

Sprawl in the Mexico City Region

Benton Heimsath, UCLA

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Outline

- Mexico City region
- Incentives for Urban Sprawl
- Proposed Solutions
- Los Angeles: A Way Forward?



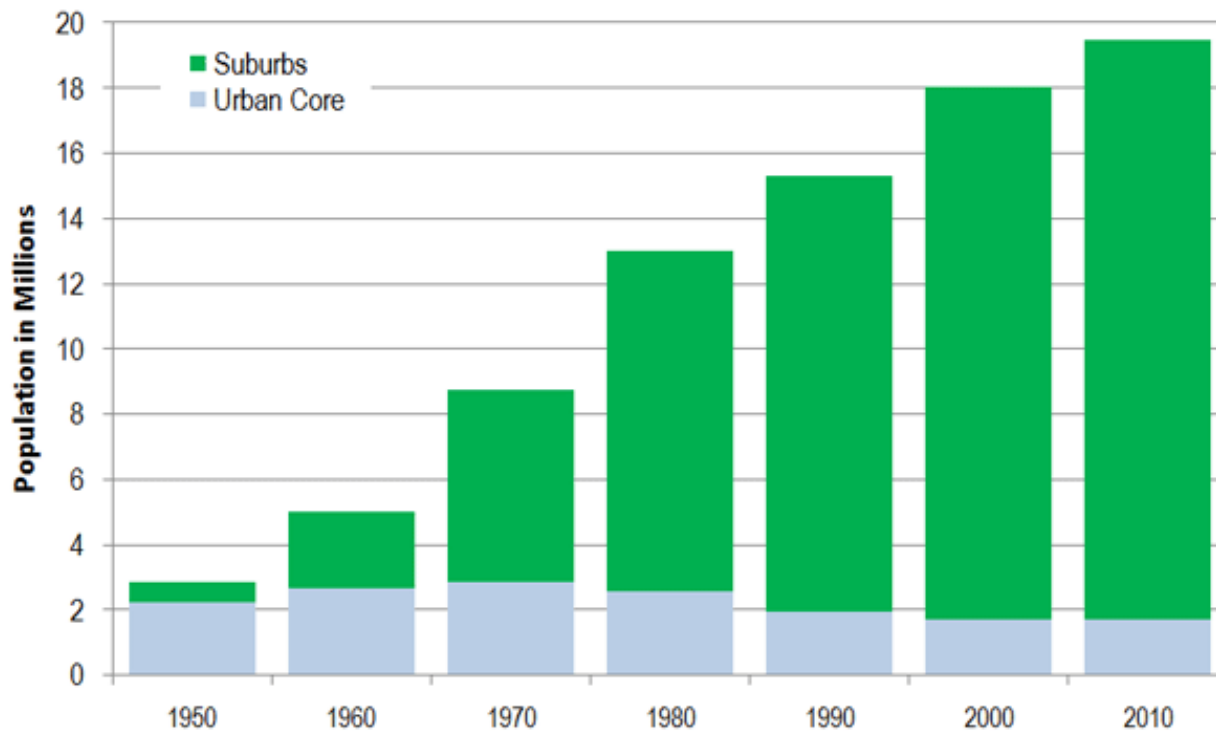
Mexico City demographics

- 21,163,226 in region
- 8,841,916 in Mexico City proper
- Half the population is <26 years old.
- Half the population works in the informal economy.



