Toward a critical political ecology of Latina/o urbanism

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> [C]ities are machines for globalizing networks...[1]

> *El barrio*…is a zone of segregation and repression…an ethnically-bounded sanctuary and the spiritual zone of Chicana/o Mexicana/o identity.[2]

Introduction: neoliberalism, autonomy, and the politics of (re)making cities

Lefebvre argues that "state power endures only by virtue of violence directed against a space."[3] Cities are marked by spaces of violence. I am not thinking of gang violence or the chaos of unruly crowds demonized by classical sociology and the grand theorists of collective behavior. Instead, I am concerned with the form of spatial violence that arrives in the guise of urban planning and design.

Revealing the spatial forms of structural violence, some of the leading theorists of the politics of transnational and regional modernities argue that globalization destabilizes identities and disrupts local spaces (e.g., Appadurai 1996). The identities of entire nation-states are destabilized by the globalization of a multitude of cultures and national-origin groups and the erosive effects of global commodity chains.

However, in its neoliberal form, the destabilization of identity involves the further conceptualization of globalization as a strategy of de-territorialization or the violent production of 'placelessness' (cf. Appadurai 1996; Ferguson and Gupta 1997; Hardt and Negri 2000). The new bloody enclosures of common space arrive under the rubric of free trade and the backing of a loyal and minimalist security-planning state. Neoliberal regimes have used this enclosure process to direct the 'redevelopment' of urban core neighborhoods over the past ten to fifteen years.

The planning rationalities unleashed by the ascendance of neoliberalism are oriented toward the de-territorialization of space for the convenience of markets; they seek to remake all places into non-places by strictly confining the legal and economic configuration of space to the naturalized properties of the commodity form. The turning of socially-constructed practices into naturalized (essential, eternal, immutable) private property rights is the foundational conceptual reification of neoliberal theory. It is the principal legitimizing logic underlying capitalist spatial dynamics and redefining the quality of environmental conflicts in contemporary urbanism. The hijacking of the planning process by corporate-steered interests is the pivotal source of structural violence in the spatial

reorganization of the city and is thus the contested terrain addressed by this contribution to the Latina/o critique of contemporary urban planning discourses.

There are always other sides and the 'suffering' of the multitudes offers a subaltern source of criticism directed against the inequities of spatial violence. The suffering multitudes challenge the neoliberal tendency to deem displacement as an incidental and perhaps inconvenient but inevitable externality of development. They challenge the loss of 'archaic' connections to place. Our critique is grounded in recognition of the existence of alter/native counter-planning practices. These practices possess the capacity to challenge the structural violence of the enclosed panoptic-grid city. The resistant and alter/native forms of urban spatial organization of the new social majorities can be glimpsed in the heterotopias, the multitudinous *re-territorializations* of space, that people create through their everyday life to make place(s) in locale(s). This so-called Everyday Urbanism (cf. Kelbaugh 2001) certainly now involves the rise of mass participation social movements which have coalesced since April 2006 around the defense of the rights of Mexican and other national-origin groups who assert their status as indigenous diaspora peoples and not 'illegals.' A banner seen at recent mass protests reads: "*No somos ilegales, somos obreros transnacionales*" ("We are not illegals, we are transnational workers"). These movements are producing new political projects, new subjectivities, and new transnational and yet unitary resistance and project identities that imbricate with social and environmental justice in the city, challenging neoliberal and postmodern orthodoxy alike.

In Mexican-origin urban communities, the rise of environmental justice movements has been nurtured by the *barrio* as a sanctuary for well-grounded plural multiethnic and yet unitary national-origin identities (see Peña 2005ab, 2006; Díaz 2005).[4] I will not cede ground to the advocates of de-territorialization, who proclaim an 'end to the local' which sounds eerily like the 'end of history.' Instead, I advocate analytical practices grounded in subaltern experiences that focus on *how space is continuously re-invented as place* over time through the formation of place-based resistance and project identities (see Castells 1997 and Peña 2003a). Here space has been reinscribed with contested meaning to produce shifting boundaries; think of the post-border cities or the transnational suburbs of diaspora indigenous Mesoamerican communities in the LA basin. Here place is infused with the extension of memories of difference in which homeland identities are anchored in conscious diasporic strategies for 'dwelling' in and re-inhabiting transnational spaces. Place therefore can be understood as both constitutive of and called into being by the spatially-inscribed sites of power/knowledge dynamics.

Today's contests over the neoliberal production of placelessness through the re-inscription of community sites as spaces of private property are increasingly constrained by multiethnic transnational communities who are proving to be formidably well-organized. This is occurring at a critical conjuncture with a major shift in the socio-structural and political economic 'matrix' of cities as indicated by profound demographic changes that have unleashed mass social movements currently confronting the technological, economic, and politico-administrative forces aligned with neoliberal regime-makers.

This chapter outlines a series of interrelated themes and theoretical sources based on these ideas as a step toward the critical study of Latina/o urbanism as a politics of transnational place-making. This approach adopts two seemingly disparate sources, Foucault and Lefebvre, to present the outlines of a critical political ecology of urban planning. This means I view planning practices both as discourse regimes and social movements engaged with the (re)making of urban spatial order. The role of planning discourse is examined in terms of legitimation games and the production of forms and technologies of *governmentality*, briefly the 'conduct of conduct.' A Foucaultian approach to urban planning focuses attention on the discourses of power/knowledge in the ordering and managing of urban spaces, the conduct of conduct in the city. The history of the policing of the city certainly falls within the range of this type of inquiry.

More generally, governmentality involves the production and reproduction of the knowledge, practices, and techniques acquired, codified, and modified over time in the political administration of cities. In urban planning context, governmentality can be understood to exert spatial control through panoptic organization. This is chiefly accomplished through legal and economic regimes that use varied technologies to constitute the regulatory apparatus. The aim is to control the flows of capital and labor, administer security, and manage crime to defend the alignment and distribution of infrastructure and environmental amenities with specific class- and race-based imperatives in mind. This obviously requires the production of security (police, courts, jails, prisons). This further requires that governmentality produces not just 'cities' but 'subjectivities' (the criminalization of immigrants and other subaltern positions). Through the activities of boundary maintenance institutions like the police, courts, and planning commissions, a given governmental regime seeks to regulate, normalize, and manage urban populations through administrative control of the spatial order. The regime draws from the ever-expanding techniques of

disciplinary action (for e.g., by redefining "undocumented immigrants" as "felons" or building panoptical border fences or gated communities).

