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People walking on Madero Street in Mexico City, Mexico, on 1 August 2020.
On that day, Mexico's Ministry of Health confirmed 9,556 cases of COVID-19 registered in 24 hours, a new record for the country. Fot. Guillermo Gutierrez/NurPhoto/EAST NEWS

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FRAGMENTATION, SEGREGATION, AND GOVERNANCE IN RURAL URBANISATION THROUGH HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN CALIMAYA, MEXICO

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1. Introduction

This paper is based on two research projects. The first, already completed, was called *Sustainability of the Territory: The Participation of the State, Private Initiative, and Society in the Production of Formal Housing*, for which I received funding from the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACyT). The second one, which is under works, is titled *Strategic Plan for the Management of Land, Adequate Housing, and Access to Habitat: Co-Participatory Laboratory in the UAEMéx*, also carried out with funding from CONACyT as part of the National Strategic Programmes (ProNacEs) in the field of housing. The objective of the research is to present some reflections on the consequences of the urbanisation of the countryside in Calimaya, as well as on how governance at the municipal level has resulted in fragmentation and segregation in the area.

The municipality of Calimaya de Díaz González, geographically located at longitude 99°37'02" west and at latitude 19°10'22" north (INAFED, 2022, as cited in PDMC, 2022), is one of the 125 municipalities that belong to the administrative political territory of the State of Mexico, as well as part of the 22 municipalities that make up the Metropolitan Area of the Toluca Valley (ZMVT), based on the Planning Law of the State of Mexico and Municipalities, and part of Region XIII Tenancingo 2017–2023 of the State of Mexico.

The process of urbanisation of agricultural lands in Calimaya through developing housing projects has begun in the year 2000, when a condominium comprising some 18 homes was authorised to be developed. By the beginning

of 2007, a total of 3,205 homes were developed in one of the first urban complexes of mixed type (medium and residential housing). The project had a great impact on the process of urbanisation in the territory of the municipality, since the real estate developer in charge of it was required to present the municipality and the state with a plan taking into account donation areas, urbanisation works, and equipment corresponding to the urban complex: I) Donation areas. II) Urbanisation works. III) Primary infrastructure works. IV) Equipment works.

Processes of urbanisation of the countryside through housing projects are a common phenomenon in most of the Mexican territory. They exert influence on the environment, society, as well as on the public administration. One of the consequences of their authorisation and implementation is fragmentation and segregation, in most cases linked to problems with governance by public administration at the municipal, state, and federal level.

In this context, fragmentation, more precisely urban fragmentation, is understood as a spatial phenomenon that is characterised by obstructions in the process of expansion of the urban fabric in the form of material and immaterial barriers, which in turn generates social segregation (Guzmán Ramírez et al., 2021). The latter, namely socio-spatial or territorial segregation, can be defined as a social phenomenon in which the state intervenes to facilitate the reproduction of private capital and in doing so detaches itself from its social obligations (Guzmán Ramírez, Hernández Sainz, 2013).

On the other hand, a major contributor to problems in the context of housing development and the phenomenon of social segregation, caused in part by public institutions, is the issue of governance. Urban governance by local governments responsible for managing urban development has the ability to transform social demands and needs into concrete solutions (Vásquez Avellaneda, Navarrete Peñuela, 2014).

2. Methodology

The methodology used in the research consists of direct and participatory observation to identify the impacts and consequences of the authorisation of the development of urban complexes and condominiums in Calimaya, as well as to study urban fragmentation, social segregation, and governance. The work has been carried out on the basis of references to secondary sources that allow to contextualise and understand the relationship between these aspects in physical space.

Likewise, through the analysis and conceptualisation of both issues, it has been possible to identify some governance problems associated with urban fragmentation and social segregation that affect public administrations and governance itself.

The advances in the research have provided a basis for identifying the processes of urbanisation of the countryside through housing projects and

urban complexes as modalities in the execution of urban development, which has been done through the analysis of the context of their authorisation and corresponding legislation.

Subsequently, the geographical location of the study subject has been identified and necessary cartographic material has been developed to represent the characteristics of urban fragmentation associated with walling, as well as its consequences in the form of social segregation linked to physical and immaterial barriers, as referred to by Guzmán Ramírez et al. (2021).

