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Dependency and Globalization
in Paramaribo, Suriname "

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Abstract:

In recent years the field of Caribbean urban studies has expanded significantly. As a result of growing professional networks and increased international attention, calls for a Caribbean Urban Agenda have brought urban issues in the region to the forefront. Simultaneously, the field of postcolonial urban studies has seen significant developments as well, with authors such as Jennifer Robinson calling for a new research agenda in which the comparative playing field is leveled and all cities around the world are seen as 'ordinary'. In the wake of these developments, this thesis aims at examining Paramaribo's urban growth since the return of a democratic regime, the resulting population boom, and subsequent spatial expansion. While narratives of dependency and globalization explain some of the spatial trends observed such as urban sprawl and downtown decline, these western theoretical frameworks fail to recognize the diversity of urban processes at play in Paramaribo's urban fabric. Through a series of vignette case studies, this thesis attempts to nuance the narrative of the city's recent urban growth and highlights how modalities of distinction, informality and political society continue to influence spatial production of Paramaribo.

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"My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular,

rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars"

— Aimé Césaire, 1956

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I. Introduction

In a world that is more globalized, what becomes of cities is a question that is more relevant by the day. When introducing the topic of globalization into the field of urban studies, a variety of theoretical positions are usually taken; from a convergent urban growth that makes cities more of the same all around the world to a divergent explosion of diversity making cities unique hybrids of all imaginable cultures, a wide spectrum of possible outcomes are proposed. But what is really happening?

> […] Does globalization really submerge the forces of individuation to the extent of wiping out all evidence of a city's local and physical identity? […] even when exposed to conditions that are increasingly similar all over the world, the cities tend to assert a distinctiveness and physical reality of their own. […] cities caught up in the vortex of global synchronicity develop their own strategies that allow them to assert their identity. [there are] strategies by which they manipulate and rebuild these concrete forms of identity—or fail to do so. Conversely, […] specificity [is also] an inescapable force of its own. All cities are physically and geographically exposed to the world at large, and even those that seek to escape the gravity of this truth are invariably thrown back on their own bricks and mortar. Specificity is not the opposite of global urbanism, it is an integral part of it.[1] [emphasis added]

Take the following mural for instance:

[1] ETH Studio Basel, *Belgrade: Formal/Informal: A Research on Urban Transformation* (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2012) 13-14.

Figure 1. Mural on school wall showing the diversity inherent to globalization.
Source: **Author**

Painted on the wall of a school in central Paramaribo, Suriname, this mural highlights a number of contradictions inherent to the discussion surrounding globalization. Contrasting the barren roadside and concrete block wall topped by barbed wire, the image shows a floral landscape comprising three central petals: the top one contains three persons—students and/or teachers—of which two are black and one is white; another one on the left shows a student in front of a blackboard reading "Ik wil, ik

kan, ik doe mijn best" (*I want, I can, I will try my best);* finally, a third petal on the right shows a black student sitting at a desk with a computer screen in front of her. Held together in the center by a representation of the Suriname flag, this image encapsulates exactly what globalization entails: diversity. Not just in terms of race or ethnicity, but in terms of technological proliferation and ideological dissemination. What the artists—supposedly students at the school—perhaps unconsciously conveyed is a powerful message in the context of contemporary life: that despite a history of colonisation, there is room for co-existence; that in contrast to the supposedly primitive context of Suriname, there is room for creativity and technological innovation; and that, most importantly, there is an eagerness to learn and to exchange knowledge. All these aspects define what it means to be globalized: not to be global per se, but to let oneself be shaped by all the flows that define and connect our life-worlds today.

It is exactly in this context that this thesis situates itself. A growing number of scholars in the field of Caribbean urban studies are calling for a greater specificity in researching the cities that make up the Caribbean basin; a shifting discourse of postcolonial studies is attempting to level the playing field of comparative urban studies and introduce cities that were formerly "off the map[2]" into the discussion of urbanism in the 21st century.

II. Aims and Objectives

If there is one thing I have taken away from my previous education in Architectural History, it is to always link the theorizations and conceptualization of cities to their actual built environment. While it is essential to imagine and theorize the city systems and systems of cities that make up our world today, connecting our inquiries to the physicality of cities is equally important. In this particular thesis, I set out to combine both approaches, while responding to a particular problem setting as well.

Departing from a call for more particularizing academic inquiries and specific urban policies for Caribbean cities, this thesis sets out to construct an inquiry of Paramaribo that tests the limits of universalizing theories, while building a case for a more nuanced account of urban growth. After defining this problem setting and formulating a research question, a literature review on dependency theory, world systems and global cities theory, as well as ordinary cities theory sets the stage for this thesis' theoretical framework. Next, a brief overview of urbanization research in Latin America, the Caribbean and Suriname provides a departure point for the thesis' hypothesis. In the second section of this thesis, a brief elaboration on methodology introduces the analysis chapter, in which a historic-morphological analysis, vignette case studies and a short policy analysis will mold the working hypothesis. Finally, a

[2] Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* (London: Routlegde, 2006), 7

number of conclusions will connect the dots between the theoretical and empirical analyses, while formulating a way to move forward.

a. Problem Setting

Within the realm of urban planning and governance, two distinct trends mark the discourse on Caribbean urban development in the 21st century; on the one hand, there is a generalizing practical attitude that fails to recognize urban specificity of Caribbean and Latin American (LAC) cities, and on the other hand there is a recent shift in theoretical attitudes within the field of postcolonial urban studies. This thesis is aimed at transposing this two-pronged problem setting to the particular context of Paramaribo, Suriname.

i. A Lack of Specificity for Caribbean Cities

Since the dawn of our current round of globalization in the 1970s, an acute lack of specificity has contributed to a failing discourse on the character and development of LAC cities. For decades, attitudes described as "globalizing" and "developing" have fostered western-centric, capitalist models of development, aimed at incorporating so-called developing cities into the global economy, while largely ignoring the complex nature of urban settlements themselves.[3] Developing approaches designed to alleviate the most extreme forms of poverty simultaneously fail to deliver long-term increases in living standards, while globalizing approaches designed to connect poorer cities to the global chain of production in many cases only further exacerbate social and economic inequalities already present. Among a multitude of factors, a failure the recognize the urban nature of poverty reduction and economic growth—especially in Latin America and the Caribbean where 80% of populations live in urban areas[4]—continues to limit potential alternatives to generalizing attitudes.[5]

As leading Caribbean Urban Planning scholar Dr. Asad Mohammed points out, the Caribbean is faced with a number of pressing challenges, which are urban at their core and warrant particularizing academic inquiries and planning approaches rather than universalizing ones. Soaring poverty rates, such as those found in Suriname (70%), Honduras (65%) and Haiti (58.5%)[6], high crime rates (18 out of the top 20 countries worldwide with the highest homicide rates are found in LAC)[7], high income inequality (9 out of the top 20 most income-unequal countries globally are found in

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[3] Ibid., 4.
[4] UN-HABITAT, *State of Latin American and Caribbean Cities* (UN HABITIAT, 2012), Accessed April 19, 2016, http://unhabitat.org/books/state-of-latin-american-and-caribbean-cities-2/
[5] Judy L. Baker, *Urban Poverty: A Global View* (World Bank, 2008), Accessed April 19, 2016, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2008/01/9112288/urban-.poverty-global-view
[6] CIA World Factbook, *World Poverty Rates* (CIA, 2012), Accessed April 19, 2016, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2046.html
[7] UN-ODC, *Crime Statistics and Homicide Count* (UN-ODC, 2013) Accessed April 19, 2016, https://data.unodc.org/#state:0

LAC)[8], strong dependence on foreign capital, mainly in tourism and resource extraction, environmental threats due to global warming, and complex land markets, tenure insecurity and unplanned settlements[9], call for a set of highly specified *urban* responses across local, regional and international scales.[10]

Despite efforts on behalf of the United Nations and the World Bank to bring the urban dimension ever more into the center of debate, there remains a lack of specificity when it comes to the Caribbean urban agenda. Regardless of the region boasting some of the highest rates of urbanization and urban primacy,[11] in addition to including some of the smallest, completely ocean-locked nations in the world, the Caribbean is most often lumped in with Latin America in general—a super-region comprised of nations with vastly differing geopolitical, economic and cultural contexts. In addition, nations along the northern coast of South America find themselves locked between identities of the Caribbean and South America, contributing to an even more diluted discourse on urban development.

As a result, policy approaches to Caribbean cities often fail to respond to a more comprehensive set of circumstances and instead yield to these aforementioned globalizing or developing attitudes. At the root of developing urban strategies geared towards a particular Caribbean urban agenda lay comparative inquiries placing Caribbean cities not only in a global context, but rather within a 'multiplex' of local, regional and global influences, recognizing the particularity and specificity of each urban area. This thesis, at its most fundamental core, is aimed at inquiring into the nature of urban development from such a perspective.

ii. A Shifting Postcolonial Discourse

In tandem with Asad et al's call for greater specificity in treating the urban challenges of the 21st century, a group of scholars working within the theoretical realm of postcolonial urban studies have significantly altered the approach to studying not just cities outside the West, but all cities around the world. As leading scholar Jennifer Robinson contends in her ground-breaking monograph *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development,* comparative inquiries aimed at producing a new urban agenda should circumvent the divide between modernity and tradition in which previous studies have become entrenched.[12] In an effort to rise above restricting perceptions of Caribbean cities as being on the periphery of the world or as imitating the leading example of Western cities, this thesis is intended to test the limits of current postcolonial frameworks—largely book-ended by dependency theory and the world-systems and global cities discourse—and reach beyond these constricting frameworks to capture the cosmopolitan character of

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[8] World Bank, *Gini Index*, (World Bank: 2015), Accessed April 19, 2016, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI/
[9] Asad Mohammed et al., "Towards a Caribbean Urban Agenda" (Technical Paper, 2011), 3.
[10] Mohammed, "Towards a Caribbean Urban Agenda."
[11] Robert B. Potter, *Urbanization, Planning and Development in the Caribbean* (London: Mansell Publishing, 1989), 4.
[12] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 94.

Caribbean cities. Postcolonial theory posits that there is a greater diversity of urban processes at play, many of which escape the concept of development and cannot be fully grasped by western-centric theorizations of space. It is in this pluralist context that a more comprehensive understanding of cities arises and that more encompassing urban interventions can be developed.

iii. Paramaribo, Suriname as Problem Setting

In the wake of a generalizing discourse that floats between developing and globalizing attitudes, and aimed at circumventing restrictive binaries such as modernity/tradition, developed/un(der)developed, and innovative/primitive, this thesis will take the city of Paramaribo, Suriname as a point of entry for a postcolonial perception of place.

The relatively unknown identity of Suriname's capital—or even of the country in general—immediately prompts the question: *what kind of city is Paramaribo?* From a regional perspective, Suriname sees itself as being part of both the Caribbean and South America, in addition to Latin America, as well as the Americas in general. It is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a common market established in 1973 and designed to strengthen relationships between countries in the Caribbean Basin in response to increased globalization;[13] it is also a member of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), another union of nations aimed at greater Caribbean integration. However, Suriname finds itself a member, too, of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), an intergovernmental organization established in 2008, modeled after the EU and aimed at creating a common currency, passport and parliament by 2019; it is a member of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Latin American Parliament (LAP) and the Latin American Economic System (LAES) as well, in addition to also being a member of the broader Organization of American States (OAS). In other words, Suriname is floating in between a number of transnational organizations, much like its geographical location on the shoulder of South America floats between both the center and periphery of each of these regional blocs.[14]

From a demographic perspective, Suriname appears even more divided between identities. Since its permanent colonization by the Dutch in 1667, the territory has steadily diversified itself ethnically, religiously and culturally through the in-migration of populations from across the world. Indigenous peoples, Dutch and European settlers, African slaves, East Indian and Javanese contract laborers, Chinese and Brazilian migrants, a number of diasporic groups such as Maronites and Jews, as well as a number of mixed descendants of all these peoples—and their wealth of languages and cultural practices—have come to define the population of Suriname. As a result, the capital city of Paramaribo cannot possibly define itself as one unified culture, once again leaving one to wonder about where this city belongs

[13] CARICOM, 'Member States and Associate Members" (CARICOM, 2016) Accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.caricom.org

[14] Suriname Government, "International Cooperation" (Suriname, 2016), Accessed April 19, 2016 and translated from Dutch, http://www.gov.sr/over-suriname/internationale-samenwerking.aspx

in today's globalized climate.[15]

Beyond economic, political or social identity, Paramaribo also bears little resemblance to other capitals in Latin America and the Caribbean when it comes to its spatial configuration. It is one of the smaller capitals, comprising only 240.000 inhabitants (2012 est.), yet exhibiting significant sprawl. It does not boast high-rise construction such as that found in Caracas, Bogotá, Port-of-Spain, Havana, or Panama City, nor does it have sprawling beach resorts, vacation condos or cruise ports such as those found in Willemstad, Oranjestad, San Juan, Santo Domingo or Bridgetown. If anything, Paramaribo more closely resembles the capitals of its direct neighbors—Georgetown, Guyana and Cayenne, French Guiana—comprising mostly low-rise construction, a historic urban core, and largely residential suburbs marking the periphery.

Although diversity is found in every place around the globe (the thesis will return to this point in reference to Doreen Massey and Jennifer Robinson's case), Paramaribo has remained relatively untouched by popular perception or cultural labeling and could more easily allow for the formulation of a postcolonial account of urban development—one that is not clouded by dominant discourses on neocolonialism and developmentalism. In a broader context, this thesis could thus offer a novel perspective on the dynamics of Caribbean urban growth in the 21st century.

b. Research Question

In summary of the problem setting, this thesis emerges from a generalizing discourse, especially in practical terms, which yields to globalizing and developing attitudes instead of acknowledging and responding to the cosmopolitan nature of the city itself. In an effort to undertake a postcolonial investigation of Paramaribo, Suriname, the challenge consists of selecting the appropriate research object and question in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the city as diverse, innovative and ordinary all at the same time.

i. Research Object

In an effort to build a postcolonial account of Paramaribo's urban growth, this thesis will focus on real property as its main object of research. Within the postcolonial discourse, three major strands of literature can be discerned: the dependency school, world systems and global cities theory, and ordinary cities theory. Without delving too deeply into the specifics of each of these theoretical discourses yet, their point of contention, at its very core, rests with the *negotiation of space,*[16] of which

[15] Suriname Government, "Demography" (Suriname, 2016), Accessed April 19, 2016 and translated from Dutch, http://www.gov.sr/over-suriname/demografie.aspx

[16] This term, despite having a wide variety of applications in different contexts, is borrowed from the work "Belgrade: Formal/Informal" (2012), a research on urban transformation edited by ETH Studio Basel Contemporary City Institute. In this work, the term *negotiation* reflects the processes of contestation that shape each aspect of the built environment—each property in the city. In the

real property is the defining element. Each of these theories proposes an alternate constellation of urban actors, interests and power relationships that underlie the negotiation and production of space: whether that constellation is marked by a continuing influence of one nation state over another territory (dependency school), the supposed hegemony of global capital over the production of space (world systems and global cities theory) or a complex network of social and cultural interconnections that span the global but are embedded and expressed within the local scale (ordinary cities theory), the arena of a postcolonial urban investigation can always be re-interpreted as a power struggle for land use and property development—a process of spatial negotiation.