The work of Lefebvre (1974/1991), and especially his theory of 'thirdspace,' *espace veçu* or lived space, provides another set of useful concepts for a political ecological critique of urban planning. Over the course of a given city's history, the organization of urban spatial forms continuously shifts in rhythm with the cycles of social conflict and social movements experienced by shifting communities in everyday life. The political economy of the city is not just an invention of top-down neoliberal governmentality and its managerial spatial imperatives. From Marx's theory of commodity fetishism we can readily recognize that governmental rationality (*qua* domination and reification) already actually presupposes a history of resistance by subaltern groups and communities; it is a reaction to the transformations occasioned by significant demographic shifts in the widening mobilization of communities in social movements stubbornly grounded in plural ethnic-national and transnational identities.

The multitude struggles toward alter/native use of space through place-making practices that promote self-reliance, community, and autonomy and thereby constitute sets of spatial practices we can posit, at least ambiguously, as counter-hegemonic because they oppose the logic of the Panopticon City. An iconic example of this is the South Central Farmers Feeding Families in LA, a grassroots organization that exemplifies a new multiethnic and transnational Latina/o ecological rationality. Organizations like SCF are pivotal sources of resistance to the neoliberal enclosure of communitary spaces. Comprised of 360 families, SCF includes U.S.-born Chicana/os and people from indigenous diaspora communities originating in Mexico and Central America. They have created a veritable Mesoamerican agroecological landscape renowned as a world-class ethnobotanical collection. More importantly, they have produced a system for local food sovereignty and a strong sense of place and community, all the while successfully managing the 10-acre farm land and resisting eviction by a developer who seeks to bulldoze this cultural ecological commons to make room for yet another set of industrial-box warehouses (Peña 2005b, 2006).

Other 'critical' interrogations of contemporary urbanism seem mired and fixated on an East Coast black/white binary; the too familiar images of a repressive and exploitative urban grid with its 'new mass culture;' or a naive celebration of "postmodern pastiche" and hybrid diversity as symbols of a happy-go-lucky performative and consumerist global city. I also have in mind our obsession with images of: Multiply-redundant and yet flow-choked freeways with their misnamed arterials that cast a leaden pall across the sky; Cyclic yet incessantly profligate

production of capitalist infrastructure to reinforce the spatial privileges of class, race, national origin, or gender while promoting hyper-consumerism and its jacked-up ecological footprint (i.e., its violence against environmental space); Technologies of instantaneous surveillance including building and landscape architectural models designed to control 'crowds;'[5] Proliferating toxic 'brownfields' classified as 'urban sacrifice areas' under the abandonment policies of a post-Superfund era. An important lesson in the critical study of neoliberalism is to reveal its tendency to regard the second contradiction of capital, which 'externalizes' the damage done by production unto labor and the environment, to be essentially off the table as a matter of regulatory politics. State or community regulation of the capitalist waste of workers and the environment is essentially seen as no longer appropriate to the purview of a more efficient and 'down-sized' minimalist state that allows market forces to reign free. From the vantage of Latina/os, however, none of this is a significant departure from the equally destructive and violent policies of 'urban renewal' experienced in the decades between 1950 and the end of the sixties when the barrio and ghetto were little more than mythic menaces to the shining beacon of the modern Fordist city in all its hygienic Puritan glory.[6]

Against the expansionist constellation of metastasizing commodity-grid cities with their far-flung expressways, shopping malls, amusement parks, and gated McMansion suburbs, deep-rooted social movements for ecological democracy have risen in the struggle over the future of the 'chocolate' urban core cities (Avila 2004). This struggle is spilling out of the inner city into the inner-ring suburbs with the expansion of the Latina/o resident population. The roots of these urban movements lay deep in the mid to late 19th century and the epic struggles of Spanish-Mexican land grant communities and their cultural heirs. A century of such precursors includes Las Gorras Blancas (1870-1899), El Paso Salt War (1877), Cananea strike (1906), Chávez Ravine (1949-50), UFWOC anti-pesticides campaigns (1965-71), the struggle against the Indian Camp Dam (1971-76) (see Peña 2005a: 100-03), or struggles over urban open space, parkland, and urban farm land in the LA metro area in places like Belvedere (1970s), the Cornfield in East LA (1990s-2001), and South Central LA (2003-06) (Díaz 2005, Peña 2006).

It is in the interstitial spaces of the city that transnational diaspora communities remake local places. In this form, cities are the autotopographical canvas of the subaltern (cf. González 1995). LA is the place where the ancient heirloom seeds of land race *maíz*, *calabacita*, and *frijol* find their way up north from Oaxaca or Chiapas, perhaps five thousand years old, to meet and grate-up against the hot pavement of the straitjacketed networks of freeways and arterials, growing through the cracks and thriving in vibrant inner city cultural landscapes – the socially-driven

spaces defined and shaped by subaltern communities. Urban gardens and farms are by-products of attempts by diasporic people to replicate the *huerto familiar* or hometown kitchen gardens in Mexico, Central America, Puerto Rico, Cuba, or the Dominican Republic. These landscapes are iconic political symbols of a process involving the *re-*territorialization of place and 'home-making' by transnational diaspora communities (Peña 2005b). I have characterized this elsewhere as *autotopography*, or, for those for whom the written word is not the last say, self-telling through place-making or landscape-shaping (Peña 2005a, 2006).

This chapter outlines and tentatively explores several theoretical problematics that lay at the intersection of critical Latina/o studies with urban planning and political ecology. I seek to bring into focus the following five interrelated themes as windows to the critical engagement of Latina/o studies with urban planning discourses and practices:

I. Outlining recurring and emerging elements in histories of Latina/o cycles of urban crisis, restructuring, and struggle;

II. Initiating a critique of urban planning and design discourses which are currently framed by three paradigms: everyday urbanism, new urbanism, and postmodern urbanism; from our vantage these are confronted by a 'fourth paradigm' entailing the rise of environmental justice theory and practice;

III. Recasting the study of the politics of urban planning to overcome binary oppositions by recognizing how this involves both global flows and local spaces; focusing on emergent critiques of technologies of neoliberal governmentality in contested environmental management discourses indicating a need for more critical institutional and social movement ethnographies;

IV. Envisioning the future of urban design policies as a discourse with the environmental justice movement (EJM); thus, legitimation of 'just sustainability' principles, place-based knowledge, and grassroots governance in the transformation of urban planning and design discourses;

V. Accounting for the design elements of a *shifting vernacular mosaic* – i.e. the cultural, social, economic, and ecological design elements of Latina/o urban forms to account for the sources of their socio-spatial logic, rationality, and practical ethics.

