

https://dspace.org/

Beyond variegation: The territorialisation of states, communities and developers in large-scale developments in Johannesburg, Shanghai and London

Robinson, Jennifer; Wu, Fulong; Harrison, Philip; Wang, Zheng; Todes, Alison; Dittgen, Romain; Attuyer, Katia

2022
Urban Studies Journal
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40201

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Check for updates

Special issue: Comparative methods for global urban studies

Urban Studies

Urban Studies
2022, Vol. 59(8) 1715–1740
© Urban Studies Journal Limited 2022

Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/00420980211064159
journals.sagepub.com/home/usj


Beyond variegation: The territorialisation of states, communities and developers in large-scale developments in Johannesburg, Shanghai and London

Jennifer Robinson
University College London, UK

Fulong Wu
University College London, UK

Phil Harrison
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Zheng Wang
University of Sheffield, UK

Alison Todes
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Romain Dittgen
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Katia Attuyer
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China

Corresponding author:
Jennifer Robinson, Faculty of Social Sciences, University College London, 26 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AP, UK.
Email: jennifer.robinson@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract

Large-scale urban development projects are a significant format of urban expansion and renewal across the globe. As generators of governance innovation and indicators of the future city in each urban context, large-scale development projects have been interpreted within frameworks of 'variegations' of wider circulating processes, such as neoliberalisation or financialisation. However, such projects often entail significant state support and investment, are strongly linked to a wide variety of transnational investors and developers and are frequently highly contested in their local environments. Thus, each project comes to fruition in a distinctive regulatory context, often as an exception to the norm, and each emerges through complex interactions over a long period of time amongst an array of actors. We therefore seek to broaden the discussion from an analytical focus on variegated globalised processes to consider three large-scale urban development projects (in Shanghai, Johannesburg and London) as distinctive (transcalar) territorialisations. Using an innovative comparative approach, we outline the grounds for a systematic analytical conversation across mega-urban development projects in very different contexts. Initially, comparability rests on the shared features of large-scale developments – that they are multi-jurisdictional, involve long time scales and bring significant financing challenges. Comparing three development projects, we are able to interrogate, rather than take for granted, how a range of wider processes, circulating practices, transcalar actors and territorial regulatory formations composed specific urban outcomes in each case. Thinking across these diverse cases provides grounds for rebuilding understandings of urban development politics.

Keywords

comparative urbanism, developers, financing, large-scale urban development, state–community relations, urban politics

摘要

大型城市开发项目是全球城市扩张和更新的重要形式。作为在每一城市背景下治理创新的推动者和未来城市的指标，人们已经在更广泛的流通过程的“多样化”框架内（例如新自由主义化或金融化）对大型开发项目进行了解读。然而，此类项目通常需要大量的政府支持和投资，与各种各样的跨国投资者和开发商密切相关，并且通常在当地环境中被激烈争夺。因此，每个项目都是在独特的监管环境中实现的，通常是作为打破常规的例外情形，并且，每个项目都是通过一系列参与者在很长一段时间内的复杂互动而形成的。因此，我们寻求拓宽这一探讨，从多样化全球化进程的分析重点出发，考察三个大型城市发展项目（分别位于上海、约翰内斯堡和伦敦），将其作为独特的（跨标量）地域化案例。我们使用创新性比较方法，为在背景非常不同的超大城市开发项目之间进行系统性分析对话奠定了基础。最初，可比性取决于大型开发项目的共同特征：它们涉及多个辖区、时间跨度长、并且伴随着重大的融资挑战。通过比较这三个开发项目，我们得以审视（而不是想当然地推断）在每种情况下，一系列更广泛的过程、流通实践、跨标量参与者和区域监管结构如何导致了特定的城市结果。对这些多元化案例的思考为重建对城市开发政治的理解提供了基础。

关键词

比较城市研究、开发商、融资、大型城市开发项目、政府 - 社区关系、城市政治

Received April 2021; accepted October 2021

Introduction

The territorial formations of the urban under planetary urbanisation (extended, fragmented, sprawling, operational) imply the need to move beyond a jurisdictional municipal approach to understanding urban development politics – a range of territories, territorialisations and spatial dynamics need to be taken into account (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Choplin and Hertzog, 2020; Kanai and Schindler, 2019; Keil, 2017; Lauermann, 2018; Murray, 2017). Based on the example of large-scale urban developments in three different contexts (Shanghai, London and Johannesburg), we propose an approach to building understandings of urban politics which can potentially speak to a wide range of emergent urban territories in the midst of interconnected but also often dispersed and fragmented urban outcomes. We suggest that it is important to move away from the analytical focus on competing municipalities interacting with footloose capital, as framed through the US experience (Lauermann, 2018; Robinson, 2021). We also want to reach beyond the spatial analytic of 'variegation' which emphasises the wider processes involved to the detriment of direct analytical focus on emergent territorialisations; in this perspective, contexts have a relatively limited role, as hybridising or adding variety to wider processes. We propose an approach which is relevant to the diverse territorialisations of urban politics; for example, large scale development projects, satellite cities, peripheral urbanisation and extensive infrastructural developments. In these settings, a diverse cast of actors is assembled, with differently configured interests and concerns, varying from context to context (even within the same city, region or country). Rather than contributing to elaborating pre-existing concepts, such as neoliberalisation or financialisation, we propose a methodology which is open to initiating new conceptualisations of a wider variety of social processes and political dynamics. We thus seek to build insights, comparatively, across a diversity of emergent political formations, to open up new grounds for conceptualising urban politics from a wide range of urban experiences.

We begin from an understanding of the urban as 'specific' – each urban outcome is distinctive (Schmid, 2015). Thus, we take seriously Lefebvre's (1996: 100) caution that 'the city's transformations are not the passive outcomes of changes in the social whole'; the urban is more than the sum of already identified wider processes. We are inspired to move beyond a view of the urban as variegated outcomes of social processes, or as contexts shaped by intersecting processes and wider social formations. Gill Hart encourages us to see social processes as "constituted in relation to one another through power-laden practices in the multiple, interconnected arenas of everyday life" (2018, p. 4). Following Lefebvre, we can consider the urban as a three-dimensional and lived spatiality, mediating global and private levels (Schmid, 2005, 2008) and as an emergent and open totality; urbanisation processes and social relations can therefore be considered to be emergent from the urban itself, and from social and spatial praxis (Goonewardena, 2018; Lefebvre, 2003 [1974], 2009 [1940]). We appreciate that specific urban contexts are enmeshed in 'pan-urban' processes, with implications for the complex spatialities of contemporary urbanisation:

> the capitalist urban fabric is no longer organized as an encompassing, worldwide grid of national city-systems, neatly subdivided into internal central place hierarchies, but is instead unevenly differentiated among variegated places, regions, territories, and landscapes whose mottled connective tissue more closely resembles that of an intricately stitched latticework than a simple pyramid, hierarchy, or grid. (Brenner, 2019: 12)

In the wake of a long debate in urban studies and geography (Allen and Cochrane, 2007; Brenner, 2005), the idea of 'scale' does not offer a privileged way to engage with this complex spatiality (cf. Leitner and Sheppard, 2020; Peck, 2017). Instead, we focus on the constitutive spatialities of urban territories and of the actors involved in urbanisation processes, including their transnational reach and flows, institutional formations and lived experiences (Allen, 2016; Halbert and Rouanet, 2014; Keil, 2017; Massey, 2005). This inspires new grounds for composing comparisons and building concepts across the wide diversity of urban experiences, able to start from the fragmented, dispersed and often divergent territorialisations of urbanisation processes rather than comparing 'cities', or configuring an analysis within the conceptual architecture of 'scale' (McFarlane, 2019; Schmid et al., 2018). Amongst these possible starting points are the ubiquitous large-scale developments which characterise urban developments across the globe. Other such territorialisations might include urban corridors, satellite cities, territories of suburbanisation, territories of extended urbanisation and landscapes of infrastructure-led development (Murray, 2017; see Kanai and Schindler, forthcoming). As with large-scale urban developments, these provide scope to bring many different urban experiences into the process of conceptualisation.

