

# Recent Trends and Practice in Spatial Planning in Mexico

## The Municipal Planning and Research Institutes

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This article analyzes the creation of municipal planning and research institutes, a phenomenon that is beginning to be institutionalized at the municipal level as spatial planning practice. There exist about 32 institutes in Mexico; the municipalities of Leon, Guanajuato and Juarez, Chihuahua, are the innovators that started to institutionalize that trend and practice. The results show that municipalities that have adopted this institutional innovation are those that are in conurbation process, experiencing accelerated rates of growth, and a good proportion are northern municipalities. The main conclusion is that there is a mismatch between the practice and goals of technical rationality and the complex and social diversity of urban municipalities that require democratic and collaborative processes and practices.

*Keywords:* spatial planning, collaborative planning, rational planning, planning institutes.

### *Tendencias y prácticas recientes de la planeación espacial en México: Los institutos municipales de investigación y planeación*

Este artículo analiza la adopción de institutos municipales de investigación y planeación (IMIP), un fenómeno que se empieza a institucionalizar en México a nivel municipal, como una práctica de planeación espacial. Actualmente existen alrededor de 32 institutos en México, siendo León, Guanajuato y Juárez, Chihuahua, los municipios innovadores que iniciaron la tendencia que ha comenzado a institucionalizarse. Los resultados muestran que los municipios que han adoptado esta innovación institucional son aquellos que están en un proceso de conurbación, que experimentan tasas de crecimiento acelerado, y en una buena proporción son municipios norteros. La prin-

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principal conclusión es que hay un desfase entre las metas de racionalidad técnica que pretenden poner en práctica y la complejidad y diversidad social de los municipios urbanos que requieren procesos y prácticas más democráticos y participativos.

*Palabras claves:* planeación espacial, planeación participativa, planeación racional, institutos de planeación.

The objective of this paper is to analyze recent trends and practice regarding spatial planning in Mexico. The idea for the paper emerged from a project undertaken by the author and other colleagues to help establish the municipal planning and research institute (hereafter IMIP by its Spanish acronym) in Nogales, Sonora. The emergence of IMIPs across Mexico has been a phenomenon that started in 1994 with the creation of the first such institute in the municipality of Leon, Guanajuato, to the latest formed in 2007 by the municipality of Nogales, Sonora.

As of today, there exist about 32 municipal planning and research institutes affiliated with the Mexican Association of Municipal Planning Institutes also known as AMIMP.<sup>1</sup> A considerable number of institutes are located in northern Mexico (the states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas), central Mexico (the states of San Luis Potosi, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Michoacan and Hidalgo) and, to a lesser degree, in southern Mexico (the states of Guerrero, Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche and Quintana Roo). The states of Baja California, Guanajuato, Sinaloa, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas are the states that account for a larger number of such institutes (see map 1).

Planning practice in Mexico has been transformed substantially in part due to two interrelated crises: 1) the fiscal crisis of the State that led to the adoption of neoliberal policies as a new development strategy and governance philosophy in the 1980s; and 2) the legitimacy crisis of the political system based upon a one-party system and the rise of democratic movements in Mexico. The two interrelated crises set in motion a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.amimp.org.mx/enlaces.html> [accessed on 02/11/2010]. Officially there are 39 members. Some of the members are regional or state planning agencies.

series of political and institutional changes that transformed substantially the relationship (*i.e.* responsibilities and mandates) among all levels of government. Several municipalities demanded a new form of governance different from the centralized patronage relationships of a one party system that existed for more than a half century in Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

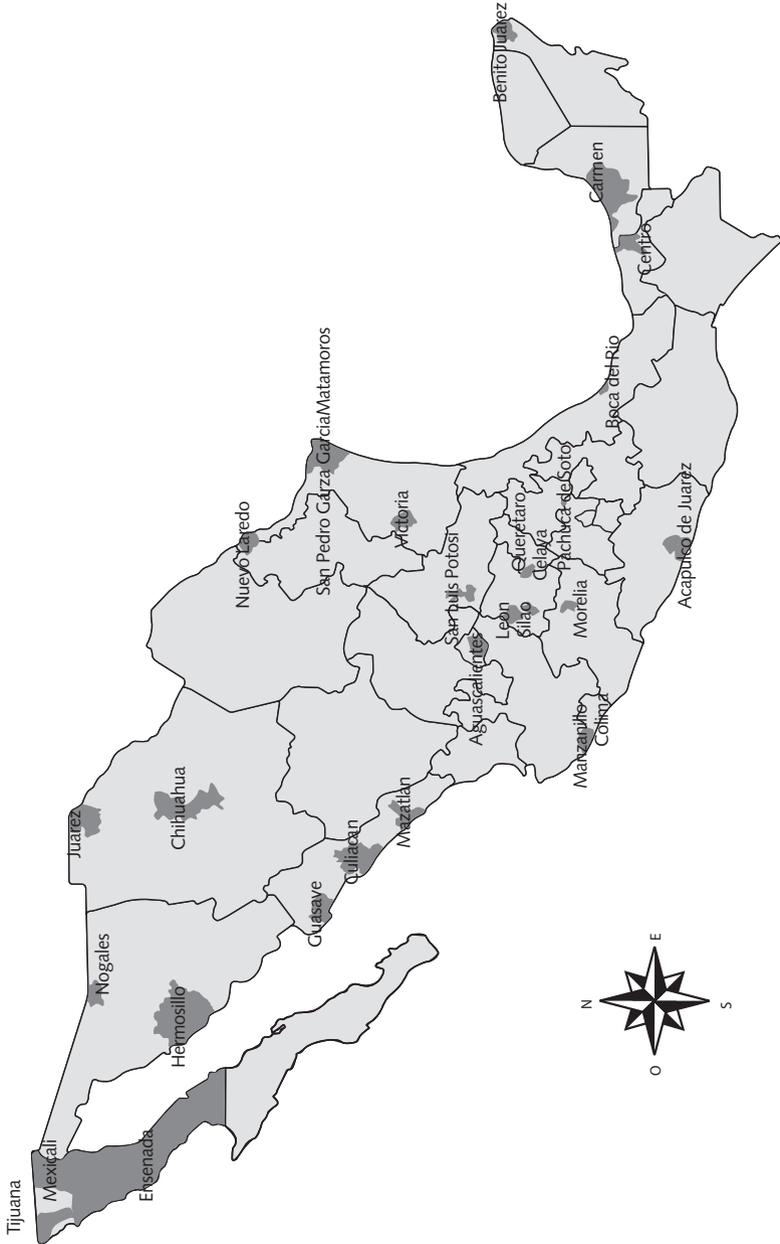
This article is exploratory and addresses two key questions: What are the causes that explain the emergence of IMIPs? What is the contribution of IMIPs to local planning practices in Mexico?

To be able to answer the above questions the article is divided into four sections. The first section is intended to offer a historical recount of the context that triggered the emergence of new planning practice at the local level, particularly the rise of the democratic movement and the election of opposition party candidates, such as those from the National Action Party or PAN (by its Spanish acronym), to several municipal governments. The second section focuses on a brief history of contemporary spatial planning in Mexico identifying different stages in the planning practices; globalization and the adoption of neoliberal philosophy is of particular interest. In the following section an analysis of key indicators of demographic, economic and governance effectiveness is undertaken. By comparing and contrasting those municipalities that adopted an IMIP model with the rest of the nation; this section focuses on planning outcomes in order to make an indirect assessment of the impact IMIPs have on local governments. The fourth section focuses specifically on understanding the institutional architecture of the IMIPs; what is their mandate, mission and vision, professional qualifications and recruitment of the staff, organization, products, etc., followed by a reflection to answer the questions posed previously regarding how IMIPs have contributed to reshape plan-

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<sup>2</sup>The official party was formed in 1929 as the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) and then changed to the Mexican Revolution Party (PRM), and in 1946 became the Institutionalized Revolution Party or PRI. The PRI was the arena where old revolutionary fighters or *caudillos* would solve their differences through political negotiation and avoid armed rebellions. Since its formation, PRI controlled the political landscape through a patronage system and any political opposition or independent movements were allowed just as a democratic facade.

MAP 1. IMIPS Location



Source: Elaborated by autor.

ning practice in Mexico. Finally, the paper contains some concluding remarks about how to improve spatial planning and practice in Mexico.

#### THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

As stated previously, two interrelated crises combined to create an inflection point that produced deep structural changes in the way planning institutions and practices operated in Mexico: 1) the fiscal crisis that put the government on the brink of bankruptcy; and 2) a legitimacy crisis that triggered the movement for democracy and the beginning of the end of a one-party system. In the next paragraphs, I explain briefly these events so the reader will have in mind the context in which IMIPs emerged in Mexico as a novel idea to make municipal governments more efficient, effective and professional in the way urban development is being planned.

