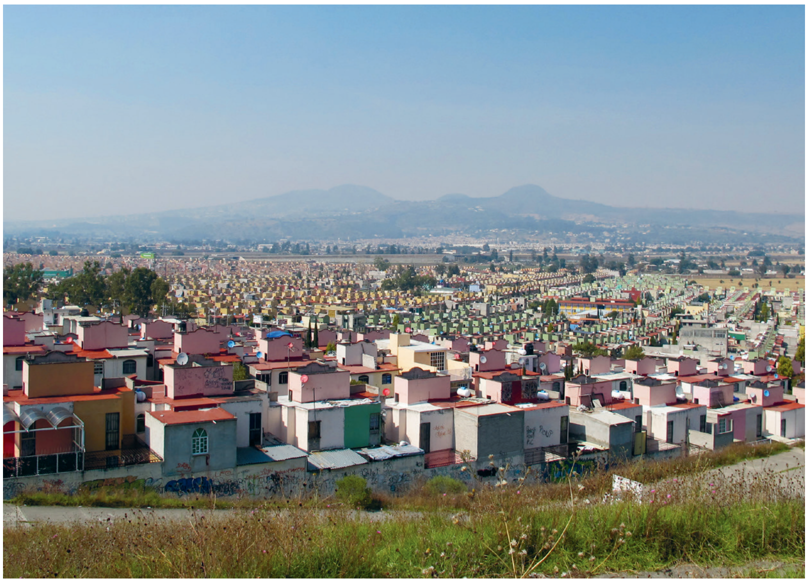
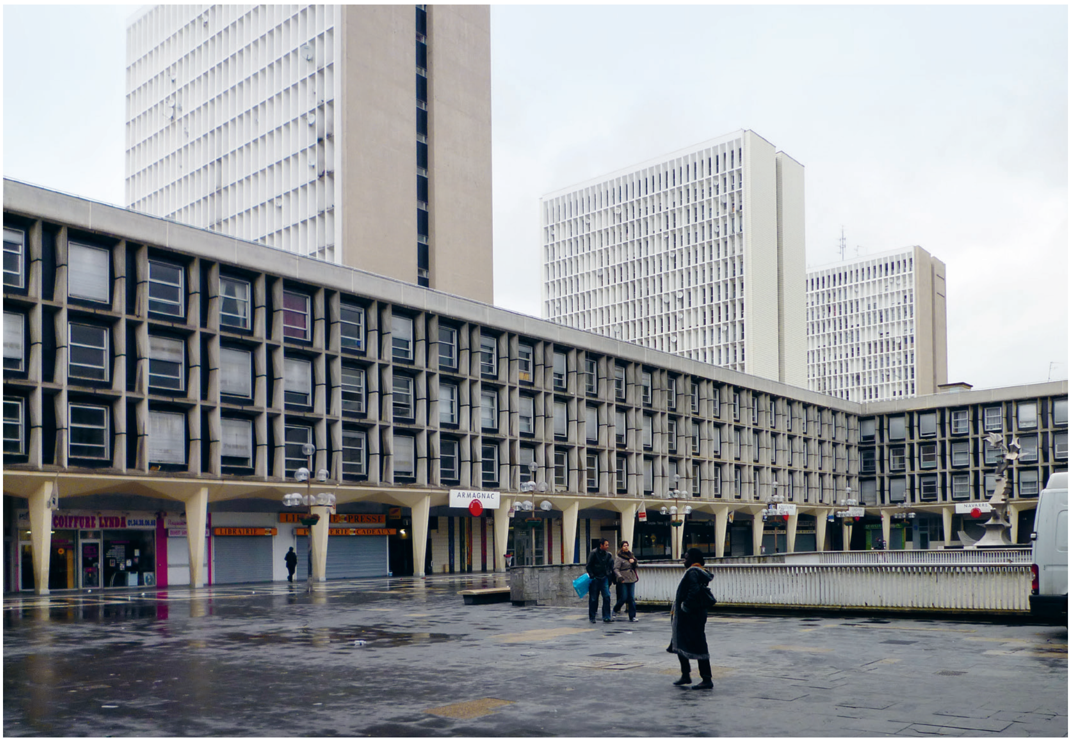


Mexico City; first mega conjunto San Buenaventura built in 1998. Ixtapaluca, 2013


COIFFURE LYNDA
ARMAGNAC

Paris; commercial centre in Sarcelles, built in 1955. Val d'Oise, 2011

# MASS HOUSING URBANISATION

## STATE STRATEGIES AND PERIPHERALISATION

Hong Kong: neighbourhood centre in a new town. Tin Shui Wai, 2012

# MASS HOUSING URBANISATION

● Main centrality

ılıılı Public housing estate
(rental and subsidised housing)

🟨 Landfill

🟩 Country park

⬜ Urban footprint

●-● MTR line and station

═ High-speed railway
Hong Kong–Guangzhou

━ Border between
Hong Kong and Shenzhen

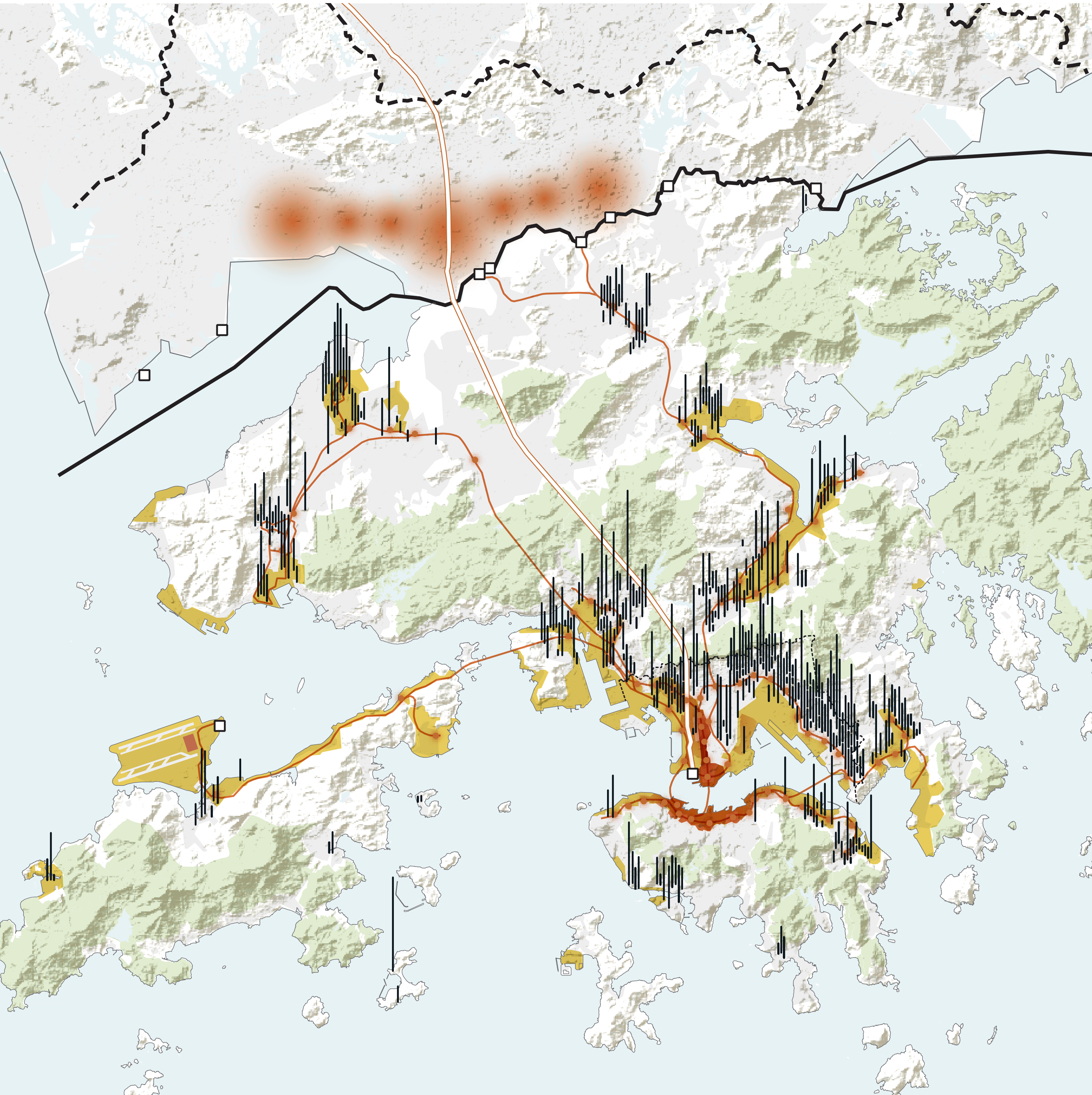
☐ Checkpoint

▬ ▬ Border of the former Shenzhen
Special Economic Zone (1980–2010)

------ Border between Kowloon and the
New Territories

0 5 10 20 km

# HONG KONG

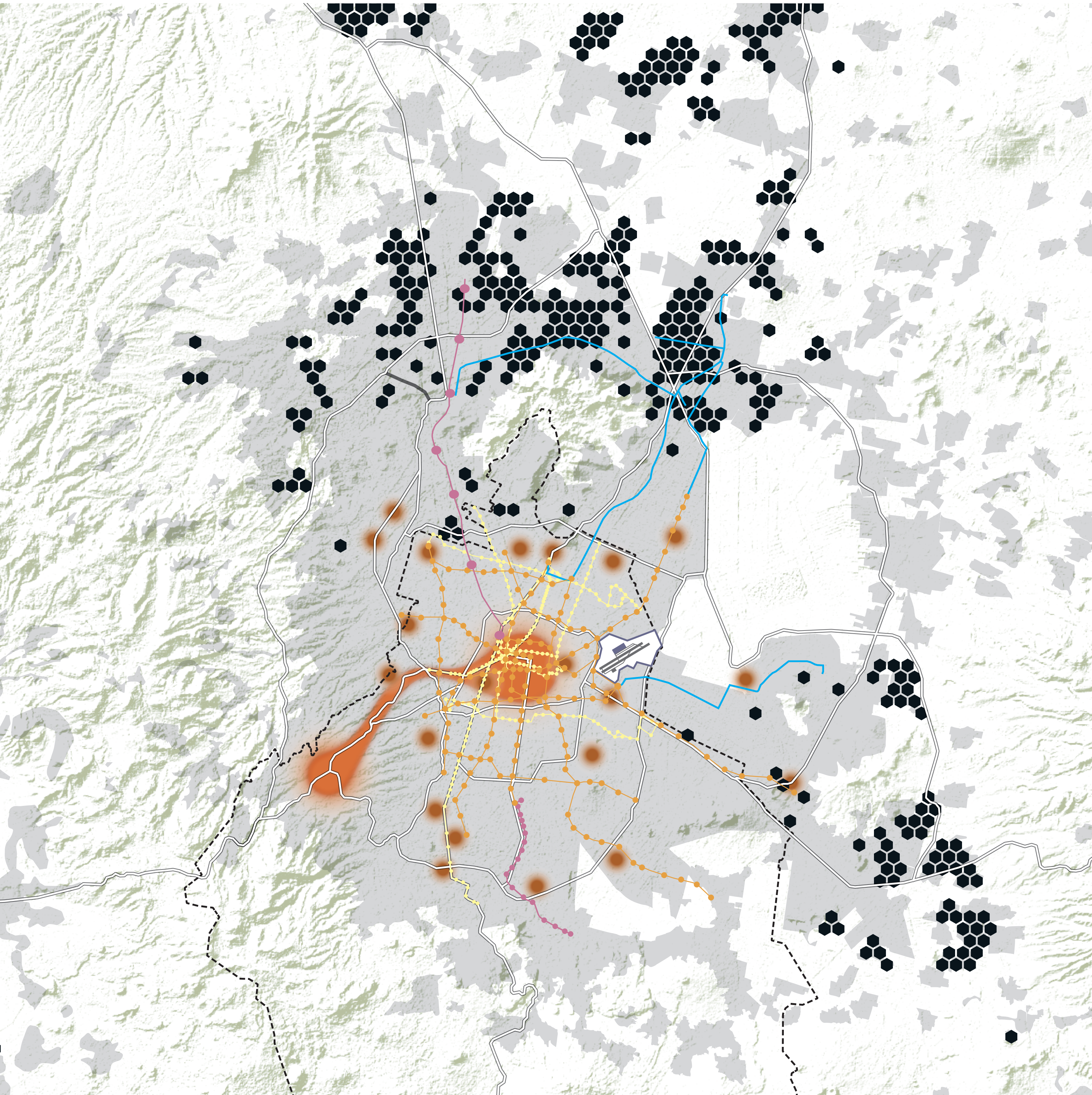


# MASS HOUSING URBANISATION

- ● Main regional centrality
- ● Local centrality
- ⬢ Mega conjunto habitacional
- ▨ Urban footprint
- ═ Main highway
- ●–● Train
- ●-●-● Metro
- ·-·-· Trolleybus
- — Bus
- - - - Administrative border of CDMX (Ciudad de México)