Much of my focus in this chapter is on Los Angeles since it is a 'global' city in proximity to Mexico and the Pacific Rim. With Davis (2000) and Avila (2004), I believe this means LA is insightfully rendered as the 'two-thirds'

world's principal U.S. big city.[7] However, in making this choice I am not arguing for an exceptionalist view of Los Angeles as a locale for the study of the politics of place-making in a time of globalization from above and below. I believe similar political ecological processes are unfolding in most locales, but these lay beyond the scope of my current effort and personal experience. My choice here is made in part because I can best illustrate my theoretical concerns through the ethnographic grounding of the subject in a locality I know intimately through longstanding personal ties and on-going political work in the LA-area Latina/o urban agriculture movement.

I. Cycles of urban crisis and struggle

In the afterword to a fabulous visionary book, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio*, the Chicano historian Ricardo Romo anticipates the historic revolt of Latina/o communities against environmental racism:

> Under the auspices of Urban Renewal, giant earth movers began carving up East Los Angeles in the mid-1950s. The old barrio of Chávez Ravine had already disappeared, a victim of the construction of a new home for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Angry homeowners had taken the city of Los Angeles to court in a futile attempt to keep the Dodger organization from destroying their neighborhood…In the later 1950s the massive construction of freeways linking the Anglo suburban communities with the central business core began. High overpasses and expansive six-lane freeways crisscrossed the eastside. Thousands of residents from Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, City Terrace, and surrounding neighborhoods were relocated. The freeways divided the neighborhoods without consideration for the residents' loyalties to churches, schools, businesses, or family. Residents, especially the young and the aged, became increasingly isolated from other areas of town as the massive layers of concrete and asphalt eliminated trolley lines and disrupted public transit service. The daily trek of hundreds of thousands of autos left a gloomy grey cloud of smog hanging over the east side. (1983: 169-70)

Romo describes the now familiar targeting of communities of color for the siting and construction of transportation infrastructure and large-scale urban re-development projects that continue to destroy places and dislocate communities. In post-1950 LA, urban renewal, 'white flight,' and sprawl became central elements of strategy for the articulation of race and class privilege through 'spatial racism.' Urban planning and design theories served to rationalize the land use policies that segregated, contained, and repressed African American, Mexican-origin, and other communities of color. Planning practices simultaneously promoted a new spatial order that served white middle-class commuters who began relocating to the outer rings of the burgeoning suburbs accompanied by their strip malls, freeways, and amusement parks. Romo suggests that capitalist interests controlled post-war reconstruction and sprawl politics in Southern California.

There is an exciting new generation of urban planning scholars like Eric Avila (2004), David Díaz (2005), and Michael Mendez (2005), as well as new works by Mike Davis (2000) and Robert Gottlieb (2005). These authors have taken Romo's suggestion seriously to create a rich body of new critical histories of urbanism and urban planning focused on Los Angeles and Southern California. These works provide keen insights on the networks and alliances of elected officials, speculators and real estate developers, and manufacturing and other industrial interests that literally paved and bulldozed their way to suburban sprawl, 'urban renewal,' and the devastation of Chicana/o Mexicana/o neighborhoods of the eastside and especially the urban core in the communities of Belvedere, Boyle Heights, Chávez Ravine, Lincoln Heights, and City Terrace. They also provide significantly detailed local histories of the cycles of struggle waged by Latina/o workers, immigrants, students, community-based groups, and social movement organizations.

For example, in *City of Quartz* (1992), , Mike Davis, the dean of LA urban studies, focuses on the role of capitalist power structures that assert control over much of Southern California urban policy. In *The Ecology of Fear* (1999) Davis illuminates the role of individual and collective white middle-class fears of the other and the paranoid thirst for private and environmental security against threats (cultural and natural) both real and imagined. Davis illustrates this ecology of fear in a lucid discussion of 'social control districts' designed by the LAPD and LA County Sheriff to control prostitution, drug trafficking, gang activities, and homelessness. The 'ecology of fear' is as a major force underlying the urban political ecology of the region. Finally, in *Magical Urbanism* (2000), Davis begins to sketch the history of organized resistance by Latina/o workers, students, immigrants, and barrio residents who have increasingly faced down the ecology of fear and the prerogatives of capitalist planning imperatives. Davis demonstrates how the protracted urban crisis, experienced by Latina/os as displacement, enclosure, and increased 'policing,'[8] has been met by a cycle of repeated grassroots mass mobilizations since the 1960s (see also Gottlieb 2005). The Chicano Moratorium of 1970; resistance in the 1980s against incinerators, prisons, and pipelines led by grassroots organizations like the Concerned Citizens of South Central and Madres del Este de Los Angeles (MELA); the rise of the Latina/o labor-progressive coalition in the 1980s and 90s; and the establishment in 2003 of the South Central Farmers Feeding Families to resist neoliberal enclosure of urban common spaces for agriculture; all these are examples of a deeper history of resistance marking the trajectory of urban affairs in Los Angeles. This has never been a one-sided story of unopposed domination by business elites, elected officials, and government planners. By the

time Reaganomics rolled around in the early 1980s, with its promise of returning the nation and world to prosperity through the trickle down of de-regulated tax-free havens called 'enterprise zones' (Peña 1985), LA had already experienced three decades of urban riots between Watts and the aftermath of the police beating of Rodney King in 1992, the year that the South Central Farm was established.

These cycles of struggle are tied to one of the most enduring sources of Latina/o activism, the labor movement. The history of the labor movement (understood both as the self-organization of workers and the organization of labor by and for capital) is not limited to the history of strikes and organizing campaigns, although these are important. Of interest to urban historians should be the relationship between unions and the spatial organization of the city and neighborhoods. The union hall as a center of civic and social life is part of that history, but so too would be the contributions of working-class organizations (including *mutualistas* and other communitary associations) to the actual built environment of the barrios. How many *carpinteros* have contributed to the vernacular landscape of East LA and increasingly South Central LA? These are the types of inquiries missing from the vast corpus of Latina/o urban history.

