

Centralidad metropolitana

- 1 Centro: historic core; cultural, political and urban centrality
- 2 Paseo de la Reforma: economic and political centrality, losing importance since the development of Santa Fe; backbone of adjacent residential areas
- 3 Santa Fe: financial centrality and headquarter economy; attracting condominium development in adjacent neighbourhoods

Specialised urban centrality

Efecto Santa Fe
(bypass urbanism)

Production of discontinuous territories induced by Santa Fe: privately managed residential areas, condominium developments, gated communities and large-scale infrastructure projects; often in ecological preservation zones

Efecto bando dos

Restructuring of centrally located post-proletarian neighbourhoods and de-industrialised areas; real estate boom; structural intensification and verticalisation

Urbanización popular

Self-construction of neighbourhoods by residents; deficient urban infrastructure and public services

Urbanización popular consolidada

Consolidated self-built neighbourhoods induced by the regularisation of land titles; incremental gains in infrastructure, facilities and tenure security

Pueblos industrializados

Industrialised villages with local manufacturing jobs in sweatshops or professionalised home-based businesses; large-scale infrastructural projects; sprawl of mass housing urbanisation (mega conjuntos habitacionales)

Pueblos urbanizados

Urbanisation of mainly self-administrated villages in ecological conservation zones; transitional zone between densely built-up urban areas and national parks; agricultural areas with village structures, forests, essential groundwater areas; relevant to local tourism

Eje industrial

Extended industrialisation following main traffic arteries connecting Mexico City with regional subcentres

Zona residencial

Speculative, fragmented and densifying urbanisation of residential areas with privatised public streets and CCTV

Restricted zone

Formally restricted urban development; mostly ecological conservation zones

International airport

- I Mexico City International Airport
- II Toluca International Airport

Urban footprint

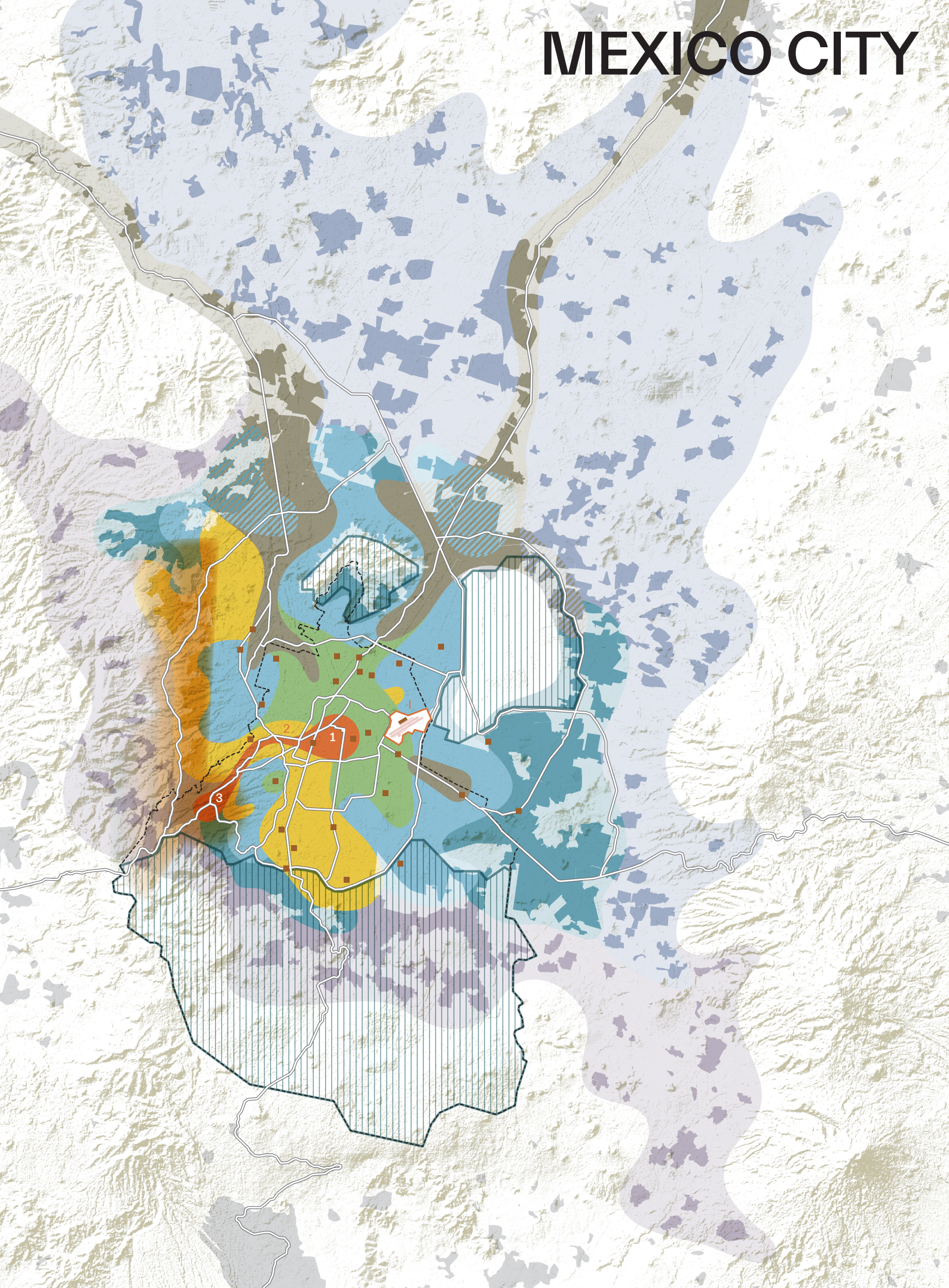
Main highway

---- Administrative border of CDMX
(Ciudad de México)

0 5 10 20 km



MEXICO CITY



The urban experience of the past, without my present urban experience, becomes unintelligible. Past evidence ought to be dwelled in with the familiarity of that one who has walked and seen enough streets in the present.

Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, *I Speak the City*, 2012

CHANGING PARADIGMS OF URBANISATION

Mexico City has been transformed from a metropolis of three million around 1950 to the metropolitan region of over 21 million inhabitants that it is today. Together with surrounding regional metropolitan areas, Mexico City forms the core of Mexico's urbanised central region of an estimated 35 million inhabitants. This enormous urban growth is just one of the manifold socio-territorial changes that Mexico City has faced since the mid-19th century. I focus on these urban transformations by using a Lefebvrian regressive-progressive approach to develop a periodisation of the social production of urban territories. To do this, I start from a socio-spatial analysis of the present and then reconstruct the pathways of urbanisation and their deep inscription into today's urban territories, analysing



why urbanisation processes in Mexico City emerge or vanish. In doing so, I identify and describe significant moments of urban transformation and reveal the power relations underlying the production of urban territories.

To this end, we introduce the term ‘urbanisation paradigm’ to describe the social production of the territories under study when a specific set of socio-territorial power relations emerges and asserts itself (see Chapter 2). An urbanisation paradigm is formed when new power constellations are established, rules are institutionalised and subject positions are negotiated. This complex process fundamentally shapes the production of space. Each urbanisation paradigm produces a new and different territory, which can be seen concretely in particular types of construction and urban planning but also in the general material changes in urban space. Additionally, urbanisation paradigms are characterised by a particular urban imaginary and everyday practices specific to a certain time. Hence, I understand urbanisation paradigms to be the product of social processes, and it is society that produces, installs and discards them in a specific geographical and historical context. In the pathways of Mexico City’s social production here presented I periodise this territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of urbanisation paradigms. While the result is inevitably merely a partial reconstruction of a spatialised history, I seek to contribute to an understanding of Mexico City’s history by placing the social production of a metropolitan territory at the centre of the analysis.

This chapter builds on extensive scholarship on urban questions in and from Mexico City and on my own long-standing ethnographic research (for detailed references, see Streule 2018). In the following, I first trace the main historical urban transformations of Mexico City, which I framed in six different urbanisation paradigms. With this, I reconstruct a historical narrative characterised by both continuities and shifts or ruptures in the social production of urban territories. In the second part I analyse the situation in Mexico City as it was during my fieldwork in 2013, outlining eight predominant urbanisation processes. Finally, I reflect upon the tendencies emerging of a possible new urbanisation paradigm of Mexico City in the present.



Centro Histórico with Zócalo. Centro, 2009
Building site in former industrial district; Nueva Granada; 2013

PATHWAYS OF URBANISATION

A suitable starting point for this chapter is the map of Mexico City's urban configurations. The map, a synthesis of my empirical research based on walking and observing the streets in the present—as Mauricio Tenorio Trillo puts it in the epigraph—functions as the basis for developing the spatialised historical narrative offered in this section. Although the historical narrative constructed by this regressive-progressive approach is oriented towards dominant phases and thereby reproduces certain dominant structures, it underlines the multifaceted becoming of urban territories through a socio-territorial perspective. To grasp this complexity and refine the analysis, the idea of the palimpsest character of urban territories, as suggested by André Corboz (2001), was particularly useful. Accordingly, I do not aim to highlight only ruptures or crises but to describe paradigmatic shifts in the common understanding of what Mexico City was, is and could be; how the urban materialises and which subjects are recognised and acknowledged in this production process. Consequently, the analysis focuses on the social production of urban territory and the spatial dimension of power relations (Haesbaert 2011). To understand how the urban territories of Mexico City are produced and contested over time, the socio-territorial approach I apply attends to materiality, meaning and the everyday as key dimensions of urban territorialisations.

