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## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE SUBURBANIZATION IN MEXICO CITY**

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## Abstract

One of the most striking features of recent urbanization is the suburbanization process framed by public-private partnership strategies between state and developers. Among the different urban typologies, which have been associated with this specific form of spatially and socially segregated urbanism, public-private suburbanization as phenomena of the global south has not yet sparked particular interest in social science and beyond. Nevertheless, it is assumed that in many regions of the global south these typologies may become one of the dominating forms of future urban development.

Current research has depicted emerging suburban residential developments as paradigmatic examples of contemporary urban development under conditions of globalization, economic liberalization, and state restructuring. Beyond this first delineation of the process, the paper is based on the assumption that the establishment of suburban housing areas generates multifarious urban transformations in their local and regional surroundings. By introducing different social and economic realities, and other lifestyles as performed in the neighboring areas, these urban configurations are generating new and unexpected changes, such as local economic developments, commuter flows or demographic and social transformations within and beyond their local urban context.

In Mexico City, private led suburbanization processes and the promoting of an American way of life for wealthy citizen have a long history: one of the first suburban housing project (Ciudad Satélite) dates back to the 1950ies. However, the actual mass production of suburbs, which proceeds all over Mexico, shows a dimension unknown until now. The “Mega Conjuntos Urbanos” are newly built substandard housing areas for Mexican middleclass families and are mostly located on the fringes of the megacity. People living in these areas are producing new forms of urbanization and social dynamics, which are manifested, among others, in new forms of enclosure and representations of safety within their neighborhoods. By building walls and fences, dwellers are creating a popular form of gated communities.

In order to critically retrace these urban transformations, this paper applies a relational concept of space, understanding newly built suburban settlements not as isolated and de-contextualized urban units, but as integral part within dynamic networks of local, regional and global relations. San Buenaventura, a residential area in the urban mega region of Mexico City is chosen as a case study for the analysis; it represents a prototype of this suburban housing configuration.

The paper presents an analysis along two perspectives: First, it examines urbanization processes on a metropolitan scale, and is then “zooming” in on the neighborhood scale. By locating the case study of San Buenaventura in the specific urban and historical context of Mexico City, a new understanding on current urbanization processes is gained. In a final step, the findings will be contextualized in order to evaluate the potentials and risks of public-private suburbanization, and to show how this specific case affects diversity in urban everyday life.