However, most current scholarly work relevant to an understanding of LA's political ecological landscape presents a primary focus on the agents of change conceptualized as workers, immigrants, students, and barrio residents active in labor and social justice movements. This history of struggle can even be invoked as the basis for the eventual election of Villaraigosa, the first Mexican-origin mayor of LA in more than a hundred years. However, this approach can obscure the less formal and more quotidian ways that urban landscapes and neighborhoods are reinvented from the bottom-up by multitudinous subjectivities making place. The million protestors that marched and brought the metropolis of LA to a standstill between March 25 and May 1 of 2006 are exemplary of a subaltern force that is usually not visible or accounted for. It is to the histories and cultures of these multitudes that we must turn to as these remain largely unknown to the urban planning discourse except as uncomfortably annoying encounters of arrogant planners with the alter/native voices of criticism and dissent. These histories must surely begin to include the emerging patterns of urban neighborhood spatial organization and use practices occasioned by the arrival of a growing number of indigenous diaspora Mesoamericans including Mixteca, Nahua, Seri, Tojolobal, Triqui, Tzetzal, Tzeltal, Yaqui, and Zapoteca peoples who have settled in the LA basin and the entire West Coast over the past twenty years.

II. Everyday urbanism, new urbanism, or postmodern urbanism?

In the historical context of the Southwest, Latina/o urbanism has been marked by place-bound spatial change induced by capitalist restructuring and punctuated and ruptured by cycles of continued migration and settlement, intense labor struggles and other forms of collective action (Díaz 2005). The history of the mid to late twentieth century may well be remembered as the era when the Latina/os experienced the ravages of the earliest forms of environmental racism. We may come to understand the history of the early twenty-first century as a time when Latina/os reinvented the spatial and social landscapes of cities and rural areas across Latin America, the U.S., and Canada.

Los Angeles since the 1940s has been the largest Mexican-origin and Spanish-speaking urban center in the world after Mexico City. The twenty-first century may thus be remembered as a time when large cities like LA became 'transnational suburbs' for indigenous Mexican immigrants as they made their way north to colonize the entire West Coast from Tijuana on the border, to the Santa María Valley near Santa Barbara, to Forks in Washington State's Olympic Peninsula, where they intermarried with the Makah First Nation at Neah Bay on the Strait of San Juan de Fuca. Indeed, the spatial transformation of metropolitan basins like LA is as much a consequence of growth machine politics as it is a result of the gradual re-colonization of El Norte by Mexican-origin peoples with roots in many distinct regional and ethno-linguistic source communities that have literally used the city as a "machine for globalizing networks." This seems especially the case over the past three decades (1980-2005) when the geographical and cultural sources of the Mexican diaspora shifted to include a growing number of indigenous communities (see Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004). These constitute the multinational sources of a real ethno-linguistic mosaic and are the communitary basis of what could become a more just and sustainable urban ecology.

Many of the contributors to this book offer criticism directed at the framing of urban planning and design politics. My concern is to challenge the framing of the debate as limited to three major urban planning and design paradigms which are identified by Douglas Kelbaugh (2001) as comprised of Everyday Urbanism, New Urbanism, and Postmodern Urbanism.

From my vantage, these three are confronted by a fourth paradigm entailing the rise of the environmental justice movement, which offers a unique and challenging re-conceptualization of the nature-culture interface and privileges place-based knowledge in formulating the basis for sustainability with justice in the future forms of urban

design and planning (see Peña 2005). Far too many theorists of spatial syntax posit the process of urbanization as if it were merely the template of structural automata driven by the invisible hand of the market and steered ever-so-slightly (and by sleight-of-hand) under the gaze of a loyal minimal state and its 'neutral' experts. The city is not as predictable, orderly, or manageable as supposed by a broad range of contemporary theorists and planners. Urbanists need to consider 'chaos,' or complexity and uncertainty, in the spatial forms of the city under conditions of attenuated environmental conflicts and social movement mobilizations.

The existence of a multinational-ethnolinguistic mosaic in the Latina/o urban core has come to be associated with a rather acrimonious debate in urban design philosophy. Kelbaugh offers a critique of what he sees as the three extant paradigms with a stake in the future of urban planning and design: Everyday Urbanism, New Urbanism, and Postmodern Urbanism. Of particular interest here is Kelbaugh's take on Everyday Urbanism. Using Lefebvre-like concepts he describes it as an approach to urbanism that builds "on everyday, ordinary life and reality." Everyday Urbanism is open to "populist informality" and prefers "ephemerality, cacophony, multiplicity, and simultaneity." Kelbaugh alludes to the manner that Everyday Urbanism "delights in the way indigenous and migrant groups informally respond in resourceful and imaginative ways to their ad hoc conditions and marginal spaces." He characterizes this as "urban design by default rather than by intention." Kelbaugh argues that Everyday Urbanism sees "form and function…structurally connected in an open-ended way that highlights culture more than design as a determinant of [spatial] behavior." (2001: 1; *brackets added*)

Kelbaugh's characterization of Everyday Urbanism obscures the interplay of urban design with class, race/ethnic identity, gender, and sexuality in the politics of place-making. I agree that the landscape-shaping and place-making activities of indigenous and diaspora populations have distinctive casts because, as Nora Zeale Hurston might have it, they can use their own 'spice-box' and 'inner juiciness.' Urban planning theory has not readily recognized the articulation of these subaltern values, knowledge and practices, resource mobilization, and identity formation processes. I therefore disagree that we can accurately characterize this as "urban design by default." The city is not just an autonomous spatial order upon which people randomly grid and map-out their experiences; it does not serve as an *a priori* and immutable template that moulds the person and determines the ground for the articulation of adaptive responses by indigenous and diaspora populations in an "ad-hoc" situation. The transnational migratory circuits that link mountain villages in Mexico with the urban centers of the U.S. are not

ad-hoc. In fact, these involve the planned and directed flow of people and their cultural and biotic baggage in purposeful and often communal and collaborative ways. Moreover, in the new city, indigenous immigrants engage autotopographical interventions – they induce the wholesale transformation of vernacular housescapes, vecindades, common spaces, and other subaltern features of the built environment – all of which are re-signified through the importation of familiar ethno-cultural artifacts and fused through the spatial templates of indigenous design rationalities that blur the boundaries between private and public space.