TENOCHTITLAN: TRACES OF THE AZTEC EMPIRE

Mexico City is located in a high valley 2300 m above sea level at its lowest point. It is nearly surrounded by wooded hills and volcanoes, which limit the city's expansion mostly towards the planes of the north and north-east. This urban landscape is natural but it is also profoundly shaped by infrastructural engineering practices that reach back to colonial times. In the early 14th century, the Aztec founded Tenochtitlan, the urban centre of their dominion, on an island in what was then Lake Texcoco in the high valley with a total of five lakes. Initial plans for a canal and tunnel systems to drain these lakes were drawn up shortly after the Conquista (Legorreta 2006) and ultimately formed the foundation for the later construction of the modern urban infrastructure that regulates Mexico City's freshwater and sewage system. In the 1980s the long story of the lake district drainage came to an end with the virtual disappearance of the last lake, except for a reservoir that now floods only after heavy rains and is dry the rest of the year. The consequences of this century-long drainage project, resulting in the

damages of underground aquifers, can still be seen and felt today: buildings in the historic centre lean due to the ground continually sinking, and many urban areas to the east often flood as a result (Schwarz and Streule 2023). Importantly, this has also brought about chronic water shortages in large areas of Mexico City. In fact, the inadequate water supply and sewage system are among its most serious problems today, particularly as they affect the northern and eastern urban areas that already suffer from regular flooding.

In the first place, the lakes that have since disappeared attracted ancient settlements. Traces of Aztec urban artefacts are clearly visible in Mexico City today. The warlike Aztec empire produced a pre-Hispanic urbanisation paradigm that contributed to the Aztecs' power over other Indigenous settlements in the region. These villages were mainly located on the shores of what was then Lake Texcoco and some are still recognisable today as *pueblos originarios*, Indigenous village structures in the midst of today's urban districts (Medina Hernández 2007; Alvarez Enríquez 2011). Tenochtitlan was connected by levee roads to other urban centres such as Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Tacuba and Azcapotzalco (present-day districts) to form an urban archipelago. Another important structure that is still a feature of the contemporary city goes back to the four main streets intersecting at right angles in the centre, dividing Tenochtitlan into four districts. With an estimated population of 150,000 to 200,000, the city was one of the largest urban centres in the world at the beginning of the 16th century (Espinosa López 2003). It has remained an important urban centre ever since.

COLONIAL URBANISM: THE FORMATION OF AN IMPERIAL CITY

Colonial urbanism left innumerable traces in Mexico City, not only due to the centuries of colonialism but also to the essential role Mexico City played in the colonial project of the Spanish empire. After Hernán Cortés's troops invaded Tenochtitlan in 1521, the Aztec city was largely reduced to rubble and renamed Ciudad de México. The city was designated by the Spanish crown as the seat of the Spanish viceroy and the capital of New Spain—which included what are now Mexico, California, Central America, northern parts of South America and the Philippines. During the period of Spanish imperialism, an urbanisation paradigm of colonial urbanism emerged that was characterised by a geometric urban form and shaped by Spanish notions of urban planning. Despite the destruction of Aztec temples and palaces to create this new urban layout, and despite the fundamentally changed rules of ownership and land use, elements of the pre-Hispanic urban geometry remained (Meissner 1996: 31).

The correspondence of structural planning elements such as the four main streets leading away from the centrally located Plaza de Armas parade ground (today known as Zócalo), with the axial structure of Tenochtitlan's levee roads described above, shows the persistence of the form of the Aztec capital (Low 1995; Espinosa López 2003). The urban ideal propagated by the Spanish, however, invoked the character of Renaissance urbanism, by which the Spanish crown sought to establish an affinity with the Spanish metropolis in Europe and omit pre-Hispanic urban continuities, superimpositions and simultaneities. Decades later, the urban structure of Mexico City was defined as a model and codified in colonial planning law in the Leyes de las Indias (Laws of the Indies) to be applied throughout the entire Spanish empire in the Americas and Asia.

The colonial urbanisation paradigm was based on a strong alliance between an emerging Creole elite and the Catholic Church, and it was solidified by excluding the Indigenous populations: while soldiers and the clergy were able to access rights to civil protection and land as pay for their services, the Indigenous population was displaced and settled on its outskirts. Only the Spanish were allowed to live in the colonial city, now called the Centro Histórico, and formerly urban Aztecs were pejoratively called '*Indios*'. Although the pueblos originarios that were relatively distant from the colonial urban core were able to maintain some economic and legal autonomy, they were subjected to evangelisation by the colonial power as one of its most important instruments of control. The territorial expansion of this colonial urbanism can still be seen today in the names of the pueblos originarios, which were renamed after Christian saints by the Catholic Church but reclaimed by combining Christian and Indigenous names, as in San Bartolo Ameyalco or San Mateo Tlaltemango.

MODERN METROPOLIS: ESTABLISHING AN URBAN REGION

Today, central western districts of Mexico City exhibit a metropolitan flair, with their Neoclassical, Beaux Arts and Art Nouveau architecture, cafés and large public parks. This ideal of European urban modernism was established in the early 19th century during the great political upheavals and the brief interlude between independence from Spain and the formation of the Mexican Republic, in which a Habsburgian emperor installed by Napoleon III planned to expand the main street, Paseo de la Reforma, into a boulevard modelled on Paris. The Paseo de la Reforma extended from the centre across fields to the new seat of government, Chapultepec Castle. This example is illustrative of a European urban modernism at first glance, but to truly understand Mexico's specific urbanisation

paradigm during the long 19th century, it is necessary to delve deeper onto the effects of Mexico's independence on urban development and then to contextualise it in the relative political and economic stability of the following decades known as Porfiriato. Both these historic conjunctures were necessary for establishing the urbanisation paradigm of the modern metropolis.

On one hand, Mexico's independence and secularisation had a lasting effect on urban development because vast amounts of land were made available by the new government of the Republic for urbanisation. In 1810, Mexico's Creole elite, which had previously administered the government under the Spanish crown, declared the country's independence from Spain. They remained allied with the Catholic Church until secularisation 50 years later during the War of Reform (1858–1861), when the government of the new republic appropriated church property, including numerous monasteries and church hospitals. As a result, the cityscape of Mexico City in particular, which had been mainly shaped by the Catholic Church for over three centuries, underwent massive change (Monnet 1995: 233–234). Simultaneously, the communal lands of the pueblos originarios were nationalised and privatised. Together, the nationalisation of church landholdings and the progressive expropriation of Indigenous communities created the basis for large-scale private landholdings, the haciendas, which became central to the modern urbanism of Mexico City (Mas Hernández 1991: 65).

On the other hand, this urbanisation paradigm was consolidated during the Porfiriato, the long reign of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), which was characterised by an authoritarian style of government and a process of modernisation by private capitalists. An urban elite consisting of a few wealthy and influential families established itself in Mexico City. Infrastructure was developed by the government throughout Mexico and by the end of the 19th century the railroad network connected cities all over the country, with Mexico City as the central hub. As a result of the privately financed expansion of tram lines, urbanisation was extended outside the colonial Centro Histórico, launching the city's physical expansion into the surrounding countryside (Ward 1991: 61) and establishing Mexico City's urban region. The construction of the first urban expansion districts, the *colonias residenciales*, was driven by foreign, often European investors and planned for the use of the urban elite, especially to the west and south of the present-day Centro Histórico (Espinosa López 2003: 119). At the same time, private investment was directed to constructing new urban districts for factory workers north of the Centro Histórico. Called *fraccionamientos populares*, these were characterised by inadequate urban infrastructure such as electricity, pavement or sewage (Morales Martínez 2011). As the urban elite moved into the leafy western periphery of the city,

Mexico City became a modern metropolis and the Centro Histórico turned into a working-class neighbourhood. This is just one example of the increasing contradictions of deeply inscribed social inequality that exist in the metropolitan area today. The contrast between an affluent western and a precarious eastern zone that emerged during this period is one of the enduring socio-territorial patterns of Mexico City.

