

-  Regional centrality
-  Gentrification
-  Concentration of wealth
-  Cosmopolitan urban
-  Multilayered patchwork urbanisation
-  Laminar urbanisation
-  Post-proletarian
-  Exurban
-  Urban footprint
-  Industrial site
-  Freeway and important road

Mostly specialised centralities scattered over large parts of the urban territory; the result of a decentralised and polycentric pathway of urbanisation

- 1 Downtown LA: Having formed a small CBD for decades it is currently marked by strong processes of expansion, urban intensification and the incorporation of differences

Crescent of gentrifying neighbourhoods, stimulated by the rise of Downtown LA

Strongly dependent on topography, located mainly on foothills and along the coastline

Relatively densely woven urban fabric; structured by the concentration of important centralities

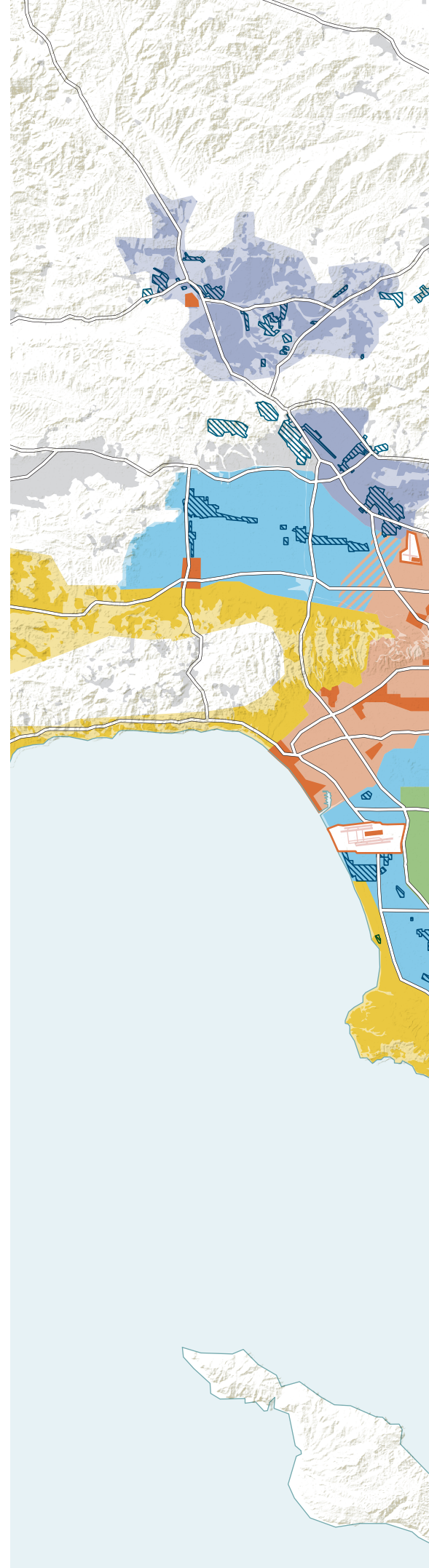
Developed in the once peripheral agricultural area of Orange County; marked by a complex urban pattern and the clustering of old and new centralities

Originally morphologically and socially homogeneous white middle-class suburbs; today marked by strong socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural differentiation due to immigration, economic restructuring and social polarisation

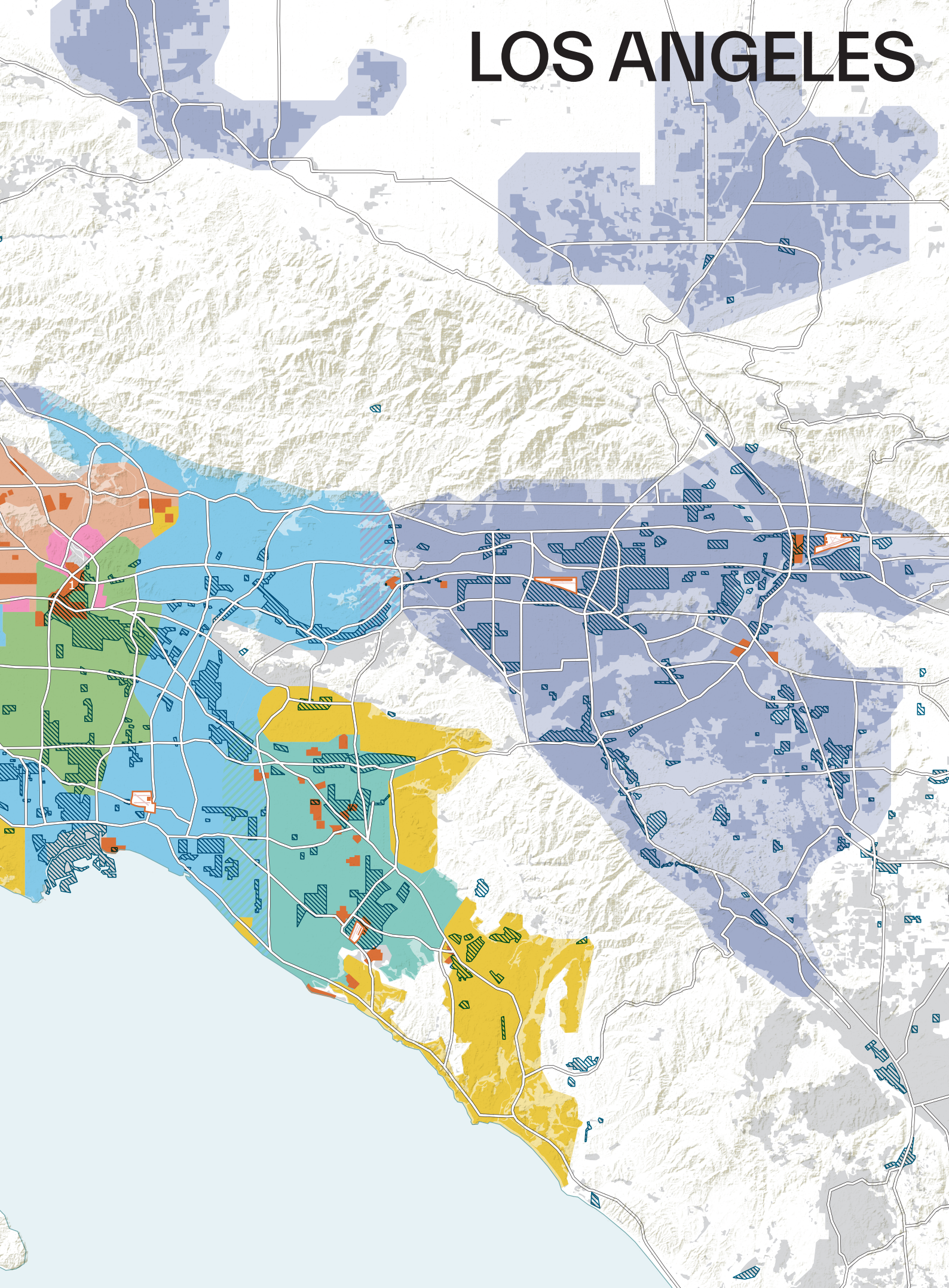
Single contiguous configuration; from the 1940s to the 1970s close to Los Angeles's major industrial hub with a large proportion of African American inhabitants; since the 1980s marked de-industrialisation and social polarisation; it was the site of the Watts riots of 1965 and the Rodney King uprising of 1992

Heterogeneous, mostly middle and low-income areas in peripheral locations stretching far into desert zones

0 5 10 20 km



LOS ANGELES



Until recently, Los Angeles was commonly viewed as an exception to the general pattern of urban growth and development in the United States of America. It has typically been described as an emergent new Babylon, located on the westernmost edge of the continent, far from the main centers of economic activity and political power, and given over to peculiar (in its dual sense of idiosyncratic and bizarre) forms of social being.

