



Mexico City; Lomas del Chamizal neighbourhood with condominium towers of Santa Fe, Cuajimalpa, 2012



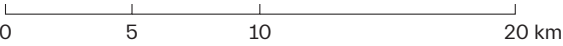
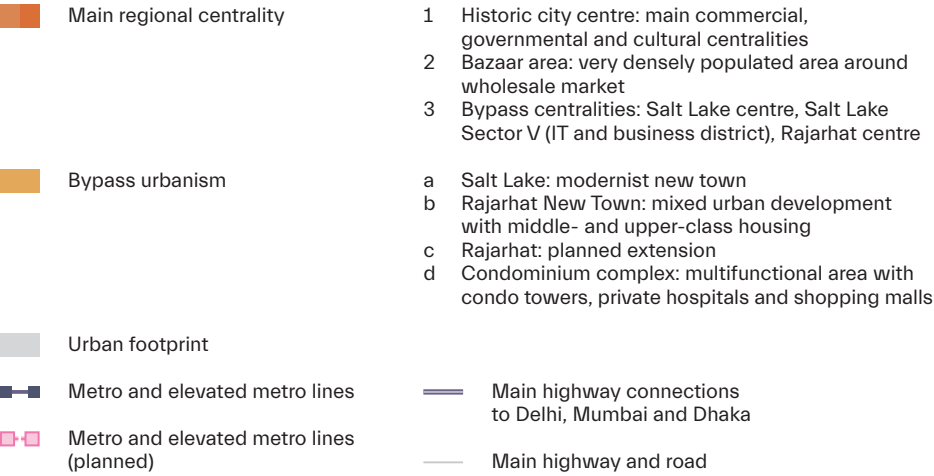
Lagos; company housing estate. Lekki, 2013

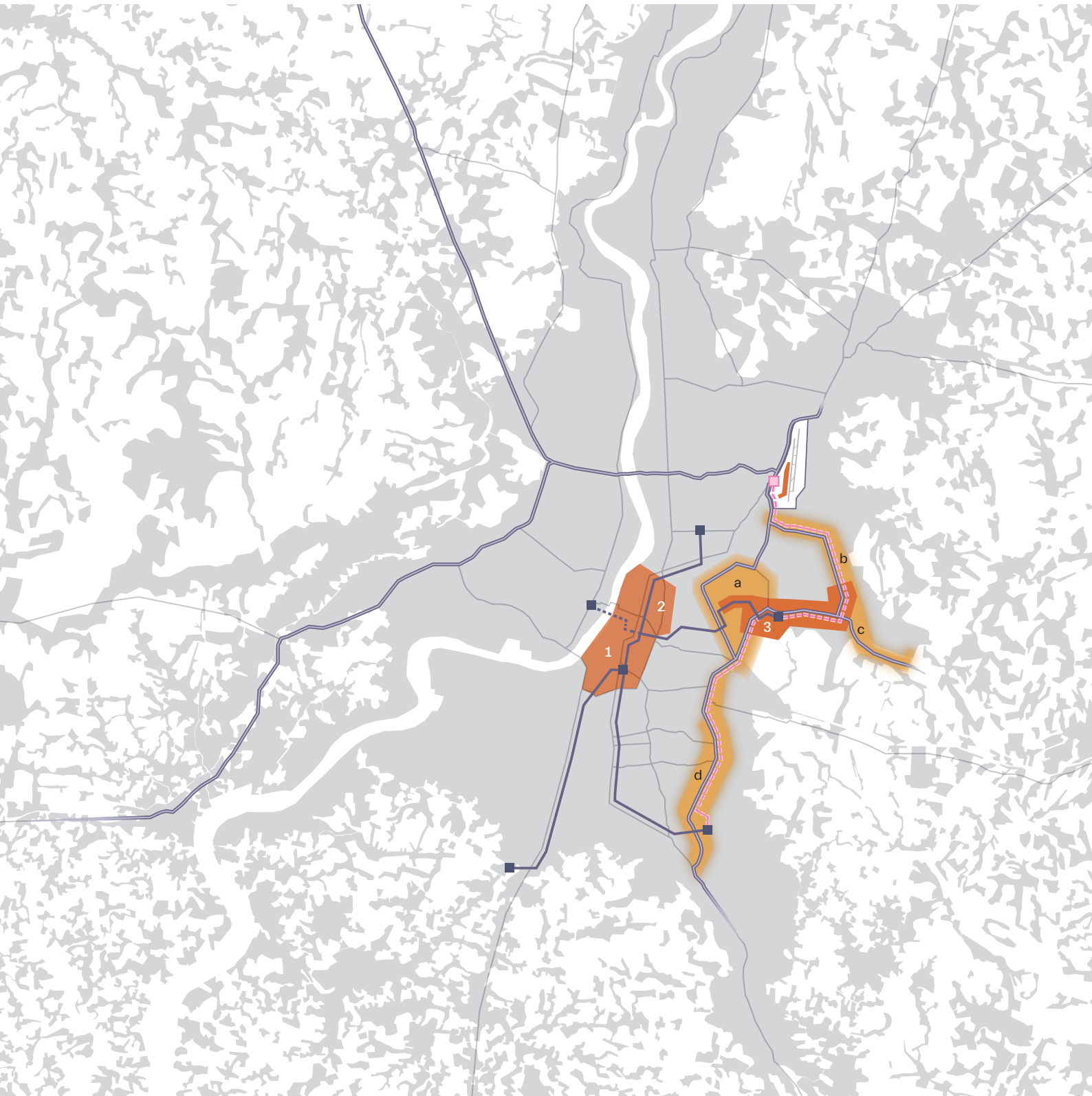
RE-ORDERING CENTRE-PERIPHERY RELATIONS

Kolkata; condominium settlement constructed by Singapore developer. Rajarhat New Town, 2012

