Research tools for the Socio-Cultural Anthropology and Ethnographic Approach to the Social Representations within Urban Studies

Martha de Alba

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana - Iztapalapa

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- Moscovici's SRT is inspired on an socio-anthropological approach: Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl.

- An anthropological or cultural approach is necessary to understand contemporary world: modern and postmodern societies of XX and XXI Centuries (Moscovici, 1993)

- The ethnographic and anthropological approach has an important place on the SR research field in several countries. Some examples:
  - Madness: Denise Jodelet
  - Spaces for children: Chombart de Lauwe
  - Health: Claudine Herzlich
  - Gender Identity: Gerard Duveen
  - Public spaces: Sandra Jovchelovitch
  - Political Action: Mireya Lozada
  - Imaginaries and collective memory: Mauxi Banchs

In the ethnographic and anthropological approach to the SR

- SR are studied in historic context, as part of cultural systems.

- Search of an understanding of social and cultural dynamics. Less concern about the study of social cognition at intra-individual- level.

- Interdisciplinary approach

- Qualitative perspective: comprehension and description of the phenomena.

- Use of multiple methods to observe social phenomena.
  - Detailed ethnography, narratives, acted social representations in everyday life's rituals, archives, questionnaires, graphic materials (drawings, maps, art), photography, etc.

SR and Geertz's Interpretative theory of culture

- Moscovici defined SR as theories of common sense socially constructed.

- Geertz defines common sense as theories of life created and reproduced by societies. Is a cultural system.

- According to Geertz culture is like a web of significance:

"I believe that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning".

Ethnography: Thick description

- Interpretative method to search those webs of significance, common sense, or SR.

- Culture is an acted document: "ethnography is like trying to read a manuscript--foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, written in transient examples of shaped behavior". Behavior as symbolic action.

- Observation of socially established structures of meaning in actions, rituals, narratives, documents, etc.

- Clarify de relationship between local culture and general society: social structure, institutions, political and economic system, etc.

- Respect the informal logic of common sense and real life

- Remember: "evil is in the details" of what we observe or read.

Ethnography of Tepito

Tepito is one the oldest popular neighbourhoods of Mexico City, with a bad reputation and strong social identity.

Since the seventies, street vendors started to occupy the neighbourhood, changing radically the local landscape and everyday life of residents.

Research questions

- In the context of strong transformation of Tepito:

  - What are the SR and collective memory of Tepito in senior residents' narratives?

  - What are the differences between SR and collective memory of Tepito?

  - Does the neighbourhood offer quality of life to elder residents?

  - How do elder residents experience their neighbourhood on everyday life?