Soja and Scott, *Los Angeles: Capital of the late twentieth century*, 1986

AN ORDINARY METROPOLIS

For a long time, Los Angeles has been seen by many researchers in urban studies as a strange exception. It stood in an astonishing contrast to the well-structured Chicago model that was widely seen by Anglo-American scholars as the universal model of urbanisation. This model, which had been developed from the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s (Park et al. 1925), conceptualised the city as a succession of concentric rings, at the heart of which was one large central business district that was surrounded by a zone in transition (a kind of arrival zone for various immigrant groups), encircled by a 'zone of working-men's homes' with working-class and middle-class families and an affluent residential



zone with villas for the rich. At the edge was a 'commuter zone' that was expanding outwards. This model expressed a clear logic determined by a wealth gradient, with poor immigrant people living in the inner city, close to jobs and businesses, and the wealthy enjoying ample space and green, residing some distance from the busy and crowded inner city. This idealised model was originally used as a heuristic to contextualise the rich empirical studies of the Chicago School, and despite the fact that cities all over the world show very different patterns of urbanisation, it dominated the Anglo-American discussion in urban studies for many decades.

The dominance of this model was challenged only in the 1980s, when all sorts of new urban developments could be observed on a worldwide scale that clearly contradicted the Chicago model: new centralities were being developed in the urban peripheries, gentrification and upgrading processes made inner cities places for affluent urbanites and metropolises developed into huge polycentric urbanised zones, riven by socioeconomic polarisation and political fragmentation. These developments were conceptualised at the time as resulting from a fundamental worldwide change from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist accumulation regime and at the same time, as a cultural and architectural shift from modernism to postmodernism.

This was also the moment when urban research on Los Angeles reached its greatest heyday. This strange place that had hitherto been widely seen as an extraordinary and exceptional example of

a metropolis suddenly seemed to epitomise all the features of a new model of urbanisation that was becoming the 'prototype of the city of the future' (Dear 2001: vii). Thus, in 1989 Edward Soja asked: 'What better place can there be to illustrate and synthesize the dynamics of capitalist spatialization?' In so many ways, Los Angeles is the place where "it all comes together", to borrow the immodest slogan of the Los Angeles Times' (Soja 1989: 191). Edward Soja and Allen Scott, together with Mike Davis, the most prolific and vocal scholars of the Los Angeles School, declared that Los Angeles was the 'capital of the late twentieth century' in an allusion to Walter Benjamin's famous text 'Paris: Capital of The Nineteenth Century' (1969 [1938]), and they edited a volume they called *The City* (1996), using the same title that Robert Park, Ernest Burgess and Roderick McKenzie had chosen for the Chicago School's foundational book in 1925. This was a clear provocation: the old Chicago model was dead, and a new, postmodern model of urbanism inspired by the Los Angeles experience was opening exciting perspectives in urban studies. Michael Dear in particular promoted the idea of a Los Angeles School of Urbanism; an ambition openly expressed in his anthology *From Chicago to L.A.* (2001); without, however, convincingly defining the epistemological core of this proposed new school (see also Dear and Flusty 1998).

In many of these accounts, the Los Angeles experience was presented in an almost mythical way, often oscillating between fascination and disapproval: an endless metropolis without a proper urban centre extending from the Pacific Ocean to the mountains and deserts; a place where highways are called 'freeways', but where the banal grandiosity of the freeway system, with its promise of universal access and instant mobility, ends in epic traffic jams; a place between surf culture and psychedelic experiences, between the Beach Boys and the Doors; a place where new industrial production systems and technopoles had developed (Scott 1988) and where independent municipalities and towns scattered over the territory precluded any coherent urban planning (Davis 1990); the traumatic experience of civic unrest, from the Watts riot of 1965 and the Rodney King uprising of 1992, both of which resulted in military intervention and heavy casualties; the wild extravaganza of the celebrity culture in the movie business and the music industry; the celebration of Hollywood and Disneyland and the dominance of mass consumerism and mass entertainment where simulacra of the theme park are deeply inserted into everyday life; the arrival of innumerable immigrants from Latin America and Asia which transformed Los Angeles into a multi-ethnic heteropolis and heterotopia (Jencks 1993; Soja 1996; Sandoval 2010); the city of gangsta rap and social polarisation, where palaces in Beverly Hills stand in close proximity to the streets housing the homeless in Downtown (Wolch 1996); a place



View from the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains towards the linear centrality of Wilshire Boulevard. Brentwood, 2013

inserted between the American Dream and the dystopia of looming earthquakes and the urban nightmare in *Blade Runner*.

However, what has been called the Los Angeles School of urbanism was in fact a loosely knit grouping of independent scholars and researchers, each of whom had their own projects and ambitions. This school never materialised as a common project and it faded away slowly at the beginning of the 21st century, together with discussions about postmodernity and postmodern urbanism. Nonetheless, these researchers created a very rich and imaginative body of academic literature, which is indispensable for understanding contemporary urbanisation.

It was clear that together with Paris, Los Angeles had to be part of our comparative project. Both of these huge urban regions constitute an example of a Western industrial metropolis whose historical origins were almost the complete opposite of each other, and which in many respects developed into quite similar territories. This chapter has to be seen in this context. Its role in this book is to revisit the rich knowledge on urbanisation and urbanism on Los Angeles that has been assembled in the past three decades, but with no ambition to add new research results. Obviously, I therefore treat Los Angeles not as a paradigmatic model but as an ordinary urban region (Robinson 2006); one among many others, each of which is marked by their own specific pattern and pathway of urbanisation.

PATHWAY OF URBANISATION

The analysis of Los Angeles's pathway of urbanisation presented here is based on two important sources. The first is Janet Abu-Lughod's (1999) careful and detailed analysis in her seminal comparative study on the urban development of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, respectively. She chose a periodisation according to three overarching regimes of accumulation in the USA to structure her analysis (from the stock market crash in 1873 to the crash in 1929; the long cycle of US Fordism from 1930 to 1970; and the post-Fordist restructuring of the global economy in the long 1970s). The second important contribution to the periodisation of Los Angeles's urbanisation is made in the introduction to *The City* by Allen Scott and Edward Soja (1996), in which they give a short but precise overview on the historical development of Los Angeles. This analysis is mainly oriented towards economic development and consequently their periodisation follows the boom and bust phases of its history. This is a very helpful approach, as we are here seeking a periodisation of the production of space, and the phases of urban development usually have a direct relationship to economic growth cycles. Soja and Scott identify five surges of urban expansion that I partly adopt for this chapter.

The starting point of this urbanisation pathway is California's colonial history. The area that was later named Los Angeles was inhabited by the Tongva and other Indigenous peoples (Montoya 2021). The first Spanish Conquistadores arrived here as early as 1542. In the 1770s, Franciscan missionaries erected the first missions in the area, and in 1781 a group of settlers founded the Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles. The missions and pueblos were part of a brutal colonial system of incarcerating and dispossessing Indigenous peoples (Madley 2018; Brook 2013). After the Mexican war of independence, California became a Mexican province in 1822, but this did not substantially improve the situation of the Tongva people.

The gold rush in San Francisco in the 1840s triggered the first boom in agricultural production and cattle farming in the Los Angeles area to feed the gold seekers. Shortly thereafter, the US war against Mexico brought the area under US control, and in 1850 California was incorporated into the USA as its thirty-first state. At that time, Los Angeles was a Mexican agricultural village with about 1600 people (Fogelson 1967), surrounded by large *ranchos*, a legacy of Mexican rule. Soja (2000: 121) describes its development until 1870 as a story of 'two decades of ethnic cleansing', which 'erased much of the Latino heritage'. The invaders, predominantly North American White Protestants, tried to wrest control of Mexican land grants from the *ranchero* class (Erie 1992: 521). In 1871, the accidental killing of a white man resulted in the murder of about twenty Chinese (out of a total

Chinese population of about 200) by a mob of vigilantes and police officers. 'The massacre exposed an undercurrent of racism and xenophobia that would periodically burst to the surface, briefly interrupting and redirecting the urbanization process' (Soja and Scott 1996: 4). The subsequent urbanisation pathway can be seen as a succession of booms, interrupted by short periods of bust.