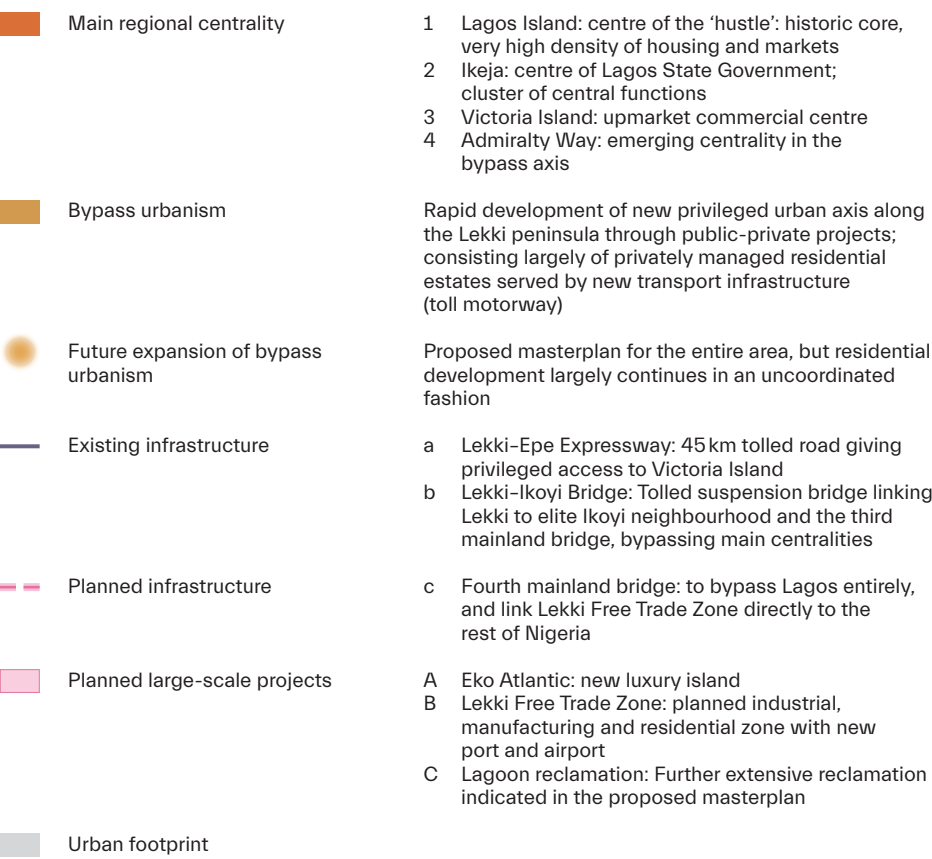


BYPASS URBANISM





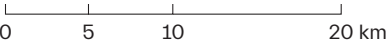
BYPASS URBANISM



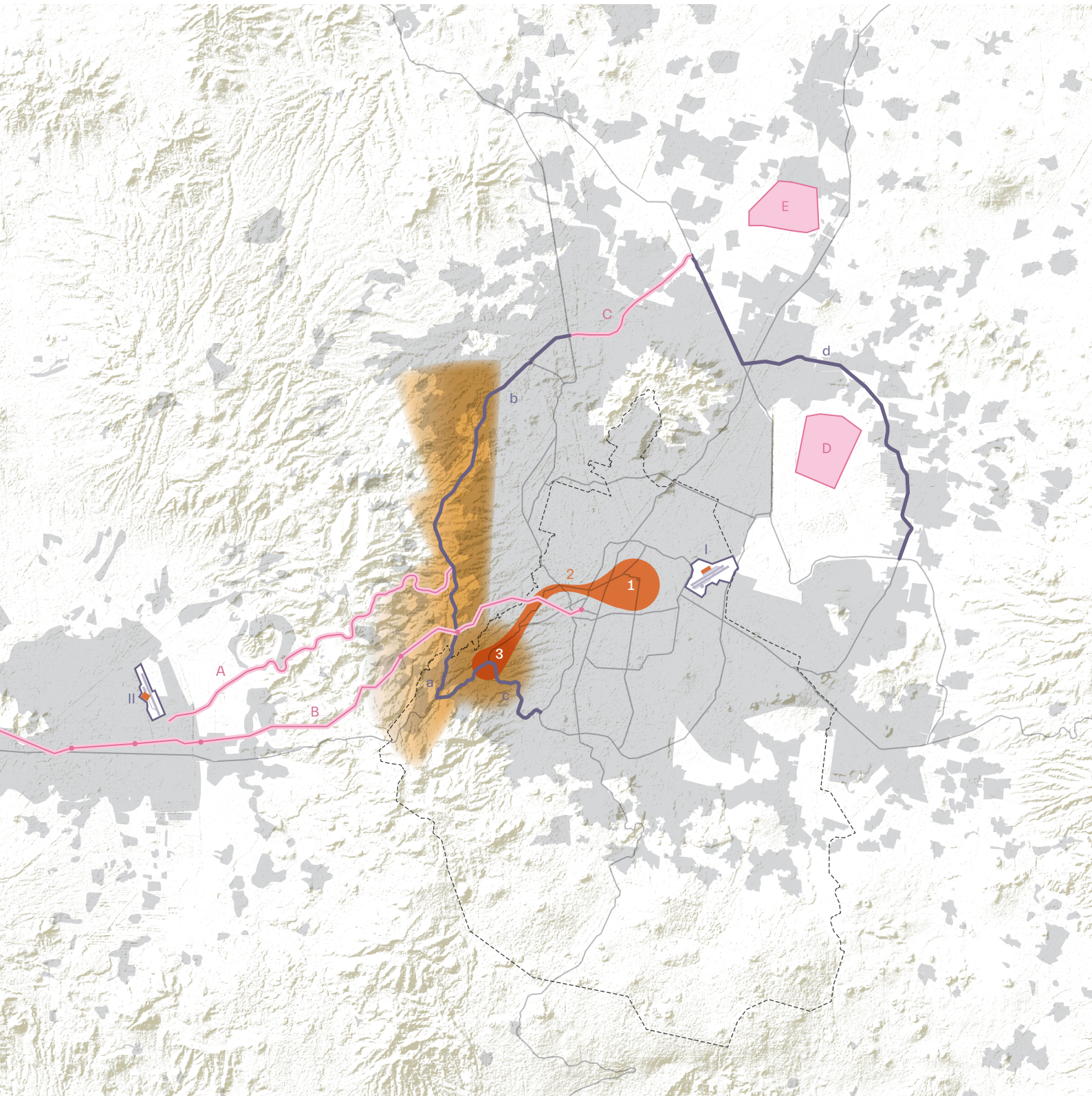
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BYPASS URBANISM

	Main regional centrality	1 2 3 Centro: historic core, cultural, political and urban centrality on a metropolitan scale Paseo de la Reforma: economic and political centrality, losing importance since the development of the new centrality Santa Fe; backbone of established residential areas like Lomas de Chapultepec and Polanco Santa Fe: financial centrality, headquarter economy and emerging CBD; attracting condo development in adjacent residential areas of Interlomas
	Efecto Santa Fe	Production of discontinuous territories induced by new centralities; rapid development of new privileged urban axes through public-private projects; consists mainly of privately managed residential estates served by new toll roads; further development of condominium towers and gated communities in ecological preservation zones
	Existing transport infrastructure	a b c d Autopista Chamapa–La Venta: toll road bypassing the western part of Mexico City connecting Santa Fe and Interlomas Autopista Chamapa–Lechería: extension of the toll road Chamapa–La Venta, connecting Santa Fe and Interlomas with northern residential areas like Esmeralda and Sayavedra Supervía Poniente: Toll flyover linking residential estates and Santa Fe with the main circular highway Periférico Circuito Exterior Mexiquense: Toll road bypassing the eastern part of Mexico City
	Planned large scale infrastructure project	A B C D E Autopista Toluca–Naucalpan: toll road connecting Toluca with Mexico City Tren Interurbano México–Toluca: commuter rail service connecting the western part of Mexico City with the International Airport of Toluca Phase III of Circuito Exterior Mexiquense: further extension of the toll road connecting western and eastern highways to bypass Mexico City in the north NAICM: international airport planned in the federal zone of former lake Texcoco; project officially cancelled after a non-binding referendum in October 2018 AIFA: international airport on the former Santa Lucía Air Force Base; inaugurated in March 2022
	International airport	I II Mexico City International Airport Toluca International Airport
	Urban footprint	
	Main highway	---- Administrative border of CDMX (Ciudad de México)



MEXICO CITY



BYPASSING

This chapter introduces the notion of bypass urbanism to conceptualise a process of urbanisation that reorders the centre-periphery relations of urban regions into new hierarchies. Bypass urbanism became visible through a comparison of large-scale urban transformations at the peripheries of Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City by zooming out and considering their impact on the socio-spatial structure of extended urban regions. Bypass urbanism does not designate the construction of a single new town or one real estate project. It is a result of the simultaneous development of various independent but related projects. Therefore, bypass urbanism usually does not emerge from a coherent planning initiative, even less so from a hidden masterplan at the hands of any single developer or state agency; it emerges through a convergence of interests over large areas of land at the geographical periphery of urban regions that have become available for new urban developments by various measures. We understand bypass urbanism as a multidimensional process that includes material-geographical bypassing, bypassing regulatory frameworks and socioeconomic bypassing in everyday life. It results in the creation of exclusive and exclusionary spaces that enable people to live middle- and upper-class lifestyles, at the same time leading to the peripheralisation of the existing urban areas that it bypasses and neglects. The massive scale of bypass urbanism that we have observed represents a new quality of urban development that does not result in isolated urban enclaves or archipelagos but in the fundamental restructuring of the extended urban region with far-reaching and incalculable repercussions.

THE EMERGENCE OF BYPASS URBANISM

Something astonishing is happening in the urban peripheries, or what were once the peripheries, of Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City. Developments such as highways, airports, tunnels, toll roads and

bridges, private schools, universities and hospitals, business districts, office complexes, industrial parks, shopping malls, gated communities, condominium towers, luxury residences and other real estate projects at various scales have been rapidly built in past decades over huge areas that once were sparsely settled agricultural lands, wetlands, nature reserves, *terrains vagues* or even contaminated areas and dumping grounds at remote locations of these three urban regions.

The massive scale of these transformations became apparent in our research when we compared these extended urban regions; particularly through mapping, which revealed situations that are not easily visible from the ground alone. In each of these urban regions we observed conglomerations of large-scale real estate megaprojects, new centralities and newly constructed urban infrastructure in certain sectors of the urban periphery, resulting in huge affluent and exclusive urban zones that bypass existing urban areas. We name this process bypass urbanism. Similar terms have already been used, such as 'bypass-implant urbanism' (Shatkin 2008) and 'bypass approach to urbanisation' (Bhattacharya and Sanyal 2011) to characterise certain aspects of individual large-scale urban projects at the urban periphery. We use the term here to conceptualise an urbanisation process that goes beyond the reach of even the largest new town or urban megaproject.

Until recently, analyses of such urbanisation processes have focused mostly on individual projects. In Mexico City, Santa Fe has been mainly analysed as an emergent business district and the adjacent neighbourhood Interlomas is famous for the proliferation of gated communities (Jones and Moreno-Carranco 2007; Parnreiter 2011; Tamayo 2001; Valenzuela 2007). In Lagos the rapid urbanisation of the Lekki corridor between Lekki Phase I estate and Epe is gaining increasing attention because of its private housing estates, the violent forced evictions that took place there and its negative effects on the environment (Heinrich Böll Stiftung Nigeria 2014; Lawanson and Agunbiade 2018; Uduku 2010). The adjacent new town Eko Atlantic is noted as one of the new megaprojects in sub-Saharan cities (Mendelsohn 2018; Murray 2015; Watson 2014). In Kolkata there is a growing body of literature on the new town developments of Salt Lake and Rajarhat New Town (see e.g. Das 2020; Dey et al. 2016; Rumbach 2014, 2017; Sen 2017). However, these projects need to be addressed in a comprehensive analysis of the extended urban region by scrutinising the combined effects of new transport connections and the interplay of various megaprojects which are transforming entire sectors of the urban periphery into new parallel cities that bypass large parts of each urban area under study. These findings were stimulated by the decentring perspective offered by the planetary urbanisation approach (Brenner and Schmid 2015; Schmid 2018).

By positioning ourselves at the peripheries of these urban areas it was possible to invert the usual centripetal perspective and to look from emerging urban territories on the outskirts towards the existing centre.

Our methodology was based on iterative rounds of field research in each urban region by individual researchers who used mobile and multi-sited ethnographic methods, interviews with inhabitants and a comprehensive consideration of the works of local scholars (Kallenberger 2018; Sawyer 2016; Streule 2016, 2018, 2019a). Mapping was the key tool for making these comparisons, as it allowed us to move analytically and imaginatively across different contexts to identify emergent similarities. Bypass urbanism is one such specific urbanisation process that emerged in our comparison in three of our eight case studies; namely, Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City.