0 5 10 20 km

# MEXICO CITY

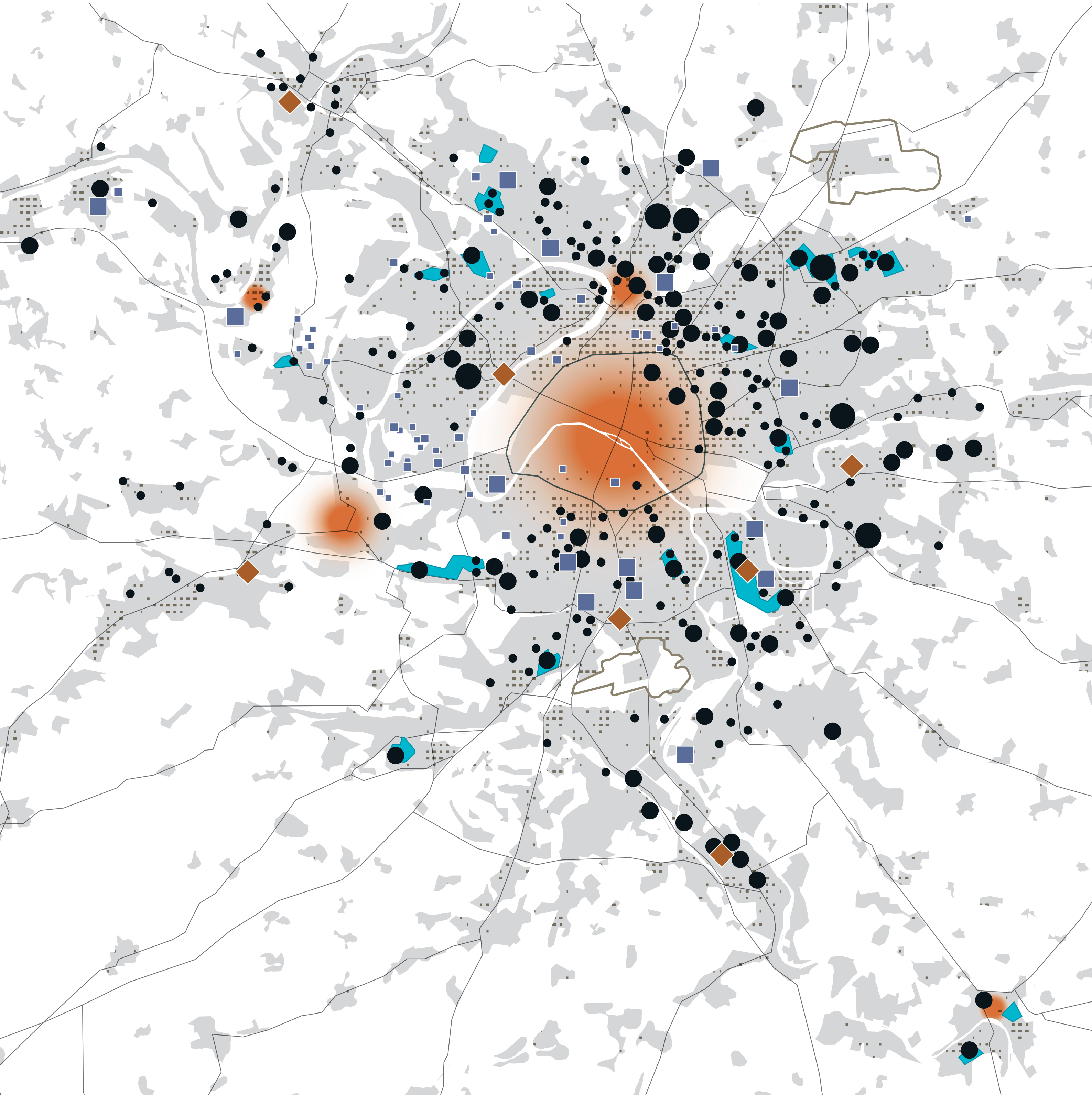


# MASS HOUSING URBANISATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ● | Urban centrality | |
| ◆ | Emergent centrality (after 1965) | |
| 🟦 | Priority area for urbanisation | Zone à urbaniser en priorité (ZUP), 1959–1969 |
| ■ | Grand ensemble | Built by semi-private developer SCIC (Société coopérative d’intérêt collectif), 1955–1965 |
| ● | Grand ensemble | Built since 1950 |
| ⬡ | Périphérique | Motorway encircling the city of Paris |
| ▭ | Airport | |
| ⁙ | Industrial area | |
| ▒ | Urban footprint | |
| — | Main highway | |

0 5 10 20 km

# PARIS



Anne Kockelkorn
Christian Schmid
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Kit Ping Wong

# A COMPARISON ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

In this chapter we compare the contribution by state-initiated mass housing urbanisation to peripheralisation in three very different historical and geopolitical settings: Paris from the 1950s to the 1990s, Hong Kong from the 1950s to 2010s and Mexico City from the 1990s to the 2010s. We understand mass housing urbanisation as the industrial production of large-scale housing that leads to the strategic reorganisation of entire urban territories. This urbanisation process is implemented by state actors, often as a response to fast urban growth, and implies a combined intervention into the housing market, the housing industry and the territorial development of the entire urban region. In Hong Kong and Paris this process unfolded during the post-war economic boom and in both cases, it was provoked by a severe and politically threatening housing crisis, which made the economic, technical and organisational efforts demanded for fast housing construction politically necessary and economically welcome. A different version of mass housing urbanisation evolved around the beginning of this century in Mexico City under the influence of a financialised housing market, where it served to relocate lower-income groups from urban regeneration and renewal sites in central areas.

During this study we found that in all three cases strong processes of peripheralisation occurred. In this comparison across space and time we focus on how, when and to what degree this urbanisation process has led to the peripheralisation of settlements and entire neighbourhoods over the course of several decades. This long-term perspective allows us to evaluate the decisive turns and ruptures in the strategies governments have used over time, as well as the continuities and contradictions of their territorial effect. Finally, we develop a taxonomy of different modalities of peripheralisation that may serve as a conceptual tool for further urban research.

## MASS HOUSING URBANISATION

In contrast to other types of social housing, which includes a wide variety of material forms, scales and kinds of organisation, mass housing urbanisation is a large-scale process and therefore involves the transformation of the entire urban territory: including both the urban periphery, where mass housing urbanisation usually takes place, as well as the urban centres, where it may have marked repercussions. A key aspect of this process is the direct intervention of state actors in housing production and the urban planning and territorial development that create the necessary conditions for this all-embracing urban process to take place. In this way mass housing urbanisation is different from other kinds of large-scale urbanisation, such as the privately organised and market-oriented production of single-family homes and condominiums or the various forms of self-build and popular urbanisation in southern metropolises (see Chapter 12).

Comparative historical analyses of mass housing urbanisation across the world are relatively rare. Studies of mass housing analyse the relation between state regulations and housing production and highlight the variety of pathways, actors, housing markets and the urban forms this involves (Power 1993; Dufaux and Fourcaut 2004; Urban 2012; Glendinning 2021). However, they do not conceptualise mass housing production as an urbanisation process and they do not analyse its territorial dimension; especially not the relationships between centres and peripheries and the related resettlement and relocation of people. Similarly, recent analyses of financialised housing production describe the effects of privatisation and enclosure but neglect the territorial restructuring that occurs and its consequences for the entire urban region (Aalbers 2016; Jacobs 2019; Rolnik 2019).

We define mass housing urbanisation as a specific process of urbanisation that has four main characteristics. The first of these is the large-scale construction of housing units using standardised industrial forms of production. Because of its organisational complexity, this process is often implemented at the scale of the nation-state. The standardisation of the production process and of the housing typologies and floor plans all play a part in imposing normative lifestyles and consumption patterns on the residents.

Secondly, mass housing urbanisation is usually designed to meet the needs of lower-income groups (working and middle classes) and therefore receives financial support from public authorities. This includes direct and indirect subsidies, such as regulative interventions into the housing market and social and mortgage benefits for tenants. Furthermore, these interventions may be approved for social housing intended for rent as well as for home ownership. In both cases, the state intervenes directly into the process of social reproduction.

The third characteristic of mass housing urbanisation is the intervention of state actors into this process. Only they have the legal power and the organisational capacity to control the large-scale production of housing and the related relocation of people. Most important, states hold the power to transfer ownership of public land, as well as the right to expropriation together with access to other planning and financial tools.

The fourth defining characteristic of mass housing urbanisation is that it results in the strategic reorganisation of entire urban territories. This entails rearranging the social composition of urban areas and it often also includes the resettlement of mostly lower-income groups from central (inner-city) locations to peripheries, thus transforming both the periphery and the urban centre.

The large-scale production of housing requires large tracts of land to be available. This can be provided by the thoroughgoing demolition of inner-city neighbourhoods using urban renewal strategies or by the urbanisation of hitherto sparsely settled areas on the outskirts. Territorial restructuring is thus a defining feature of mass housing urbanisation and it may result in specific forms of peripheralisation. However, peripheralisation itself is not a defining characteristic of this form of urbanisation. Even though the newly built settlements are usually located at the urban periphery, they do not necessarily experience spatial isolation and the lack of centrality. The planning of public transport infrastructure and new centralities may provide its residents with at least some urban qualities together with fast access to the main centres. Mass housing urbanisation and new town developments in both capitalist and socialist countries during the post-war period have sometimes resulted in inclusive urban neighbourhoods that do not display deep socioeconomic segregation (Beyer 2017; Clapson 2004). However, the case studies presented in this chapter show marked processes of peripheralisation, despite their different geographical and historical settings. Identifying and comparing the pathways of mass housing urbanisation that have led to peripheralisation is one of the main goals of this chapter. It thus also makes a contribution to a relatively recent comparative global housing studies project (Aalbers 2022).

## PERIPHERALISATION

The term peripheralisation denotes a territorial process that generates and reinforces relations of dominance and dependency. It is a relational concept for identifying the polarisation of power, wealth and access to economic and social resources among central and peripheral areas. This definition moves away from a static conceptualisation of a periphery as a geographical location to analysing a dynamic and contradictory economic, political and social process. Increasing socio-spatial inequalities have led to a revival of the term 'peripheralisation' in urban and regional research in recent years, particularly in analysing declining industrial regions in Europe and North America and sparsely populated areas in eastern and southern Europe. Peripheralisation is also closely related to processes of stigmatisation, marginalisation and exclusion and often associated with population decline and urban shrinkage (for a theoretical and empirical discussion see e.g. Fischer-Tahir and Naumann 2013; Kühn 2015, 2016; Kühn and Bernt 2013).

In the early 1970s, Henri Lefebvre claimed a pivotal role for the centre–periphery relationship in his theory of the production of space. He understood centrality as a dialectical concept: the centre does not exist without the periphery (or numerous peripheries). He applied this conceptualisation in his analysis of the restructuring of the Paris region in the 1950s and 1960s, describing the relocation of the working class from central neighbourhoods to the new housing estates in the urban periphery, which led to them suffering severe losses in their access to everyday amenities, opportunities and possibilities. Lefebvre's understanding of the importance of centre–periphery relations also allowed him to make links among the processes of peripheralisation in metropolitan and in remote and sparsely settled territories. He defines centrality as a spatial form: it describes the simultaneity of people, things and events that can be brought together around a point. Centrality creates a situation in which they no longer exist separately, but interact and become productive. The centre is thus a crucial resource: it is a privileged place of encounter, assembly and communication; a place for the exchange of goods, information and affect; a place in which constraints and normalities dissolve. The question of whether people have access to or are excluded from centrality is at the very core of Lefebvre's understanding of the 'right to the city', which he defines as a 'right to centrality'. It includes the right not to be excluded from centrality and its movement and the right not to be forced out of society and culture into a space produced for the purpose of discrimination (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]: 109–10, 150; see also Schmid 2022).