THE CITY AS A GROWTH MACHINE

In 1870, at the beginning of the first boom period that lasted until the economic depression of the mid-1890s, the Los Angeles region consisted of some villages scattered over the wide plains set among the mountains, the desert and the Pacific Ocean. The region had little to recommend to prospective residents (McWilliams 1973: 6, 13). As John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1987: 55) stated, Los Angeles 'had none of the "natural" features that are thought to support urban growth: no centrality, no harbour, no transportation crossroads, not even a water supply. Indeed, the rise of Los Angeles as the pre-eminent city of the West, eclipsing its rivals San Diego and San Francisco, can only be explained as a remarkable victory of human cunning over the so-called limits of nature'. The landscape of Los Angeles had to be produced—it had to be forged out of crude materials (McWilliams 1973; Sullivan 2014).

Nevertheless, Los Angeles did have two major natural advantages: huge swathes of flat land and a Mediterranean climate, which provided excellent conditions for the agricultural production that soon made it the most affluent agricultural region of the USA. This climate was also a major advantage for urbanisation: 'The climate of Southern California is palpable: a commodity that can be labelled, priced, and marketed. ... The climate is the region' (McWilliams 1973: 6). In the following decades it was the production of the city itself that became the main driver of urban development. Molotch (1976) has analysed this process using the concept of the 'urban growth machine'. He conceives of the city as an areal expression of the interests of a sector of the land-based elites that competes with other land-based elites for the growth-inducing resources invested in its area. These place-based actors are trying to manipulate public opinion and are utilising governmental authority at the local, regional and national scale to reorder urban life and increase the market value of their assets. Molotch understands 'place' as a market commodity that can generate wealth and power for its owners. This idea is consistent with Lefebvre's concept that a place is always produced, and that urbanisation is the result of social actions, political power and social class relations. Los Angeles is a perfect illustration of this connection. Its production started in earnest when the first rail

connection broke the isolation of the region. The completion of the Southern Pacific railway from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1876 was supported by considerable subsidies by the City of Los Angeles (Wachs: 1996). The advertising was rolled out to sell the city as a paradise with warm winters and dry summers and with a climate that could cure many of the maladies afflicting people in other parts of the country (Molotch 1996: 240; Waldie 2004: 155).

A faux Mexican legacy was also used to sell the city. The popularity of Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona*, which describes the story of a Scottish-Tongva orphan girl from the San Gabriel area, who suffers racial discrimination and hardship, instigated a kind of nostalgic frenzy for Southern California's rancho past. This led to the restoration of the decaying missions and the use of a Mexican touch as a sales point for anything remotely connected with the area (Sullivan 2014: 25–26). As Soja (2000: 126–127) emphasises, the 'Ramona myth' reveals the subtle dimensions of institutionalised racism. The 'Spanish style' and the 'Mission style' derived from this myth are still utilised to this day on numerous items in Southern California, from furniture to residences to fast food stands (Molotch 1996: 248).

This strange paradise attracted mainly white pensioners from small towns in the Midwest responding to the appeal of a place that promised relief from freezing winters and harsh summers (Sullivan 2014: 18). During this phase, Los Angeles grew from 19,000 inhabitants in 1870 to 250,000 in 1900 (Soja and Scott 1996: 3). In addition to the three already established towns of the region—Los Angeles, San Buenaventura (in today's Ventura County in the north) and San Bernardino in the east—20 new municipalities were created, including Anaheim, Riverside, Santa Monica, Santa Ana, Compton, Pomona, Pasadena and Long Beach, covering almost the entire area of contemporary Greater Los Angeles (Soja 2000: 124).

INDUSTRIAL TAKE OFF

An additional driver of urbanisation was generated by extractivism. Within a few decades after oil had been discovered in Los Angeles in 1892, derricks were pumping out 'black gold' from Santa Monica and Long Beach to Fullerton in Orange County. In the following years, oil, logistics, real estate and agriculture generated the next economic boom.

This boom was strongly supported by the *Los Angeles Times* and its conservative publisher, Harrison Gray Otis, who shaped the image of the city for decades by promoting the anti-union, pro-business stance that dominated the entire region. Otis was also at the forefront of the movement to sell the city to outsiders, frequently deploying writers on assignments that were at best a mixed marriage of reporting and promotion.

The *Los Angeles Times* was also instrumental in the formation of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, a business group that did much to shape the pro-business atmosphere of the city (Sullivan 2014: 34).

With the help of massive subsidies from the federal government, Los Angeles constructed the port of San Pedro, outplaying the key advantage that San Diego, with its natural harbour, had hitherto held. This 'close collusion between private enterprise and governmental powers in city building' gave Los Angeles's political economy its specific character (Abu-Lughod 1999: 135). To overcome its water problem, the City of Los Angeles constructed, again with federal subsidies, a huge water-collecting system with reservoirs and aqueducts tapping the waters of the Owens River at the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, north of the Mojave Desert, which subsequently led to the drying up of the Owens Lake (Nadeau 1960). The resulting abundance of water not only enabled further settlements to be constructed but also pushed the rise of agricultural production. Los Angeles became the premier agricultural county of the nation, and the emblematic oranges produced in the region were used in advertisements to lure prospective homeowners (Sullivan 2014). In the following decades, the real estate business became the motor of the regional economy. Further cycles of immigration from Europe, Japan and Mexico increased the number of people living in the Los Angeles region to 1,150,000 in 1920. Los Angeles was poised to take off as a major metropolis.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDUSTRIAL METROPOLIS

The next round of urban growth in Los Angeles started in the 1920s (Soja and Scott 1996: 7) with the establishment of three leading industries: oil, aeroplanes and motion pictures. Signal Hill, a part of the Long Beach oil field, with its hundreds of derricks littering the skyline, became a famous site for producing oil during the 1920s. Southern California's clear skies supplied ideal conditions for testing aeroplanes and attracted aeroplane enthusiasts such as Glenn Martin, Donald Douglas and John Northrop, who were later to become titans of the industry (Molotch 1996: 241). Hollywood also became the world's premier capital for making motion pictures. Meanwhile, boosterism and real estate speculation drove the growth machine. In 1930 the city of Los Angeles was home to 6 per cent of 240,000 real estate agents and developers in the USA, and about 14 per cent of its labour force worked directly in construction and real estate (Erie 1992: 520). All these industries drew new, mainly white residents to Los Angeles, so that by the end of the decade Los Angeles had surpassed San Francisco as California's most populous city.

In the early 1930s, as the Depression set in and economic hardship brought out latent strains of racism, tens of thousands of Mexicans were deported to Mexico (Acuna 1998: 7). At the same time, immigration continued, particularly from the crisis-ridden 'dust bowl' in the Midwest, but also from western urban areas in the second half of the 1930s when industrial employment rose sharply (Abu-Lughod 1999: 245). On the eve of the Second World War, Los Angeles County not only remained the first-ranking county in the USA in terms of agricultural wealth and income, but also ranked first in the production of aeroplanes and motion pictures, second in auto assembling and rubber tires and tubes, third in furniture production and the retail trade, fourth in making women's apparel, and fifth in the overall value of industrial production (Abu-Lughod 1999: 245). By 1940 the region counted about 3.3 million people, and the city of Los Angeles was the fifth most populous city in the USA with a population of about 1.5 million.

FORDIST METROPOLIS

The beginning of the Second World War ignited the next boom phase for Los Angeles. The entry of the USA into the Second World War after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour made Los Angeles a key location for producing armaments and logistics. It became the most significant industrial centre on the West Coast, and shipyards, steel mills, car factories and rubber plants were being established, mainly in the south-east section of Los Angeles County in towns such as Southgate and Vernon. The aeroplane industry was transformed into an aerospace industry and Los Angeles became one of its main hubs (along with Seattle). This military-scientific-industrial complex was further fuelled by the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The core of the industry was soon complemented by a large network of subcontractors and producer services, and later the electronics industry; and when land reserves in Los Angeles County had been consumed, branch plants started to be founded in Orange County, which was still a quiet backwater at the time, establishing one of the world's first decentralised technopoles (see Chapter 15). In parallel, the motion picture industry was thriving, with major studios all over Los Angeles, including the Warner Brothers and Disney Studios in Burbank, Universal in Universal City, Fox in West Los Angeles, MGM in Culver City and Paramount in Hollywood. Following the opening of Disneyland in Anaheim in 1955, Los Angeles also became a major tourist destination for white North Americans.