To be absolutely clear, postcolonial urban theory does not simply call for an investigation into the state of urban development after a territory attains political independency or sovereignty; rather, it is an active contestation of the very power structures that have been reproduced by the legacy of colonialism.[17] In this light, property—as the most elemental container of space—can be considered the very object of contestation and negotiation: that through which power relationships in the built environment are manifested. This thesis will employ a methodology that is aimed at inquiring into the very power relationships that surround the negotiation and production of space, those social, economic, political and cultural elements that shape the development of property and all its improvements, both local and global, formal and informal.

ii. Research Question

Investigating the negotiation of space from the perspective of real property, the research question framing this thesis could thus be formulated as follows:

> *What negotiative processes have shaped the production of space in Paramaribo, Suriname in its most recent round of urbanization; what actors, interests, methods and power relationships have driven urban transformation and how does a postcolonial account of urbanization challenge western-centric theorizations of sprawling or informal urban growth?*

As implied in the research question, the *negotiative processes* are defined as the actors, their interests, methods and relationships to other actors that underlie the production of space, that is, the development of property in Paramaribo, Suriname. In this light, the thesis deliberately circumvents any assumptions of neocolonialism or developmentalism on the part of outside actors, while allowing each of these negotiative processes to reveal connections to both internal as well as external

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context of this thesis, the term is most relevant because it avoids ad-hoc presumptions of spatial production as the outcome of only formal processes (legal planning documents, formal public and private investment, etc.) while acknowledging the constant informal "remolding" of these formal superstructures, which eventually produces the built environment as we find it existing in all of its diversity.

[17] Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996)

actors, places and influences.

Thus, in a larger effort to bring full circle the discourse on decolonization, the outcomes of this investigation are aimed at framing, as argued by Ramón Grosfoguel, a *transmodern* understanding of place, an understanding of place that *goes beyond Western universalisms or Third World fundamentalism*.[18]

III. Literature Review

In preparing for a postcolonial analysis of Paramaribo's recent urban development, it is necessary to first understand the historical currents that have shaped the various strands of postcolonial theory. For the purpose of this thesis, three major research agendas can be discerned within postcolonial (urban) theory: the dependency school, world systems and global cities theory, and ordinary cities theory.

While the dependency school asserts that a dependent relationship continues to define the organization of cities in our globalized world today, some of them being at the core (Europe, North America, Oceania and Japan) and others at the (semi-) periphery (Asia, Latin America, and Africa), world systems and global cities theory offers a more emancipated set of organizational relationships in which some of the peripheral cities in fact take on more central and commanding roles in terms of global flows of capital. However, more recently, ordinary cities theory has produced an alternative constellation in which the nation-state takes on an increasingly marginalized role and the production of space emerges from a complex web of interconnections that span both the *global* and are embedded within the *local*; in other words, hierarchies are broken, western-centrisms are abandoned and all cities are elevated to the same comparative playing field.

a. Dependency School

One of the first major literary movements that attempted to formalize the international relations that exist between countries and cities is the dependency school. Most essentially, this school of thought proposes there exists an inherently unequal relationship between cities around the globe, defined by a core-periphery hierarchy through which countries move. Even though there exist many other research agendas tangential to dependency theory (see modernization theory, developmental theory, and various forms of (neo-) colonial theory), for the purpose of this thesis the list of seminal authors has been limited to Fernand Braudel, Andre G. Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein and Raúl Prebisch.

[18] Ramón Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms: Decolonial Pluri-versalism from Aimé Césaire to the Zapatistas," *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(3) (2012): 97.

i. Fernand Braudel

Considered one of the foundational scholars of global political-economic dynamics, Fernard Braudel has written extensively on the growth of the capitalist economy since the 12th century. His argument, which he developed in the late 1940s and continued to refine well into the 1980s, consists of defining an unequal relationship between those cities at the core of the world-system, and those at the periphery:

> A world-economy always has an urban centre of gravity, a city, as the logistic heart of its activity… At varying and respectful distances around the centre, will be found other towns, sometimes playing the role of associate or accomplice, but more usually resigned to their second-class role.[19]

This perspective encapsulates the essence of dependency theory and forms the basis upon which later scholars will expand.

In the context of Paramaribo, Braudel's interpretation of the *negotiation of space* implies that there exists a relationship in which Paramaribo is located at the bottom of the hierarchy (periphery) and cities in the West such as Amsterdam are located at the top (core). Not many researchers have investigated this relationship beyond superficial inquiry, but scholars such as Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens from the University of Antwerp have observed a dependent relationship in the reliance of Suriname's economy on foreign investments in the oil, mineral and lumber industry (companies such as Alcoa, IAMGOLD and others), as well as a continued stream of development aid flowing from the Netherlands to Suriname.[20] Despite there being a truth to these dependent relationships in terms of political influence and economic growth, the production of space may take on a more nuanced form, which Braudel's theoretical framework does not encompass.

ii. Andre Gunder Frank

Parallel to Braudel's well-known premise of a capitalist world-system that is inherently uneven, numerous authors have expanded on the idea of a network of dependencies linking cities around the world. Most notably, Andre Gunder Frank linked the idea of *development* to theories of dependency, arguing that, "… historical research demonstrates that contemporary underdevelopment is in large part the historical product of past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellite underdeveloped and the now developed metropolitan countries," and that, "… these relations are an essential part of the structure and development of the

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[19] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th – 18th century, Volume III: The Perspective of the World* (London: Collins, 1984), 27.

[20] Sigrid Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo," (Master Thesis, University of Antwerp), 71 (translated from Dutch)

capitalist system on a world scale as a whole.[21]" Thus, in essence, these dependencies are not merely stages of development through which countries move—in the neoclassical "convergence" sense of economic development—but are rather components of an unequal capitalist system in which the subjugated are trapped.

This is an important point to understand, because it implies that Suriname—as opposed to popular perception or political propaganda—is in fact not moving through a temporary phase of development, but rather continuing to serve its function as resource provider to wealthier countries at the core of the world-system.

iii. Immanuel Wallerstein

Beyond the mere existence of a world-system in which dependencies define a core-periphery relationship between cities, various authors have attempted to investigate the superstructures actually facilitating such dependencies. Scholars such as Immanuel Wallerstein have argued that an unequal power relationship between the metropolitan and satellite countries has perpetuated a dependent relationship, stating that,

> […] given slightly different starting-points, the interests of various local groups converged in northwest Europe, leading to the development of strong state mechanisms, and diverged sharply in the peripheral areas, leading to very weak ones. Once we get a difference in strength of the state-machineries, we get the operation of "unequal exchange," which is enforced by strong states on weak ones, by core states on peripheral areas. Thus capitalism involves not only appropriation of surplus value by an owner from a laborer, but an appropriation of surplus of the world-economy by core areas.[22]

What Wallerstein implies in his theory is that the nation-state plays a central role in defining the power relationships between areas around the world. The nations of northwest Europe, due to their supposedly stronger legal and governmental organization, are able to enforce exchange upon those with weakly organized state mechanisms.

In this light, Paramaribo finds itself struggling against the power of core nation-states, relying solely on the weak bargaining power of its own dysfunctional government to get the best deal possible. While there certainly is a difference in the availability of resources, knowledge and skills between core and periphery state mechanisms, there are certainly additional internal factors such as misappropriation of resources or even corruption that reinforce dependent relationships and influence the production of space. As a result, this theoretical framework, too, seems to

[21] Andre G. Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (London: Monthly Review, 1969), 4.
[22] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Essential Wallerstein* (New York: The New Press, 2000 (1972)), 87.

exclude a more comprehensive understanding of spatial negotiation in which internal—and mostly informal—forces define much of the city's growth as well.

iv. Raúl Prebisch

Opposite Wallerstein's argument that dependencies are sustained by strong nation-states, Raúl Prebisch asserted already in 1950 that fundamental macroeconomic mechanisms could also be at the root of unequal dependencies. More precisely, he argued that the advances in productivity seen in core nations lead to higher savings, which, ideally, should be shared with primary producers on the periphery, who, through additional income can continue to acquire capital goods to increase their own productivity and income; however, in reality, increases in income at the core are not redistributed, leading to a shortage of income in peripheral nations, which in turn prohibits them from investing in those capital goods which would allow them to move up the development ladder themselves.[23] In essence, developing nations are not able to move up the development ladder due to the ever-increasing income gap with developed nations; rising incomes at the core increase the demand for manufactured goods, but only marginally increase demand for primary goods—especially food—coming from the periphery.

In this sense, examining Paramaribo's urban growth will not simply require looking into formal political relationships and legal frameworks, but economic relationships with the outside as well. It is not a secret many Surinamese living in the Netherlands own property in their homeland and a number of Dutch real estate companies still trade in Paramaribo's property market.[24] The demand for capital goods needed to develop real property plays an important role in the Prebisch hypothesis, since it implies a dependent relationship could be sustained by the lack of a construction material manufacturing industry in Suriname. The analysis section of my thesis will attempt to inquire into these relationships.

Despite these divergent views on the underlying structures of dependency theory—the existence of a core and periphery, the myth of development, the power discrepancies between nation-states and the poverty trap of a macroeconomic income gap—the 1970s and 80s nonetheless continued to witness an increasing divide of per capita GDP growth between the West (Europe and North America) and non-West (Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and most of Asia).

b. World Systems and Global Cities

In tandem with growing income disparities, the world witnessed a transformation of international into global economies as well, prompting a shift in governance scales

[23] Raúl Prebisch, "The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems," *Economic Commission for Latin America* (1950)
[24] Intervast, "Advies van de notaris: Onroerend goed in Suriname," *Intervast*, accessed August 26, 2016. https://www.intervast.nl/nieuws/181-onroerend-goed-suriname

that has been well studied within the then-emergent world systems and global cities discourse. Interestingly, Wallerstein was at the cradle of this discourse, urging a new perspective on international relations that was not defined by the centralized division of labor found in the nation-state (or the larger nation-empire), but rather by multi-polar world-systems in which a global division of labor traverses multiple cultural and political centers.[25]

i. Paul Knox

Responding to the emergence of Wallerstein's world-systems theory, Paul Knox confirmed in the introduction to *World Cities in a World-System* the transition to global economies, as well as the rise of an oligopolistic network of global corporations and advanced producer services providers who increasingly influenced global commerce and trade.[26] Telling of this trend are the emergence of a global service sector, including transnational banks and investment companies, as well as an increased desire on the part of national governments—and stimulated by supranational institutions such as the World Bank and IMF—to focus their attention on attracting foreign investment.[27]

In the context of Paramaribo, this hypothesis could warrant insightful inquiries into the interests at play within the various levels of government; are the goals of Suriname's Assembly to merely attract foreign capital and cater to the global economy? If so, what effect does this have on the development of property in Paramaribo? And, if not, what other motivations are at play and how do these, in turn, shape the built environment of Paramaribo?

ii. John Friedmann

Continuing the investigation of world-systems, John Friedmann inquires into the urban dimension of Wallerstein's theory in his seminal work *The World City Hypothesis.*

> The world city hypothesis is about the spatial organization of the new international division of labour. As such, it concerns the contradictory relations between production in the era of global management and the political determination of territorial interests. It helps us to understand what happens in the major global cities of the world economy and what much political conflict in these cities is about. Although it cannot predict the outcomes of these struggles, it does

[25] Immanuel Wallerstein, "World-systems Analysis," *World System History*, ed. George Modelski, in *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems* (EOLSS, 2004), Developed under the Auspices of the UNESCO, Eolss Publishers, Oxford, UK.
[26] Paul Knox and Peter Taylor, *World Cities in a World-System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.
[27] Ibid., 6.

> suggest their common origins in the global system of market relations.[28]

More specifically, Friedmann suggests that cities' structural changes are related to the form and extent of their integration into the world economy; that they become basing points in a hierarchical organization of global production; and that they manifest themselves in the structure and dynamics of their production sectors and employment. In turn, these hypotheses imply that some cities become points of accumulation for capital, while others accumulate debt; that this organization manifests the inherent contradiction of capitalism, leading to class division and polarization; and finally that the state increasingly functions as facilitator of infrastructure for global firms.[29]

In doing so, Friedmann does not necessarily break the premises of the dependency school—the existence of an inherently unequal relationship between cities around the world, arranged into a core-periphery hierarchy—but he does open up the geographical playing field to any city around the world, including those in the non-West, that may take on more global economic functions.

Certainly, from this perspective, Paramaribo becomes a world city in a sense that it serves a role in the global production chain, exporting resources such as bauxite, gold, timber and other minerals; however, the spatial infrastructures underlying this global economic function may not manifest themselves the same way as those located in the command and control centers of the global economy. Indeed, Paramaribo bears little resemblance to London, New York or Tokyo, because it does support the same kind of global function as those cities. As Schiffer and Schmittz argue, cities in South America like Paramaribo are simply global as the result of foreign investment or state privatizations in the mining sector; they hold no real command and control functions, and, in fact, when other areas for resource extraction such as Southeast Asia or Africa become more profitable, they become net exporters of capital through debt payments.[30] Similarly, the secondary effects of being a global city like London are also mostly absent in places such as Paramaribo. For example, there is no significant clustering of advanced producer services that stimulate significant investments in commercial and residential real estate.

iii. Saskia Sassen and Peter Taylor

Among recent scholars researching the phenomenon of global economies are Peter Taylor and Saskia Sassen, who respond to Friedmann's world city hypothesis and focus on the networks of global cities as defined by global economic sectors. The emphasis in their works increasingly shifts from studying urban processes within individual cities to defining the networks and flows that pass through them.

