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Inequality in heritage centres: Analysing the reality in Mexican cities

Globalisation has had an impact in Mexican cities, creating new urban structures. Therefore, globalisation modifies the relationships that individuals establish with the territory through the construction of new citizenship practices. With a multidisciplinary approach, we develop a theoretical analysis that allows us to understand the new condition of Mexican historical centres caused by the challenges imposed by becoming a World Heritage Site. We apply a theoretical construct that allows us to portray certain aspects of reality in Mexican cities regarding the construction of democratic and participative practices of citizenship. We analyse this phenomenon based on two theoretical points of departure: a) the process of becoming a heritage site (i.e., tourism/gentrification) and b) the

theory of social capital. The results show that the new situation implies a transformation in the space, time and economy of the heritage site. In the historical centre, the political actors and institutions promote centralist, transnational and urban conservationist development. An urbanism is created that prioritises conservation to the benefit of tourists and to the detriment of enjoyment, use and participation by the local population. Furthermore, there is an erosion of the social fabric through processes of exclusion and gentrification, which place citizenship in peril.

Keywords: heritage preservation, citizenship, gentrification, exclusions, historical centres

1 Introduction

Current discourse on social reality focuses on the consideration of space not only as a container or carrier of the substance of social processes, but as an active element that influences the very structure of social reality (Lezama, 2002). In this regard, it is important to distinguish between the built environment, in which certain processes of social life take place, and its appearance, which provides content to the material dimension of space (Lezama, 2002). In other words, this involves the distinction between space as mere material support and social space, which, in affiliation with the material framework, acts as both a source and a resource. Furthermore, this includes the social relationships that individuals establish through processes that depend on spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1969). Therefore, space is not only a real scene but also the architect of that reality; it refrains from being a passive entity upon which men build history to take an active role in shaping life events in general (Castells, 1988).

Historically, citizenship has been a leading aspect of the general “life of the city”. With the alliance of *civitas* and *urbs*, a community with social order and material support (i.e., public spaces), the history of citizenship has been built in the western world (Choay, 2009). In other words, the various levels of adjustment between social practices and the built environment had conditioned the character of citizenship over the centuries. This occurred in the middle of adjustments that, depending on the moment in history, promoted or inhibited democratic participation, equality, liberty, respect and recognition among the individuals and groups in a community.

Based on these considerations, it is important to highlight that creating citizenships can be analysed in terms of reality of social practices and/or the territorial conditions that this social (i.e., urban/spatial) issue manifests. The analysis of citizenship as a social question has been widely developed in the social sciences. In one of the clearest examples, the British sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall (1949) proposes three types of citizenship, assigning temporality to each one. These citizenship types, which arise from the need of all individuals to enjoy the same rights, are complementary to the extent that the limitations of each of them are clearly defined and are manifest in the exclusion of one or more groups of individuals. There are thus at least three major levels of citizenship in modern western societies.

The first is *civil citizenship*, established in the eighteenth century, which confers the recognition of equality before the law necessary for the exercise of individual rights (the freedom of

speech, thought and religion, the right to property, commerce and justice, and the right to conclude mutually agreed-upon contracts). This supposed equality leaves out not only those without property, but also those that do not have the means to be heard. This form of citizenship was favoured by the cities because it was “born in the commercial cities and follows the development of the destined courts to arbitrate disputes about these exchanges” (Donzelot, 2012: 11).

The second is *political citizenship*, which arose in the nineteenth century as a way of compensating for the previous exclusions, assigning individuals the condition of being equally sovereign. However, the social inequality generated by the capitalist system, which pervades western society, does not ensure the satisfaction of essential needs for the survival of all. As such, it excludes many individuals from the exercise of civil and political citizenship. Political citizenship ensured the right to participate in exercising power, and responded to desires of the urban population, both poor and rich, to participate in the city government.