A key driver of urbanisation became the free-way system, which connected the growing suburbs to each other and to Downtown. In 1939 the second freeway in the nation—the Pasadena Freeway—opened. Post-war Los Angeles was much more than a bizarre exception: it now constituted the most consequential example of a fully car-oriented urban

region, which was not really compatible with the dominant contemporary paradigms of urbanisation, because the urban fabric of the inner city areas dating from the late 19th and early 20th century were much too dense for the construction of huge motorway systems and thus still strongly relied on public transport, as the examples of New York and Chicago demonstrate. In Los Angeles, however, the rapid extension of the freeway system opened out huge swathes of open land for urbanisation, allowing an almost limitless extension of settlements, unhindered by pre-existing urban patterns, even extending into desert zones. The construction of freeways thus fuelled another major housing boom, with developers mass-producing single-family homes on an assembly line basis (Waldie 1997: 11). In this way, Los Angeles became a prototypical Fordist metropolis, an 'endless city' based on mass production of houses and the mass consumption of land and resources.

However, most of these new settlement areas were inhabited by white residents, while minority populations were confined to relatively small zones, with Latinos living in East and Southeast Los Angeles and African Americans in South Central Los Angeles and some neighbouring municipalities, such as Compton. By the beginning of the 1940s, black working-class families had started to migrate to this area in large numbers, especially from Texas and Louisiana, in response to the recruitment efforts of the defence industry. The black population in the city of Los Angeles increased from about 63,000 in 1940 to roughly half a million in 1970, rising from about 4 per cent to 18 per cent of the total population. In 1965 a major uprising shook Watts, a neighbourhood of South Central, resulting in 34 deaths.

This uprising had repercussions in the entire USA and beyond, and was followed by riots in many inner cities with a large African American population against the repressive power of white America. It also highlighted the looming crisis of the Fordist arrangement of Los Angeles: 'The black working class had been integrated into the Keynesian social contract only incompletely; the black population remained segregated at the margins of the American society' (Keil 1998: 217). These riots arrived in a wider context of discontent in the late 1960s, with protests against the US war in Vietnam, but also against the debilitating effects of the consumer society and the hermetic worlds of the suburbs; protests that would soon contribute to the end of the Fordist dream.

In 1970, with a population that had grown to 10 million, Greater Los Angeles was the second largest conurbation in the USA, having long overtaken Chicago in size. In many respects it was the incarnation of a Fordist metropolis: having a strong industrial base, generating jobs and income, in an atomised consumer society with everyday life dominated by the private automobile and mass entertainment, and white middle-class nuclear families living in single-family homes in an endless suburban space. This world was soon to face radical urban change.

As in all Western countries, the 1970s brought a deep economic crisis and the end of the Fordist-Keynesian regime of accumulation. The following decades were dominated by deindustrialisation, globalisation and neoliberalism. Under the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the US government was at the forefront of this neoliberal change, which brought forward flexibilisation and deregulation, neoliberal policies on the national, regional and local scale and industrial and urban restructuring. The economic, social and political aspects of this change from a Fordist to a neoliberal paradigm of urbanisation is accurately analysed by Roger Keil in his book *Los Angeles* (1998).

During this process the Fordist manufacturing sectors (automobile, steel and consumer durables) almost disappeared, and by the early 1990s, after the end of the Cold War and the ensuing drastic cuts in national defence budgets, the aerospace and defence industries also came under pressure and laid off tens of thousands of engineers (Storper et al. 2015: 92). But despite the economic crisis, and in sharp contrast to metropolitan areas in the north-eastern part of the USA, Greater Los Angeles was still booming, creating new jobs and attracting immigrants from all over the world. This resulted in a further population growth from 10 to 16.4 million people between 1970 and 2000.

The loss of Fordist industries was more than compensated by growth in the labour-intensive sectors of craft production, the motion picture industry and the high-tech sectors. Major technopoles developed in the airport area, the eastern San Fernando Valley and Orange County, based on strong traded and untraded transactional inter-relations reducing uncertainty and market instabilities, and advancing innovation processes; more remote minor technopoles developed in the Ventura corridor, the San Gabriel Valley and even in Palmdale (Soja and Scott 1996: 12-13).

At the same time, Los Angeles's role in the international division of labour changed fundamentally, when it became a main global centre in the quickly changing Pacific Rim; a change that was particularly fostered by the rise of China as a major export-manufacturing producer. The rise of global production networks allowed corporations to decentralise their activities to low-cost locations all over the world while remaining anchored in specific transnational clusters. This change was conceptualised at the time in a path-breaking article by John Friedmann and Goetz Wolff, 'World city formation: an agenda for research and action' (1982), in which they developed the idea of the formation of world cities as major sites for the concentration and accumulation of international capital, as well as nodes of globalised networks and control centres of the world economy that were key destinations for both domestic and international migrants (see also Friedmann 1986).

This analysis was greatly inspired by Los Angeles's economic and urban transformation. Thus Los Angeles, previously the incarnation of a white North American metropolis became a destination for low-skilled and high-skilled immigrants from Latin America, particularly Mexico, as well as from many Asian countries, particularly China, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and Cambodia.

These developments led to a bifurcation of labour markets, with a growing number of high-waged, high-skilled jobs of the headquarter economy in management, banking and finance, producer services, research and development, higher education and also the entertainment industry on the one hand. On the other hand, an equally fast-growing number of precarious jobs were created to serve this headquarter economy, in hotels, hospitals, restaurants, retail stores and cleaning, which were done mainly by women and immigrants from Latin America and Asia (Soja and Scott 1996: 12). This led to socio-economic polarisation and increasing class contradictions that were reinforced by racism, a process that Friedmann and Wolff encapsulated in the metaphor 'citadel and ghetto': On one side stood the citadel with its skyscrapers on Bunker Hill in Downtown Los Angeles, and on the other the deteriorating neighbourhoods of the black working-class population in South Central, suffering unemployment, socioeconomic and racialised peripheralisation, and whose residents were being left behind in an increasingly desperate situation. In 1992 the Rodney King riots erupted, sending shock waves throughout the entire metropolitan region and beyond. They gave rise to dystopian images, captured in the noir science fiction movie *Blade Runner*, of the possible future of Los Angeles (Davis 1993, 1998).

URBAN INTENSIFICATION

The last two decades mark the end of the extraordinary boom of Los Angeles. Between 2000 and 2020 its regional population continued to increase from 16.4 to 18.6 million—but this was by far the slowest growth rate it had experienced since its first boom in the 1870s. Its ethnic composition further diversified, and Los Angeles became a real world city. Its Hispanic and Latino population is today by far the largest ethnic group, constituting more than 46 per cent of its total population, while non-Hispanic whites count for fewer than 30 per cent (United States Census Bureau 2020).

During this process, the urban landscape has been profoundly transformed once more. While the metropolis has extended further into the geographical peripheries, it has also densified. Orange County's population, and the exurban counties of San Bernardino and Riverside had even higher growth rates. As a result, they developed into much denser urban configurations. At the same time Los Angeles County had a quite slow population

growth, despite experiencing an intensification and urban upgrading, leading to gentrification and incorporation of differences (see Chapter 17). This can be seen as the result of what we could call a rediscovery of the urban; the well-known phenomenon that urban qualities and values are becoming more important to the more affluent sectors of the population. This development, which had started in London and New York in the 1960s, finally arrived in Los Angeles in the 2010s after the mortgage crisis and the economic depression; most notably with the revival of Downtown LA and—very surprisingly for Los Angeles—the beginning of gentrification processes in a range of urban core areas adjacent to Downtown LA, in Santa Monica and also in Santa Ana in Orange County.



Urban intensification and gentrification. Boyle Heights, 2014



PATTERNS OF URBANISATION

When Ozan Karaman and I started to conduct expert interviews and mapping sessions to explore the urban configurations of Los Angeles in the spring of 2013, our interlocutors explained to us that the Los Angeles region is so huge and complex, and consists of such a great variety of immigrant communities and specialised neighbourhoods, towns and cities, each of which with its own specific socioeconomic and ethnic composition, that it is impossible to draw an overall picture of Los Angeles's urban configurations.

