under mayors that were members of the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). Groups organized after the earthquake still fight for adequate and affordable housing, while financial investment proliferates luxury housing, propagating the closeness to the cultural patrimony of the historic centre such as on Avenida Reforma or around Plaza Alameda (delparque.com.mx).

- Transfer of international financial and knowledge aid

Subject of abuses of received aid: The damnificados or the authorities?

It is a widespread position, that government neglected international support which is also seen as the first step of the end of the PRI as public opinion grew on the common position of its incompetence (Stevenson 2010). At the same time the Centro Nacional de Prevención de Desastres (CENAPRED) was founded shortly after the earthquake financially supported by the Japanese government, another example of transregional knowledge transfer after the shock.

An example of (lacking) knowledge transfer is the fact that in self-constructions (up to 50% of all constructions in Mexico City, Garcia Peralta 2006), the knowledge of how to construct in a secure manner simply is not present (Interview with Roberto Meli, 8.10.2010).

- The uncontrollable (non)repeatability of the disaster: Installation of secure norms and their (non)compliance

Construction norms, their control and the installation of new control mechanisms and their being insufficient. As was pointed out in an anniversary article in La Jornada (19.9.2010), 25 years after the earthquake buildings still do not cope with the restrictions on construction, partly due either to falsification of the construction plans or due to missing public control personnel. This position also Roberto Meli (UNAM) has taken in a personal interview (8.10.2010).

- Risk and Vulnerability: who lives secure and where? Inequality in the access to knowledge

Theory on the causes of the disastrous outcomes show, that the vulnerability of Mexico City is highly uneven, depending on the ground.

As Mario Ordaz, engineer at the UNAM told me in an interview, the division of the three zones, observed by CENAPRED is by far not sufficient to measure the real effect of an earthquake. His team has developed software to simulate the impact an earthquake would have for each individual building. Yet, this software is licensed and very expensive, access to it is restricted. Until now, only assurance firms such as the German "Munich Re", an enterprise of re-assuring, use it to estimate risk and value, while the governmental CENAPRED does not see a necessity for those detailed maps. As Ordaz stated: "Por eso no sorprende que las aseguradoras al nivel nacional e internacional tienen mucho mejor conocimiento y medida la vulnerabilidad en caso de un sismo que el gobierno, ni hablamos de la población." (14.10.2010)

The structural perspective of engineer at the UNAM, Roberto Meli, sees a stronger vulnerability in apartment buildings of 5 to twelve storages than in the vast majority of building that have been self-constructed (Interview on 8.10.2010), first, because of

their height, second, because of economic reasons: The larger apartment buildings often do not cope with the regulations because that would be too expensive, while the self-building owner opts for more security of his structure.

"Bienvenido al Primer Mundo" or: transforming England's Twenties

The elite residential closed community[21] is not a specific Mexican phenomenon. Types of it can be found all over the world (Borsdorf et al. 2007). Yet, their origins are matter of dispute,[22] as well as their interdependence with the urban society as a whole (Sabatini 2001). In Mexico City first types were built in the 70s but it was until 1992 when there began a decisive increase in numbers of large scale residential developments. Given a general scarcity of urbanizable land for the expanding metropolis, this has caused a further eviction of economically weaker parts of the population – a process, which has been observed in other cities as well (see for example Caldeira 1996). Yet, in the case of Mexico, with the reform of Art. 27 in 1992 land appropriations at a large scale for the private purpose of maximizing its value were legalized; the ejido, until the 90's almost exclusively settled by low-income populations (Memorandum 1994) now is subject to a heterogeneous variety of appropriations. And a first time-relation in the formalization of those "Places of one's own" can be spanned back to 1917, as the reform contradicted one of the most important achievements of the Revolution, the distribution of land. Forming an important element in the general impetus of NAFTA-driven deregulation (Whiteford et al 1998, Baños Ramirez 1998), the reform was presented by President Carlos Salinas as an indispensable move towards "modernization" (Cornelius and Myrhe 1998). Although legally backed by the Reform, the developers of elite residential communities had and have to negotiate with often heterogeneous groups of ejidatarios and political representatives of families (avecindados) who despite the restrictions of the former version of Art. 27 had purchased ejidal land. Concerning the consequences for urbanization, due to the location of ejido-land to be urbanized, its privatisation for real estate speculation confronted and still confronts, first, political conflicts with the ejidatarios and the avecindados, second, economical problems due to the financial crisis of 2008, and third, the problem of making desirable a form of living at the outskirts of the city, far away from its services and offers.