The next step has been field research carried out at the offices of the City Council of Calimaya. It has consisted in conversations with decision-makers in the field of administration of urban development and provision of public services associated with the maintenance of public infrastructure. This has allowed us to observe and confirm the existence of problems with governance associated with fragmentation and segregation.

The field research has also included contacting bodies involved in the authorisation of urban complexes and condominiums, as well as state agencies which have information on the actions of public servants and their omissions in performing their functions, such as the Human Rights Commission of the State of Mexico (CODHEM).

Finally, the results, discussion, and pertinent conclusions have been developed, identifying certain determinants and evidence of the outcome of the urbanisation process in Calimaya, as well as the consequences of the fragmentation and existing segregation resulting from poor governance in different spheres of public administration.

3. Results

The process of urbanisation through housing developments in the municipality of Calimaya, State of Mexico, is recorded to have started in the year 2000 and has had a disadvantageous impact on the area, bringing perceptible results in the form of urban fragmentation and social segregation which we owe to problems with governance and inadequate urban planning.

In this context, it has been essential to reflect on and analyse the effects of the authorisation of various urban complex and condominium projects in the State of Mexico, with particular focus paid to whether these public policies were congruent with or respectful of human rights as provided for in the General Law of Human Settlements, Territorial Planning and Urban Development and in the corresponding regulations concerning the planning and regulation of human settlements and urban development.

The present state of affairs is due to the fact that state-promoted housing policies and programmes are marred by inadequate urban planning and authorisation of popular forms of urban housing lacking sufficient attention, evaluation, or foresight which would promote social welfare and full respect

for human rights. This has had a considerable impact on the Mexican territory and society, fragmenting urban spaces and socially segregating the inhabitants of such developments, at the same time exacerbating the problems with governance in the sphere of public administration.

In addition, when decisions are made to authorise forms – or rather modalities – of urban development intended, among other things, to satisfy the demand for housing and services, and when such projects are carried out in collaboration with private initiative or real estate developers for the benefit of the general population, it is always necessary to guarantee their constant and strict supervision. Such a requirement has rarely been fulfilled.

On the one hand, as a modality in the execution of urban development, urban complexes must be integrated into the local municipality administration and consequently municipalised in line with the corresponding legislation. On the other hand, they are real estate projects developed by the private initiative looking to obtain the highest possible profitability. This results in the social segregation of the inhabitants of such complexes through urban fragmentation, a process which takes place with the consent of the government.

Therefore, it has been essential to expound on and analyse the conceptualisation of the figures of the urban complex and condominium. They are defined in a similar way in the legislation pertinent to their authorisation, considered as two modalities in the execution of urban development, but as specific objects, they require taking actions of a greater or lesser impact on the urban environment.

For example, the development of an urban complex requires actions of greater impact for urban development. They may be considered actions of the first order, since they involve marking out public roads or constructing buildings, facilities, and industrial plants aimed at providing the population with public services to meet its needs for education, culture, recreation, sport, commerce, transportation, health, welfare, and more.

Conversely, the urban actions necessary to develop a condominium have a much smaller scale. This is due to the nature of this form of development, which has a lesser impact on the urban fabric and different characteristics in terms of property regime, dynamics of coexistence, benefits, and habitability.

Likewise, an urban complex as a modality of urban development has certain physical characteristics and notable legal differences that set it apart from a condominium. In some cases, the size of urban complexes has a strong impact on the population and the urban development of municipalities. This is also the case of the municipality of Calimaya, in which the Ministry of Urban Development and Work registered ten housing complexes authorised for development, with a total of 12,154 homes that will service an approximate population of 54,696 inhabitants (Table 1).

However, the process of developing urban complexes in Calimaya has been degraded to the construction of housing exclusively through private participation, which results in lack of congruence with the policies in force and the