With Lefebvre, I propose that people – as residents, inhabitants, workers, visitors, homeless persons – participate in and transform the spatial order of the city through their everyday life activities. But inhabitants of the city draw on a vast repertoire of knowledge and practices, many handed down across generations and others an amalgam of the influences and opportunities posed by a new home. In this manner people exercise agency to reinvent themselves by remaking places, although surely never under circumstances of their own choosing. People grounding themselves in place, even the homeless, are the living source of varied cultural landscapes in the city. Culture, and especially ethno-national identity, is a powerful force that produces and remakes the cityscape as a contested and shifting mosaic of neighborhoods, industrial zones, commercial districts, open spaces, and infrastructure. This has always been a highly conflicted process involving deep and recurring divisions of class, race/ethnicity, national origin, religious creed, and gender.

Thus, we propose that what Kelbaugh calls Everyday Urbanism is not "urban design by default" because the indigenous and diaspora communities bring their own cognitive mapping, networking, and landscape-shaping practices. In other words, people don't go brain-dead just because they migrate. They continue to imagine places into being. Their landscape shaping practices are results of alter/native design rationality, appearing ad-hoc only to the outsider. In some cases, for e.g. in LA's many Zapotec or Mixtec transnational suburbs, the vernacular landscape is not simply a 'falling into place' or re-appropriation of private and public spaces in patterns of 'invasion-succession' or 'ethnic churning.' Instead, at a deeper and more profound level this involves a distinctly indigenous paradigm that blurs the private/public split of the dominant model altogether. Indigenous organization of spatial relations in neighborhoods is not overly concerned with the private/public space and is focused more on the creation of inhabited spaces that support opportunities for conviviality.

The past twenty years have witnessed the remaking of the urban core cities by forces rooted in the struggles of the environmental justice movement (EJM). So far largely overlooked are the design rationalities of the EJM. The urban planning ethics and design principles of environmental justice derive from the everyday lived experience and production of place in subaltern communities.

Environmental justice ethics directly challenge neoliberal planning orthodoxy by emphasizing: (1) Bottom-up instead of top-down planning practices; (2) Place-based instead of expert-driven planning and assessment practices; (3) Elimination of environmental risks and prevention of the disparate distribution of environmental risk instead of the perfunctory neoliberal mitigation of disproportionate harm after it occurs; (4) Equitable distribution of environmental amenities like open space, greenbelts, parks, urban farm land, and common-use spaces in contrast with the neoliberal enclosure of all space as private property and the disparate distribution of amenities to rich neighborhoods and suburbs; (5) Priorities for investment in social reproduction (housing, health, nutrition, and education) and (6) Mobilization of community-based and self-managed sustainable development resources to improve the quality of life for low-income and other marginalized populations instead of the orthodoxy of market-steered reduction of social sector spending combined with growing public subsidies for investments that contribute to sprawl, urban core gentrification and new and coming waves of displacement, and the expansion of surveillance and security control.

As is evident from this brief sketch of some EJ urbanist principles, future urban planning discourses will have to consider not just the effects of environmental racism on the spatial ordering of cities. These will be further confronted by grassroots demands for more democratic and participatory approaches to planning discourses and land use management practices. Surely, the immediate horizon will witness a growing concern with regional and/or bioregional planning theories and practices. This could be a step in the right direction but extant regional planning forums are already dominated by the same growth machine political alliances that ruled over urban planning policy and practice in the period immediately after 1950.

III. Neoliberal governmentality and the contradictions of Latina/o urbanism

The concept of neoliberalism has had multiple iterations ever since Foucault first tied it to the study of governmentality.[9] Liberal and socialist critiques of globalization define neoliberalism as a set of governmental rationalities that include: (1) Privatization of the state sector and communitary ownership of land, water, and other

resources; (2) Commodification of all living biological materials and systems (from the biosphere to the genome); (3) Narrowing of the administrative horizon of the state through reduced social sector spending on health, education, housing, nutrition, and social cooperation; (4) Concurrent expansion of state spending in the areas of behavioral regulation through the criminal justice (police, courts, jails, prisons), border and customs control, homeland security, and emergency management systems; (5) Deregulation of the control and mitigation of environmental externalities and a transition to market-based policies for pollution "abatement" through cap and trade agreements.

The concept of neoliberalism advocated by Foucaultian students of governmentality is unique. This approach includes proposals aligned with the theory of the "risk society."[10] For example, Joe Austin (2005) proposes that neoliberalism is "characterized by an expansion of economic logic to encompass and describe larger segments, if not the whole, of human behavior." Hardt and Negri emphasize the idea that governmentality may "directly structure and articulate territories and populations" (2000: 23), but the novel feature of the new paradigm is its "biopolitical" nature. Biopower "regulates social life from the 'inside,' so the system produces not just commodities, but 'subjectivities'" (see Rooke 2001: 2). Pierre Bourdieu states that neoliberalism is a political project designed with aim of destroying all forms of "collective structure" like trade unions, *ejidos*, or neighborhood associations. In the place of collective action institutions, the neoliberal regime promotes a new order based on provision of the "lone, but free individual."[11] In a word, neoliberalism renders subjectivity in anti-communitary and hyper-individualist terms.

A critical political ecology of urbanism requires examination of the problematic of power/knowledge and how it plays-out in urban planning as an institutional practice that is directly tied to neoliberal governmental regimes. For example, extant planning practices within municipal government administrations in the USA habitually accord privilege to the knowledge claims of expert planners who may be acting as legitimation agents of corporate 'redevelopment' or infrastructure projects. Planning discourses promote rationalization of the urban spatial order by subjecting it to outcomes that must be measured against the holy grail of metrics, *qua* the highest economic use. The neoliberal model narrows the horizon of spatial syntax to that which is considered *sui generis* as the "normal economic" quality of all spaces.