On this basis, we outline the grounds for a systematic analytical conversation across three large-scale urban development projects in three very different contexts. Our cases are Lingang, Shanghai (one of nine planned satellite cities), the Corridors of Freedom project in Johannesburg (a linear transport-oriented development seeking to integrate the racially divided city) and Old Oak and Park Royal in north-west London (a new neighbourhood planned in relation to significant new interchanges of metropolitan (Crossrail) and national (High Speed 2) transport infrastructure investments). Initially, comparability rested on the shared features of large-scale developments – that they are multi-jurisdictional, involve long time scales and bring significant financing challenges. As the comparative process unfolded, the terms of comparison and the object of study evolved (Deville et al., 2016). Each development came into view as a specific transcalar territorialisation of a range of urbanisation processes and actors (Halbert and Rouanet, 2014). Comparing three development projects, then, we are able to interrogate, rather than take for granted, how the urban outcomes in each case were the result of engagements between different actors and institutions in the context of specific territorial regulatory formations. Our comparative practice opens conversations across the three cases, on generative grounds (Robinson, 2016), composing a comparison based on the shared features of urbanisation through large-scale development projects. This indicates the potential for building insights across a diversity of urban experiences without prejudging the wider frameworks within which these urban developments might be analysed. A comparative approach which does not set the terms of analysis in advance is also open to the diverse literatures of the different contexts being considered, potentially enriching the vocabulary of urban studies in each situation.

Based on our research, we find expanded ways to characterise the interests of state actors in urban development; we consider how the need to embed developments in local political contexts amplifies the role of residents and community-based groups in shaping outcomes even where political circumstances for engagement are not propitious; and we observe that the urban development itself is crucial to securing financing through property taxation, enterprise taxes or planning gain, drawing

attention to the 'urban land nexus' as a shared feature of urban development (Scott and Storper, 2015). Of course, starting from the perspective of the urban as specific can also deepen and extend understandings of wider social processes, such as neoliberalisation and financialisation. We identify financialised actors as closely woven into the territorialised political formations of each development, responsive to regulatory contexts and developmental agendas. Working across divisions such as national contexts, north–south or delimited 'conjunctures' and drawing on theoretical repertoires and insights from different contexts, we seek to establish grounds for a comparative urban practice which can more effectively support global urban studies and advance an open approach to conceptualisation across diverse and divergent urban experiences.

Theorising urban development: From 'variegation' to 'specificity'

The term 'variegation' was introduced by Peck and Theodore as a 'still inchoate but putatively alternate vision' (Peck and Theodore, 2007: 733) to the 'space-blind' (Peck and Theodore, 2007: 765) 'varieties of capitalism' analyses of the geographies of global capitalism. In their paper, they suggested that thinking about 'variety' in relational terms, informed by the spatial analyses of economic geography, draws attention to the 'complex asymmetries and webs of connection that increasingly characterise the unevenly integrating global economy' (Peck and Theodore, 2007: 766). The 'common matrix' of the contemporary capitalism system indexes the networked terrain across which varieties (or variegations) of capitalism are produced – neoliberalisation, financialisation and imperialism (Peck and Theodore, 2007: 766). Their 'provisional' use of the term 'variegation' was firmed up considerably in the suite of papers with Neil Brenner on neoliberalisation (most fully in Brenner et al., 2010; also Peck et al., 2009). This conceptual culmination of a long decade of work by the authors, together and separately, on policy circulations, scale and spatial differentiation, as well as neoliberalisation, has strongly influenced urban studies. 'Variegation' has become an important way to conceptualise outcomes of widely circulating processes, strongly hybridised through path dependency and political contestation. These outcomes implicate and influence systemic processes (such as the rule regimes of international policy and economic regulation), contributing to what Peck and Theodore have variously called a 'syndrome', 'arc' or 'forest' of neoliberalisation (Peck, 2013, 2017; Peck and Theodore, 2019). The term variegation therefore marks a rich spatial analysis, indicating the relation between specific localised outcomes and wider systemic processes configured through connections, wider historical processes and transnational institutions and actors, which are articulated in particular contexts with distinctive historical pathways.

The nuance of the analysis, and its relevance to the spatiality of contemporary policy and economic processes, has made this now a conventional term, rather than a hesitant proposition. It has been used to expand insights into many aspects of urbanisation, from neoliberalisation (González et al., 2018), to financialisation (Aalbers, 2017) and gentrification (Forrest, 2016), for example. Criticisms have also emerged, though, including concerns that the 'systemic' analysis prejudges that the hybridisations which might emerge through the complex sociospatial dynamics of variegation inevitably form part of pre-determined circuits. The outcomes may instead be developmental, or related to divergent state projects, such as party-led, state-capitalist/socialist or illiberal regimes (Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Wu, 2010). The overarching conceptualisation

(arc, forest, syndrome) has also been called into question – why do the diversity of practices and policies referenced all belong to the term 'neoliberalism', or form part of a process of neoliberalisation (Le Galès, 2016)?

For our study, comparing three large-scale urban development projects in quite different 'contexts', with divergent political and regulatory arrangements, we were drawn to question the term 'variegation' as a useful basis for thinking about urban development. Aspects of the analytical perspective this term implies remain relevant. There are a multiplicity of transnational circulations and actors, as well as institutions with different scales of operation involved in large-scale urban developments. Large developments are moments of institutional and policy innovation, as inspiration for designs and solutions to the great challenges they present are sought – scoping for policy ideas and best practice and learning from other contexts are often central activities for those involved. Thus, they might be imagined to be hard-wired into 'variegated' processes (Moulaert et al., 2003). Large-scale developments are certainly closely embedded in the wider circulations of urbanisation – which can provide some (genetic) grounds (Robinson, 2016) for considering such developments as shaped by interconnected processes, even across very different contexts.

