

(Download) El Mall: The Spatial and Class Politics of Shopping Malls in Latin America

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Arlene Daacute;vila

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Arlene Daacute;vila : El Mall: The Spatial and Class Politics of Shopping Malls in Latin America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised El Mall: The Spatial and Class Politics of Shopping Malls in Latin America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. by catching a glimpse of what Davila describes in great detail. The way that the book is organizedBy TaylorDavila clearly lays out the organization of the chapters to come in El Mall. There is a lot more to the infrastructure and organization that goes into malls than people think. This ethnography

really opened up my eyes to the destruction that comes from capitalism, the politics that surround it, and the divides that it creates within society. Davila shows how the rise of malls throughout Colombia sheds light on the social injustices experienced by many different groups. Spaces that are intended to create public spaces where everyone is welcome have actually created a hostile, judgmental environment, where people are judged on the color of their skin and the brand of their pants. Davila delves into this notion that different classes stratify the many malls of Colombia, and this divide will be explored in depth throughout the book. Questions of consumption and identity are brought to light as Davila answers the questions that have been asked over the years, ever since the dramatic increase in these shopping malls. Her argument is developed throughout the span of the ethnography, and is proven as the book progresses. I think that this type of organization makes information easier to process and creates a linear model to follow. Midway in the book, we arrive at a mini photo album. This is a very important thing to include, as it gives a different perspective to things. Rather than talking about these people in theory, we begin to see faces, and the subject becomes even more human. We are able to empathize and understand on a deeper level, by catching a glimpse of what Davila describes in great detail. The way that the book is organized, each chapter aims to answer a certain question. These questions are not choppy; rather they are thoughtfully placed and help to give greater context to the next chapter, while providing clarity. I really felt like the quotes included in the beginning of the chapter evoked powerful emotions, and really helped to set the framework that Davila provided in the given chapter. I think that one of the first of these quotes that really struck me was in chapter 2. "While these developers speak many different languages, they all speak the language of retail" (p 44). This really stood out to me as it highlights the capitalistic nature of these buildings and the globalization-taking place in Colombia. Davila succeeds in capturing the politics and very nature that surrounds the malls, and the many interwoven factors that give rise from such public spaces.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very Insightful! By Customer I recently finished reading this book for my Latin American and Caribbean Civilization class. The author of this book focuses on Shopping Malls in Latin American Countries, specifically Colombia. She looks at malls from a social aspect and explores how malls affect not only the economy but also people's lifestyles. Since reading this book I look at the development and growth of shopping malls in a completely different way. Malls are not just for shopping and spending money, in Colombia it plays a huge part in how people interact with each other. Malls can be used for various different things; for example people go to malls to pay bills, attend mass, watch movies, have family time, etc. One of the things I found most interesting in this book is how people give so much importance to how they look when they are going into shopping malls. People want to wear their best clothing and accessories in order to look the part and to look like they can indeed afford to buy any item they are looking at. When people do not fit into the norms of the shopping mall, they are usually looked down on and treated poorly. Davila explores this in many chapters in the book, she also gives us insight on how the class system is important in shopping malls. The main consumers shopping malls in Colombia are trying to get at are the middle class. As the middle class continues to rise and grow retail stores continue to want to appeal to them. Another interesting aspect of the book is how the shopping malls want to run in the way malls in the United States. Many of the popular stores and brands like Zara and Forever 21 can be found in a lot of the malls in Colombia. Overall, this book is very well written and gives a lot of insight into the world of shopping malls. Shopping malls are more complex than people think and this book really makes you see just that.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An eye opener! By Christine Taveras This semester I took a class in which we studied the origin of Latin American civilization and its people. In this course we had to read three books that helped us understand the people of Latin America. In my Latin America class we read this book at first I thought it would be another book discussing about people's addiction with shopping. This book blew me away when it began by telling us how developing cities are creating new malls for this new "middle class". The malls in Latin America are built by completing elite families. While other malls are built off narco-trafficking laundering money. She discussed every aspect that is necessary in having a mall from the funds to the developers to the shoppers. She spoke about policies that are necessary in building shopping malls. She even compared how famous stores like Zara and Forever 21 in the United States are perceived in stores in Latin America. Davila opened our eyes to what shopping malls really mean and how it affects society in Latin America. Throughout the book she studies the rise of globalization, line of credit and commerce. I honestly thought people go to the mall just to shop but in Latin America malls have a whole different definition. Her research with shopping malls is fascinating and she couldn't have expressed herself any better in her book. I definitely agree that shopping malls are not as welcoming as they appear. The everyday person can't afford to shop in these malls and the rich people in Latin America come to America to shop.

While becoming less relevant in the United States, shopping malls are booming throughout urban Latin America. But what does this mean on the ground? Are shopping malls a sign of the region's "coming of age"? El Mall is the first book to answer these questions and explore how malls and consumption are shaping the conversation about class and social inequality in Latin America. Through original and insightful ethnography, Davila shows that class in the neoliberal city is increasingly defined by the shopping habits of ordinary people. Moving from the global operations of the shopping mall industry to the experience of shopping in places like

Bogotá, Colombia, *El Mall* is an indispensable book for scholars and students interested in consumerism and neoliberal politics in Latin America and the world.

"Overall, *El Mall* treats the mall as a microcosm of wider changes in governance, economics and social relations... nuanced."