The fiscal crisis originated as an imbalance between government income and expenditures during the 1970s. This fiscal imbalance had its origin in the fact that at the same time it had windfall income from oil exports, Mexico also spent recklessly on infrastructure, social spending, and large subsidies to urban dwellers to lower costs of living in the city. Government fiscal deficits were financed through borrowing in foreign markets. Windfall gains from oil by exporter countries, mainly in the Middle East, kept interest rates low and therefore made foreign borrowing attractive to national governments. The foreign debt of sovereign nations such as Mexico and Brazil, to mention a couple, skyrocketed to 96.8 and 116.2 billion dollars respectively (Todaro, 1997, 511). As long as oil prices were high and interest rates abroad were kept low, as happened during the 1970s, Mexico could finance its fiscal deficits.

However, when oil prices went into a downward spiral and the U.S. Federal Reserve, headed by chairman Paul Volcker, decided to raise the discount rate to combat stagflation in the United States, this created the debacle of the Mexican public finance. Higher interest rates increased

the burden of the debt service. According to Todaro (1997, 551) the ratio of debt to gross national product (GNP) for Mexico at its peak reached 42.1 per cent. In 1982 Mexico shocked the world with the news that it could no longer serve its debt and, if there was not rescheduling or refinancing, Mexico would default. This announcement was just the beginning of the foreign debt crisis worldwide that required the intervention by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to address an international structural problem of the finance system.

The fiscal crisis forced Mexico to accept the IMF terms of adopting structural adjustment programs (SAP) to overcome its financial crisis and put public finance in order. SAP called for a reduction of government expenditures (which meant cutting social expenditures and subsidies) and an increase in tax revenue. Other components of SAP in Mexico were reducing government intervention in the economy and fostering the private sector by selling state enterprises, privatizing some government services, deregulating economic activities, and opening the economy to allow foreign direct investment and to engage and participate in the global economy. The IMF policies work in tandem with the World Bank (1997) advice in how to reengineer government to make it more efficient and effective by adopting new managerial philosophies known as the new public administration (Denhart and Denhart, 2003).

Shifting the attention to the political dimension, the following events are important to emphasize that accounted in part for the demise of the old and the emergence of new governance forms: first, the response to the 1985 Mexico City earthquake sent a powerful message that civil society can organize and act independently from any party or patronage institution; second, the contested nature of elections in states such as Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Yucatan and Guanajuato, where the National Action Party became an important contender and where eventually the PRI stopped being the ruling party; third, the lack of legitimacy of the 1988 presidential election that declared the PRI's

candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), the winner over the leftist coalition<sup>3</sup> candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who was widely viewed by Mexican society as the legitimate winner; fourth, the accord between the PRI and PAN to recognize Salinas de Gortari as the president in exchange for reforms that would make the election system more open and citizen controlled to prevent future electoral frauds. Electoral wins by the opposition parties, and eventually the loss of a majority in congress by the PRI in 1997 not only restored a system of checks and balance among the three branches of government but also state and local governments lobbied for more control and powers being transferred to them. In the next paragraphs I offer an explanation of how the different events somehow were cumulative and transformed the political landscape in Mexico that frame planning practice.

Mexico City's earthquake in 1985 is considered by many scholars as an important historical reference that marked a "before" and "after" regarding the way government and society relate. This natural event made evident the incapacity of government to respond to an emergency situation and the capacity of society to organize and act independently from government and party structures. Civil society for the first time was capable of acting alone and independently from the traditional patronage system. Before the earthquake the PRI acted as broker or mediator between society and government developing a patronage system. After the earthquake civil society had more options to channel its demands and also political parties, such as the PAN or PRD, developed new mechanisms to relate to civil society and forms of governance.

The fiscal crisis of the state had a tremendous impact on the Mexican economy. The 1980s are known as the lost decade not only for Mexico but also for many other countries around the world. Not only Mexico's GNP fail to grow; it actually contracted. According to the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI), in 1980 the per capita GNP was

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<sup>3</sup>The leftist coalition eventually formed the Democratic Revolution Party known as PRD whose stronghold is the Federal District or DF where Mexico City is located.

equivalent to 13 049 pesos and in 1996 it was 12 774 pesos.<sup>4</sup> During this period, per capita income declined, unemployment rates increased, and the rates of poverty went from bad to worse.

The above context provides the stage for discontent with the one-party system. It took a severe economic crisis for the erosion of the political grip of the PRI. The PRI could no longer legitimize its power. It is not surprising that people started looking for alternatives and were open to other political offers. In the 1980s it had become more difficult for the PRI to maintain political control. Democratic waves emerged and the PAN became a legitimate contender and government alternative. The very competitive gubernatorial elections in Sonora, Chihuahua, Yucatan, Guanajuato and Baja California were just the beginning of the end. In 1989 the PAN scored its first big win when Ernesto Ruffo Appel was sworn into office as governor for the state of Baja California, becoming the first elected governor from a party other than the PRI in modern post-revolution history. This big win was followed by others in states such as Guanajuato, Chihuahua, Yucatan, etc. Finally, the PRI lost the crown jewel—the executive branch was won by Vicente Fox in 2000, a PAN candidate.

The PAN as a political party was created in 1939 by Manuel Gomez Morin as an opposition political party, ten years after the official party was born as the PNR. It can be said that the PAN's philosophy was the antithesis of the PRI which embraced anti-democratic, corporatist and patronage structures. Since its beginning, the PAN differentiated itself from the PRI by offering a political ideology that emphasized citizen-based political institutions around principles such as individual freedom, democratic values, economic liberalism, and conservative social causes.<sup>5</sup> The PAN had a strong appeal in some regions of Mexico such as

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<sup>4</sup> The data is deflated to 1993 as a base year. <http://dgcnesyp.inegi.org.mx/cgi-win/ehm.exe/CI070010> [Accessed 2/17/2010].

<sup>5</sup> The PAN has strong ties to the religious rebellion movement in the 1920s known as *la Cristiada* or Christian rebellion. This movement had its stronghold in states such as Guanajuato and Jalisco, a region known as the Bajío.

the Bajío in central Mexico, considered to be the cradle of conservatism, as well as in northern states where capitalist entrepreneurial values are more embedded in a society known for its pragmatism (Morales, 2005).

Different authors (Bassols, 1995; Espinoza, 1998; Guillen, 1996; Morales, 2005; Padilla, 1995; Valencia, 1995) have analyzed the relationship between political parties and government style and arrived to some basic conclusions. The PAN moved away from traditional patronage and tried a new way to include public participation in local government; the PAN created two distinctive programs in its political platform—*miercoles ciudadano* (citizen's Wednesday) and *Sabaton* (Big Saturday)—, both are intended to make government more accessible and closer to the public; it also established communal organization to solve problems such as garbage collection, street cleaning, etc. (Morales, 2005). The PAN searched for municipal autonomy, efficiency in government and transparency in the use of resources. In Leon, Guanajuato, it created the Organizational Development Office as a way to bring a more professional government and develop managerial and planning skills (Valencia, 1995). Padilla (1995, 133-134) emphasizes that the PAN was successful in urban settings with a growing middle class (*i.e.* Ciudad Juarez) that was dissatisfied with the PRI's forms of government (patronage and authoritarian); the success of the PAN was based on promoting the idea that anti-democracy and corruption, embedded in the PRI, were the causes of the problems facing urban dwellers. Bassols (1995) argues that one of the most important things to highlight from PAN governments is their desire to open and find new spaces for the participation of civil society outside of the corporatist and patronage schemes. In addition, the PAN was willing to change government structures related to administrative norms and planning practices. The other main party, the PRD, given its leftist leaning ideology emphasize more social and equity issues (*e.g.* financial aid to senior citizens and single mothers, scholarships to low income students, etc.) and to a lesser degree municipal reform (Morales, 2005). The PRD has been pragmatic and it has been

open to undertaking public-private partnerships.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the PRD replicates many of the patronage practices used by the PRI. Mexico City has been the main laboratory for the PRD.