Table 1. Authorised urban complexes in Calimaya 2000–2021

No	Name of the urban complex	Company / Promoter	Authorisation date	Type of housing	Number of houses	Serviced population
1	“Villas del Campo”	GEO Edificaciones, S.A. de C.V.	02.01.2007	Mixed (Medium [3,112] and Residential [93])	3,205	14,423
2	“Sail Andrés”	Inmobiliaria HEMAJO de Atlacomulco, S.A. de C.V.	07.12.2007	Medium	121	545
3	“Villas del Campo II”	GEO Edificaciones, S.A. de C.V.	28.08.2009	Medium	1,892	8,514
4	“Valle del Nevado”	Proyectos Inmobiliarios de Culiacán, S.A. de C.V.	02.10.2009	Social Interest	2,783	12,524
5	“Rancho la Providencia I”	Proyectos Inmobiliarios de Culiacán, S.A. de C.V.	23.02.2010	Medium	310	1,395
6	“TJRBI Hacienda Lomas”	Promoción y Desarrollos URBI, S.A. de C.V.	10.09.2010	Medium	325	1,463
7	“Bosque de las Fuentes”	Inmobiliaria HATTIE, S.A. de C.V.	14.10.2010	Mixed (Residential, Trade, and Services)	987	4,442
8	“Hacienda de las Fuentes”	GEO Edificaciones, S.A. de C.V.	22.10.2010	Medium	1,750	7,875
9	“Valle de las Fuentes”	Consortio Inmobiliario ZERO, S.A. de C.V.	21.12.2010	Mixed (Residential, Trade, and Services)	464	2,088
10	“Lomas Virreyes I”	ARQ. Sergio Zenneño Ocha	24.08.2016	Medium and Residential	317	1,427
Total					12,154	54,696

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from the Ministry of Urban Development and Work of the State of Mexico

Table 2. Authorised condominiums in Calimaya 2000–2021

No	Location	Authorisation date	Type of housing	Number of houses	Serviced population
1	Camino a la Hacienda de Zacango s.n, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	10.02.2000	Housing	18	81
2	Carretera Toluca – Tenango km. 13, San Andrés Ocotlán	16.02.2007	Residential complex	56	252
3	Camino Viejo a San Bartolo, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	28.06.2012	Residential complex	7	32
4	Prolongación Emiliano Zapata, lote 19, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	14.05.2019	Housing	17	77
5	Prolongación Emiliano Zapata, lote 22, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	14.06.2019	Housing	3	14
6	Prolongación Emiliano Zapata, lote 25, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	27.08.2019	Housing	16	72
7	Calle camino de terracería a la Conchita s.n, San Andrés Ocotlán	06.11.2019	Housing	44	198
8	Calle camino de terracería a la Conchita s.n, San Andrés Ocotlán	06.11.2019	Housing	54	243
9	Prolongación Emiliano Zapata, lote 31, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	22.11.2019	Housing	13	59
10	Prolongación Emiliano Zapata, lote 31, Santa María Nativitas Tarimoro	22.11.2019	Housing	8	36
Total				236	1,062

Source: Own elaboration based on data obtained from the Ministry of Urban Development and Work of the State of Mexico

planned public objectives. This in turn has led to pre-emptive fragmentation of urban space and brought with itself various facets of segregation of inhabitants. Also, the private investors have used this form of development as a pretext to build a greater number of condominiums and wall off the entire estate.

In contrast, the number of homes registered through condominium authorisation totals 236, which will service an approximate population of 1,062 inhabitants (Table 2).

It is also important to add that the above forms or modalities of urban development start to concentrate a greater number of inhabitants compared to Calimaya's traditional centres or communities. This is, for example, the case of the municipality seat, which had a population of 13,038 inhabitants in 2020, a number lower than the projected population of 22,937 inhabitants in the housing development of Villas del Campo I and II, which is equivalent to 64% of the sum of both populations.

The process of creating housing estates in Calimaya through the construction of urban complexes with internal condominiums is carried out by developers without the involvement of the authorities, which results in the construction of fences around public facilities and blocking primary communication routes. This leads to urban fragmentation and subsequent social segregation. By authorising similar projects and failing to fulfil their obligations, the public institutions tend to promote the privatisation of public space and allow for housing, urban space, and public equipment and infrastructure to be commercialised as an exclusive product, giving only secondary importance to the objectives standing behind the execution of such forms in urban development. The case is similar for other regions of Mexico, where the model of closed housing estates is implemented based on the arguments of security concerns, social status, and differentiation, and leads to public space being privatised (Alvarado Rosas, Di Castro Stringher, 2011).

Figure 1 shows the ten urban complexes authorised to be developed in the municipality of Calimaya from 2000 to 2021, as well as the evident process of urbanisation of the countryside. The map also includes some previous subdivisions which, although bearing similar physical characteristics, are not considered urban complexes in the sources consulted, since the State of Mexico previously used different legal terminology in defining housing developments.