The last one is *social citizenship*, which emerged in the twentieth century as a result of the policy implemented by the welfare state oriented towards the idea that all people are equal in dignity and rights. Dignity is understood as the set of rights granted to all citizens, whether referring to their social status, access to housing, education and healthcare, or an income that allows them to satisfy their basic needs. This form of citizenship addresses the problem of the growing concentration of poor people in cities as a result of migration from the countryside to the city.

Returning to the line of argument, and in agreement with the theoretical although not the chronological structure of Marshall (1949), Jacques Donzelot (2012) addresses the concept of social citizenship in the mid-twentieth century. Social citizenship is understood as the equality of rights and is added to the already established civil and political citizenship of previous centuries. Donzelot proposes the passage to a new type of citizenship that has a spatial nature, one that is derived from the urban environment. From a narrative typical of French reality, Donzelot introduces the concept of urban citizenship and discusses the finished nature of all types of citizenship known thus far in order to open a new chapter. Although the novelty of the urban dimension, as expressed by the author himself, seems to be inconsistent, given the prominence of urban discourse in the descriptive part of citizenship, he clarified that the rationale for this new category is justified by evidence of a radical change that has occurred in society and the city over the last 150 years. At the beginning of this period (the nineteenth century), the city preceded and determined the

social question. In this regard, it is perceived as the cause of all social ills, where man is degraded and society perverted. The city was considered a dire abode that represented the origin of social struggles for citizenship. However, at the end of the period (in the twentieth century), the equation was reversed, and the city became a victim of society. Social practices of “ghettoisation” atomise the city and segregate its inhabitants.

In this last era of citizenship, the state can no longer control the social consequences of globalisation. Consequently, the state has begun to turn inwards towards the local. New rights are arising in light of this new perspective: the right to the city. Therefore, urban citizenship is becoming the exercise of rights by elected local representatives, residents, business owners and so on. All must agree to respond to the issue of urban citizenship with the help of local collaboration agreements. Thus, the right to the city emerges in a climate of “urban-philia”, which interprets urban space as a means to invoke social, economic and ecological conflicts.

2 The city model and the hallmarks of citizenship

One of the ideas this reflection is based on suggests that there is a direct relationship between the city and citizenship. This means that a certain social, economic, cultural and spatial (architectural and urban) order corresponds to certain features of citizenship, rights, restrictions, tensions and exclusions of groups and individuals. In this sense, using two specific models of the city, we interpret the locus as a builder of the distinctive hallmarks of citizenship.

We first analyse the social city. This model of the city arose after the Second World War in Europe in a general atmosphere of contempt for the city. The city was then conceived of as the cause of all social ills, including the physical and moral degradation of its inhabitants and the deterioration of relationships, which was expressed through disease and crime. In this sense, urban space built in the name of social citizenship fed on a sort of “urban-phobia” that occurred in the era of industrialisation. This model attempts to restore the traces of a socially balanced city, whose scope proved to be conducive to the construction of social citizenship.

This model is illustrated by the garden city concept introduced by Ebenezer Howard in 1898, which emerged as an alternative city paradigm that promotes itself as overcoming environmental and social imbalances, and aims at preserving both city artifices and the nature of the countryside (Choay, 2009), whose ties had been corroded by the practices of the

industrial era. Another alternative, proposed in 1899 by Tony Garnier for the model of the industrial city, follows the principles of modern urban planning as defined in the Charter of Athens (International Congress of Modern Architecture, CIAM, 1933).

The social city incarnates the principle of universal law, promoting access by all to the same goods, reducing inequality and alleviating social distances. This is reflected in the efforts to build large-scale social housing to re-assert the right to homeownership. Functional urbanism represents the “spatial company” that best reflects this social calling. This new urbanism is consolidated and promoted by the welfare state in its role as the custodian of the general interest. The traditional street is abolished in the name of security, and the dispersion of public space is one of the most emblematic testimonies of libertarian and hygienic principles. However, the erosion of the social fabric characteristic of these forms of urbanism will result in the emergence of a new model. Second, there is an urban renaissance. In contrast to the social environment that is posited by the social city, Donzelot (2012) argues that today a kind of “urban-philia” exists, which induces society and its citizens to think in terms of the alleged virtues of the city, whereby the concept of citizenship adopts the form that values the urban and no longer complains against it.