In the following, we explore the characteristics of bypass urbanism and propose an analysis that leads to a revisable conceptualisation, which is open to further examination and discussion. Lekki corridor and Eko Atlantic in Lagos, Rajarhat and Salt Lake City in Kolkata, Santa Fe and Interlomas in Mexico City, together with a range of infrastructural projects almost constitute huge parallel cities on their own. The maps of the bypass processes reveal the scale of this transformation of peripheral areas. It looks almost as if new cities are coming into existence, bypassing the existing urban areas in terms of the material structure of the urban fabric, the territorial regulations that apply and their socio-economic characteristics. It is thus our hypothesis that the entire urban region is being reconfigured through the production of various emerging centralities and new transport networks with the resulting off-centring of the urban structure. The emergence of heterogeneous but powerful alliances of various state and private actors and the concomitant transformation of regulations specific to these projects are also shaping and defining a process of urbanisation that bypasses conventional modes of urban and regional governance. Our study shows that these actors do not follow a clear, predefined masterplan or overarching strategy, but that the logic of capital accumulation and commodification is resulting in a new kind of urbanism that affects people inside and outside the bypass areas. The comparison of these three very different contexts suggests that the process also leads towards a peripheralisation of other parts of the urban region as socioeconomic inequalities are deepened and enshrined in the reordering of the urban fabric.

The following section explores the idea of bypassing in recent literature on urban megaprojects and new towns in large and fast-growing southern urban regions. We focus particularly on the deepening of socio-spatial segregation and the reinforcement of socioeconomic inequality, the inclusion of complex alliances of actors in the public

and private sectors in planning practices, and the increasing role of (global) corporate power and private investors in the urbanisation process. We then develop our specific understanding of bypass urbanism by bringing together a range of features to conceptualise a multidimensional process of urbanisation. The following sections present detailed discussions of bypass urbanism in Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City, which the final section will draw together to propose a more detailed and nuanced definition of bypass urbanism.

URBAN MEGAPROJECTS AND NEW TOWNS: BYPASSING AS METAPHOR IN URBAN STUDIES

Large-scale urban developments in urban peripheries are not a new phenomenon. They have been framed through terms such as ‘new towns’ and ‘satellite towns’, usually without distinguishing whether they are built by the state or privately, or considering their specific spatial forms and concrete locations in different urban regions (see Gotsch 2009). As Murray (2017: 55) points out, such concepts were originally deeply rooted in modernist planning principles that aimed at taming and controlling the chaos of urban life: new planned towns at the urban periphery were intended to create ideal urban landscapes characterised by the imposition of a rational order. In past decades, however, the character of such urban megaprojects has changed profoundly. As neoliberal urban governance practices take hold they are increasingly being developed as private, gated luxury enclaves, designed to meet the world-class aspirations of real estate developers and corporate elites (Murray 2017: 165). They are usually located at the geographical peripheries of existing urban regions and are clearly and intentionally segregated, with the aim of attracting the new urban middle classes and excluding the rest of the population. Developers sell these buyers the image of prestigious and exclusive, modern, healthy lifestyles in highly securitised and green surroundings (see e.g. Datta and Shaban 2017).

The metaphor of bypassing is alluded to in various contributions on these developments. Chakravorty (2000: 71) states that Kolkata’s new towns Salt Lake and Rajarhat would ‘bypass the city’s ills—poor infrastructure, slums and poverty’. Referring to Jakarta, Firman (2004: 358) notes that the choice many people make to move to a new town reflects their desire for new modes of everyday life, separate from, but close to, the amenities of the existing city, thus avoiding congestion, pollution and lack of space. For Metro Manila, Shatkin describes a form of ‘bypass-implant urbanism’ that meets the ‘imperative of the private sector to seek opportunities for profit by cutting

through the congested and decaying spaces of the “public city” to allow for the freer flow of people and capital and to implant spaces for new forms of production and consumption into the urban fabric’ (2008: 388).

By analysing new towns on the outskirts of major urban regions in India, Bhattacharya and Sanyal (2011: 42) note the emergence of a ‘bypass approach to urbanisation’ where ‘older metropolitan centers are ceded to the existing mix of wealth and squalor, while new towns are developed as the location of a new economy and a new class of producers and consumers’, with the consequence that people are displaced to make way for the new urban elites. Rumbach (2014: 118) writes of Salt Lake in Kolkata that ‘this “bypass urbanism” seeks to create new zones of exclusivity, where urban elites can, from a comfortable distance, enjoy the amenities of the metropolis, and its informal labor force’. However, as various researchers have observed (see e.g. Bhattacharya and Sanyal 2011; Datta and Shaban 2017; Rumbach 2014; Shatkin 2008, 2017), this advertised and much desired mode of segregation may reveal a range of contradictory effects once it is realised: often these projects worsen the commuter congestion they are supposed to alleviate; the built forms do not always live up to shiny brochures and in many cases the plans are only partially implemented. These ‘urban fantasies’ (Watson 2014) are confronted with the deep poverty of everyday realities and emerging economic and financial crises, and entire new towns remain unfinished and appear more like ghost towns than new middle-class paradises.

The construction of new towns usually reinforces existing uneven urban development and access to public infrastructure, reconfiguring the urban fabric and exacerbating socio-spatial inequalities and segregation (Wang et al. 2010). These large-scale projects divert public (and potentially private) investment away from existing urban areas and their lower income groups, compounding the problems that arise from longstanding infrastructural deficiencies (Bhattacharya and Sanyal 2011; Firman 2004; Ghertner 2014; Shatkin 2008; Siemiatycki 2011). The market-driven rationality for these developments (for example, privately funded toll roads) gives privileged access to them for those who can afford the associated charges (Ong 2006). These mechanisms have the effect of widening pre-existing socioeconomic disparities, and while socio-spatial segregation is not new in most of these urban regions, it is being reinforced on an unprecedented scale by the development of such new towns (Datta 2017; Firman 2004; Garrido 2013; Shatkin 2008; Wang et al. 2010). These large-scale urban projects can be realised only by the provision of new modes of urban governance, in which private regulatory regimes shield these enclaves of wealthy people from public oversight and interference, leading to an ‘urbanism of exception’ (Murray 2017).

Such projects often violate existing master-plans and land-use plans and are very poorly executed, with only short-term profit-oriented goals. Many researchers observe that global private developers are given increasing power in urban and regional planning, and public-private sector relationships are being reshaped so large-scale developments can be implemented. This is what Shatkin (2008) calls 'the privatisation of urban and regional planning' and Garrido (2013) calls 'corporate planning'. In China, state entrepreneurialism promoting urban projects on the outskirts of major urban regions has been a prominent theme for quite some time (Lin 2014; Shih 2017; Wu and Phelps 2011). In general, Shatkin (2017: xiii) identifies a 'real estate turn' in urban politics as a result of a range of reforms in urban governance, land management and state-community relations, in which state actors play an active role in making land available for urban development to increase their power and authority. He raises the hypothesis that in an era when state actors face intense fiscal constraints and are exposed to vagaries of global investment and finance, they increasingly seek to exploit opportunities to monetise urban land. He sees these tendencies as being the result of a convergence of state, corporate and real estate interests, leading to new strategies of rent-seeking and land commodification (Shatkin 2017: 214).

These new modes of governance involve controversial methods of land acquisition, which are often seen as a way of masking predatory land grabs. In order to consolidate large tracts, state actors and private developers often apply unscrupulous and unfair strategies, which are hard for local actors to counteract as they are relatively powerless and disorganised by comparison (Bhattacharya and Sanyal 2011; Firman 2004; Ghertner 2014; Rumbach 2014). Sometimes the violent displacement of residents living and working in the area can spark various forms of resistance, contestation and subversion by the existing land-users (Shatkin 2011; Wang et al. 2010). While megaprojects are usually justified by claims that they bring about economic growth and environmental sustainability and that they provide much-needed infrastructure, there is little accountability as to whether these goals have been achieved or not, to say nothing of systems for evaluating their long-term effects (Datta 2017). Nevertheless, the concrete social and environmental impacts of these projects and the roles of various actors involved in the development process vary hugely according to context and must be carefully differentiated (see also Hogan et al. 2012: 61).

The scholarly work discussed so far predominantly refers to discrete urban developments, such as specific real estate or infrastructure projects. While the massive restructuring impacts of such projects are often clearly visible, most analyses focus on individual projects and treat them as isolated islands—as terms such as 'satellites', 'new towns',

or 'luxury enclaves' indicate—while the broader spatial context in which they are located is often not analysed. Only very recently has the large territorial scale of urban development come into perspective. One example is Datta and Shaban's (2017) edited volume, which presents various observations about the emergence of unprecedented modes and scales of transformation of peripheral areas in urban regions of Asia and Africa. These new urban zones, which they term 'fast cities' emphasising the rapidity of development, bypass the pressing challenges of existing megacities and may lead to the development of urban mega-clusters and new industrial corridors (Datta 2017: 9).

THE CONCEPT OF BYPASS URBANISM

Throughout the works discussed here, the notion of 'bypass' appears quite often as a metaphor, mostly in the sense of bypassing planning instruments and territorial regulations, local actors and existing modes of everyday life. In our own comparison of Kolkata, Lagos and Mexico City we arrived at a much more literal notion of bypass urbanism. We used it to describe the material urbanisation process unfolding along the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass in Kolkata, which became the backbone of the development of a large urban corridor of varying width including new shopping malls, private hospitals, business centres and condo towers. The obvious result of this kind of urban development is not the production of an isolated enclave or an archipelago of wealth and luxury, but a fundamental restructuring of the entire urban region with far-reaching and incalculable repercussions. In our terminology we extend the range of meanings expressed by bypass urbanism to capture a multi-dimensional urbanisation process that includes material-geographical bypassing, bypassing of territorial regulations and socioeconomic bypassing in everyday life.