New Growth is Suburban

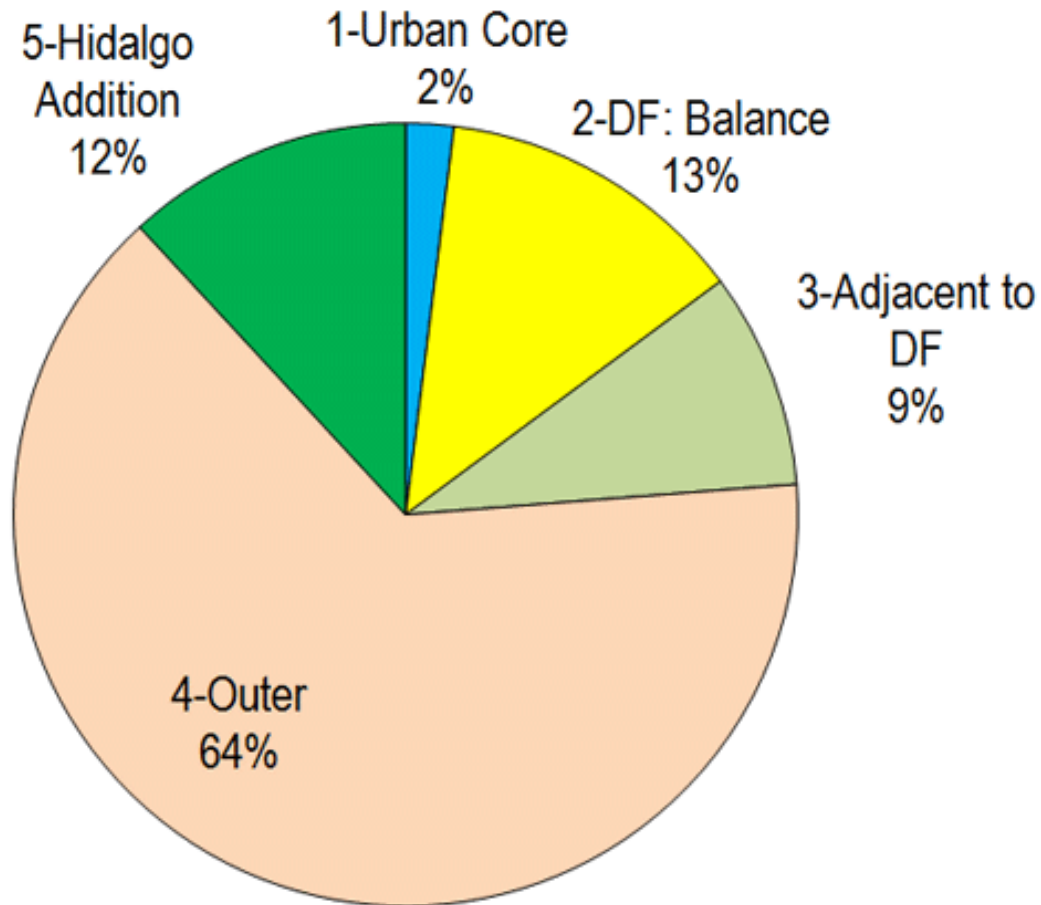
Valley of Mexico Urban Area: 1950-2000
CORE & SUBURBAN POPULATION TREND



<http://www.newgeography.com/files/val-mex-2.png>

Valley de Mexico Metropolitan Growth

2000 TO 2010



(Source: "The Evolving Urban Form: Valley of Mexico," Wendell Cox.)

What is sprawl?

- “Urban sprawl is the growth of a metropolitan area through the process of scattered development of miscellaneous types of land use in isolated locations on the fringe, followed by the gradual filling-in of the intervening spaces with similar uses.”
(Whyte 1958)

Source: <http://robynpaterson.com/?p=2656>





Sprawl has led to distant, disperse, and disconnected (3D) cities across Mexico, including Mexico City (pictured). Photo by Emerson Posadas/Flickr via EMBARO

Incentives to Sprawl



The "Gasolinazo Effect"