Saskia Sassen was among the first to conceptualise processes of peripheralisation in global cities in the 1990s (Sassen 1994). She argued that the increasing concentration of corporate power and economic activities relying on highly qualified individuals depends on large numbers of people, often migrants, who work in precarious low-income jobs such as cleaning, caring and logistics. The existence of such processes of peripheralisation in urban centres challenges the classic idea of a centre–periphery dichotomy, as the areas undergoing peripheralisation can be found sometimes adjacent to centralities but they are nevertheless cut off from urban life. Loïc Wacquant calls the polarity between affluent and impoverished neighbourhoods 'advanced marginality' (Wacquant 2008). In her analysis of the spatiality of poverty in the extended region of Johannesburg, Lindsay Howe (2021) examines the intersection of peripherality and poverty and explains that state-subsidised affordable housing often reinforces existing socio-spatial inequalities, while emerging popular centralities produced through the agency of people may help to reduce the peripherality of their settlements.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In the following, we compare the patterns and pathways of three variations of mass housing urbanisation: a Fordist one in Paris; a colonial one in Hong Kong and a financialised one in Mexico City, together with the related processes of peripheralisation over the course of several decades. We thus draw on very different cases situated across distinct geopolitical and historical settings to explore the types of centre–periphery relations and territorial effects that may emerge and unfold in the context of mass housing urbanisation. Our analytical angle places the difference between owners and tenants—so central to Friedrich Engels' analysis of housing in late 19th century Europe (Engels 1975 [1845])—in the background. Even if the concrete form that tenure takes remains critical to each variation of mass housing, the differences between the modalities of tenure are not the focus of this chapter. Moreover, our goal is not simply to find similarities and differences between the cases we discuss. Rather, we seek to bring the three variants of mass housing urbanisation into conversation with each other in order to arrive at an empirically grounded conceptualisation of this specific urbanisation process (see Chapter 2). Adopting a transductive approach, we take the relationship between theory and empirical research to be dialectically intertwined, as 'an incessant feed-back between the conceptual framework used and empirical observations' (Lefebvre 1996 [1968]: 151).

In addition, we adopt a long-term perspective to explain the crucial turns and ruptures in the strategies that governments have used over time to understand the continuities and contradictions of their territorial effect. This entailed, for instance, reading the Paris case through the lens of the colonial territorial regime in Hong Kong during the 1950s and 1960s and analysing global city formation and financialisation in Hong Kong and Mexico City after 1980 and 1990. Thinking the urban through its 'multiple elsewheres,' to use Jennifer Robinson's (2016) phrase, allows us to revisit and provincialise inherited terms and ways of understanding mass housing urbanisation. This is exemplified by concepts that are key to understanding mass housing urbanisation in the Paris case, such as 'neoliberal restructuring' and 'the welfare state', that help to understand urbanisation processes in the West, but do not help to grasp the specificity of the two other cases. Using a comparative analysis of the different territorial settings across global divides was therefore crucial for developing a novel and globally relevant understanding of mass housing urbanisation. Decentring western Europe and its canonical narratives of housing histories permitted a thorough repositing of the role of the nation-state. This procedure allowed us to understand the inherent logic of this urbanisation process precisely because of—and not despite—the diversity of the case studies analysed. The stark contrast of Fordist, colonial and financialised settings helped us to identify the fundamental features of mass housing urbanisation and its ensuing peripheralisation and work towards a definition that may be relevant in other contexts.

## A TAXONOMY OF PERIPHERALISATION

In its most general sense, peripheralisation denotes a territorial process that generates and reinforces relations of dominance and dependency. It leads to the loss or lack of access to all sorts of functions, jobs, infrastructures, uses, facilities, venues, meeting places and public spaces. As a result of our comparison, we identified three modalities of peripheralisation induced by mass housing urbanisation: logistical, everyday and socioeconomic peripheralisation.

Logistical peripheralisation focuses on processes that restrict access to amenities, functions and infrastructures. It entails the physical and social disconnection of a territory from urban centralities and networks—that is, its isolation from the surrounding urban fabric. This is shown by the long journeys people need to make to meet their daily needs, but also by the lack of efficient and affordable public transport. It thus imposes unaffordable or time-consuming commutes to workplaces and main regional centralities. The peripheralisation of the everyday is the counterpart to logistical peripheralisation as it entails the absence or poor quality of local and regional centralities and corresponding amenities. It includes the lack of opportunities for education, cultural and political participation, social encounters, leisure and enjoyment. Additionally, peripheralisation of the everyday restricts inhabitants' capacities to create their own modalities of everyday life. This often goes hand in hand with economic prosperity, particularly when homogenisation and commodification reduce the possibilities for residents to appropriate and self-organise economic, socio-political and cultural spaces. The third process we observed in our case studies is socioeconomic peripheralisation, occurring in our cases only after the 1970s. It is characterised by processes of impoverishment, social exclusion and stigmatisation and captures a situation in which people cannot afford access to basic goods and services even when they are available. Socioeconomic peripheralisation almost inevitably includes features of a peripheralisation of the everyday—such as exclusion from social networks and decision-making processes—whereas peripheralisation of the everyday may occur without marked socioeconomic peripheralisation.

In the following three sections, one for each case study, we first investigate the agencies and administrative tools of the main actors who initiated mass housing urbanisation. Secondly, we analyse land regimes, housing markets, the government's rationales and territorial strategies and the experiences of the inhabitants in the different political and socioeconomic contexts of these urban territories. Based on these insights, we then analyse the specific territorial characteristics and the varying processes of peripheralisation in each. The order of the case studies in the text follows the history of peripheralisation through mass housing urbanisation: Paris (1950s–1990s), Hong Kong (1950s–2010s) and Mexico City (1990s–2010s). The concluding section directly compares the three cases, details our taxonomy of peripheralisation and discusses the role of the state and its colonising strategies in the production of urban territories.

# PARIS, 1950s–1990s

The extended Paris region (Île-de-France) faced unprecedented urban growth during the post-war boom period, growing from 4.5 million inhabitants in 1954 to 7.6 million in 1975. Much of this growth was absorbed by modernist high-rise estates called grands ensembles. In 1962, 110 *grands ensembles* in the urban periphery of Paris housed around 2 million people, almost as many as the City of Paris itself. As a result, the life routines of the upper-working and lower-middle classes underwent radical changes from the 19th to the 20th century, providing the grounds for the formation of a consumer and leisure society. However, by the mid-1980s the grands ensembles had turned into zones of socio-economic decline, deprivation and stigmatisation. This inversion of socioeconomic fortune and symbolic meaning was a result of the liberalisation of urban politics in the French system of centralised interventionism from the mid-1960s onwards, as well as the economic crisis of the mid-1970s and the neoliberal restructuring that occurred after 1978. All these processes increased socio-spatial segregation and resulted in a fragmented and heterogenous territorial pattern.

## THE URBAN MODEL OF THE GRANDS ENSEMBLES AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PARIS

The term ‘grand ensemble’ first appeared in public discourse at the end of the 1950s. It is a colloquial term that designates a large-scale modernist housing complex usually comprising more than 500 apartments composed of high-rise towers and low-rise slabs *(tours et bars)*, set in large open spaces and equipped with some urban amenities (Lacoste 1963). A precondition for this urbanisation model was the prefabrication building industry created for reconstructing war-damaged cities after the Second World War. Mass housing urbanisation started to be built in the mid-1950s. At the time, the Paris region faced a severe housing crisis that posed a threat to the stability of the government; caused by the comparatively low amount of construction activity and the dilapidation of the existing housing stock at a time when the region was experiencing great economic and demographic growth. In the Département de la Seine that surrounds the City of Paris, 240,000 families were classified as poorly housed *(mal logés)* in 1954, and thousands of people were living in squatter settlements. In the City of Paris only one in every two apartments was equipped with a toilet, only one in four had central heating and only one in five a bathtub or a shower (Bertrand 1964). To accelerate the pace of housing production, the French state offered the construction industry several financial and political incentives. In 1953 it facilitated access to credit financing and granted public authorities expropriation rights for housing production (Effosse 2003). It also created an employers’ tax system that promoted the growth of semi-public providers of social housing for employees (Driant 2009; Glendinning 2021). In 1954 the public investment bank Caisse des dépôt et consignations (CDC) founded the subsidiary construction firm Société centrale immobilière de la Caisse des dépôts (SCIC) as an intermediate agency between the state and the municipalities. The SCIC soon became the main investor in housing in Île-de-France, where it financed and built 60,000 housing units up to 1964, including the new town of Sarcelles (Landauer 2010).

Paris; Cité de l’Abreuvoir, built between 1954–1958. Bobigny, 2022

Paris; housing slab in the Cité des 4000, before its demolition. La Courneuve, 2011

The expropriation laws and the creation of the SCIC constituted a decisive shift from locally rooted housing provision towards the strategic intervention of the national state into urbanisation processes. The creation of the SCIC linked civil engineering, market interventions and military strategies; a strategic combination of legal tools and disciplinary knowledge that was developed and applied in the French colonies (Kipfer 2019; Fredenucci 2003; Henni 2017). The strategy of combined urban intervention was strengthened with the advent of the Fifth Republic, established by General Charles de Gaulle in 1958 a few months after a military coup in Algeria had dismantled the Fourth Republic (1945–1958). De Gaulle installed a political system that granted the president and the prime minister special executive powers, and in the following years French urban planning introduced comprehensive territorial projects through top-down procedures (Vadelorge 2014; Effosse 2005). In 1958 the Gaullist government created priority urbanisation areas called ZUP *(zone à urbaniser par priorité)*, an administrative tool allowing land acquisition for the construction of 500-unit settlements equipped with public facilities. The 22 ZUPs launched in the Paris region from 1959 to 1969 comprised 140,000 housing units and covered a territory of nearly 6,000 ha—half the size of the City of Paris itself (Jamois 1968: 235–236). However, mass housing urbanisation in the Paris region during the post-war boom was a diverse and finely grained process. Fewer than half of the approximately 150 grands ensembles built until 1976 were ZUPs or developed by the SCIC. The others were constructed using a variety of small-scale public or parastatal housing providers acting at a local scale, as exemplified by the high-quality social housing projects in the communist municipalities of Ivry-sur-Seine and Saint-Denis (Glendinning 2021; Fourcaut 2006). Local empowerment could also be achieved when a ZUP was based on the initiative and leadership of a mayor, such as the ZUP of Créteil, which included a new university. The coexistence of authoritarian strategies and local empowerment characterised the production of the grands ensembles until the mid-1960s.

Two contrasting tendencies determined the social composition of the grands ensembles. On the one hand, social housing remained socially segregated until the mid-1960s, since access to social rental contracts required a defined minimal income and thus excluded the poorest strata of the population as well as refugees and people without French citizenship. On the other hand, the grands ensembles also housed people displaced by the urban renewal of working-class neighbourhoods in the City of Paris. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, large parts of the City of Paris were transformed into a centre for global finance and a headquarter and knowledge economy, which was accompanied by a fundamental change in the social composition of its population. From 1954 to 1975 the share of workers living in the City of Paris dropped from 30 to 22 per cent, whereas the share of inhabitants older than 65 increased from 11 to 18 per cent (Nivet 2000). From 1962 to 1975, 1.7 million of its population of 2.8 million people left the City of Paris, while only 800,000 new inhabitants arrived to live in Paris; in the same time span, its population shrank by 500,000, while the urban region grew by 1.9 million (Annuaire statistique de la France).

The Paris administration promoted this transformation of the city through a series of urban renewal projects that extended over 3.8 km$^2$, or 3.6 per cent of the area of the city in 1970 (Godard et al. 1973; Coing 1966). The social housing companies owned or co-owned by the City of Paris[1] also facilitated the relocation of working-class inhabitants to the inner *banlieue* by building large-scale housing estates for the inhabitants of urban renewal sites, such as the Cité des 4000 in La Courneuve (1959) and Les Courtillières in Pantin (1955–1961) (Pouvreau 2010; Landauer and Pouvreau 2007). However, most of the indigent residents who were expelled from the City of Paris were relocated to new substandard housing estates that were often situated in ZUPs. These relocation efforts initiated a process of socioeconomic peripheralisation (Tricart 1977). Astonishingly, the communist press took little notice of this renovation and deportation *(rénovation-déportation)*, as critics called it at the time (Groupe de sociologie urbaine de Nanterre 1970). This silence can be interpreted as a tacit territorial compromise between the conservative administration of the City of Paris and the communist municipalities of the Département de la Seine. The former sought to enhance and upgrade the City of Paris, while the latter hoped to strengthen their constituency by the arrival of more working-class people.