This optimistic view of the city is not entirely shared by Jordi Borja, who argues in favour of contradictory realities that challenge the appropriateness of the city as an area of citizenship. The “dissolution of the city”, he says, is expressed in urban regions of fuzzy boundaries, a dispersed habitat, social atomisation and environmental unsustainability. These freedoms are reduced, and social costs rise as a result of segregation. In contrast, a counter-trend is in favour of a social re-evaluation of the urban culture, and of a public space of citizen value, which promotes the “right to the city” (Borja, 2012).

The conceptual framework proposed by Marshall and Donzelot forms the basis for the links between the city and citizenship to be analysed in terms of human experience. We compare this Eurocentric view of the city/citizenship relationship with Mexican reality, checking whether or not it is valid and determining the particular characteristics of urban space and citizenship on this continent. Specifically, we focus our comparative theoretical analysis of the contemporary period of development in place since the late twentieth century in the selected territory of the historical centres of Latin American cities. The analysis, as stated above, has the following points of departure: a) the concept of heritage and b) the theory of social capital.

3 Mexico: Urbanisation, urban citizenship and world heritage cities

In Mexico, relationships between citizenship and cities are modified in the light of global practices and their consequent urban dynamics. Therefore, “the classical concept of citizenship, whose content is insufficient to meet the demands of a new socio-cultural diversity of social actors, is put under question” (Ramírez Kuri, 2013: 628). The term *citizenship* is polysemic and cannot be reduced to a limited repertoire of rights and obligations in a legal framework. In this case, this repertoire is reconfigured and expanded in light of ever-renewed social demands: new social, human, political and cultural conflicts are linked not only to social rights, but extend to rights to cultural and urban heritage, the environment, ecology, gender, health, life and safety (Ramírez Kuri, 2013).

Citizenship has been modified due to a series of urban dynamics present in Mexican cities since the second half of the twentieth century – that is to say, during a period of economic stability and growth in the country. During this, modernisation began and Mexico became mostly urban. Various factors such as rural-urban migration, urbanisation, industrialisation and the economic policy of import substitution structured urban agglomerations in Mexico. This is how metropolises began to form (e.g., Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey or Puebla); urban regions (the Mexican Bajío or heartlands) and other cities of several hundred thousand inhabitants, among which Cancún, Acapulco, Oaxaca, Ciudad Juárez, Morelia and others stand out. These cities act like magnets in their regions, attracting populations and activities, to the detriment of the surrounding rural zones. The first great dislocation of shapes and scale of the historic Mexican city does not seem to have slowed down. Industrial parks and popular residential zones on the periphery of cities do not seem to stop appearing; bedroom communities of social housing pop up isolated from the city; the main avenues and ring roads mark the urban expansion, with its new limits rapidly coming apart; construction takes place in zones far from the traditional large urban centres, markets, bus stations, malls, hospitals, administrative centres and other services.

At the end of the twentieth century, the liberalisation of the national economy and its entrance into the world market (the privatisation of banks and the integration of free trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement) were definitive triggers of urban reorganisation, and subsequently the city. Since the 1980s, development in the city no longer depended exclusively on plans and infrastructure financed by the state. This weakened its intervention, and allowed the entrance of private capital and foreigners into various branches of

services that were exclusive to them. In particular, globalisation was manifested in the real-estate sector, which marked a new stage for major Mexican cities (e.g., Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, León, Querétaro, Morelia, Puebla, and others). In other regions of Mexico, this sector was restructured by the arrival of foreign capital in the form of industrial poles such as the automotive sector in the heartlands, or factories in towns along the border with the United States.