The point where we part company with 'variegation' as a way to think about the politics of large-scale urban developments (and urban development more generally) is that it is not clear, in each case, what the large-scale developments are an example of. Are they contributing to the contradictory realisation of neoliberalisation, or wider neoliberalised governance transformations (Moulaert et al., 2003) even as many large projects are stalled, fail or turn out rather differently than imagined? In the three contexts we studied, the developments were implicated in transnational circuits of investment (including financialised investors), policy and design; they were bound up with significant institutional innovation and state rescaling; and they were embedded in political processes of engagement, contestation and mobilisation. But the aims, procedures and end points of each were divergent and each required to be treated as starting points of analysis on their own terms. In Johannesburg, a developmental initiative sought to bring low-income housing to central locations following a major Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) investment; in Shanghai, a state-led programme of economic upgrading to expand production of manufacturing equipment was kick-started by a new deep-water port; in London, land value uplift associated with a major new transport hub was leveraged to secure the resources for extensive new housing provision as well as offices in a challenging 'brownfield' site.

Our grounds for considering the three cases together rested on their shared features as large-scale developments: the long time frames, multi-jurisdictional co-ordination and financing challenges. In this sense, our grounds for comparison were 'generative', in that we composed a comparison based on these shared features to support concept development and to take forward analysis in a particular field (Robinson, 2016). Our early findings confirmed that these elements were present in each of the developments, and also that these issues of temporality, multi-jurisdictions and financing were productive for thinking across the three cases, yielding valuable comparative insights (Robinson et al., 2021). Building a comparison on the basis of shared features across diverse contexts opens up the possibility to attend to the widest possible range of urban experiences in building conceptualisations, moving beyond entrenched habits of parochial theorisation based on a restricted selection of contexts. Given the ubiquity of large-scale urban developments, this is a

promising basis for inspiring a more global reach for theorisation of urban development politics.

In our study, the territorialisation of governance practices and political formations at the scale of the project (Pinson, 2009) became apparent in each case. Different elements of the state, a range of developers, financial flows, designers, visions, policy innovation, as well as engagement and contestation from residents and community-based mobilisation coalesced to frame a rich and multi-dimensional process of the production of a new space in each urban context. Thus, with the extensive spatial vocabulary of urban studies and geography we came to think of our cases, following Halbert and Rouanet (2014), as 'transcalar' territorialisations, what they call 'transcalar territorial networks'. The multiplicity of networks and actors, their differential reach (Allen, 2016), overlapping institutional configurations (Allen and Cochrane, 2007) and their composition in relation to a specific territorial regulatory regime (Schmid, 2015) were operative in producing distinctive outcomes. Thus, in response to the significant, shared challenges of large-scale developments, each gave rise to bespoke 'business models' (ways of making development possible), reconfiguring extant governance arrangements, securing financing from a variety of sources, including the urban land value and activities generated by the development itself, and managing the resident and wider public concerns and interests (Robinson et al., 2021). The outcomes are specific, distinctive even in their own immediate context and can only be appreciated across the multiplicity of these processes and actors, as part of the production of (new) urban space, even as they are deeply entwined with global circulations of actors, ideas and practices, processes of global economic competition, financialised processes of investment and long-term governance transformations.

Methodologically, our analysis involves attending to the specificity of each development. This is not to abdicate explanatory analysis and insights into wider or circulating processes or institutional configurations (cf. Peck, 2013, 2017). It also does not produce incomparability – rather it launches opportunities for creative reflection and designing comparative experiments across diverse and even divergent cases. In this sense, we want to think analytically with the diversity of the urban. We are not simply seeking to 'reveal' the 'context-soaked heterogeneous form' of wider processes, which Brenner et al. (2010: 206) see as a limitation of governmentality approaches. We are offering neither a purely descriptive nor an empiricist approach – although the fullness and inexhaustibility of the urban world will always be a source of surprise for the conceptualisations any observer must start with (Robinson, 2016). Rather, we insist that this multi-dimensional complexity is the form of the urban, and of space, and that insights into processes of urbanisation (as opposed to capitalism or neoliberalisation) can be generated on this basis (Schmid et al., 2018). Starting with three rich and specific cases of 'transcalar territorialisations' of urban development, we find grounds for comparative analysis to re-build the concepts of urban development politics in a way that is open to a wider range of analytical repertoires and urban experiences.

Transcalar territories of urban development

Comparing three large-scale urban developments

At first sight, the sizes of the three urban contexts in which our case studies are

located may seem disparate, but at a functional metropolitan region scale we can note that in 2015 they were home to, respectively, around 24.2 million (Shanghai Municipal Government), 15.2 million (Gauteng City-region) and 24.2 million (London's wider south-east region) – all very large urban regions by 21st century standards. Nonetheless, the cases stretch across three quite different contexts with very different processes of state formation, political systems and economic co-ordination. Working across political systems of bargained authoritarian (Lee and Zhang, 2013), late (if not post-)democracy and an emergent developmental democracy calls for complex comparative tactics. However, if insights on interconnected and globalised urban development practices are to avoid the parochial theorisations of earlier US-led models (Lauermann, 2018), it is precisely this diversity which needs to come into view – and which inspired our comparative analysis.

In considering divergent governance and financial systems across three different regions, we broaden the geographical and analytical horizons of Shatkin's (2017) Asian-centred insights, which significantly expanded the vocabulary of urban development politics through attending to the state-centred and often informalised political interests which frame the politics of land in large-scale developments in China, India and Indonesia. Bringing our three cases into comparison highlights the significant difference that divergent institutional and financial architectures make to the outcomes and potential of large-scale urban developments: metropolitan-wide financing supported longer-term developmental ambitions in Shanghai and Johannesburg, contrasted with the more speculative outcomes in London which were based on short-term state financing through land value capture focused narrowly on the territory to be developed (Robinson et al., 2021).

In this article, we expand our concerns to bring into view a diversity of actors and interests, institutions and practices which broaden the scope for conceptualisation of urban development politics, which we return to for consideration in the conclusion. We draw out three of the dynamic relations constituting the territorialisation of large-scale urban developments, each of which comes most strongly into view in one of our cases. Insights are then expanded through the other two, apparently divergent, cases. Thinking each case through the others has deepened and enriched analysis of all – and also opened up the possibility to build insights in urban studies from a wider range of experiences and contexts. We stage this encounter in the text that follows, initiating each section with a different case which had particularly inspired our analysis of the other two, which we then discuss in turn.

We selected the specific cases for comparison in a two-step process. Firstly, we were eager to explore the potential of comparative analyses across apparently divergent contexts. Africa and China, seldom compared and both exceptionalised in urban studies in different ways (Parnell and Pieterse, 2016; Wu, 2020), were also our primary areas of long-term research and so were our starting points. We added in the UK context, where one of us was already working with community-based groups, as a 'new' research area which would allow us to open up a North–South conversation which, we felt, was important to consider in decentring existing theorisation in urban studies. In each context, we selected cases of large-scale development which we were already familiar with. This meant that a complex comparative analysis of very long-term developments would be feasible within a relatively short time horizon (we had two years of funding) and that we could anticipate building deeply grounded comparative insights. As we were methodologically

interested in thinking across diversity, we were pleased to select three varied developments which were very large-scale for each context. Our research methods included long-term collaboration with community-based organisations, participation in planning consultations, in-depth interviews with around 30 key informants per case study including developers, state actors and community-based actors, as well as extensive document analysis and review.