MÉXICO, LA CAPITAL: PRODUCTION OF URBAN PRIMACY

Similar social inequalities were an important trigger for the Mexican Revolution of 1910 that overthrew Díaz's dictatorship. However, this revolution did not bring about immediate and extensive changes to urban power relations. Although a new post-revolutionary political elite emerged, supporting the newly founded state party—the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)—the Porfirian oligarchy remained influential because it still owned vast tracts of land in the Mexico City region. These new and old urban elites were the driving force behind the continuous real estate deals that took place before and after the revolution (Eibenschutz 1977: 135; Garza 1985: 105). The monopoly of the large urban landowners was broken only when the national land reform intended to change agrarian policy was implemented in 1934. It brought into existence *ejidos*, land available for communal use, which constituted also an important condition for industrialisation. This was one of the most profound transformations ever to take place in Mexico and had very significant effects on the urbanisation of Mexico City. Communal farmers suddenly had immense pieces of land at their disposal either to cultivate or to use for urban development.

The land reform had a particularly strong influence on the urbanisation of peripheral areas, where *ejidos* were concentrated. Although the *ejidos* belonged to the communes and could not legally be sold, they formed the base for the exceptional urban growth of Mexico City by illegally accommodating most of the large number of migrants from rural areas (Iracheta 1984; Cymet 1992; Schteingart 1989).

To understand this key moment of Mexico City's urbanisation, we note that, just before the land reform was implemented, the sale of building land and the construction of urban expansion districts increased vigorously. By quickly selling off their land, the urban oligarchy tried to avoid the nationalisation of their large-scale landholdings. They also parcelled the land into smaller units and reassigned land titles to their family members or acquaintances to prevent their property from being classed as a large estate and therefore subject to nationalisation. Potential buyers included provincial landowners who wanted to invest in real estate

in Mexico City because of the threatened expropriation of their factories, lands and mines. Investment in real estate was one of the few remaining safe investments for the oligarchy during and after the revolution.

One of the most important factors shaping the urbanisation of Mexico City during this period was the relationship between the two federal states in which the metropolitan region is mainly located—CDMX (Ciudad de México, until 2016 referred to as DF, Federal District) and the Estado de México (the surrounding federal state, where most of the population lives). As a result of land reform, legally available building land became scarce in Mexico City and the price of the remaining privately owned land after expropriation skyrocketed (Morales Martínez 2011). The government was indifferent to the quadrupling land prices, and the resulting shortage of housing for most of the urban population and its housing policy focused exclusively on housing for industrial and state employees. This exclusionary housing policy can be explained by the government's alliance with the new trade unions. It marks the beginning of a decade-long strategy to co-opt unionised workers and exclude most of the urban population (see also Streule 2017b).

From a general perspective, this emerging urbanisation paradigm took hold with the Industrial Workers Pact in 1945, in which the government, entrepreneurs and unions jointly stipulated that the (then) DF should be considered the centre of an import-substitution mode of industrialisation. In this way, the entrepreneurs of Mexico City permanently outmanoeuvred competition from Monterrey (today the third largest city in Mexico) in the north-east and the DF became the social, political and economic centre of Mexico.

Internal migration from rural areas led to rapid population growth in Mexico City and the contiguous urbanised area beyond the DF also grew. The centralising strategy of import-substituting industrialisation resulted in a new scale of urbanisation that expanded from the capital to the metropolitan region. As a result, the pressing problem of the housing shortage in the centre of Mexico City was exacerbated by rapidly rising rents. City dwellers who did not benefit from the few government housing programmes could secure housing only via informal land occupations and by building homes themselves, thus establishing pockets of *colonias proletarias* (Gutmann 2000; Sánchez-Mejorada Fernández 2005). This process of popular urbanisation marks an important turning point in the production of space in Mexico City; namely, a change from the dominance of tenements for rent to legal or de facto home ownership in peripheral areas (Gilbert and Varley 1991). This is still one of the main urbanisation processes in Mexico City today. In 1954 the DF government prohibited the parcelling of land for *colonias proletarias*,

while the real estate and land market was simultaneously boosted in the neighbouring Estado de México. A paradigmatic example of the fast and massive proliferation of popular urbanisation in the urban periphery is the construction of the self-built district Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, which today is consolidated into a neighbourhood with more than one million inhabitants (see e.g. De la Rosa 1974; Ward 1991).

The urbanisation paradigm consolidated during the onset of the decades-long stable socio-political constellation and economic upswing known as the *milagro mexicano* (Mexican miracle), roughly between 1940 and 1970 (Garza 2003). The basis of this stability was a conservative political-ideological turn in the government of Mexico City. Urban development in the 1950s was orchestrated by the PRI and tailored to the emerging urban middle class (Davis 1994). Land squatters and street vendors were suppressed and a comprehensive modernist planning policy was put in place that focused on the urban renewal of the DF. As a result, an unprecedented building boom fundamentally restructured Mexico City. Big, state-driven urban projects in the south, such as the construction of the Ciudad Universitaria campus in 1952 were followed by the construction of an outer ring road, the Anillo Periférico. Its western part connects the west central part of the city to the new neighbourhoods in the south. The ring remains uncompleted to this day—its eastern part remains a regular road. In contrast, the western part has become so important that it has been recently complemented by a second, elevated highway, the Segundo Piso.

During this period, the dual character of this urbanisation paradigm emerged and it still has a great influence on the urban territories of Mexico City. It constitutes a contradiction between the rigid urban development policy in the DF and a *laissez-faire* policy in the Estado de México. This became particularly clear when the metro system was constructed in the DF, which ignited a confrontation between two irreconcilable political camps over urban policy: the pro-growth coalition and the stabilisation alliance. After Mexico was chosen as the site of the 1968 Olympics, the rigidly controlled urban growth and strong planning ambitions characterising this period was overthrown and a new urbanisation paradigm emerged. The pro-growth coalition prevailed and the construction of the first metro line began, although it opened only in 1969 after the Olympics.

However, criticism from urban society—especially students—intensified, and ambitious infrastructural projects, such as the metro and the Olympics, led Mexico City into a financial crisis, further exacerbated by the world economic crisis in the 1970s. The quality of life deteriorated dramatically for large parts of the population. Furthermore, the one-party rule of the PRI in Mexico City lost its clout and the government was able to stabilise

the political system only through repression. A terrifying example of this was the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968, when the army fired into a huge group of peacefully protesting students. The urban dimension of this crisis became evident in the increasingly authoritarian and repressive administration of the city. Dissident politicians, journalists and activists were subjected to censorship, arbitrary arrest, torture and extrajudicial killings. Autocratic governments not only characterised Mexico but most of Latin America at that time.

MEGALOPOLIS UNBOUND: EXPANSION AND COLLAPSE OF A METROPOLITAN REGION

The outlines of the current metropolitan region of Mexico City became visible in the 1970s. Amidst explosive urban growth fuelled by political corruption, clientelism and economic liberalisation, the emergent urbanisation paradigm of the unbound megalopolis radically and fundamentally restructured both the centre and the periphery. The urban pro-growth development strategy that had been pursued since the early 1970s thus differed markedly from the previous one and the new urbanisation paradigm was characterised by the existence of a speculative land market in cahoots with the urban elite. Mexico City's built area extended rapidly and the population increase in the DF alone is estimated to have been 4.53 per cent in 1970. Popular urbanisation profoundly shaped this urbanisation paradigm, producing urban territories primarily in the municipalities of the Estado de México. State land and ejidos formerly used for agriculture were settled illegally by immigrants from other regions of Mexico but also by people from central districts of the DF who moved to the periphery because of the cost of living and housing in the centre. However, living in peripheral self-built districts made a daily commute to work in DF inevitable.

When academics, planners and politicians brought the metropolitan scale into focus and renamed it the *Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México* (Unikel 1976), including the DF and 60 adjacent municipalities of the states of México and Hidalgo, it was already part of the everyday lived reality of Mexico City's inhabitants. Overall, this urbanisation paradigm was characterised less by the publicly proclaimed decentralisation programmes than by wilful urban development deals between the political and economic elite. The PRI strategies to enrich its elite, together with nepotism and corruption shaped these urbanisation processes, especially in the Estado de México where the PRI has ruled ever since the party was founded in the 1920s (Messmacher 1987; Hiernaux et al. 2000), and when developers and construction companies emerged as main actors of urbanisation (Iracheta 1984; Schteingart 1989). Corrupt entrepreneurial

urban politics took hold, in which influential politicians deliberately promoted private business and highly speculative projects of their own and their acquaintances, epitomising the urbanisation paradigm of an unbound megalopolis.

Today's Mexico City's industrial corridors stretching out towards regional centralities took shape during this period. While industrial zones were still mainly located in the DF at the end of the 1970s, adjacent municipalities of the Estado de México now started to experience a veritable surge of industrialisation. At the same time, the DF changed policies away from import-substitution industrialisation towards a deregulated economic model. This model had already been put into practice in the late 1960s and eventually culminated in the liberalised economic policies of the early 1980s. This new economic model was based on the attraction of producer services, corporate headquarters and large-scale foreign direct investments. At the same time, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank encouraged Mexico to expand export-oriented production facilities, or *maquiladoras*, near the US-Mexico border. These national decentralisation and deregulation strategies significantly destabilised the previous urbanisation paradigm because it threatened the very pillar of the traditional PRI system; namely, the unionised labour sector.