Transport and communication technologies also played a key role in the transformation of Mexican cities. This allowed certain industrial production by transnational companies to be located towards the outskirts of the city. Furthermore, access to technology translated into the creation of large areas that contribute their quota of urban sprawl. In the context of a free trade market, transport and communications allow the relocation of centres of production in radii ever further from the markets of consumption (i.e., Mexican and US cities). Thus, since 2000, the railroads, airports, industrial zones and highways have been directing an important part of urban expansion in Mexico. Therefore, globalisation has driven the largest expansion ever seen in Mexican urban areas, under the conditions of the interests of international private capital associated with the interests of the local elite. This extension was a poor fit with the social relationships that define citizenship and the form and scale of Mexican *urbs*.

In terms of territory, the city became a patchwork composed of historical centres of colonial origin – with a world heritage angle – with urban traces and a uniform and distinguishable architectural style in cases where conservation was allowed. Surrounding them are the first modern extensions from the beginning of the twentieth century. This was followed by accelerated expansion in the second half of the twentieth century, during which slums multiplied, with new forms of territory and urban poles of peripheral centres: airports, malls, commercial districts, residential neighbourhoods and social housing, among others. With this new structure of urbanisation, the citadel scale has passed to a territorial or metropolitan scale, creating a juxtaposition that generates an ensemble of urban pieces, and heterogeneous structures with technological-architectonic and commercial objects.

In this context, the historical centres of the Mexican city condense these phenomena driven by local and global processes related to structural adjustments in the economy. One challenge is the construction of the complex social fabric of the built environment: “Latin America is living a re-appreciation of the built city and, within it, to an even greater degree, the three types of historical centrality exist today: the foundation, the urban and the subject in the context of globalization” (Carrión, 2013: 713).

Fernando Carrión explains that one of the development trends in Latin America is oriented towards historical centrality as opposed to the peripheral expansion of the cities of the twentieth century. This new logic of a centripetal character has the task of returning to the consolidated city (Carrión, 1997). Assuming as a courtesy “the reciprocal fit of a form of urban fabric and a way of living” (Choay, 2009: 167), the new pattern of the urbanisation of Latin American historical centres is held in the “public and social conscience incarnated by new *heritage subjects*” (Carrión, 2013: 717).

4 Citizenship in the theory of heritage

Although it is true that, historically, the notion of citizenship has been built by the establishment of rights and obligations of individuals and groups (Antaki, 2000), it is also true that this notion has been structured by its counterpart; that is, by vulnerable groups that were deprived of those rights through social disputes, fighting for their conquest (Marshall, 1949). Taking these principles into the capitalist city of the twenty-first century, specifically in the Latin American region, it is especially in the second facet, that of the conflict, in which citizenship is defined (Castells, 2005; Delgadillo, 2009; Carrión, 2014). In other words, Mexican citizenship is built around rebellious expressions of opposition to the political elite and the bourgeoisie groups. It is in this struggle for the right to the city (Harvey, 2011) that citizenship is expressed against a number of exclusions that are social, economic, territorial and cultural in nature, and even heritage that belongs to advanced capitalist cities.

The conflict and exclusion of the Mexican city permeates its historical and heritage territory. In fact, conflict and exclusion reach their peak in the protected heritage parts of the cities. This is due to spatial and social characteristics: the concentration of symbolic supports of power, squares, parks, monuments, palaces and institutions, among others. In this context, we argue that citizenship in a heritage city (de)constructed the dispute over the use, enjoyment and usufruct of the built heritage, both tangible and intangible.

Indeed, urban citizenship in the context of heritage cities arises from the absence of the participation of the inhabitants in the administration and use of cultural resources. This participation, more desired than real, in town planning evokes a panoply of terms associated with the exercise of the rights of citizens in the decision-making regarding the administration of cities: citizen participation, social participation, governance, participatory planning and so on. In theoretical and political discourse, these factors construct, or at least should build, citizenship in a Mexican heritage city. This is the case, at least

in the declarations and operation manuals of declared heritage sites, where there is a requirement or recommendation to include local civil society in decision-making in managing heritage (UNESCO, 2014).

