

Paper 2—Section A—Changing Cities

A case study of a major city in an emerging economy—MEXICO CITY

Key words—

Poverty: When people lack the means to satisfy basic needs such as water and food.

Quality of life: The standard of health, well-being and happiness of people

Squatter settlement: An area which consists of self-built houses made from scrap materials such as corrugated iron and 20 plastic, usually without piped water, electricity or sewage disposal.

Connectivity: The ability to connect and communicate between places.

Rate of natural increase: The speed of change in the difference between the birth

Top-down approach: Where decisions are made by governments or large companies with little consultation; often large-scale and expensive.

Bottom-up approach: Projects that involve local people and communities in decision-making, often involving small-scale projects for the poorest rate and the death rate.

Practice questions:

- Explain one way that Mexico City's situation could help its development.
- Explain why squatter settlements are often not in CBDs.
- Give one bottom up strategy aimed at improving quality of life in Mexico City.
- State one source of migrants for Mexico City.
- Give one reason why people migrate to Mexico City from rural areas.

SITE

Began as capital city for Aztecs.

Built on an island in Lake Texcoco as easily defended & provided drinking water and fish

CONNECTIVITY

Major highways make it main route between N & S America— eg Federal Highway 57

International Airport links Mexico City with S.America, Europe & USA

Motorways connect to Industrial towns such as Toluca

Mexico City Case-Study Context

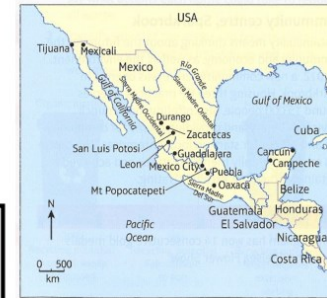


Figure 13 The situation of Mexico City

CULTURE

Mix of indigenous & Spanish traditions of foods, music, religion and architecture

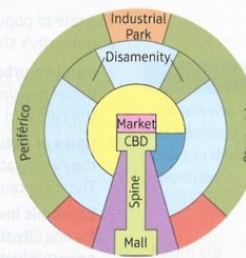
21 million people = largest metropolitan area in the West

Home to National opera & theatre as well as TV and radio stations

V important financial centre in the Americas

V high inequality—income; housing; access to services

Mexico City Structure



- CBD has both traditional and modern elements
- High class homes surround CBD, Spine and Mall
- Common to find massive peripheries

Key	
[Green]	Commercial
[Pink]	Market
[Orange]	Industrial
[Yellow]	Zone of maturity
[Light Blue]	Zone of in situ accretion
[Dark Green]	Zone of peripheral squatter settlements
[Purple]	Elite residential sector
[Blue]	Gentrification
[Red]	Middle-class residential tract

Figure 15 A model of Latin American cities

Mexico City structure

CBD – main financial hub characterised by office blocks, including Mexican Stock Exchange and government buildings. Now attracts high-value retailers.

Inner city – characterised by slums. First slums built during the 19th century.

'Vecindades' are abandoned multi-storey colonial mansions converted into cheap tenements and rented out to families.



Suburbs – areas like Ciudad Satélite, characterised by middle-class housing, mainly built to owners' orders. Tight security – walled-off parking spaces, barbed wire, electric fences and armed guards.



Urban-rural fringe – land use dominated by unregulated shanty towns.

Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl (Neza)

Built on marginal (swampy) land. Once sprawling slum, now scruffy suburb. Houses often informally built, overcrowded & lack running water, toilet and window panes

Egs of Bottom up projects where locals improve their QoL