DOMESTIC WATER ACCESS AND PERIURBAN POVERTY IN THE METROPOLITAN ZONE OF MEXICO CITY: LESSONS TO IMPROVE POLICY DECISIONS?

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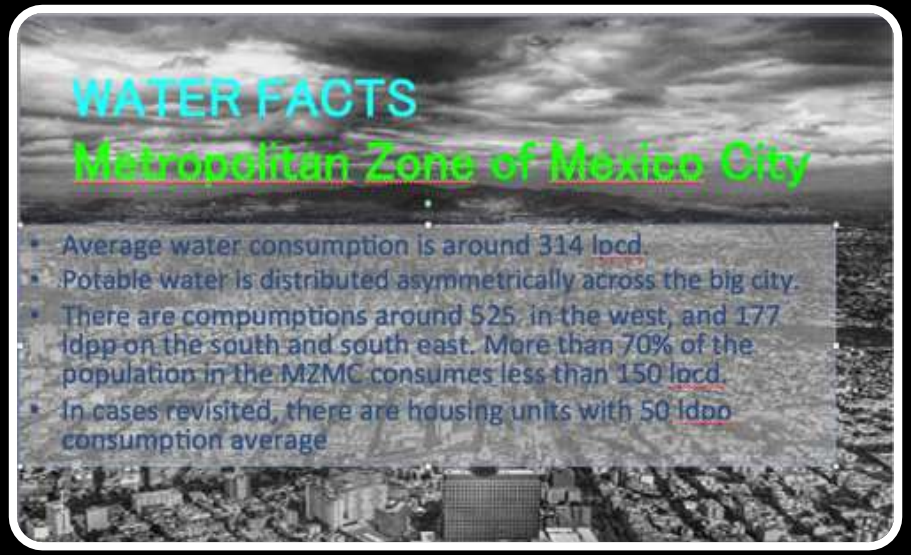
Introduction

- As one of the largest population centers in the world, the **Metropolitan Zone Of Mexico City** (MZMC) is a living laboratory for all of the most complex matters with which urban governments and denizens have to grapple. One of those is water and sanitation distribution.
- **Objective**: to get a better understanding of main political and social factors involved in the domestic water and sanitation access process in two of the poorest periurban settlements of the MZMC.
- Key information that could be usefull to improve policy decisions related with more equal water allocation between MZMC.