Nevertheless, official urban development policy still focused on state-funded housing construction but opened it up to private-sector employees by providing them with newly available credit facilities. State housing construction thus reached a peak in the 1970s with the *unidades habitacionales* housing developments, which had a lasting impact on the urban peripheries with many new housing estates built. At the same time, the thoroughgoing restructuring of central areas was initiated. In the midst of the economic crisis at the end of the 1970s a major oil discovery in the Gulf of Mexico triggered a building boom that included, for example, the further construction of the metro and the profound restructuring of the city centre (Ziccardi 1991).

The Ejes Viales project, a new expressway grid through central city districts comprising a total of 19 expressways is an example of this large-scale restructuring. Deep roadside ditches were cut through existing neighbourhoods, and the residents of the countless demolished homes were largely left to fend for themselves. A few of the displaced people were resettled in *unidades habitacionales* but the majority moved to the peripheral eastern neighbourhoods of popular urbanisation (Messmacher 1987; Hiernaux et al. 2000).

This unbounded urban development, together with the massive increase in rents and prices for land and building materials, in addition to growing unemployment, accelerated existing impoverishment and renewed the urban crisis (Moctezuma 1984: 64).

The urban social movements that emerged criticised the PRI's exclusive and often destructive mode of governance. Many of these movements were organised into the Movimiento Urbano Popular (MUP) and demanded the protection of tenants, the regulation of land titles and the provision of urban infrastructure (Moctezuma 2012).

The strategies employed by self-organised residents to press their demands were very diverse (Tamayo 1989: 87). The residents of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, for example, refused to pay rent for their lots to the developers who had sold them land without land titles (Ocotitla Saucedo 2000). The government denied such protest movements representation in urban policy and attempted to defuse urban conflicts by initiating reform policies and co-optation of some protesters, but without officially addressing their specific demands. As a result, the urban crisis came to a sharp head in the mid-1970s. The MUP now provided a platform for questioning the hegemonic urbanisation paradigm. These movements not only form the foundation for today's more democratic urban policies, particularly in the DF, but also serve as an inspiration and reference for many social movements in Mexico City today.

In 1985 a severe earthquake devastated central parts of Mexico City. Thousands died or were seriously injured and hundreds of thousands lost their homes. Despite civilian assistance, the municipal and national governments failed to organise emergency relief and even banned the residents' attempts at self-help. The government's attempt to use the army to isolate the affected neighbourhoods and to blow up the ruined buildings as quickly as possible was met with resistance, as many people still hoped to find survivors under the rubble (Poniatowska 1988). The earthquake's destruction of the central parts of the city and the severe damage it caused, especially to government buildings such as hospitals and housing complexes, were attributed by the people to the poor maintenance of buildings since the 1940s and corruption in government construction projects (Gallo 2010).

The government's failures, especially in terms of the programme it launched to relocate the residents of destroyed or damaged houses to the new state housing—the *unidades habitacionales* on the urban periphery—were greeted by devastating criticism. People's struggles to remain in homes in the city centre and their demand to be given dignified living conditions were finally successful (Hiernaux 1987; Tamayo 1989). Beyond being a social and urban catastrophe, the earthquake also marked the dismantling of the existing urbanisation paradigm. Most urban dwellers questioned the already tarnished legitimacy of the ruling PRI. Middle and low-class income groups joined social movements calling for election boycotts or actively supporting opposition parties. Internal

conflicts within the PRI grew into a government crisis. The previously stable PRI urban elite in the DF was shaken to the core and they have never really recovered.

POST-APOCALYPTIC MEGACITY: REINVENTION OF AN URBAN TERRITORY

Contrary to the pessimistic assessments after the earthquake, a confident image of a post-apocalyptic megacity took shape (Monsiváis, 2001). Despite the gloomy forecasts and nightmares of urban developers, Mexico City did not collapse but was shaped by new subjects such as activists, visionaries and leaders, who emerged from those greatly discontented with the urban elite and those who had engaged in various urban struggles. For the first time since its existence, the 1988 PRI national election campaign faced serious opposition from candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who was supported by the supra-regional federation of neighbourhood movements (Taibo II 1994). Yet massive electoral fraud brought the PRI to power again, leading to nationwide protests. In the aftermath of these elections the opposition institutionalised itself by founding a new party, the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). Disappointed voters also helped to elevate the neoliberal-conservative Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) in the years that followed. Most disaffected urban residents organised into neighbourhood movements which openly criticised government clientelism and corruption.

Urbanisation in the DF changed substantially after the urban crisis following the 1985 earthquake, which also gave rise to the major political changes towards a more democratic system that made CDMX the place it is today. In contrast to this profound political transition in the DF, the Estado de México is characterised by the remarkable near-century regime of PRI governors. Urbanisation in the Estado de México of the 1980s and 1990s was, as a result, still characterised by unbridled land speculation and the unrestrained enrichment of individual politicians, entrepreneurs or local leaders. Corruption has long since been normalised and informality has become an integral part of territorial relations. This continuity is vital for understanding the production of urban territories of the Estado de México today. Despite the reinvention of Mexico City after the earthquake, the dual character of the previous urbanisation paradigms did not vanish. Instead, it became even more marked and the urban transformations of the DF and the Estado de México became increasingly distinct, yet often developed in complementary ways.

While this dual character persisted, a significant change in the approach to urban governance characterised this urbanisation paradigm. The examples of newly introduced special urban development zones, constitutional reforms and the

effects of a national development programme serve to illustrate this change. Firstly, the process of economic liberalisation and deregulation that had been initiated in the early 1980s was deepened and accelerated in the wake of the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. In the following years, the planning instrument of special urban development zones to promote foreign direct investment was introduced, with far-reaching consequences for urban development. The most important of these zones turned the Santa Fe region into a new metropolitan centrality (Parnreiter 2002; Duhau and Giglia 2008).

Secondly, two constitutional reforms in 1992 had a strong impact on the production of urban territories in Mexico City. The first reform restructured land tenure by making it legal to sell communally owned ejido land, which previously could not be sold legally (Cymet 1992; Duhau 2009). The impact of this constitutional change on urbanisation processes was enormous. In the urban periphery of Mexico City the state explicitly declared three million hectares of ejidos as a reserve zone for potential urbanisation. The reform heralded a huge market in land speculation and opened up new channels for the marketisation and commodification of communally used territories. The reform also proposed the building of *mega conjuntos habitacionales* (mega housing complexes) as a state-controlled alternative to the conventional process of popular urbanisation. The second legislative reform, little noticed at the time but one that had severe consequences on central neighbourhoods, repealed the law on fixed rents that had been in force since the 1940s (Espinosa López 2003: 312; Streule 2006: 51). The reform of land rights and the rent law led to a dramatic change in territorial regulation that affected the production of territories both in the centre and the periphery of Mexico City.

Finally, the national development and poverty reduction programme Programa Nacional de Solidaridad was used to integrate a broad urban stratum of the population into the government's political project and thus served to provide political and social stabilisation in the time of structural adjustments and the urban crisis. The programme did not break with the patronage logic of PRI, but it was aimed at the urban poor—hitherto neglected by the government—rather than at unionised workers (Dresser 1994; Laurell 1994; Vite Pérez 2001). The strategy primarily involved entering into relationships with the urban social movements active in the Estado de México and pacifying them with selective but substantial investments in urban infrastructure and the legalisation of land titles. It thus targeted residents of Mexico City's eastern periphery in municipalities such as Chalco or Ecatepec concentrating on areas where most of the votes in the previous presidential elections had been cast for the opposition, thus ultimately serving

to control insurgent territories of popular urbanisation (Zibechi 2011: 109). The programme's massive, manipulative legalisation of land titles by the federal agency CORETT, the Commission for Land Tenure Regularisation, allied numerous urban residents once again with the PRI (Assies and Duhau 2009; Mathieu 2013). The legalisation of titles was not presented as a right but as a personal gift from the president, and mass public events were mounted to present these land titles. The large-scale propaganda surrounding the government programme, particularly in the municipality of Chalco, attracted many more residents to this area and resulted, not least, in an enormous growth of population in this municipality of 17 per cent annually in the early 1990s.

Additionally, this period is marked by a major demographic shift. Despite the demand to continue living in neighbourhoods affected by the earthquake, the central districts of the city recorded a massive decline in population for the first time in decades, regardless of overall population growth in Mexico City. The earthquake was not the only reason for the population decline; ongoing deindustrialisation and administrative decentralisation, which promoted the development of sub-centres in the Mexico City region, were also responsible. In the context of this urban growth and expansion into the peripheries, the metropolitan territories of Mexico City became tied to the regional metropolitan areas surrounding them, as previously agricultural land between different cities was urbanised and the extended central region, the *región centro*, emerged (Aguilar 1999, 2003; Delgado 1998; Negrete Salas 2008). In addition to the Mexico City core, the central region includes the cities of Querétaro, Toluca, Cuernavaca, Puebla, Tlaxcala and Pachuca.