In reality, the right to decide on the use of heritage is different. At least in Mexico, except for some cases, such as Monte Alban in Oaxaca and the historical centre of Mexico City and Xochimilco (Delgadillo, 2009), national or supranational declared heritage sites do not have instances of civil society organisation integration in decision-making regarding asset management (establishment of projects, investment, range of cultural activities and uses, for example). Incidentally, the participation of citizens in these cases has been fuelled by the attack against the rights of vulnerable groups (farmers, indigenous peoples, informal trade associations and neighbours) in economic, ecological and/or cultural terms of use in a heritage city.

As for the actors that build citizenship in the heritage city, it is possible to distinguish two groups: a) the upper and middle classes (the bourgeoisie and political elite) and b) the lower classes and social minorities. The first group, represented by the social and economic elite, disputes its rights as entrepreneurs, consumers and inhabitants. These roles, associated with economic activity, converge on the role of a historical heritage centre: tourism. The interest of the elite is not only economic, but in terms of social status is also associated with cultural consumption. The second group, consisting of the other classes and vulnerable groups, is the group that appears to have their citizenship hurt due to the exclusionary dynamics of economic and political capitalist city logic, which undermines the use and benefit of heritage or, in other words, the right to the city or, in this case, to its heritage. On the one hand, the condition of residents of the central slums is eroded by the dynamics of gentrification, which seek to renew this space by substituting current residents with more affluent ones with greater purchasing power. On the other hand, the policies of the “rescue” of historical centres based trade regulation on public streets, undermining the status of workers within the heritage space, with obvious effects of exclusion. With this in mind, the prospect of new jobs derived from the economic exploitation of heritage may seem favourable, yet it occurs in situations of precarious employment and low wages (e.g., the service sector in hotels, restaurants, trade, construction and personal services). Finally, the condition of a user of heritage urban space is restricted by concrete actions of privatisation and security. Tourism police watch over an aseptic image of urban heritage and exert undesirable pressure on citizens for the purpose of cultural and heritage tourism consumption: homeless people, indigenous people selling crafts, street vendors, prostitutes and “urban tribes”, among others.

The socio-spatial exclusion and precariousness of citizenship are expressed in both public and private spaces. Since the 1980s, several historical centres in Mexican cities have specialised in diverse commercial activities, from informal trade to finance and banking. Equally, in the same decade, historical centres became a historical subject of a heritage that would give the city a new image for future use and serve for purposes of visibility and political power (Monnet, 1993). In the declarations of “World Heritage”, the role of the private sector has been very important and has even displaced some government-initiated renovation projects. Economic interest has dominated heritage and has promoted a tendency of gentrification under the term “rescue” of historical spaces (Coulomb, 2009). In several cities, such as Queretaro, Morelia, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Oaxaca or Puebla, spatial renewal projects were implemented in central areas and have since realised the implications for market dynamics. One example is the “Tourism Corridors Programme” in the first decade of the twenty-first century in the Mexican capital, whose primary objective was to attract new activities, international flows of people and capital or the national elite.^[1] The interventions sought to make central areas more attractive to the higher social classes, which, according to those supporting the programme, would reactivate the use of habitable space and “neighbourhood life”.

In the public space, heritage policies stipulate the renewal of squares, monuments, avenues, roads, gardens, parks, walkways, and gazebos, and the renovation of facades and replacement of street furniture. The funding for this that comes from the state and UNESCO excludes the vast majority of cases, hindering direct participation in decision-making on projects that affect both users and local inhabitants.