State–citizen relations: Embedding developments

Johannesburg to Lingang and London. The Corridors of Freedom (COF) transport-oriented development project was announced by former mayor, Parks Tau, in 2013. The aim of this large-scale and long-term project is to produce an integrated, 'people-centred' and compact city that responds to the legacy of segregated apartheid planning which relegated the poor to spatially distant and poorly serviced areas. It seeks to 're-stitch' the spatially divided and highly unequal metropolis and to transform neighbourhoods radiating outwards from the inner city along newly installed or planned BRT routes. The focus is on incremental mixed-use brownfield development and increased housing densities directed at lower income households (Harrison et al., 2019).

The Corridors vision was articulated by the Mayor and bound in with his personality (Interview,[1] State 6, 2017) but, within the City administration, institutional direction came from the Department of Development Planning (State 1, 2016). Although empowered through its control of the municipal budgeting process, this department was thinly capacitated, requiring both agile and (over-)committed staff input ('the people that are involved in the process are on the edge of burn-out like all the time' – State 1, 2016). 'Embedding' (Evans, 1995) the project within state institutions, across different levels of government, as well as with developers, was crucial to ensuring its success. The Department relied heavily on the interest and involvement of the private sector to supply housing units and business spaces at scale. But state actors also had to seed and sustain the legitimacy of the project among its citizens, including both the vocal and politically organised (largely white) residents living near strategic sites along the corridors, and poorer (mainly black) residents who were the Mayor's political base. In Johannesburg, there is considerable experience of well-organised groups delaying and opposing developments (Developer 6, 2017). Given the positioning of the initiative at the intersection of state-led visioning processes, profit-led real estate development and the interests and reactions of the different segments of a fractured society, there were inevitable tensions – exacerbated by pressure from the Mayor for rapid results and electoral benefits (State 6, 2017).

In a number of our interviews, consultants and city officials noted the hostility of residents to the proposed developments when they were initially presented in large public meetings, with residents accusing the officials of disseminating information rather than enabling effective participation (Consultant 1, 2017). Middle-class residents were mainly concerned with proposed increases in density – which they linked to crime, slums and the loss of property value – and with new social housing close to their neighbourhoods. Poorer residents were mainly concerned with the livelihood benefits of new developments and there were ongoing tensions around the allocations of jobs (Consultant 3, 2016; Developer 13, 2017; State 1, 2016). Feelings ran high, leading officials to observe that, despite the political and financial pressure to deliver quickly, 'it's at that time we came back to the Mayor and said listen, this thing is going

to go sideways if we don't do this properly and we need time to do this' (Interview, State 1, 2016). To prevent the project from being derailed, the city administration responded by strengthening participatory processes. The City's development arm (the Johannesburg Development Agency) was, for example, brought in to facilitate participation in the preparation of the precinct plans for the various segments of the corridors (State 6, 2016; Consultant 1).

In these processes, the City had to navigate a complex political terrain as the corridors traverse very different socio-spatial contexts. Although the electoral base of the ANC administration was mainly black African, the City of Johannesburg had to be careful not to alienate the white middle class, which provided a substantial share of the fiscal base of the City and could voice its concerns volubly through the media and other channels (Beall et al., 2002). City officials entered into negotiations with residents' associations around density and the location of new development, and adjusted targets and plans (State 1, 2016). At crucial moments it was the Mayor's presence and intervention which helped to move the process forward in middle-class neighbourhoods (State 1, 2016). Political and personal ties connected the city administration to black African neighbourhoods, although to differing degrees. Organised neighbourhoods in politically influential townships such as Soweto and Alexandra were able to command the attention of city officials, and influence investments towards their areas (Planact, 2018). There was far less embeddedness in other socio-spatial contexts along the corridors. The coloured (or mixed-race) communities of Westbury and Coronationville, for example, mainly supported opposition parties and felt alienated from the City administration (Planact, 2018). The group least connected is arguably made up of transnational migrants (renters and sub-renters) from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa who provide no electoral advantage to the City and who lack the leverage of paying property taxes or having a vote (Landau and Freemantle, 2010). There were nevertheless limited attempts by officials to 'walk the streets' of migrant-dominated neighbourhoods to identify groups that were not formally represented (State 1, 2016).

Political changes led to a shift in the patterns of embeddedness and institutional priority. In 2016, the ANC lost control of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council to a curious de facto coalition between the centre-right Democratic Alliance (DA), with a mainly white middle class as its electoral base, and left-wing populist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), with its base among the black African poor. The DA base was largely opposed to densification near middle-class neighbourhoods, while the EFF demanded direct investment in historically black townships rather than in the linking corridors (Harrison et al., 2019; Parker and Appelbaum, 2020). The Corridors survived but with significantly reduced investment from the City. Recent political instability has brought an ANC-led administration back to power under a new mayor but the future of the initiative remains uncertain (Robinson et al., 2021).

The Johannesburg case drew attention to the importance of embedding large-scale projects in state–citizen/resident relations, and the different ways in which this is undertaken across different groups. This informed our analysis of the other two cases, including Lingang where we had not initially envisaged the possibility for comparative insights on community engagements.

The 'developmental' ambitions of the Johannesburg case draw attention to the developmental goals of the Shanghai case, in terms of both economic upgrading and ambitions for social development. On the one hand, this is to do with the importance

of Lingang in the broader municipal economic growth agenda of industrial restructuring (as with the role of the Corridors in the broader spatial restructuring of Johannesburg post-apartheid). But the developmental state has also to attend to its embeddedness in a broader dynamic of support from the local population. Socially, Lingang was a relatively under-developed and remote area with a rural population. How to acquire land and resettle the existing rural population swiftly and peacefully was one of the first tasks that officials had to address (Wang and Wu, 2019). The strategy was to make 'good' arrangements for local peoples' livelihoods if possible; with prescribed relocation compensation, including apartments of 40 m^2 per person in relocation settlements and state pensions for retired residents (Senior planner Lingang Group, June 2016). Lingang's approach to dealing with local residents followed the common resettlement logic that resettlement can bring prosperity to residents through generous compensation. A senior official on the Lingang Development Management Committee (LDMC) described the resettlement process in Lingang as follows: 'Actually all the four townships are quite supportive of the demolition and relocation, because the residents also want to be relocated. As they say, a farmer's fate can only be turned around with demolition and relocation [农民翻身靠拆迁]' (LDMC senior official, August 2016). The local township governments were tasked with informing and resettling residents, since township officials were familiar with the local situation and the needs of residents. To ensure a smooth transition for residents to their new housing, Lingang initially prioritised the development of relocation settlements and public amenities such as schools and hospitals over the development of commodity estates. Efforts were also made to ensure that township governments benefited since the state relied on townships to deal with dissatisfied residents. Through allocating parcels of industrial park land to township governments to develop to the benefit of local communities, Lingang sought to bind township governments and local residents into the development. Both the institutional formation and the physical development were shaped by the need to embed the development in local social relations.