The urbanisation paradigm eventually ceased to apply in the late 1990s, as major political transformations gave way to the formation of a new power constellation in the production of Mexico City. In 1997, after a massive economic crisis the PRD's Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who failed to win the 1988 presidential election, won the first scheduled direct election for mayor in the DF. Cárdenas's campaign promised an inclusive urban policy of 'one city for all'. An administrative reform put the DF on equal footing with other Mexican states in terms of self-government and created the separation of powers between the PRI-led national government and the capital administration—as became evident in the creation of a new post; that of head of the federal district government for Cárdenas, the recently elected mayor. At the same time, however, this electoral defeat allowed the PRI to leave urban problems to the PRD now in power, which was a welcome relief as it had become increasingly difficult for the PRI in previous years to govern Mexico City (Davis 1994). The PRD's transformation from an opposition to a governing party allowed for the partial incorporation and pacification of

neighbourhood movements. Many of the those who had resisted the unequal urban development introduced by previous administrations decided to support the new municipal government and even to engage in parliamentary politics (see also Haber 2009).



Office tower of private company. Santa Fe, 2009

Refurbished street near La Merced market. Centro, 2013



PATTERNS OF URBANISATION

The previous section has examined the pathways of Mexico City's urbanisation by clarifying the temporality of socio-spatial processes. It thus laid the foundation for understanding the emergence of urban configurations as outcomes of ever-changing urbanisation processes. The identification of urban configurations helps us to differentiate between the contemporary urban territories of Mexico City. What the map at the beginning of this chapter shows are thus not urbanisation processes but specific urban configurations that can be traced back to different historical periods, framed as urbanisation paradigms. In other words, we descended into the past of Mexico City from the present situation as a starting point and then reconstructed the pathways of urbanisation to conceptualise current urban situations. This procedure allows us to have a more differentiated and complex grasp of the patterns that shape the urban territory of Mexico City.

Thus, I understand urban configurations as concrete urban territories existing in a specific moment in time that have a certain coherence and are produced by distinct urbanisation processes. Urban configurations are not the product of a one-time event, but rather are produced by a recurrent process in which socio-territorial practices and

lived experiences, as well as socio-territorial meanings and imaginaries, provide a strong framework of reference for the constant process of becoming urban territories. The urban configuration map of Mexico City, which represents the situation in 2015, is a tool for developing a comprehensive understanding of the expansion and interrelatedness of urbanisation processes.

While the situation today may be different, as a snapshot in time the map helps us to examine dynamic processes of urban transformation that are otherwise difficult to grasp. Assuming that the mapped patterns are provisional by nature, I now focus on these urban configurations of Mexico City. To this end, I identify and discuss different pre-dominant urbanisation processes that constantly transform the territory and materialise in various urban configurations at a given time. In this description, I mention only briefly the processes that are further discussed in the comparative chapters of Part III and elaborate instead on the specific urbanisation processes of Mexico City that are not treated elsewhere in this book. This section is written like an extended legend of the configuration map. It builds on my ethnographic research and on local scholarship. Key references are Emilio Duhau and Angela Giglia (2008), Adrián Aguilar (2004), Gustavo Garza (2003), Emilio Pradilla (2009) and María Ana Portal (2017), among others, for their particular focus on urban transformation on a metropolitan scale. For reasons of length, I cannot refer in detail to the extensive studies and discussions each configuration and process analysed here is based on. An extended list of references can be found in Part III and in my book *Ethnography of Urban Territories* (2018).

CENTRALIDADES METROPOLITANAS: PRODUCTION OF MAIN METROPOLITAN CENTRALITIES

The process of the production of main metropolitan centralities (*centralidades metropolitanas*) has shaped three different urban configurations of Mexico City: the Centro; Reforma, the linear centrality that has developed along the Paseo de la Reforma since the late 19th century; and Santa Fe, the eccentric metropolitan centrality that has emerged in the last three decades. While the Centro Histórico has primarily a symbolic, social and political significance (Leal Martínez 2007; Mantecón 2005; Coulomb 2004), Santa Fe is determined more by its logistic and economic centrality (Valenzuela 2013; Moreno-Carranco 2013).

Reforma, in contrast, is an economic and political centrality that has been losing importance since the establishment of Santa Fe but is still necessary for the formation of expensive residential districts such as Lomas de Chapultepec and Polanco (Ortiz Guitart and Mendoza 2008; Tamayo 2001).



Despite these differences, all three centralities have two features in common: the concentration and the productive encounter of urban differences on a metropolitan scale. They therefore constitute a fundamental condition for urbanity in general. This distinguishes them from the large numbers of *specialised* and *local* urban centralities in Mexico City. These three main metropolitan centralities are constantly transforming and are to be understood as a complex temporal phenomenon. Thus, to analyse Centro Histórico and Santa Fe a distinction between old and new centralities is pointless. Both urban configurations are shaped by the same underlying process. Considered together, Centro, Reforma and Santa Fe illustrate how this process inscribes itself into the terrain and, through its pronounced dynamics, strongly influences surrounding areas and further urbanisation processes. Centrality can be understood as a productive force that has the capacity to reorganise vast urban areas. In the overall process of the formation of metropolitan centralities, Centro, Reforma and Santa Fe generate an overarching system of centralities that forms the actual backbone of Mexico City's urban patterns. Furthermore, this example clearly shows that centrality is always contested and in its ongoing transformation it is often accompanied by processes of displacement that are particularly evident in the Centro Histórico, which symbolises the constant struggle of maintaining a popular centrality (Crossa 2009; Delgadillo 2018). In the context of the globalisation and metropolisation of the urban region a conflict has emerged between the extant low-income inhabitants and users of the Centro, and the ambitions of government and investors to create a commodified centrality for tourists and visitors. We conceptualise this transformation process as the incorporation of urban differences, focusing on the production, reproduction and incorporation of the intrinsic qualities of the urban (see Chapter 17).

EFFECTO SANTA FE (BYPASS URBANISM): RE-ORDERING CENTRE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS

What began around three decades ago as a planning process for the new financial centre of Santa Fe has long since developed its own urban dynamics. The urbanisation process, called *efecto Santa Fe* (the Santa Fe effect), which dominates the western urban peripheries of Mexico City, is driven by the powerful process of metropolitan centralities described above, attracting great interest from diverse actors such as private investors, transnational construction companies and local and national politicians.

The efecto Santa Fe results in the construction of mansions, gated communities, luxury condominiums and country clubs, reinforcing the social segregation that exists among Mexico City's western and eastern urban areas by bypassing existing

urban centralities. However, far from resulting only in the creation of isolated enclaves, this urbanisation process, which we call 'bypass urbanism', is profoundly restructuring the entire metropolitan region, resulting in the fundamental socio-spatial reorientation of the city towards the western periphery (see Chapter 14). From the very beginning of the planning process the commercialisation of land and speculative transactions has run hand-in-hand with large state investments in transport infrastructure, such as the toll highway Autopista Chamapa-La Venta leading to the north, one of the most expensive highways in Mexico. Another example is the toll flyover Supervía Poniente, which bypasses the narrow roads in the western hills to facilitate rapid connections among the exclusive residential areas of Santa Fe and other urban service and financial centres, such as Interlomas, with the wealthy southern areas of Mexico City (Hiernaux Nicolas 1999; Duhau and Giglia 2008; Castañeda 2014).



Apartment buildings are densifying a post-proletarian area. Azcapotzalco, 2013



Museum Soumaya and mall by Grupo Carso in former industrial district. Granada, 2013

This expansion of north-south connections has reinforced the *efecto Santa Fe*, and the continuous construction of new connecting roads between isolated, previously disconnected territories is characteristic of this urbanisation process (see also Bayón and Saraví 2013). This new transport infrastructure is key to the gradual consolidation of this emerging urban configuration and it has an immense impact on the surrounding urban areas. Increasing social conflicts accompany this process of urban transformation. The expropriation of land for the construction of urban infrastructure projects and the nationalisation or privatisation of natural resources led to disputes between the government and the inhabitants of the surrounding popular neighbourhoods and *pueblos originarios* (see also González Reynoso 2014; Pérez Negrete 2017).

EFFECTO BANDO DOS: RESTRUCTURING CENTRAL POST-PROLETARIAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

For over two decades the *efecto bando dos* (the bando dos effect) regeneration process has been transforming residential and industrial districts close to the city centre. This process has restructured several urban configurations, most of which have historically been diverse residential neighbourhoods and were originally built to serve different segments of the population. Nowadays they are generally known as *barrios bravos* (rough and at times dangerous working-class neighbourhoods) (Marcadet 2007). They were created around the end of the 19th century, as described in the previous section. Some were laid out as *fraccionamientos populares* near industrial and commercial centres while others, especially in the west of the Centro, belonged to the *colonias residenciales*, upper-middle-class urban expansion districts.

