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Life in the Megalopolis: Mexico City and Sao Paulo (Questioning Cities)

Lucia Sa

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The modern metropolis has been called 'the symbol of our times', and life in it epitomizes, for many, modernity itself. But what to make of inherited ideas of modernity when faced with life in Mexico City and São Paulo, two of the largest metropolises in the world? Is their fractured reality, their brutal social contrasts, and the ever-escalating violence faced by their citizens just an intensification of what Engels described in the first in-depth analysis of an industrial metropolis, nineteenth century Manchester? Or have post-industrial and neo-globalized economies given rise to new forms of urban existence in the so-called developing world?

Life in the Megalopolis: Mexico City and São Paulo investigates how such questions are explored in cultural productions from these two Latin American megalopolises, the focus being on literature, film popular music, and visual arts. This book combines close readings of works with a constant reference to theoretical, anthropological and social studies of these two cities, and builds on received definitions of the concept megalopolis

Life in the Megalopolis is the first book to combine urban-studies theories (particularly Lefebvre, Harvey, and de Certeau) with Benjaminian cultural analyses, and theoretical discussions with close-readings of recent cultural works in various media. It is also the first book to compare Mexico City and São Paulo.

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