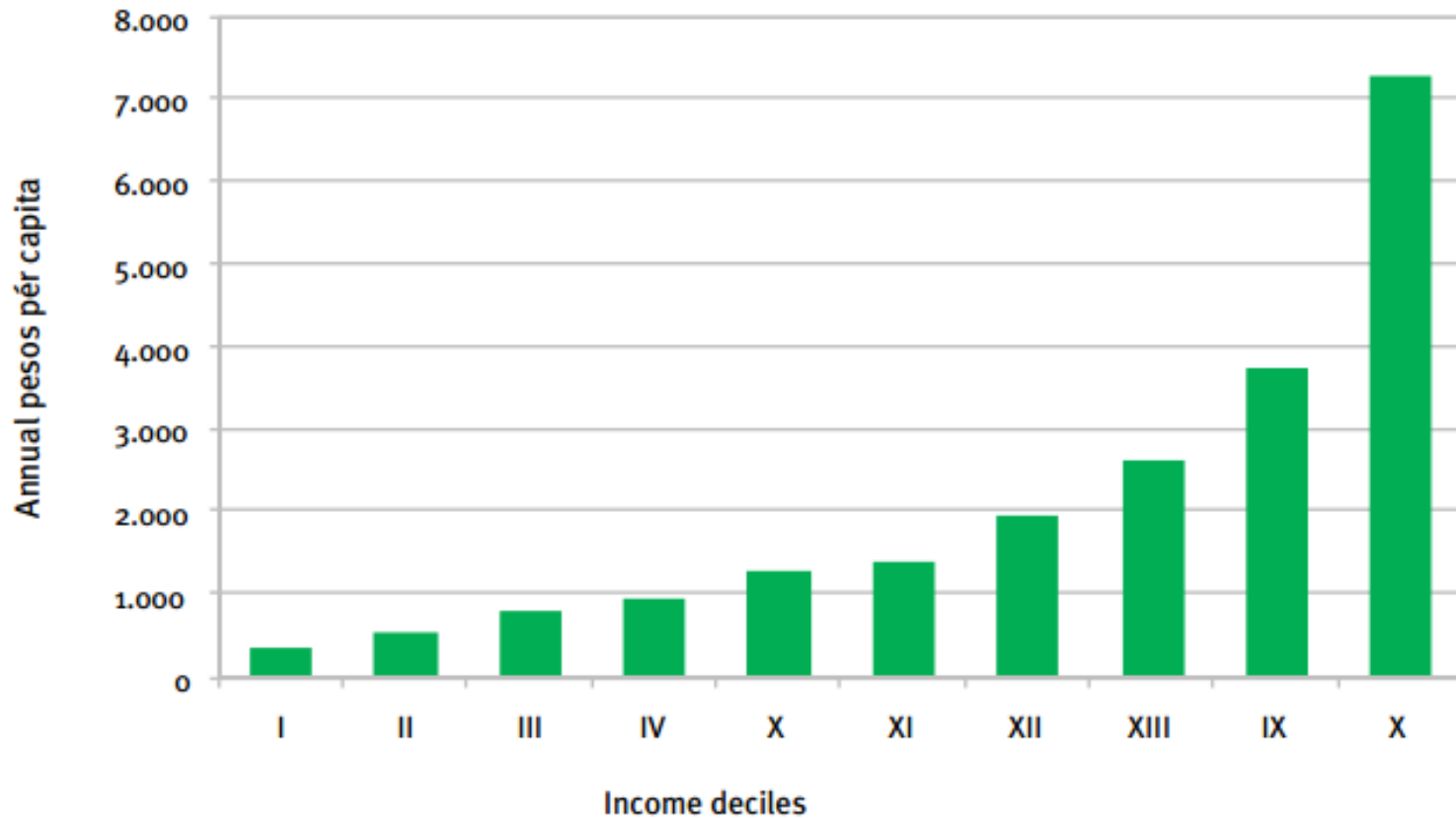
Since 2007, Mexico has spend approximately \$20 billion a year on gasoline subsidies.

Car ownership in the city has increased: from 38 % of homes owning cars in 2000 to 46% in 2010.