Critical engagement with theories of governmentality can involve a critique of the dialectics of *articulation* and *legitimation* in cycles of struggle for control of the socio-spatial organization of the city.[12] Foucault defines government as "the conduct of conduct" in the sense of normalized self-regulation ('self-control') and a second sense

as "governing others" through forced normalization, discipline, and punish. Governmentality is relational but it also involves technologies of regulation which for Foucault are discursive strategies in the 'games of truth' (see Vásquez and Torres 2003). Examples are the domains of expert rationality performed by lawyers, risk assessors, law enforcers, urban planners, and so on to rationalize capitalist control and hegemony. It is little wonder then that Latina/o scholars have long insisted on the need to deconstruct discursive strategies in the *framing of space*, for example in the critique of the conceptualization of nature as wilderness (ecosystem), natural resource (commodity), or home land (community) across different locations of class, race, or gender (cf. with Pulido 1996, Pulido and Peña 1998, Peña 2003, 2005a). Inevitably, any engagement with the study of the politics of urban place-making will involve not just attentiveness to the 'linguistic turn' but more significantly to a thoughtful critique of power/knowledge dynamics in the analytics of social movements.

Urban politics presumably operate at the 'macro-structural' level: In this sense, urbanism is a broad political conflict over the extent to which the diverse constituencies of the city 'internalize' the dramatic social and environmental costs (*qua* externalities) of urban redevelopment projects and investments in large-scale infrastructure to subsidize the grid frame and circulation networks of capital. These causes are championed in the extant planning regimes that rationalize capitalist imperatives and worldviews.

We need an approach that avoids sidelining macro-structural dynamics (e.g., the 'stateless' theories of power as per Foucault's focus on the microphysics of power) or a relapse into the romanticist myopia of fragmented localism. We can take seriously Canclini's call for the study of 'post-border' cities: "We can deduce that borders can be geographic or symbolic, material or invisible, places of loss or recovery of identity" (2004: 282-3).

One point could be to use displacement and by this I am not referring to displacement that induces geographic mobility of labor, which is the production by capital of the uprooted migrant or iterant worker, landless 'peasant,' or jobless proletariat. Instead, I have in mind diaspora movements and their transnational networks. I want us to recognize how these are at once bodies produced by neoliberalism and bodies that produce their own resistance and counter-strategies against corporatist hegemony – *no somos ilegales, somos obreros transnacionales*. The subaltern experience of displacement can mean disruption of space as inscribed and controlled by capital – a process of re-territorizalization if you will – through the refusal to be reduced to mere labor power and thus liberation from the de-territorialization of spaces that capital imposes to control, regulate, and exploit our bodies within the spatial grid. In

this sense resistance is also *re-emplacement* – the recovery of the body's ability to place itself in relation to social space, living space, and hence in the freedom to negotiate and experience conviviality amidst the free association in communities emerging from the interconnected relationships we have with other bodies.

However, we live in a post- 9-11 context and a rush toward a national security state that seeks to tighten control of the border while increasing surveillance and harassment of diaspora peoples and their organizations. This requires that we initiate critical institutional ethnographies of the rationalities, technologies, and strategies of governmentality that are used to advance neoliberal agendas. We must do this with an eye on the systematic de-legitimation of neoliberal imperatives and a reversing of the momentum of attacks by the minimalist state against the conditions for the social reproduction of Latina/o transnational diaspora and native communities. We also need to understand social movements and especially the strategies that succeed and the values and ethics that underlie effective mobilization and identity formation practices. There is a need to recognize and study collective resource mobilization in the strategies of everyday resistance like the use of informal rotating credit associations that allow diaspora families to acquire health insurance; there are many other extant and evolving forms of mutual aid that merit ethnographic attention as sources of social and cultural capital.

IV. The future of urban politics and the environmental justice movement

The emergence of new *subaltern restoration ecologies*[13] like those epitomized at South Central Farm is a result of decades-long struggles by barrio communities seeking to control their own ecological futures by creating sustainable and just neighborhoods and communities. Mexican-origin communities share a collective history in the development of sustainable settlement practices, if we simply recall the ecological and cultural landscape splendor of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco (Peña 2005a: 54-57). The so-called New Urbanist forms are really foreshadowed by the design principles of the Mexican-origin indigenous diaspora. These native spatial logics invoke built-environment principles marked by preferences for the profusion of green space, urban agricultural lands, and watershed reserves; high density of housing in mixed residential-commercial-agricultural use areas; proximity or overlap between working, living, and socializing spaces; and the blurring of common and private spaces in vernacular cultural landscapes and architecture (see Mendez 2005; Díaz 2005, Peña 2006). We can see how this is playing out with the appearance of a multitude of heterotopias in the form of the ubiquitous thirdspace *jardinitos* and larger organized community gardens and urban farms that have taken root across the Latina/o urban core in cities like Los Angeles, Albuquerque, San Antonio,

Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Chicago, Gary, Miami, New York, Philadelphia and even Seattle. These indigenous diasporic heterotopias are perhaps most poignantly exemplified by the still unfolding struggle to defend the South Central Farm from rapacious developers (Peña 2005bc, 2006).

The struggle for urban agriculture in the Latina/o urban core epitomizes the rise of an environmental justice movement that seeks to link demands for open space, ecological protection, and food sovereignty with demands for fair and adequate housing, investment in locally-controlled jobs with living wages, and the protection of the essential common spaces that neighborhoods require to sustain a sense of place and community. In this movement, all the sectors of the Latina/o urban core population are establishing a profound unitary identity as a progressive force for social justice, environmental self-determination, and economic autonomy.

Prognoses for the future of urbanism in the U.S., and Southern California in particular, are mixed. Some scholars predict a new era of grassroots 'magical urbanism" led by Latina/os who are revitalizing the inner cities (Davis 2000). Others lament the re-gentrification of the urban core in the return of white suburbanites who are 'rescuing' the inner city from decades of neglect, decay, and decline (Fulton 1996). There are more optimistic predictions associated with the New Urbanist and Smart Growth planning movements that seeks to replace the suburban house-car-strip mall model with communities built around mixed-use neighborhoods with housing, jobs, stores and services all within walking distance (Fishman, Calthorpe, and Fulton 2001). Still others insist on the need for bioregional thinking that places city planning within the parameters of watersheds and insists on the primacy of ecosystem management values (Peña 1998; 2005a). Regardless of the prognosis you find most compelling, there is already widespread agreement that in the coming decades "racial diversity will dramatically alter the physical and cultural landscapes of the [city]" and the "future...is unmistakably tied to that of the Latino community" (Mendez 2005: 45).