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[28] John Friedmann, "World City Hypothesis," *Development and Change* 17(1) (1986), 69.
[29] Ibid.
[30] S.R. Schiffer and H. Schmitz in Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* 100-101

Saskia Sassen has produced significant research in this field, particularly from a territorial perspective. In her book *The Global City,* she breaks the common misconception that the global age we live in is one that is increasingly detached from spatial containers—in other words, that the emergence of the internet, improved communication technology, and other technologies that increase user mobility have somehow caused a decentering of the economy. On the contrary, she argues, as economies of agglomeration have gained increased relevance for the proper and efficient functioning of global production chains. So-called advanced producer services (APS)—businesses such as banks, financial, legal, insurance, real estate, and accounting firms that facilitate global exchange—heavily rely on proximity for their proper functioning and are thus highly concentrated in central business districts such as the City of London.[31]

Peter Taylor has expanded on this idea and investigated what hierarchies of cities might then exist around the world, and what the connections are between them. His Globalization and World Cities approach (GaWC), through studying the presence of headquarters and offices of major APS providers in cities around the world, revealed a map that effectively confirmed the presence of a world-system á la Wallerstein, transgressing national boundaries and passing through distinct cultural and political urban nodes.[32]

Despite these world system and global cities approaches offering a more emancipated form of examining the relations between cities worldwide, they have not managed to produce a methodology that transgresses assumptions about modernity and hierarchy; they maintain an understanding of modernity as being associated with the command and control functions found in West and fail to recognize urban modernity as being anything more than what is found in those few big cities which have grown to dominate the world systems and global cities literature.[33] And yet, Paramaribo manifests a mix of urban typologies that aim to be strikingly modern and global as well. If not a global city in terms of command and control functions, it certainly is global in another sense. As Jennifer Robinson will argue, in world systems and global cities research, a large number of cities still remain "off the map," thereby sustaining a division of cities along developmentalist lines and preventing any creative re-organization of urban resources.[34]

c. Ordinary Cities and Transmodernity

Alongside the arguments of the dependency school and world systems and global cities theory, the postcolonial discourse has come to accommodate a growing number of critiques by a third set of scholars who aim to break divisions and hierarchies based on the modernity/tradition and developed/un(der)developed

[31] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)
[32] Peter Taylor, "Globalization and World Cities," Loughborough University, Accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/group.html
[33] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 7.
[34] Ibid., 94.

dichotomies. By recognizing the inherent diversity of place and taking into consideration the complexity of cities—in all their entirety, not simply in terms of their relation to the West, whether in political or economic terms—these authors attempt to reconnect the notion of modernity to any urban area around the world, thereby hoping to unlock once again the creative potential for alternative urban growth and social innovation such a postcolonial attitude may foster.

i. Doreen Massey

One of the earlier scholars in this progressive branch of postcolonial thinking is Doreen Massey, who since the 1990s has studied the spatial implications of an uneven, global capitalist system. In her work she puts considerable emphasis on the concept of *place* and how it can be understood in a global context: not as a static, delineated entity with an essential identity, but rather an unbounded set of processes with a multitude of identities.[35] In the context of postcolonial urban studies, her findings circumvent the fixation of modernity as being a singularly Western phenomenon, and instead place diversity at the center of urban life altogether.

This approach implies that any city around the world, in fact, any place really, is understood as an ever-changing set of influences, from the local to the global. In the context of Paramaribo, Massey's thinking forms an important point of departure since the problem setting of this thesis stems partly from the questioning of the city's identity. In other words, what this study is not intended to do is somehow locate and describe a supposedly authentic and local identity embedded in Paramaribo—as some political or business interests undoubtedly would like to do. Rather, it will attempt to reveal the diversity embedded within the urban fabric; not simply in terms of ethnicity, but in terms of the production of space: what processes, both global and local, formal and informal, have given shape to the city's most recent urban transformations?

ii. Jennifer Robinson

Extending this line of thought, then, one quickly arrives at the conclusion that inquiries into any given place around the globe will reveal a unique set of influences. Jennifer Robinson has picked up on this idea and concluded that, as a result, we should simply view any city around the world as inherently ordinary—unique, but no more or less than any other city. In het work *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (which has influenced the theoretical framework of this thesis more than any other text in this literature review) Robinson argues that a postcolonial inquiry should start with dislocating modernity from the West, by acknowledging that modernity is nothing more than the condition of being innovative and creative—a condition that can be found in any constellation of urban actors.

[35] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)

In doing so, she cautions us not to look for transformations, hybridizations or strict appropriations of Western typologies in non-Western places, but rather to acknowledge the complex interplay between ideas, skills and capital that constantly passes through cities. For example, the presence of skyscrapers in Rio de Janeiro does not make the city modern per se, as much as the facades inspired by pre-Columbian geometries of Art Deco skyscrapers in New York City do not make that city any more traditional; yet, both examples can be recognized as having roots in a number of places around the world, having culminated in those particular places as a creative expression of urban society at those particular times; a "dialectic at a standstill" between past and present, as she quotes Walter Benjamin, that is modernity.[36]

In methodological terms, her work implies a comparative type of research that places all cities within the same playing field and produces theory "without assuming its universal applicability or segmenting the world of cities into categories.[37]" In this sense, she is arguing we view all cities as inherently ordinary, that we make no ad-hoc assumptions about what makes a city modern, global or developed—something world system and global cities research does do. How do we achieve this leveled playing field? By dispossessing the West of its privileged relationship to modernity, by detaching modernity from tradition, and by breaking conceptions around novelty.[38]

Continuing her call for a postcolonial perspective, which views all cities as ordinary, Robinson constructs a new governance framework for urban development (development, that is, in the growth sense of the word—not in the Frankian sense of convergence towards the Western model of development). She demonstrates that developmentalist attitudes have caused cities to focus solely on those aspects of economic development that should make poorer cities catch up with richer ones: focusing on attracting global investment in industries centered around resources with a global comparative advantage such as tourism or mining; the implementation of Western typologies such as the construction of tech parks; or the stimulation of urban agglomerations through spectacular urbanisms without the needed skills, wages or knowledge available.[39] In fact, her description of developing and globalizing urban approaches exactly confirm Dr. Asad's observation of 'generalizing' urban strategies employed in Caribbean urban governance.[40]

She proposes not mimicking Western urban development strategies, but instead facilitating diversity and helping to overcome barriers that result from social, economic or political difference; investing in education, providing infrastructures that facilitate both formal and informal economies, stimulating knowledge exchange

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[36] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 14-15, 19, 33, 67, 73.
[37] Ibid., 60.
[38] Ibid., 60-67.
[39] Ibid., 140-160.
[40] Mohammed, "Towards a Caribbean Urban Agenda."

and collaboration, providing support for both local and global enterprise, all together at the same time.[41]

Transposed into a concrete context for this thesis, her theory urges an investigation of Paramaribo's land-use that is free of ad-hoc assumptions of development, thereby circumventing theorizations of simple dependency or globalization. Instead, an inquiry into what could be called the 'intersection of influences' that have shaped a number of Paramaribo's peripheral neighborhoods in the last decade should reveal a more cosmopolitan and diverse account of the city's growth. In turn, this investigation could provide a more accurate picture of what barriers may prevent the development of a more politically inclusive urban society in Paramaribo, beyond generalizing consultants' reports about the challenges of third world urban development.[42] The methodology section following this literature review will focus on how such a postcolonial investigation will be approached.

iii. Ananya Roy

Echoing Robinson's call for a new theory of urbanism—one that is postcolonial—Ananya Roy defends against the criticism that a postcolonial perspective is irrelevant in urban studies.[43] She responds to scholars such as Vivek Chibber, Michael J. Storper and Allan Scott who, as she claims, continue to misread historical difference as empirical variation; an urban theory founded on a basic urban form that simply has variations across regions around the world. What Roy takes issue with is that, underlying this basic urban form, is the definition of urbanization as "the complex interaction between economic development, divisions of labor, agglomeration, specialization, and external commerce,[44]" which continues to reaffirm a western-centric conception of the urban. It is therefore important to approach an investigation such as this thesis without any universal assumptions about the nature of urbanization.

In the context of Paramaribo's peripheral growth, a postcolonial inquiry should therefore not only depart from investigations into those formal structures that define urbanization in the West—economic development, divisions of labor, agglomeration, etc.—but simultaneously those informal aspects of urban life that have inherently appropriated and transformed global influences, embedded them into the local, and produced an urban fabric that is, equally so, rich with creativity

[41] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 162-163.
[42] A number of reports, produced by the World Bank and the Dutch Government have tried to formulate Paramaribo's challenges to urban development in the 21st century; however, these will be discussed in the Analysis section of the thesis, where they engage in a more direct dialogue with the case studies.
[43] Ananya Roy, "Who's Afraid of Postcolonial Theory," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* DOI 10.1111/1468-2427.12274 (2015), 2.
[44] Scott and Storper, in Roy, "Who's Afraid of Postcolonial Theory," 6.

and innovation on its own accord.

iv. Ramón Grosfoguel

Elaborating on the note of western-centric universalisms, Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel's work can provide some helpful insights as to what the origins of such universalisms are and how they have obstructed a postcolonial approach to urban studies up until this point. Tracing the evolution of Universalism from René Descartes, Immanual Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to Karl Marx, Grosfoguel arrives at the following observation:

> If universal truth is constructed through the epistemology of a particular territory or body (whether it be Western, Christian, or Islamic), and through the exclusion of others, then the cosmopolitanism or global proposal that is constructed through this abstract universalist epistemology will be inherently imperialist/colonial […] epistemic racism is inherent to modern Western philosophy.[45]

Resonating with Robinson's call for a postcolonial approach, which epistemologically positions itself outside the privileged position of the West and recognizes the cosmopolitan nature of place as well, Grosfoguel's argument sets the stage to end the long process of decolonization while embarking on a new discourse of transmodernity.[46]

Quoting Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel, Grosfoguel writes:

> During the last 520 years of the "European/Euro-North-American capitalist/patriarchal modern/colonial world-system" we went from "convert to Christianity or I'll kill you" in the 16th century, to "civilize or I'll kill you" in the 18th and 19th centuries, to "develop or I'll kill you" in the 20th century, and more recently, the "democratize or I'll kill you" at the beginning of the 21st century.[47]

This simplistic, yet telling paragraph neatly shows how one dominant world-system—as Wallerstein would consider it—has hidden itself behind a succession of seemingly different ideologies; the rhetoric may have changed, but the power-relationships are still fundamentally the same. A transmodern understanding and production of space would re-conceptualize democracy and decolonize itself from a racialized and capitalist Western form.[48]

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[45] Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms," 94.
[46] Enrique Dussel, in Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms," 97.
[47] Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms," 97.
[48] Enrique Dussel, in Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms," 97.

Having elaborated on these three major strands of postcolonial literature—dependency theory, world systems and global cities theory, and ordinary cities theory—and their implications for an investigation of Paramaribo's urban growth, the following section will briefly turn to what has most recently been written about property development in the context of Latin America.

d. Urbanization in Latin America

In an effort to identify the most current themes surrounding urbanization in Latin America, this thesis turns to a 2015 volume *Suburban Governance: A Global View,* edited by Pierre Hamel and Rogel Keil.[49] Given that for a number of decades, Latin American urbanism has been widely explored by a number of scholars, this thesis will limit itself to what has most recently been written about the history of urban development in Latin America, as well as where current and future scholarship on Latin American cities[50] could be improved. For these discussions, a chapter authored by Dirk Heinrichs and Henning Nuissl will shed light on the historic development of Latin American cities, whereas another chapter authored by Ananya Roy will highlight where a postcolonial approach to studying cities could be situated.

While the title of this volume explicitly targets suburbanization rather than more general trends of urbanization, it is clarified that in this so-called urban age, "it is no longer possible to understand cities and urban development without paying particular attention to suburban expansion.[51]" Once this thesis heads into a discussion of the most recent urban transformations of Paramaribo, it will become clear that for this city, too, suburbanization plays a significant role in contemporary growth.

i. Dirk Heinrichs and Henning Nuissl

In an effort to better understand what contemporary themes are relevant to Latin American cities today, Heinrichs and Nuissl first synthesize a short history of Latin American suburbanization. They depart from the colonial square, where political and economic power was centralized. After independence, most Latin American nations expanded their infrastructure and cities experienced a first wave of suburbanization mid-19th century; elites moved to the periphery and central municipalities saw a decline in commercial functions.[52] A dramatic population increase due to migrations

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[49] Pierre Hamel and Roger Keil, *Suburban Governance: A Global View.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015)

[50] As discussed in the problem setting earlier, there is no conclusive label for Paramaribo as either a Caribbean or a Latin American city; however, including a brief discussion on urbanization in this region of the world, especially given its shared geography, could highlight some meaningful points of con- or divergence. A discussion of Paramaribo in the context of Caribbean urbanism, as studied by Hebe Verrest, will follow in the Analysis chapter of this thesis.

[51] Ibid., 3

[52] Ibid., 217

from the countryside spurred the first rapid growth of self-built, informal settlements at the fringe in a second wave of urbanization around the middle of the 20th century, causing a clear divide between the formal, compact city of before and the informal, sprawled periphery. The 1970s witnessed a third wave of suburbanization in terms of public investments in housing, aimed at increasing standards of living and filling housing shortages, while in more recent years, a fourth wave of suburbanization took place in the form of large private—and often gated—developments on the periphery.[53]

While this generalizing account of Latin American suburbanization bears little resemblance to the historic development of Paramaribo—as the analysis chapter of this thesis will point out—there are two noteworthy points to keep in mind. First, the urban periphery shifts from being a space of informality and self-sufficiency, to one of formal state-intervention, to finally one of private development and exclusivity. In this last phase, the role of the state has been to facilitate private investment as a form of economic growth, thereby increasing the influence of the private sector on urban growth. While this played out very differently in the case of large Latin American cities such as Santiago de Chile, where the private sector is represented by a handful or large real estate development companies,[54] the comparatively small-scale private developments taking place in Paramaribo could be considered under the same type of governance, namely, governance as "a means to legitimize increased private involvement in 'city building.'[55]" This close power relationship between state and private actors will play a significant role in the contemporary city building process of Paramaribo as well.

ii. Ananya Roy

A second chapter from Hamel and Keil's volume that carries significant relevance for this thesis is a titled *Governing the Postcolonial Suburb* by Ananya Roy and elaborates on what governance means in the context of studying suburbs in the Global South—and, as she argues, equally so in the Global North. In her essay, Roy sets out to analyze the postcolonial suburb (the suburbs of cities in the Global South) through the modalities of distinction, informality and political society.[56] In her discussion, she asserts that *distinction* is a key characteristic of the postcolonial suburb, as a modes of differentiating, for example aesthetics and life-styles, are equally emblematic of social exclusion as the spatial segregation of neighborhood themselves.[57] In other words, a postcolonial perspective stretches beyond simply identifying boundaries; it requires a closer, physical reading of the built landscape and a reconstruction of the diverse spatial strategies that underlie contemporary

[53] Ibid., 218-219
[54] Ibid., 228
[55] Ibid., 225
[56] Ibid., 339
[57] Ibid., 340-41

urban growth and permeate all corners of the city.
Next, Roy turns to the modality of *informality* as a second characteristic of the postcolonial suburb. She writes:

> Although informality is often considered to be synonymous with poverty, I prefer to think about informality as a mode of the production of space. […]The splintering of urbanism does not take place at the fissure between formality and informality but rather, in fractal fashion, within the informalized production of space. A closer look at the metropolitan regions of much of the world indicates that informal urbanization is as much the purview of wealthy urbanites and suburbanites as it is of squatters and slum dwellers. These forms of elite informality are no more legal than squatter settlements and shantytowns.[58]

In the context of this thesis, this implies that a postcolonial account is not found where formal urban processes end and informal ones start, but rather, in the informality that is found in the production of space itself.