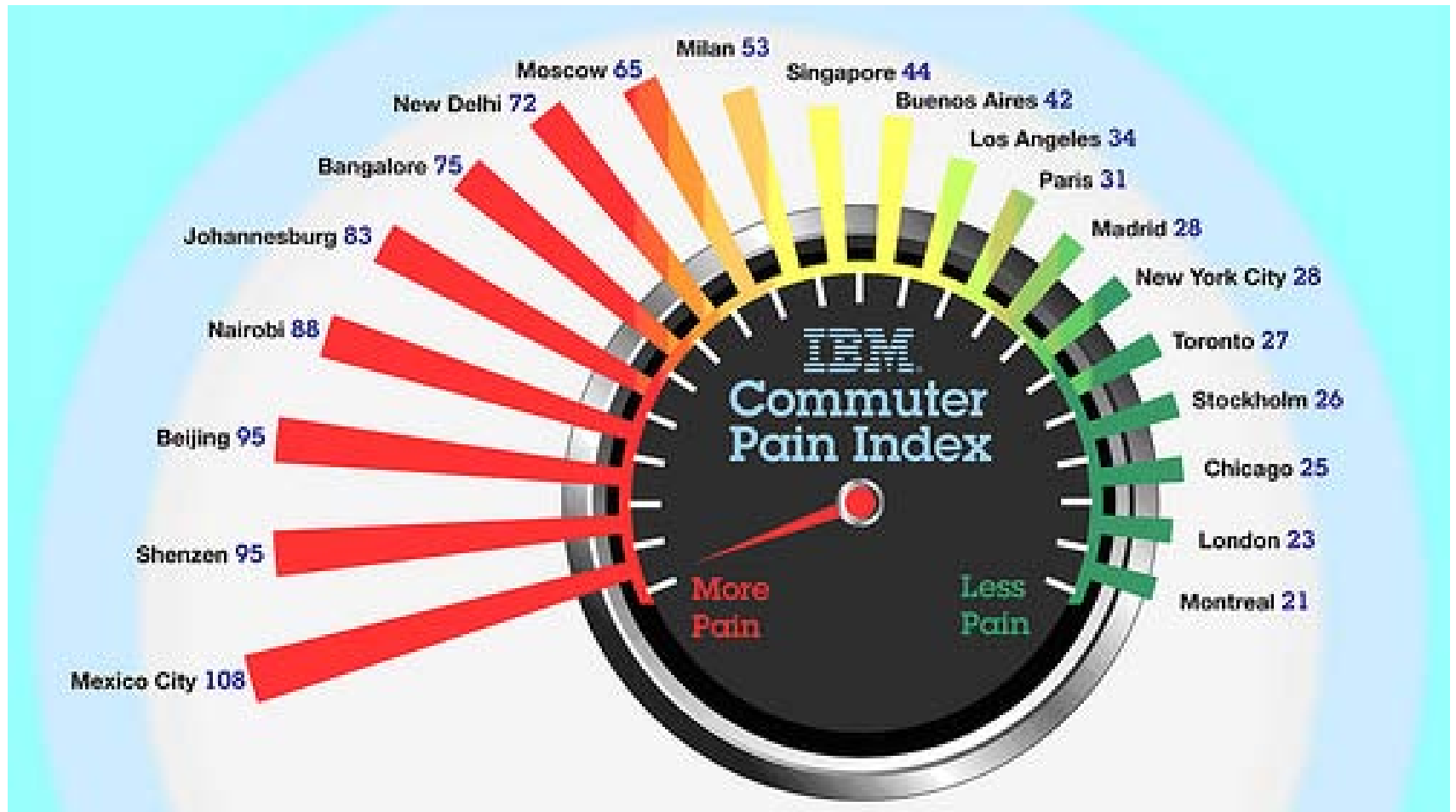
Gas Subsidy, by Income Level

GRAPH 4: GAS SUBSIDY AND INCOME DECILES, 2010
(ANNUAL PESOS PER CAPITA)



Source: Scott, 2011.

IBM Global Commuter Pain Index



Transit



Housing Finance

- The number of mortgages issued annually almost tripled between 1995 and 2005, from fewer than 200,000 to roughly 550,000 (Monkkonen 2011).
- **FOVISSSTE**: federal housing subsidy programs for low and middle-class Mexico City residents.
- National Workers Housing Fund Institute (**Infonavit**)*

Housing Dysfunction



- In 2010, more than 60% of the DF housing stock was produced outside of the formal sector.
- 2 out of 10 homes purchased with Infonavit housing were uninhabited (Herbert et al 2012).

Informal settlements

- Policies have tolerated the illegal occupation of private and communal lands.
- The Federal District cannot offer affordable housing or plots of lands for relocation.
- According to Aguilar and Santos (2012), formalization of informal settlements is a short-term response to political pressures.

Lack of effective municipal planning

- Land use planning and transportation planning are not sufficiently integrated in Mexico City.
- New developments are undertaken in the suburbs without consideration of transportation, infrastructure, etc.

Many solutions have been
proposed...

...but is it enough?