In the context of developing housing which privileges the private at the expense of the public through closed estates, an important aspect are the modifications made to the legal instruments concerning planning and regulating the territorial arrangement of human settlements and urban development. These documents, called Municipal Urban Development Plans, are changed as to convert previously agricultural areas into land for development. This is a common practice through which real estate developers increase the profitability of their investments – they acquire agricultural areas at a low cost, build them up with homes, and wall off the new estates to then advertise their product as exclusive and offering increased surplus real estate value.

Concomitantly, social segregation is deepened by acts of omission on the part of the authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with the corresponding legislation, normative instruments, or legal agreements in the process of authorisation of urban complexes. Even the residents of the new estates and the public in general are relegated to secondary position in this process.

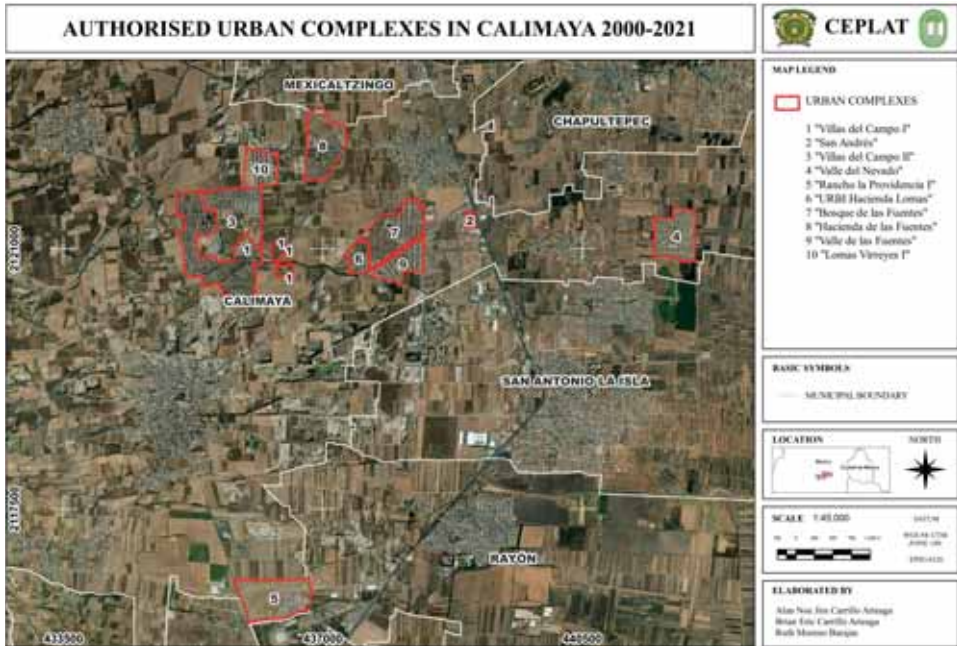


Figure 1. Authorised urban complexes in Calimaya 2000–2021

Source: Own elaboration

Likewise, real estate developers frequently adopt a questionable business model in which, after walling off urban complexes, they offer private security services to their residents and restrict or monopolise the use of public roads, despite the fact that doing so is prohibited by the legislation of the State of Mexico and the Municipality of Calimaya, as shown in Figure 2.

In other cases, developers establish neighbourhood groups with questionable social objectives, promoting anomalous behaviours which tend to transgress the human rights of the local residents, who then fall victim to discrimination and are subject to coercion and illicit acts. This issue is overwhelming even for the public institutions responsible for administering urban development or dealing with such transgressions, as they do not have the capacity to organise public consultations or give the problem timely attention.

Problems with governance become acutely apparent in the face of these practices, in which some urban complexes in Calimaya are fenced off, with their barriers reinforced for commercial purposes, and at the same time public communication roads are monopolised and restricted, as shown in Figure 3. The authorities do not know how to meet the initial social demand to formulate concrete public policies which help prevent or resolve the adverse effects of inadequate urban planning, an issue which is later exacerbated by the high rate of population growth in the developers' completed projects.