Roy's final point of discussion revolves around *political society* and its role in the postcolonial suburb. If the postcolonial suburb is a space of distinction and informality, then political society is the process by which these conditions are mediated. The "small acts of resistance [and the] quiet encroachment of the ordinary" such as trespassing, vandalizing, destabilizing, and appropriating space are examples of how boundaries are broken, of how the "civil" is politicized.[59] The liminal space between legality and illegality, between the global and local, between those segregated and those segregating, this is where a postcolonial account is found.

In her conclusion, Roy writes that postcoloniality is more than just a "historical condition in a formerly colonized society;[60]" rather, postcoloniality constitutes a "critique of stable categories of space, society and state[61]" in which "new definitions of identity, citizenship, and exclusion are contested.[62]" Permeating the entire urban fabric of cities in the Global South and North, postcoloniality and its three modalities—distinction, informality and political society—thus constitute the pillars upon which a postcolonial account can be built. The analysis chapter of this paper will attempt to retrace these modalities and reconstruct the diverse spatial strategies that define Paramaribo's contemporary urban growth.

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[58] Ibid., 342
[59] Ibid., 344
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 345

e. Caribbean and Paramaribo, Suriname

As far as establishing a postcolonial, multi-epistemological inquiry of Caribbean cities goes—and in particular, one of Paramaribo, Suriname—the literature is rather limited. Granted, not much time has passed since the development and maturing of Massey, Robinson, Roy and Grosfoguel's arguments, yet it is striking to find how little has been written about Paramaribo from a distinctly comparative and postcolonial perspective.

On the regional scale, there are a few major works of Caribbean Urban studies, including a seminal monograph by Robert B. Potter called *Urbanization, Planning and Development in the Caribbean*. In this edited publication, Potter attempts to compile a regional perspective on the state of urbanization in the Caribbean in the age of globalization. In the introduction Potter draws some comparisons between the various territories that comprise the region, while pointing out the increased relevance of the urban scale in terms of development—indeed, it is one of the most urbanized regions in the world. Despite recognizing the territorial differences that exist between each of the island-nations and continental countries surrounding the Caribbean basin, Potter quickly moves to build a universalizing theory on the course of development in the latter half of the 20th century; he writes that "the newly independent formerly colonial territories, perhaps inevitably seeking to develop, came to equate the state of development with the process of urbanization and industrialization,[63]" and continues to build a theory of development that follows the framework of the dependency school of Frank.[64]

While deserving credit for formalizing a number of trends characteristic of Caribbean urban development—politico-economic variations of dependency across the Caribbean, economic growth without economic progress, urban-rural polarities, anti-rural attitudes and agricultural neglect, increased foreign ownership of capital, a disconnection between planning and national development policy, among others[65]—Potter's findings, perhaps simply due to their premature publication, do fit within Roy's criticism on substituting historical difference for empirical variation-finding, perpetuating assumptions of Western hegemony and sustaining the existence of one dominant world-system from which the dependent territories must be cut off.[66]

In regards to existing literature on Paramaribo and its position vis-à-vis global capitalism, sources are rather limited. Scholars at the University of Amsterdam (Hebe Verrest, Rivke Jaffe), the University of Antwerp (Sigrid Heirman, Tom Coppens), as well as the University Anton de Kom in Paramaribo, have explored aspects of this relationship in greater detail, outlining some of the major (macro-) economic, political, ethnic, social, and gender dimensions. Rather than covering these individual

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[63] Potter, *Urbanization, Planning and Development in the Caribbea*n, 10.
[64] Ibid., 11.
[65] Ibid., 316-320.
[66] Ibid., 321.

sources in a broad literature review, at the risk of losing relevance in light of this thesis' pursuit of a postcolonial account of Paramaribo's recent urban transformations, these sources will be treated on an individual basis in the analysis section of this thesis.

Finally, before formulating a hypothesis for this thesis, it is important to mention what has already been written about Paramaribo's urban growth in recent years. Two scholars, Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, have produced the most recent research on Paramaribo's urban sprawl, which they presented at the second edition of the Caribbean Urban Forum, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in 2013.

In their paper, Heirman and Coppens investigate the nature of Paramaribo's urban sprawl through a number of methods; first, they establish a theoretical framework of urban sprawl by covering the current literature on the topic; then, they move on to detect patterns of urban sprawl in the city's historic growth track through the methodology of Bhatta (2010); third, they cross-reference the city's peripheral growth patterns with urban sprawl types developed by Harvey and Clark (1965), followed by a density analysis via the application of Berke's Urban Transect model (2006); and finally, they develop their own allotment type to provide insight into the structure of the city's sprawl patterns.[67]

Beyond simply identifying patterns of urban sprawl unique to Paramaribo, Heirman and Coppens continue their investigation by inquiring into the underlying causes of the predominantly ribbon-type urban growth. They consider both universal factors such as industrialization, land prices, property taxes and credit as well as more localized causes such as available infrastructure, land speculation and a fragmented planning policy, which all could be attributed as primary causes of sprawl; furthermore, civil war, patronage in public employment, clientelism in land allocation, and public housing projects are considered as endogenous causes.[68]

While these findings certainly establish a sound platform for research on Paramaribo's urban growth—something that, due to the lack of data was not available beforehand—one major avenue for further exploration, as acknowledged by the authors themselves, is the sustainability and affordability of Paramaribo's urban sprawl. As they hypothesize, the expansion and maintenance of the city's peripheral infrastructure relies heavily on incomes generated from development aid and the mining industry, rather than from its own domestic tax base.[69] What this implies is that, as the population continues to grow and the city's boundaries continue to expand—in a low-density, sprawling fashion as they claim is the case right now—then additional costs for infrastructure may not be able to be covered by public expenditure. As a result, the process of spatial production will most likely fall back on more informal mechanisms to sustain itself, if it hasn't already in the past few years.

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[67] Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo" (Paper presented at the Caribbean Urban Forum, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, March 13-15, 2013), 10.
[68] Ibid., 13.
[69] Ibid., 15.

This discrepancy in the research of Paramaribo's urban growth—the interplay between formality and informality—constitutes the basis for the empiric inquiry of this thesis. Indeed, the negotiative process of spatial production that emerges in the moment of suspension between legal planning, funding and construction processes, and quasi-legal adaptations, appropriations and reorganizations of material, financial, infrastructural, and human resources is exactly where a postcolonial account of Paramaribo's urban growth is situated. These processes, which spatially manifest themselves on every parcel of land that is developed—or is left undeveloped—will reveal a more nuanced account of urbanism, one that is not strictly a narrative of dependency or of globalization, one that is not exclusively local, nor global; in short, a postcolonial narrative that reveals the creative dialectic between formal and informal process that underlie Paramaribo's urban growth.

IV. Hypothesis

Given the recent developments within the discourse of postcolonial urban studies—the emergence of ordinary cities theory through the work of scholars such as Massey, Robinson, Roy and Grosfoguel, among others—particular studies of cities in the Global South from an explicitly postcolonial, let's say ordinary perspective are still far and few between. In het book *Ordinary Cities,* Robinson provides a number of vignette cases in Rio de Janeiro, the Zambia Copperbelt and Kuala Lumpur in which she dispossesses the West of its privileged relationship to modernity, detaches modernity from tradition, and breaks misconceptions of novelty. Similarly, this thesis will select a number of vignettes in Paramaribo—specific examples of property developments—in which conceptions of dependency and globalization will be challenged.

Emerging from a concrete problem setting, having developed a specific research question and having analyzed the state of the art of postcolonial urban studies, this thesis will propose the following hypothesis:

> More than a landscape of dependent third world growth or globalizing urban sprawl, Paramaribo's contemporary urban growth is marked by modalities of distinction, informality and political society which underlie the negotiation of space and produce an urban landscape that is cosmopolitan, modern, and, most of all, uniquely ordinary.

The following analysis and vignette case studies will support the production of this hypothesis.

V. Methodology

In an effort to probe Paramaribo's urban transformations through a distinctly post-colonial framework, free of Western assumptions of dependency or globalization, a comparative methodology that employs both quantitative and qualitative methods

has been developed. A total of three research stages make up this thesis' analysis section, starting with a historic-morphological analysis and recent urban growth synthesis, followed by a vignette case study inquiry, and ending with a policy review.

The first section of this thesis' analysis is aimed at identifying what urban transformations have taken place in recent decades. While it is important to understand the long-term growth trends, it is meaningful for the purpose of this thesis to focus on the transitional period which started around 1975, as this was the year of Suriname's independence from The Netherlands and a time of significant political, economic and demographic change. At the same time, the following decades were also a period of increasing globalization, as national divisions of labor transformed into international production chains, financial markets took on a larger share of the global economy and technological innovation increasingly facilitated economic, social and cultural exchange between people and places around the globe. Through an overview of Paramaribo's demographic changes and morphological transformations, conducted by Heirman et al., this first stage will provide a broad picture of how the city has transformed itself over the last centuries. Then, a more in-depth investigation of the last few decades, carried out by Heirman and Coppens, will lay the groundwork for the thesis' own argument, namely, that Western frameworks for analysis are insufficient in grasping the diversity of urban processes at play, and that a postcolonial approach proposed by Robinson can reveal important nuances in understanding contemporary urban growth.

Following this analysis, the thesis will then in a second step select a number of vignette case studies, which will serve as entry points for a so-called postcolonial inquiry. As the aim of this thesis is to build a particularizing account of urban development—and not a universalizing one—the outcome of this analysis will not be an encompassing explanation of urban development in the Global South; it will, however, highlight the deficiency of Western frameworks in theorizing urban growth in the Global South, while bringing about qualities of modernity, novelty and cosmopolitanism inherent in Paramaribo's urban landscape. This analysis, in turn, will be important to review current governance strategies and policies that aim to influence contemporary growth.

In this final stage, these postcolonial inquiries and the resulting particular narratives will be used to frame a discussion of recent urban development interventions on the part of national government and supranational institutions. By highlighting the disconnection between current urban policy approaches that counter urban sprawl, aim to revitalize the city's downtown, or attempt to curb the host of negative outcomes of the last decades of urban growth, this thesis will should be able to set the stage for alternative frameworks for policy approaches to urban development in the Global South.

VI. Analysis

a. Historic-Morphological Analysis

Before delving into a set of vignette case studies and exposing the diversity of processes at play in Paramaribo's urban transformation, it is important to first sketch a contextual picture of the city's historic development. In doing so, this thesis applies a method called *historic-morphological analysis*, based on a paper by University of Queensland geographer Thomas Sigler entitled "Monaco with bananas, a tropical Manhattan, or a Singapore for Central America? Explaining rapid urban growth in Panama City, Panama." In his paper, Sigler attempts to explain Panama's recent urban boom not simply as the result of neo-classical market forces, but rather as the result of structures and agencies supporting these macro-level forces.[70] In doing so, the method he applies first analyses the land-use/land cover transformation of the city, before then moving into an analysis of the negotiation of space underpinning it. Similarly, this thesis will first present an overview of the land-use/land cover changes of Paramaribo's urban recent transformation, before then analyzing a number of negotiations inherent to this transformation. The vignette case studies will highlight some of these processes at play below the surface of Paramaribo's urban change.

i. From a Caribbean city to an Ordinary City

As historic data recording urban density, land use and land cover is slim, this paper relies on a number of secondary analyses performed by other scholars in the field, namely Hebe Verrest and Rivke Jaffe of the University of Amsterdam and Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens of the University of Antwerp. While their papers outline some of the overarching similarities between Paramaribo and other Caribbean cities, the authors also acknowledge significant differences, already laying the groundwork for a particularizing account of Paramaribo's urban growth.

In her city profile of Paramaribo, Verrest examines the city in the context of Caribbean urbanism and concludes that the city's structure in many regards matches that of other Caribbean cities. Like most other Caribbean cities Paramaribo started off as a plantation city, which formed the trade, service and political gateway between the colony, its motherland and rest of the world throughout Dutch domination from 1667 until 1975. Like other Caribbean cities, she argues, Paramaribo is a primate city and continued to serve the country's primary economic, political and social functions even after the abolishment of slavery in 1863 and the settlement of smaller rural communities around the rest of the country. When bauxite, timber and oil became the main products of export in the early 20th century,

[70] Thomas Sigler, "Monaco with bananas, a tropical Manhattan, or a Singapore for Central America? Explaining rapid urban growth in Panama City, Panama," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* DOI:10.1111/sjtg.12058 (2014), 263

migration from the countryside increased and Paramaribo's population doubled from 37.000 in 1920 to 74.000 in 1950. With continued centralization of economic and political functions in the capital—especially after The Netherlands granted Suriname political autonomy as a constituent country of the Kingdom of The Netherlands in 1954—the city's population expanded even further; by 1980 it had reached 230.000 and despite being slowed down by post-independence out-migration and the military coup between 1980 and 1987, population growth of the urban area clocked in at over 300.000 after the return of a democratic regime in the early 1990s.[71] Like many other Caribbean cities today, Paramaribo is by far the largest city in its country, boasting a population of 360.000 as of 2012.[72]

Concurrent with these demographic expansions, the city saw itself spatially transformed as well. Verrest distinguishes three main urban sections: (1) the historic colonial core, mostly institutional and containing the central business district; (2) the inner city, historically where freed slaves and the lower classes lived; and (3) the suburbs, where after WWII agricultural land was converted for residential use.[73] While Rivke Jaffe et al. agree with this overall structure, they emphasize the diversity of urban processes that have taken place in more recent years: the urban core has seen both re-investment in the form of commercialization, as well as decline in the form of abandonment; likewise, peripheral growth is marked by both processes of formality, such as the construction of gated communities for the elites, as well as the continued expansion of informal neighborhoods, coined "suburbs of the poor.[74]" So, in essence, Paramaribo appears to have the same historic urban development as other Caribbean cities, yet a growing diversity of urban processes are being discerned in more recent years.