In summary, this section has shown how the combination of two crises—an economic and political one—set the stage for the emergence of new forms of government and planning practices. The control of state and municipal government by opposition parties such as the PAN and PRD and, eventually, the loss of the presidency opened up a window of opportunity for trying something different from the traditional corporatist and patronage system. The creation of municipal planning and research institutes or IMIPs is the evidence of innovations in local governing and planning in Mexico. Before discussing the IMIPs, it is important to analyze more specifically the spatial planning practice that prevailed in Mexico to have a point of reference to be able to contrast and compare.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPATIAL PLANNING AND PRACTICE IN MEXICO

This section is based mainly on Garza (1999, 2005) and Gazca (2009), which analyze in detail the evolution of spatial planning in Mexico. Both authors offer a typology that identified important inflection points in regards to the planning framework and practice in Mexico. Garza (1999, 2005) identifies four stages that characterized spatial planning practice in Mexico: 1) the setting up of the Mexican state; 2) the Mexican miracle; 3) planning in the context of the big crisis and the lost decade; and 4) planning during the neoliberal state. Gazca (2009, 52-53) argues that it is through a historical-spatial analysis of capitalism in Mexico and state intervention in organizing the territory, that we can understand spatial planning. Furthermore, Gazca (2009) identifies five stages: 1) the first step towards regional planning, 2) regional policies undertaken at the

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<sup>6</sup> Carlos Slim, considered to be the richest man in the world, has partnered with Mexico City government to rescue the historical district.

state level, 3) the institutionalization of regional policy, 4) decentralization and regional policy, and 5) the State crisis and the retreat from regional policy. In the next paragraphs, I will analyze the main characteristics of each stage framing the analysis by looking at the role knowledge, action and power played (Friedmann, 1987; Forester, 1989).

According to Garza (2005, 39) and Gazca (2009) the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1900-1940) in Mexico are a period when the “judicial superstructure” of spatial policy in Mexico was laid down. The Mexican Constitution, approved in 1917, is the main “judicial superstructure” that frames contemporary spatial planning practice in Mexico. This “judicial superstructure” focused on the dual objective of developing a balance between the city and the rural areas (town and country planning). Gazca (2009) points out the importance of the first plans (Six Year Plan, the First General Planning Law) and the role that the State plays in the process of facilitating productive process and capital accumulation.

What is important to rescue from the “judicial superstructure” is the issue related to property rights because it is the most important aspect to be able to understand spatial/territorial planning in Mexico. *Eminent domain* power is one of the most important tools to shape spatial policy. Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution is the one that directly deals with *eminent domain* issues. What is important to highlight from article 27 is the following: 1) the State assumes the role of trustee of the people and it has the authority to transfer property and regulate its uses; 2) the State has the authority to take land whenever the public interest requires it; 3) property rights are not absolute; that is, the landlord owns only *usufructuary* rights not the physical asset itself. In addition, article 121 addresses local jurisdiction over land and buildings. Article 115 focuses on municipal authority and mandates regarding land use (Garza, 2005).

Some studies (Peña, 2002) have compared the Mexican institutional framework of planning *vis à vis* the U.S. This comparative work is important to be able to understand planning practices by contrasting them with other models. One of the key differences between the two planning

systems is the ability of local governments to control and regulate urban development through the use of *eminent domain* power. In the U.S. based on the Tenth Amendment and Dillon's rule, the local or municipal government has the authority over land use decisions in its territorial jurisdiction (Blaesser and Weinstein, 1989, 16-20). In contrast, in Mexico local government authority on land use is severely handicapped; *eminent domain* is executed either through a federal executive decree<sup>7</sup> or by state governments. In summary, the legal framework assigns an overwhelming power to the federal government to shape spatial policy at different scales. The State, controlled by the official party—the PRI—became the force that congregated diffuse power; thus a centralist model of planning was not only necessary but it was the only option at that historical moment of nation building after the Mexican revolution.

Applying Faludi's (1973) framework of substantive and procedural planning I argue the following. The substantive planning issues (ends) were derived not by planners applying positivist knowledge but rather by political elites or *caudillos*<sup>8</sup> that also happened to become entrepreneurs; the distinction between the private and the public interest was fuzzy to say the least. Political elites skewed resources and investment in regions where they have their strongholds; northern states such as Sonora, Tamaulipas and Sinaloa benefit the most (Wilkie, 1967). In summary, power relations among elites concentrated around the official party (PRI) were the cause of the contradictory results of knowledge and action.

The Mexican miracle is a period of unprecedented prosperity in Mexico that lasted about three decades (1940-1970). The miracle consisted of unprecedented rates of growth above 6 per cent per year parallel to

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<sup>7</sup> Article 27 was used to implement the agrarian reform after the 1910 revolution that destroyed the old hacienda or plantation system by distributing land to peasants and creating a new breed of farmers. Also, the most famous executive decree was when president Lazaro Cardenas in 1938 expropriated the assets of foreign oil companies; creating the state enterprise Pemex that to this day is in charge of oil exploration, exploitation and distribution.

<sup>8</sup> *Caudillo* is a term applied to former soldiers of the Mexican revolution that replaced the elite from the old regime. Francisco Villa, Alvaro Obregon, Plutarco Elias Calles and Lazaro Cardenas are among the most famous caudillos.

macroeconomic stability (Hansen, 1983). At the same time, the country experienced a shift not only in its economic base by becoming an industrial country, but also by moving towards the path of an urban society. The degree of urbanization went from 20 per cent in 1940 to 47.1 per cent in 1970; the number of cities increased from 55 to 174 (Garza, 2005, 30-33). Two issues central to the territorial spatial agenda were the production of public goods in the form of capital facilities that would support the economic growth miracle such as roads, ports, irrigation, bridges, electricity, etc., and regional spatial policy aimed to reduce regional disparities and the primacy of the urban system. The creation of institutions and agencies in charge of planning capital facilities such as the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE), the communications and roads agency (SCT), and watershed and hydrology commissions, was an important contribution during this period. Gazca (2009) points out that this era is very rich in regional spatial policy which was mirror based on the experiment of rational planning in the Tennessee Valley Authority in the U.S. and replicated in Mexico with the watershed program (Programa de Cuencas) in addition to other policies such as growth poles.

It is important to reflect on the knowledge bases of planning and the profile of the planning profession during the Mexican miracle. Mexican spatial policy is not immune to paradigms being applied in other parts of the world. Different works (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979; Friedmann, 1987) are very illustrative to analyze the regional and spatial planning paradigms. Rational planning provides the epistemological bases for regional planning. Planning is driven by scientific positivist knowledge applied to public policy (Friedmann, 1987). Planning focuses on problems where means are known and ends are agreed (Blanco, 1994); technical engineering solutions are the means to achieve the goal of economic growth linked to spatial or territorial policies. The State, particularly after the Great Depression, undertakes a proactive role to help the market overcome either coordination problems or market failures, particularly those related to the provision of public goods.

Garza (2005, 54) and Gazca (2009) arrived at the same conclusion that regional policies in Mexico were ineffective and, worse, produced opposite results—a higher degree of urban concentration and primacy of the main industrial cities and a territorial polarization. Furthermore, the dominant political elite basically only cared about promoting specific sectors of the economy and merely made token efforts at implementing spatial territorial policies. The priority was to promote industry without caring much about spatial concentration or regional inequalities. Caudillos were replaced by a new breed of entrepreneurs linked to the official party; president Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) best represents this new breed of political-entrepreneurs or capitalist cronyism (Hansen, 1983). Power brokers were in charge of setting the ends and planners simply were reduced to procedural tasks often linked to technical engineering.

According to Garza (1999, 58) three events frame the urban analyses that were produced during the volatile decade that goes from 1960 to 1970: 1) ideas promoted by the Latin American Economic Commission (CEPAL) as part of the U.S. lead initiative known as The Alliance for Progress; 2) the questioning of physical and urban design solutions to social problems; 3) the emergence of spatial segregation and modernization theories and studies which framed most of the analysis. Research was framed by the mass migration of the rural population to large cities such as Mexico City and interests in survival strategies of urban dwellers. Another relevant aspect is that urban and regional planning was incorporated into academia; research centers and academic programs were created. The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN), two of the most prestigious academic institutions in Mexico, started offering graduate degrees in planning and urbanism respectively (Garza, 2005, 65).

Spatial planning research and practice in Mexico was affected and shaped by the social tension and movements of the 1960s. For instance, in the United States the civil rights movement and the opposition to the Vietnam war strongly influenced planning to pay attention to social and

racial issues. Mexico was becoming an urban society and also a more educated one; Mexican society started demanding a more open, democratic and tolerant society. Garza (1999, 78-79) emphasized that in the following decade new planning programs emerged. The Colegio de Mexico (Colmex) offered a master's degree in urban development, The Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM) campus in Xochimilco offered an undergraduate degree in urban settlements, UAM-Azcapotzalco offered urban sociology. The support for scholars to study urbanism or similar careers in Europe was also important. Critical theory or Marxist analysis (*e.g.* Lefebvre, Castells, Harvey, etc.) appeared as a new conceptual framework applied by Mexican scholars to study the urban space.