Between 1980 and 1990, these central city districts lost 25 per cent of their inhabitants on average, partly due to the earthquake in 1985. At the same time, their reputation as *barrios bravos* became increasingly entrenched. Numerous cheap apartment buildings, former industrial sites, old and often derelict buildings and undeveloped plots characterised these neighbourhoods. Since the 1990s, ongoing deindustrialisation affected industrial sites close to the city centre. In 2001 the DF local government issued an agreement titled *Bando Informativo Número 2*, known as *bando dos*, that promoted the regeneration and re-densification of these areas after decades of disinvestment and the systematic failure by the state to construct new housing (Tamayo, 2007; Benlliure Bilbao, 2008; Salinas Arreortua, 2013).

However, rather than providing access to affordable housing, the bando dos spatial planning policy generated a real estate boom in central post-proletarian neighbourhoods and former industrial

areas for middle and upper-end market segments, with the effect that many low-income residents could not afford the increased rent and had to leave these areas (Esquivel Hernández 2007; Paquette and Delaunay 2009). Eventually, strong public opposition contributed to the suspension of the bando dos policy in 2007. However, the urban transformation that this policy initiated continued to affect areas beyond those defined in the planning document because of the widespread construction of multistorey apartment buildings in the central districts of the city. This resulted in many local protests by residents against further restructuring plans. Although the real estate boom that characterises the process has led to increased investment in these central areas, the regeneration project has not lived up to its promise of preserving the existing building stock or improving the urban infrastructure (Schwarz 2017). In addition, bribing official bodies and corruption play a large part in this restructuring process: even when construction companies do not adhere to the prescribed number of floors or the approved apartment sizes, they nevertheless often receive valid building permits.

ZONAS RESIDENCIALES: SPECULATIVE DENSIFICATION

Diverse urban configurations, which I call *zonas residenciales* and are located in the privileged urban zones in the western part of Mexico City, are currently being shaped by an urbanisation process characterised by speculation, fragmentation and densification. These areas were usually built as urban expansion districts in the late 19th and early 20th century. They consisted mainly of residential houses in the neocolonial style (Morales Martínez 2011). Driven by the current real estate boom, the former two or three-storey residential houses are being replaced by multistorey apartment buildings and the *zonas residenciales* are thus continually densifying. Another striking feature of this process is the conversion of existing buildings: private residences are becoming shops and long-established *cantinas* are turned into trendy restaurants and bars. This transformation process is spreading in waves to the north-west, west and south-west and is inscribing itself more and more deeply into the terrain.

In order to emerge this process needs several conditions to be in place: of which the two most important are a favourable location characterised by lush vegetation, abundant groundwater and solid ground for building, and secondly the specific conditions of landownership. In contrast to the process of popular urbanisation (see the following section), which mainly developed on the *ejidos* communal land, the *zonas residenciales* are being developed mainly on the *haciendas*, which permitted large-scale planned and legal urban development to be put in place. This was the context in which

this process emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, as I show in more detail in the Pathway section. It took place at the onset of speculative urbanisation during which real estate developers built urban expansion districts and sold the completed residential houses to a clientele with purchasing power (Sheinbaum 2008). As these urban zones were laid out as middle-class urban extension districts or neighbourhoods composed of luxury villas, from the beginning they had a well-developed urban infrastructure. In the 1950s and 1960s entire satellite towns and luxury enclaves were built according to a similar logic, but they were located even further in the north-western and south-western peripheries than the comparable, older districts consisting of detached villas.

As a result, a type of informal high-income urbanisation has been developing since the 1970s, in which the urban elite uses corruption and nepotism to override legal building regulations and to expand this type of neighbourhood, even into nature conservation zones (Lezama and Domínguez 2006). This transformation of the *zonas residenciales* housing the privileged solidifies the already pronounced social segregation in Mexico City by a self-reinforcing social dynamic, as they in fact exclude other city dwellers from the use of their costly urban amenities (Bayón and Saraví 2013). In these areas street vending is not permitted and numerous public streets are closed off by the residents themselves on their own authority. Furthermore, private video surveillance of public space is widespread (Giglia 2002; Lindón 2006). Private investments in infrastructure, health and education flowing into these areas lead to the further consolidation of their residents' privileged position. This is particularly true of the transport infrastructure, which was further expanded by the toll motorways such as the *Supervía Poniente*, which add to earlier major projects such as the *Periférico* ring road, the *Ejes Viales* main road grid and the *Segundo Piso* highway.

URBANIZACIÓN POPULAR (POPULAR URBANISATION): AUTO-CONSTRUCTION AND CONSOLIDATION OF SELF-BUILT TERRITORIES

Large parts of Mexico City, particularly those in the eastern part of the metropolis, are built and maintained by the residents themselves and state agencies and commodification play a minor role. The residents here are busy producing urban territories, mostly without any obvious leaders, but with a shared interest in producing urban space for their community through their daily practices (Moctezuma 2001; Grajeda 2015). In their aspirations to produce and preserve their neighbourhoods, people generate this urban configuration via their spatial practices. We conceptualise this specific urbanisation process as popular urbanisation (see Chapter 12).

Specific land tenure relations play a central role in this urbanisation process, which primarily unfolds on *ejido* or communal land formerly used for agriculture, and also by occupying state-owned land (Cymet 1992; Azuela and Tomas 1996). These areas are often in exposed locations and zones where there is the constant danger of flooding or landslides. For decades these neighbourhoods have coped with either no infrastructure at all or poor urban infrastructure. Popular urbanisation is characterised by self-building, which is done by the gradual construction of homes on parcelled plots of land by the residents themselves (Bazant 2003; Andrade Narváez 2011). Despite some spectacular land occupations, especially in the 1970s, land parcelling for self-building has been the common source of housing for most of the inhabitants of Mexico City. Using the historical perspective discussed in the section on pathways in this chapter, we see that popular urbanisation was the dominant process of Mexico City's spatial production for decades and is still employed in large areas today (Navarro and Moctezuma 1989; Duhau 1998; Connolly 2013). The enormous growth of Mexico City in the second half of the 20th century would not have been possible without popular urbanisation, which has shaped around 60 per cent of Mexico City's metropolitan territories.

Focusing on the temporality of this process, I distinguish two distinct phases: (1) *urbanización popular*, which describes the initial, often precarious phase of self-initiated construction on subdivided plots; and (2) *urbanización popular consolidada*, which depicts the subsequent consolidation of self-built



Residential houses. Jardines del Pedregal de San Ángel, 2013



Public street closed off by residents. Pedregal de Carrasco, 2013



Popular urbanisation. Valle de Chalco Solidaridad, 2013

territories. While both original and consolidated forms of popular urbanisation are present in Mexico City today, the transition of the one form to the other does not always happen. The consolidation of formerly precarious, self-built neighbourhoods is commonly triggered by a transformation from municipal or state land to individual land ownership (Schteingart 1996; Vega 1996). This transformation is usually implemented by the regularisation of land tenure, often in exchange for electoral votes, and the consolidation of the neighbourhood by the residents themselves. This also fundamentally changes the common traditional tenure patterns in Mexico City, by changing housing tenure for most of the poor urban population from renting to owning their houses (Gilbert and Varley 1991). The urbanización popular consolidada is changing urban configurations, for example, through residents improving their urban infrastructure or creating jobs in areas previously known as *cinturón de miseria* (deprived informal settlements in the periphery) (Ortiz Flores and Zarate 2002).

Urban configurations dominated by this process commonly also include other forms of housing and are not exclusively characterised by self-building. There is a mix of village structures in the neighbourhoods of Iztapalapa, Ecatepec and Naucalpan: the pueblos originarios, consolidating self-built housing and pockets of state housing (unidades habitacionales). Well-known Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl is unique in this respect: it has neither former village structures nor unidades habitacionales, because it was built on the drained Lake Texcoco. Before construction started, the area was parcelled out completely like a draughtboard and each of the plots was sold and then urbanised through self-building.

Today, both processes, urbanización popular and urbanización popular consolidada, are still active in different urban configurations of Mexico City. The modalities and basic features of urbanización popular have changed little for decades, and even if it barely occurs near the centre any more, it still dominates large peripheral areas. What has changed, however, are the migration processes linked to this process. While the first settlements in the 1950s and 1960s evolved through rural-urban migration, most residents of more recent settlements no longer come from the provinces or from inner-city tenement houses, the *vecindades*; but are second or third-generation descendants of families with experience of self-building (Vega 2015). Many moved from already consolidated popular districts to build a house in the newly available peripheral areas, following the pattern their parents had established. Put differently, both the original and the consolidated processes of popular urbanisation result from the mobility of precarious urban residents in search of affordable land from central configurations to the urban periphery, yet both originated at different times. This common feature is the result of the

historical extension of Mexico City towards distant areas, especially in the east. In line with this historical shift, formerly peripheral areas are turning into central neighbourhoods in the wake of the massive extension of the entire territory of Mexico City. Nezahualcóyotl, Naucalpan and Ecatepec, each with several million inhabitants, are today fully equipped with urban services (Bassols and Espinosa 2011).