Firstly, in our usage bypass urbanism involves a series of projects that together initiate the development of an entirely new urban configuration at the edge of an urban region. This includes new infrastructures such as airports, ports, highways, tunnels, toll roads and bridges; urban amenities such as private schools and hospitals, malls, private universities, golf courses, recreation facilities; as well as real estate projects, new towns and technology centres. All these projects together have the effect of physically bypassing the existing urban area. In this way, a fundamentally new model of urbanisation is introduced into the extended urban region.

Secondly, in order to be implemented, the production of these large-scale urban projects usually cut short or circumvent existing territorial regulations and planning procedures or take

advantage of certain 'flexibilities' and grey legal areas in the regulatory system. These projects involve alliances of various private and state actors, and often expand the reach of the private sector into urban planning and reinforce the entrepreneurial role of the public sector.

Thirdly, bypass urbanism offers an alternative to the messiness of existing urban space by the creation of exclusive and exclusionary urban spaces that enable comfortable or prestigious lifestyles to a limited group of people. In terms of everyday life, they bypass large parts of the urban region, reinforcing tendencies of uneven urban development, socioeconomic segregation and peripheralisation. We now discuss each of our case studies in turn and then return to the elaboration of bypass urbanism as an emergent urbanisation process.

THE KOLKATA EASTERN BYPASS: MORE THAN JUST A HIGHWAY

Travelling from the central Bazar area to Salt Lake, we left the dense and congested urban core and drove slowly eastwards, noticing a steep gradient in manifestations of urban wealth. The roads became narrower and bumpier and most of vehicles using the road changed from the yellow Tata Indigo cabs to motor and cycle rickshaws. Suddenly, the road turned into an unpaved track leading through a poor popular neighbourhood. Just as we thought we were driving in the wrong direction, the scenery abruptly changed and we arrived at a highway bordered by buildings with shiny glass facades and skyscrapers under construction. We had reached the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass. While the urban centre of Kolkata slowly decays, new projects of an immense scale and scope are emerging on the eastern urban edges. In the East Kolkata Wetlands, a roughly 30 km long urban corridor has been developed from the International Airport in the north, passing the rapidly developing Rajarhat New Town and the modernist satellite town of Salt Lake and following the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass all the way to the south-eastern outskirts of Patuli Township and New Garia area. Along this corridor, hundreds of condominium towers and office blocks and a wide range of private hospitals, shopping malls, luxury hotels, private high schools, universities and

Kolkata, food stalls in front of condominium towers, Rajarhat New Town, 2012



a science museum have been built. Many more such projects are under construction or being planned.

The beginnings of Kolkata's bypass urbanism have somehow remained obscure. Chakravorty recalls how he became aware of the existence of the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass in the early 1980s, when he took it regularly to reach his new home in Salt Lake. When his friends found out that he used the bypass—which was then just a two-lane road—as late as 11 o'clock at night they were 'foreboding and solicitous', warning him about 'dacoits' (armed robbers) (2014: 184). The construction of the new town in Salt Lake, where he lived,

was in its first stage. Until the mid-20th century, Kolkata had developed mainly along the Hooghly River, one of the many tributaries of the Ganges. Towards the east the land gently declines to marshland, jungles and tidal lakes, forming an important nature reserve as well as an economically and ecologically vibrant region (see Bose 2015: 91). Through its unique ecological system, domestic wastewater from Kolkata is disgorged and cleaned in these wetlands and produces nutrients for growing vegetables and fish farming (Dey and Banerjee 2017). The first plans by the state to build an urban extension for Kolkata's fast growing lower- and middle-class population in the municipality of Bidhannagar date back to the late 1940s. They followed the tabula rasa planning model of modernist new towns of the time, such as Chandigarh and Brasilia. Land reclamation began in 1962 and the first houses were ready for occupation in 1970, but further development proceeded slowly. It was not until 1981 that the population of Salt Lake exceeded 10,000, but by 2011 it had reached about 276,000 (see Rumbach 2017: 5). During the planning process, multifamily apartment buildings for the middle-class were replaced in the plan by more up-market, detached single-family houses, and plots originally intended for civic amenities and green spaces were illegally transferred to well-connected individuals and commercial developers. Furthermore, state actors were responsible for recurrent demolitions of villages and repeated evictions of hawkers and street vendors from public spaces, often using the argument that their presence would conflict with the desired aesthetic and function of a planned modern city (Rumbach 2017).

From a broad perspective, this change can be seen as the result of a paradigm shift from a developmentalist towards a neoliberal or 'post-Marxist' (Sen 2017) planning regime. From 1976 to 2011 the state of West Bengal was governed by the Left Front led by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). Its main focus was land reform and reduction of rural poverty (see e.g. Bose 2015: 81; Sen 2017: 193). Urban development policies were neglected and limited to the improvement of *bustees* (poor tenement settlements). This changed around 1986, when restructuring within the CPI-M prefigured a turn towards neoliberalism within the party. On a national level, this change fully unfolded only after the economic crisis of 1991, when the negative Indian trade balance and a massive fiscal deficit led to the devaluation of the Indian rupee and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank forced the government of India to make wide-ranging economic and financial 'adjustments' so they would be eligible for emergency loans. The urban development of Kolkata was greatly slowed down by this crisis. It had already been held back for decades by Kolkata's weak economy and it was further hampered by a 'politics of deliberate uncertainty' (Roy 2003) in relation to landownership. This



Kolkata; traditional centrality. Bazaar area, 2012

policy was used by the Left Front to take state control of urban development, in a situation where most of the urban and agrarian land was marked by multiple claims of ownership (see also Shatkin 2011).

At the beginning of the new millennium Kolkata started to catch up with the booming Indian economy and underwent great growth in financial and producer services. As a result, the last undeveloped part of Salt Lake was developed into an information technology (IT) hub. At the same time, the West Bengal government changed its approach to become much more business friendly. Sen (2017: 195) cites an urban regeneration programme from 1996 that was directed against hawkers and street vendors as a turning point. Roy (2004: 152) notes that 'the New Economic Policy of the Left Front has taken hold most vigorously on the eastern fringes of Calcutta' and that the urban developmentalism of the 'new communism' remained Marxist only in its radical rhetoric, while it started to enact a neoliberal agenda by bypassing its own regulations; most notably restrictions on the urbanisation of agricultural land (Roy 2004: 153). Shatkin (2017: 160) explains this policy change as emanating from the growing interest of the Left Front in fully seizing opportunities for economic growth through land monetisation and the commodification of urban space in order to strengthen its political and economic influence.

After the development of several upper-income housing projects using public-private partnerships the Government of West Bengal launched the Rajarhat New Town project adjacent to the IT hub in Salt Lake, on fertile agricultural land with long-established villages, orchards, ponds and wetlands. The name is somewhat confusing because the municipality of Rajarhat, stretching from the north of Salt Lake to the airport and with about 400,000 inhabitants (in 2011), is not part of the new town. Rajarhat New Town, an area of about 3,075 ha with about 190,000 inhabitants (in 2011) is located outside the municipality of Rajarhat towards the south-east (see Biswas and Singh 2017). It was announced as being a green, eco-friendly and socially inclusive smart city in the 1993 concept plan of the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority. In 1999 the execution of the project was handed over to the development corporation WBHIDCO (West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation), a public-private partnership between the State of West Bengal (that held 51 per cent of the shares) and private investors. This corporation acquired the land and leased it to developers and private owners, securing funds from capital markets and building the necessary infrastructure. Based on a law dating from 1894, the government forced farmers to sell their land directly. This forced acquisition of the land, combined with the government's lack of transparency and unfair compensation which

generated huge windfall profits for the government and its partners, and finally a range of forced evictions and demolitions, created widespread resistance and controversy (see e.g. Das 2020; Dey et al. 2016; Kundu 2016; Sengupta 2013). However, due to the piecemeal procedure of the project and the poor farmers' low level of organisation the new town project proceeded relatively quickly.

The Left Front's model of land acquisition came under pressure in 2006 when the government of West Bengal tried to acquire about 400 ha of agricultural land in Singur in the north-western part of Kolkata to develop a factory and a related settlement for the production of the Nano, Tata Motors' new low-cost car (see Shatkin 2017: 157). After the project met with powerful and widespread opposition by farmers, activists, NGOs, academics and opposition parties, Tata decided to locate the factory at Ahmedabad (Mallik 2017). The long-term fallout from this and other scandals was that the Left Front lost its majority in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly to the new All India Trinamool Congress in 2011 (see e.g. Das 2020; Sen 2017).

The overall plan and development pattern for Rajarhat New Town did not change substantially with the new government. The first part of about 2700 ha was close to completion in 2020. It consists of the usual high-rise gated residential complexes, a number of important global and regional IT and real estate companies, institutes of higher education, luxury hotels and several big malls. In contrast, the second part of Rajarhat New Town still sits in a splintered and rugged landscape, with some patches of new high-rise apartment buildings, together with scattered construction sites and fallow land. The proudly announced Kolkata Museum of Modern Art, designed by award-winning Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron is just an excavation pit. The rest of the designated new town area contains 16 pockets of remaining villages, some recent popular settlements, agricultural land with herds of cattle grazing and the last remaining wetlands and ponds (see also Basu et al. 2020; Mitra and Banerji 2018). There are several reasons for buying an apartment in the bypass area:¹ On the one hand, Kolkata's emerging middle and upper middle-class residents are looking for fashionable apartments where they can live that are less crowded and less noisy. On the other hand, a large number of individual and corporate investors are buying here for speculative reasons. Some of them, mostly non-resident Indians who live in North America or Europe, are looking for apartments as potential residences for their retirement. Others, such as immigrants from other parts of India who work for a few years in Kolkata's IT sector, are buying (instead of renting) apartments as an investment. Additionally, some companies acquire apartments as housing for their staff. It is noteworthy that the luxury speculative tower developments in Rajarhat were until recently occupied only sparsely,

whereas the small condominium towers produced for the local market sold much more quickly, particularly if the developers agreed to make compromises with the local residents (see also Shatkin 2017 for the Bata Riverside project).