Ecology of aging: Constructing place identity through life course is related to aging well
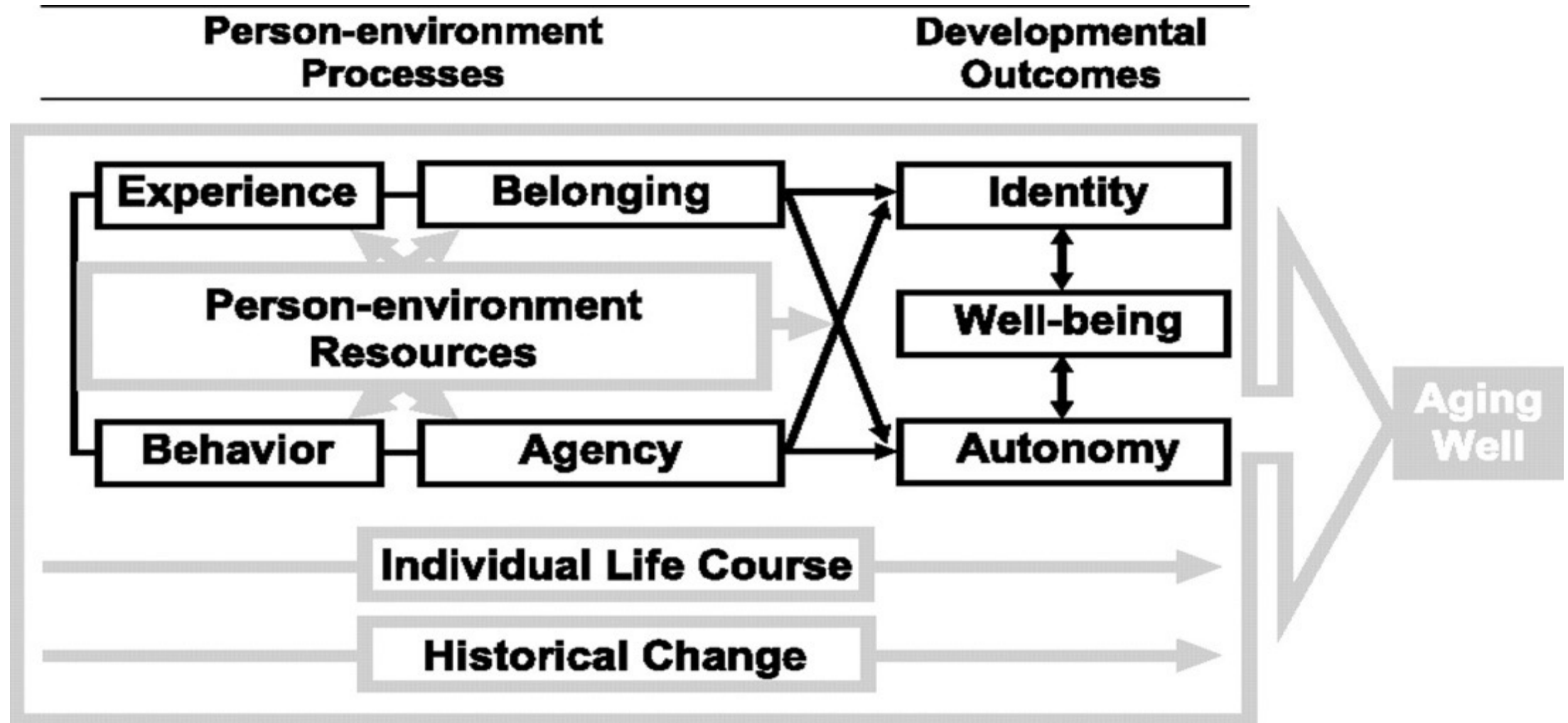
Wahl H et al. The Gerontologist 2011;geront.gnr154

Methods

- Field observation: several visits to Tepito
  - Urban landscape:
  - Social dynamics: groups, leaderships, age of residents
  - Important buildings and equipment

- Informal conversations during the visits

- Photographs: a sensitive subject

- Interviews: biography in urban context

- Archive: newspapers, web sites, documentation

Interviews:

- Semi – structured interviews about collective memory and social representations:
  - ❖From the past…
    - Social frames of memory (Hallbwachs):
      - Time: personal (life stages) and historical (city-neighborhood past)
      - Space: city, neighborhoods, particular places
      - Groups: family and community context, education and job trajectory
    - Sketch map of the spatial memory
    - Family genealogies and biography
  - ❖To the present…
    - Their daily life in the city and the neighborhood
    - Their social representations of the city and the neighborhood

Collective memory vs SR of Tepito:

Nostalgia vs Present situation

- Strong opposition between narratives of the past and present of the neighbourhood.

- Nostalgia of a glorious past helps to mitigate the negative representation and experience of Tepito in the present.

- Nostalgia is not a distorted illusion, but a mirror of negative aspects of their neighbourhood today, that decrease senior's residents quality of life.