The planning focus was no longer instrumental (means-ends) but rather trying to understand substantive issues and big questions that society is dealing with (*e.g.* housing access and survival strategies, urban segregation, poverty, exclusion and political participation, etc.). The traditional power structure of one strong party was confronted and questioned by a sector of society that felt excluded (students, young urban middle class). Knowledge or epistemological bases of planning moved from the rational-technical and instrumental towards a more sociological approach (substantive).

The next decade saw the emergence of planning professionalization and institutionalization of planning practice. The passage of the General Law of Urban Settlements and the creation of The Human Settlements and Public Works Agency, known as SAHOP by its Spanish acronym, in 1976 are another inflection point for planning practice in Mexico. SAHOP was in charge of coordinating intra and inter-urban spatial policy. The SAHOP was transformed in 1982 into the Urban Development Agency or SEDUE. Garza (2005, 60) describes these changes as the "most important jurisdictional superstructure" that established the bases that still today frame the spatial planning practice in Mexico. The planning practice of SAHOP and later SEDUE has focused on four aspects: norms, strategies, government coordination and planning instruments. The goals set forward for spatial planning deal with the "problem" of urban primacy that Mexico City represents. Therefore, policies promot-

ing new growth poles and development of “backward regions” were promoted. Spatial planning attempted to foster a more balanced urban hierarchy not only of economic activities but also population across the national territory.

Gazca (2009) highlights the creation of 226 plans of the main urban agglomerations and planning commissions addressing specific issues such as marginality, arid zones, rural development, etc. However, according to Garza (2005, 61-62), the institutionalization process of urban and regional planning was a failure due to the fact that there is not evidence of a greater degree of technical-scientific rigor: SAHOP lacked expertise in making plans that could be in accordance with existing realities. Plans were bureaucratic requirements rather than road map and SAHOP was bogged down in the negative inertia of the political system (*i.e.* corruption), and its own “architectonic bias”.

The above discussion shows clearly that there is a mismatch between knowledge and action or between theory and practice. On the one hand, the main planning agencies in Mexico, SAHOP and later SEDUE, focused on territorial and physical planning. On the other hand, academic institutions and planning programs were emphasizing more urban sociological studies. Planning practice and knowledge generated were not synchronized. Furthermore, the PRI continued playing the role of power broker among all actors, urban developers continued doing business as usual by socializing costs and privatizing gains, and popular urban movements, such as squatting, continued to be tolerated and, in many instances, promoted by leaders of the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP), one of the political pillars<sup>9</sup> of the PRI (Duhau, 1998). Mexican cities are more a product of politics and power than technical scientific knowledge in the form of rational planning (Ward, 1990).

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<sup>9</sup> The PRI is organized into three broad sectors. The workers sector congregates the unionized workers and is organized around the Mexican Workers Confederation or CTM. The second sector is the peasants and rural masses affiliated with the National Confederation of Peasants known as CNC. The last sector is the National Confederation of Popular Organizations or CNOP which deals with urban demands such as housing, public services, etc.

As explained previously, the economic crisis experienced by Mexico for most of the 1980s altered substantially the political structure and the planning regime. The PRI's role as power broker was eroded and a centrifugal process of power towards state and local actors got underway. The central government was willing to transfer more responsibilities to the local governments as a way to deal with fiscal deficits and restore order in the public finance. Two laws were passed that are important from a planning perspective: 1) the Planning Law in 1983 and 2) reforms to article 115 in 1983 and 1999 that explicitly transfer to local governments more responsibilities such as public utilities (water, sewer, roads, etc.) as well as those to control and manage the urban development process. Other laws, such as the National Democratic Planning System in 1983, and reforms to articles 25 and 26 allow more vertical and horizontal coordination regarding planning (Gazca, 2009, 71) with the making of the State Planning Commissions (coplades) and Municipal Planning Committees (Copladem). A key problem was the lack of expertise to undertake planning (Garza, 2005, 77), particularly in rural or small urban municipalities. In addition, transfer of responsibilities was not necessarily attached to a transfer of resources or rules to make local governments more accountable (Guillen, 1996).

During the period of the lost decade, as the 1980s were known, and during the administration of president Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) the *Solidaridad* program was perhaps the most important spatial program at the urban scale. The program was designed to provide basic infrastructure and other type of public works to alleviate urban poverty. Several studies have pointed out that the program was mainly political rather than a comprehensive strategy to strengthen urban planning; the program was used as a means to restore the PRI's power base through political patronage (Diaz-Cayero and Magaloni, 2003; Bruhn, 1996; Kurtz, 2002). Planning knowledge was put to the service of power to restore the political machinery. However, a new financial crisis at the end of 1994, known as the *Error de Diciembre* (December's Mistake), which sent the value of the peso in a downward spiral *vis à vis* the dollar was too much to

bear. The PRI lost the majority in Congress in the 1997 midterm elections and in 2000 lost the executive branch to Vicente Fox—a PAN candidate.

The PRI administration of Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) and the two PAN administrations under Vicente Fox (2000-2006) and Felipe Calderon (2006-present) did not change philosophy in regards to spatial planning. These administrations were in charge of consolidating the neoliberal State that was a work in progress since 1982. Different scholars in Mexico arrived at similar conclusions with regards to the future of spatial planning in Mexico. For Garza (2005) the neoliberal State meant the abdication of the federal government to lead urban policy and the transfer of planning responsibility to local government. However, some local government lacked the technical capacity and the resources. In addition, local governments by themselves cannot be a substitute for the federal government to plan the territory at a national scale (Garza, 2005, 101-104). According to Iracheta (1997), in the 1990s the challenge for local planning is to create competitive cities and address urban poverty after a lost decade. The central focus of planning is no longer to develop a formal model of the physical and environmental image of the city, but rather to define the way in which the local authorities and civil society will participate in the generation of initiatives and the governance of their own space. This implies that planning needs to take into account the political game and search for consensus. Planning focus becomes the socio-spatial configuration process (Iracheta, 1997, 156-157). Localities are organizing without a central authority and national spatial policy. Perlo (2000) concludes that a new territorial policy needs to consider the diversity of the territory and realize that national spatial policy requires new instruments and rules that would allow development that could be steered towards common goals. The new spatial policy needs to be “comprehensive, integral, coherent, decentralized, participative, democratic and strategic” (Perlo, 2000, 329).

A few issues from the above arguments can be rescued to set the stage to begin discussing the role IMIPs will play in spatial planning within the context of the neoliberal State. First, the transfer of more planning re-

sponsibilities to the local level and the lack of local planning expertise forced some governments to innovate and try out new instruments to improve the planning processes and practice (Cabrero *et al.*, 1997; Guillen, 1996). Second, due to globalization cities such as those along the U.S.-Mexico border, tourist resorts such as Cancun, and mega cities such as Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara are often linked more to the global economy than national economic processes (Perlo, 2000; Sassen, 2006); therefore, there is a need to become more competitive and improve planning practice. Third, the traditional top-down and centralized spatial planning approach becomes obsolete in a democratic society; the traditional patronage system no longer seems feasible. Thus, there is a need to find new mechanisms and rules that will redefine the relationship between government and society.

I hypothesize that the causes behind the establishment of IMIPs is to respond precisely to these three issues that local governments face that relate to: 1) the acquisition of knowledge and expertise through technical-administrative innovations to deliver services in a more efficient and effective way (Cabrero and Arellano, 1993) thus professionalizing planning; 2) the challenge of making urban centers more competitive to be able to “hinge” to the global economy (Sassen, 2006), and 3) the search for new planning paradigms that will replace the traditional patronage-cronyism regime. In summary, I argue that the surge of IMIPs is an attempt to subdue politics and power in favor of technical reason to deliver basic government outputs (public services) more efficiently, improve government processes and practices (administrative innovation), and increase accountability (democratic).

#### MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES ADOPTING THE IMIP MODEL

The goal is to offer a general overview of municipal planning institutes in regards to their mission, vision, professional background, planning

practice and procedure. However, before delving into those issues it is important to discuss some of the characteristics (demographic and economic) of the urban municipalities that have adopted the IMIP planning model and the main indicators, in terms of the quality of government, of the municipalities being studied. I do not pretend to establish any causality between the creation of the IMIP and government effectiveness in delivering services; this is beyond the scope of the present article. Instead, what I attempt is to present a general profile of the municipalities and their ability to cope with the demand for public services by innovating their planning practice —the creation of an IMIP being one of them.