The construction of Rajarhat New Town in an already densely populated area with about 250,000 inhabitants in 1991 (see Basu et al. 2020) had massive consequences. It led to displacing residents and farmers from their land and the concomitant loss of their livelihood (Das 2020) as well as to their cultural marginalisation (Huque 2018), ambivalent changes in gender relations (Dhar 2016), and increasing dependency upon unstable sources of income (Mallik 2017). Kundu (2016) shows in detail the contradictory relationships that have emerged between the newcomers and the old-established residents in this area. Many of those who lost their land now work as servants, house-keepers, security guards, drivers and cleaners for the wealthy newcomers. Others have opened shops and food stalls in front of the new office towers, or rent out parts of their homes to poor migrants from other parts of the country. 'Though villagers agreed that some job opportunities had opened up, these were few and far between and gave them little dignity' (Kundu 2016: 97).

A similar situation developed in the southern part of the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, where all sorts of private real estate projects mushroomed, creating massive intrusions onto the wetlands with new office blocks, hotels, private hospitals and amusement parks. These projects could be realised only through various deals involving the illegal filling of ponds and lakes, and the demolition of popular settlements and evictions, often affecting poor migrant communities (see Bose 2015: 91; Mukherjee and Chakraborty 2016). This bypass urbanism is currently gaining even more traction, propelled by the recent extension of Kolkata's Metro Line 2 from the centre to Salt Lake and the construction of the new elevated Line 5 along the entire Eastern Metropolitan Bypass. These investments at the urban edge go hand in hand with disinvestment in central Kolkata, not only because of the congested urban situation but also because many houses in the inner city are subject to various different claims to ownership, which is stalling reinvestment. Urban development is thus figuratively and literally bypassing the historical centre and diverting most governmental and private investment towards the bypass area, creating a new kind of social segregation (see also Antenucci 2017).

Bypass urbanism in Kolkata has not followed a predefined path. Despite the fact that the State of West Bengal took the lead, it was not guided by a clearly defined masterplan and a coherent development strategy. The underlying reason for bypass urbanism in Kolkata was the political change from a developmentalist strategy focusing on rural areas towards a neoliberal urban policy. This change

was not expressed by new investments in the urban centre but found its expression in the urban periphery where new urban projects were easier to establish. Bypass urbanism was thus the result of several, sometimes haphazard, attempts by West Bengal's government to urbanise rural land in various locations of the urban region. While some of these attempts failed badly, others succeeded. Faced by strong opposition in some places, the government developed those areas where the lowest resistance occurred—in the eastern wetlands. Thus, behind the back of individual actors and state planners, a range of projects developed, resulting not in a patchwork of urban enclaves, nor in an archipelago of wealth and modernity, but condensing into an entirely new urban configuration. The Kolkata Eastern Bypass can almost be seen as the paradigmatic case of a new kind of urban corridor, bypassing large parts of the urban region together with their vivid and rich cultural, political and social urban life.

THE LEKKI CORRIDOR: 'THIS IS LAGOS!' 'THIS IS NOT LAGOS!'

To travel out from the Lekki peninsula located between the Atlantic and the Lagos Lagoon residents suddenly had choices: they could either take the toll Lekki-Epe Expressway to reach Ikoyi and Victoria Island, Lagos's major centres, or the toll Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge to bypass them to get directly to mainland Lagos, where the main part of the metropolitan region is located as well as the city government, airport and university. This is a novel luxury in Lagos, where the chronic lack of transport connections across the waterways and marshy terrains has contributed to its notoriously bad congestion. The toll expressway dating from 2012 and the toll bridge dating from 2014 were the first major pieces of infrastructure to be built in Lagos for two decades, and they serve almost exclusively the wealthy residents on the Lekki peninsula.

Today, the Lekki corridor is massive in scale. it stretches along the Lekki-Epe Expressway from the Lekki Phase I settlement, with its luxury housing estates and commercial areas adjacent to Lagos's central islands, through the mixed areas of Ajah and Ibeju Lekki, to the fast-growing Lekki Free Trade Zone (LFTZ) near Epe, some 45 km down the expressway. One source estimates that the entire area covers about 60,000 ha. In only one decade the Lekki corridor has become the new place for wealthy private residential estates, private schools and new industrial developments (Lawanson and Agunbiade 2018). Lagos's privileged areas have ballooned from small elite strongholds such as Ikoyi or Apapa in central areas to the almost open-ended expanse of the Lekki corridor. Lekki Phase I is emerging as a new centrality in its own right and is hugely popular with Lagos's elites and upper-middle classes. This leads to an ambivalent situation where, as expressed in an exchange between a resident of Lekki and a resident of Ikoyi, the Lekki corridor can either be seen as an extension of Lagos or as something that is 'not Lagos'.² On the one hand, this kind of urban development is what people have been waiting for for a long time: readily available land and housing, with fast and direct links to the centre and with easier and more secure procedures for renting and buying houses ('This is Lagos!'). On the other hand, Lekki is a world away from the defining hustle and energy of Lagos ('This is NOT Lagos!'). From either perspective, this kind of urban development is changing the structure and dynamics of the entire urban region. Bypass urbanism is producing an urban fabric with material, regulatory and everyday experiences that are vastly different from the rest of Lagos.

Territorial regulation in the bypass area is quite different from the usual method of urban development in Lagos, which we have called plotting urbanism (see Chapter 13; Sawyer 2016), which is the unplanned, plot-by-plot development of land where statutory and customary rights are intertwined in a dual land regime, causing widespread disputes and fraudulent activities over landownership, land divisions and property transfers (Sawyer 2014). In contrast, in 2003 almost the entire Lekki corridor underwent what is still the largest acquisition by the government of land in Lagos to date. During the acquisition powerful traditional landowners retained some key areas of prime land



Lagos; private estate development. Lekki-Epe Corridor, 2012

and small traditional landowning families were able to claim back land through a process of 'land excision' (Lagos Development Envision Lab 2020). Thus, traditional landowners retained control to develop their land, but nominally have to comply with statutory regulations.

This procedure has led to a new power relationship among the state and powerful land-owners and to patterns of urban development that differ from those elsewhere in Lagos. Statutory and customary landownership regimes are more clearly delineated and the availability of large swathes of state-owned or excised undeveloped land has led to the proliferation of large housing estates. Private developers do not have to go through protracted negotiations for each individual plot (as described in detail in Chapter 14; see also Sawyer 2016) as they can obtain legal titles for large pieces of land in one fell swoop, either directly from the government or from traditional landowners who have officially excised land. Some powerful landowners in prime locations, such as the Oniru and Elegushi families, have profited massively from developing their excised land in Lekki.

The Lekki peninsula is very marshy and requires much investment for infilling; it is prone to flooding by ocean surges on the Atlantic coast and very serious coastal erosion that threatens existing communities living in coastal areas (Mendelsohn 2018). It was therefore only sparsely populated at the time of its acquisition by government, with the exception of Maroko, a vibrant popular settlement of 300,000 people which was situated in the western part of the Lekki peninsula on land of the Oniru family. The residents had been originally relocated to Maroko after government clearances of Lagos's centre in the 1950s (Agbola and Jinadu,

1997). In the early 1980s both the Oniru family and the government began to develop plans for the Lekki corridor and to agitate for the clearance of Maroko. The Oniru family sought to evict Maroko's residents by citing non-payment of rents and the end of a 25-year lease agreement. The military government then razed Maroko in 1990 with no notice or compensation, claiming that an attempted coup had been hatched by its residents (Agbola and Jinadu, 1997). The clearance of Maroko is an example of the blatant collusion between the state and powerful customary families (Soyinka, 1999). Violent forced evictions have continued along the Lekki corridor right up to the present, with one of the most recent examples being the Otodo Gbame neighbourhood (Amnesty International 2018; Mendelsohn 2018). Lekki became notorious once again when peaceful protestors of the #EndSARS movement were shot and killed at Lekki toll gate in October 2020 by soldiers, allegedly with the acquiescence of the Lagos State government (Busari et al. 2020).

However, little development took place following the clearance of Maroko due to the continuation and deepening of Nigeria's social, political and economic crises during the 1990s. Although the state encouraged urban development by offering subsidies, levies and the release of newly acquired government land (Al-Handasah 2011: 82), private developers and even customary landowners were reluctant to invest in Lekki and the government had little financial capacity or political will to carry out its plans (Kuris 2014). It was not until its acquisition by government in 2003 that the development of Lekki began in earnest. After the return of a civilian democratic government in 1999 Lagos entered a period of unprecedented stability and growth: over the course of six consecutive terms with the same political party in office,³ Lagos State Government has focused on re-engineering its internal sources of finance, gained access to global financial markets and maintained an agenda of infrastructural development and public service reform (Cheeseman and de Gramont 2017).

Another catalyst for bypass urbanism has been the construction of new transport infrastructure. The Lekki-Epe Expressway and Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge were constructed and are operated using public-private partnerships. Rapid development around the western part of the expressway on land owned by Lagos State (Lekki Phase I) and the Oniru family (Oniru estate) helped to accelerate urbanisation. This continuous political stability, together with the proven commitment of the state and visible progress encouraged a range of additional actors to invest in properties in Lekki, including middle-class residents, the diaspora, companies seeking accommodation for their expat workers and developers. In retrospect, we can see that bypass urbanism needed just the right conditions to



Lagos; market stalls and housing in old Lagos. Lagos Island, 2013



flourish: land that was available, clear land tenure regimes, political stability, political will, a deficit of middle-class housing, public financing mechanisms and efficient tools of urban governance to enable private investment.