Mexico City XIX Century. Tepito – Teocaltepiton : little temple

CARTE 1
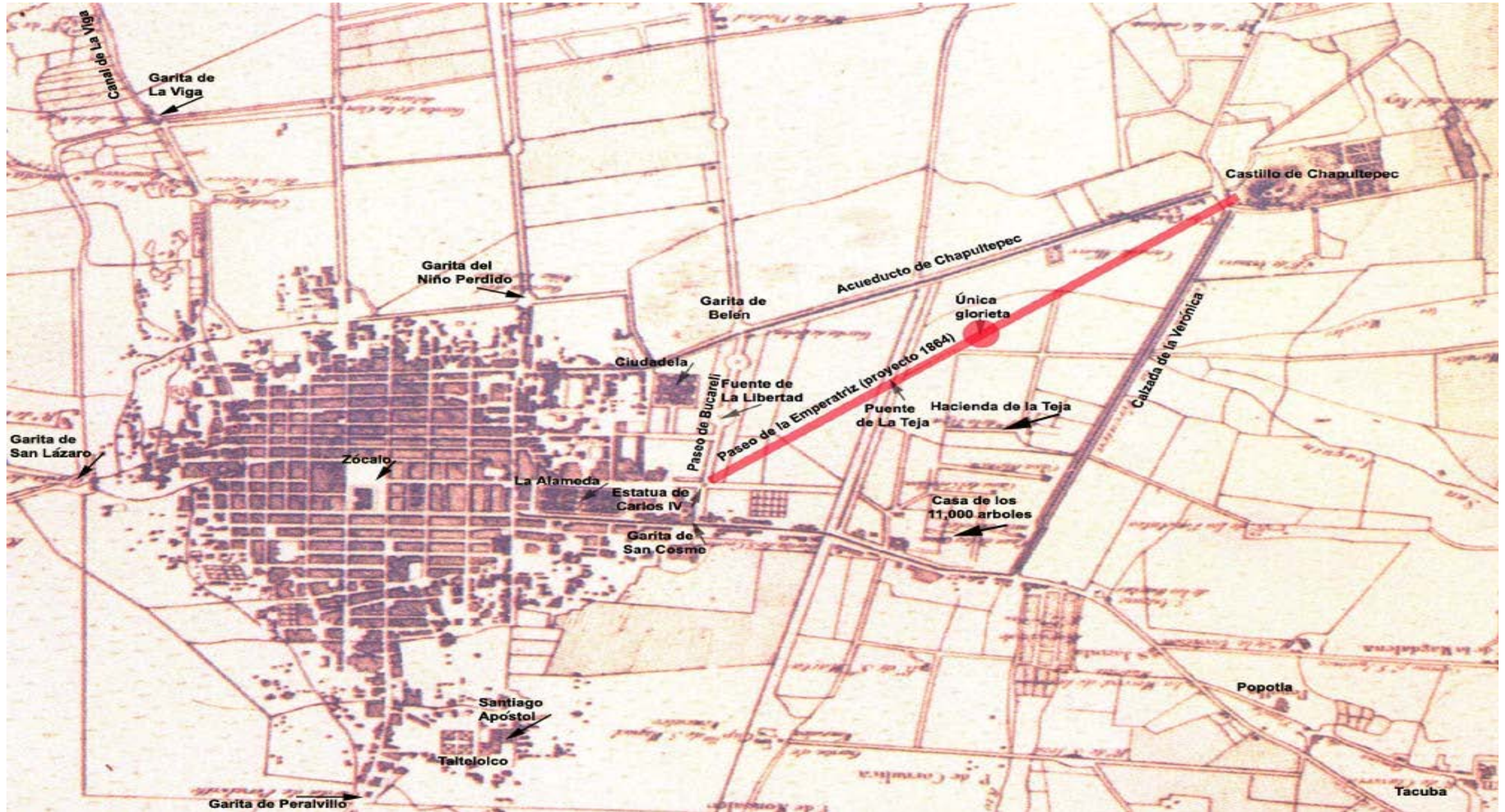
Le centre de Mexico : points de repère