This position is consistent with the view of cultural theorist, landscape designer and architectural historian Charles Jencks, who in his book *Heteropolis* had introduced the concept of post-modernity into the world of architecture two decades previously (Jencks 1977). In his book on Los Angeles, published in 1993, one year after the Rodney King riots, he argued that this metropolis had developed into a new form of a city which was marked by diversity and heterogeneity, and where more than eighty languages were spoken in schools. He pleaded for a love of difference, curiosity and a desire to seek out new experiences, and underscored his statement with impressive maps illustrating the mosaic of more than a hundred ethnic groups, forty different lifestyle clusters and twenty identity areas that can be detected in Los Angeles.

However, Los Angeles's urban configurations can also be represented with a much simpler urban typology, as architectural and urban historian Rayner Banham demonstrated in his seminal book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*

in 1971. He developed a simple but thoughtful typology based on the morphology formed by natural and human forces: the beaches (surfurbia), the foothills (the privileged enclaves), the freeways (autopia) and the 'Plains of Id', where 'the crudest urban lusts and most fundamental aspirations are created' (1971: 143).

The urban typology that we developed, following our specific method of mapping, resulted in seven urban configurations that partly coincide with Banham's typology. The Plains of Id in our analysis are the ordinary zones of laminar urbanisation, and the privileged enclaves of the foothills are part of the zone of the elite rich in our analysis. As we also considered socioeconomic processes, territorial regulation and lived experiences, and looked at centralities and peripheries, we additionally identified a cosmopolitan urban zone, an area of multilayered patchwork urbanisation, a post-proletarian zone and exurbia.

ON CENTRALITIES, RAILWAYS AND FREEWAYS

By the beginning of urban development in the late 19th century a specific urban pattern had evolved on the plains of Los Angeles; one which defines the urban region to this day: a series of small independent towns scattered over the entire area. These towns gradually developed into a collection of urban centres. They were soon connected by privately built electric streetcars and inter-urban railways, which fostered the development of an extended urban fabric. Starting in the late 1880s, streetcar networks were constructed in several cities of the Los Angeles area and inter-urban railway lines were built to connect the city of Los Angeles to nearby municipalities (Bottles 1987: 29). This specific historical situation gave rise to a specific model of the production of space: as these streetcar and railway lines were a precondition for further urban development, they had to be built in advance of the construction of the houses. Because this necessitated a massive initial investment, these railways were profitable only if they were directly linked to land development.

At the beginning of the century, Henry Huntington, the nephew and heir of Collis P. Huntington, former president of the Southern Pacific railway that linked Los Angeles to the rest of the country (see above), started building a streetcar empire by developing a unique business model (Friedricks 1992). In 1898 he bought the Los Angeles Railway, which ran the streetcars in the city of Los Angeles (named 'yellow cars'), and in 1901 he founded the Pacific Electric Railway to create an inter-urban network on standard-gauge tracks and was soon on his way to sending his 'big red cars' out across the entire region. Before constructing new lines, his own 'Land and Improvement Company' bought



Citadel and ghetto: Skid Row and Bunker Hill in the background. Downtown LA, 2014



up the land adjacent to those lines and sold it once they were constructed. In this way, he made a fortune out of the land that had been newly made accessible (Nadeau 1960: 111). This strategy laid the ground for the specific model of Los Angeles's urban development. In 1923 Huntington's inter-urban rail network had reached its greatest extent, covering more than 1,100 miles (1770 km), serving an area that covers today's Greater Los Angeles almost entirely and connecting Santa Monica, Long Beach and Balboa on the coast, Pasadena, Burbank and San Fernando in the north-west, Santa Ana in Orange County, as well as San Bernardino and Riverside in the east (Banham 1971: 61–64; Wachs 1996: 108). In this way, Huntington became the de facto regional planner of the whole area and, as a large-scale subdivider, determined the spatial layout and socioeconomic mix of large parts of the new settlements (Friedricks 1992).

We may observe that the rail network laid down Los Angeles's basic pattern of urbanisation, just as the trainlines structured the urbanisation of Tokyo. But, in contrast to Tokyo with its dense urban pattern, Los Angeles developed an extended pattern of urbanisation. The various small towns soon developed into a loosely knit constellation of various centralities connected by trainlines, and the open land in between was filled with standardised, quickly constructed detached houses, placing roads in a basic orthogonal grid, which resulted in the homogenous layer that we call laminar urbanisation. Subsequently, the urban fabric began to unfurl in all directions instead of concentrating on one node. This set the mould for the development of a horizontal metropolis that was very different from that of Chicago. City officials and regional planners approved of this decentralised urbanisation paradigm because it allowed the region 'to avoid

the crowded and unhealthy aspects of eastern urban life' (Bottles 1987: 180, see also Fogelson 1967: 250).

However, the electric railways had a short life. By 1920, when automobiles began to flood and jam central areas, the first discussions were conducted about the construction of a network of freeways, and in 1937 the Automobile Club of Southern California presented the first regional freeway plan (Bottles 1987: 217). After the Second World War the street cars were soon replaced by bus routes, and the freeway system that was developed linked up the Southern California region. This spectacular transformation, which happened in many cities across the USA, is often presented as the result of a conspiracy. Between 1938 and 1950, the private bus company National City Lines (NCL) and its subsidiaries, supported by investments from General Motors, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, Standard Oil of California, Federal Engineering, Phillips Petroleum and Mack Trucks, gained control of a range of streetcar and railway systems, among them being that of Los Angeles, and NCL then converted streetcar routes to bus operations. Most of the companies involved in this development were convicted in 1949 of conspiracy to monopolise interstate commerce by selling buses, fuel and supplies to NCL subsidiaries, but they were acquitted of conspiring to monopolise the transit industry and were given only minimal fines (Wachs 1996).

The story was, of course, more complicated than a simple conspiracy. In the Los Angeles region, the streetcar networks were heavily regulated by municipal governments, which imposed the fare structure and timetables and thus limited the investors' profits and investments. Furthermore, the growing motor traffic was increasingly blocking



Freeway junction near Pomona, 2013

the trainlines, leading to delays and lengthy train journeys, further encouraging people to use their own cars. Given this situation, buses appeared to be a much more flexible and economic transport solution in this area. However, these arguments were often just used as an excuse to demolish the streetcar and regional railway networks, and buses are still today presented as the only possible – or at least the only reasonable – solution to the transportation problem (see e.g. Bottles 1987; Wachs 1996). This argument conceals the fact that there are other options, such as delegating to public authorities the operation of public transport and using regional planning to steer urbanisation into a more concentrated and compact direction. It also neglects the class character of the freeway program: In Los Angeles, the bus system would never be able to cope with the huge dimensions of the region, and people on low incomes who could not afford to buy into the new freedom of mobility became trapped in their neighbourhoods and often lost their jobs (Goddard 1994).

Finally, the triumph of the freeway is often explained as being the inevitable result of the Zeitgeist: people wanted to drive cars, which became more available and affordable with Fordism, and from the very beginning individual mobility was ideologically linked to freedom, as the term ‘freeway’ used in California clearly indicates. To this day, Los Angeles’s freeway system has a highly symbolic value. But the utopian promise of ‘free’ and limitless mobility has long since turned into a dystopian reality with its endless traffic jams, air pollution and climate crisis.

The construction of the freeway system had immediate concrete effects: it worked as a gigantic logistical connector and permitted a systematic low-density extension of the metropolis in all directions. This decentralised model was not only promoted by powerful landowners and developers but was also the result of a Fordist-Keynesian compromise in which the predominantly white trade unions supported suburban housing and metropolitan freeways (Parson 1982: 406). As a result, the freeway system became the main structuring element of the plains, cutting across vast spaces and dividing them into discrete fragments. It also worked as a barrier, locking certain communities in places such as East Los Angeles and Watts, while shielding others from the urban bustle such as Brentwood and Santa Monica. Thus, the configuration of ‘elite rich’ and ‘post-proletarian’, though they may be only about ten miles apart, are located in completely different worlds.