## LOGISTICAL PERIPHERALISATION AND PERIPHERALISATION OF THE EVERYDAY

In the first phase of mass housing urbanisation, the grands ensembles functioned as enclaves of accelerated modernisation for the white and native French part of the population, offering a modern but peripheralised mass consumer environment. In the outer banlieue they started urbanising the agricultural land that had been protected from construction between the wars by urban planners. In the inner banlieue, by contrast, buildings were located on the interstices of the dense 19th century urban apartment blocks, patches of single-family homes and industrial sites. In both cases, many grands ensembles were constructed on territorial enclaves, cut off from local centralities and placed adjacent to motorways, rail lines and industrial sites. This logistical peripheralisation of the grands ensembles was due not least to the sharply rising land prices in the Paris region (24 per cent per year from 1958 to 1964) because private and state-owned developers aimed at making homes affordable (Vadelorge 2014: 106, 116). While public bus connections were usually available, it could easily exceed 90 minutes to travel to the centre of Paris. Additionally, buses often did not run in the evenings and bus stops could be reached only after long walks (Clerc 1967, Huguet 1971). Territorial isolation and inadequate public transport resulted in the creation of a double periphery: many grands ensembles were peripheral to the centre of Paris and cut off from easy access to local centralities and the essential amenities of daily life.

Despite the various forms of logistical peripheralisation, living in a grand ensemble in the early 1960s was considered a privilege by many working-class households. The apartments provided comfort, light and space; private bathrooms and central heating were accompanied by a new consumer lifestyle and new domestic appliances; and, despite the standardised production methods used, the buildings and apartments were often of a high architectural quality. However, this modernisation went hand in hand with a peripheralisation of the everyday. Social spaces for meeting and interaction, such as restaurants, bars and entertainment venues, were largely absent, while televisions, refrigerators and the availability of cheap domestic washing machines shifted collective routines from the neighbourhood to the domestic interior. The economic viability of small retail stores was diminished by the state-driven erection of large-scale shopping malls in the banlieue (Cupers 2014). At the same time, having to pay higher rents for these modernist apartments and the cost of new consumer goods imposed economic discipline on households. The interplay of these processes with the functionalist apartment plan and the urban setting reinforced the Fordist production of new subjectivities through individualisation and hierarchical gender roles, promoting a modern

Paris; grandes ensembles, seen from the parc Georges-Valbon, 2022 middle-class identity of white French culture, as investigated by Ross (1995) and vividly illustrated by Christiane Rochefort's novel *Children of Heaven* (1962). This homogenisation of urban space became particularly apparent when contrasted with the tight mesh of small retail stores, launderettes, bars, cinemas and entertainment venues that made up everyday routines in the working-class neighbourhoods of the City of Paris (Coing, 1966). The morphological rupture between the hermetic, monotonous universe of the grands ensembles and the surrounding urban fabric aggravated residents' feelings of alienation. Sociological surveys revealed there was a widely shared unease about everyday life in the grands ensembles and in 1965 82 per cent of French citizens said they would prefer living in a detached house to having an apartment in a grand ensemble (Raymond et al. 1966: 29).

## RACIALISED SOCIOECONOMIC PERIPHERALISATION

During the 1970s the grands ensembles became the arena of a political paradigm shift in migration politics and the politics of housing finance, which consolidated the socioeconomic peripheralisation of residents and initiated a new form of racialised peripheralisation. Thus, social problems were transformed into the urban problem of a territorially, socially and ethnically segregated society. Starting in 1965, public authorities began to withdraw funding for social rental housing, while offering large financial incentives to high-income groups to leave the social rental housing sector. Access to home ownership was facilitated through the launch of public mortgage schemes and direct housing subsidies (Kleinman 1996; Lefebvre et al. 1991). This process was institutionalised and accelerated after the neoliberal reform programme of 1977 named after Prime Minister Raymond Barre. This programme made it harder for social housing companies to get a loan and encouraged lower income groups to become homeowners by launching a mortgage scheme for households that had no equity (Bourdieu and Christin 1990). These changes introduced a new governmental rationality: the shift from residents having the right to housing to their having a duty to participate in the housing market (Kockelkorn 2020).

In parallel with these changes in the politics of housing finance, the poorest French citizens and the immigrant population gradually gained access to the regular social rental housing from which they had previously been excluded (Tricart 1977; Gastaut 2004). In 1968 the regional administration began to impose annual admission rates in the regular social housing sector (habitation à loyer modéré*;* HLM) for households from squatter settlements and urban renewal areas. Squatter settlements had been growing since the end of the colonial war in Algeria in 1962, and in 1966 alone 119 squatter settlements in the Paris region gave shelter to about 47,000 people from North Africa and southern Europe, as well as poor white native French people (Gastaut 2004: 2). Most immigrants, however, lived in private rental housing in dilapidated working-class neighbourhoods in the City of Paris—neighbourhoods that were often targeted for urban renewal (Tricart 1977; Viet 1999). In both cases, Algerian residents were rehoused through specialised housing companies and the use of special funds and legal instruments: their hostels and provisional settlements materialised a state of exception and stigmatised their inhabitants as incapable of leading a normalised modern everyday life (Gastaut 2004; Tricart 1977). This situation changed in 1970, when a new rehabilitation law gave immigrants and the poorest native French citizens access to the HLM housing (Tanter and Toubon 2002). This was a clear political victory for racialised and immigrant people. However, their numbers rose only through struggle and contestation, since housing companies and municipalities, no matter their political preference, strongly rejected and circumvented the rules about integrating such people despite the annual admission rates for households from squatter settlements and redevelopment areas that had been imposed by the authorities in 1968, and that were fixed at 15 per cent in 1970 (Tellier 2012; David 2010; Blanc-Chaléard 2015). By 1979 the proportion of immigrants in the HLM sector had risen to 26 per cent. In general, however, they were often located in sites that have suffered more from peripheralisation, as such sites had vacancies more frequently. At the same time, the arrival of people with a low income and those of minority ethnic groups contributed to the symbolic devaluation of the grands ensembles in public discourse that would later lead to racist discrimination against its residents, especially in specific sites that were affected by marked processes of peripheralisation.

These new population politics, together with the introduction of the financial incentives described above, fundamentally altered the social composition of the social housing sector. In 1973 a large portion of social housing residents in France were middle class, while only 12 per cent came from the lowest income quartile of households entitled to social housing (Lévy-Vroelant et al. 2014: 136). By 1984 the share of the lowest income quartile had risen to 26 per cent and by 2006 to 40 per cent.[2] This change in the social composition of social housing estates led to uneven urban development. Poor households with a migrant background were likely to be placed in already disadvantaged grands ensembles in the outer periphery. The second wave of deindustrialisation and the continual rise of unemployment from the mid-1970s reinforced this socioeconomic and racialised peripheralisation. It was most severely felt in grands ensembles located close to industrial plants that had either been shut down or had greatly reduced their workforce, such as the La Rose-des-Vents ZUP in Aulnay-sous-Bois. Similar processes of peripheralisation occurred in housing estates that had served to relocate people after slum clearance and urban renewal projects, such as the Cité des 4000 in La Courneuve and La Grande Borne in Grigny. The lived experience of these residents as they faced constant racial discrimination laid the ground for the projection of an imaginary of state violence on buildings that had originally been the outcome of a Fordist compromise based on the idea of a society where all citizens were equally entitled to social goods. Many grands ensembles of the post-war boom years thus became territorial enclaves housing a stigmatised population whose entitlement to political participation, economic redistribution and territorial justice had been pulverised. Throughout the 1990s there were urban uprisings almost every year in the Parisian banlieues, tying the urban model of the grands ensembles to the imaginary of racialised socioeconomic precarity and violence.

The beginnings of this form of peripheralisation in the grands ensembles occurred at the same time that five *villes nouvelles* (new towns) started being built in the outskirts of Paris. This large-scale territorial project was planned in the 1960s and exemplified the authoritarian, top-down mode of Gaullist governing. The realisation of the plan, however, was greatly impeded, firstly by the change in public strategies that relocated the development initiative into the hands of private investors in 1969 and then by the economic crisis of the 1970s. As a result, the five new towns attracted only a fraction of the inhabitants they had been planned for, and in the early 1980s they were additionally struck by the subprime mortgage crisis triggered by the neoliberal reforms of 1978. In the 1990s most new town centres experienced processes of racialised socioeconomic peripheralisation similar to those in the grands ensembles—even though regional metro lines (RER) and shopping malls had somewhat ameliorated the effects of logistical peripheralisation (Kockelkorn 2017).

By the 1980s the concentration of poverty in territorial enclaves and marked territorial fragmentation were key features of the Paris region. Throughout the 1970s, these features developed within an overarching socioeconomic pattern that set in stark contrast the poor north-eastern and the wealthy south-western parts of the banlieue that had characterised the region since the mid-19th century. This large-scale socioeconomic polarisation was reinforced in 1968 by the dissolution of the Département de la Seine that had surrounded the City of Paris. Its replacement by three new départements—Hauts de Seine, Val de Marne and Seine-Saint-Denis—greatly weakened the dominance of communist officials in regional governments and thus also their more distributive policies. The north-eastern territory, which mainly corresponds to the Département Seine-Saint-Denis, was characterised by a long history of industrialisation and working-class immigration dating from the mid-19th century. To this day, it contains a high number of precarious urban zones classified as 'sensitive urban zones' (Zone urbaine sensible, ZUS), which often consist of grands ensembles and are characterised by high rates of unemployment, high levels of poverty, the disproportionate presence of immigrants and young people, as well as large families and lower rates of education and health than in the overall population. By contrast, the entire south-western part of the Paris region—extending over the départements of Hauts-de-Seine, Yvelines and Essonne—largely escaped industrialisation. This region was much less affected by relocation processes, immigration, deindustrialisation and unemployment; and today it includes less than 10 per cent of the regional ZUS.

The answer of the French government to this triple process of peripheralisation was a complete change of urban strategy. In 2004 it allocated € 24 billion (through 2030) for the demolition (in part or in whole) and reconstruction of grands ensembles across the nation. In the Paris region, 119 sites were transformed by raising € 100 billion of private sector investment.[3] Because of its gentrifying tendencies, scholars and activists alike were initially very critical of this strategy, which is often combined with infrastructural measures and an increase in home ownership. However, the strategy put a preliminary halt to the ongoing peripheralisation of many urban enclaves while more or less maintaining the share of social housing. In 2006 the share of social housing in the Paris region was at 23 per cent of the total housing stock. It rose to 25 per cent in 2015 and shrank to 22 per cent in 2019.

## CONCLUSION

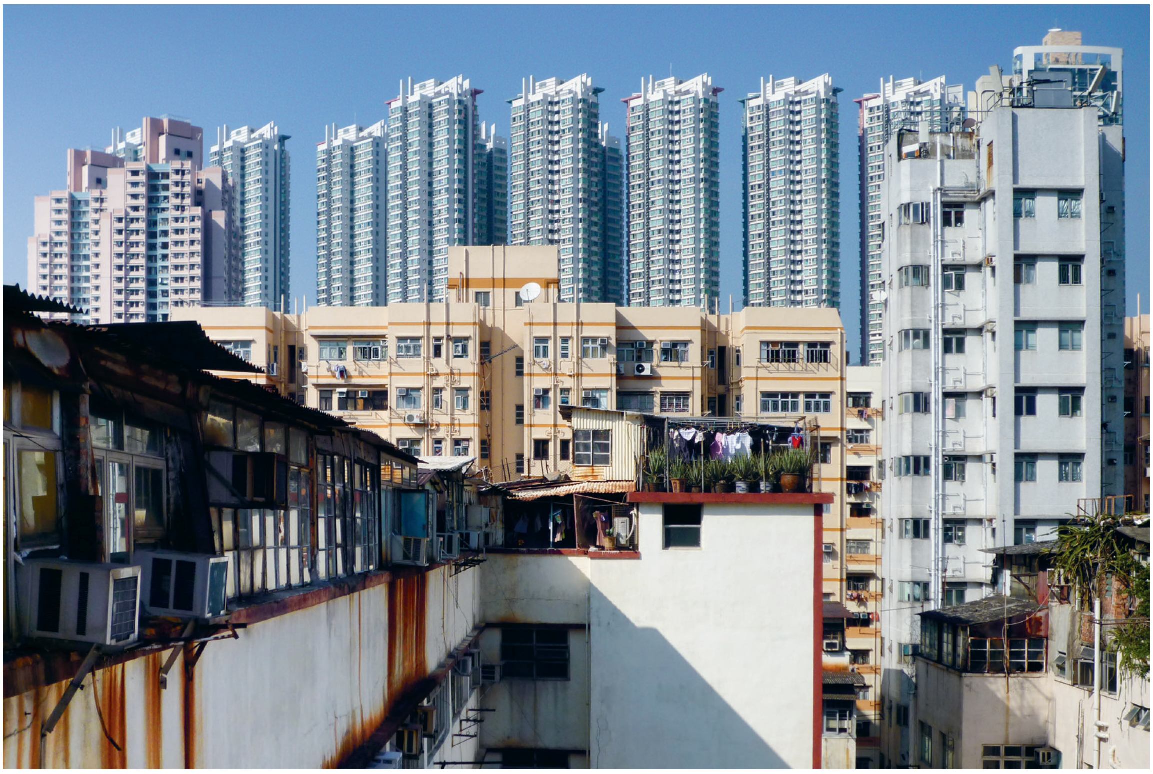
From the 1950s to the 1970s, mass housing urbanisation in the Paris region was put in place by a great diversity of developers, urban forms and territorial settings, and the histories of individual grands ensembles were as unique as their locations. Firstly, they were constructed by a great variety of municipal, regional, national, public and semi-public actors. Secondly, they were implemented through contradictory modes of governing: on the one hand, the state's authoritarian interventionism, deriving from its experience in the French colonies, promoted the relocation of working-class populations to the urban periphery; on the other hand, municipal actions aimed for local empowerment. Thirdly, they were territorialised in the finely grained mosaic of the more than 1,300 municipalities of the Paris region, each having a specific relation to the City of Paris and a specific territorial position in the complex centre–periphery system of the region.