In the private sector, heritage policies promote tax policies that attract investment in property. In this framework, the hotels of prestigious multinational chains such as Holiday Inn and Fiesta Americana, and other boutique hotels aimed at high-level business travellers found a potential market for cultural tourism in Mexican historical centres. The new users/inhabitants of the city are distinguished by activities that revolve around the international headquarters of banks and financial services, commerce and luxury tourism, and business tourism. The areas reconstructed and constructed for tourism and heritage, thanks to foreign investments, are connected with global companies. The exclusivity and exclusion of heritage sites are incorporated in these companies’ commercial activities and so these sites are predominantly used as spaces for boutiques and international restaurants of globalised brands such as Cartier, Zara, Sears, McDonald’s, Starbucks and Burger King. In addition, luxurious, fashionable bistro-style restaurants multiply in renovated sectors. Another distinctive feature is the strict control found in private spaces and perimeters of surrounding

“public” space. The scheme is more or less the same for hotels, boutiques, restaurants and other places of the new owners of the equity of central areas: the urban space is nothing more than the extension of trade by the elite represented by trendy café terraces, valet-parking spaces and parking lots, luxury shopping galleries or the extended access of a hotel lobby. Under these great conditions of the city, the population is not within the range of business space, international tourism or the upper classes.

As a result, the amount of urban space that can still be considered public in the sense of being free and allowing free access and circulation is reduced. In these places and specific times, there is a social diversity around walkers, fountains, bike rides or concerts. However, these appropriations are far from dominant in a sanitised and boutique context, as described above.

5 Citizens in the theory of social capital

The contribution of social relations in which individuals participate during their socialisation process is called “social capital” (Loury, 1977). The first contemporary systematic analysis of social capital was by Pierre Bourdieu (1985), who defined it as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a more or less institutionalized web of relationships of lasting knowledge or mutual recognition” (Bourdieu 1985: 248). His treatment of the concept is instrumental and focuses on the benefits received by individuals by virtue of their participation in groups and in the deliberate construction of sociability in order to create the resource (Bourdieu, 1985). Along the same lines as Bourdieu, James S. Coleman (1988) states that social networks encourage norms of reciprocity; that is, one gives to the other, without expecting retribution (at least not immediately), with the assurance that the action will result in a deferred income. The interaction is based on trust.

In historical heritage centres, gentrification is strongly oriented toward the promotion of tourism. However, unlike gentrification, which is understood as a process of replacing one class with fewer economic resources with another, better-positioned class, tourists are characterised by their floating condition, and in that sense neither expel the resident population nor replace it. This is because the social practices of tourists, by the nature of their condition (temporary visitors), do not build social capital. To explain this situation, we propose two categories of analysis of the problem, namely:

- Temporary residence: Social capital is a resource that requires construction over time, and its accumulation is slow. The tourists’ visiting status prevents them, in most

cases, from establishing long-term relationships, and as such their temporary residence is insufficient to build permanent networks that generate social trust. In this context, the willingness of tourists to establish lasting social practices is scarce, due to their brief stay in the place, and

- The nature of social practices: Alessandro Pizzorno (2003) explores the nature of social actions that build social capital and defines the traits that distinguish them from other social actions. He starts by excluding the types of social relationships that obviously cannot constitute social capital, analysing what they have in common. They are not, he says, the terms of trade, the mere encounter between people that do not continue their relationship, nor hostile ones, exploitation or conflict in general. These are distinctive hallmarks that need not be recognised by the other's identity, or that attempt to annul the identity of the other (Pizzorno 2003). As a result, these relationships bear social capital to the extent that a more or less lasting identity of the participants is recognised, and they also hypothesise forms of solidarity and reciprocity. In this explanatory context, it is clear that the relationship of the main character in this study, the tourist, meets the first two conditions that prevent the generation of social capital: trade relationships and mere encounters between people that do not continue their relationship, and, in that sense, they are not determined by the recognition of the identity of the actors involved in the interaction.

Alejandro Portes (1999) identifies three basic functions of social capital, applicable in a variety of contexts, among which capital is a source of social control. In this regard, there are a number of studies on capital that focus on the imposition of rules. The social capital created by compact community networks is useful for members of the community because they seek to maintain discipline and promote loyalty among those in charge. Its main result is to make formal or open controls unnecessary (Portes, 1999).