However, most of this discourse remain silent with respect to environmental justice movements and associated alter/native spatial principles. For example, New Urbanists seek a return to the dense and mixed-used urban neighborhoods and small towns of the period before World War II. Of course, if you were black or Latina/o the decades before the advent of the Civil Rights Movement were largely defined by the agonies and degradations of legally-enforced segregation and is hardly the type of 'golden age' anyone would hope to use in framing future urban planning. Sadly, the New Urbanists are keen to promote gentrification not just of housing stock but of cultural

institutions like museums, art galleries, chamber music halls, and theatres, ignoring the presence and proliferation of alter/native arts and cultural institutions in the urban core after decades of 'chocolate churning.'

In the 1980s and 90s, the environmental justice movement demanded an end to the regime of disproportionate risk caused by toxic racism. However, it also issued a call for ecological democracy, i.e. the active engagement of grassroots citizen groups and communities in environmental risk assessment and decision-making. Since the second EJ summit in 2002, the movement has turned toward a renewed focus on proactive campaigns for what is termed 'sustainability with social justice' or 'just sustainabilities' (see Agyeman, Bullard, and Evans 2003). However, EJ discourse needs to expand on this type of discussion by taking it beyond the realm of environmental risk and impact studies and into the equally obtuse and contested realm of urban planning theory and practice. The future frontiers of urban planning will be increasingly challenged by environmental justice ethics which are grounded in the oppositional experiences and practices of actual grassroots social movements in the urban core. It will be a formidable process, but the planning profession must be challenged and restructured from the bottom-up.

V. The shifting vernacular mosaic

In the Southwest, the Chicana/o Mexicana/o compact town or 'urban village' form of the 19th century was really a second form of urbanism preceded by the indigenous pueblo builders (see Arreola 1998, Mendez 2005). Well into contemporary times, Chicana/o urbanism has been characterized by a preference for dense neighborhoods with proximate circulation networks that allow people to live, work, play, and socialize in the same overlapping local spaces. The contemporary urban *vecindad* form takes some of its cues from the urban cultural landscapes of pre-contact indigenous forms. Barrio urbanism, to borrow David Díaz's term, directly borrows design principles rooted in the metropolitan vernaculars of the Colhua Mexica at Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco that favor high density as well as an abundance of common and agricultural spaces. In many parts of the Southwest, the contemporary urban village vernacular architectural and landscape forms evolved from earlier traditions embodied by hybrid forms including essentially rural patterns like the acequia riparian mosaic with its dense linear village clusters, acequia water webs, and resultant 'messy' biodiversity (abundant green spaces).

In my spatial observations in LA, I have identified six vernacular elements of alter/native design rationalities; I am calling the complex of these elements a Shifting Vernacular Mosaic. This set of shifting vernacular forms and practices is not as informal and ad-hoc as supposed by Kelbaugh and the New Urbanists. Imagine this simply as an

ideal type of the Latina/o sustainable urban community. In my mind, this ideal would include six interconnected components that are common elements of Mexican urban spatial practices*: la vecindad (*residence, home) *el jardín* (garden), *la plaza, el santuario*, and *ejido* (town square, sanctuary, and village commons), *la tiendita y el taller* (store and workshop), *el mercado (*the market), *el calmecac* (school, museum, gallery, performance space), and *la cuen*ca (watershed).

Vecindad. Vecindad has a nuanced meaning as residence or neighborhood, but can actually refers to a particular pattern in the vernacular architecture of Mexican-origin communities north and south of the present-day border. Mendez (2005) suggests that Latina/o cultural inclinations made them supportive or compatible with the "compact city" models championed by the New Urbanists, but I tend to think that the vecindad form lacks either the segregationist aims of pre-World War II American patterns or their penchant for individual privacy and convenience. New Urbanists may want to create overlapping housing, workplace, and entertainment environments for the efficiency and economy and convenience it provides individual residents. La vecindad provides a similar imbricate form not for the sake of individual convenience but because the spatial logic of the culture insists on the provision of spaces for conviviality.

Jardín. Jardín is a garden. The vernacular or Everyday Urbanism of new Latina/o cities includes the flourishing of urban agricultural spaces created and used by indigenous diaspora and native communities. Urban gardens are impressive for their scope, vigor, cultural significance, and role in struggles for more sustainable and just cities. El jardín is a communal space shaped by autotopography (self-telling through place-shaping); it results from communal expressions of ethnobotanical and agroecological knowledge; and it is part of the political demands made by urban Latina/o communities for open space and other environmental amenities. El jardín is a source of plants for medicine and traditional recipes; it is a diverse polycultural agroecological space; and it represents a connection to home spaces back in the origin-communities and is thus often the anchor for transnational place-based identities.

Plaza, santuario, ejido. The town square is not strictly speaking a religious space in the Mexican spatial model but it is imbued with spiritual, cultural, and expressive life. It is not a sanctuary for the individual to find reprieve from the crowd as much as a space for practiced conviviality. The idea of the sanctuary as a common is based on the principle that people want to live together and interact as much as possible "out on the street," as Kelbaugh suggests. But this still provides the design principles for communal circulatory flows that encourage civic and economic engagement in

public spaces. The idea of an urban village commons is also a component here given the rise of the just mentioned Latina/o urban agriculture movement that seeks to create food secure urban environments.

Tiendita, taller, y mercado. Those of us who are at least in our 40s and 50s recall the ubiquitous corner tiendita (grocery store) that provided crucial, culturally-resonant food supplies and dry stuffs in our childhood neighborhoods. While the era of Walmart Superstores is part of the neoliberal agenda, numerous Latina/o inner city neighborhoods are being revitalized from the bottom-up by the return of the small family-owned and run neighborhood grocers, craft shops, general merchandisers, and other retail businesses that make the barrio a complete and semi-autonomous social and economic entity.

Calmecac. The school is another institution that occupies center space in the Latina/o vernacular urban landscape. While the struggle for social justice and equality on instruction and curriculum continues in the public schools, Latina/o urban core communities are now establishing numerous small-scale educational institutions that serve particular cultural and social needs. These might include *curanderas/os* at the local *botanícas* (stores that sell botanical remedies and traditional medicines, or it might include the educational activities of soccer clubs, urban farms and gardens, Chicana/o art studios, and spaces for the study of musical and other performing arts. Some grassroots organizations are now complementing the established Chicana/o Mexicana/o museums, art galleries, dance clubs, and similar facilities that play a critical role in our daily lived experience of our multiethnic cultural heritages. The urban farms can also play a role as calmecacs, centers for grassroots environmental, agroecological, and ethnobotanical education as the case of South Central Farm portends.