Beyond the general lines of Paramaribo's historic development as described by Potter, Verrest and Jaffe et al., a more detailed spatial analysis of the city's recent urban transformations is needed to determine significant growth patterns and select representative vignette case studies. When it comes to developing a more detailed account of Paramaribo's recent growth, this thesis will first turn to a master thesis produced by Sigrid Heirman et al. in 2007 in order to get an overview of the spatial development of the city since the beginning of the 20th century, before returning to her 2013 paper co-authored with Tom Coppens about the city's most recent urban growth.[75]

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[71] Hebe Verrest, "City Profile," *Cities* 27 (2010), 50-52
[72] ABS Suriname, *Census* (2012), Accessed August 31, 2016, http://www.statistics-suriname.org/index.php/censuskantoor/abs-census-uitslag-2012
[73] Verrest, "City Profile," 52
[74] Rivke Jaff et al., *The Caribbean City,* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2015), 9-10
[75] Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo"

ii. Spatial Development of Paramaribo (17th C. – 2005)

In their master thesis of 2007, Heirman et al. provide a detailed account of Paramaribo's entire historic development, from the early settlement in the late 17th century to the sprawling city of today. The following diagram produced by the research team shows the historic development of each of the city's spatial scales and will serve as a contextual platform for this thesis' inquiries:

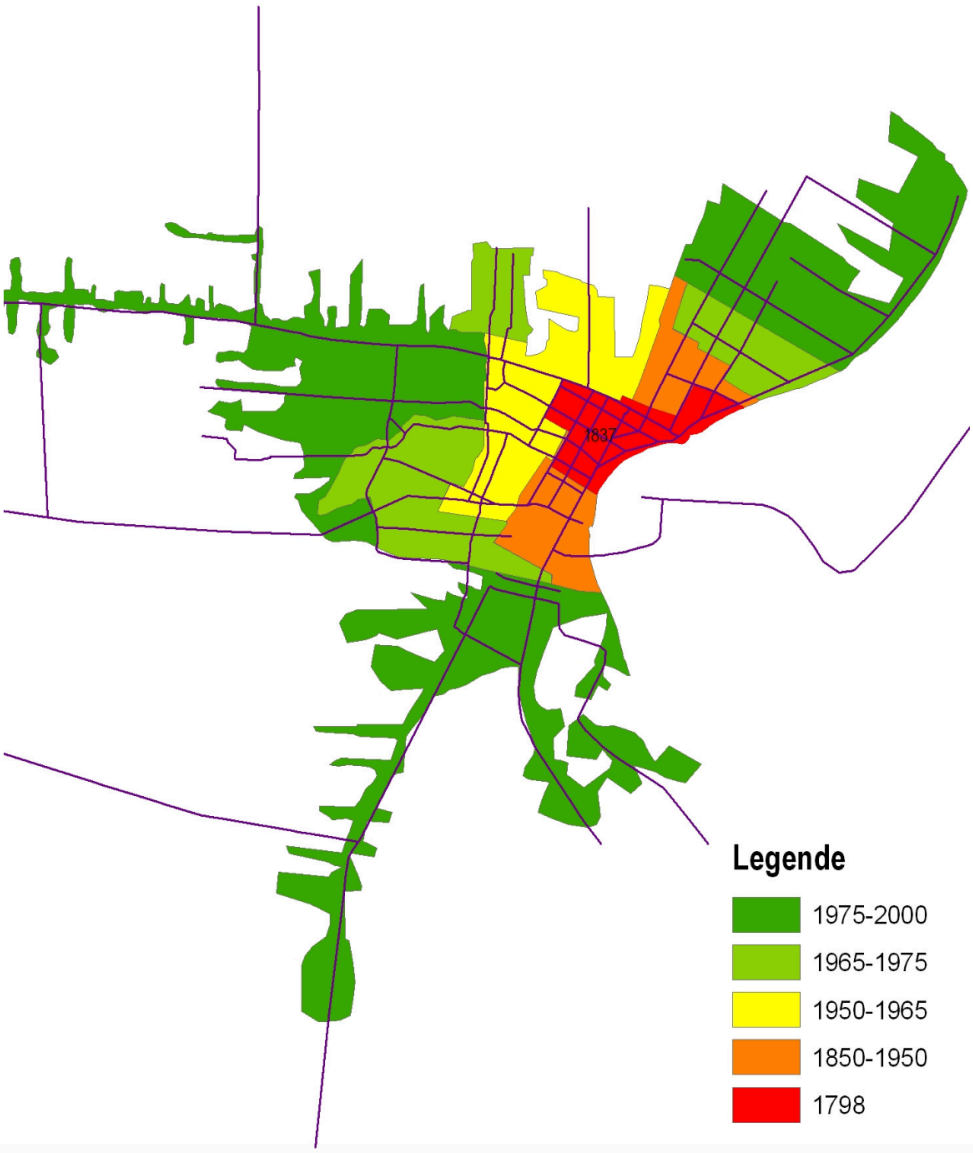

Figure 2. Historic growth of Paramaribo, 17th C. - 2005.
Source: **Heirman et al.**

The center-most section marked in red represents the oldest part of the city, with its city limits as established in 1837. Comprising the **original planned colony**, as well as two early expansions called Combé and Frimangron, this part of the city is the historic core, today simply known as "Centrum". As opposed to later spatial scales of the city, this historic core is highly planned and consists mostly of a grid structure

comprising roads and ditches. The colony's government laid out infrastructure in accordance with the existing topography—for example, roads ran alongside raised shell deposits while ditches were dug in between to drain heavy rainfall—and, subsequently, individual lots were given to tradesmen, free blacks and poor whites. Street blocks were large and lots were long and narrow, usually containing a house on the street-side, a yard and slave quarters in the back.[76] As Robert Potter points out in his analysis of Caribbean urbanism, this urban core represents only one half of the functional colony, the other half being the many plantation lots alongside the riverbed.[77] While these lots are not spatially part of the city, they form a functional satellite area to the city, given the economic link between the resource extracting plantations and the trade function of the city proper.

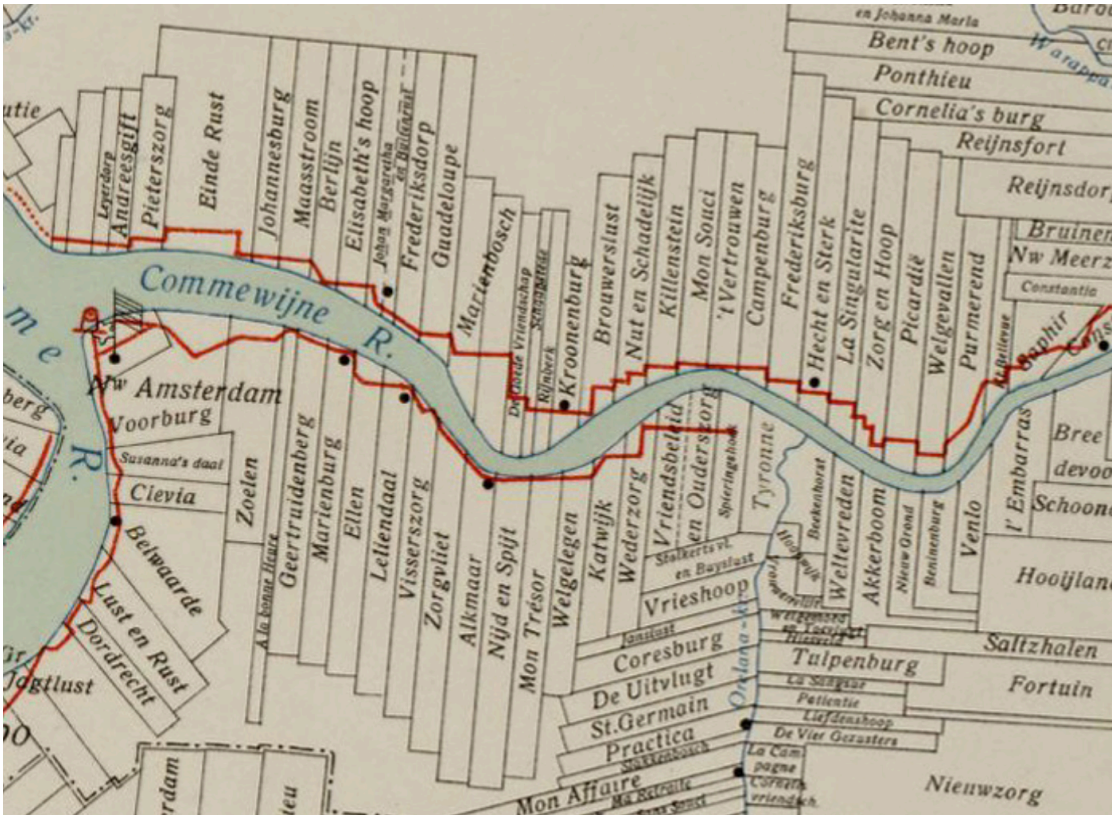

Figure 3. Historic representation of plantation lots along the Suriname and Commewijne rivers. *Source:* Heirman et al.

Aerial photos of Centrum today reveal how this structure has remained mostly intact:

[76] Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo", 13-36
[77] Potter, *Urbanization, Planning and Development in the Caribbea*n, 243-258.

Figure 4. Planned colonial core, today known as Centrum.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

Figure 5. Planned colonial core with Combé to the northeast.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

The second spatial scale of Paramaribo's urban structure, as analyzed by Heirman et al., comprises the section marked in orange, to the northeast and southwest of the colonial core. These **inner city** sections of Paramaribo constitute a very different kind of urban development; a kind that was no longer guided by government-mandated expansions, but privately owned developments. After the abolishment of slavery in 1863 and the termination of all slave contracts in 1873, many former slaves moved from rural plantations to the capital city in search of better opportunities. Simultaneously, contract laborers were imported from the Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia to steep labor shortages on the plantations, causing an increased demand for housing in the capital city. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, private undeveloped land within city limits was subdivided into buildable lots and later around 1900, when urban land was near saturated, a phenomenon of land-use

conversion from agricultural to urban use guided developments.[78] As a result of this fragmented form of urban development, the neighborhoods comprising the inner city appear to have no overarching structure, let alone a coordinated urban infrastructure of streets, sewers, or other utilities.

The following aerial photographs of two neighborhoods, one to the northeast and another to the southwest of Centrum show the discordant nature of urban development under private-led development. While this type of urban growth is described as being largely unstructured,[79] due to a lack of overarching urban plans that organize urban infrastructure, it must be noted that within each of the private developments a highly efficient gridiron structure was used to subdivide the land, most likely as the result of profit-motives. Nuances such as these are important to mention, since they highlight that seemingly disorganized growth is in fact steered by deliberate choices and structures—a point that can be easily forgotten in the context of third world urbanism.

Figure 6. Urban pattern of privately developed neighborhoods to the northeast of Centrum.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

[78] Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo", 13-36
[79] Ibid., 25

Figure 7. Urban pattern of privately developed neighborhoods to the southwest of Centrum.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

After becoming a constituent country with increased autonomy under the Kingdom of the Netherlands, local government interests shifted from planning a city to building a political base for previously disenfranchised ethnic groups.[80] As a result, the post-war years brought increased urbanization in the form of more unplanned private development. This section of the city, marked in yellow comprises parts of the **inner city**, but also areas that today would be considered **peripheral** in terms of their distance from the center. While the majority of developments were private, the Stichting Huisvesting—a government agency responsible for housing—did spearhead a number of developments (over 24 to this day) in and around Paramaribo. There will be a clear differentiation between these projects and private developments, which will be discussed in the vignette case studies; for now it is enough to mention that the continued growth of the city outside its administrative limits led to noticeable sprawl and a gradual shift of residential activity from the center to the periphery, resulting in the commercialization of downtown.[81]

The aerial photo below shows the first publically planned housing project Zorg en Hoop, laid out in 1951. The vignette case studies will hone in on the nature of public housing projects as opposed to private developments, among which the role of public space will play an important factor.

[80] Ibid., 26
[81] Ibid., 27

Figure 8. First publically developed neighborhood Zorg en Hoop (1951).
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

As urbanization continued throughout the 1960s,[82] a remarkable trend was observed on the national scale: around 1975, the urban proportion of Suriname's population surpassed the rural and by 1980, 65% of inhabitants lived in urban areas, mostly the capital Paramaribo.[83] This trend can be seen as an extension of the rural-urban migration wave that started in the latter half of the 19th century and continued into the 20th, or, more likely, can be attributed to the declaration of independence in 1975. In the five years following independence, Suriname witnessed a negative growth rate of its total population while its +65 population continued to increase, indicating the departure of many younger Surinamese. While it took the country until 1986 to surpass the population count it had right before independence,[84] what is most important for this thesis is that Suriname in the meantime became a predominantly urban nation, with Paramaribo at the center of its urban society.

Developments that took place between 1965 and 1975 are marked in light green on map and constitute a **near doubling of Suriname's land cover**, from 1900 to 3000ha.[85] Like most of Paramaribo's 20th century urban growth, these developments too were conversions of privately owned former plantations into subdivided neighborhoods of individual building lots. The aerial photo below shows the current layout of the privately developed Ma Retraite neighborhoods III and IV.

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[82] Ibid., 28
[83] UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, "Country Profiles," *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2014 revision,* https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Country-Profiles/
[84] World Bank, "Suriname," *World Bank Data,* http://data.worldbank.org/country/suriname
[85] Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo", 28

Figure 9. Post-war privately developed neighborhoods Ma Retraite III and IV.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

While issues of planning had been left mostly unconsidered by public authorities for the majority of the 20th century, the 1970s nonetheless saw minimal efforts at curbing the so-called *wild growth* of urban properties. In 1972, the national congress passed the *Stedenbouwkundige Wet* (urban planning law), which was aimed at regulating the subdivision process that underpinned private residential development; more specifically, it stipulated that every proposed subdivision must adhere to a subdivision plan approved by the Ministry of Public Works.[86] While this law sets up a formal process for how subdivision and building permits should be processed, physical urban growth is still heavily mediated through informal adaptations to this process, an important point when it comes to discussing urban growth from a postcolonial perspective. The thesis will delve into this matter in the next section of vignette case studies.

[86] Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo", 29

According to Heirman et al. the following decades saw little significant urban growth, due to a military dictatorship that crippled the country's economy in the 1980s, as well as a decade of democratic restructuring in the 1990s.[87] Symbolically, the construction of the Jules Wijdenbosch Bridge connecting Paramaribo to the Commewijne district on the other side of the Suriname River can be seen as the beginning of a new period of significant urban growth, as indicated on the map in dark green. The neighborhoods that have been added in more recent years are mostly private developments, though new forms of publically funded projects have sprouted, which will be discussed in the case study section below. What's important to note in the context of this historic-morphological analysis is that the density of these turn-of-the-millennium neighborhoods is significantly lower than those of previous decades. Many of the new properties are part of so-called string-developments that have grown around the major traffic arteries connecting Paramaribo to the hinterland; they include the Kwattaweg and Commissaris Weytinghweg running west and the Indira Ghandiweg running south. Other developments include the peripheral neighborhoods north of downtown, as well as the new neighborhoods across the river in Commewijne.