From these considerations, we conclude that the tourist is a subject devoid of social capital in the town visited. Now, what is the role of social capital in the construction of citizenship? Citizen participation is the basis on which capital is built. A wide range of actors are involved in networks, whose hierarchical structures do not seek to influence public policy. In this context, the term *citizen participation* means "politics or decisional participation, which is expressed in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies" (Leal, 2003: 117). Because of his fleeting passage, again the tourist – although an omnipresent player in the historical centres not involved in their capacity of alienation from the social and material reality of

the place that welcomes him – is oriented to an ephemeral search for satisfactions.

6 Stocktaking for citizens in tourism-heritage sites and the erosion of social capital in Mexican cities

This article addresses the construction of citizenship in two different ways: from the viewpoint of the city as a socio-spatial builder of citizenship, and the reverse, from the perspective of society as an agent builder of new forms of urbanism.

In Mexico, the emergence of new citizenships arises from the dispute of symbolic universes, from historical centres currently involved in strong heritage processes. These immensely wealthy urban areas are characterised by the presence of markedly poor populations, who struggle daily to make themselves visible. If each city model corresponds to particular hallmarks of citizenship, historical heritage is the new model where citizens not only express themselves, but also all those that pretend to be. To do so, claiming their right to the city is a daily struggle to avoid being displaced. In this sense, urban citizenship of heritage centres is about the rights that should be exercised broadly by all that inhabit the heritage city.

In general, local practices are excluded from the preservation policies for historical centres. Specifically, indigenous groups are objects of general indifference, and at the same time they are repressed by public policy and by the law of the market. They are excluded as users, and sometimes as workers in the middle of their sustenance activities, found in economic informality. One of the exceptions in which the locals and the indigenous are integrated into urban planning of the historical centre is by exploiting tourism in terms of the experience of the visitor. Dances, fairs, religious festivals, processions and pilgrimages, among other events, are integrated as part of the spectacle of historical centres. Beyond this, the unknown active role that the business could have on planning and this way of making citizenship robust still leaves many unknowns. In Mexico efforts should be made to promote the participation of non-governmental organisations, residents, businesspeople and religious associations that rescue and find new uses for heritage, so that they may also have a vocation that satisfies the needs of the local population. This would allow a new power balance to be formed between the state, which decides everything, and local citizen groups, which would emerge in a new citizenship.

The historically established relationship, in which space is seen as the product and the condition of social relationships, can also be observed in the Mexican case. This is true in the sense



Figure 1: Revolution Square in Mexico City; social activities and new urban space design (photo: David Navarrete).



Figure 2: Sopeña Street in Guanajuato, Mexico; view of street vendors, vulnerable populations and tourism spaces (photo: David Navarrete).

that citizenship is conditioning urban landscapes that synthesise the principles of social practices of democracy and inclusion. What would the characteristics of Mexican citizenship be, and what would model Mexican heritage sites be? It has been shown that the current dominant dynamics are those of commodification, corporatism, de-regulation and social indifference as a negation of conflict. These principles would produce a sceptical landscape that would exclude undesired groups such as indigenous peoples, the poor and/or migrants through re-claiming, cleanliness, security, order and tourism image policies; this is a theatrical landscape – or, in other words, about making a spectacle of heritage through technologies, art, performances and illumination; a landscape-cum-museum of conservationist policies of heritage and of historical centres that frequently produce superficial interventions, but that do not attend to the social dynamics of use and occupation to recover the centres; a commercial landscape that allows landowners and business spheres of historical centres to speculate on the value of the land and transform historical centres into conglomerates of tourism and commercial services. This would be the translation in the historical centre space of a weak citizenship that is impregnated with neoliberal values and globalisers, and is anti-democratic.