Despite these differences, most of the grands ensembles provided a shared collective experience of modernity for many residents until the mid-1960s. At the same time, they were affected by logistical peripheralisation and the peripheralisation of the everyday. However, with the neoliberal restructuring of the 1970s, the destiny of the grands ensembles changed radically. They no longer served as a normalising step in a middle-class housing career but contributed to the containment of an increasingly marginalised and stigmatised population. Many territorially separated and enclaved sites suffered from racialised socioeconomic peripheralisation which was aggravated by the rise of unemployment and the pre-existing effect of logistical peripheralisation. Under those conditions, the high architectural and landscape quality of many grands ensembles were unable to counter social stigmatisation and territorial segregation. This demonstrates that urban form alone cannot counter the effects of such peripheralisation.

# HONG KONG, 1950s–2010s

The colony of Hong Kong developed in the contradictory interplay of British colonialism and free-trade capitalism. Founded in 1841 at the end of the first Opium War between the British Empire and China, the original raison d'être of this colony was its entrepôt economy. Until the Second World War this free trade port served as an outpost for trade between the British Empire and China. It was based on the principle of non-intervention into economy and society, small government, no tariffs and low tax. The main source of income and the main instrument of government domination was its leasehold of the Crown land that made up the original territory of the colony; namely, Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon peninsula. In 1898 the colony expanded through a 99-year lease of the New Territories north of Kowloon, which a century later would lead to the handover of the entire colony to the People's Republic of China.

After the Japanese occupation in the Second World War, Hong Kong was restored as a British colony. In the radically changed geopolitical situation of the Cold War and the rise of communist China, it became a frontier territory between the Western and Eastern blocs (Mark 2004). The turmoil in China provoked the immigration to Hong Kong of hundreds of thousands of refugees during the decade after 1945, who soon made up most of the population of the colony. In this situation the political and economic doctrine of non-interventionism proved to be



Hong Kong; rooftop housing in Kowloon. Tai Kok Tsui, 2012 dysfunctional. The colonial government had to take charge of the production of housing and the urban infrastructure and embarked on a new pathway of urbanisation in which mass housing urbanisation became the main technique for managing the large number of immigrants and to restore social order, which in turn also gave rise to rapid export-led industrialisation. This mode of space production was again reshaped during the radically changed political and economic conditions of the 1980s, when China opened itself up to the world economy and Hong Kong became a global city.

## COLONIAL STRATEGIES OF SPATIAL CONTAINMENT

In the early 1950s, mass housing urbanisation became the key element of the government's territorial strategy, with the aim of controlling the numerous economic, demographic and geopolitical crises that the colony faced. Firstly, in the context of waves of decolonisation in Asia and Africa, British rule in Hong Kong was questioned at the international level. Secondly, the trades embargo imposed by the UN and the USA on China (1950–1972) severely affected Hong Kong's entrepôt economy. Thirdly, the civil war and the rise of the Communist regime in China led to a continual flow of refugees to Hong Kong. From 1945 to 1959 its population quadrupled from 600,000 to 2.36 million people, which aggravated the already severe housing crisis and triggered a sprawl of squatter communities living on rooftops, along hill slopes and at the urban fringes. The government initially refused to resettle the illegal squatters but the squatter communities grew rapidly from 30,000 inhabitants in 1947 to 300,000 in 1950. More importantly, the growth of these communities led to an eruption of social unrest that immediately assumed geopolitical dimensions. A series of fires in the squatter settlements in the early 1950s sparked waves of social unrest and anti-colonial activity that confronted the colony with a potential existential threat (Smart 2006). The Shek Kip Mei fire of December 1953 finally prompted the launch of an official resettlement policy.

As a temporary solution to these interrelated crises the government started to build resettlement housing. To maximise the number of rehoused people, the government opted for a very dense form of mass housing using minimal land areas where land costs were lowest. During the 1950s, 26 resettlement estates were established in the New Territories north of Kowloon. Similar to the 'chawls', a form of tenement housing for workers in India (Home 1997), the six to seven-storey H-shaped blocks had no elevators. In them five people squeezed into each 11 m$^2$ room and only shared latrines and washing facilities—a water standpipe, basins and showers—were provided on each floor. Because its goal was to restore colonial control and spatial order, resettlement was conceived as spatial containment, not welfare provision, and emphasised efficiency and quantity, not quality. The Public Works Department was responsible for the construction work, while the newly established Resettlement Department oversaw estate management, squatter control, slum clearance and rehousing. By 1972, 234,059 of the new resettlement units housed around 1 million people (Yeung and Wong 2003); about a quarter of Hong Kong's entire population. Additionally, various government agencies built low-cost and middle-class housing for rent, and government loans were offered to independent voluntary organisations to build affordable housing.

Before the Second World War, while imposing residential segregation between the European and the Chinese population and controlling the building and sanitation of the settlements, the government allowed the Chinese immigrants to attend to their own social and educational needs: schools, health and social welfare (Carroll 2007). In contrast to this laissez-faire policy, the post-war resettlement estates functioned as a disciplining instrument and marked the beginning of direct rule of the Chinese subjects, whose presumed loyalty to communist China posed a threat to the colony (Mizuoka 2018). All blocks and rooms were numbered, tenants paid monthly rents through standard administrative protocols and the spatial organisation of the settlements and buildings made it easy to control the inhabitants. For the government, this new type of housing was instrumental in transforming the post-war immigrants into good citizens: 'if they were to remain and become good citizens, they had to be weaned away from their discontent and transformed by some social alchemy from the mentality of the farmer to that of the industrial worker' (Hong Kong Annual Report 1956: 9). Mass housing urbanisation, which began as an emergency response to an immediate social crisis, thus evolved into a governmental strategy for the territorial containment and colonial control of the immigrant population.

## COLLECTIVE CONSUMPTION AND EXPORT-LED INDUSTRIALISATION

In addition to containing the immigrant population, the resettlement strategy had another effect, which soon became decisive for the further development of Hong Kong. The government constructed public housing and also multistorey industrial buildings to relocate cottage industries from squatter areas (Castells et al. 1990; Mizuoka 2018). In the mid-1950s the government started to develop entire industrial towns on reclaimed land in Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan to relocate families and allow Chinese industrialists to set up new factories. These industrial towns housed large concentrations of factories and low-wage workers, thus securing the growth of labour-intense industries —and they provided an effective solution through the production of space.

A key aspect of this territorial development model was the availability of land. As the government owned all Crown land, it could use it for state-built public housing while also offering land for sale in prime locations to private companies via public auctions. In the following decades the sale of land became the most important source of income for the government (Ho 2004; Mizuoka 2018). However, land was scarce, both because of the hilly topography and because indigenous villagers held most of the land in the New Territories and resisted the resumption (reacquisition) of their farmland by the government. Therefore, the government began a process of large-scale land reclamation to make the rapid expansion of mass housing in the New Territories possible and financially viable.

Although the government did not provide direct support to industries like other fast-industrialising South-East Asian countries due to the opposition of British business groups (Chiu 1994), it can be argued that mass housing was a form of collective consumption organised by the government that constituted a kind of wage subsidy to industries by lowering costs of the reproduction of labour power (Castells et al. 1990). It contributed to the development of an export-oriented manufacturing sector that was closely linked to the long-established port centre and to related businesses in finance, commerce, insurance and shipping. Industrial take-off in turn stimulated commercial and banking activities, which turned Hong Kong into a regional financial centre by the 1970s (Jao 1979).

In various ways, mass housing urbanisation thus marked a turning point for the development of Hong Kong. By this strategy the government assumed an interventionist role in the economy and society and re-established its own domination over the production of urban space, land supply and population management in a new territorial order (Ma 2007). At the same time, mass housing urbanisation became the motor of post-war industrial development and territorial expansion. By the 1970s Hong Kong had become one of the four Asian Tigers in the new international division of labour.

## THE PRODUCTION OF CIVIC PRIDE

In the 1970s mass housing urbanisation began to fulfil an additional function: it became a tool for creating a sense of civic pride and identity. This strategic change was a reaction to two riots that constituted a real threat to the social order and the legitimacy of the colony and increased geopolitical tensions with China. In 1966, in response to an increase in fares, the Star Ferry protests erupted. They were the culmination of earlier protests demanding that the government address pressing social needs, indicating a rise in local political consciousness. The following year saw a political riot inspired by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as local communists turned a workers' dispute into a series of violent actions challenging colonial rule and imperialism (Lui and Smart 2009). These riots made it clear that the early form of resettlement housing had not transformed immigrants into good citizens but instead had concentrated an unruly working class. In response, the government launched a series of social reforms to re-establish the people's confidence in the government's legitimacy.

In 1972 the new governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, started a 10-year public housing scheme and a new town programme, with the aim of producing decent housing for 1.8 million people. His main idea was to develop the already planned new towns of Shatin and Tuen Mun into full cities with their own centralities, access to local employment, better public housing and an improved urban environment providing leisure and public facilities. The goal was to enhance the government's legitimacy and to create a new political subject: that of the 'Hong Kong people', distinguishing them from their Chinese identity (Faure 1997). By this action MacLehose hoped to strengthen the position of the colony in upcoming negotiations with China about the status of Hong Kong after 1997 (Yep and Lui 2010).

Mass housing urbanisation and new town development thus became a strategic political instrument to develop a sense of civic pride. This strategy aimed to solve the contradictions of colonialism through urbanisation: instead of giving people democratic rights, it offered them a sense of belonging. Thus, in public discourse the 1970s symbolised a period of successful governorship, modernisation, prosperity and social stability. And yet the ideological framing of this kind of production of space used the spatial fetishisation of 'home' and 'prosperity' to conceal the contradictions of colonial domination.

## COLONIAL POLITICS OF PERIPHERALISATION

During the three decades of post-war boom, mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong initially evolved from being a short-term response to social unrest into a spatial strategy to contain immigration and illegal squatting. It then became a motor of industrialisation and finally a form of socio-spatial engineering of civic identity under colonial rule. This development also included processes of peripheralisation of the working class. This is how it happened.

Firstly, mass housing urbanisation intervened in the regional territorial development, orchestrated flows of investments and established a new territorial order for the colony. While Hong Kong's centre was reserved for commercial and financial activities and British capitalists, the incoming Chinese industrialists and the working class were relegated to the peripheries. This territorial organisation involved great logistical peripheralisation. This would have severe consequences in the following decades.

Secondly, an increasing number of people and activities were relocated by government from squatter areas, tenement buildings and streets or roadsides to the new, high-density peripheral areas and thus brought them into a new technocratic spatial order. This new territory was defined by power and led to a peripheralisation of working-class families' daily life, unlike the mixed inner-city neighbourhoods in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. The government managed these high-density communities through town planning and land-use zoning: public facilities were allocated according to population thresholds and considerations of economic efficiency. Thus, these spaces were also increasingly controlled and homogenised and everyday life was increasingly regulated. Low-income families were moved into rental flats, cottage factories into multistorey industrial buildings, street hawkers were relocated to stalls in roofed food markets and schools and social activities were moved from rooftops into proper buildings and community centres. Squatters became tenants and were institutionalised and managed by the Housing Authority, which became the largest provider of housing in Hong Kong (Smart 2006) and developed into a huge technocratic and managerial colonial institution. Mass housing urbanisation thus became a device of control and discipline. It changed everyday routines, shaped social activities and interactions, affected social networks and social organisation, reduced people's capacities for self-organisation and contributed to the taming of social movements. This led to a paradox: the production of space offered the people a better quality of life and a sense of belonging and pride; at the same time, it served as an instrument for securing the submission of people to British colonial rule.