The aerial images below respectively show a new development, Surivillage, north of Paramaribo, which, at the time of the taking of the satellite image (2006) had not been built up yet; a string development along the Kwattaweg; and string developments in Commewijne.

[87] Ibid., 30

Figure 10. Recent urban development Surivillage in Paramaribo North.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

Figure 11. Recent string development along Kwattaweg, west of downtown Paramaribo.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

Figure 12. Recent string development on the right bank of the Suriname River in Commewijne.
Source: **GLIS, https://www.miglis.sr/percelenonline/**

iii. Recent Urban Growth of Paramaribo (1975 – 2012)

Now that a historic overview of the major morphological transformations of Paramaribo has been established, a more in-depth investigation of the most recent urban changes can take place. In their 2013 paper, Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens set out to investigate the characteristics, causes and effects of Paramaribo's urban growth by looking into the dynamics of urban sprawl. Whereas urban growth describes the general process of urban transformation that cities undergo over time, urban sprawl describes a specific condition of urban growth, characterized by rapid, low-density growth. While this thesis is not intended as an empirical case study of urban sprawl, Heirman and Coppens' paper on urban sprawl is included because it demonstrates how western frameworks of analysis limit the potential for what Robinson calls a city-wide view.[88]

Before delving into Heirman and Coppens' analysis of Paramaribo, it is important to note that their intention is to "stress the gap between generic insights on urban sprawl and the local conditions.[89]" While the dichotomy between the global and the local, too, is a central point of contention in Robinson's theories, her ordinary cities approach differs in a sense that it does not operate from this divide—maintaining the centrality of western theory—but rather engages directly with the circulation of modernism within the urban context itself. Despite Heirman and Coppens' awareness of this dichotomy, their analysis—though hybridized—retains a structural approach to assessing Paramaribo's contemporary urban growth that fails to capture the diversity of urban processes at play. More specifically, it departs from ad-hoc spatial models, which largely exclude dialectics between space and urban actors, thereby limiting the possibility to detect nuances, informalities and other deviations from "generic" (or what I would call "encompassing" theory).

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[88] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 13
[89] Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo", Powerpoint accompanying paper, 4

The first section of Heirman and Coppens' paper examines the applicability of encompassing theorizations of urban sprawl to the urban fabric of Paramaribo. Applying Bhatta's model, they conclude that before 1975 the city experienced expansive growth, while afterwards it was dominated by outlying growth, indicating accelerating sprawl.[90] Through Harvey and Clark's urban sprawl model they continue to refine their assessment of Paramaribo's recent urban growth by identifying the morphological patterns of sprawl, namely, linear, leapfrog, scattered and polynuclear.[91] Next, they apply Berke's transect scheme to identify the density scales of Paramaribo's urban fabric, asserting the absence of an urban core and emphasizing the dominance of the rural reserve category, which they then cross-reference with data from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing to confirm the predominance of detached and low-rise structures.[92] Their analysis is concluded with the synthesis of a localized allotment scheme, which identifies the plantation and ribbon typologies as the dominant spatial units of Paramaribo's recent urban growth.[93]

Their analysis completes the previous growth scheme chronicling 1798 to 2005 with the following final layer of urban expansion from 2000 to 2012, marked in light pink:

Year	Surface (hectares)	Surface (km²)
1700	25	0.25
1800	375	3.75
1850	500	5
1900	945	9.45
1950	1000	10
1965	1900	19
1975	3000	30
2000	7500	75
2012[5]	20700	247

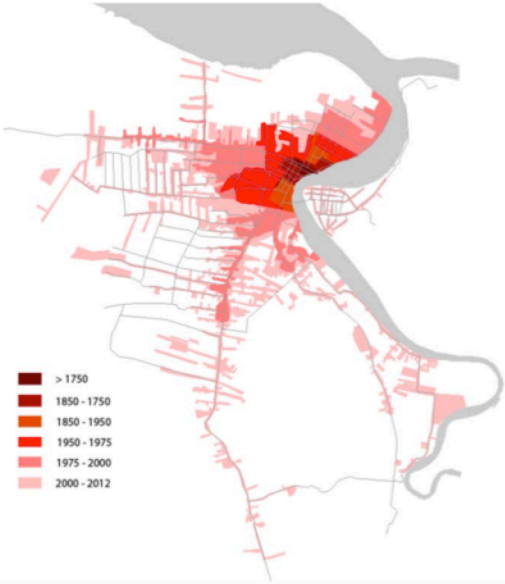

Figure 13. Complete schematic representation of Paramaribo's growth stages.
Source: **Heirman and Coppens**

[90] Ibid., 7
[91] Ibid., 8
[92] Ibid., 8-9
[93] Ibid.

In the next section, the authors review the causes of urban sprawl, first from encompassing theory and later applied to the specific context of Paramaribo. As with the morphological analysis of Paramaribo's urban growth, their list of causes is a combination of global as well as local factors. While lower land prices, lower taxes, the break-down of traditional family structure and cheap credit are generally seen as contributing factors of sprawl, Heirman and Coppens assert that none of these really apply to the case of Paramaribo, as access to land is highly politicized and difficult, taxes are collected nationally rather than locally, households tend to be multi-generational rather than splintered, and interest rates on loans are astronomically high. Looking into local factors, the authors note the following causal relationships: (1) industrialization is not a major driver of urban growth as most of the mining activities are located away from the city; migration due to government employment, however, does stimulate urban growth; (2) subdivision is easy because of the pre-existing infrastructure on individual plantations lots; (3) high car-ownership facilitates development of peripheral areas (4) market failures in the form of vacancies exacerbate sprawl due to lack of tax disincentives, fragmented ownership resulting from inheritance, and foreign ownership for future development; (5) non-existent planning stimulates sprawl due to the lack of land-use and structure plans and the absence of condominium ownership; and finally (6) local geography, which due to its combination of stable, linear sand ridges and unstable clay grounds promotes ribbon development with little infill.[94]

If Jennifer Robinson's ordinary cities approach were to be applied, this analysis could be improved when it comes to assessing the spatial characteristics of the city. In their attempt to test the applicability of "generic insights" of urban sprawl theory to Paramaribo's urban fabric, they do not necessarily dislocate modernity from the West,[95] as Robinson calls for: they simply hybridize it. Indeed, the models of Bhatta, Harvey & Clark, and Berke do not suffice in explaining Paramaribo's urban growth, however, the addition of a localized allotment model does not broaden the analysis either; this approach still departs from ad-hoc models that aim to divide and place into hierarchies the diversity of processes that is actually at play in the urban fabric.

The mode of thinking that restricts Heirman and Coppens in their analysis of Paramaribo's urban growth is the use of explicitly spatial models that continue to categorize development. Even through the authors acknowledge the many facets, both physical and non-tangible, of urban sprawl, their analysis departs from Breuckner's definition of urban sprawl as "the excessive spatial growth of cities.[96]" Thus, from the start, the discussion of urban growth is inextricably linked to its spatial impact as well as the pace of its development, limiting the potential for a broader inquiry into the city's contemporary urban dynamics. Even though the authors make side-notes as they test the boundaries of each model ("parts A, B and

[94] Ibid., 10-13
[95] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 13
[96] Breuckner (2000) in Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo", 1

C apply, but X, Y and Z are different"), the end result of their analysis is an account of urbanism that is not so much a departure from, as it is a refraction of encompassing theory. They synthesize Paramaribo's urban growth as follows:

> […] Paramaribo is characterised by a discontinuous spatial pattern that shows resemblance of American suburban cities but due to the incoherence of the whole also fits the larger frame of a discontinuous rather unstructured city in the developing regions, but without the dominant informal settlements.[97]

Following Robinson's ordinary cities approach, it can only be concluded that Heirman and Coppens' analysis of Paramaribo is missing a number of valuable links that could more accurately reflect the nature of contemporary urban growth. Indeed, the aerial images of Paramaribo's urban structure that so accurate coincide with the schematic configurations of Harvey and Clark's sprawl types certainly shed light on the universality of urbanization, yet simultaneously beg a more particularizing account of what goes on at street level. Bringing *down to earth* as it were the analysis of Heirman and Coppens, this next section of the thesis will highlight a number of vignette case studies in which these spatial configurations are given a multi-dimensional character, tracing the network of actors, interest, methods, and power relationships that lend agency to the built fabric. While it may not be possible to extrapolate these vignette case studies into larger urban patterns, their narratives should highlight the cosmopolitan nature of Paramaribo's urban growth; these accounts of nuance, informality and deviation, in turn, will be indispensible in reviewing current policy approaches and legal frameworks used to influence urban growth.

b. Vignette Case Studies

As Robinson suggests, a more complete, postcolonial account engages with the circulation of modernity within the urban context itself.[98] Of course, the question at the end of her plea remains: how to engage with the cosmopolitan, diverse nature of cities? How to unearth the innovative, novel qualities that are so characteristic of modernity and are, as she claims, found in all cities around the world?

In an effort to find these qualities in the urban fabric of Paramaribo, Ananya Roy's essay *Governing the Postcolonial Suburb,* discussed earlier in the literature review, could be helpful in setting up some road signs. In her elaboration she responds specifically to the suburbs of the Global South, yet, her modalities of regulation could be applied to a wider perspective of the city—if not, the entire city. Would it be possible to find in the urban fabric of Paramaribo examples of property development that, even though part of macro-urban trends as the ones described by

[97] Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo", 11
[98] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* 7-9

Heirman and Coppens, demonstrate a more nuanced reality? In the following section, the thesis will move across the urban landscape of Paramaribo and hone in on various examples of property development that, despite being characteristic of formally described processes, exert Roy's modalities of distinction, informality and political society. As you can imagine, these examples are not idiosyncratic cases: they are uniquely ordinary examples.

While it is virtually impossible to do a comprehensive reading of all properties in Paramaribo, the point is not to come to an encompassing theory of urbanization in the Global South; on the contrary, the point is to demonstrate that there is no such thing as third world, dependent or globalized urbanization per se—there is only the negotiation that exists between all actors and processes, both global and local, formal and informal. As Doreen Massey argues, *place* is shaped by intersections—not static, delineated or essential in their identity. Operating from this logic, the following vignettes demonstrate the diversity of urban processes at play in Paramaribo.

i. Vignette I: Distinction

Using Roy's first modality of distinction as a lens for reading Paramaribo's urban landscape, this first vignette reveals the diversity of strategies that aim to self-identify, differentiate and distinguish among households and neighborhoods. Spatial segregation is generally one of the first ways in which socio-economic inequalities are expressed; however, as Roy argues, there are more strategies at play. As Hebe Verrest argues in het city profile of Paramaribo, there is considerably little spatial segregation and significantly more socio-economic blending between households—especially compared to other cities in the Caribbean.[99] While this observation certainly is true on the macro level, based on historical, geographical, and census and social studies, a closer look at the built environment suggests variations on this conclusion that are important to consider when analyzing the city's contemporary urban fabric.

There are a number of aesthetic strategies in which owners self-identify and differentiate amongst one another, based on their origin and the availability of capital, material, and labor resources. In the center of Paramaribo where much of the old building stock remains in bad condition, certain middle-class properties set themselves apart in their choice of building materials. The following house, despite its fairly common two-story typology with upper-floor wrap-around porch, is dressed in an arguably opulent manner, sporting finely decorated wrought iron gates with gold trimmings, curved wrought-iron railings inlaid with decorative glass, stately columns with Corinthian capitals, refined stone trimmings that project across the first floor, arched windows reminiscent of neoclassical palaces, and featuring a tiled driveway.

[99] Verrest, "City Profile," 51

Figure 14. Middle class home with pseudo-elite finishes.
Source: **Author**

Across the river in the more recently developed district of Commewijne, more examples of this pseudo-elitist aesthetic differentiation are found. Here, a house decorated with stone quoins and columns with ionic capitals, as well as the same neoclassicist arched windows sits across from a dilapidated shack.

Figure 15. Middle class home with pseudo-elite finishes.
Source: **Author**

Figure 16. Dilapidated house across the street from pseudo-elite middle class home.
Source: **Author**

Across the street, two other miniature palaces are found, donning more Corinthian columns, decorative balconies and sculptural concrete elements.

Figure 17. Middle class homes with pseudo-elite finishes.
Source: **Author**

While it may seemingly signify a phenomenon of high-income families moving into lower-income areas, there is a more nuanced dynamic at play. When examining these structures, it becomes clear their designs have very common layouts—usually a central-hall plan with one or two stories, with or without a wrap-around porch on the second floor, and topped by a low-pitched roof—and their finishes, despite being symbolically elitist, are usually prefabricated elements found at most construction material stores throughout the city. These homes constitute a bourgeois cut-and-paste kind of architecture that is aimed at self-identifying with the elite in areas that are not distinctly wealthy.

Figure 18. One of the many pre-fabricated construction element stores found throughout Paramaribo.
Source: **Author**

Figure 19. Another construction store. Note the pre-fabricated columns in the background.
Source: **Author**

Especially compared to the houses found in more homogeneously affluent parts of the city such as Tourtonne, Ma Retraite or Putcher these cut-and-paste architectures are no match for the architect-designed and more complexly built villas of the local elite or foreign national.

Figure 20. Home of local elite or foreign national.
***Source:* Author**

Figure 21. Home of local elite or foreign national.
***Source:* Author**

One of the largest real estate firms in Suriname *Intervast* targets itself at Dutch buyers by guaranteeing high quality finishes for their properties. As opposed to the cut-and-paste architecture found throughout the city, these Dutch second homes are designed by a team of professional architects, built with imported materials (such as Belgian plumbing and German fixtures) and according to European building standards[100], thereby setting themselves apart from locally built homes of the middle and lower class. This, too, results in a modality of aesthetic distinction that nuances contemporary urban growth.

[100] Intervast, *Home* (Intervast Nederland, 2016), Accessed April 28, 2016, https://www.intervast.nl

Figure 22. Example of a home marketed towards Dutch expatriates.
Source: **Intervast, http://www.intervast.nl**

As a result, it is important to acknowledge that, despite socio-economic blending and low spatial segregation, there remain other strategies by which households differentiate themselves from one another. Depending on their wealth, origin and access to resources, households get creative in the way in which they express their identity; either through the use of ready-made building elements symbolic of the elite, or more sophisticated designs drawn up by architects and executed with higher quality, custom-made, imported materials, every home asserts its own identity within the built fabric.