As mentioned earlier there exist 32 planning institutes in municipalities that are diverse in terms of their demographics. Based on the 2005 inter-census population count,<sup>10</sup> the size of the 32 municipalities on average was slightly above a half million (526 338); and the largest in the group are Tijuana (1 410 687), Ciudad Juarez (1 313 338) and Leon (1 278 087). The smallest ones are Corregidora (104 218) and San Pedro Garza Garcia (122 009). In general terms, those urban municipalities have a higher than average rate of population growth; the average annual rate of growth at the national level for the 1985-1995 decade was 2.42 per cent and for the next decade 1995-2005 the annual average rate of growth was 1.33 per cent. In contrast, the average annual rate of growth of the 32 municipalities was 5.57 and 2.30 per cent, respectively. It is important to emphasize that some of the 32 municipalities have impressive average annual rates of growth in 1985-1995 and a lower rate of growth for the next decade (1995-2005). One set of the 32 is municipalities located at the U.S.-Mexico border such as Tijuana (7.67 and 4.23%), Ciudad Juarez (5.22 and 2.98%), Mexicali (2.42 and 2.30%), and Nogales (6.41 and 4.50%). Another set is resort and tourist municipalities such as Benito Juarez where Cancun is located (49.21 and

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<sup>10</sup>The population census is conducted every 10 years in Mexico by INEGI for years ending in zero such as 2010; however, between census there is a quick population counting in the years ending in five —2005. The key difference is that the population counting only focuses on demographic aspects whereas the census is more comprehensive and incorporates social, housing and economic variables.

8.38%) and Manzanillo (3.21 and 2.69%). Another set is municipalities that are suburbs of larger metropolitan areas such as Boca del Rio (7.88 and .51%), a suburb of Veracruz City; San Pedro Garza Garcia (3.17 and .019%) and San Nicolas de los Garza (4.92 and -.23%), suburbs of Monterrey; and Corregidora (6.77 and 7.41%), a suburb of Queretaro. The rest of the municipalities are midsize cities that are state capitals such as Hermosillo, Sonora; Victoria, Tamaulipas; Centro, Tabasco, where the capital of Villahermosa is located; and Culiacan, Sinaloa (see annex 1).<sup>11</sup> Let us remember that the first IMIP was formed in 1994 in the municipality of Leon in the state of Guanajuato. Faster rates of growth experienced the previous decade is just one of several causes that forced some municipalities to innovate regarding how to manage urban growth and cope with the provision of urban services through better planning.

The 32 municipalities being considered account for 16.31 per cent of the total population of Mexico in 2005 and 23.35 per cent of the national gross production value in 2003.<sup>12</sup> In 2000 the GDP per capita for Mexico was \$7 495 dollars compared to \$11 066 dollars for the 32 municipalities. The municipality of San Pedro Garza Garcia, a suburb of Monterrey, has the highest GDP per capita (\$32 877), followed by the municipality of Carmen, Campeche (\$21 892); however, the high GDP per capita of Carmen comes from oil production. Corregidora, Queretaro, and Benito Juarez, Cancun, followed in the range of \$15 000. On the opposite side, the lowest GDP per capita in the group are Guasave (\$4 907), Irapuato (\$5 202) and Ensenada (\$5 388).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> All calculations are based on the 1995 and 2005 population and counting and 2000 Census. Data comes from the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI). <http://www.inegi.org.mx/inegi/default.aspx> [Accessed 3/9/2010]

<sup>12</sup> Data calculated based on Censos Economicos 2004. Data comes from the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI). <http://www.inegi.org.mx/inegi/default.aspx> [accessed 3/9/2010].

<sup>13</sup> Data comes from the 2000 Human Development Index elaborated by the National Population Council (Conapo) [http://www.conapo.gob.mx/publicaciones/indicesoc/IDH2000/dh\\_Indices.pdf](http://www.conapo.gob.mx/publicaciones/indicesoc/IDH2000/dh_Indices.pdf) [accessed 3/9/2010].

Regarding the demographics and economic characteristics of the 32 municipalities under study we can say that, in general, those municipalities experienced higher than average rates of population growth, particularly in the 1985 to 1995 decade. An important source of growth can be attributed to foreign direct investment (FDI), in the form of foreign owned assembly plants also known as maquiladoras<sup>14</sup> in the case of the municipalities on the U.S.-Mexico border. Also, it can be attributed to the urban growth of metropolis that are in a conurbation process such as the cases of Monterrey (San Pedro Garza Garcia and San Nicolas de los Garza), Queretaro (Corregidora) and Veracruz (Boca del Rio). Based on those facts, I argue that municipalities facing high rates of population growth and, at the same, a very dynamic economy engaged in the global network of production confronted the need to improve their planning practice to be able to deal with not only the increasing demand for urban services, but also to position themselves better in the global network of cities (Sassen, 2006).

Furthermore, I present some facts regarding urban indicators and the governance capability of the municipalities. In developing countries, such as Mexico, one of the key indicators of government capability is access to basic services or public utilities, such as sewer and water, that are considered a local responsibility.<sup>15</sup> In addition, access to water and sewer is important for the quality of life of urban dwellers as well as for the competitiveness of the city. For sewer I only take into consideration homes connected to the public network (excluding septic tank and open discharge to creeks, rivers or other water bodies). For access to water I only considered piped water inside the house (excluding water outside but within the property and public wells). I believe both indicators

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<sup>14</sup> A maquiladora is a regime that allows inputs into Mexico free of duties and then the inputs are assembled in factories and returned to the origin country in the form of goods or outputs. With the opening of the Mexican economy in the 1980s and the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the mid 1990s most of the maquiladoras factories have located on the Mexican side of the border with the United States.

<sup>15</sup> In Mexico, article 115 of the Constitution was reformed in 1983 to make explicit that local governments have the responsibility of providing water and sewer services, among other services.

are more representative of local government capability. I compare two points in time (1995 and 2005) in order to explore whether municipalities that adopted the IMIP planning model have been able to keep up with the pace of growth and reduce existing gaps compared to the national average. While I would like to compare before and after the IMIP was created the following restrictions do not allow; census data is available only every five or ten years and some IMIPs just got started and it would be difficult to assess any impact.

Regarding access to basic utilities such as sewer and water, I found the following (see annex 2).<sup>16</sup> Overall, the 32 municipalities have a higher rate of coverage or access to sewer and water compared to the national average. The coverage for piped water for the 32 municipalities under consideration increased from 70.44 to 83.14 per cent compared to 54.41 and 67.35 per cent respectively for the nation as a whole. The coverage for sewer went from 71.11 to 80.33 per cent in the study group compared to 59.98 and 69.28 per cent for the nation.

The most important indicator is the percentage change in coverage from 1995 to 2005; the percentage change tells us not only if the municipalities kept pace with urban growth but also if they did reduce the initial gap. Thus, a gap reduction is an indicator of the government capability. The data for sewer show that municipalities that have a high rate of coverage in the benchmark year (1995) have marginal gains such as Aguascalientes, San Nicolas de los Garza and San Pedro Garza Garcia (both suburbs of Monterrey) and San Luis Potosi. On the opposite end, there are communities that have a very low rate of coverage in the reference year and made substantial improvements above the rate of growth of households; for instance, the percentage change (1995-2005) for Benito Juarez municipality where the resort town of Cancun is located (32.99%), Manzanillo another resort town (28.51%), the border city of Matamoros (18.36%) and several others in the range of 10 per cent to

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<sup>16</sup> Data from the 1990 Census has been severely questioned regarding its validity. Also because recently data from the mid decade population counting was available so we decide to compare 1995 and 2005.

17 per cent. In general, the majority of the 32 communities improved the coverage of sewer services with the exception of Ciudad del Carmen, which continues having a very low rate of coverage.

The data for piped water also show some important improvements. The rate of coverage for the municipalities under study is higher compared to the nation from 1995 to 2005. The coverage for the 32 municipalities increased from 70.44 to 83.14 per cent compared to 54.41 and 67.35 per cent for the nation. The top performers or the municipalities whose marginal gains or rates of change were impressive are Corregidora, a suburb of the city of Queretaro (30.17%), Silao (25.76%), Manzanillo (25%), Cancun (23.97%), and Guasave (19.74%). The rest of the municipalities tend to approach the national indicator of marginal gains (12.94 %). The municipality of Nogales lags behind the rest in this indicator.

An argument that can be made against comparing the group of 32 municipalities against the national average is that there are several rural municipalities that will keep the national average low. Thus, it will be necessary to compare urban municipalities against urban municipalities. The 2005 municipal marginality index, developed by the Consejo Nacional de Poblacion [National Population Council] also known as Conapo,<sup>17</sup> was used to compare all municipalities whose population is above 100 000. The marginality index takes into consideration indicators such as education levels, housing conditions, which include access to services and physical characteristics of the home, and size of town. There are a total of 2 453 municipalities in Mexico and only 182 municipalities met the 100 000 population threshold. I applied a t-test to determine if the mean difference is statistically significant between the 32 municipalities under study and the rest of the urban municipalities. The results show (see annex 3) that the 32 municipalities are better

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.conapo.gob.mx/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=194](http://www.conapo.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78&Itemid=194) [accessed 3/10/2010]. The index applied a factor analysis technique. The index ranges from a negative value (-2.37), which means a very low marginality, to a positive value (4.49), which indicates a high marginality level.

off; in other words, they have lower levels of marginality compared to the rest. In summary, the results indicate that the municipalities under study performed better in access to basic service indicators.