In the years that followed, the freeway system structured the path of urbanisation. It linked the major centralities and business districts and determined the locations of shopping malls. This decentred logistical space also influenced the industrialisation of the Los Angeles region. In the 1920s industrial plants were mainly concentrated

in and around Downtown LA, and only slowly began to expand south towards Vernon and South Central Los Angeles. In the 1960s the region presented a very different picture: industrial plants were still concentrated around the centre, but also formed several industrial clusters scattered over Los Angeles County and beyond, typically around important freeway intersections, and thus reinforced the decentralised or even excentric urban pattern of Los Angeles (Bottles 1987: 200–202).

However, as we explain in the next two sessions, these centralities are not evenly distributed across the region: they are concentrated in two main areas that we call ‘cosmopolitan urban’ in the central area and ‘multilayered patchwork urbanisation’ in Orange County.

COSMOPOLITAN URBAN

Despite its decentralised structure and endless freeways, the Los Angeles region has a large central area in which most of the major and minor centralities are concentrated and which has undergone a strong urban revival in the last two decades. The most spectacular example of this development is the transformation of Downtown LA, which for a long time did not constitute a strong central business district, and was in Banham’s (1971: 186) view ‘neither very attractive nor historically rewarding’. Kevyn Lynch (1960: 33) even claimed that ‘great numbers of citizens never enter the downtown area from one year to the next’. And many decades later Soja (1996: 184–236) just called it ‘Citadel LA’, following Friedmann and Wolff’s world city analysis.

In the first decades of the 20th century this area used to be an attractive downtown, but it subsequently suffered a steady decline, when new downtowns were developed in the region. In the 1920s A.W. Ross developed a shopping strip designed specifically for motorised access, with parking lots at the rear of the buildings along the Miracle Mile of Wilshire Boulevard, which soon became the first linear downtown. At the same time, Hollywood Boulevard became the new movie district and tourist attraction, and additional new downtowns were developed in Santa Monica, Westwood, Beverly Hills, Pasadena and Santa Ana (Fogelson 1967: 147; Garvin 2019: 28). In the following decades, Downtown LA developed into a centrality for mainly Latino low-income groups as well as being a place where homeless people collected together (see Chapter 17). During the Fordist period the city government and business organisations undertook a series of attempts to develop a ‘proper downtown’, which only resulted in the redevelopment of Bunker Hill into quite a bleak business district decorated with some skyscrapers, and which clearly lacked the key components of a vibrant and animated urban centre. Downtown LA remained an isolated island, delineated and bracketed

by a parallelogram of freeways, with the 10 to the south, the 5 to the east, the 101 to the north and the 110 to the west.

The situation of Downtown LA changed gradually in the 1990s and 2000s as coordinated planning efforts finally led to the long sought-for 'urban renaissance'. A series of flagship projects were realised. 'Business improvement districts' were created, such as the Arts District and the Fashion District to the east and the south, using industrial areas and warehouse spaces, and poor and homeless people were evicted and displaced from the central parts of Downtown. In the 2010s, Downtown LA became a magnet for real estate developers, art galleries and the urban middle classes, as new apartment buildings, luxury condos and trendy venues sprang up across its entire surface. As we argue in Chapter 17, this recentralisation of Los Angeles can be understood as the production of an entirely new urban configuration that serves as a new strategic centre restructuring the entire region, with far-reaching effects.

Additionally, partly as a result of the transformation of Downtown, an arc of gentrifying neighbourhoods has developed in its vicinity in recent years, stretching from a western outpost in Silver Lake to Echo Park, Cypress Park and Lincoln Heights to an eastern outpost in Boyle Heights. At the same time, other centralities have also undergone various forms of urban upgrading. Miracle Mile at Wilshire Boulevard, which was historically one of the initial elements of Los Angeles's polycentrism, became the home of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art—which also offers free concerts and affordable films attracting a wide mixed audience—and the Page Museum, with its famous Tar Pits. Both museums serve as specific cultural destinations and also as public spaces where people congregate, gaze at exhibits, observe one another, reconnoitre and rendezvous. Further south is Century City, with its characteristic skyline built on the former Twentieth Century Fox site on the backlot of the former film studio. Further south, business towers housing small and large corporations, retail shops and restaurants line Wilshire Boulevard all the way down to the Pacific shore.

A second important linear centrality is the coastline of the greater Los Angeles region, from Point Mugu in Ventura County to Laguna Beach in Orange County. Attracting millions of people, it forms the most important series of public spaces in Greater Los Angeles. The main centralities and touristic magnets along the coastline are Venice and Santa Monica, which operate in both symbolic and material ways as sources of cultural and financial revenue for the City of Los Angeles. Venice has marketed itself as a gathering place for the idiosyncratic, the bizarre and the outlandish, with its street people and its petty con artists, which have long been a significant aspect of the general culture of Los Angeles (McWilliams 1973). On its part, Santa Monica has

attempted to present its beach as more reputable than Venice's, and it has spent considerable energy trying to displace homeless people from its beaches and parks. In the last decade, Internet firms have moved into these two beach cities and created there an IT and high-tech cluster, called 'Silicon Beach'. This 'marriage of Internet and entertainment' (Storper et al. 2015: 110) assembles branch plants of most of the tech giants, start-ups, accelerators, incubators and venture capital funds; showing the tendency of such firms to look for attractive urban environments for their offices.

Other noteworthy centralities in the cosmopolitan urban configuration are Pasadena, an important and affluent centrality comprising a hub of museums, including the Norton Simon Museum and the Huntington Library, art collections and botanical gardens. In the early 1990s Culver City launched an urban revitalisation program by renovating its downtown area, and the Culver City Art District generated an influx of art galleries and restaurants. West Los Angeles, West Hollywood



Downtown LA. Financial district, 2020



and Hollywood are other more-or-less affluent neighbourhoods that constitute specific and specialised centralities with strong urban qualities, together contributing to the cosmopolitan urban character of this large central part of Los Angeles. Today, the configuration of cosmopolitan urban is no longer very different from core areas in other large metropolitan territories.

MULTILAYERED PATCHWORK URBANISATION

The large central area of Los Angeles is not the only cluster of regional centralities in the region. Over a long period of time, a second cluster of centralities emerged, unnoticed, in the former urban periphery of Orange County, south of Los Angeles. This astonishing development was overlooked in urban studies, until it rose to fame in the 1980s when it was declared the new paradigmatic example of post-Fordist urbanisation and postmodern urbanism by researchers of the Los Angeles School. However, we found that this area forms an urban configuration that developed gradually over many decades, and is today a dense, polynucleated and fairly cosmopolitan urban space.

Orange County is located between the ocean and the Santa Ana mountains half way between Los Angeles and San Diego, primarily connected through the Santa Ana Freeway and the northern segment of the San Diego Freeway. It is composed of a great variety of urban fragments and determined by numerous logics, none of which holds overall sway, yet all of which together give the area a heterogeneous character. This is the result of a long-lasting, complex and differentiated pathway of urbanisation that continues to this day. The individual patches sometimes developed over decades, filled up the landscape, effacing all traces of agricultural production and finally leading to a dense agglomeration. The way this area developed into a configuration of multilayered patchwork urbanisation is discussed in detail in Chapter 15.

Over its historical development different urban layers have been produced in Orange County. The first layer was formed by the mixed agricultural production, which ranged from dairy products to beans and the orange groves that gave this county its name. Over the decades this layer has slowly faded and has finally been almost erased by urbanisation. A second layer developed after the Second World War as a result of the massive influx of relatively affluent, white middle-class families spilling over from southern Los Angeles County. These families were attracted by the good transport networks, the beaches and the climate. A third layer was initiated by the oil economy, which laid the foundation for further industrialisation. During the 1960s and 1970s an industrial complex of the aircraft and military industry developed, which in turn generated

more new business and technology centres, mainly in two clusters around Irvine and Fullerton. The last two decades have been marked by yet more densification and intensification. Gradually, over time the density and diversity of the urban pattern reached a certain degree of saturation. Sometime during the 1990s, the full dimensions of multilayered patchwork urbanisation finally became visible.