## GOVERNMENT-LED FINANCIALISATION OF REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

In the 1980s, mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong entered a new phase. Hong Kong became an international financial centre and site of multinational corporations and gradually developed into a global city. At the same time, with the opening up of China to global markets, manufacturing industries in Hong Kong were relocated across the border, predominantly to Shenzhen, Dongguan and Guangzhou. Additionally, Sino-British negotiations gradually defined key projects and regulations for the future of Hong Kong.

With Hong Kong's rise to a global city, strategic territorial planning became a decisive instrument for the promotion of economic growth and led to the fundamental restructuring of the city (Ho 2018). This included, for example, the extension of the metro system, the expansion of the central business district through harbour reclamation, the redevelopment of large dockyards at the harbour front, various urban renewal projects in inner-city neighbourhoods, the construction of an international container port in Kwai Chung and the relocation of the airport from a central area to Lantau Island. These developments also contributed to a boom in financial markets and the real estate sector. In this way, mass housing urbanisation was reshaped by new territorial logics and integrated into an all-encompassing metropolisation strategy. Instead of focusing on developing civic pride, the political discourse now regarded housing as a resource and emphasised that it should be efficiently allocated using market forces. In its long-term housing policy programme launched in 1987, the government shifted its attention from public rental housing to the subsidised sale of housing and introduced new incentives to boost homeownership (La Grange 2007).

In this new round of territorial development, mass housing urbanisation was coupled with the expansion and financialisation of the private housing

sector. This process had begun during the real estate boom of the late 1970s, when developers raised capital by listing their companies on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (Tang 2008). At the time, the real estate and construction sector accounted for 40–50 per cent of the capitalisation of the Hong Kong stock market (Tse and Ganesan 1999). As a result of the massive influx of local and global capital, private developers bought cheap farmland from villagers to keep it in their land banks for speculative use and they started to build large-scale condominium towers and malls for the growing middle classes; first in the 1980s in the new towns of Shatin and Tsuen Wan and, a decade later, in Tin Shui Wai and Tseung Kwan.

This coupling of mass housing urbanisation with highly speculative real estate development was gradually institutionalised through the direct collaboration of government actors and private developers in the new town development. While the government still played a central role in controlling and orchestrating urban development through the planning system and as the only landowner, a finance-led and property-based growth regime emerged that linked the government, private developers, financial institutions and households (Smart and Lee 2003). Financialisation also characterised the strategy of the government-owned Hong Kong metro company MTR, which was established in 1975 and gradually developed an innovative financial arrangement; raising funds from international financial markets and receiving injections of equity from the government and eventually starting to develop the space above the metro stations into shopping malls and condominium towers through joint ventures with private developers (Yeung 2008). In 2000 the government partially privatised the MTR and listed it in the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Hong Kong; public rental housing in the New Territories. Tin Shui Wai, 2012

## SOCIOECONOMIC PERIPHERALISATION OF THE METROPOLITAN WORKING CLASS

During the 1980s, mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong changed considerably. With ongoing deindustrialisation and metropolisation, the real estate sector and the MTR became the motors of economic and territorial development, while the coupling of public housing and industrial production lost its importance. Tin Shui Wai and Tseung Kwan O developed into dormitory towns and Ma On Shan (an extension of Shatin) and Tung Chung (an airport-related new town) followed suit. These mass housing peripheries thus came to be fully integrated into the growing metropolitan territory thanks to the railway and highway systems, which also facilitated the large-scale production of condominium towers for the middle classes in the new towns.

These developments generated a parallel process of socioeconomic peripheralisation, as many low-income families from the metropolitan centre had to relocate to the new areas. The loss of industrial jobs forced working class people into low-end service sectors, while the real estate boom led to a massive surge in property prices and rents. The living conditions of working-class families became harsh in the 1990s. While on the waiting lists for public housing for years, they had to live in expensive but intolerable subdivided or cubicle rooms in inner-city areas. The only way to obtain affordable housing at the time was in places like Tin Shui Wai, a new town without local jobs and thus long commutes to work. This had a particularly severe impact on young, nuclear families as parents struggled to obtain or keep a job and had to cope with gender and family issues if, for example, only the wife could get a (low-paying) job. In 1995, Tin Shui Wai appeared in a newspaper story under the headline ‘Nightmare in a Dormitory Town’ (South China Morning Post 1995), and in the early 2000s it was dubbed the City of Sorrow (Lee 2007). Tin Shui Wai was not the only example of this form of deep socioeconomic peripheralisation, but by virtue its sheer scale it symbolised how a considerable portion of the metropolitan working class had become trapped in the periphery.

## THE PARADOX OF PHYSICAL UPGRADING AND SOCIAL DISCIPLINE

One striking paradox of this kind of mass housing urbanisation is that the quality of the urban environment improved while it reproduced the state's disciplinary power. Architectural and landscape design turned the extremely high housing densities into a rational but also punitive form of community space. This space was closely controlled by the Housing Authority, which introduced standard security measures for all buildings and hired low-waged subcontracted security guards to patrol the buildings. In 2003 to 'ensure public hygiene and effective management', it imposed a 'marking scheme' with a code of conduct for public housing tenants, who could be found guilty of any of 28 'misdeeds' (e.g. littering, smoking, drying clothes in corridors, allowing water to drip from their air-conditioner) and assigned penalty points as a result (Hong Kong Housing Authority 2021).

In 2005, after the Housing Authority won a legal challenge at the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal, it launched the large-scale privatisation of commercial properties in all public housing estates (Chen and Pun 2007). The privatisation of about 180 shopping centres and food markets dramatically increased the value and the rents of retail in the housing estates, which in turn increased general household expenditures, as small retail stores and family enterprises selling goods at low prices had to relocate or give up their businesses. Since many shops and restaurants were dominated by the big retail chains owned by a handful of real estate tycoons, this had yet another negative impact on the everyday consumption of ordinary families. The paradox of physical upgrading and social discipline made this socioeconomic segregation invisible and turned each domestic unit into a clean, well-planned and efficiently managed space, which drove people into passivity. It also reduced the possibilities for grassroots initiatives and social movements, which had played an active role in public housing estates ever since the 1970s.

## CONCLUSIONS

Mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong began as a colonial strategy of the spatial containment and control of a growing immigrant population. It then turned into an instrument to produce and reproduce an industrial working class. It became a force of production that transformed Hong Kong's entrepôt economy into an export-oriented manufacturing economy closely linked to the long-established harbour economy. However, this development also led to logistical peripheralisation as well as to the large-scale peripheralisation of the working class. Mass housing urbanisation produced a new territorial order by which Hong Kong Island and the central parts of Kowloon developed into an international commercial and financial centre under the lead of British capitalists, while Chinese industrialists and the working class were relegated to peripheral areas.

In the 1970s, mass housing urbanisation became a political instrument to develop civic pride and a new Hong Kong identity as a way of maintaining colonial rule without granting the people political rights. This strategy aimed to resolve the contradictions of colonialism through urbanisation and particularly through the construction of new towns with their own centres, giving residents access to local employment, better public housing and an improved urban environment. At the same time, mass housing urbanisation became an instrument of control and discipline that led to a peripheralisation of everyday life.

In the 1980s globalisation and metropolisation led to a new model of territorial development. Mass housing urbanisation was coupled with financialisation and the development of private real estate companies, which rearticulated the collaborative relation between the government and private developers in the construction of new towns. As a consequence, everyday life was subject to a contradictory form of the production of space: a highly efficient and profitable territorial organisation that at the same time resulted in the socioeconomic peripheralisation of the metropolitan working class.

Mexico City; serial houses of a mega conjunto. Tecámac, 2012

# MEXICO CITY
# 1990s–2010s

In the first two decades of the 21st century, the urban peripheries of Mexico City have undergone a striking socio-spatial transformation. From 1999 to 2015 municipalities in the peripheries approved more than 400 *mega conjuntos habitacionales* (mega housing complexes) as part of a radically reformed public housing policy (Villavicencio and Durán 2003; Maya and Cervantes 2005). Subsequently, private developers constructed more than 724,000 housing units, mostly in the poorly accessible outskirts that often lack even basic urban infrastructure. In contrast to the French grands ensembles and Hong Kong's new towns, these mega settlements are not made up of dense housing high-rises but of small, mass-produced single-family houses that form vast carpets of housing over the landscape (Salinas Arreortua 2016). In 2013, less than 15 years after the first mega conjunto was built, the entire Mexican housing programme was thrown into a deep crisis. Major private developers went bankrupt and 5 million houses throughout Mexico were abandoned; a clear indicator that this corporate 'public housing' model had failed (Streule 2018).

## THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF MASS HOUSING PERIPHERALISATION

This apparently quick rise and fall of mass housing urbanisation at the urban fringes of the metropolitan region is closely related to the policy of re-densifying some of the popular central districts of Mexico City. This upgrading policy, which was implemented in the early 2000s by the government of the Distrito Federal (today called Ciudad de México; CDMX), contributed to leap-frogging mass housing urbanisation beyond its borders into the surrounding Estado de México (the provincial state that is home to most of the over 21 million inhabitants of Mexico City).

This process is rooted in the history of Mexico's public housing policies. In the late 1940s public housing was reserved for state employees, while most low-income groups invested in self-built houses in areas of popular urbanisation (Streule 2017a; see also Chapter 12). A profound housing reform in the early 1970s gave rise to a new form of housing estate, the *unidades habitacionales* (housing units), multistorey housing blocks for state and private sector employees mainly built close to industrial areas. After a catastrophic earthquake devastated large parts of the central areas of Mexico City in 1985, many new unidades habitacionales were built in the urban peripheries to relocate people from affected areas.

The most recent round of mass housing urbanisation has been vastly different in scale and scope, as it not only targets public and private workers but also aims to bring broad sections of Mexican society into the housing market by using specific mortgage programmes (Soederberg 2015). It is based on a policy of decentralisation that has been pursued by the national government since 1994, as well as on a series of far-reaching constitutional reforms in the 1990s. The most important of these were land reform and the reform of financial markets and pensions, as we describe in the following paragraphs (Álvarez Villalobos 1999). Political decentralisation has given municipalities much more decision-making power and also more influence on urban development. Many municipalities have promoted the construction of state-planned, market-based mass housing on communal agricultural land, particularly on *ejido* land, which is regulated on the basis of collective land use rights (Isunza and Méndez 2011; Varley and Salazar 2021). The key to this transition was the Land Reform Act of 1992 that allowed local governments to sell ejido land, which previously was not legally saleable. As a result, the ejidos of Mexico City were turned into major urban land reserves, giving rise to marketised, profit-oriented urban development (Fausto 1999). In a broader context, the Mexican government promoted the commodification of the ejidos and changes to the Mexican Constitution in 1992 to prepare for the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Similar to the grands ensembles in Paris, the mega conjuntos were mainly built in remote areas where land was available and cheap. But these places in comparison were more remote, farther from urban infrastructure, detached from the existing urban fabric and with poor public transport. Thus, daily commuting from these settlements to more central areas is both time-consuming and expensive, especially for public transport in the Estado de México. The subsidised metro network is located mainly in the CDMX and only a few lines of rapid bus transport connect central areas with municipalities in the Estado de México.