Municipal public finance is another indicator I used to analyze government capability. Specifically, I look at revenues, revenue collected by municipalities through property tax, and expenditures in public works or infrastructure. The argument I put forward is that government capability will be linked to its ability to raise more revenue from its own sources, such as property tax, and depend less on federal and state transfers.

Annex 4 presents the results of the main indicators and I found the following: the 32 municipalities per capita expenditures almost double in real terms from 1990 to 2005 from roughly 152 to 295 pesos.<sup>18</sup> The per capita expenditures for the 32 municipalities are higher by a ratio of about 1 to 1.5; in other words, per capita expenditures are about 50 per cent higher than the national benchmark.<sup>19</sup> Regarding real per capita tax revenue collected by municipalities the trend is more erratic the range goes from 29 to 49 pesos. However, the tax collected continues being higher by the 32 municipalities than the national average by a ratio of about 2 to 1.

The trend for public works and social expenditures shows a convergence between the group of municipalities and the nation; the exceptions are the municipalities of San Pedro Garza Garcia (Monterrey) and Nuevo Laredo, whose expenditures were 2 to 4 times higher, respectively, in 2005. In relative terms, there seems to be a slight edge in favor of the municipalities being studied; however, in 2005 the relative expenditures in public works and social programs were lower compared to the nation.

Finally, looking at the percentage of tax revenue to total expenditures allows us to see the structural weakness of municipal finance in Mexico.

<sup>18</sup> In 1995 most of the financial indicators declined. The reason is that in December 1994 the Mexican peso exchange rate crashed and suffered a strong devaluation *vis à vis* the dollar going from 4 to 1 to slightly above 7 to 1. The values were deflated at 1990 pesos.

<sup>19</sup> Revenue and expenditures are the same. Municipalities in Mexico by law are not allowed to borrow or issue bonds, thus the income and expenditures must be balanced.

Property tax and user fees are the main source of municipal revenue. Sales tax, income tax and corporate tax, among others, are collected by the federal government and shared with the states. The data show that, in general, Mexican municipalities depend heavily on federal and state transfers and roughly 85 to 90 per cent of municipal revenue is federal and state transfers. The 32 municipalities are relatively better off but the fact is that they also face those structural weaknesses of depending heavily on transfers.

In summary, based on demographics, economic and public finance information presented here, the 32 municipalities that have adopted an IMIP alternative represent a very important set of municipalities in the urban system of Mexico. I can say that they are a very important second tier in the urban hierarchy behind the main urban agglomerations such as Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey. Those municipalities face higher rates of urban growth and, therefore, an unprecedented demand for urban services and amenities. Additionally, some of the municipalities are located in states such as Baja California, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon and Sinaloa; were the first opposition governments to the PRI emerged and that demanded not only more autonomy and democracy but also a new form of relationship between government and citizens (Ziccardi, 1995). Thus, I argue that the creation of IMIPs represents a way to improve the procedures and practice of municipal planning that I will discuss in more detail in the next section.

#### THE IMIPs' PLANNING PRACTICE AND PROCESSES

This section offers an analysis of the profile of the IMIPs related to the way the different IMIPs perceived their main function, practices and procedures. This section deals specifically with the second question posed regarding the contribution of IMIPs to the planning practice. A content analysis of the different websites of the IMIPs was the methodology I followed to identify some key elements that will allow us to understand in

more depth what IMIPs are and what they do. This section concludes with a reflection regarding to what extent IMIPs have become a new paradigm in spatial planning in Mexico and the main obstacles they face.

In the mission and vision of the organizations, some keywords are common across the majority of the IMIPs. First, there is an emphasis on placing a high value on technical knowledge; for instance, there are words such as “high technical quality”, “a technical consulting organization”, “scientific bases”, “technical scientific bases and criteria”, “technical-operational structure”. Second, about half of the IMIPs include the concept of strategic planning; for instance, some emphasize “strategic projects”, “strategic planning culture”, “strategic orientation”, etc. Third, there is also a concern with the continuity and long term nature of the planning processes; words or phrases such as “ensuring continuity”, “long term”, “permanent manner”, and “continuity of the process” are common. Fourth, the concept of sustainability is also another common element. Last but not least important, is the pledge by IMIPs to incorporate public participation in the procedures; words such as “inclusive”, “citizen participation” and “different actors” are found.

The establishment of IMIPs attempts to overcome some structural weaknesses of local governments; for instance, there is a lack of continuity of programs and projects due to the fact that no reelection of local mayors or municipal presidents is allowed, thus making planning short-term and reactive. Also, the absence of a civil service leads to massive changes or rotation of public officials with every new government preventing the professionalization of planning and accumulation of knowledge and expertise. Local governments have created a parallel structure to government planning bureaucracy such as Desarrollo Urbano (urban development) and IMIPs’ bylaws establish that the director’s tenure should transcend government periods with the option of reappointment; the staff enjoys similar rights to those of the civil service career officials.

Another way to analyze the IMIPs in Mexico and how they are contributing to spatial planning is to look at the areas of planning that are

being emphasized. This will give some hint in regards to what IMIPs do and how they view urban planning. Seven planning areas are emphasized across the board and that I consider to be the most representative of the planning profession: transportation and mobility, urban design, capital facilities planning, geographic information systems (GIS), infrastructure planning, regional and urban planning. Urban planning is the department that is most common across the IMIPs, particularly those located in smaller cities that do not have staff to perform more specialized tasks. GIS was the other department that was common; an important activity of planning is precisely to generate the spatial and statistical information that the planning process requires. Urban design was the third most important area being emphasized. Regional planning was among the least emphasized area.

Another area I wanted to analyze concerns services that IMIPs offer to the public. I focus on those services that are sold or offered to the public and that generate some revenue to the organization. The IMIPs are consistent with the idea of producing technical knowledge to drive the planning process. Cartographic and statistical information are the most important services offered or being marketed to the public.

Regarding the product or outputs IMIPs generate, I focus on what plans are produced. It is obvious that a planning agency must generate plans among other things. I classified the products in four categories. The first and second categories are plans, that according to constitutional article 115, all municipalities in Mexico are required to produce such as the Plan de Desarrollo Urbano [Urban Development Plan] and Plan de Ordenamiento Ecológico y Territorial [Comprehensive Land Use Plan]. The next categories are small area plans, such as neighborhood and community planning, or sector plans, such as mobility or capital facilities plans. The entire universe of IMIPs is in charge of producing the urban development plan; that is, municipal governments have transferred to IMIPs the responsibility for producing the plans required by law. The majority of IMIPs are also in charge of producing the comprehensive land use plan.

The last area I analyze was related to how IMIPs relate to the public. IMIPs as independent or decentralized governmental organizations are required to comply with the open records law just like any public entity. IMIPs use their websites to comply with the law. The information that is posted deals with whom to contact in the organization, the organization's operating procedures, organizational structure, directory, contracts and bidding opportunities and finance statements. The idea is to make the organization transparent and open to the public.

As discussed previously, planning practice in Mexico was characterized by patronage machine politics. Elected non-PRI municipal governments in the 1980s and 1990s experimented with new forms of urban politics; municipalities such as Leon, Guanajuato, and Juarez, Chihuahua, are among the trailblazers in the IMIP movement. In some ways, the IMIP movement in Mexico finds a parallel in the reform movement in the U.S. which attempted to reform local government based on a few principles: the public interest above all, the most qualified people should run the city, politics should be separate from administration; merit system and qualified professionals should be in charge of essentially technical problems; and the application of scientific principles and management to local government (Ross and Levine, 2001, 159). In essence, the IMIPs are an attempt to create a rational bureaucracy just as Max Weber prescribed more than a century ago.

The question that remains to be asked is. To what extent has the IMIP model been able to transform the planning practice in Mexico? Several scholars (Garza, 1999 and 2005; Guillen, 1996; Iracheta, 1997; Ramos, 2007) have criticized the planning practice at the local level because of the lack of technical expertise and planning professionals. I would argue though that spatial planning outcomes, good or bad, in urban municipalities, such as the ones we have studied here, are not because of the lack of professional expertise because the IMIPs are well equipped with technical knowledge; but rather due to the fact that IMIPs' institutional design (rational planning) is not the most adequate in the context that the new urban governance demands.