During this process, a wide variety of urban centralities were created step by step, based on local and often private initiatives. Because they were developed independently, today they form a patchwork in which the pieces bear little relationship to each other. Anaheim became an entertainment and tourist centre when Disneyland opened in 1955. Today it also hosts sports centres, a stadium, and various other attractions. Santa Ana, the seat of government of Orange County, became a boom town driven by the rapid growth of the defence industry. During the 1960s and 1970s more working-class families from Mexico arrived in Santa Ana and found low-skilled and low-paid jobs. By the 1970s Santa Ana had become a Latino city with a vibrant downtown, mainly attracting working-class Mexican immigrants. Recently it has undergone strategies of urban upgrading and gentrification (González 2017).

In the southern part of Orange County where the large ranches, a legacy of the Mexican period, had for a long time resisted urbanisation, an entire range of centralities were created. An axis of centralities runs from Santa Ana to the John Wayne Airport with a huge business cluster, all the way down to the Fashion Island shopping mall and the beach resort in Newport. The neighbouring private new town of Irvine is the site of several university campuses and a business centre for the technology and semiconductor sectors. In Costa Mesa a kind of

a downtown has been created with South Coast Plaza, a huge shopping mall complex, and the neighbouring Segerstrom Center for the Arts, a performing arts complex with theatres, a concert hall, an arts museum and other venues.

Today Orange County, with its collection of urban centralities, forms a metropolis in its own right with more than 3 million residents. Having for a long time been dominated by a white population, it has today a much more mixed ethnic composition, with about one-third being of Latino and one-fifth of Asian ethnicity.

LAMINAR URBANISATION

In clear contrast to multilayered patchwork urbanisation, another configuration is marked by a much more homogeneous urbanisation pattern that lacks any major centrality and consists mainly of one single layer that covers the territory, like laminar flooring. Individual towns and municipalities in this area rarely have distinct features. The entire configuration is structured by an endless repetition of the hierarchical orthogonal road pattern composed of large boulevards separating smaller roads. The smallest units of this grid are filled with detached houses that are arranged along inner streets. The intersections of the bigger roads are usually equipped with a service corner containing a gas station, fast food restaurants, shops and often also mini malls, to provision the local people with the necessities of everyday life. The repetitive occurrence of the same retail and fast food chains creates an experience of uniformity and monotony that gives the impression of an endless, ubiquitous, almost indistinguishable pattern, which is perfectly expressed by Banham



Laminar urbanisation. Lancaster, 2020

(1971: 143): 'An endless plain endlessly gridded with endless streets, peppered endlessly with tacky-tacky houses clustered in indistinguishable neighbourhoods, slashed across by endless freeways that have destroyed any community spirit that may have once existed, and so on... endlessly'.

This form of urbanisation is not the kind of haphazard assemblage of urban fragments that is often associated with urban sprawl, but a well-structured extension of the settlement area. It spreads out over much of the Los Angeles region, from Granada Hills and the City of San Fernando in the north-west portion of the San Fernando Valley to Montebello and Monterey Park in the San Gabriel Valley, and to Lakewood and Cerritos in south-eastern Los Angeles County. These areas, which have long been seen and celebrated as typical west-coast suburbs, and which are familiar to many people in other parts of the world from Hollywood films and soap operas, have experienced astonishing changes to everyday life. They no longer form remote catchment areas oriented towards one urban centre, as its inhabitants may work in sites all across the Los Angeles region. As a result of the ceaseless expansion of the region, large parts of this configuration are no longer positioned at the edge of the settlement area but find themselves in the geographical centre of the metropolis. Many of these areas have also developed their own commercial, educational and industrial bases to such an extent that they can hardly be called 'bedroom communities' any longer. The term 'suburbia' has thus become a misnomer for these areas, except for some parts in the western San Fernando Valley such as Calabasas and Woodland Hills, which still retain the lineaments of traditional North American suburbanism.

Most importantly, the social and ethnic composition of these areas has changed considerably in recent decades. During the 1950s and 1960s this was a typical white middle-class area. Today, the neighbourhoods that are assembled in the configuration of laminar urbanisation form a mosaic with qualities that are quite different from each other, in terms of ethnic and social composition, class structure, political position and economic and geographical orientation. To give some examples: Encino is predominantly white and upper-middle class, with a high concentration of Jewish residents, and is situated within the San Fernando Valley. Monterey Park is famous as an Asian-American neighbourhood and lies within the San Gabriel Valley, while Lakewood is situated in the Los Angeles Basin and has a lower middle-class, primarily white and Latino population (see Waldie 1997).

EXURBIA

Often directly adjacent to the areas of laminar urbanisation is a configuration that we call exurban. In North America, the term exurbanisation is used

to describe a process of peripheral urbanisation that is characterised by large swathes of open land and areas of agricultural production (Nelson et al. 2007). In Los Angeles, densification has changed the characteristics of these rapidly growing areas in the last two decades. They are no longer sparsely settled areas where agricultural production is dominant, but share many characteristics of laminar urbanisation. Major centralities are largely absent, with the exception of the two county seats Riverside and San Bernardino. Moreover, the regular pattern of urbanisation is often interrupted by huge zones where logistics and industrial production take place. The population is generally less affluent, mainly consisting of lower-middle class and working-class residents, some of whom also live under precarious conditions. Here almost half the residents are Latinos and there is also a relatively high percentage of African American residents who have moved into the area to escape the difficult conditions in South Central Los Angeles.

This zone has undergone some of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation during the fallout from the subprime crisis of 2008 and 2009 (Molina 2016). As a result, these areas are strongly affected by logistic, socioeconomical and everyday peripheralisation, aggravated by their great distance away from major regional centralities. Many people are thus long-distance commuters who spend hours a day driving on the freeways. The affordability of housing is a main reason for moving to these areas, which for some people seems to justify their long-distance commutes.

By far the largest part of the exurban configuration is located in the eastern part of the region, in the two counties of San Bernardino and Riverside, both situated directly adjacent to the core area of laminar urbanisation. Driving east from the San Gabriel valley, you see that the endless laminar landscape gradually changes after Pomona. The area becomes visibly less affluent, the urban fabric is less dense and more porous, the size and the condition of the houses decreases, the lawns in the front yards are less green and the public spaces and amenities are worse. Many work in the huge warehouses and the big-box stores that cluster in this area in places such as Banning and Beaumont. Yet it is still quite common for workers to commute from exurban areas to jobs in Los Angeles or Orange County. Freeways and the Metrolink commuter rail system connect these remote areas to other areas in the region.

Even more remote are the places north of the San Bernardino Mountains in the arid Victor Valley, which has the Southern California Logistics Airport as its largest employer. The most western part of the exurban configuration is the somewhat isolated urban island of Palmdale and Lancaster close to the Mojave Desert. There, people routinely commute to low-paying service jobs in the San Fernando Valley and even to the Los Angeles Basin itself.

This large, nearly contiguous configuration originated as a variant of laminar urbanisation but followed a very different pathway from that of the other parts of this configuration. Starting in 1940, it became a working-class African American neighbourhood close to the main Fordist industrial hub in South Central Los Angeles. It has since been transformed into a post-proletarian configuration when the factories in this area closed down in the depression of the 1980s and early 1990s.

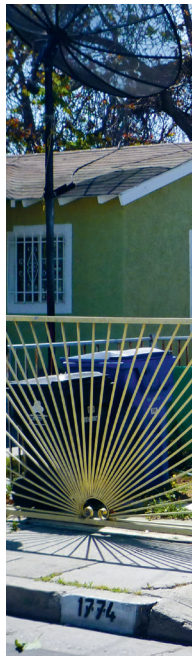
The heart of this area is Watts, which is incorporated into the City of Los Angeles, and the City of Compton, one of the poorest towns in the whole of Southern California. Both communities are known for their intensive struggles with poverty and gang activity as well as for their dynamic culture. Compton has a reputation for toughness and is also well known as the place from which arose N.W.A. (Niggaz Wit Attitude), one of the first and most influential West Coast gangsta rap groups, whose song 'Straight Outta Compton' celebrates the hard edge of the metropolis while castigating the police and condemning police brutality. Watts is famous as the site of the sculptural towers created by artist Simon Rodia as well as its arts centre. Watts was also the location of the riots of 1965.