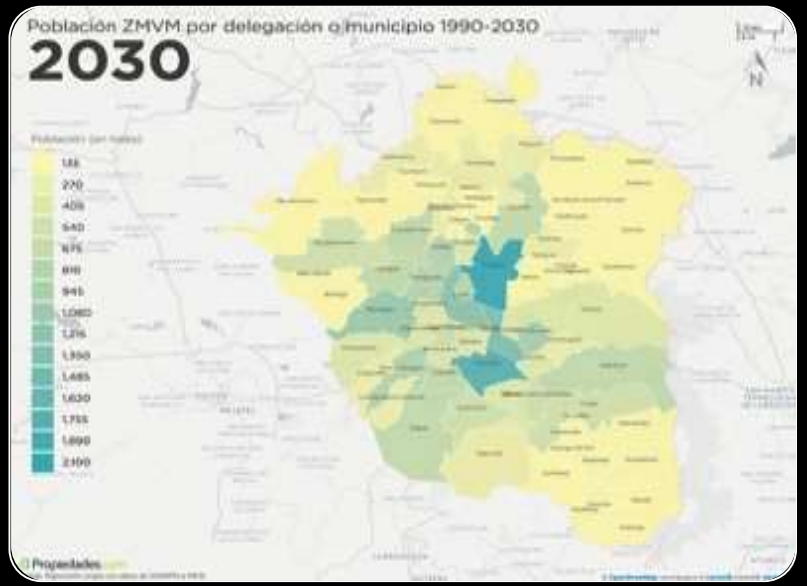
Photo by: Erik Tochimani

Two main problems

1. The actual water management model



2. The rapid transformation of peripheral spaces

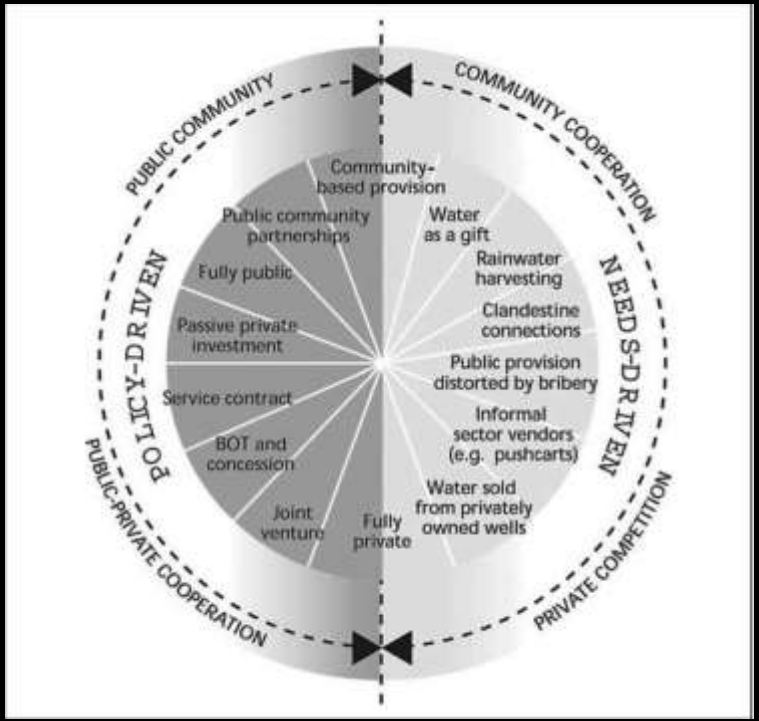


Case studies

WATER ACCESS CONDITIONS						
YEAR	2000		2005		2010	
CASES	SAN ISIDRO TLAIXCO	SANTIAGO TEPATLAXCO	SAN ISIDRO TLAIXCO	SANTIAGO TEPATLAXCO	SAN ISIDRO TLAIXCO	SANTIAGO TEPATLAXCO
HOUSING UNITS	447	634	569	629	683	861
PUBLIC PIPES AVAILABLE, WATER INSIDE HOUSE	0.22%	9.31%	0.35%	79.65%	94%	97%
PUBLIC PIPES AVAILABLE, WATER OUTSIDE HOUSE	1.34%	81.70%	47%	18%		

The conceptual model

- A continuous spectrum of policy- driven mechanisms (on the left) and needs-driven practices (on the right).
- *Policy driven*: production and provision, formal or semiformal practices.
- *Needs driven:* highly localized strategies adopted by the peri-urban poor.
- Three kinds of actors can be seen:
- Public actors (local government agencies)
- Private actors (water vendors , formal and informal)
- Social actors (households and dwellers; also social or political organizations involved).
- **Depending on the role assumed by each actor (provider, regulator, mediator, or consumer) different modes of interaction can be possible.**



Source: Allen et. al., 2006

CASE 1. San Isidro Tlaixco

- 2010: poor and high cost water supply
  - ✧ Informal water market
  - ✧ Arrangements between local government and dwellers
  - ✧ Public provision system distorted by bribery

- 2016: poor and high cost water supply…with a pool
  - ✧ Informal water market
  - ✧ A price range for water thanks was defined
  - ✧ More competition for water vendors
  - ✧ Shifts in local government's priorities and public agenda
  - ✧ Water distribution at no charge

CASE 2. Santiago Tepatlaxco




2010: more intensive in informal practices

- ✧ Community based provision
- ✧ Local distribution system
- ✧ Absence of the state, its policies and its resources

2016: new informal mechanism identified

- ✧ Political network based on opportunism and with electoral aims
- ✧ High increase in local water demand
- ✧ increase in social conflict has diminished the committee's legitimacy

Conclusions

- Periurban spaces are becoming increasingly relevant to understand what water access challenges represent for complex urban areas.
- Changes in water access do not depend on the intervention of one single actor.
- Traditional schemes of water provision are insufficient to fulfill the periurban population's needs, particularly in the case of poor communities.
- Water access is based on a dynamic process of interactions and exchanges between different actors, rather than public provision. A more flexible notion of water management policies is needed. Water access is NOT a synonym of water infrastructure availability.
- Both case studies evidence the way in which informality remains as the solution-oriented creative space for these communities, in a context of uncontrolled urban expansion and ever-increasing demand for water.

The key to structural improvements in water and sanitation lies in the recognition of these practices and their articulation to the formal system under new governance regimes.

Patrón de prueba de pantalla panorámica (16:9)