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[21] Naively I will use this descriptive term instead of, for example gated community. Different terms are used in literature causing for a great variety: barrios cerrados (Roitman), conjuntos cerrados, gated communities (Garcia Peralta, Sheinbaum), large scale urban projects (Swyngedouw). It will itself be topic of investigation to systemize the relation between place, origin and speaker.
[22] See for example publications on gated-communites.de

Focussing on a specific case of elite residence, the Ciudad Bosque Real[23], the socio-political conflicts in the formalization can be studied that take part in the imposition of the history of the ejido in urban environment. The aim, in the general line of argument of this proposal, of investigating those places is to get a deeper understanding of the historical and regional origins of their formalization via a discursive analysis of materials around the deregulation. The elite residential developments, including security measure, etc. and Golf clubs are representatives of a global modernity, yet have to be seen embedded in various historical and regional lines of development, that make questionable the planning competence of public institutions. The reform opened opportunities for new actors such as developers, construction companies, realtors, ejidatario-entrepreneurs, neighbourhood activists groups, for the transfer of knowledge of advertising, constructing and designing those places and thereby contributed to the implementation of new "Places of one's own".

Questions

- Which are the actors-positions (speech positions) created discursively around the Constitutional Reform working on a formalization of those Places?

- Which (regional and historical) sources of technical knowledge on secure construction, construction of security and leisure facilities as well as designs can be related to the formalization?

- What strategy can be pointed out by analyzing the relation to knowledge and norms by the actors? How do the historical and regional relations influence a proclaimed understanding of modernization/right to the city?

Materials

- Regarding Ciudad Bosque Real: Sales Announcements, Homepage-presentation, Real Estate magazines, TV-Spots, opposing critiques in internet (bosirreal.blogspot.com) and interviews with residents and the administration.

- Political Speeches, academic (expert) evaluation and newspaper articles around the reform of Art. 27 and land deregulation

- Interviews with representatives of neighbourhood activists and ejidatarios

Topics (first superficial survey)

- Modernization

Carlos Salinas (president from 1988-1994) propagated right with the beginning of his candidature for presidency a politics of "modernization" from below, which he related

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[23] Ciudad Bosque Real is located on the western peripheries of the Metropolitan Zone of Mexico City and provides housing via apartments and single family villas for up to 10500 families on 560ha of formerly agricultural land. The residential privately policed and administrated development also incorporates Mexico's largest golf club, commercial centres, schools and energy and water recycling plants.

to an opening towards foreign investment and knowledge transfer and that should incorporate all aspects of the national project such as land distribution, nationalized industries and cultural patrimony and all strata of society (Salinas, 17th August 1987).

- Political representation and changing political party power structure

The loss of hegemonic power of the PRI due to the declining opportunity of political mileage via bearing the "illegal development" on ejido-land. The political organization of neighbourhoods confronted with the risk of being expropriated due to the new legal framework favouring new economical actors

- Right to Property, the revolution and modernity in regard of business

Owning a place as business is a position taken by some habitants including one statement publicated in the real estate magazine "BosqueReal". Buying an apartment in the development means investment that is supposed to pay out with rising prizes. Property is also the topic in the liberalist argumentation of a "right of ejidatarios to sell". The private property argument is opposed by a social demand of habitable territory as in the discourse of Tierra y Libertad, part of the Popular Urban Movement (MUP) by the neighbourhood representatives surrounding the residential development.

- The formal market and the informal market

The illegality of land fractions, their regularization and the so called "expropriación bajo interés social" are subject of interpretation by public authorities as well as ejidatarios.

- Design, Security and Lifestyle

Entering the development one passes a sign that says "Bienvenido al Primer Mundo", a First World Image putting outside "América Latina". This inside-outside perspective is backed by interviews I conducted with residents who praise the advantages of living in an enclosed city, far away from "that Latin America" outside. In the propagation of the elite residence the security measures become a matter of highest importance, proclaiming a "Seguridad Ante Todo" (bosquereal.com)

- Ecology

The Autonomous System of the residence (Rainwater and energy efficient producing) and the political fights for land regularisation in officially declared ecological zones.

- Distance from the Centre

Opposing views: Distance as freedom from the city's noise, dirt and danger vs. distance as obstacle and long way to work.

Conclusion: Towards an analysis of entangled histories

The entanglement of the developments in the Centre and the Periphery lies in the common but often conflictive interest to formalize an "own place". It will be further necessary to show the interdependence of the heterogeneous lifestyles that makes up modernity in Mexico City. The examples of discursive formalization processes, the earthquake and the Art. 27, can be used to show the conflicts arising from the relation between regulation by norms and laws and their impact on and application by socio-political actors. The formalization of places of one's own is embedded in historical processes of knowledge transfer and legislative adjustments; but these are due to the socio-political configurations already inscribed in the different grounds of the urban space. As far as this is marked by inequalities, the formalization continues to be a function of societal powers between domination and appropriation and a matter of power in the definition of formalization as linear process in the regulation of property.

The entanglement of the interdependent formalization processes in the Centre and on the periphery, their origins and impacts on inequality are matter of further research; this paper could only try to give a superficial insight into their dimensions. Of high methodological interest will be the time-space sensitive discourse analysis as here lies the core of the argument: The formalization processes of places of one's own do combine various historical and regional origins; remembering the events and their historical relations is itself a discursive space of establishing social positions; the representations of those places in the named materials and the mutual perceptions that speak out of the interviews will serve as testimonies for those entangled histories.

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