How can this be remediated? By reinventing a citizenship that has a city again. In other words, appropriate special units by and for citizen users, with limits, references and public spaces – public in the political sense of plurality of opinions and places for diverse points of view where one can discuss differences and coexist with diverse social groups.

Equally, this can be remediated by overcoming the notion of the monumental concept that is associated with stylistic attributes of artwork, which suggest limited public policy with regard to the conservation and protection of heritage. This requires broad knowledge and understanding of heritage, conservation and protection of heritage, transcending the physical scale to consider aspects not only of cultural and natural heritage, but also intangible heritage, in order to award recognition to the diversity of cultural manifestations (Carrión, 2012). It involves overcoming the idea of the monument for memory in the management of historical centres that may help people re-think historical preservation policies beyond bureaucratic, conservationist processes. In this context, one should include the concept of “symbolic universes”, such as the effort to integrate multiple dichotomous notions of heritage. In the urban space of the Mexican historical centre, a spatial root is recognised as a kind of symbolic communication; it is the favourite place of these universal symbols. Therefore, institutional planning of Mexican heritage has the objective of imposing values, norms, forms of authority and social representations that agree with the active political power.

Finally, the situation can also be remediated with a form of citizenship that allows individuals and social groups of all categories of citizens to control public money. This means avoiding it being invested only for the benefit of certain corporations of privileged business people and political elites. Legislation must be put in place in order to ensure control and to implement legal mechanisms to punish those that favour personal or corporate interests over those of the city. With this it is possible to combat one of the principal structural problems of Mexican society: corruption, which is another negative factor that deteriorates or determines the conditions of citizenship in Mexican historic centres.

7 Conclusion

The heritage city builds unequal citizenship. This is true if one considers that processes of heritage emphasise the dynamics of social and spatial exclusion, whose implications are negative for the exercise of the right to the city. The story told by the heritage districts of the capitals of developed countries and in Latin America shows that it is only a matter of time for these socio-spatial re-adjustments to accentuate the inequalities of the city. Furthermore, these processes are driven by government intervention that seeks to ensure the new economic development of the city, making renewed sectors the main axes of business in the capitalist era of globalisation. Major public investments in heritage with the goal of enhancing its economic and tourist attraction benefit foreign capital, a very small capitalist elite and the upper classes. This specialisation of the territory implies the limitation of rights and exclusion of population activities less suited to the objectives of international competitiveness. Among the government interventions, there is no determined strategy to include either the less well-off or traditional activities in the proximity. In this context, the option of restarting central urban areas through heritage preservation comes as an erosive form of citizenship because it also exacerbates social exclusion of part of the population, especially at work, in activities involving consumption, culture and housing.

Heritage centralities also lead to social capital losses via two different routes: 1. through the expulsion of their residents or natural agents that hold the values of identity and trust necessary for the promotion and preservation of social capital, and 2. through the dominant presence of a floating population, whose principal agent, the tourist, does not have the necessary conditions and is not ready to build social capital. It is appropriate to recall that social capital is crucial to the natural control of public space (i.e., informal social control); this is true if one considers that, in many residential communities, given the growing threat status (feelings of insecurity), neighbours are

organised in solidarity networks for joint action in vulnerable areas of crime: their residential streets. Community alarms are installed, safety corridors are plotted, community alert plans are implemented, internet blogs and forums are opened, phone chains are organised and neighbourhood patrols are created to ensure their integrity. This situation produces a significant increase in the share of the social capital of the community, establishing a circular flow between the community and city in a positive way.

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Notes

[1] These projects involve the following objectives: a) Strengthening urban centrality and promoting re-densification of central areas (attracting activities and people); b) Better use of infrastructure (services, equipment and transport) for the existing centre; c) Economic development and welfare of society in general; d) Promoting a mix between use of space and tourism, financial, cultural, technological and communication services in the perimeters of intervention and e) An opportunity to protect and preserve built heritage (SECTUR DF 2004: 1–2; General Urban Development Programme 2001–2006).

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