While the development of the Lekki corridor marks an important departure from the usual process of urbanisation in Lagos, it also reproduces some of the existing patterns. The same infra-structural deficiencies exist in Lekki as in the rest of Lagos: there is no piped water, no centralised sanitation and sparse electricity supply from the grid (Adedire and Babatunde 2018). This makes private developers, residents' associations and individuals responsible for infrastructure provision on their estates. Additionally, despite being under stronger government control and receiving more investment than ordinary neighbourhoods, the effects of poor planning are painfully obvious: building regulations and development controls are frequently circumvented; natural drainage channels are often blocked, contributing to bad flooding; many roads, even in the government schemes, are still unsurfaced; and the Lekki-Epe Expressway is already congested.

Nevertheless, Lekki offers the possibility of a relatively high quality of living and a desirable lifestyle for those who can afford it. The expressway, the choice of housing and new centralities combine to make Lekki an extremely desirable location. The Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge has had a particularly marked impact: it is very popular with residents as an iconic landmark and has become something of a promenade. Admiralty Way, where the bridge meets Lekki Phase I, has been redeveloped into a new upmarket commercial zone, with malls, bars, galleries, boutiques, restaurants and spaces for events. In this initially unregulated area, the state government not only tolerated the conversion from residential to commercial uses but encouraged the emerging centrality by increasing the permitted building height and essentially rezoning it. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Lekki tollgate became an important site during the #EndSARS protests of 2020, which were driven by young Nigerians protesting against police brutality and, amongst other things, being targeted for being 'fresh' for having smartphones, laptops, natural hair and nice clothes.

The amenities here are very exclusive, entrenching stark socioeconomic and socio-spatial inequalities. The Lekki-Ikoyi Bridge, for example, does not allow public transport and the high tolls make it prohibitively expensive for many, although it is an important piece of public investment and infrastructure. Housing estates are heavily guarded and gated by both state police and privately organised security companies, who limit and control access not only to the estates but to supposedly public areas and streets (Uduku 2010). However, an entire population of service workers is also very visible in these luxury estates, including housekeepers,

cooks, security guards, guards of empty plots, construction workers and tailors. The small provision stalls that pop up to cater for their needs introduce a contrasting rhythm and character to the locked-down streets, bringing a bit of old Lagos to new Lekki.

Currently, two additional megaprojects are underway that are expanding bypass urbanism: the LFTZ at the eastern end of the Lekki corridor, which promises to be a 'model mega-industrial city'⁴ with a new deep-sea port, new industrial and manufacturing zones, residential development and tourism—and even a new airport (see Lawanson and Agunbiade 2018), displacing key functions in existing urban areas. Further, Aliko Dangote, known as one of Africa's richest businessmen, is rapidly constructing a new oil refinery near the LFTZ, which is increasing land speculation and investor confidence. On the opposite side, at the very western edge of the corridor, the new town Eko Atlantic is steadily becoming a reality. This new exclusive enclave, planned for 250,000 residents and 150,000 commuters, has been built on reclaimed land in the Atlantic Ocean directly south of Victoria Island. The government has had little to do with the project besides granting it permission; few controls have been placed on it and a report that warned that landfill here would generate serious environmental consequences (especially for tidal patterns) was ignored.⁵ The masterplans of Eko Atlantic and LFTZ exist separately from the 2012 masterplan for the 'Lekki sub-region' (Al-Handasah 2011), which has already been rendered obsolete by urbanisation and poor planning. Current plans for the Lagos metropolitan region continue to entrench the logic of bypass urbanism: a proposed mass transit light rail line along the Lekki peninsula will strengthen the corridor and a fourth bridge to the mainland from LFTZ will bypass the centre and provide a direct link to the rest of Nigeria.

In summary, despite the fact that Lagos State has played a key role in supplying land and transport infrastructure for decades, bypass urbanism in Lagos is not the result of an overarching masterplan. It developed gradually, involving varying power and actor constellations. Private-public partnerships, private developers and powerful traditional landowning families all played influential roles. Despite the seemingly haphazard circumstances in which the different projects were conceived, the current transformation of the Lekki corridor is a process of unprecedented force, exacerbating to new extremes existing historical tendencies for the segregated and unequal production of space in Lagos and the effects of weak planning controls. The corridor not only gives residents direct and privileged access to the main centralities of Lagos, but it is also gradually adding new urban functions and centralities to the peninsula, to some extent insulating its residents from the challenges the rest

of the urban region continues to face and displacing key functions from other areas, with unknown consequences. As bypass urbanism spreads east, taking up a significant proportion of the remaining prime and well-connected available land in Lagos, it spurs further peripheral urbanisation in other areas. The people who are routinely excluded from privileged developments—the urban majority—are left to languish in the ever-expanding north and west of Lagos, even further from the centralities and the new opportunities developing in the Lekki corridor. The increasing competition over land and housing continues to push up prices along the corridor, creating new divides between ordinary urban areas and the exclusive bypass corridor.

SANTA FE AND INTERLOMAS: ‘WHAT’S THE VIEW FROM YOUR APARTMENT: SAN DIEGO OR TIJUANA?’

To reach the western periphery of Mexico City, we leave the circular highway *Periférico*. Gaining altitude, we cross high bridges over deep canyons and finally arrive at one of the largest and most luxurious shopping malls in Latin America. Over this one-hour drive the urban landscape changes profoundly: densely urbanised neighbourhoods with two- or three-storey houses suddenly give way to skyscrapers and condominium towers. This area is known as the Santa Fe central business district, where transnational corporations like Hewlett Packard, Chrysler Group and Telefónica (Movistar) have their headquarters (Jones and Moreno-Carranco 2007). Santa Fe’s urban transformation over the last four decades has been spectacular: what used to be a huge dumpsite and landfill of former sand mines at the periphery of Mexico City is today a business district, surrounded by condo developments, gated communities and country clubs (see Streule 2016, 2018; see also Duhau and Giglia 2008).

This area is often seen as the most western extent of Mexico City’s linear central business district stretching from the *Centro Histórico*, a vibrant commercial centrality with a wide range of users undergoing profound urban transformation (see Chapter 17), all along the east-west axis of *Paseo de la Reforma*, a boulevard cutting through the affluent residential neighbourhoods of Polanco and Lomas de Chapultepec (Graizbord et al. 2003; Tamayo 2001). However, this conventional image of the connections between the periphery and the established centralities obfuscates an alternative perspective; one that focuses instead on the numerous luxury residential and office areas in the western urban periphery and their various internal connections. With this change of focus, a barely recognised but huge emerging urban configuration comes into view. The built area encompasses the Santa Fe business district and Interlomas, the adjacent residential and commercial area in the State of Mexico and also expensive residential estates like Herradura, Bosques and Lomas as well as residential areas located further north, such as the constantly expanding gated communities of Arboledas, Esmeralda, Sayavedra and Valle Escondido.

The urban configuration of bypass urbanism is located in two different federal states; namely the City of Mexico (CDMX) and the State of Mexico (Estado de México), which are the two main political-territorial bodies forming the metropolitan region

of Mexico City. The full scale of this emerging urban configuration becomes discernible by examining the newly built transport infrastructure. One of the most important of these routes is the toll highway—Chamapa–La Venta—and its extension, Chamapa–Lechería leading north. It is one of the most expensive highways in Mexico, connecting Santa Fe, Interlomas and Bosque Real with Ciudad Satélite and Atizapán further north. Another example is the Supervía Poniente toll flyover, which bypasses the winding roads in the western hills to facilitate rapid connection to the wealthy southern areas of Mexico City. The flyover was inaugurated in 2013, after strong resistance by the people who were displaced to make way for its construction (see Pérez Negrete 2017). Other such projects are still at planning stage, such as the toll highway connecting Toluca and Naucalpan and the Mexico City–Toluca commuter rail project, Tren Interurbano. Toluca, the nearby capital of the State of Mexico, is important to residents of Santa Fe and Interlomas mainly because of its international airport, which offers them a better alternative to the Mexico City international airport that is located to the east of the vast metropolis. Thus, far from creating an isolated enclave, bypass urbanism in Mexico City is profoundly restructuring the entire metropolitan region, resulting in a fundamental socio-spatial reorientation towards the western periphery.

All these new transport infrastructures are changing the mobility patterns of people who can afford to pay the tolls, while excluding less wealthy people (Streule 2018). Thus, the new urban configuration offers affluent people a range of amenities, such as a direct link to the airport, private universities, malls and hospitals, and at the same time allows them to avoid the urban threats and problems found in more central areas, which are located in an earthquake zone and plagued with chronic traffic jams and air pollution (see also Bayón and Saraví 2013; Ortiz Guitart and Mendoza 2008). However, even in this privileged area, the social reality of Mexico City cannot be fully erased and even these wealthy neighbourhoods still exist side by side with popular ones. It is common for residents of the luxury condominiums in Interlomas to ask: ‘What’s the view from your apartment: San Diego or Tijuana?’⁶ Depending on whether they see Santa Fe or the popular neighbourhoods of Naucalpan, they may indeed imagine that they are living in different worlds.

Although the imaginary of upper-class white Mexican residents includes the notion that they are living in a ‘first world city’, the area suffers severe infrastructural deficiencies. Urban services are limited, and infrastructure problems like water shortages or the erosion of soil walls are common. In 2015, for instance, buildings in a central area of Santa Fe nearly collapsed during a spectacular landslide. And even if such real estate developments are sought after so residents can bypass the

existing urban structure, they need access to established centralities for many functions and therefore this kind of bypass urbanism is still connected to the vast majority of Mexico City’s territories (for a broad discussion see Hiernaux Nicolas 1999; Lindón 2006; Müller 2014).