However, following the completion of the initial phase of development, which included land-intensive developments such as highways and roads, the demand for more land and thus the need for resettlement decreased significantly. Additionally, at the same time as the industrial development slowed down, legislation was changed and prevented the acquisition of development loans against land which is yet to be made vacant (Senior official at LDMC, August 2016). The slowing down of the resettlement process resulted in controversial and tense moments in relations between residents and the municipal and district bodies, and the State-Owned Development Corporations (SODCs). When relocation from rural villages was halted, some were left living in now-deserted underserviced settlements, many dependent on housing migrant workers and adjacent to industrial zones with significant pollution hazards (Wang and Wu, 2019).

Although the two cases of Johannesburg and Shanghai indicate that state–community engagements have actively shaped the outcomes and governance of large-scale developments, dominant analyses in urban studies have been informed by researchers focused on places such as London, emphasising 'post-politics' and constraints on community engagement in urban development processes (Lees, 2014; Raco, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2005). Participation, often led by developers, is understood as providing only the semblance of openness, while the hidden face of power proceeds in technical and restricted

forums (Drozdz, 2014); participation is seen as simply complying with the agendas of power (Swyngedouw, 2011). Our comparative research led us to different conclusions. From the Johannesburg case, we were alerted to the challenges of 'embedding' support across diverse and conflicted constituencies, and from Shanghai we were also aware of how state–resident interactions changed over time as the development progressed. On this basis, we were able to critically reflect on Swyngedouw's (2005) sense of the dual 'Janus' face of urban development politics in London to identify several different settings in which residents' participation was sought. Rather than a cynical dualism, we noted that residents were able to engage to varying extents. In some settings, their inclusion was crucial to the project's progress and their ideas and insights were valued; on other occasions, they (and other actors) were either directly excluded from engagement with planning and decision-making, or the terms of engagement were decidedly onerous.

Settings for early policy development were open to residents' perspectives and concerns, both those within the development corporation area (c. 2800 households) and those in neighbouring areas. Planners for the Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC), tasked by the Mayor of London with bringing forward the development, sought to draw on residents' local sense of place to inspire plans. They responded to residents' concerns, and early proposals identified sensitive areas on the edges of the development where development would be restricted to protect existing residential neighbourhoods. Funding for a place-making initiative focused on the Park Royal Industrial area drew in many residents from the affected areas. However, the lengthy and intensive planning policy process and some early developments saw state–community relations experience many twists and turns. 'Sensitive edges' where tall buildings were to be restricted were replaced by provisions for dense high-rise early developments. These were intended to generate profit and increase planning-gain incomes to fund infrastructure. Policy visions morphed into versions that read like developer briefs in which many good ideas shared between planners and communities became merely possibilities, which might be funded if enough profit was generated from the development: social infrastructure, affordable housing and key transport investments were all to be largely funded from planning-gain contributions from development (Robinson and Attuyer, 2021).

This directs our attention to a different setting: routine behind-closed-doors negotiations which took place between planners and developers about design and developer contributions to planning gain, to consider how trade-offs could be made across different priorities for the development. In fact, both parties collaborated to maximise income from the development while navigating planning policy commitments and design requirements. Residents' concerns were only presented in these settings indirectly via the planners, who were under pressure to prioritise infrastructure and housing delivery (Robinson and Attuyer, 2021). For the OPDC, securing the financing for the development (£2.5 billion) is a major challenge, and developer contributions will not be enough (Mayor of London, 2016). So, in yet other settings, where the OPDC's role is to bring forward developments through its own development arm, even more secret activities were undertaken. A masterplanning process excluded both communities and developers from negotiations with central government in an attempt to secure some additional infrastructure financing (£250 million). These later activities reflected a decline in the participative and collegial approach which had, from the perspective of some,

shaped the first years of the OPDC practice (Community Representative 2 and 3, 3 August 2016).

Inspired by the Johannesburg case, our assessment is that focusing on the varied settings for public engagement can identify specific areas of democratic deficit and indicate how community-based organisations might take forward a targeted political programme to expand voice and equality (Drozdz, 2014). This could promote political opening rather than focusing on the closure identified in post-political analyses (Swyngedouw, 2005). More generally, in contexts like South Africa (Brown, 2015), Brazil (Holston, 2007) and India (Patel et al., 2012), achieving political gains, even incremental ones, builds on patient processes of mobilisation, engagement and institutional transformation – drawing the state to embed the development through territorialised community agency. In Lingang and China more generally, residents' mobilisations have secured sharing of benefits through compensation, and also contributed to shaping the complex institutional arrangements needed to bring forward the development (Hsing, 2010; Shen et al., 2020).

Intra-state: Assembling transcalar state agency

Lingang to London and Johannesburg. Lingang is a municipal mega-urban project, which demonstrates the significant role of the local state. However, the actual delivery of Lingang has been achieved through various municipal and district development corporations. To involve local communities, at the township level, smaller industrial zones and development corporations have also been set up. In other words, the development has been carried out by an assemblage of development corporations across different scales (Shen et al., 2020). All these development actors are 'state owned' but the actual ownership is scattered across different levels of government. For Johannesburg, the difference is that the COF development is led directly by the state institutions rather than by a dedicated municipal agency or development corporation. For London, the state-owned development corporation had no guaranteed income or land assets, and relied closely on negotiating with private sector developers. In Lingang, the development corporation operates under the guidance of the government (specifically the development management committee, *guanweihui*). This is a distinct model in China, allowing the enterprise to borrow financial resources independently, although there are close linkages between the development corporation and local government. In Lingang, the management committee and development corporation have 'two names but one set of personnel' (*liangkuai paizi, yitao renma*). This approach reflects state entrepreneurialism (Wu, 2018), which uses the 'market instruments' but is subject to the planning and developmental centrality of the state. These instruments include development corporations and 'land backed mortgages' (Wu, 2019).

The Lingang project began in 2002 with the Shanghai municipality's ambition to develop China's largest deep-water harbour. The Shanghai municipality convinced the central government to assign Yangshan Island from Zhejiang province's jurisdiction to Shanghai with the prospect of developing China's first deep-water harbour and to compete with other countries already in possession of a deep-water harbour, including Singapore and South Korea. The municipality felt that a harbour city would provide important support services, such as logistics, for the Yangshan deep-water harbour (Lingang senior planner, June 2016). Yangshan harbour in turn would help Lingang become a harbour city equalling the success of Hamburg's Hafen City or Alexandria (GMP architect, June 2016). The

development of Lingang was motivated by a second reason, namely to help Shanghai upgrade its industrial sector to include the heavy equipment manufacturing industry. The final vision for Lingang was thus as a combination of harbour city and a large industrial zone specialising in heavy equipment manufacturing.