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Desarrollos Urbanos Integrales Sustentables (DUIS)

- Comprehensively planned development areas that contribute to the territorial system of states and municipalities and promote a more orderly, dense, just and sustainable urban development.
- Joint ventures in which federal, state and municipal governments, developers and landowners, who join existing urban centers participate.
- As of 2012 only eight DUIS have been certified, benefitting roughly 312,000 Mexican households.

(<http://www.shf.gob.mx/PROGRAMAS/INTERMEDIARIOS/DUIS/Paginas/default.aspx>)

Desarrollos Urbanos Integrales Sustentables (DUIS)



Key points

- Despite the rhetoric, sprawl is massively incentivized by policies put in place by the Mexico City and Federal government.
- While there is clear interest in sustainable development, the Mexico government must first undo its policies that heavily favor development at the urban fringes.



The “Three D’s” of TOD

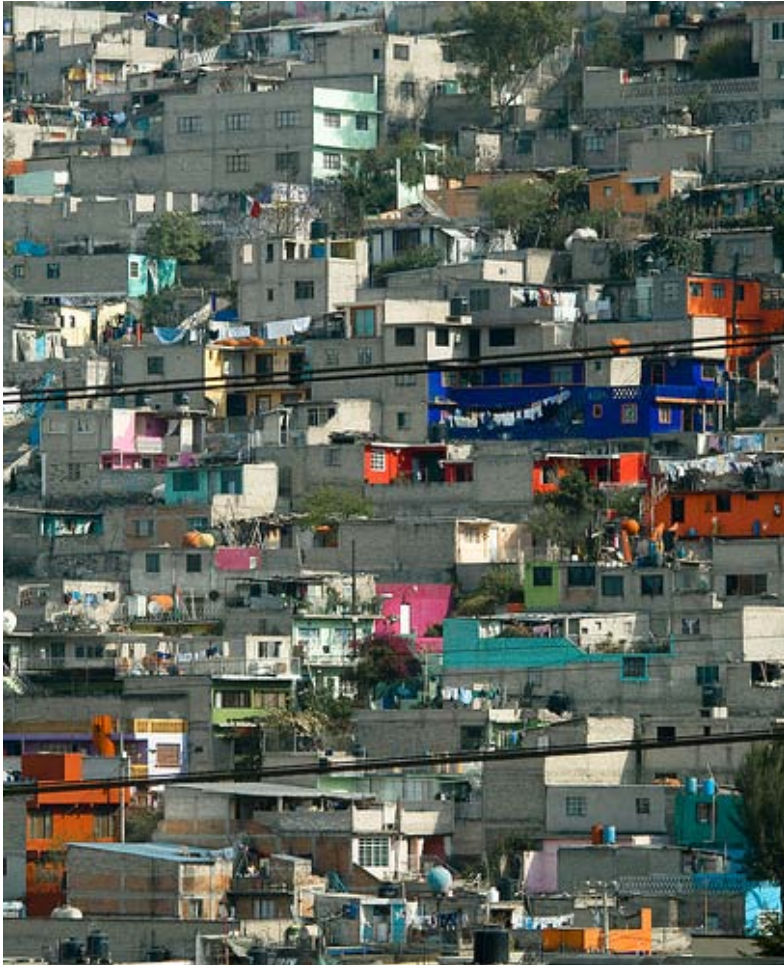
- Density of residents and jobs near transit stations;
 - Diversity of land uses (residential, commercial) near stations; and
 - Design, i.e. urban design elements that make the station more integrated with the surrounding area and more accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists
- (Cervero 1997)

Transit Oriented Development in Los Angeles region

- “The City of Los Angeles aims to support vibrant communities near transit stations, where people can live, work and shop, all within a safe and pleasant walk to transit stations.
- Through its many planning efforts, the Department of City Planning aims to create walkable neighborhoods near transit stations that will expand mobility, improve livability, increase transit ridership, and support jobs and housing for all residents of Los Angeles.”



Suburbs: DF vs. LA



Recommendations for DF

- Focus on accessibility, not just simply transit extensions and urbanist interventions.
- Undo financial incentives for automobility and low-density housing that encourage sprawl.
- Introduce land use regulations to control the expansion of new development with sufficient infrastructure.