Eje : axe routier important
TLATELOLCO : nom de quartier
P.T.C. = Place des Trois Cultures
AGN. : Archives Générales de la Nation
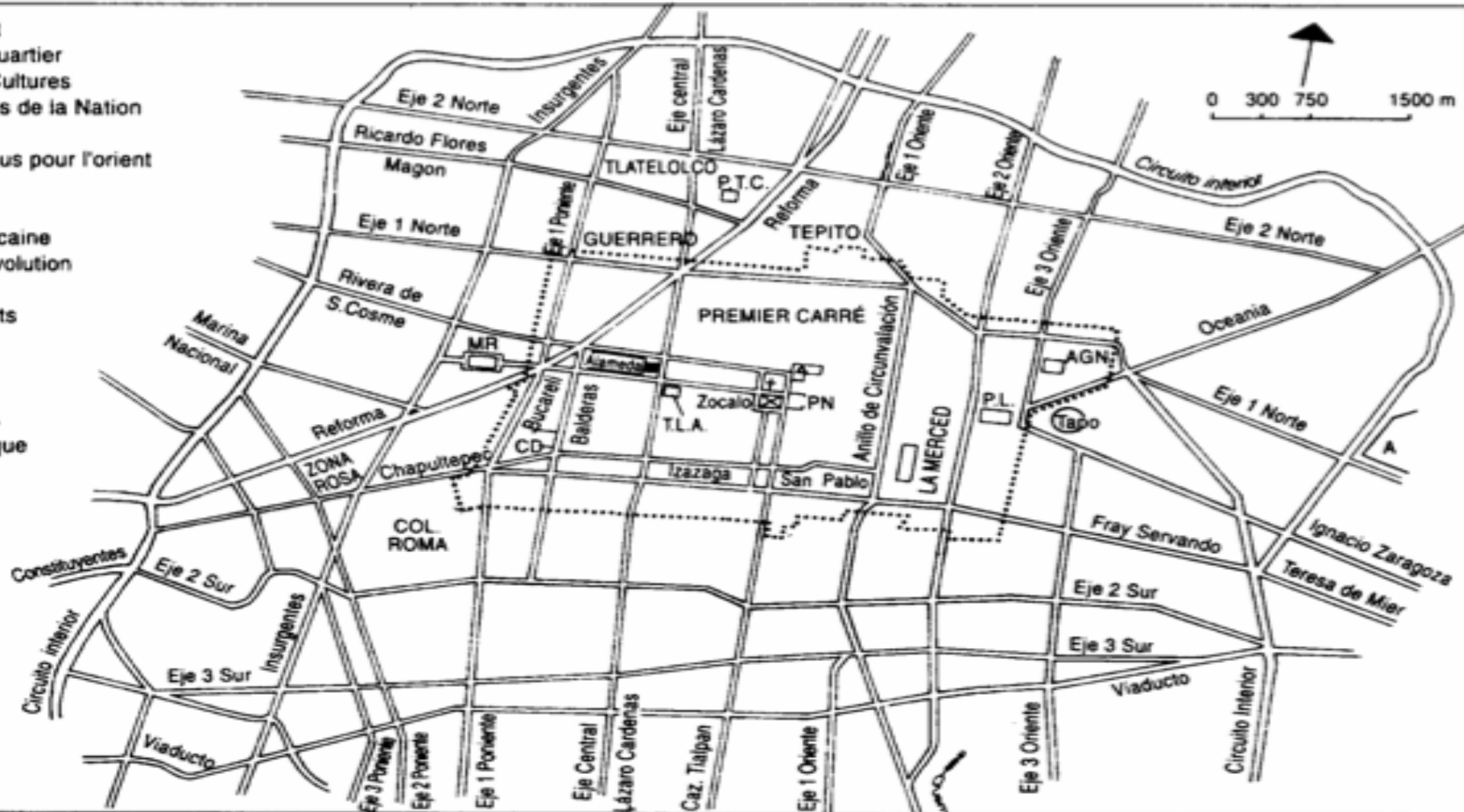A : Aéroport
Tapo : Terminal des autobus pour l'orient
PL : Palais Législatif
PN : Palais National
T.L.A. : Tour Latino-Américaine
M.R. : Monument à la Révolution
C.D. : Ciudadela
■ : Palais des Beaux-Arts
△ : Temple Mayor
▼ : Colonne de l'Ange de l'Indépendance
····· : Limites officielles du centre historique de Mexico

0 300 750 1500 m

Eje 2 Norte
Insurgentes
Eje central
Lázaro Cárdenas
Ricardo Flores Magon
TLATELOLCO
P.T.C.
Eje 1 Oriente
Eje 2 Oriente
Circuito interior
Eje 1 Norte
Reforma
TEPITO
Eje 2 Norte
Eje 1 Poniente
GUERRERO
Eje 3 Oriente
Rivera de S.Cosme
PREMIER CARRÉ
Oceania
Marina Nacional
Anillo de Circunvalación
M.R.
AGN.
Alameda
Bucareli
Balderas
Zocalo
PN
P.L.
Tapo
Eje 1 Norte
Reforma
T.L.A.
LA MERCED
CD
ZONA ROSA
Chapultepec
Izazaga
San Pablo
Fray Servando
Ignacio Zaragoza
COL ROMA
Teresa de Mier
Constituyentes
Eje 2 Sur
Eje 2 Sur
Circuito interior
Eje 3 Sur
Insurgentes
Eje 3 Sur
Viaducto
Circuito Interior
Viaducto
Eje 3 Poniente
Eje 2 Poniente
Eje 1 Poniente
Eje Central
Lázaro Cárdenas
Caz. Tlalpan
Eje 1 Oriente
Eje 3 Oriente