The IMIP model somehow attempts to adopt and implement rational planning practices; that is, the application of technical knowledge derived through scientific principles to the public domain (Friedmann, 1987). However, as many authors have acknowledged (Forester, 1989; Healy, 2006; Lindbloom, 1996) power relationships embedded in the political process are as important, or more important, as technical knowledge to implement actions and public policy.

The institutional design of IMIP is a paradox. On the one hand, IMIPs as purely technical entities that are supposed to plan independent from politics gives them a reputation and validity as institutions. On the other hand, they are criticized for being ineffective because they have no control over the decision making process and implementation; therefore, there is no guarantee that the plans developed by the IMIP and policy recommendations are implemented. IMIPs as parallel government entities only have an advisory role, therefore, their influence will depend of the support by the decision making bodies, such as the municipal president and the local legislative body known as the *cabildo*. Furthermore, whenever there is a change of governing political party there is no assurance of support by the incoming political group to the point that in the worst case scenario the IMIP could disappear because, in many instances IMIPs, are not formally part of the government structure recognized in state or federal law.

The IMIP in Ciudad Juarez is a good case study to exemplify the above structural problems. The IMIP in Ciudad Juarez was officially formed in 1995 during the PAN administration of Ramon Galindo Noriega (1995-1998). The PAN administration, to differentiate itself from the PRI, emphasized different values in local government —citizen driven governments as opposed to patronage politics; strategic planning as opposed to machine politics. The IMIP was conceived as a means to bring professional management, efficiency and effectiveness to government. The PAN governed the municipality for twelve years and had some influence in the municipal decisions; in 2004 the PRI regained the control of the municipality and it has governed since. The support for IMIP dwindled with the PRI administrations because it was perceived as a PAN entity and the fund-

ing declined substantially; the IMIP subsidy from the municipality in 2004 was about 21 million pesos and in 2005 close to 12 million pesos, a decline of 43 per cent.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the incoming municipal president Ernesto Murgía (2004-2007) did not embrace the municipal plans promoted by IMIP and he even redirected and went against the growth patterns IMIP was promoting. In parallel, the Chihuahua state government, headed by PRI governor Patricio Martínez, was in constant disagreement with the local municipality during the years the PAN was in charge; state government not only undermined the IMIP planning recommendations but also limited the *eminent domain* powers of the municipal government to control and manage urban growth; for instance, Francisco Villarreal, a PAN mayor, during his administration (1992-1995), used *eminent domain* to expropriate 1 200 hectares of land of known as *Lote Bravo* to use them to promote low income housing, plans that IMIP supported but that the state governor reversed (Fuentes and Cervera, 2004; Fuentes, 2009) almost a decade later.

#### CONCLUSIONS: IMIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN GOVERNANCE

One of the main changes in the planning paradigm in recent decades has been the acknowledgment that rational planning has its limits in regards to urban planning. New paradigms have emerged recently to compete with rational planning. Collaborative planning and strategic planning are among them; both agree that a necessary condition to improve planning practice is through an open and honest debate and dialogue among all the stakeholders in developing a new vision for space development.

According to the most prominent scholars of the collaborative paradigm (Healy, 2006; Innes and Booher, 2010), planning practice has undergone substantial changes; the following are the most important. Planning emphasis has moved from Euclidian planning and morpholo-

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.imip.org.mx/transparencia/> [accessed 6/1/2010].

gies to spatial relations and cooperation. Planning has moved from a hierarchical bureaucratic practice towards more decentralized planning.

In regards to the shift away from Euclidean planning, this means that the main task of planning is no longer a physical planning object such as a land use plan, which attempts to find the optimal location and distribution of all different uses based on rational planning principles. Instead, the main planning task is to improve the planning process, based on open and honest dialogue. Planning outcomes no longer are a plan itself but rather other products such as social learning or a new “planning doctrine”. In the words of Faludi (2000, 312) a “planning doctrine” is simply a coherent action framework with regards to three aspects: 1) spatial arrangements, 2) the development of the area and 3) the way the first two will be handled. The new planning paradigm places especial emphasis on the process about how to arrive at or create a “planning doctrine” that will guide urban development.

In the transition from hierarchical structures towards more decentralized process the main changes are the following. Planning is no longer the exclusive domain of the state or government or professional planners applying science to public policy (Friedmann, 1987). Planning now is open to other actors, such as the private sector and civil society. In other words, urban governance becomes a central focus of planning; governance is the process of governing a political territorial community (Healy, 2010), which recognizes that the state by itself is not capable of delivering the best outcome possible but requires the help, support and participation of private organizations and civil society.

From the above discussion, what can be said regarding the future of IMIPs? It is clear that the idea that IMIPs, as a means to implement rational planning, is a naïve one because in a context of a democratic society rational planning has severe limitations and becomes impossible; the main proof is that plans developed by those agencies rarely are adopted and implemented therefore making IMIPs ineffective. However, it does not mean that the technical knowledge that the IMIP produces is not necessary and important. Healy (2006, 2010) and Innes and Booher (2010)

agree that technical knowledge plays an important role in the planning process by providing information, scenarios, future visions, forecasts, etc. that can be useful to help the debate in the different planning arenas. The planner facilitates and contributes to the debate and helps to shape a collective discourse from which the “planning doctrine” will emerge.

In conclusion, the IMIP should not be seen as the answer and solution to all urban problems through the application of technical knowledge; this is impossible to accomplish. The IMIP should be visualized and design as an agency that will help to shape the new “planning doctrine” through useful information that will help to develop a coherent framework of urban governance through honest and open debate. The IMIP is not the solution to urban development rather an important stakeholder that facilitates and informs the planning process. ☒

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## ANNEX 1. Demographic and economic characteristics of selected municipalities

State	Name municipality (city)	Population 1980	Population 1990	Population 1995	Population 2000	Population 2005	Average annual rate 80-95 (%)	Average annual rate 95-05 (%)	Gross product value 2003* (1000s pesos)	PB per capita dollars**
Aguascalientes	Aguascalientes	359 454	506 274	582 827	643 419	723 043	4.14	2.41	59 092 857	11 302
Baja California	Ensenada	175 425	259 979	315 289	370 730	413 481	5.32	3.11	12 693 493	5 388
Baja California	Mexicali	510 664	601 938	696 034	764 602	855 962	2.42	2.30	58 833 900	11 855
Baja California	Tijuana	461 257	747 381	991 592	1 210 820	1 410 687	7.67	4.23	78 987 631	9 812
Campeche	Ciudad del Carmen	144 684	136 034	179 690	126 024	199 988	1.61	1.13	271 278 894	21 892
Colima	Colima	100 428	116 505	120 781	129 958	132 273	1.35	0.95	5 670 493	9 971
Colima	Manzanillo	73 290	92 863	108 584	125 143	137 842	3.21	2.69	16 617 740	8 893
Chihuahua	Chihuahua	406 830	530 783	627 662	671 790	758 791	3.62	2.09	67 637 269	13 741
Chihuahua	Ciudad Juárez	567 365	798 499	1 011 786	1 218 817	1 313 338	5.22	2.98	95 152 253	12 970
Guanajuato	Celaya	219 010	310 569	354 473	382 958	415 869	4.12	1.73	27 959 495	6 594
Guanajuato	Irapuato	246 308	362 915	412 639	440 134	463 103	4.50	1.22	19 135 862	5 202
Guanajuato	Leon	655 809	867 920	1 042 132	1 134 842	1 278 087	3.93	2.26	68 166 892	7 080
Guanajuato	Silao	77 036	115 130	131 527	134 337	147 123	4.72	1.19	66 732 495	11 523
Guerrero	Acapulco	409 335	593 212	687 292	722 499	717 766	4.53	0.44	19 806 391	8 280
Hidalgo	Pachuca	135 248	180 630	220 488	245 208	275 578	4.20	2.50	10 636 783	9 289