Rather than relying on private capital and developers, however, the Shanghai municipality instead relied on a set of state agencies to deliver Lingang. State-owned development corporations took on the role of the primary developer and were given starting capital from the Shanghai municipal government to acquire land from rural residents and to develop the land according to the vision set out by Lingang's masterplan. Initially, there were two development corporations. Lingang Group is in charge of the heavy equipment manufacturing zone and focused on attracting heavy equipment companies to Lingang. Harbour City Group is responsible for developing the main town of Lingang and attracting residents to develop Lingang into a vibrant harbour city with a planned population of 800,000 residents. Moreover, the municipality created the Lingang Development Management Committee (LDMC) to take over planning responsibilities and to examine and approve the specific developments of Lingang. Relieved of their planning and development responsibilities, the district government of Nanhui (later replaced by Pudong district) and the township governments are tasked with governing the local population of Lingang, including handling the process of resettling rural residents, dealing with residents' complaints and managing the life of residents after their resettlement.

According to the Shanghai municipality, the institutional set-up of Lingang makes optimal use of the specialised knowledge of different state organisations. Lingang's two SODCs and the LDMC are all headed by seasoned managers and planners who have successfully delivered previous state projects and have the necessary development and economic expertise. The district and township governments with their abundant knowledge of the local population are much better suited to dealing with residents. The assemblage of development agencies and actors reflects the nature of the project as a developmental mission for Shanghai. For Lujiazui Group, another major SODC which was tasked by the municipality with contributing to developing Lingang in 2009, rather than a project focused on short-term profits through real estate development, Lingang is: 'a political mission so we accomplish it … There has never been a case where the Lujiazui Group could not deliver just because the economy is not doing well' (Lujiazui Group senior planner, August 2016). In London, the analysis of the Lingang case focused our attention on the multiple roles of the state – as policy maker, regulator and development manager, as well as developer. Analytically, this insight was highly significant in allowing us to critique the popular London discourse of powerful global developers overwhelming weak local state actors unable to defend public interests (Colenutt, 2020; Robinson and Attuyer, 2021). Unravelling the multiple interests of state actors drew attention to the continuing power of the state to extract planning-gain income, in a context where other sources of funding for development had been constrained. We discuss this further in the following sub-section. Some aspects of state interests have therefore become closely aligned with those of developers; but other interests are also evident – exposed by attending to the multiple roles of the state in urban development. This is reflected in our analysis of the diverse settings of community engagement (above), where different planning rationalities (and different planners) were operative in the different settings. In

addition, as in Lingang, despite the creation of a bespoke development corporation, a wide range of state agencies and actors had to be drawn together around the territory of the project to secure its delivery. In London, this related strongly to the search for a viable business model for the development. With few resources available to pay for infrastructure, and a highly fragmented political system (Travers, 2004), the need for collaboration across jurisdictions was apparent from the beginning as the core development area crosscuts three London Boroughs. As with many large-scale developments, this jurisdictional complexity presented numerous challenges. Thus, the opportunity was seized to draw on a new competency for the GLA (since 2011), to create 'Mayoral Development Corporations', and the OPDC was created on 1 April 2015. Concerns are often expressed about the institutional capacity of local boroughs to manage such huge developments (Interview, GLA officer 1), and large-scale developments in London (in 'Opportunity Areas') do anyway usually proceed through collaborations between the Mayor's regeneration teams and local boroughs. Establishing a formal Development Corporation to take over planning powers from the three boroughs, with representation from each borough on the Board and the planning committee, provided a new way to navigate the relationships between the GLA, the OPDC and the three London boroughs.

Complexity also characterised the relations with national state agencies. The train infrastructure operator, Network Rail, and the Department for Transport are major landowners in the OPDC area, as well as being responsible for the land along the proposed HS2 high-speed train tracks. Their development interests are overseen by a wholly state-owned property developer, London and Continental Railway, whose strategy, honed in relation to the HS1 (channel tunnel) project, involves seeking to maximise the value of their property assets through land sales. Despite an early 'Memorandum of Understanding' (2015) to work together with the Mayor on the development of these lands, the reluctance of the public sector bodies to yield on achieving maximum value for their land means their redevelopment has been pushed into the very long term, largely beyond the 20-year period of the draft local plan. This has increased early development pressure on other sites in the project to generate finance for the development.

In sum, then, a new institutional model of the Mayoral Development Corporation has re-scaled planning and development authority away from the local boroughs to the Metropolitan authority.[2] But the operations of the OPDC are dependent on convening a transcalar alignment of state and non-state actors and interests in relation to the specific territory of the development. This entails co-ordinating complex intra-governmental relationships, from very small local boroughs to a weakly capacitated metropolitan mayor, as well as powerful national state agencies and central government departments.

In Johannesburg, the COF was an ambitious project for the city administration and, as in London, the challenge was to influence actors operating across different scales, within and outside government, to direct their actions in support of the vision. The relational capacity required for the project came from constructing different forms of embeddedness, including within state–citizen relations, as discussed above, and within a complex matrix of inter- and intra-governmental relationships. In one respect, Johannesburg had a significant advantage over London as the city administration was constructed in 2000 at the end of a post-apartheid transition, as a single-tier metropolitan authority. There was no need for the metropolitan authority to negotiate the project with local authorities or to construct a

body such as a development corporation that could manage across local and metropolitan functions. However, the City of Johannesburg was still a complex organisation, incorporating multiple departmental and political interests and requiring mechanisms for cohering city-level action. The personal authority and institutional power of the executive mayor was an important factor but so was the technical control that the planning department exercised over the budgets of other internal agencies.

Beyond the city, implementation required the support of other spheres of government. The National Constitution adopted in 1996 protects local government but also frames it within a complex system of intergovernmental relationships. The Corridors had an unexpected challenge from a coalition of interests within government that linked the agenda of the national Minister of Housing to promote 'mega'-housing projects on the peripheries of urban areas to the spatial agendas of Provincial Government, and with segments of the property industry. This was contrary to the vision of the city administration to consolidate development and densify along centrally situated transport corridors and detracted from the overall priority of corridor-type development across government. However, the Corridors initiative was protected by the near fiscal independence of the City of Johannesburg, the support it received from the powerful National Treasury and the fuzzy means of accommodation between city and provincial governments which allowed both to pursue their own visions with apparent support from the other. But this fragile interembeddedness left the Corridors programme somewhat exposed to political change at the city level (Ballard et al., 2017).

In all three cases, the projects initiated a reconfiguration of state institutions, territorialising capacity across different agencies and actors. Thus, we identify the transcalar territorialisation of state agency as a key feature of all three cases, necessary to bring forward development.

Developers and territories: Navigating institutions, generating finance

London to Johannesburg and Lingang. In London, development is reliant on the private sector and is brought forward through complex mutual negotiations between the state and developers. The OPDC case highlighted most strongly the formative nature of the financing arrangements for development outcomes. Crucial here was the high cost of development in an area with difficult terrain and poor infrastructure; the land ownership structure also meant that this was not an area which had a naturally high visibility or attractiveness for developers. Analyses of property and housing development in London have focused on the agency of global investors – a speculative wall of money pressing on the London landscape to which local councils had little response (Colenutt, 2020; DeVerteuil and Manley, 2017; Fernandez et al., 2016). But as with all three of our cases, our study of the Old Oak Park Royal development showed that (transcalar) state agency was closely involved in drawing in investment and finance, and strongly shaped the nature of the developments brought forward by financiers and developers. This included pressing for early progress on the edges of the area, which produced a predominance of rental-based developments as sales values would be depressed during the lengthy construction phase of the overall development. Moreover, the developers who were motivated to invest in the OPDC area had a range of origins and transnational reach, and varying interests in the land development.