**CAPÍTULO VII
DE LAS PROHIBICIONES DE APLICACIÓN GENERAL**

Artículo 206.- En la totalidad del territorio municipal, queda prohibido:

- I. El uso exclusivo, parcial o total de las áreas de uso común, de los conjuntos habitacionales, comerciales y de servicios sujetos al régimen del condominio, por parte de particulares o agrupaciones de cualquier tipo;
- II. Bloquear, restringir, condicionar o monopolizar en cualquier forma el uso de las vías públicas;
- III. El establecimiento y operación de cualquier tipo de estructura para el almacenamiento, manipulación y eliminación de la totalidad de residuos peligrosos;
- IV. La ganadería extensiva en zonas de reforestación;



Figure 2. Prohibition published in Bando Municipal de Calimaya

Source: Bando Municipal de Calimaya 2022–2024

In this way, in the production of housing, as in any other industry, external factors also influence the speed with which projects are developed. Therefore, the legislation pertinent to the authorisation of urban complexes development provides for partial or total municipalisation of public infrastructure, allowing the developers to transfer their obligations to the municipal authorities. The latter then become responsible for providing the public services required by the inhabitants as primary infrastructure works are carried out and urban development is administered accordingly.

Thus, the lack of capacity of the state to ensure that this form of urban development meets the objectives set out in public policies reveals not just problems with governance but perhaps an entire state at the service of private capital, with lax policies and tendency to favour the neoliberal model. This is exemplified by the privatisation of urban infrastructure by real estate developers, which is a recurring issue in cases where urban complexes are constructed without adequate supervision of local governments.

Likewise, the emerging social segregation in Calimaya is not only physical and a product of urban fragmentation resulting from walling off urban complexes, but also the result of social inequality reinforced by immaterial



Figure 3. Public road access to the 'Villas del Campo' urban complex

Source: Own photo

barriers determined by inadequate or deficient urban planning, separating the population into social groups (Guzmán Ramírez et al., 2021).

Consequently, this type of social segregation and urban fragmentation should be discussed in the context of poor urban governance. Local governments should make sure that they have the capacities necessary to attend to the administration of urban development or implement a governance model based on the New Public Management which does not threaten or put at risk the principles of public administration (Vásquez Avellaneda, Navarrete Peñuela, 2014).

Another important aspect is that problems with governance related to the low standards of public service have an impact on municipal autonomy. The very same municipality authorities which out of ignorance promote social segregation by excluding the population of urban complexes or condominiums from the reach of public administration consequently fail to be recognised as public representation by the residents of these estates.

4. Discussion

We shall now return to the conceptualisation and contextualisation of urban fragmentation as a phenomenon generating social segregation with the implication of public institutions. The latter privilege the private at the expense of the public and consequently ignore or shirk their responsibilities. It is necessary to study whether the urban complex as a form of urban development contributes to this state-promoted urban fragmentation.

In any case, public policies, laws, and instruments should be analysed and reconsidered to provide a more detailed view of how the aforementioned forms of urban development may fare better in terms of the observance and full respect for human rights, which would undoubtedly lead to an improvement in the quality of life of local residents.

To this effect, having identified problems with governance which, through poor urban planning, result in social segregation and urban fragmentation, the local governments should adopt a model based on the New Public Management concept, as proposed by Vásquez Avellaneda and Navarrete Peñuela (2014).

The results of the present research show that urban development in the Municipality of Calimaya carried out through the analysed modalities is a process marred by considerable deficiencies. These are linked to the newly developed urban governance which fails to successfully enforce the existing legal instruments in urban planning or implement the technologies indispensable for adequate administration of urban development and territorial planning.

Another point of discussion which has emerged from the field research carried out and the contextualisation of social segregation is the commercialisation of housing development projects, which highlights the overall privatisation of the public sphere. In this respect, it seems necessary to discuss the role of public institutions and their commitment to fostering social welfare as well as their power to make decisions reducing the negative effects of social segregation.

5. Conclusions

Calimaya struggles with obvious problems with governance, made apparent by the passivity of the public institutions responsible for managing urban development and provision of public services. This inertia is particularly visible when observing the state of the local networks and systems of organising and distributing goods and services, which include the infrastructure and equipment necessary to support the development and maintenance of human activities – namely urban infrastructure.

Another manifestation of the local problems with governance in terms of urban fragmentation is the popular phenomenon in which social groups

lacking necessary information or guidance usurp public functions to forcibly remedy the shortcomings of public services, in most cases resorting to a strategy based on disinformation and social coercion which puts minorities and the rights of third parties at risk.