A neighbourhood "kidnapped" by street vendors

Tepito: street market by day, neighbourhood by night

Sample

	NAME	SEX	AGE	DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF MIGRATION	STUDIES	MARITAL STATUS	CHILDREN	OCCUPATION	PENSION	GENERAL HEALTH	TRANSPORTATION	HOME
1	Amelia	Woman	82	1928	1933	none	widow	5	street vendor	Ninguna	Funcional (pre	public transport	owner
2	Guillermina	Woman	80	1930		elementary school	widow	4	own commerce (store)	Ninguna	Funcional	public transport	owner
3	Blanca	Woman	72	1937		elementary school	widow	5	street vendor	Ninguna	Funcional (art	public transport	owner
4	Rosa María	Woman	72	1937	1957	elementary school	widow	5	street vendor	Ninguna	Funcional (pre	public transport	owner
5	Gloria	Woman	67	1942		elementary school	widow	5	manufacturer, street vendor	Ninguna	Funcional (pre	public transport	owner
6	Marcelo	Man	80	1930	1957	elementary school	widow	3	barber	Ninguna	Óptimo	public transport	owner
7	Miguel	Man	69	1941		elementary school	married	1	street vendor	Ninguna	Dependiente (	public transport	owner
8	Luis	Man	68	1940		elementary school	married	7	own commerce (store), shoemaker	Sí / 1800	Funcional (pre	public transport	owner
9	José Luis	Man	64	1945		high school	widow	4	street vendor	Ninguna	Funcional (dia	public transport	owner
10	Miguel Ángel	Man	60	1948		baccalaureate	married	10	street vendor, wrestler (luchador)	Ninguna	Óptimo	car	owner

Social memory of Tepito by elderly residents:
a play in three acts

- First act. *Comedy*: every day life in Vecindades

- Second act. *Drama*: transformation of Tepito by plans of modernization (new markets, read axis and housing projects) and the arrival of Fayuca (importation and sale of contraband items).

- Third act. *Tragedy*: drugs, violence and piracy commerce.

- In each act, we will observe the relationship between socio-spatial phenomena in Tepito and resident's life course

ACT I:

Narrative: Every day comedy in Vecindades

Socio-spatial phenomena: Birth of local identity

Life stage: Memories of childhood and young years (1930-1955)

More about vecindades: Oscar Lewis: Five families, 1959; The children of Sánchez, 1961.

Migrant families with the same profile, searching for a better life in the big city, living in little communities.

Neighbourhood *of poor workers*: employees or manufacturing workshops. Handwork as a value.

Desapareció el tradicional panadero en el DF

...en este contexto, el reconocimiento del espacio, los vínculos y ...memoria colectiva del...

...Tepito... Este proyecto adquiere así un sentido de memoria colectiva del barrio...

Vecindades (1966, 1961)

GALERÍA FOTOGRÁFICA | El México de Ayer

Mythical past of harmonious social life, without conflicts, minimizing poverty. United neighbours organizing collective activities.

Strict family principles and moral values ("poor but honest", "thieves never acted in the neighbourhood", marriage, clear female and male social roles).

Street commerce: flea market that occupied a specific area and was controlled by local residents

- San Bartolomé de las Casas
- ca.1930

Local folklore. Strategies to cope with poverty and to achieve goals (creating and learning new skills). Local characters: wrestlers (luchadores), boxers, pachuco style of dressing for dancers, the junkman, street vendors, etc.

