Making Informality Invisible. Ignoring irregular urbanisation in the Mexican Miracle (1951-1966)

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Between the fifties and the mid-sixties, Mexico experienced sustained economic growth and social peace, a period known as the “Mexican miracle”. In that context, elites in Mexico City were prone to ignore urban informality or, at most, to see it as a temporary condition. However, there were two situations that helped to make this obliteration possible: one is the fact that urban informality was taking place outside the capital city (i.e. in the neighbouring State of Mexico). The second is that many settlements were being created in ejido lands, i.e. those granted to peasants as part of the agrarian reform, that was the Federal Government’s responsibility. Thus, the city government could construe both types of settlements as being outside its “reach”. The paper will analyse the way those mechanisms of obliteration worked, before being replaced with new ways of defining (and dealing with) “irregularity” in the early seventies, when the “miracle” had vanished.