The government of Mexico City launched the large-scale Santa Fe real estate project in 1987, in the wake of Mexico’s dramatic economic crisis and after a major earthquake that had destroyed large parts of the central areas of Mexico City in 1985. The project was intended to follow the global trend set by urban megaprojects such as La Défense in Paris and Docklands in London (Moreno-Carranco 2013). In the mid-1990s, just after NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has been signed, the Canadian developer Reichmann International went into partnership with financier George Soros and joined ICA, the largest construction company in Mexico, to build a housing, office and entertainment complex in Santa Fe. Their plan covered only a part of the overall Santa Fe development, which included office buildings, a huge shopping mall and a private university.

At the time, it was considered one of the most ambitious real estate projects in Latin America (see Depalma 1994). In order to bypass the usual urban planning procedures, the government declared Santa Fe a ‘special zone of controlled urban development’ (Zona Especial de Desarrollo Controlado; ZEDEC). This zone covers around 940 ha and incorporates land in the two boroughs (*alcaldías*) of Álvaro Obregón and Cuajimalpa. An urban development project that transcends administrative borders was a novelty

Mexico City, Interlomas, 2013



at the time and is still extraordinary in Mexico City today. ZEDEC Santa Fe was thus located on ambiguous administrative terrain; a grey zone for planning and administration.

The government assigned a newly founded semi-private company, Servicios Metropolitanos (SERVIMET), to manage the special development zone and gave it responsibility for constructing the necessary infrastructure, as well as marketing and the sale of the land. The company was also made responsible for the implementation of the masterplan and thus de facto for undertaking

most planning-related tasks. In 2002, due to operational irregularities and various charges of corruption, SERVIMET was liquidated. It was replaced by the Fideicomiso Colonos de Santa Fe, a public-private trustee company, which included representatives of both the government and the main private investors, but it was fully financed through public funding. Its task was to manage the official public budget for Santa Fe, to plan the infrastructure and to implement safety programmes. The government argued that the de facto privatisation of the local administration was necessary because the ZEDEC Santa Fe stretches across two boroughs and therefore the responsibility for the whole zone was not clearly defined. However, after 2010 protests arose and residents of popular neighbourhoods in the area challenged the exclusive use of state financing and criticised the public agenda of the trustee company, saying it was in fact based largely on self-interest. The protesters thus demanded financial transparency and the renationalisation of the public services. In 2013 the city government finally transferred the public administration back to the two corresponding boroughs.

Privatised institutions were key to successfully bypassing ordinary planning procedures and turning Santa Fe into the first and only privately managed territory in Mexico City (see also Valenzuela 2007, 2013). The government created new planning mechanisms in order to foster the faster, more flexible and site-specific management of large building projects (Parnreiter 2011, 2015). However, manifold contestations and protests arose against this exclusive and segregated urban development, further fuelled by the state-led expropriation of land and the displacement of residents due to privately developed infrastructure projects and rising land prices (Castañeda 2014; Pérez Negrete 2013, 2017). Whereas in the first phase of the construction of Santa Fe the residents of popular neighbourhoods were evicted and deprived of their livelihoods based on the dumpsite, today Indigenous villagers forcefully struggle against other effects of bypass urbanism, such as the privatisation and extraction of natural resources like water and land. One example of this is San Francisco Xochicuautla, a village of Hñähñu-Otomí people north-west of Mexico City, where the attempted expropriation of common land to build the Toluca-Naucaupan toll highway provoked local resistance (González Reynoso 2014; Streule 2019).

As has become evident, bypass urbanism in Mexico City is not the result of a top-down planning process but of the converging interests of a variety of influential governmental and private actors, such as federal states, local governments, private national and international investors and developers, particularly transnational real estate groups.⁷ Although the state played a key role in initiating bypass urbanism, private investors dominated this process, not least through their major influence



Mexico City; El Pedregal at the México-Huixquilucan road. Naucalpan, 2013

on planning bodies, as shown above. The massive change in territorial regulations designed mainly to benefit private interests unleashed an unprecedented urban dynamic: office towers, apartment blocks and gated communities are becoming predominant both in Santa Fe and Interlomas, and in a vast part of the western periphery including boroughs of CDMX such as Álvaro Obregón, Cuajimalpa and Magdalena Contreras as well as municipalities in the State of Mexico like Huixquilucan, Naucalpan and Ocoyoacac.

Thus, a regional effect of spontaneous speculation has unfolded, that we call 'effecto Santa Fe' (Streule 2018). Real estate prices in Santa Fe are cited in US dollars and monthly rents are among the highest in Mexico City, exceeding prices in prestigious neighbourhoods in the vicinity of the Paseo de la Reforma like Polanco, Lomas de Chapultepec and Lomas de Tecamachalco. This emerging exclusive real estate market is attractive to expatriates and for very wealthy Mexican families, who prefer to live in the safety of a gated community rather than in these more central affluent residential areas (see also Angotti 2013; Roitman and Giglio 2010; Sheinbaum 2008).

From a broad perspective, the bypass effect in Mexico City is less marked than in Kolkata and Lagos, mainly because the peripheralisation of the historically entrenched centralities is less evident. After decades of neglect and decay, the Centro Histórico, for instance, has recently undergone massive urban transformation. Successive city governments have implemented a multifaceted programme of revitalisation, beautification, policing and displacement, in partnership with private investors, most notably billionaire Carlos Slim (see Chapter 17; Streule 2008). The Centro Histórico has thus regained its importance as a cultural and political centre, yet it is still only a partial centrality and thus does not challenge Santa Fe as a financial and commercial centre.

BYPASS URBANISM: COMMODIFICATION AND PERIPHERALISATION

What are the specific characteristics of bypass urbanism? The analysis of the three case studies allows us to refine our initial definition:

Firstly, bypass urbanism implies the material production of a relatively dense, affluent and exclusive urban landscape in a remote part of the urban region. The core of the process may be one or several large infrastructural or real estate projects (such as Rajarhat New Town and the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass highway in Kolkata, the financial centrality of Santa Fe in Mexico City or the Lekki-Epe Expressway in Lagos), which are complemented by various additional infrastructural projects (such as toll highways or bridges) and attract facilities such as business districts, exclusive residential areas, shopping malls, private schools and hospitals. Bypass urbanism thus does not arise from constructing a particular new town or a megaproject: it is the result of the simultaneous development of an ensemble of various independent but related projects, which together have the potential to restructure the entire urban region.

Secondly, this form of urbanism bypasses existing territorial regulations. It does not usually emanate from a coherent planning initiative, even less so from a hidden masterplan at the hands of any single developer or state agency, but emerges through a convergence of interests over large areas of land at the geographical periphery of urban regions that have strategically been made available for urban development. In most cases, it is promoted by alliances of numerous public and private actors; private corporations and developers acting for profit as well as various state actors making use of private capital for their own infrastructural and financial gain, prestige and political power. Bypass urbanism is also an often-desired form of urban development for emerging middle classes and globally mobile elite urban populations, as it fulfils their demands for housing, comfortable and prestigious lifestyles, good transportation and investment opportunities.

Thirdly, the resulting urban configuration is marked by its socio-spatial separation from existing urban areas and generates socioeconomic segregation at a very large scale. It is partially linked to the existing urban fabric through newly built transport routes and thus takes advantage of existing centralities, at the same time as redirecting investments towards the emerging centralities. Bypass urbanism, as the outcome of a wide range of individual initiatives and decisions, thus incorporates a fundamental logic of uneven urban development through the reordering of centre-periphery relationships.

In this concluding section, we compare the different insights that emerge from the three case studies and discuss the main specific conditions and outcomes of bypass urbanism, such as the formation of territorial alliances that underpin bypass urbanisation and the ceaseless struggles over land that accompany this process. We then look at the results and consequences of bypass urbanism affecting the entire urban region: the commodification of the urban periphery, the production of new centralities, the process of large-scale peripheralisation and changing centre-periphery constellations.

TERRITORIAL ALLIANCES

Bypass urbanism is based on pragmatic but not necessarily coordinated decisions by a variety of public, parastatal and private actors that may also intersect and overlap. The role of the state in this process varies greatly over time and context: state actors are not the only significant actors and they do not merely act to facilitate private investment. They also intervene in bypass urbanism as regulators, landowners and financiers. They exploit their legislative and administrative powers to intervene in real estate markets and they also acquire and consolidate large areas of land. However, in a situation in which the potential to generate value and extract profit from urban land has increased dramatically, corporate actors and private finance influence the development of urban space at a much larger scale.

In Mexico City the government and private actors were explicitly intertwined, and private interests were incorporated into the planning process by the creation of parastatal agencies and semi-private management bodies. Private actors, including transnational corporations and investors, played a direct role in managing public funds set aside for urban development, and at the same time they developed their own major projects in the area. In Lagos, although the management of urban development remained more clearly under the aegis of Lagos State, due to the massive deficits in the provision of infrastructure and the limitations in state finances private actors played a major role in supplying public infrastructure and developing prime urban land. While the roles of parastatal and non-state actors were formalised through various acts of legislation in different contexts, negotiable regulatory systems opened up many opportunities for private exploitation and unplanned development. Powerful traditional landowning families colluded with the state to maximise the value of their land and became influential actors in the urban development of the Lekki corridor.