## THE FINANCIALISATION OF HOUSING

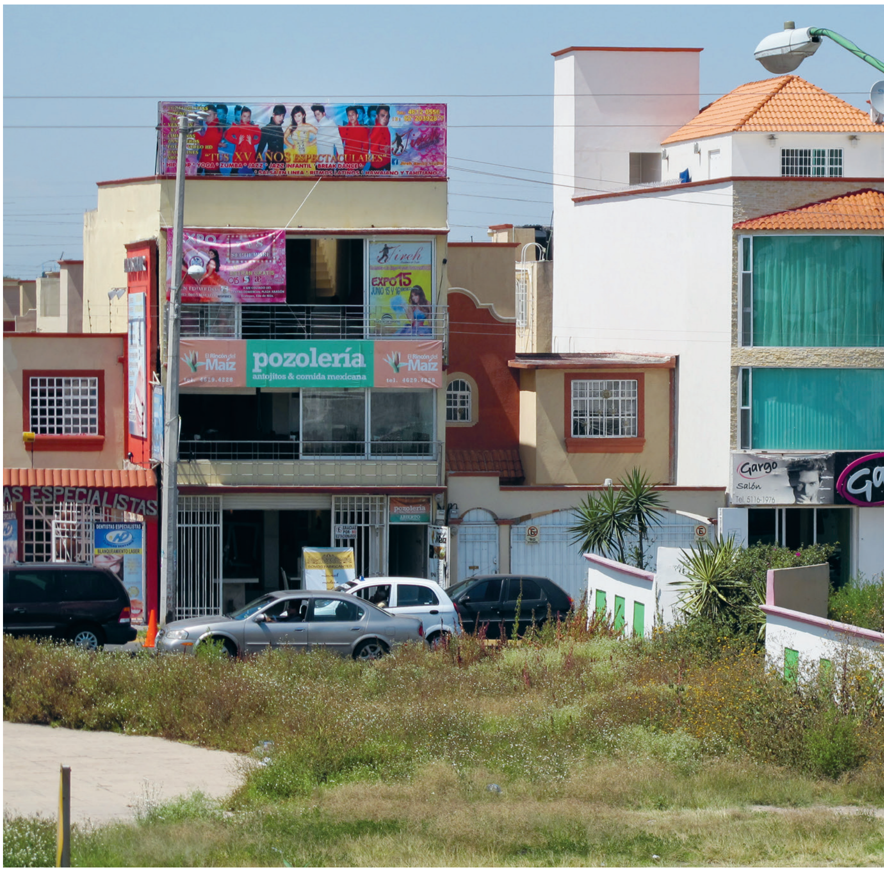
An important precondition for the construction of the mega conjuntos was the renewed politics of financialisation introduced by the Mexican government and promoted by major international development organisations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (Boils 2004). The pension reform of 1995 changed the pension scheme from a general fund to a personally managed account and made parts of the pension fund available for mortgage lending. Only two state-led housing funds manage the entire mortgage market for low-income housing in Mexico: INFONAVIT (Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores), the institution that grants housing loans to private sector employees and FOVISSSTE (Fondo de la Vivienda del Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado), the corresponding institution for state employees (UN-Habitat 2011). Employees and workers in these categories who have saved the required amount can, depending on their income, ask for a loan to buy a particular housing type. This housing policy, which has individualised lending, is also reflected in the changing discourse of the national government, which since the 2000s has promoted the 'right to access credit' and given little weight to people's constitutional right to decent housing (Sánchez Casanova 2013). As a result, the processes and formalities of the credit business have been rigorously simplified since 2000 by the two consecutive conservative federal governments of the Christian-Democratic PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) that supported deregulation and privatisation. Mortgage loans were made more accessible and the eligibility for a mortgage was expanded to include other social groups. At the same time, like a variable mortgage, the mortgages are adjusted daily for inflation, which constitutes a massive financial risk for new homeowners (Valenzuela and Tsenkova 2019; Rolnik 2014). People living in the mega conjuntos thus struggle with the peripheral location of their houses and also with the burden of rising mortgage repayments, which over time can exceed the budget of many.

The increasing level of debt as a result of this mortgage scheme and the massively reduced access to the job market caused by logistical peripheralisation have greatly aggravated socio-economic peripheralisation. As jobs and services are rare in these neighbourhoods, most of the population works or studies outside the municipality, mainly in the CDMX, which generates massive additional commuting and thus also costs more to get to work. To increase their income, some inhabitants began to open businesses in their own homes, starting restaurants, hair salons and workshops in their living rooms (Hastings 2008). Furthermore, the mega conjuntos provide only minimal educational facilities, which are mostly limited to childcare provision and primary schools.

## THE FAILURE OF THE CORPORATE MODEL FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

Since the late 1990s the Mexican public housing market has been dominated by a handful of private developers (Puebla 2002) who acquired large tracts of land on former ejido or communal land to achieve economies of scale (Valenzuela and Tsenkova 2019; see also Isunza and Méndez 2011).

Mexico City; construction site in section IV of Las Américas. Ecatepec, 2013



These developers are responsible for the design of the housing types and the planning, construction and management of the mega conjuntos. When construction is complete they hand over the administration of the settlements to the local government, which is not obliged to make any planning or construction provision until this transfer has been made—and it can even refuse to hand over the administration if the developers do not fully comply with the contract. Furthermore, the developers' responsibilities are often unspecified. Although they are contractually committed to constructing the necessary residential infrastructure, they provide only basic services and infrastructure, and this is often late, insufficient and particularly short in water supply (Maya and Cervantes 2008).

Mexico City; adapted houses in section I of Las Américas. Ecatepec, 2013

The financial risks in this corporate model of public housing are borne by the state via the Sociedad Hipotecaria Federal (Federal Mortgage Company), which provides the loan guarantee, and by INFONAVIT and FOVISSSTE, which manage the credit funds and collect interest payments. Falling demand for new houses in the mega conjuntos, an exodus of residents and the subsequent cessation of their interest payments, and above all the developers' aggressive financial policies, plunged the developers into a crisis in 2013. Having speculated on profits that they anticipated but did not materialise, by this time they owed the banks over two billion US dollars. Two of the largest developers became insolvent in mid-2013 and suspended their debt payments. Su Casita, Mexico's second-largest private lending institution went bankrupt in the same year. Despite the state's attempts to rescue it, the model of the mega conjuntos seems to have come to an inglorious end.

## CONCLUSIONS

The state played a fundamental role in the financialisation of mass housing urbanisation in Mexico City by directing public resources to the private building sector and promoting public–private partnerships to provide public housing. Yet the crisis of the corporate model for public housing in 2013 has already led to a shift in Mexico's housing policy towards more integrated urban development, where developers are incentivised to build high-density housing near densely built-up areas close to industrial and business zones (Valenzuela and Tsenkova 2019: 496). Furthermore, the current government, which was elected in 2018, has prioritised granting credit schemes for purchasing land for self-build housing and for repairing existing housing stock rather than building new homes. Despite this policy shift, based on deals they have made in the last two decades, developers are still building about half a million houses in new mega conjuntos every year on large peripheral tracts of land.

Today, the failure to provide adequate and affordable housing in Mexico City has resulted in increased vandalism, together with abandoned and vacant houses in many settlements. The 2013 developer crisis had a profound territorial impact, as it created zones of insecurity in which residents were susceptible to organised crime (Valenzuela 2017). The residents' exclusion from social networks and thus the peripheralisation of the everyday is particularly obvious in the mega conjuntos.

Newcomers are usually disconnected from their existing social networks elsewhere in the city. The lack of social cohesion is aggravated by the high levels of insecurity in these urban areas, which are notorious for gender-based violence.

In the broad perspective, mass housing urbanisation in Mexico City has played a less important role than in Paris or Hong Kong in providing affordable housing. Regardless of any claims of the universal benefits of mortgage securitisation and its ability to make markets more efficient and allow lenders to increase credit to more borrowers, Mexico continues to be characterised by an extreme shortage of affordable housing for the poor (Soederberg 2015: 483). For most low-income families this means they have no access to public housing and thus more incentive to continue the long-standing and well-established process of popular urbanisation.

# COLONIAL STRATEGIES AND THE DEVALUATION OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

An analysis of the pathways of mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong, Mexico City and Paris reveals a broad spectrum of territorial processes that are depicted in the three maps, although the map of Mexico City is an exception insofar as it depicts only one phase of mass housing urbanisation that includes all three types of peripheralisation from the outset. This map highlights the existence of radical logistical peripheralisation and the peripheralisation of the everyday in almost diagrammatic simplicity that visualises the inherent neocolonial logics of financialised mass housing urbanisation. Interpreted in combination with the socioeconomic peripheralisation revealed by our analysis—which this type of map cannot show—the entire territorial pattern of Mexico City can be read as a diagram of the inherent violence of this process.

The maps of Hong Kong and Paris offer a simultaneous snapshot of two distinct phases of mass housing urbanisation that have led to different and sometimes contradictory types of peripheralisation. These maps become decipherable only if we consider territorial disposition, governmental rationales and historical pathways in one broad picture. In the following, we compare the way that mass housing urbanisation came into existence in these three urban regions, what goals motivated its realisation and how different peripheralisation processes unfolded over time.

## THE STATE AND THE LAND QUESTION

The most important precondition for mass housing urbanisation is landownership or, more precisely, the capacity of state actors to control, repurpose and reallocate large swathes of land. The instruments we identified in the three cases are government landownership, expropriation, financial incentives, privatisation and various forms of public–private collaboration. The most striking case is Hong Kong, where the ownership of Crown land and the tactics of land reclamation and acquisition gave the colonial regime a monopoly of the land market. With these instruments, it became the dominant agent of urban development and used them to compensate for its failure to deal with massive illegal squatting that occurred after the Second World War. This power relation remained unaltered in the following decades although the governmental approach and planning strategy changed several times and it persisted after the end of British rule and the handover of the colony to the People’s Republic of China. In Paris under

Fordism, the interventionist welfare state used its existing range of tools and strategies to control and redistribute privately owned land, both directly by strengthening its expropriation rights and indirectly by zoning regulations and giving financial incentives for housing developers. In Mexico in the 1990s the central state imposed a new legal framework that allowed municipalities to privatise and urbanise land that had been communal and collectively owned, and to enter direct collaboration with private developers to urbanise it.

State control of available land is thus a necessary condition for mass housing urbanisation, which can be achieved by regulating the land and housing markets in combination with planning strategies and the imposition of various forms of land tenure. Investigating how the interplay of land regimes, planning strategies and housing policies profoundly transform and reshape urban territories requires a transdisciplinary research approach that has rarely been undertaken in academic housing studies. Our analysis thus highlights how the large-scale territorial development strategy of mass housing urbanisation leads to the rearrangement and relocation of people, jobs, livelihoods, social networks, urban services and infrastructure, thereby profoundly changing the everyday life of the inhabitants.

## COLONIAL AND FORDIST RATIONALITIES

The simultaneous launch of mass housing urbanisation in Hong Kong and Paris after the Second World War highlights strong parallels among them. Firstly, it was used as a tool to stabilise political and social crises. Secondly, it implemented a governmental strategy of collective consumption through which the state secured long-term economic growth by providing the necessary infrastructure for social reproduction. In Hong Kong mass housing urbanisation helped colonialism to survive during periods of social unrest and allowed the government to manage large numbers of refugees at a time of geopolitical turbulence. It also contributed to decades of high economic growth and relative stability. In Paris it helped to appease social unrest and political conflict during the transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic. It also enabled a Fordist growth model and addressed the severe housing crisis that had resulted from long-standing neglect of the housing stock and massive population growth in the post-war years.

Closer investigation, however, shows the differences between the Fordist and a colonial mode of governing. In Hong Kong mass housing urbanisation was achieved directly by the government through urban planning and the construction of housing and infrastructure to become a key element in the development of a new industrial working class. Relocating large parts of the immigrant population into large-scale high-rise settlements and new towns became a primary tool to form, regulate and control the everyday life of the labour force. The ensuing formation of an industrial workforce provided the necessary precondition for Hong Kong's industrialisation and initiated its fundamental change from an entrepôt economy to one of the world's leading industrial export economies. Granting political rights to residents was never part of this economic, administrative and territorial restructuring programme. Instead, mass housing urbanisation was used to re-establish and legitimatise the government's dominance in post-war society. Although the government improved and diversified architectural forms, the homogenising logic of mass housing urbanisation characterises the entire territorial process from the first settlements in Kowloon to the most recent production of urban peripheries in the New Territories.

In Paris, the conditions for mass housing urbanisation were set through a Fordist, tripartite institutionalised compromise between organised labour, entrepreneurial organisations and the state. This compromise offered the working class a range of benefits, such as rising wages, full employment, a welfare state and social stability; it also included both the working and the middle class within the same social project of housing provision. Mass housing urbanisation as such was implemented through a territorial strategy that shows certain parallels to Hong Kong. It included the centralisation of decision-making and territorial control, close collaboration between the government and the construction industry and the rapid, top-down implementation of new settlements through new planning instruments. In contrast to Hong Kong, however, this centralised and authoritarian form of territorial regulation was implemented in parallel to extant local forms of housing provision that allowed for self-empowerment through social welfare. In particular, the possibility of self-empowerment happened when projects were realised by powerful local actors or in the context of a territorial compromise between the Gaullist government and communist municipalities. The coexistence of authoritarian strategies and local empowerment has led to the great diversity of territorial situations, architectonic forms and urban infrastructures that characterise the grands ensembles. In subsequent decades, this heterogenous constellation would lead to marked territorial fragmentation and various processes of peripheralisation.