© 2012 Di Composers

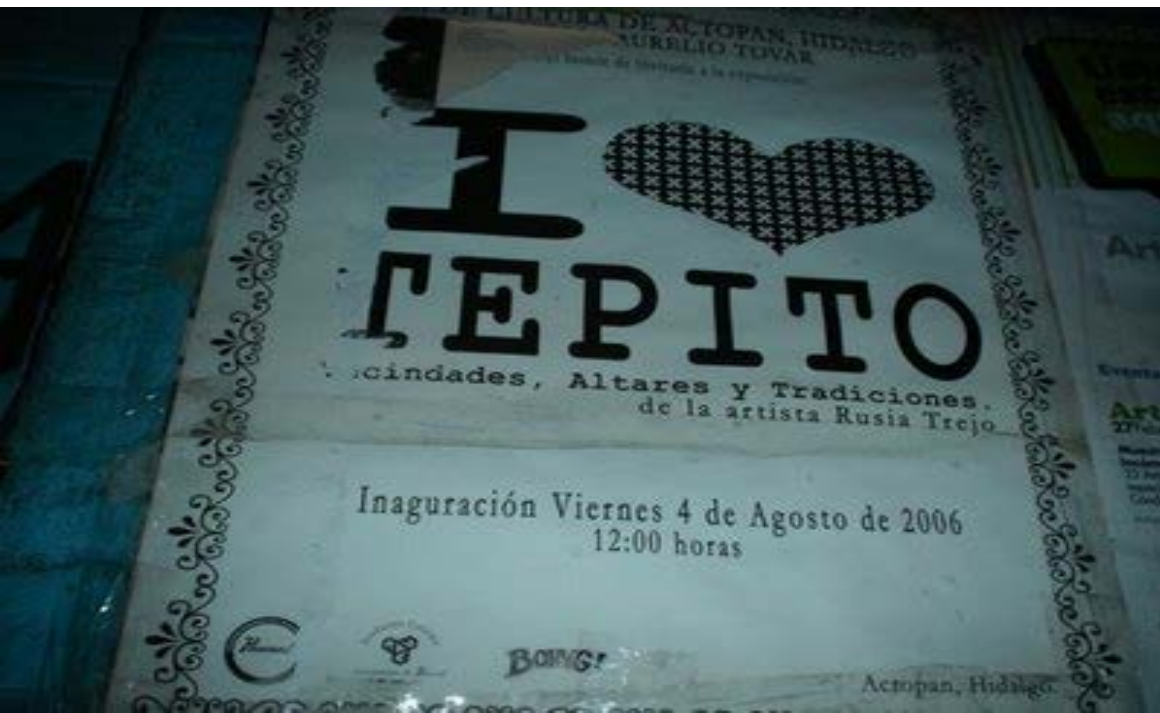EN TEPITO TODO SE VENDE

MENOS LA DIGNIDAD

In Tepito we sell
Everything except
dignity

i Tepito

"I am proud of being Mexican but is a blessing of god coming from Tepito"

ACT II

Drama

Narratives:

plans of *modernization*: new markets (1956-57), housing projects (1970), big avenues (1978).

and

the arrival of *Fayuca*: importation and sale of contraband items (1970).

Socio-spatial phenomena

Local identity was menaced: social memory as an ideology used against modernisation projects

Life stage:

Memories of family life and job trajectories

(1955 – 1990)

Four new markets in Tepito (1956-1957):

Destruction of entire blocks of vecindades next to Sn Francisco church, the center of the neighbourhood.

- Opposition of street vendors organizations: not every body got a place in the markets

- Vendors came back to the streets, markets were used to stock merchandise

antigua calle de rayon, 1950, hoy eje 1 norte, lagunilla, tepito.

MERCADO DE LA LAGUNILLA (COMESTIBLES)

FAM, GUERRERO

36 TEPITO UNIDAD VARIOS SEDECO

Plan Tepito : construction of public housing projects (1978 – 1986):
"Bird cages" and "The Fortress"

Neighbourhood organizations reacted against vertical buildings, small apartments, no public spaces. Very different from vecindades architecture and distribution.

unidad los palomares, en toltecas y rivero, 1978, tepito

Apartments were expensive for many residents, almost anyone could get credits due to informal jobs

unidad la fortaleza, en toltecas y rivero, 1978, tepito

Tepito Arte Acá: art as political action

Plan Tepito stopped due to economical reasons, not due to political action of local organizations

1985 earthquake: local organizations and academic groups negotiated to build "modern vecindades". A successful urban intervention.

Renewed vecindad en Tepito

Fayuca (1970-1995): Tepito becomes a big Tianguis

- Importation and sale of contraband items

- Thousands of stands expanded on Tepito central streets

- Many residents got rich quickly: moved to middle class neighbourhoods, but kept stands in Tepito

- Many other regretted they sold stands quickly

- Strangers bought street places and stands

- Commerce organizations got more power than resident organizations

Act III

Tragedy

Narratives:
Traffic and consumption of drugs
Crime and violence
Piracy commerce controlled by mafias

Social phenomena:
Saving a weak local identity

Life stage: Old age

Markets and apartments: stock merchandise

- Asian products (jeans, handbags, tennis shoes, etc).

- Copies of CD and DVD (music, movies, computer programs, pornography, etc.) created in local laboratories.

- Contraband products

- Illegal items: arms, false documents…

- Drugs

Police operations against drugs and piracy gangs

Santa Muerte: a new worship

TEPITO

Final remarks

- Memory reconstructed from a present difficult situation

- Three acts play: official memory that reinforce place identity and justifies the present (personal and local life)

- Functional memory:
  - local social identity helps to protect Tepito from government interventions
  - Collective memory could "safe" the neighbourhood from threats of present situation

- Fear of the future of the neighbourhood and next generations. Not economical opportunities, few control of their territory, wild and illegal street commerce, drugs and crime.