This state of affairs suggests that the problems with governance faced by Calimaya undermine and complicate the position of public authority, at the same time generating various types of social damage of an incalculable scope, most of which have hardly been addressed by the pertinent institutions. In addition, the lack of trained staff in public institutions leads to the exacerbation or persistence of issues associated with social segregation, as a consequence of which the inhabitants of the forms of urban development discussed in this paper are stripped of their individual rights and guarantees.

There are also cases in which certain local residents are jealous of the newly created urban infrastructure and, due to lack of guidance and information on the part of public institutions, hinder the public administration from organising public infrastructure in a way which would guarantee its proper servicing, support, and operation.

It is here where issues such as inadequate urban planning or non-observance of existing regulations and legislation begin to bring repercussions and consequences affecting the general population. Not having proper understanding of the specific causes or some determinants shaping the urban fabric, people begin to experience extended travel times and increased transport costs, saturation of communication routes, lack of road connectivity, and other inconveniences which result from, among others, poor public administration.

The problems with governance are additionally exacerbated by the low standards or requirements for occupying public posts in the municipal administration. This has a bearing on the process of urban fragmentation and segregation, because unqualified personnel tend to have an erroneous understanding of the nature of certain recently developed housing projects or urban complexes, perceiving them the same way as traditional housing estates or condominiums without understanding the individual context and characteristics of each form of urban development. With this, they tend to deprive the inhabitants of the former of access to public services, ignoring their needs and in the process committing administrative transgressions which usually go unsanctioned.

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ABSTRACT

Fragmentation, segregation, and governance in rural urbanisation through housing developments in Calimaya, Mexico

The article is based on two research projects and presents reflections on the consequences of the urbanisation of the countryside in Calimaya, as well as the results of poor governance in the municipal government in the form of fragmentation and segregation. Calimaya is a municipality that belongs to the State of Mexico and is a part of the Metropolitan Area of the Toluca Valley. The construction of housing projects in the area has been progressing rapidly since 2000, most of them taking the form of mixed-type urban complexes as well as condominiums. These urban projects have had an impact on the territory, environment, society, and public administration. The urbanisation of the countryside brings with itself fragmentation and segregation, which in most cases are linked to problems with governance by public administration at the municipal, state, and federal level.

Keywords: urbanisation, housing, fragmentation, segregation, governance

The authors of this monograph delve into an analysis of the impacts and consequences of diverse crises on cities, exploring the responses and adaptive mechanisms crucial for navigating challenges and fostering development, even in crisis conditions. The publication specifically addresses such issues as the spatial ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. effects on urban spatial policies, the informational layer of cities, resident behaviour, and the informal labour market), cities' strategies in addressing the climate crisis (e.g. urban agriculture, the creation of green urban spaces), contemporary concepts of city development aimed at enhancing the quality of life (e.g. functional mix, walkable city, New Urbanism), and crises from a regional perspective (e.g. flood threats). The authors present diverse viewpoints and employ various research methods, exploring cities in Europe and the Americas to highlight both differences and universal challenges.

This monograph is the culmination of extensive collaboration among scholars from the University of Warsaw and universities in Latin America, including Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, Universidad Mexiquense del Bicentenario, Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León in Mexico, and Universidad de los Llanos in Colombia. Some articles were co-authored by teams comprising researchers from both Poland and Latin America.

The monograph introduces an innovative perspective on urban issues within the context of Polish geographical literature, focusing on both Polish and Latin American cities. A notable strength lies in the methodological aspect [and] the balanced proportion between a thorough analysis of the examined problems and the presentation of practical solutions. The monograph is poised to capture the interest of a diverse readership, including geographers, researchers from various disciplines in social sciences and related fields, doctoral students, as well as individuals intrigued by contemporary urban development issues.

from the review by Wioletta Kalamucka

Many studies [featured in this monograph] stand out for their exploration and testing of unique methodological proposals, encompassing variables, indicators, and data. The evolutionary approach taken towards the examined issues is particularly intriguing. Numerous phenomena studied within urban issues are intricately linked to their current developmental paths. Altering these paths necessitates robust external stimuli, such as the introduction of tourism into traditional agricultural or rural communities. However, this is not always beneficial for the traditional life of local communities, despite stimulating economic development. This could potentially be a valuable avenue for future research initiatives.

from the review by Andrzej Matczak

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