



The Hidden Transformation: Mexico City under Habsburg Rule

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The controversial and short reign of Maximilian of Habsburg in Mexico (1864-1867) produced important plans both for buildings and for urban areas of Mexico City, but its short political life did not see through their full completion. In many cases the origin of these transformations is not even mentioned in the travel guides.

In fact, the interventions in the city of the times of Maximilian left profound signs, but were later successfully appropriated by the governments of the “republican restoration” (1867-1876) and of the times of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911). For example, the creation at the time of Maximilian of the Paseo de la Reforma, then called Paseo de la Emperatriz, offered the groundwork for real estate speculation in the southeast expansion of the city, under the authority of the same élites of public officers and foreign investors.

The paper aims at reconsidering the influence of the Habsburg in the capital city of Mexico, to assess the continuity between the planning phase of the Habsburg times and the realization of the plans under the later republican regimes. It will also propose to start considering the transformation of Mexico City under Habsburg rule in an international context, reading its history in comparison with the almost contemporary examples of major urban transformations in Europe.

KEY WORDS: Mexico City, Habsburg rule, continuity in urban transformation