In Kolkata, the State of West Bengal played a key role in developing the infrastructure, such as the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass highway

and the metro system. It also took the lead in planning and construction of the new towns of Salt Lake and Rajarhat and was responsible for acquiring and expropriating the land from the people who lived there. Private investors and individual landowners took advantage of these state initiatives and projects in many ways by exploiting various opportunities for constructing buildings, often through illegal practices such as encroaching onto the wetlands and filling up ponds and water bodies. As these examples show, the roles played by the state and private actors in bypass urbanism cannot be assumed in advance: in every case specific territorial alliances may be formed with the intention of taking maximal advantage of their power and resources to exploit the urbanisation process.

STRUGGLES OVER LAND

The acquisition and consolidation of land is a highly contentious process in all three urban contexts because developers and state agencies often operate in a grey legal area. In Kolkata, the State of West Bengal took the lead in providing the land for urban development by expropriating land designated as rural for urban development and by maintaining and exploiting a 'deliberate uncertainty' about land tenure and acquisition (Roy 2014). In Mexico City, the bypass area extends across municipal and state boundaries, creating uncertainty over jurisdiction and responsibility that is open to manipulation. The government of Mexico City also expropriated land in the initial phases of establishing the special development zone Santa Fe.

In Lagos, after a protracted legal battle with traditional landowners, the state government took control of almost the entire Lekki corridor but left key areas of prime land under the control of some of the powerful landowning families. The resulting increase in land tenure security unleashed the urbanisation process and allowed state actors, some traditional landowners and private developers to exploit the opportunities of bypass urbanism to the maximum. In Kolkata and Mexico City there was much resistance to the expropriation of private and communal land, the access to centralities that resulted, the destruction of livelihoods and ecosystems and the environmental degradation. In Kolkata, various projects have been stalled or even stopped due to popular protests. However, the lack of transparency in the land acquisition process and the bypassing of formal planning procedures has hampered organised resistance. Furthermore, in terms of its 'unintended' impacts over a vast area and with no overall masterplan, bypass urbanism is capable of slipping under the radar of public attention, and the lack of public awareness of these occurrences may further inhibit popular action against it.

THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE URBAN PERIPHERY

A key feature of bypass urbanism is the fact that it takes place at the urban periphery and transforms large tracts of non-urban land into prime urban land with a much higher market value. This land was originally peripheral in a double sense. In geographical terms it was at the outskirts of the urban regions and in socioeconomic terms it was relatively sparsely populated land, designated as agricultural land, as a nature reserve or as unsuited for urbanisation, such as wetland, steeply sloping or unstable land or land that had become contaminated. Bypass urbanism is thus a process that produces new, exclusive urban spaces out of peripheral land; such as the eastern wetlands in Kolkata, the sparsely populated and flood-prone Lekki peninsula in Lagos and the unstable sand mines filled with contaminated waste in the western hills of Mexico City. In all three cases peripheral land with little value has been transformed into a commodity to be used for urbanisation. In this logic, the realisation and extraction of the potential rent gap inherent in this land is a key aspect of bypass urbanism (see also Shatkin 2017: 214; Smith, 1996).

THE PRODUCTION OF NEW CENTRALITIES

However, bypass urbanism goes far beyond the simple commodification of land, as it also entails the production of new centralities in these peripheral areas. This process has far-reaching implications and impacts outside the areas directly concerned, because it fundamentally alters the centre-periphery constellation of the entire region. Only in a relational understanding of urban space do the full dimensions of this process come to light. It is thus useful to recall Lefebvre's reflection that centrality is the basic condition of the urban. He understands centrality as a key resource, as it condenses the wealth and the potential of an urban society and creates a situation in which different elements no longer exist separated from one another. Centrality therefore promotes exchange, convergence, gatherings, encounters and meetings (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]). Seen in this light, bypass urbanism fundamentally alters the configuration of centralities in an urban region because it has the effect of relocating centralities, thus depriving entire parts of the urban region of this crucial resource, and it also alters the quality of the existing centralities. Bypass urbanism thus entails the strategic production of new centralities and the establishment of a reciprocal relationship among them and existing centralities.

Analyses therefore need not only to focus on the newly built areas but also to consider the effect that bypass urbanism has on the wider

urban context. In Mexico City we observed a Santa Fe effect when a large area at the western fringes of the city was upgraded as a result of the development of the financial centrality of Santa Fe and the concomitant construction of toll roads, bridges and tunnels. Bypass urbanism also creates the potential for displacing functions such as new government agencies and corporate facilities of existing centres to the bypass area. In Kolkata, important public institutions and even state functions were relocated to Salt Lake and Rajarhat, while the existing centralities in the inner city face disinvestment. In Lagos the industrial developments planned for the eastern end of the Lekki corridor will displace key functions from existing centres, drawing labour and investment to the corridor on a massive scale.

LARGE-SCALE PERIPHERALISATION

It is in this way that the process of peripheralisation is set in motion by bypass urbanisation. We use this notion here to highlight the reordering and reconfiguration of socio-spatial relations. Sassen (1994) applies it in the context of global city formation, in which the production of new strategic centralities leads to the devaluation of other economic sectors and hence also of other urban spaces. In bypass urbanism, however, entire parts of urban regions are downgraded.

This process of peripheralisation of central urban areas marks a main distinction between it and other forms of urban restructuring. Bypass urbanism thus constitutes a clear difference from the well-known restructuring processes that were conceptualised in terms like 'edge city' (Garreau, 1991), 'exopolis' (Soja 2000) or 'in-between city' (Sieverts 2003). While many new centralities emerged in the urban peripheries through these processes, the metropolitan centres were strengthened at the same time. The result could be seen as 'regional urbanisation' (Soja 2000) with a marked tendency towards poly-centrality and the densification of the urban peripheries. However, in the process of regional urbanisation the existing hierarchy of centralities persists and sometimes it is even reinforced: while new centralities emerge in the urban peripheries, they neither replace nor bypass existing centralities in the urban cores.

CHANGING CENTRE-PERIPHERY CONSTELLATIONS

The distinction between bypass urbanism and other forms of peripheral urbanisation is illustrated by our own comparative research. While in all our eight case studies massive transformations of urban peripheries have occurred, only three of them underwent bypass urbanism. This can be seen in

our case study of Paris, where many centralities in the *banlieue* have been planned and built since the 1960s, including the famous *villes nouvelles* (new towns) with their own newly developed centres and the spectacular business district La Défense that served as a model for Santa Fe in Mexico City. However, these peripheral centres did not become an alternative to the main central area of Paris, which became an even more attractive and privileged urban space in the meantime (see Chapter 15). A different situation developed in Los Angeles with its entrenched polycentric urban structure, which was also a case study in our project. While Downtown LA struggled over decades to become a major centrality, countless new centralities scattered across the extended urban region emerged. In the last decade, however, Downtown LA has been transformed into a renewed and refurbished centrality, attracting new businesses and affluent middle-class groups in the search of urbanity (see Chapter 17).

These observations illustrate the wide range of different possible relationships between the centre and the periphery and highlight one crucial aspect of bypass urbanisation: it goes hand in hand with the peripheralisation of existing centralities. Thus, with bypass urbanism a new kind of disparity appears, leading to the inversion of the centre-periphery relationship. In this way, bypass urbanism constitutes the opposite of current development trends in most large metropolitan regions across the world, where central areas are upgraded through flagship projects, urban regeneration strategies and large-scale redevelopment efforts, intensifying gentrification and the socioeconomic upgrading of entire inner-city areas. With bypass urbanism, however, it is the geographical periphery that is made into the privileged space, avoiding the messiness of existing urban situations together with their complex urban structures, opaque land regulations and the endless negotiating processes with their various stakeholders. Thus, what formerly was the edge becomes the centre and has a reciprocal and privileged relationship with existing centralities.

Bypass urbanism thus leads to the fundamental structural transformation of urban regions on an unprecedented scale. The production of huge, exclusive territories where residents have privileged access to an efficient infrastructure and various urban functions and amenities intensifies existing inequalities, strengthens socio-spatial segregation and reconfigures existing centre-periphery relationships. These tendencies are often difficult to discern. Using the excentric perspective of planetary urbanisation has allowed us to grasp this particular urbanisation process and contextualise various urban projects in the entire region. The main goal for introducing the concept of bypass urbanism has been to highlight and create awareness of the regional scale of urbanisation that occurs in and beyond the three cities presented

here, and to add an additional layer to the wide range of important contributions on megaprojects and new towns that are available in the literature. Moreover, this awareness may enable policy-makers and activists to intervene in the process, develop responses to the large-scale changes that bypass urbanism brings about and link isolated local struggles with each other.

- 1 Source: numerous interviews with experts at the CSSSC (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta), including Soheli Firdos (2009), Saibal Kar (2010–2012), and Keya Dasgupta (2011–2012); and at CBE (Centre for Built Environment, Kolkata) with Santosh Ghosh and Probhas Kumar (2010–2012) as well as with Venkateswar Ramaswamy (2009, 2012).
- 2 This exchange took place in November 2013 between two local architects.
- 3 Currently known as the All Progressives Congress (a merger of several parties dating from 2013).
- 4 According to the Lagos State Development Plan 2012–2025 (Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, 2013).
- 5 The project was approved before the environmental impact assessment report by Heinrich Böll Stiftung was released (Heinrich Böll Stiftung Nigeria, 2014). Interview by author with Keya Dasgupta, 2012.
- 6 Source: interview with a resident of a gated community in Huixquilucan in November 2013 (Streule, 2018: 225–235).
- 7 Other actors who are deeply involved are transnational private infrastructure developers (e.g. IDEAL, OHL, LAR, HIGA, or FRISA) as well as Mexican investors, who develop the urban infrastructure and private urban projects like malls or gated communities.