

TOPIC:

Geographies of quality of life, deprivation, and inequalities

TITLE:

New Peripheral Geographies: Social Heterogeneity and Tendency to Urban Fragmentation in Metropolitan Lima

ABSTRACT:

In recent years, Latin American theory has postulated that the periphery should no longer be seen as a homogeneous and almost unitary space, but as the conjunction of heterogeneous and socio-spatially differentiated spaces. Evidence has shown that the current growth of Latin American cities is undergoing a process of generalisation and intensification of socio-spatial segregation, so that although the differences in spatial polarisation between 'rich' and 'poor' have diminished on a macro scale, segregation on a micro scale has been increasing. This has led to the emergence of a trend towards urban fragmentation whose progress depends on the particularity of each context, a trend that is even reflected in the production of the new peripheries.

In contexts such as the Peruvian one, characterised by the prominence of popular urbanisation in urban expansion, the production of peripheries used to maintain the pattern of polarised segregation, which generated a stigmatising reaction towards the residents of the precarious peripheries. However, with the adoption of neoliberal policies in the early 1990s, the global propensity towards self-isolation of the more advantaged socio-economic sectors and the rise of illegal land markets, the recent configuration of the peripheries has begun to manifest characteristics that suggest a transformation towards fragmented segregation, although to what extent is not yet known.

This paper focuses on the case of Metropolitan Lima, Peru's capital and largest city, and aims to analyse the advance of socio-spatial segregation in its periphery and the emergence of a process of urban fragmentation. From a quantitative approach of correlational design, it examines the current configuration of the periphery based on the analysis of spatial interaction and association in order to identify socio-economic clusters and characterise them according to four factors: urban growth, socio-economic conditions, urban risk and locational conditions. The findings show that urban expansion has begun to produce new and diverse peripheral geographies, characterised by social heterogeneity and the proximity of clusters of wealth to clusters of precariousness, giving shape to an emerging insular structure clearly differentiated by its socio-economic conditions, although affected to a similar extent by its location. In this way, the new configuration of the periphery of Metropolitan Lima shows the first signs of a process towards urban fragmentation.

KEYWORDS:

Periphery, Socio-spatial segregation, Urban fragmentation, Social heterogeneity, Metropolitan Lima