The question of value is crucial for the developer, but, as we noted, for the planning authority too. The OPDC was looking to

maximise value capture over the life of the project to fund the costs of delivery. This had to be secured during a narrow window of opportunity to negotiate planning-gain contributions from the developer at the site and moment of construction (Robinson and Attuyer, 2021). In addition, the funding streams for the state – both S106 and CIL charges[3] – relate directly to the height and density, and thus the quantum and profitability of developments. The negotiation process between planners and developers, in regular meetings over a period of two to three years, is where these issues find settlement in a determinate built form which has to meet a range of policy agendas while keeping the developer on board. As one developer noted, 'well, you know, we've got our exit strategies and you know you just weigh up the risk' (Property developer 6).

Between the competing objectives for developments to realise developer profits as well as meet the Mayor's targets for housing, contribute to financing infrastructure and deliver planning policy obligations, architects can struggle to meet professional norms or market demands for high-quality design. At times, they even worked against the planners, to decrease height and density (Architect 4, 30 August 2016). Developers were pragmatic about the planning processes which underpinned determining planning gain and policy obligations in London, and made sure that their teams were composed of locally experienced people (Property developer 3). Locally embedded reference points were therefore important to (global) architects and developers, as they were to the local planners. In searching for 'best practice' cases to inspire development, the planning authority and their consultants drew overwhelmingly on London-based cases and precedents (Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation [OPDC], 2018). It is in this context that reports from several developers that planners had encouraged them to build higher densities and heights than envisaged, as well as the paradoxical push from the major developer to lower the quantum and densities, can be understood.

However, value propositions varied considerably amongst developers. For a number of developers, their starting point in negotiations was to look to maximise the envelope for building: 'the first thing you do on an application is the bulking exercise. You first go for bulk. The developer always goes for maximum bulk and the planners will pull him back and then you reach a happy medium' (Property developer 3). For others, the difficulty was to gain planning approval when they were unwilling to build as high or to such densities as the planners wanted. This is particularly relevant in relation to financialised investors, such as global pension funds, seeking to mobilise the built environment as a liquid asset, yielding long-term, secure returns on investment through bespoke rental properties. Here, developers struggled with the high land values and the need to keep buildings to a standard height and format according to the investor model. In one case, local planning authorities, including the OPDC, found little traction to press financialised international developers to build higher, to extract further value from the development, leading to an impasse (Ealing Council Planning Committee, 3 February 2016). However, more flexible combinations of developers with conventional construction financing and London-based housing associations leveraging their social housing assets and with significant housing management experience enabled the build-to-rent model to come forward in a denser format, according to very rapid time scales compared with 'build-to-sell' properties. The ability for this model to meet the growing backlog of houses for both middle-class and low-income groups across London has informed the Mayor's enthusiasm for BTR in his wider housing policy, as well as

in the approach of the OPDC (Mayor of London, 2018; OPDC Officer 1, 6 February 2018).

The need to find alignment between developer and state interests in the London case was particularly acute, but led to tensions. There was nonetheless considerable overlap in their interests to build more densely and higher to achieve enhanced returns, while also needing to ensure locally applicable planning policy norms were not undermined to the detriment of either elector confidence or market interest. We see, then, a territorialised co-ordination of regulatory processes in relation to this specific project as well as the emergence of negotiated relationships between states and developers which enabled investors with a range of different interests, and spatial reach, to co-produce and navigate the arrangements needed to enable the development to proceed. This confirms our theoretical approach to the urban as distinctive, and the methodological commitment to building insights about large-scale developments, including the financing of urban development, from specific urban contexts.

In Johannesburg, the territorial foundations of transnational financial flows and actors are evident, as specific concerns and path-dependent trajectories influenced both state and developer financing. The overall financing of the Corridors project in Johannesburg was secured through intra-municipal co-ordination of routine income streams, largely property-based taxes and profits on utilities, as well as loan income (municipal bonds and a developmental loan from the French AFD). But, as in London, to secure the housing development that the project envisaged required the capacity of the state to influence patterns of real estate investment, and this remains critical to the success of the Corridors initiative. The corridors are not 'natural' territory for most developers, who have focused their developments mainly in the affluent northern parts of the city. Hence the municipality has attempted to induce developers to invest in the corridors, and to invest in ways that meet the specific objectives of the initiative. As Todes and Robinson (2020) explain, the outcomes are uncertain, with varying levels of interest from different segments of the real estate industry. The Corridors initiative has largely drawn on a newly emerging sector of developers focused on the affordable rental and student housing market, extending a local model where derelict inner-city buildings have been redeveloped as secure, tightly managed accommodation offering small, well-located units for the lower–middle-income market (Mosselson, 2017). This sector began with small developers and social housing institutions responding to an undersupplied market, in a context where large financial institutions had hardly invested in rental housing for decades. But it has been extended to include financialised investors through, for example, the establishment of a residential REIT, the entrance of an international social impact investor into the market and the creation of the Trust for Urban Housing Finance (TUHF) to support small developers (Financier 2, 1 September 2016; Nurick et al., 2018; Todes and Robinson, 2020).

The corridors are beyond the main areas where inner-city developers operate but have became more attractive as property prices in the inner city have increased. Diverse small local developers, some of whom were already involved in affordable rental housing or the student market in these areas, have therefore been attracted to new opportunities. Larger firms focused on the affordable housing market have expressed some interest, but their developments have so far remained confined to the edges of the corridors where larger land parcels have been available (Developer 10, 31 August 2016; Developer 12, 22 November 2016).

The municipality has offered some inducements to enable development, in addition to infrastructure provision: rates rebates; relaxation of regulations to allow and encourage higher density development; and promises to simplify and speed up approvals processes. The city also proactively assisted developers by generating design approaches appropriate to the Corridors (small spaces including social facilities), using consultants to develop financially viable models for low-income rental, and by partnering with the TUHF to facilitate financing for developers. There were, however, differences between city planners and developers over matters such as density levels and rental charges, with officials pushing for higher densities to support the BRT and lower rentals to ensure inclusion (State 2, 1 March 2019).

In Lingang, as in London and Johannesburg, financing and development drew on existing practices but also had to respond to the challenges of the development with innovations. The project was initially financed through a combination of a starting capital from the municipality and land-based financing from banks (Wu, 2019). The starting capital and bank loans were mainly used to resettle rural residents living in the industrial zone of Lingang and to develop basic infrastructure including roads and bridges as well as industrial space to be sold or rented out to businesses. The cost of developing the main town was lower than for the industrial zone since all of its land was acquired through land reclamation and thus did not require expenses for compensating resettled residents. Subsequent income streams mainly came from the heavy equipment zone, including from land leased to firms and factories moving to Lingang and their business taxes. However, income from the industrial zone was far from enough for the development to break even, given the substantial investment in transport infrastructure. Revenue from land sales for residential developments also fell short. This was partly as the industrial zone and the deep-water port needed fewer staff due to automation, and partly as Lingang is considered too remote and lacking the vibrancy of a city, so many staff working in Lingang preferred commuting back to the city. Conversations with senior officials reveal that Lingang's current income is only sufficient to cover its running expenses but cannot recoup its initial investments. For this reason, when asked about why the project never considered relying on private developers to deliver Lingang, a senior planner from a SODC explained that private developers are too focused on making short-term profit and were not to be trusted with generating the sustained revenue that a large and strategically important project such as Lingang required (Lujiazui Group, July 2016).

