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Intermediate 8

Politics of the Hyperwall:

Snaky Lines of Densification in Mexico City

As Mexico City has grown to become one of the world's largest and most sprawling metropolises, its population has increased in exponential terms. The results of the city's endless urbanisation are severe and distressing, with an unequal distribution of infrastructure and services, both visible and invisible barriers and daily commutes that cover extraordinarily long distances. Yet this seemingly unmanaged megalopolis is now rethinking itself through the new CDMX Plan that proposes inserting 40,000 new homes per year between now and 2030 into the existing urban fabric. And yet the plan does not address the biggest challenge: social inclusion.

In a city dominated by its own informality, there is a need to both articulate and reimagine the living conditions of emerging social structures beyond the assumed possible horizon of housing commodification. Intermediate Unit 8 therefore proposes the hyperwall as a new line of densification, which follows existing infrastructural, natural and socio-spatial conditions, to break through the barriers that hijack the informal megalopolis. Snaky, mixed-use strips related to city infrastructures, with a relevant housing component, will be individually proposed (ranging from 1–3km long and 20 × 50m in width) for an estimated 5,000 users. Examples of linear urban configurations – such as Ciudad Lineal by Soria, the Sotsgorod by Miliutin, Le Corbusier's *Cité linéaire*, Affonso Eduardo Reidy's Pedregulho Housing Complex, and L'illa by Rafael Moneo and Manuel de Solà-Morales – will be scrutinised to understand this urban typology. As in the myth of the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, these urban proposals will delineate sinuous linear intervals along conditions of supposed mutual exclusion – between humans and nature, politics and economy, life and death.

Bios

Francisco González de Canales and Nuria Álvarez Lombardero are co-founders of Canales & Lombardero and Politics of Fabrication. Francisco studied architecture and theory at ETSA Seville, ETSA Barcelona and Harvard University, and worked for Foster + Partners and Rafael Moneo. Nuria

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