Many of the residents of this area used to depend for their livelihood upon the factories of south-east Los Angeles, such as steel and car manufacturing plants and tire companies. But in the 1970s and 1980s most of those plants closed down, leaving residents in a precarious situation. Union jobs, which had previously lifted families out of the working class and into the middle class, disappeared and have still not been replaced by new employment opportunities (Laslett 2012). This has set in motion a process of socioeconomic and racialised peripheralisation and marginalisation. Trapped in a territory with no jobs, without perspectives, without adequate public transportation to travel to workplaces and centralities, and as their incomes plummeted or disappeared altogether, many families left the area. Much of the instability that fostered the growth of the gangs in South Central can be traced to this dramatic shift in economic stability and its effects on the community (Peralta 2008). A major wave of crack cocaine use set off a turf war between the two primary gangs of the area, the Crips and the Bloods, sparking off a conflict which led to the murder of thousands of young men. The police were the third party in this war, and police routinely beat and killed young black youth (Kelley 1996: 184). In 1991 Los Angeles police officers were videotaped beating a black detainee, Rodney King. One year later, the four officers were acquitted of the crime. This triggered the biggest civil upheaval in the history of the USA, during which 53 people were killed and 2,000 injured. The zone of conflict reached far beyond the confines of South Central, even into relatively affluent areas (see e.g. Davis 1998).

The aftermath of the Rodney King upheaval left the entire metropolis in a shambles. In the years that followed many African American families left South Central and moved to peripheral exurban areas in San Fernando and Riverside. Though there were many official efforts to ameliorate the situation, the most profound positive change seemed to have been brought about by the truce between the Crips and the Bloods. As a result, there was an abatement of the crack cocaine epidemic and by 2000 neighbourhoods that had once been engulfed in gang warfare were relatively peaceful once again. When migrants from Latin America moved into this area, many observers predicted a rise in racial tension between African Americans and Latin Americans. However, even though recent migrants have put pressure on wages and compete with African Americans for jobs, none of these dire predictions have been fulfilled. In recent years gentrification processes have started to affect the north of the configuration as a result of the urban transformation of Downtown Los Angeles, and also in relation to the expansion of the University of Southern California's campus.

Though this configuration could be said to be at an extreme social distance from the configuration of the elite rich, there is actually quite a close connection, as many people from South Central—especially Latinas—find employment in such places as Pacific Palisades and Beverly Hills as cleaners, nannies and gardeners, so that many lines of connectivity from elite rich areas to the post-proletariat area do exist, in spite of enormous differences in income level, living space and educational opportunities between them.

Post-proletarian urbanisation. Watts, 2013



ELITE RICH

The last configuration I describe here is what Banham called the privileged enclaves of the foothills—the zone of the elite rich. This zone seems the two relatively dense urban core areas that structure the region—the cosmopolitan urban area in Los Angeles County and the multilayered patchwork urbanisation in Orange County. At the core of the region, the elite rich areas are most closely associated with the west side of Los Angeles County, stretching from Malibu to the northern sections of Santa Monica and arching through Brentwood and Westwood before reaching over the hills to Encino and turning north to Woodland Hills and Calabasas. Malibu and Santa Monica are

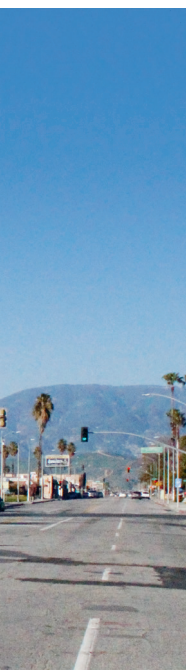
preferred locations for show business people, but many other professionals reside there as well. Many of the wealthy who live in these areas rarely venture into other zones of the region.

Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach, along with the quite politically conservative areas of Palos Verde, Rolling Hills and Rolling Hills Estates where many banking and business professionals live, form another wealthy enclave in the southern part of Los Angeles County. Many of these neighbourhoods were created during the 1950s and 1960s when the aerospace industry was flourishing in the region. Though the aerospace industry has suffered a serious decline, the residential pattern remains intact. The large, gated community called Rolling Hills Estate is notable for its strict privacy rules, and to a certain degree it has provided a template for these types of enclaves in Southern California and across the USA.

The wealthy zones of Orange County form the last component of the elite rich configuration. Of these, Newport Beach is arguably the most privileged site, being located close to the wide variety of centralities in the neighbouring municipalities of Costa Mesa and Irvine, and it has even become a centrality in its own right. The entirety of southern Orange County can largely be classified as being in the elite rich configuration, given its proximity to the hills and the beaches. Laguna Beach, San Clemente, Mission Viejo and San Juan Capistrano are all quite far away from the urban hustle and bustle, and yet all these areas are connected to one another as well as with various other configurations by the central connector of Los Angeles; the freeway system.

CONCLUSION: FROM URBAN EXTENSION TO URBAN INTENSIFICATION

This urban portrait shows that the Greater Los Angeles region can be represented by six main urban configurations. The configurations of cosmopolitan urban and multi-layered patchwork urbanisation can be seen as the two major urban core areas, both characterised by a rich collection of centralities that are distributed over the territory. Adjacent to these two core areas, we identified the zone of rich elites in the foothills and close to the beaches, which comprises quite different social milieus and urban forms. In between these configurations, laminar urbanisation extends over the planes and the valleys, forming a kind of post-suburbia, very different from the image of the classic white middle-class North American suburb. It is still embedded in the material orthogonal grid of roads that determines laminar urbanisation, and it is still mainly inhabited by middle class people, but it is a mosaic of very diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Between Downtown LA and the former industrial areas at the Pacific Coast, a large



Exurbanisation. San Bernardino, 2023

post-proletarian zone has consolidated which was historically the main territory of Los Angeles's African-American working class. An extensive exurban zone at the geographical peripheries is inhabited mainly by lower middle-class people with a relatively large proportion of Latinos and African Americans. This zone has become much denser in recent decades, resembling less the relatively sparsely settled agricultural landscapes usually associated with the term 'exurban' in North America, then areas of laminar urbanisation.

These characteristics make Los Angeles a very different territory than it was thirty years ago. It is still a vast, polycentric urban territory, and is still characterised by relatively low-density areas connected by freeways. But it has experienced an astonishing economic and sociospatial transformation. On the one hand, globalisation made Los Angeles one of the world's most ethnically diverse metropolises with a great variety of immigrant communities. On the other, the massive expansion of world city functions, producer services and technopoles induced a radical transformation of some urban areas into spaces for the reproduction of the metropolitan elites.

This has contributed to a 'rediscovery of the urban' that had begun some decades later than in many other Western metropolitan areas. New forms of social exclusion and various processes of gentrification and upgrading have resulted in the displacement of increasing numbers of lower-income people from centrally located neighbourhoods (see e.g. Lin 2019; Huante 2019; Roy 2019). Most spectacular is the development of Downtown LA into a fully commodified centre of the headquarter economy with shopping, leisure and cultural facilities and an adjacent arc of rapidly gentrifying low-income neighbourhoods. It may thus serve as a textbook example of the incorporation of urban differences. Processes of urban upgrading and intensification are visible in Venice and Santa Monica, and in the development of the various centralities in Orange County; more recently gentrification is being reported from many locations across Los Angeles, particularly in the vicinity of Pasadena and Glendale, and also in Orange County. Greater Los Angeles is still an extended polycentric metropolis, but urban intensification and socioeconomic polarisation have profoundly transformed this territory during the first decades of the 21st century.

The title of this chapter refers deliberately to Jennifer Robinson's book title *Ordinary Cities*.

I would like to thank Rob Sullivan who contributed to an earlier version of this chapter, and Ozan Karaman who participated at the mapping interviews and the elaboration of the urban configurations of Los Angeles.