Michoacan	Morelia	353 055	492 901	578 061	620 532	684 145	4.25	1.84	43 895 672	7 774
Nuevo Leon	San Nicolas de los Garza (Monterrey)	280 696	436 603	487 924	496 878	476 761	4.92	-0.23	66 616 620	14 478
Nuevo Leon	San Pedro Garza Garcia (Monterrey)	81 974	n/d	120 913	125 978	122 009	3.17	0.09	48 211 494	32 877
Queretaro	Queretaro Corregidora	29 689	43 775	59 855	74 558	104 218	6.77	7.41	8 330 453	15 757
Queretaro	Queretaro	293 586	456 458	559 222	641 386	734 139	6.03	3.13	70 088 289	14 479
Quintana Roo	Cancun	37 190	176 765	311 696	419 815	572 973	49.21	8.38	34 984 778	15 656
San Luis Potosi	San Luis Potosi	406 630	525 733	625 466	670 532	730 950	3.59	1.69	80 137 259	10 048
Sinaloa	Culiacan	560 011	601 123	696 262	745 537	793 730	1.62	1.40	35 765 727	6 970
Sinaloa	Guasave	221 139	258 130	264 225	277 402	270 260	1.30	0.23	4 309 953	4 907
Sinaloa	Mazatlan	249 988	314 345	357 619	380 509	403 888	2.87	1.29	17 300 596	7 019
Sonora	Hermosillo	340 779	448 966	559 154	609 829	701 838	4.27	2.55	56 303 102	10 404
Sonora	Nogales	68 076	107 936	133 491	156 854	193 517	6.41	4.50	10 658 105	10 920
Tabasco	Villahermosa	250 903	386 776	465 449	520 308	558 524	5.70	2.00	61 299 688	8 592
Tamaulipas	Matamoros	238 840	303 293	363 487	418 141	462 157	3.48	2.71	26 873 327	9 429
Tamaulipas	Nuevo Laredo	203 286	219 468	275 060	310 915	355 827	2.35	2.94	15 549 835	8 986
Tamaulipas	Ciudad Victoria	153 206	207 923	243 960	263 063	293 044	3.95	2.01	8 199 839	7 615
Veracruz	Boca del Rio (Veracruz)	61 883	144 549	135 060	135 804	141 906	7.88	0.51	8 107 398	14 406
	NATIONAL	66 846 833	81 249 645	91 158 290	97 483 412	103 263 388	2.42	1.33	6 317 178 777	7 495

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). Based on national Census data 1980, 1990, 2000, and Population midcounts 1995 and 2005. \*Economic Census 2004. \*\*Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO); Human Development Index 2000.

ANNEX 2. Access to basic utilities of selected mexican municipalities

	Total housing units 1995	Sewer connected to the public network 1995	Piped water inside the home 1995	Total housing units 2005	Sewer connected to the public network 2005	Piped water inside the home 2005	Sewer coverage 1995 (%)	Drinking water coverage 1995 (%)	Sewer coverage 2005 (%)	Drinking water coverage 2005 (%)	percentage change (%)	percentage change (%)
Aguascalientes	121 790	117 409	113 023	169 361	163 394	162 295	96.40	92.80	96.48	95.83	0.07	3.03
Ensenada	75 870	38 045	49 254	104 573	58 681	79 031	50.14	64.92	56.11	75.57	5.97	10.66
Mexicali	167 659	113 077	128 308	215 607	168 036	193 292	67.44	76.53	77.94	89.65	10.49	13.12
Tijuana	232 690	153 573	161 402	324 987	262 517	279 637	66.00	69.36	80.78	86.05	14.78	16.68
Ciudad del Carmen	39 569	1 428	15 145	49 464	1 407	25 119	3.61	38.27	2.84	50.78	-0.76	12.51
Colima	28 238	24 973	23 602	33 692	32 174	32 076	88.44	83.58	95.49	95.20	7.06	11.62
Manzanillo	24 787	11 065	13 199	35 447	25 928	27 738	44.64	53.25	73.15	78.25	28.51	25.00
Chihuahua	154 971	129 198	136 115	197 950	186 525	189 082	83.37	87.83	94.23	95.52	10.86	7.69
Ciudad Juarez	238 012	203 763	191 600	316 386	292 099	288 339	85.61	80.50	92.32	91.14	6.71	10.64
Celaya	72 748	61 379	54 772	94 630	87 256	82 996	84.37	75.29	92.21	87.71	7.84	12.42
Irapuato	79 531	59 114	53 296	98 532	79 084	80 269	74.33	67.01	80.26	81.46	5.93	14.45
Leon	190 956	169 029	155 435	262 323	238 886	227 048	88.52	81.40	91.07	86.55	2.55	5.15
Silao	22 252	12 897	9 525	28 364	19 214	19 449	57.96	42.81	67.74	68.57	9.78	25.76
Acapulco	153 380	76 125	66 943	167 888	99 416	93 531	49.63	43.65	59.22	55.71	9.58	12.07
Pachuca	50 619	47 072	39 455	68 594	65 218	60 364	92.99	77.95	95.08	88.00	2.09	10.06

Morelia	122 564	105 952	100 295	154 334	142 114	140 201	86.45	81.83	92.08	90.84	5.64	9.01
San Nicolas de los Caiza (Monterrey)	108 485	106 906	105 705	114 462	113 718	113 181	98.54	97.44	99.35	98.88	0.81	1.44
San Pedro Caiza Garcia (Monterrey)	26 889	26 668	26 402	28 271	27 810	27 668	99.18	98.19	98.37	97.87	-0.81	-0.32
Queretaro Corregidora	11 882	7 988	6 900	23 380	19 869	20 631	67.23	58.07	84.98	88.24	17.76	30.17
Queretaro	119 315	107 311	94 918	164 344	149 480	145 807	89.94	79.55	90.96	88.72	1.02	9.17
Cancun	78 484	24 899	39 516	123 687	80 040	91 921	31.72	50.35	64.71	74.32	32.99	23.97
San Luis Potosi	135 032	123 773	120 283	174 883	165 379	163 070	91.66	89.08	94.57	93.25	2.90	4.17
Culiacan	145 762	94 531	92 819	186 001	152 617	153 487	64.85	63.68	82.05	82.52	17.20	18.84
Guasave	53 526	20 567	21 356	63 254	35 230	37 724	38.42	39.90	55.70	59.64	17.27	19.74
Mazatlan	83 339	62 974	64 644	103 534	88 522	92 864	75.56	77.57	85.50	89.69	9.94	12.13
Hermosillo	128 835	100 256	100 286	175 846	152 238	156 351	77.82	77.84	86.57	88.91	8.76	11.07
Nogales	30 749	25 056	23 675	46 936	38 906	34 810	81.49	76.99	82.89	74.16	1.41	-2.83
Villahermosa (centro)	104 153	72 063	72 464	139 452	96 454	110 508	69.19	69.57	69.17	79.24	-0.02	9.67
Matamoros	86 932	53 584	49 441	116 696	93 354	87 816	61.64	56.87	80.00	75.25	18.36	18.38
Nuevo Laredo	63 985	50 030	46 969	85 978	77 935	76 810	78.19	73.41	90.65	89.34	12.46	15.93
Ciudad Victoria	57 080	42 467	34 905	73 882	63 098	58 660	74.40	61.15	85.40	79.40	11.00	18.25
Boca del Rio (Veracruz)	33 441	18 635	22 575	38 568	28 054	32 479	55.73	67.51	72.74	84.21	17.01	16.71
MEXICO	19 361 472	11 612 312	10 533 834	24 006 357	16 632 251	16 168 452	59.98	54.41	69.28	67.35	9.31	12.94

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) based on midcount census data (1995 and 2005).

ANNEX 3. T- Test human development index: IMIP municipalities vs. other municipalities

<i>Group statistics</i>									
<i>Marginality Index</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>	<i>Std. error mean</i>					
IMIP municipalities	32	-1.6301	.38535	.06812					
No IMIP municipalities	150	-1.2742	.65878	.05379					

<i>Independent samples test</i>										
<i>Marginality Index</i>	<i>Levene's test for equality of variances</i>				<i>T-test for equality of means</i>					
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean difference</i>	<i>Std. error difference</i>	<i>95% confidence interval of the difference</i>		
								<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	
Equal variances assumed	7.725	.006	-2.947	180	.004	-.35594	.12079	-.59430	-.11759	
Equal variances not assumed			-4.101	75.593	.000	-.35594	.08680	-.52883	-.18306	

Source: Results of the test “t” based on data from the Consejo Nacional de Población (Conapo).

## ANNEX 4. IMIP municipalities finance 1990-2005

	<i>Municipal finance (1990 pesos)</i>			
	<i>1990</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2005</i>
<i>Per capita Expenditures</i>				
Municipalities (IMIP)	152.18	130.37	212.77	295.31
National	91.63	76.28	140.93	207.06
<i>Per capita tax revenue collected</i>				
Municipalities (IMIP)	34.48	30.68	29.42	48.93
National	15.43	13.20	13.24	22.19
<i>Per capita expenditures public works and social investment</i>				
Municipalities (IMIP)	38.41	24.50	55.33	52.01
National	24.95	13.47	32.94	52.55
<i>Percent tax revenue of total expenditures</i>				
Municipalities (IMIP)	22.66%	23.54%	13.83%	16.57%
National	16.84%	17.30%	9.39%	10.71%
<i>Percent public works and social expenditures of total</i>				
Municipalities (IMIP)	25.24%	18.80%	26.00%	17.61%
National	27.23%	17.66%	23.38%	25.38%

*Source:* Elaborated by author based on INEGI municipal finance data. Inflation data from Banco de México was used to deflate the values at 1990 prices.