EJES INDUSTRIALES: EXTENDED INDUSTRIALISATION

The three urban configurations of ejes industriales form industrial corridors stretching along the main transport axes that connect Mexico City with the regional sub-centres of Querétaro, Pachuca and Puebla. They are dominated by the process of 'extended industrialisation'. This urbanisation process contributes greatly to the consolidation of the región centro, Mexico's urbanised central region (Delgado 1998; Rózga Luter 2004). State planning policies provided the impetus for this process to unfold in the early 1950s, when the government of the DF defined various industrial zones during the period of import-substitution industrialisation (Garza 1992). It received a further stimulus in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when government-led production in the new industrial zones focused on municipalities in the Estado de México rather than in the capital district, DF.

The most important industrial complexes to emerge from this process include Industrial Vallejo, Tlalnepantla, Naucalpan, Lechería and Cuautitlán Izcalli in the north-east, the north-western industrial zone of Xalostoc, and several smaller industrial parks in the south-eastern municipality of Iztapalapa. They are all located near the border between the Estado de México and the DF. The concentration of industry and jobs in Mexico City led to a steady expansion of these industrial zones along the central transportation axes. It also caused a massive shortage of housing, which was addressed by a corporatist state housing policy that promoted the construction of unidades habitacionales, mainly for unionised factory workers. However, these housing estates were not able to cope with the great demand for housing. For this reason, the workers and their families, who have long since joined the middle class, still live in the popular urbanisation settlements near the industrial zones built by the workers themselves.

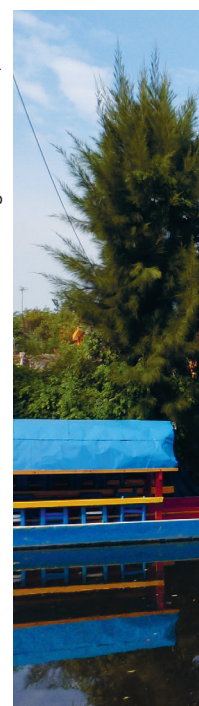
The expansion of the industrial zones underwent a renewed impetus in the launch of a decentralisation policy in the early 1970s (Aguilar Barajas 1993). To reduce the concentration of industrial production in the DF, industrial plants were moved from centrally located urban districts to municipalities in the Estado de México. This policy was motivated by the change from import-substitution industrialisation towards an export-oriented economic policy, which strengthened sub-centres of the capital region as production

locations. However, these decentralisation policies were not able to fundamentally break up the deeply inscribed spatial hierarchies that existed in the different areas. Mexico City, and the DF in particular, remained the most important national centre of production until the early 1980s, when the dynamic process of extended industrialisation came to a halt during the economic crisis (Hiernaux and Villarreal 1995; Ferreira and Robledo 2000).

The deindustrialisation that started at this time affected the urban transformation of the DF and the municipalities of the Estado de México in different ways (Rodarte García 1999; Guadarrama and Olivera 2001; Rózga Luter and Ruiz Guiérrez



Urbanised village. Xochimilco, 2009



2005). In districts close to the city centre, the process that led to the formation of the *ejes industriales* is not only losing momentum but is being replaced by a new process, the *efecto bando dos* previously discussed. At the same time, the process of extended industrialisation is regaining momentum along the important transport axes by the relocation of centre-based businesses to peripheral industrial corridors. The México–Querétaro, México–Pachuca and México–Puebla industrial corridors are characterised by this extensive form of industrialisation.

PUEBLOS INDUSTRIALIZADOS: MASS HOUSING URBANISATION AND LARGE-SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE PRODUCTION

The urban configuration of *pueblos industrializados* constitutes a transition zone between the concentrated urbanisation of Mexico City and the extended urbanisation of formerly predominant agricultural communities in the states of Estado de México, Hidalgo and Morelos. Today, a novel, remarkably rapid and comprehensive process of mass housing urbanisation is shaping this urban configuration, particularly in the Estado de México (see Chapter 16). It consists in the production of mega conjuntos habitacionales (Maya Pérez and Cervantes Borja 2005). Between November 1999 and June 2015 the municipalities of the Estado de México promoted mass housing urbanisation and approved more than 400 mega conjuntos habitacionales. Private real estate developers constructed these mega-settlements, consisting of over 724,000 units. This



Industrial axis with freight rail station. Pantaco, Industrial Vallejo, 2013

rapid expansion was fuelled by a change in the Mexican housing policy that focused on the model of providing affordable housing using mass production methods and was closely linked to the World Bank affordable housing programme (Puebla 2002; Boils 2004).

One effect of this ongoing transformation process is the massive population growth in certain municipalities. Most of them promote the market-based urbanisation of ejidos and communal agricultural land that has been made possible by the 1992 land reform (Álvarez Villalobos 1999). Many of the newcomers have jobs in the DF which leads to a daily commute of several hours. This type of mass housing urbanisation produces gigantic dormitory towns without sufficient local urban infrastructure such as schools or hospitals and adds significantly to the peripheralisation of these urban configurations (Salinas Arreortua 2016). In 2013, however, less than 15 years after the first mega conjunto was built, the Mexican housing programme fell into a deep crisis and several major private developers became bankrupt. When five million houses throughout Mexico were abandoned, it became clear that the financialisation of mass housing urbanisation had failed (see also Valenzuela Aguilera 2017).

Additionally, today the *pueblos industrializados* are adversely affected by large-scale infrastructure projects such as the gigantic new sewage system, toll highways and the new international airport. These projects are often implemented by the national government in an authoritarian manner without assessing their possible social or ecological consequences and they provoke increasing organised local resistance (Streule 2023). In addition, a strong movement to reindustrialise, which has been most effective in the *ejes industriales* located in the industrial corridors discussed in the previous section, is also shaping the *pueblos industrializados*. This process is radiating to the surrounding region and is also why local jobs continue to exist in the small factories, sweatshops or professionalised home-based businesses.

PUEBLOS URBANIZADOS: URBANISATION OF SELF-ADMINISTRATED VILLAGES

The *pueblos urbanizados* are located in the peripheral western and southern hills of Mexico City in a ecological preservation zone. It forms a transition zone between the dense neighbourhoods in the valley basin and the large national parks in the mountain ranges of the central Mexican highlands. This transitional zone contains not only the vital groundwater storage for Mexico City and extensive forests where urban development is strictly prohibited, but also fields, pastures and villages (Romero Tovar 2009; Ortega Olivares 2010). It begins at an elevation of about 2,400 m above sea level and extends up



through partially forested hillsides and sweeping plateaus. It has a harsh climate, with large diurnal variations in temperature but air pollution there is low compared with the rest of Mexico City. Despite its peripheral location and the associated problems of infrastructure and supply (such as the lack of transport, schools and jobs), with its beautiful views and tranquillity it is among the more attractive residential areas of Mexico City. In addition to its importance as a nature reserve and agricultural zone, it is relevant to local tourism. Although the daily life of many inhabitants seems to be very rural—characterised by village festivals and agricultural work—urbanisation has been advancing in this area since the early 1980s, materialising in precarious settlements, infrastructure for tourism like restaurants and amusement parks, and (mostly illegal) holiday or country houses (Schteingart and Salazar 2005; Aguilar 2008).

A characteristic of the current urban transformation process is that various actors are continually renegotiating the boundary between the city and nature, and debating what constitutes a landscape worthy of protection and how the land should be used. The main actors, who often pursue conflicting interests, include villagers, newcomers, the authorities and state institutions, and the tourism industry. Conflicts of interest are often based on two overlapping and simultaneously valid systems of territorial regulation. On the one hand, because the collective land law of the self-governing village structures, which became institutionalised in the mid-1990s, is applied here (Sierra 1997), an increasing number of communities invoke their customary right of political and territorial autonomy by self-identifying as *pueblos originarios* (Medina Hernández 2007; González Ortiz 2009). On the

other hand, with the establishment of nature reserves, the government has an effective instrument for expropriating land and for determining land use and the boundaries of urban development zones. In 1980, for example, a special category was created in the urban legislation for city territorial planning: that of ‘preservation land’ (*suelo de conservación*), which restricts the construction of settlements in the southern regions of the DF. As a result, the government has declared that no less than 59 per cent of the entire area of the DF is a preservation zone, given its ecological value in regulating the climate, replenishing water supplies and the cultivation of forests and agricultural land (Aguilar 2008). Some 75 per cent of this preservation zone consists of the collectively owned *ejidos* or *tierras comunales* of the *pueblos originarios*. Current disputes over collective land rights, Indigenous ways of life and what part of nature is worthy of protection are thus closely linked to territorial regulation (Sánchez and Díaz-Polanco 2011; see also Streule 2023).