Not only when it comes to residential properties can modalities of distinction be observed; so, too, among commercial properties exist significant differentiations when it comes to aesthetics and identity. As with the aforementioned examples of residential property, there are no strict typologies that necessarily define contemporary urban growth, but there are some strategies observed that reveal significant nuance in commercial development. First or all, it is unmistakable that much Paramaribo's historic building stock has declined significantly for a number of reasons, including split ownership due to heritage;[101] however, walking through the historic center, it is remarkable how many of these older structures are now home to—not exclusively, but for the majority—government offices and institutions. Most of these structures have been preserved to a minimal standard that makes them habitable, whereas others—especially the more monumental kind of historic buildings—have undergone more thorough restoration. The association with the more traditional, formal architectural style of Dutch colonialism lends a sense of

[101] Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo", 54

prestige to those agencies and institutions seeking to project an image of stability and establishment to their users. Of course, there are exceptions to this strategy such as the Dutch Embassy, which is located in a strikingly modern building, devoid of any references to the colonial past—or is it?

Figure 23. Restored colonial house, now the School of Law of the FHR Insitute for Social Studies.
Source: **Author**

Figure 24. Restored colonial house, now the Ministry of Natural Resources.
Source: **Author**

Figure 25. Embassy of The Netherlands in Paramaribo.
Source: **Montréal Serai, http://www.montrealserai.com**

In contrast, other commercial activities such as service and retail providers seek to do the exact opposite: disassociate from the colonial past and its history of oppression. A significant part of these retail, trade, banking, and other producer service businesses are located in either completely new office buildings or modernized older structures. Among them one finds a range of expressions, from hyper-modern, geometric complexes utilizing a combination of explicitly modern materials and elements such as reflective and colored glass, steel, plastics and

brightly colored lettering, to more modest properties where the façade has been "squared" to cover the saddle roof profile of the older structure, and a combination of modern materials has been applied to send an explicitly global message. Like the association of government agencies and institutions with the colonial architecture of Paramaribo, so too is the association of business firms with global aesthetics an attempt to identify oneself in the urban fabric of the city.

Figure 26. Hyper-modernist office building in Centrum Paramaribo.
Source: **Author**

Figure 27. Squared, modernist façades on older structures.
Source: **Author**

Figure 28. Modern office tower of Hakrinbank.
Source: **Author**

Besides examples of preserved or restored historic properties and explicitly new and aesthetically modern office and retail buildings, one also finds new structures that deliberately incorporate references to the vernacular style of the old city in an effort to associate with both ideological realms: the former colonial and present global city of Paramaribo. As one could guess, these structures are mostly of the *spectacular* kind, among them casinos, hotels and other tourist amenities located in and around the city center. These structures co-opt the heritage of old Paramaribo sought out by tourists, while still providing "world-class" comfort and amenities needed to accommodate foreign (Western) travelers. An exception among these tourist facilities are B&B's and hostels, which, due to their smaller size and absence of large-scale commercial amenities such as pools, gardens or banquet halls, can utilize larger historic homes and properties.

Figure 29. Royal Torarica Hotel, constructed in 2006 by American architect Lane Pettigrew.
Source: **Varossieau Paints, http://www.varossieau-paints.com**

Figure 30. Bed and Breakfast Albergo Alberga, located in an a restored colonial house.
Source: **Oversuriname, http://www.oversuriname.nl**

Besides the preserved, restored or modified historic properties; completely new office and retails structures with a modern aesthetic; or new structures making references to the local vernacular, there are also transplanted aesthetics of distinction such as those of some Chinese businesses. Unlike the utilization, modification or deliberate rejection of the established, vernacular building styles, these structures aim to transplant foreign vernacular styles to the urban fabric of Paramaribo in an effort to create a home away from home.

Figure 31. Chinese vernacular style creeping into the built fabric of Paramaribo.
Source: **Author**

Despite the brevity of this vignette, it becomes abundantly clear that there is no overarching pattern to contemporary urban growth in Paramaribo. A variety of aesthetic and life-style strategies are employed to distinguish oneself from its neighbors, in a fractal process of self-identification. While geographic information, census data and other quantitative tools allow us to synthesize patterns of spatial segregation or socio-economic blending, qualitative inquiries on the property scale reveal a much more nuanced reality in which contradictions are raised and consistency is trumped by diversity. It is in this liminal space of inquiry that a postcolonial understanding of place is found.

ii. Vignette II: Informality

Guided by Roy's second modality of informality, an additional layer of the postcolonial landscape becomes more legible. While Heirman and Coppens' study considers informality from a distinctly typological perspective[102] (unstructured developments), Roy argues that informality is more of a mode of production of space.[103] Following this logic, informality should then be an aspect of most any type of urban growth, in both poorer and richer settlements. Despite the predominant

[102] Sigrid Heirman and Tom Coppens, "Causes, Consequences and Affordability of Urban Sprawl in the Caribbean: Case Paramaribo", 9
[103] Roy in Hamel and Keil, *Suburban Governance: A Global View,* 342

absence of informal settlements, the contemporary urban landscape of Paramaribo is formed through a number of deviations from the legal frameworks, a number of informal trajectories branching off the formal process.

Of course, before discussing some of the informalities that shape the urban fabric of Paramaribo, the formal process of growth must be identified first; here, a straightforward interview with one of the Ministry of Public Works' planners[104] clarified the normal procedure that entails new construction. When an applicant who owns a property wants to build he does the following: (1) partner with a licensed architect who produces a plan according to the wishes of the client; this plan is (2) sent to the Ministry of Public Works and either sent back for technical adjustments or (3) approved as a conceptual permit; this conceptual permit is (4) reviewed by the director and sent back for adjustments or (5) approved and sent back to Public Works to (6) check whether or not the subdivision in which the parcel is located is legal. Finally, the permit is (7) approved or in case the subdivision is not legal yet, the permit is pending until legalization of the subdivision.

In this formal chain of procedures are a few opportunities for deviation that will influence the outcome of the legalization process. The partnering up with an architect can be an expensive step since they charge on average 5.00 USD per square meter; many applicants therefore choose to opt for a registered draftsman who charges only 10 SRD (1.40 USD) per square meter. This, however, usually results in the use of standardized plans and layouts, as opposed to custom-made plans drawn up by architects. As for a Dutch applicant, for example, the process of hiring an architect is comparatively less expensive (due to higher incomes in The Netherlands), resulting in homes that are more reflective of the clients' wishes.

Secondly, due to the nature of credit lines, local applicants are more pressed to get their permit and start the building process than foreign clients. As opposed to the Euro, the Surinamese Dollar (SRD) is volatile and prone to devaluation; the precarious economy of Suriname, being highly dependent on international prices for oil and bauxite, often experiences inflation and sees the value of its currency diminish over the course of weeks and months.[105] This being the case, applicants want to commence construction as fast as possible, before the purchasing power of their loan diminishes. This leads to the practice of loans being approved prematurely, due to close relationships between tax assessors, architects and contractors, and capital being available before the building permit is approved. As a result, construction often starts before the permit processes is finalized, with properties being "legalized" throughout the construction process.[106] When asked

[104] Melvin Alcantra, Interview conducted by Olivier Maene, Ministry of Public Works, Paramaribo, Suriname, April 27, 2016

[105] World Bank, *Inflation, Suriname* (World Bank, 2016), http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=SR

[106] The following interview with a neighborhood inspector about the construction of a business property on Kleine Waterstreet confirms that indeed there is a way to legalize construction by "walking the necessary judicial roads" and getting approval from the director of Public Works. Apintie

about the retroactive destruction of unpermitted or illegal structures, the interviewee responded that, in the context of the country's dire economic context, capital destruction is highly unusual, thereby creating a process in which paralegal processes become part of the production of space.

While this system could be considered a form of corruption due to the bending of regulations, it is in fact a way to maximize efficiency: due to the shortening of the building process, purchasing power is maximized. This, together with the employment of a draftsmen and use of standardized plans all contribute to partly informalized growth—not in terms of spatial informality, but in terms of paralegal production of space.

In addition to construction, the subdivision of agricultural land into developable properties produces a variegated landscape as well. Depending on whether land is subdivided by the housing authority, Stichting Huisvesting, or private developers, the resulting neighborhood will differ significantly due to the lack of land-use and structure plans, as well as concrete subdivision criteria[107]; in other words, there are no legally binding regulations that define what infrastructure should look like or how it should be organized throughout new subdivisions. This results in visible infrastructure changes when walking through neighborhood: power lines switch street sides; pavements change; medians, sidewalks and bike paths (dis)appear; etc. While Public Works recommends street profiles for new subdivisions, the ultimate choice still rests with the developer, who will aim to maximize profit.

Another important outcome of this loosely defined subdivision process is that significant public space is concentrated around publically developed neighborhoods such as Zorg and Hoop, Flora A, Flora B en Marowijne, which have more green space, more schools, and more sports facilities. Indeed, it is difficult to find these amenities in the neighborhoods north of Centrum, where the private development logic is to maximize the number of parcels and minimize public infrastructure such as streets and other open spaces—after all, once infrastructure is completed, it must be handed over to the government.[108] This open-ended process of subdividing land leads to the situation in which rich neighborhoods may actually have very few public amenities—though there might be more private ones in the case of gated communities—and public neighborhoods may be better served in terms of infrastructure and public services. Conclusions that seem contradictory to what one would expect of urbanization in the Global South.

TV, *Met een bouwvergunning in uw handen mag u overal bouwen* (Apintie TV, August 22, 2011), http://www.apintie.sr/vidi.php?vid=2981#search

[107] Sigrid Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo," 109

[108] Melvin Alcantra, Interview conducted by Olivier Maene, Ministry of Public Works, Paramaribo, Suriname, April 27, 2016

iii. Vignette III: Political Society

The last vignette will employ Roy's modality of political society as third lens to read Paramaribo's postcolonial landscape. In her essay, she refers to Partha Chatterjee's discussion of postcolonial urban politics and the distinction between "civil" and "political" societies—the former being the practices of a small enfranchised elite and the latter constituting the claims of marginalized citizens—yet argues that "the very category of legality and formality on which Chatterjee's distinction between civil and political society rests must be questioned.[109]" More specifically, she stresses that the unstable relationship and negotiation between the civil and the political—the failure to maintain distinction or the encroachment of the ordinary—are generalized conditions of the postcolonial suburb. It is in this context, then, that one can find multiple examples of "political society" in Paramaribo's urban landscape, spaces in which the civil is contested and distinction is disputed.

While there are dozens of ways in which the encroachment of the ordinary is expressed, this thesis will focus on two examples that particularly affect the urban fabric of the city: abandonment and vacancy. Bisecting the city from center to periphery, a number of suspended stages between undeveloped and fully developed properties constitute a range of negotiations between the civil and the political.

The construction of a new headquarters for the police corps of Suriname is an telling example of how these negotiations create contradictions in the urban landscape. Ever since the damaging of the old headquarters in 1980, the police corps has been struggling to find a new base from which to operate. In 2009, the then-government set up plans to construct a new headquarters at the corner of the J.A. Pengelstraat and Gemenelandsweg. Construction started in 2010, but throughout the next four years construction was halted several times, slowing down the entire process. Finally, in 2014, the new government released a report indicating that the project had severe technical problems and needed to be demolished. While this report was deemed "scientific" and conclusive, the former Minister of Justice and Police Chandrikapersad Santokhi claims that various influential, political supporters do not want a strong enforcement of the law in the country so that they may keep operating their dubious business activities and that, on top, there are strong business interests in this particular parcel, which have convinced the new government to halt the project.[110] For now, the building has sat unfinished for nearly two years with no concrete plans to complete construction.

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[109] Roy in Hamel and Keil, *Suburban Governance: A Global View,* 344

[110] Apintie TV, *Er schuilt veel meer achter het verhaal van de sloop gebouw hoofdbureau van de politie* (Apintie TV, May 1, 2014), http://www.apintie.sr/vidi.php?vid=9801#search

Figure 32. Unfinished police headquarters in Centrum Paramaribo.
Source: **Waterkant, http://www.waterkant.net**

Figure 33. A faded public notice for the new police headquarters still sits on site.
Source: **Author**

While the case of the police corps is of more monumental proportions, other more widespread examples of halted construction and abandonment demonstrate the unstable nature of spatial production. As mentioned earlier, local residents looking to construct a new home rely on Surinamese lines of credit, which tend to devaluate over time. But what happens when the money actually runs out? Examples of unfinished homes and business properties litter the suburban landscape of Suriname. When asked about the underlying reasons, a planner at Public Works indicated that a common problem is the personal misappropriation of credit on other purchases besides construction, such as a car. Another problem is that, due to inflation, initial budgets and loans are no longer sufficient to cover the entire

construction process, forcing families to halt construction until new sources of income are available.[111]

Figure 34. Examples of abandoned and halted construction.
Source: **Author**

[111] Melvin Alcantra, Interview conducted by Olivier Maene, Ministry of Public Works, Paramaribo, Suriname, April 27, 2016

Despite this scenario being fairly common, at least when one crosses the city and takes note of the many abandoned projects, a creative alternative to insufficient credit is a form of "phasal" construction in which part of the building is finished—usually the first floor which is used as commercial space—and remaining floors are added later. In this example below, the ground floor is already operating as a clothing store, while the upper floors are still under construction.

Figure 35. Construction in phases.
Source: **Author**

More visible even than halted construction are properties that appear vacant in more recent developments on the periphery. Property speculation, especially aimed at international buyers, has created ghost landscapes of infrastructure without infill. Despite the illusory marketing of these neighborhoods as the location of your new dream home,[112] the reality often looks very different.

[112] Intervast, *Brochure* (Intervast, 2016), https://www.intervast.nl/brochure, Accessed August 29, 2016. 22-23

Figure 36. Desolate landscape of high-end real estate development Surivillage in Paramaribo North. *Source:* Author

While infrastructure is present, neighborhoods such as Surivillage are characterized by dozens of overgrown, undeveloped parcels only occasionally interrupted by an empty villa (usually a second home), or unfinished construction. The real estate development buyers have invested in is a far cry from being anything close to an urban settlement; these neighborhoods are mere street grids with utilities, connecting a series of fully gated fortress villas, and having no public life other than the cars that go in and out, to and from the city center, throughout the day. As Roy notes, these are landscapes that struggle to maintain their distinction, not as the result of external acts of resistance, but of internal failures to maintain themselves.

In an effort to synthesize these three brief vignette studies, it is important to remember that the aim is not to theorize new patterns or typologies of urban growth, but to diversify what has already been studied about Paramaribo's urban landscape. Scholars such as Verrest, Heirman, Coppens and their fellow researchers have been able to identify and theorize a number of trends pertaining Paramaribo's recent urban growth, from both quantitative and qualitative data. The aim of this thesis has been to further nuance these observations, to descend further down to street level and add more layers of inquiry to the growing discourse. Deriving from these vignette studies are a number of observations that reveal a greater diversity of urban processes. These processes have shaped an urban fabric defined by a push

and pull of identities, strategies, and spatial transformations, an urban fabric of contradictions and nuance that is so emblematic of the postcolonial landscape.