Cuenca. Watersheds do not disappear just because people develop a dense built-environment. Judith Baca has detailed the reclamation of the concrete-laced Los Angeles River by Latina/o artists and their communities. Murals were painted across the walls that are the river's concrete straitjacket in a campaign not so much to beautify as to reclaim and re-emplace the relationship of the community with the river. The Mothers of East LA are recognized for the water conservation and watershed protection projects, presaging the emergence of bioregional consciousness in the Latina/o urban core. The first county boundaries for California were designed by General Vallejo who proposed following the natural limits of existing watersheds. This type of bioregional sensibility is a deeply held principle in the 'cosmovisions' of indigenous diaspora cultures.

Conclusion

It is well-known that the U.S. Latina/o population was mainly urbanized by 1950.[14] Now plural ethnocultural Latina/o communities are remaking the 21st century American city. In the process, they are challenging neoliberal urban planning discourses and practices. This chapter has outlined a political ecological perspective on the "politics of (re)making cities" in the age of globalization from above and below. It proceeds from the idea that urban forms are associated with the cultural and political practices of indigenous diaspora communities. These practices are generated and framed by differences of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and national origin and find expression in historically- and culturally-specified spatial forms.

Some scholars suggest that the future of Latina/o or barrio urbanism is tied to the advent of the New Urbanist and Smart Growth movements (Mendez 2005). However, there are many reasons to disagree with this view. One critic of this view notes that New Urbanism "is largely driven by architects and planners, often misses the essential components of authenticity, such as the importance of locally owned and distinctive shops." Moreover, often New Urbanists "concern themselves not so much with the survival of local cultures or businesses, but respond to the disgust with aesthetic concerns such as the predictable, often unattractive architecture associated with malls and other retail projects" (Klotkin 1999: n.p.). The New Urbanist movement is not a grassroots social justice movement; it is a professional architectural, urban, and regional *planner's* movement.

However, faced with the threats posed by neoliberal governmentality, our urban communities require that we present research scholars with a preliminary set of theoretical sources, conceptual tools, and alter/native design rationalities that can be explored more fully to develop more incisive and practical critiques of all planning discourses and their practices. The environmental justice movement certainly provides a set of guiding principles for a sustainable and just Latina/o urban ecology. The political prospects for this depend on our ability as research and activist scholars to forge alliances with grassroots social movements that are already actively transforming urban spaces and challenging neoliberal, New Urbanist, and postmodern sensibilities and agendas. Critical institutional ethnographies focused on planning agencies and commissions as well as social movement organizations will provide knowledge relevant for the development of a more proactive 'magically urbanist' strategy as Latina/os rebuild and reinvent the American city.

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Endnotes

[1] Hillier and Netto 2002: 21.
[2] Díaz 2005: 1.
[3] Lefebvre [1974] 1993: 280.
[4] I am therefore suggesting that the study of these issues cannot be separated from the study of subjectivity and agency as forces that produce concrete social movements.
[5] In February 2005, the American Planning Association posted a Post-9/11 Security in Draft Policy Guide with a section entitled, "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)." This section states that the APA

> and its chapters affirm that as a planning policy that promotes a sense of community, encompassing public involvement activities and planning for defensible spaces and "eyes on the street," Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been shown to be an effective deterrent to crime, and should be adopted by state and local governments as the basis for security planning. There are many proven planning and design measures to control the physical environment and to reduce crime, such as design controls, natural surveillance, natural access control, territoriality, security lighting, and others. These planning measures can address vulnerability and risk in a more effective manner than have many of the post 9/11 ad hoc measures which heighten fear and compromise unduly the unique character of a place and of a community....

URL at http://www.planningreport.com/tpr/?module=displaystory&story_id=1064&edition_id=63&format=html.

[6] Southern California was one of the hotbeds of the American eugenics and hygiene movements that produced one of the largest sterilization programs in U.S. history. We should not forget that LA was home to Pasadena's Human Betterment Foundation which viewed Mexicans "eugenically as low-powered as the Negro…being a superstitious savage." See Peña 2005d: 91.

[7] I am using the term 'two-thirds' world in deference to Esteva and Prakash (2000) who propose this as an alternative to the third world (which they view as a Eurocentric construct). The term two-thirds is meant to indicate that this involves the 66 percent of the world's population residing in the diverse countries other than the USA, Europe, and Japan.

[8] The issue of 'policing' is an especially significant topic for anyone interested in the problematic of governmentality, but is not addressed thoroughly in this chapter. It is nonetheless important to note that Foucault considers the invention of the police in 16th century Europe to be a key moment in the genealogy of the modern state's disciplinary and control practices. For further discussion see Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991, and especially the introductory chapter by Gordon.

[9] Foucault's 1978 lecture on governmentality is reprinted in Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991; Barry, Osborne, and Rose 1996; Dean 1999); and Rose 1999.

[10] See Joe Austin's (2005) critical review and synthesis of Ronald Strickland's edited volume *Growing Up Postmodern: Neoliberalism and the War on the Young* (2002), Mark Cieslik and Gary Pollock's edited volume *Young People in Risk Society: The Restructuring of Youth Identities and Transitions in Late Modernity* (2002), and Alain Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (1993; trans., 2001).

[11] Bourdieu 1998.

[12] I am not using the concept of *articulation* in an Althusserian sense. I agree with E. P. Thompson's (1979) critique of a French theorist who has been inadvisably anointed as a significant source of insight for too many postmodern American social theorists including a few post-structural feminists. My approach to the study of urban planning and politics requires an accounting of power/knowledge claims in relation to the construction of subjection and agency. However, this approach does not reduce agency to discursive practice (ideological "games of truth" in a Foucauldian sense). Instead, it recognizes that agency has material and discursive aspects.

[13] We are arguing that the vernacular landscapes of LA's Latina/o urban core represent a continuous effort to reclaim and restore the urban ecological forms inherited and transmitted over generations by established community members and newcomers See discussion in section V below...

[14] This paper does not address the equally complex issue of the Latinoization of rural America. However, it must be noted that at least in the case of the Mexican-origin people, urban life was deeply rooted in the ancestral metropoles of the Mexica and other indigenous cultures.