Pueblos urbanizados on preservation land.
Magdalena Petlacalco, Tlalpan, 2013

CONTOURS OF AN EMERGING URBANISATION PARADIGM

This chapter was set out to depict Mexico City as an urban territory that is structured and continuously transformed by various urbanisation processes. It has shown that these processes not only crystallise into different urban configurations but also that each of them can be traced back to specific conjunctures of Mexico City's pathways of urbanisation. Taken together, they form a particular pattern of urbanisation that is specific of Mexico City. Overall, this chapter demonstrates the way that a society produces a specific urbanisation paradigm, solidifies it and then transforms it again. This reveals that Mexico City's urban territory is only as stable or unstable as the power-driven socio-territorial practices from which it stems.

In this concluding section, I take this analysis a step further. Synthesising the historical and contemporary analysis of Mexico City's urban transformation, I reflect on a possible emerging paradigm shift in the urbanisation of Mexico City. To this end, I first look at the newly established power constellations and recently institutionalised territorial regulations and analyse which new subject positions are being negotiated. In doing this, I relate the main urbanisation processes to one another against the backdrop of current prevailing power relations. Finally, based on the description of main new tendencies—that is, the privatisation and militarisation of public space, eventisation and financialisation—I outline two key dynamics of an emerging urbanisation paradigm.

POWER CONSTELLATIONS

In 2015, after a 12-year hiatus the PRI once again took power of the national government. However, the one-party system of the PRI was over and no single party clearly dominated political power in Mexico. One exception, necessary for understanding the production of urban territories of Mexico City, is the remarkable near-century long phenomenon of PRI governors in the Estado de México. This continuity is reflected in long-lasting urban strategies such as popular urbanisation and land speculation, which had remained almost unchanged for decades and had decisively shaped the production of space. The corruption that has long been normalised and the rise of informal settlements has long since become an integral part of territorial relations. This can be seen in very different urbanisation processes like the rise of mass housing urbanisation or popular urbanisation. In contrast with the Estado de México, the DF did undergo a political transition when it

was governed by the PRD from 1997 to 2018. Since winning the newly formed position of city mayor, the PRD—which used to have close ties to urban social movements—has started to move further away from its political base and is increasingly pursuing business-friendly urban development policies. It was the PRD's policies that led to the efecto bando dos and the densifying urbanisation process initiated by speculators, which have shaped the urban configurations of the zonas residenciales. From a broad perspective, the political situation in 2015 stabilised the long-standing differences in urban development between the DF and Estado de México characteristic of otherwise very distinct urbanisation paradigms since the 1940s.

TERRITORIAL REGULATIONS

Communal ejido land has been a vital part of Mexico City's urbanisation ever since this specific territorial regulation was established in the 1930s. Land use of ejidos was originally restricted to agricultural purposes and land could not be legally sold or urbanised. The 1992 land reform, however, moved the assignment of ejido land from communal use to tradable urban land and thus opened it up to commodification. This change fundamentally altered the use of this land and initiated a comprehensive transformation of various urban territories within only a few years, giving rise to the mass housing urbanisation discussed above. However, the land reform had no significant effect on the process of popular urbanisation that was developing on ejido land in the urban periphery and which continued to play a key role in Mexico City. Furthermore, the existence of ejido and communal land also continues to allow self-governance by residents of urban territories, as is characteristic of the pueblos urbanizados and exemplified by the self-empowerment strategies of residents of the pueblos originarios, particularly those located in ecological preservation zones. The increasing networking and resistance of Indigenous urban movements against planned mega-infrastructure projects such as motorways or high-speed trains are a case in point.

MEGA PROJECTS AND SOCIAL STRUGGLE

Private corporations stand out as key actors in shaping the current urbanisation paradigm. However, numerous urban social protests against urban mega infrastructure projects and the government's authoritarian responses make it clear that the balance of power in Mexico City is continually under renegotiation and contestation. Both private developers and transnational corporations are responsible for most of these contested projects in Mexico City. Within the framework of public-private

partnerships, these groups generally not only built state-owned mega-infrastructure projects such as toll highways but also secured the concession contracts to operate them. Not all of these projects have been a success story. The newly built Metro Line 12, for example, was out of service for almost two years due to technical defects; once the Metro Line 12 was running, a bridge collapsed in 2021 and a train crashed. The new Mexico City International Airport, another example, was planned as part of the supra-regional development Pueblo–Panamá Plan from 2001 to 2008. In 2001 communal landowners resisted the airport project; then a conflict ignited over land expropriation and the airport was finally cancelled in 2018.

NEW URBAN TENDENCIES

When the Mexican government officially declared war against the drug cartels in 2007, public discourse focused on the violence in Mexico City. As a result, video surveillance was installed in streets all over the DF and public space in the Estado de México was monitored by the police together with military units. Residents also blocked off streets, particularly in the *zonas residenciales* and in the areas dominated by the *efecto Santa Fe*. Discourse about security, violence and assaults loomed large in the reports and comments about Mexico City in the public and social media, and also influenced how and who could move where and when. Criticism of corrupt police led to the organisation of neighbourhood watch groups that publicly threatened to impose vigilante norms on thieves or kidnappers. This new tendency towards the privatisation and militarisation of public space was followed by increased social segregation and the fragmentation of urban territory.

The eventisation of urban politics through publicly or privately organised large-scale events has become another new tendency in the production of urban territories. These events, which have been used for years in central urban areas as a strategy to institutionalise and normalise the process of incorporating urban differences, now became a metropolitan strategy. Ever since the bicentenary of Mexico's independence in 2010, a large-scale campaign of eventisation in Mexico City has been used to impose ideas of urbanity. For example, the government declared some *pueblos originarios* as *pueblos mágicos* to exploit their tourist potential and also to regulate their appearance, like using a standardised form of shop signs. Environmental conservation, which became a priority in urban development, was also mainly experienced as an event; for example, the main street axis Paseo de la Reforma is closed to cars every Sunday and open to bicycles—a practice unthinkable only two decades ago. This eventisation of urban politics points to the development

of new urban strategies that change the prevailing representation of the urban in fundamental ways.

Financialisation, another recent tendency of current urbanisation in Mexico City, can be seen in the development of the mega conjuntos habitacionales in the urban peripheries of Mexico City. What appears on the surface as the rapid rise and fall of a specific model of mass housing urbanisation is in fact related to the *efecto bando dos* urbanisation process that was intensified by the re-densification of the inner-city districts implemented by the DF authorities in the early 2000s. This policy generated a real estate boom in central districts, which was accompanied by skyrocketing real estate prices and contributed to leapfrogging mass housing urbanisation to the surrounding Estado de México because many low-income residents could not afford the high rents and had to leave the central urban areas. By leaving the DF, people's commutes increased and they lost access to the social security benefits that had been available to them through local programmes that were mostly absent in other states. The *Efecto bando dos* and mass housing urbanisation were thus mutually reinforcing processes. Private developers took profit-oriented urbanisation to the extreme with the mega conjuntos habitacionales, whereas in the DF the urban fabric was renewed and the central parts of the city upgraded and densified. The existing infrastructure, however, was not adapted in the process, leading to traffic congestion and water shortages.

REORDERING CENTRE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS

The recent tendencies depicted here indicate a possible emerging paradigm shift in the urbanisation of Mexico City. Overall, the predominant dynamic of current urban transformation is twofold. On one hand, Mexico City's central areas are undergoing processes of re-densification, restructuring and consolidation as a result of processes such as the production of centralities, the incorporation of urban differences, the *efecto bando dos* and the consolidation of popular urbanisation. Strongly related to this transformation of core urban areas is continuous urban expansion due to popular urbanisation and mass housing urbanisation as well as to the transformation of the *ejes industriales* and *pueblos urbanizados* urban configurations. Even if a new urbanisation process emerged with mass housing urbanisation, this did not fundamentally change the ongoing dynamic. Instead, it reinforced it by extending urban expansion and peripheralisation. This is exemplified in the stagnation and even shrinking of population in central areas of the DF, while the population of the urban peripheries in Estado de México is still growing. Although it has changed in intensity, this general centre-periphery

dynamic has been a constant of urbanisation over many decades. It is the result of three main characteristics of urbanisation in Mexico City. The first is the divided yet complementary relationship between the DF and the Estado de México. The second is the deeply inscribed difference between eastern and western parts of the metropolitan territories. The last is the regulation of ejido land. On the other hand, centre-periphery relations are being reordered through bypass urbanism, which is manifested in the efecto Santa Fe. This general dynamic exacerbates territorial fragmentation and social segregation particularly in areas in close proximity to emerging urban centralities, but it is also promoted by the increasing number of large-scale urban megaprojects in the pueblos industrializados and pueblos urbanizados. Reordering centre-periphery relations is the emerging and new dynamic in urbanisation and points towards a paradigm shift in the production of Mexico City's urban territories.