These *contrascapes* are the manifestation of modalities of distinction, informality and political society that challenge "the stable categories of space, society and state," as Roy argues, and constitute the very negotiations that underlie the production of space.

Figure 37. The contrascapes of Paramaribo, Suriname
Source: **Author**

c. Policy Analysis

One of the main avenues for further research in the wake of this thesis' hypothesis is the testing of current urban policy frameworks against the diversity of urban processes at play in Paramaribo. While this task commands its own research project, complete with literature surrounding the construction and implementation of urban policy frameworks in the Global South, this thesis will briefly discuss the discrepancy between two active urban policies currently being implemented and the findings from this thesis' analysis. Despite requiring a broader analysis, this thesis proposes that because of a transposing of western frameworks for economic development, historic preservation and urban development, urban policies fail to address the urban processes in their entirety, thereby missing out on an opportunity to create alternative agglomeration economies that take into account the full range of urban resources.

i. Urban Development Plan

As Heirman et al. allude to in their contextual study of Paramaribo there are a multitude of urban policies in the works, either in the form of projects or studies by mostly private actors or graduating students.[113] However, one of the more important policy documents, which was ordered by Suriname's Ministry of Regional Development and sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank, constitutes a development strategy for the period 2006-2016.

The document consists of two parts, the first of which analyses Paramaribo through a number of perspectives including historic, morphological, economic, environmental, institutional, housing and traffic analyses. In each section short proposals are made for future development. The second section presents a broader vision for urban development with four orientations, which are meant to guide development, and six strategic projects that should create leverage for other improvements.[114]

Orientation A: Step-by-step plan to implement strategic projects
Orientation B: A better use of the current (inner) city
Orientation C: Control of urban expansions
Orientation D: Sustainable development via a participatory urban policy

Project 1: Development of secondary centers
Project 2: Development of an inner city plan
Project 3: Improvement of communities and housing programs
Project 4: Strategic development of industrial and commercial areas

[113] Sigrid Heirman et al., "Ruimtelijke Context Paramaribo," (Master Thesis, University of Antwerp), 112
[114] Ibid., 113

Project 5: Development of a water management and environmental plan
Project 6: Development of a traffic plan

While the policy document is broad, the analytical studies rest mainly spatial inquiries and quantitative data. Its strategies consist of attracting more foreign capital, stimulating the tourist sector, investing in the port, and integrating different social groups, while its recommendations consist of mostly spatial improvements regarding infrastructure, as well as stimulating densification through the development of secondary centers and the prevention of more sprawl.[115]

Even though these analyses make theoretical sense on the macro-level, they do not take into account the diverse processes of spatial negotiation that occur on the ground. There is mention of the ethnic diversity of Paramaribo, but not of how this manifests itself in terms of identity building; there is mention of land use regulation, but not of how the current process of subdivision works; there is mention of actors, but not of how power relationships are set up to exclude political dissent.

While these recommendations may have some impact on the urban fabric of Paramaribo, they are mostly aimed at creating urban agglomerations, stimulating economic development in the form of attracting tourism and foreign direct investment. Compared to Jennifer Robinson's analysis of urban policies in the context of ordinary cities,[116] these strategies are based mostly on western frameworks of economic and urban development and are aimed at having poorer cities catch up with their richer counterparts.

Even though significant capital was poured into the project ($229,000 by the Inter-American Development Bank[117]), there has been very little concrete evidence of these policy recommendations. While the reporting date for the project has been set for July 31, 2016, no documents are available yet on IDB's website that give any indication as to the success of these policies.

ii. UNESCO

Another major urban policy that has been pushed through in recent years is the designation of Paramaribo's historic center as UNESCO World Heritage in 2002. In an effort to stimulate its tourism sector, the original colonial enter and three modest buffer zones around it were placed on the world heritage list. The value of Paramaribo's heritage: its many "fine examples" of 17th and 18th century colonial architecture, representing the amalgamation of European building typologies brought from the Netherlands with local construction methods inherent to the

[115] PHI Architecture, *Technical Assistance Urban Development Plan for Paramaribo Final Report* (Inter-American Development Bank, 2005)
[116] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* 140-160
[117] Inter-American Development Bank, *Urban Development Plan in Paramaribo* (IDB, 2016), Accessed August 30, 2016

tropical coast of northern South America.[118] While the designation certainly added a recognized quality label to the city of Paramaribo, it remains doubtful whether or not it has really benefited the inhabitants of the city.

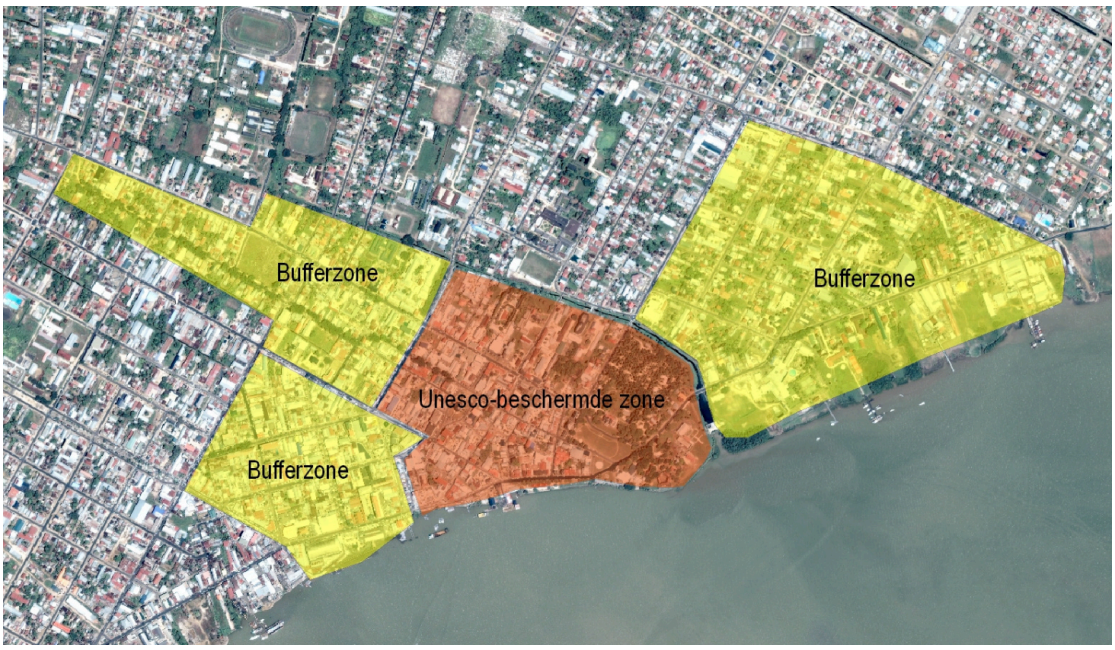

Figure 38. UNESCO World Heritage area marked in orange, with buffer zones marked in yellow. *Source:* Heirman et al.

Fourteen years have passed since the designation and very few concrete actions have been undertaken to improve the quality of Paramaribo's historic center. The international organization ICOMOS produced a report in 2013 that pointed out the many difficulties in achieving some degree of success: insufficient funding from the central government and private sector, insufficient legal provisions and unsound management, lacking authority on the part of the Building Commission who monitors new construction in the UNESCO zone, little coordination and scattered responsibilities, and limited human resources of the SGES (Stichting Gebouwd Erfgoed Suriname, who is responsible for managing the UNESCO site) where of the six people employed, two are cleaning ladies and one is a delivery man.[119] UNESCO stated earlier that year "it is regrettable that there continues to be a chronic lack of funding for the restoration and conservation of historic government buildings and for the full implementation of the Action Plan.[120]"

While these internal factors undoubtedly contribute to the weak implementation of UNESCO's policy recommendations, contextual factors such as cultural attitudes and use value of the designated heritage properties need to be considered as well. In this regard, the policy framework of UNESCO operates from a particularly colonial

[118] UNESCO, *Historische Binnenstad van Paramaribo* (UNESCO, 2016), Accessed August 30, 2016. www.unesco.nl/erfgoed/historische-binnenstad-van-paramaribo
[119] ICOMOS, *Advisory Mission Report Paramaribo* (ICOMOS, 2013), 16
[120] UNESCO, *Analysis and Conclusion by World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in 2016* (UNESCO, 2016), Accessed August 30, 2016. http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3387

perspective, in which it has deemed relevant only those properties that pertain to the settlement of the Dutch, and much less so the heritage of all other ethnic groups in Paramaribo. As Noha Nasser points out, the selection process inherent to 'creating' heritage often forms the foundation for conflict between those social groups that are included and those that are excluded from this process of representation.[121] In the case of Paramaribo this is true in a sense that since its independence in 1975, the country has seen a veritable out-migration of Dutch natives and their descendants, as well as many mixed-race citizens associating more closely with The Netherlands than with an independent Suriname. As a result, save for the economic motivations of the government, there is very little interest from investors and inhabitants in constructing a heritage—let alone preserving one—that is so closely associated with European domination and social oppression.

In addition, as one urban planner at the Ministry of Public works pointed out, the reality is also that the structures listed as UNESCO World Heritage are incredibly expensive and labor-intensive to maintain. Indeed, the wooden structures need constant upkeep, which, without the use of more modern, durable materials such as PVC or aluminum is a pricy undertaking. While some government agencies and institutions can do minimal restoration jobs, the budgets of private investors—save for perhaps those investors looking to utilize the buildings' heritage factor to start a hospitality business—are insufficient.

Needless to say, the difficult implementation of UNESCO's policy recommendations in Paramaribo does not necessarily imply the irrelevance of preservation altogether; it merely hints at the fact that there is a discrepancy between the western-centric frameworks of preservation and the context of a city like Paramaribo, where institutional, financial, cultural, and physical factors, among others, prevent an economically successful outcome. The question remains whether there are alternative approaches to preservation in the context of Paramaribo that are affordable, inclusionary, and transformative for the downtown area in a positive manner.

While more research is needed to more comprehensively assess the shortcomings of urban policy frameworks in Paramaribo, these two examples (the Urban Development Plan and the UNESCO designation) are indicative of the narrow approach to urban (re)development that focuses on stimulating export economies, while not acknowledging all aspects of spatial production. This incommensurability of western-centric frameworks of development entrench the city in a trajectory aimed at catching up with richer cities, instead of combining, as Robinson argues, the diversity of resources, both local and global, formal and informal, human and physical, into an alternative agglomeration economy;[122] an approach that would allow for greater creativity and innovation.

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[121] Noha Nasser, "Planning for Urban Heritage Places: Reconciling Conservation, Tourism, and Sustainable Development," Journal of Planning Literature, 17 (4), 2003: 467-479.
[122] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* 158

VII. Conclusions

At the outset of this thesis, two particular problems settings were used to frame this postcolonial inquiry of Paramaribo. One the one hand, a call for a Caribbean urban agenda recognizing the specificity of urban areas created the need for more in-depth inquiries into Caribbean cities. On the other hand, a changing discourse surrounding postcolonialism allowed for a new perspective into the dynamics of Caribbean urbanism. Responding to generalizing theorizations of dependent third world growth and globalization, as well as practical attitudes that fail to recognize the diversity of urban processes at play, this thesis set out to study the negotiative processes that underlie the production of space in Paramaribo, Suriname.

Departing from a literature review on the dependency school, world system and global cities theory, ordinary cities theory, as well as brief summaries of urban development in the Latin America, the Caribbean and Suriname, this thesis then formulated a working hypothesis in which it proposed that narratives of dependency and globalization only represent part of the processes of spatial production in Paramaribo. More so, it was stated that a postcolonial account of urbanization would challenge these western-centric theorizations and reveal a greater diversity of urban processes at play that nuance analyses of sprawl or informal growth.

After setting up a historic overview of all the major morphological transformations of the urban area of Paramaribo since its founding, and reviewing a more in-depth inquiry of the most recent urban changes occurring after independence and the eventual return of a democratic regime in the 1990s, this thesis identified a number of missing links that could more accurately reflect the nature of contemporary urban growth.

With the help of Ananya Roy's modalities surrounding governance of the postcolonial suburb, three vignettes were set up through which to view the urban fabric of Paramaribo: distinction, informality and political society. In addition to the conclusions drawn by Hebe Verrest, Sigrid Heirman, Tom Coppens and others, a more nuanced picture of urban growth strategies was painted. First, in the context of residential development, limitations pertaining the availability of capital, labor and material resources revealed a variety of ways in which households self-identify and distinguish, demonstrated through the comparison of a Dutch second homes, middle class houses and elite homes. The same strategies could also be observed for commercial properties, with a series of strategies ranging from respecting or appropriating the past, modifying it, or rejecting it for an explicitly global or foreign identity.

Second, the concept of informality was used to evaluate the legal process of spatial production. Rather than seeing informality as a typological outcome of third world urbanism, it was used to identify deviations from normal, legal process of building and subdividing. Discussing these paralegal modes of spatial production revealed

that informality is not so much a negative condition of the city's contemporary growth, as it is a means to maximize efficiency. Furthermore, this approach allowed reading and explaining variations in infrastructure provision and presence of public space as well, noting the different intentions behind public and private development.

Finally, through a discussion on halted construction and vacant urban developments, spaces where the civil is contested and distinction is disputed were brought into view. Here, the unstable nature of spatial production was legible in terms of political corruption, personal abuse of credit, or the effect of inflation on the purchasing power of loans. Despite these conditions, creative alternatives such as the construction of commercial property in phases are a sign that actors are constantly negotiating the production of space.

While it must be emphasized that these examples of property development do not constitute encompassing patterns of urban development, they do highlight the diversity of processes underlying the production of space. In a brief review of two of Paramaribo's active urban policies—the Urban Development Plan and the UNESCO World Heritage designation—the framework of western-centric urban and economic development strategies were set against the now nuanced reality of Paramaribo, concluding that a failure to recognize and include the diversity of resources into an alternative form of urban agglomeration entrenches poorer cities such as Paramaribo in a trajectory towards catching up with the richer ones.

In the wake of these conclusions, the future course of urban development in Paramaribo does not solely lie with drafting another master plan or urban development strategy that aims to boost exports, attract tourists or improve infrastructure. Urban policy must become aware of the diversity of urban resources that are present within the fabric of urban society. As Robinson points out, the core challenge of postcolonial studies is "dealing differently with differences among cities.[123]" In this light, a new approach to urban policy should value difference rather than trying to universalize it.

[123] Robinson, *Ordinary Cities,* 12.

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