Comparing the two models of mass housing urbanisation, we can identify two paradigms of urbanisation. Hong Kong was developing a homogenising type of territorial regulation that was stabilising and strengthening a colonial type of governance. The Paris case shows a different type of territorial regulation, one based on a territorial compromise that also involved local governments. It offered the possibility of self-empowerment and social welfare, operating either on tacit agreements or as an alternative to the overarching colonising features of the process. Both paradigms operated as social projects intended to create a supposedly homogenous group of either colonial or colonising subjects: a colonial working class with a Hong Kong identity and a Fordist middle class of white French culture in Paris (Ross 1995).

## LOGISTICAL AND EVERYDAY PERIPHERALISATION IN HONG KONG AND PARIS

Both in Hong Kong and in Paris, the colonial and Fordist rationales of mass housing urbanisation entailed various processes of peripheralisation. Dominant in this first phase was logistical peripheralisation, as the new settlements were located at remote locations in the urban peripheries. In the large-scale settlements of Paris's outer banlieues and in the interstices of the inner banlieues, this created double peripheries: the settlements were far from the City of Paris and also cut off from local centralities. In Hong Kong, the immigrants were relocated to new settlements at the urban fringes and later in the New Territories at a considerable distance from the main urban centres on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Via this urbanising strategy the government was able to re-establish social order and preserve its power to govern the land and the people. As the housing estates were strategically built together with new industrial zones, mass housing urbanisation not only provided industrial workplaces in the vicinity of workers' homes but also became a driver in the rapid industrialisation of Hong Kong. At the same time, it led to a large-scale territorial divide: while Hong Kong's centre continued to be dominated by commercial and financial activities and British capitalists, the incoming Chinese industrialists and the working class were relegated to the periphery. Mass housing urbanisation thus established a new territorial order for the entire colony.

In this first phase, both cases also display different forms of the peripheralisation of the everyday. In Paris the loss and destruction of the small-scale networks of shops and social and cultural facilities in the City of Paris could not be reproduced in the grands ensembles. In Hong Kong the peripheralisation of the everyday resulted from the production of a standardised and manageable habitat that subjected their residents to colonial authority. In Paris similar techniques of colonial governance, discipline and control were applied to the poorest segments of the population, in particular Algerian immigrants who were excluded from regular social housing rental contracts until the mid-1960s. This form of exclusion did not apply, however, to the white French working class and the rising middle class living in the grands ensembles.

Initially, this combination of logistical and everyday peripheralisation was not necessarily tied to the other processes of peripheralisation. On the contrary, one of the initial purposes of Fordist and colonial mass housing urbanisation was to counter socioeconomic peripheralisation and to resolve governmental contradictions. Until the early 1960s in Paris and the late 1970s in Hong Kong, a social rental apartment in a modernist housing estate signified social promotion. In Paris the opportunity to live within socially homogenous grands ensembles largely composed of young, white middle-class and upper-working-class families also facilitated their access to a modern lifestyle and integration into social networks and community organisations. In Hong Kong housing production was strategically used to create a productive labour force and it was also coupled with the production of new amenities and sub-centres for the working class in the new towns. The aim was to create an identity—the people of Hong Kong—and a sense of pride in that identity to enhance the government's legitimacy and strengthen its negotiations with China. These examples show that social promotion and welfare can go hand in hand with a severe lack of social and urban integration and self-determination, and thus with everyday peripheralisation. Hong Kong did not grant full political and civil rights to its people and most of the residents of the grands ensembles in Paris were denied the right to the city and to centrality.

## PATHWAYS TO SOCIOECONOMIC PERIPHERALISATION

During the planetary shift towards global capitalism that occurred from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, the situation of inhabitants of mass housing estates in both Paris and Hong Kong changed dramatically as socioeconomic peripheralisation emerged. At this time it became less urgent to secure political stability through housing production and the creation of collective identities. Simultaneously, the new economic and political conditions led to radical changes in the role of the working class. As industrial jobs were rationalised and relocated, they were replaced by low-paid and often precarious jobs in the service sector of the metropolitan economy. Accordingly, the housing policies changed in the direction of marketising and financialising social housing and incorporating individuals into the housing market. Taken together, these factors led to the paradox of urban fragmentation and territorial inequality caused by state-initiated housing provision. In Paris the transition towards the socioeconomic peripheralisation of the postwar grands ensembles began with the liberalisation of the housing market in the mid-1960s and the inclusion of immigrants and indigent French citizens in the social housing sector in the 1970s. While members of the middle class received large economic incentives to leave the social housing sector, new legal tools facilitating inner-city urban renewal and squatter clearance fostered the relocation of racialised and poor people to the grands ensembles in the urban periphery. This change in the social composition of the grands ensembles was reinforced in the mid-1970s by the economic crisis, deindustrialisation and growing unemployment. In 1978 the introduction of a new neoliberal governmental rationality and its corresponding reform programme radically altered the status of the labour force: the reforms replaced the valorisation of full employment and a society of entitled citizens with that of a ‘liminal population’ to be held at the minimal status of employability if the market demanded (Foucault 2008). In the field of housing, neoliberal reforms aggressively promoted state-subsidised subprime mortgages to residents, initiating the shift from having the right to housing to having the duty to participate in the housing market.

The combination of these measures greatly reinforced the socioeconomic and racialised peripheralisation of the grands ensembles and aggravated their already existing logistical and everyday peripheralisation. These former engines of modernisation thus became sites of social and urban relegation, creating a deeply fragmented urban territory with contradictory urban imaginaries and spatial practices; that is, emancipatory hopes of working-class emancipation and neocolonial strategies of socio-spatial segregation often coexisted on the same site.

A similar process of socioeconomic peripheralisation and territorial fragmentation began in the 1980s in Hong Kong. The unprecedented industrialisation of the Pearl River delta led to the fundamental economic and territorial restructuring of the entire region. While large parts of Hong Kong’s manufacturing industry moved across the Chinese border, its urban development was marked by deindustrialisation and the massive growth of the financial, real estate and service sectors. The government then changed its territorial strategy towards metropolisation, rail-based urban development and the implementation of urban renewal programmes. The rapidly increasing rents and poor living conditions in subdivided housing and urban renewal projects drove low-income families out of the inner-city areas to the new towns. In some peripheral areas, railway stations were transformed into new urban centralities directly coupled with condominium towers built to house the growing middle classes. In this new model, public housing policies were directly linked to the development and financialisation of the real estate sector. Social housing, which became the only type of housing they could afford, was produced to house the new working class of a low-income service economy in a polarised global city rather than the industrial proletariat. Similar to Paris, these processes changed the nature of the labour force and led to dramatic socioeconomic peripheralisation through precarisation, isolation and loss of social capital. Low-income families had to relocate to the new, fast-growing housing estates in new towns that lacked local job opportunities, which made their everyday life precarious and social reproduction arduous, even though improvements in public transport later allowed those with higher incomes to commute to the centre.

The everyday lives of both groups were thus affected either by long daily commutes or by controlled routines and social isolation in a monotonous and extremely dense environment where they were kept under strong surveillance. Rather than overcoming social contradictions, mass housing urbanisation during this period produced new contradictions: social housing estates developed into containers of poverty and despair.

Financialised mass housing urbanisation is illustrated most clearly in the case of Mexico City. Here, financialisation itself was the underlying raison d’être for mass housing urbanisation through the model of the mega conjuntos which surrendered the provision of housing to market mechanisms. The socioeconomic peripheralisation of low-income groups in the mega conjuntos was an integral part of the government’s strategy. From the beginning the new neighbourhoods were characterised by exclusion and stigmatisation, resulting in severe reductions to their inhabitants’ quality of life, increasing their burden of rising mortgage payments, reducing their health prospects and increasing gender-specific violence. This socioeconomic peripheralisation was aggravated by strong logistical peripheralisation and was interconnected to the peripheralisation of everyday life. Together, these processes produced the great territorial inequality that still characterises the entire urban region.

Reading the territorial logic of Mexico City’s mass housing urbanisation through the Hong Kong case, we can clearly discern the pivotal role of the state in dominating territorial relations. Even if the geographical and historical contexts of the two cases are profoundly different, the processes of mass housing urbanisation follow similar neocolonial dynamics of state rule over territory. While in Mexico City this process promoted national and transnational corporate interests, in Hong Kong it strengthened the agenda of the government. A centrepiece of the territorial logic in the Mexico City case is the privatisation of the ejidos preceding, yet closely connected to, the implementation of the NAFTA agreements in the mid-1990s. The neocolonial element of this model is based on re-establishing and protecting private land tenure and prioritising shareholders’ interests. The financialising of mass housing urbanisation can thus be understood as a neocolonial restructuring of urban territories that serves to entrench values of social segregation and spatial fragmentation.

Revisiting the Paris case with this insight in mind reveals that its territorial pattern in the 1980s is not an example of a financialised version of mass housing urbanisation. Rather, it shows how the initial Fordist model of mass housing urbanisation underwent a process of socioeconomic peripheralisation initiated by a neoliberal approach to governing. The first phase of the Paris case also highlights an emancipatory form of the Fordist model of mass housing urbanisation; that is, one that promises to emancipate and serve the well-being of working-class residents by providing state-initiated housing. This variant of the Fordist model was reserved for a comparatively small minority of working-class citizens and occurred only during two decades.

These research results show the relevance of comparisons across very different socio-economic and urban contexts, confronting colonial social rental housing in high-rises and two-story terraced houses obtained by paying for a mortgage. Conventional accounts of housing histories usually avoid comparing this diversity of urban forms and modes of tenure. However, our triangulation across examples drawn from various parts of the world helps to reveal the inherent colonial logic of the territorial process as well as the specificities of each case.

## TERRITORIAL PROCESS AND URBAN FORM

What lessons does this comparison hold for architecture and urbanism? Our comparison of the maps in combination with our analyses of the respective urbanisation processes lays bare the relationships between material urban forms and the governmental rationales and modes of territorial regulation that produce them. These relations include contradictions and disconnections that give us relevant clues on how to read the power relations at work in the built environment; clues that cannot be deciphered through an analysis of the built form alone. In Paris the Fordist state that had initiated and erected the grands ensembles faded away during the 1970s and the strategies of the neoliberal state that replaced it fundamentally contradicted the social and economic model for which this housing model had initially been developed. The typological variety and architectural quality of the grands ensembles could not stand up against the ensuing processes of logistical, everyday and socioeconomic peripheralisation. The finding that peripheralisation takes primacy over urban form is consistent with observations from Mexico City, where the two-storey terrace house of the mega conjuntos resulted in processes of peripheralisation that closely resemble those created in the high-rise estates in Paris and Hong Kong, despite their radically different urban type and urban density.

Finally, the social housing estates in the new towns built in the 1990s in Hong Kong had a much better material and aesthetic quality than the first resettlement estates of the 1950s, but the residents of the new estates experienced much greater effects of everyday and socioeconomic peripheralisation. We conclude that the processes of peripheralisation have such a strong impact on the trajectory of mass housing urbanisation that they override planning concepts or types of housing that seek to counter peripheralisation. However, architectural design and urban form do play an integral role in the process: in combination with the respective governance regime, material form can reinforce peripheralisation and resistance to peripheralisation, though material form can occur only if local actors, both private and public, are equipped with strong political leverage. In Hong Kong, urban forms of maximum density managed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority became tools for the surveillance and discipline of its colonial subjects and thus reinforced processes of peripheralisation. In Mexico, the poor material quality of the houses and the interdiction of altering them inhibited the appropriation of urban space and thus contributed to peripheralisation. In select cases in the Parisian banlieue rouge, however, the urban design qualities of social rental housing helped to enhance residents' wellbeing and contributed to the production of local centralities. To understand how the architecture of housing mediates power relations we need to take into account the territorial process and governmental rationales. Only a combined analysis of territorial processes, urban forms and governmental strategies will reveal the underlying forces that determine how a specific urban space mediates the power relations and dependencies between a globalised centrality and its urban periphery.

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1 Régie immobilière de la Ville de Paris, Société anonyme de gestion immobilière, office public HLM de Paris.

2 Housing inquiries by INSEE (Institut nationale de la statistique et des études économiques) and Mission économique de l'Union Nationale des Fédérations d'Organisme d'HLM.

3 For key data on the Agence Nationale de Rénovation Urbaine, see https://www.anru.fr/les-chiffres-cles-de-lanru, accessed 7 February 2021.