Instead, while Lingang's focus over the past decade has been on attracting more residents through increasing the urban functions and activities in the main town, the municipality directed Pudong district's four biggest SODCs to invest and develop in Lingang's main town under the motto of 'leading the army southwards, for the final battle in Lingang' (挥师南下，决战临港). Private developers played a more minor role. The LDMC and Harbour City Group sought to attract private developers for some of the attractions, including an Ocean Park developer (see Shen et al., 2020 for further details), and major housing developers including Vanke and Greenland were brought in for small-scale developments to increase market confidence in Lingang. However, similar to both the Corridors project and the OPDC development, Lingang is not a 'natural' territory for private developers. In this case, this is due to its remote location. Private developers only joined the development following generous subsidies from Lingang. For instance, Vanke only agreed to develop in

the main town when Harbour City agreed to share the risk of investment by owning 49% of shares in the business venture and sold the land to Vanke at a very low price (Vanke Lingang branch manager, June 2016). Yet despite the government's support, Vanke only developed what the company considers as a small to medium project that requires little investment, has a short time frame and yields fast return (短平快). Further financial support from the municipality came in the form of the 'double special' (双特) policy. This policy allows Lingang to keep the share of tax income that normally needs to be paid to the municipality and the district government. The Lingang Economic Group also invested in residential development projects in other places outside of Lingang to subsidise this municipal mega-project.

Across all three cases, the projects relied on a diversity of developers and financing mechanisms. Specifically, in each case we have seen that a territorialisation of developer–state relations and a bespoke financing solution relying on resource flows from the development itself (as property or enterprise tax, or as planning gain) effectively co-produced a distinctive approach to value and built form in each project.

Conclusion: Conceptualising urban development politics

Our comparative analysis has demonstrated that large-scale urban developments are shaped by strongly path-dependent regulatory contexts, and also result in a specific territorialisation of political institutions and actors. Theorising from specificity, we suggest, has the potential to rebuild insights on the nature of the politics of urban development across different and divergent contexts. This will require patient and open reconstruction of concepts, emergent from different urban experiences. From our study, we are able to identify some features of urban development politics which could speak across the different contexts, allowing us to learn from one context to another and inspire further interrogation. Our approach, which explored the territorialisation of political processes at the scale of the development project, is potentially especially relevant at a moment when urbanisation has become delinked from the territories of municipal government, and is rather extended, fragmented and dispersed across regions, corridors and transnationally.

We focused on the dynamic transcalar relations (state–citizens; intra-state; state–developer) which are emergent in the course of large-scale developments, and which coalesce as distinctive territorialisations of urban politics. First, we were inspired by the Johannesburg case where electoral and fiscal dependence on different groups of residents required considerable efforts to embed the development in local political relations. We noted in all three cases how the state is drawn through the territorialised agency of residents to shape, in different ways, aspects of the development, its governance (including seeking to exclude residents), design and social impacts. Future research might explore the different ways in which electoral systems, questions of legitimacy (based on development, participation and/or bargained relations of quiescence) and different forms of planning reason contribute to urban development processes.

Second, in all three cases the projects initiated a reconfiguration of state institutions, territorialising capacity across different agencies and actors at the scale of the project to bring forward developments. These sought to meet different goals, both developmental and competitive – economic upgrading, (social) housing needs or general urbanisation. The interests of state actors, and competition between them, are an important aspect of urban development politics. In the projects

we studied, these were closely bound up with the value generated by the development, through general or property taxation, profits on direct development activities or land value capture of some kind. Thinking across a diversity of political systems highlighted the urban basis of state agency, in land and in broader urban development goals, which deserves further investigation.

But other actors were also crucial to the delivery in each case. The processes of territorialising flows of finance and the agency of transnational developers strongly shaped development outcomes. Thus, third, the projects relied on a diversity of developers and financing mechanisms. So, state institutions worked to reshape developer practices to encourage responses to challenging or unfamiliar circumstances, and to ensure that the resources for the project could be generated, and the desired outcomes realised. A territorialisation of developer–state relations effectively co-produced a distinctive approach to value and built form in each project – suggesting that rather than tracing variegated processes of financialisation and their hybridisation, analyses of the emergent, urban bases of development financing could be insightful. Nonetheless, we are also able to draw insights about the nature of the wider process of financialisation. In both Johannesburg and London, financialised investors were drawn into territorialised configurations oriented to delivery of more developmental outcomes: a locally distinctive format of low-income housing in Johannesburg; and addressing a politically determined priority for significant expansion of well-managed (although not low-income) rental housing in London. Our comparative analysis therefore offers insights to nuance conclusions regarding the politics of financialised urban development (Aalbers, 2017; Beswick et al., 2016; Rolnick, 2019). More generally, comparative insights can enrich or critique understandings of wider processes; while developing comparative analyses from the perspective of the urban as distinctive, or specific, opens the possibility of identifying alternative processes as relevant. In this case, we noted that financing (rather than financialisation) was closely dependent on the regulatory context and the specific configuration of the development project.

The construction of new urban territories results in the constitution of forms of highly specific territorialised political relations. How these are configured varies, but across divergent contexts, bringing forward large-scale developments involves the production of specific political and institutional arrangements over long time horizons, across multiple jurisdictions and with an array of transnational processes and actors. To understand these, we have suggested that closer attention needs to be paid to the dynamic processes involved in negotiating political relations with residents (embedding projects), redirecting and influencing developers and investment flows (generating finance) and re-organising state institutions and interests (configuring institutions).

Starting to rebuild analyses of urban politics across diverse and divergent contexts is a crucial task for urban studies. We have proposed one way forward for this, assessing that the form of *urban* politics is not so much variegation of (well-known) wider processes, but rather, emergent and specific transcalar territorialisations, possibly in far-flung and dispersed urbanised territories (Kanai and Schindler, forthcoming). On this basis, comparative analysis can enable the actors and processes involved in urban development to be interrogated on their own terms and across a diversity of urban contexts. The dynamics which we have identified here – state–community embedding, intra-state co-ordination at the project scale and developer–state collaboration – offer possibilities for grounding future enquiries in urban development politics.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who agreed to be interviewed and who supported our engagement in the three developments. We also thank those who worked on the project with us, notably Allan Cochrane and Margot Rubin. In London, we thank Sharon Hayward of the London Tenants' Federation, Robin Brown together with others at Just Space, as well as members of the Grand Union Alliance and Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum. In Johannesburg, we acknowledge the partnership and engagement of Planact, especially Mike Makwela. In Shanghai, Prof. Yuemin Ning of East China Normal University was an intellectually inspiring and most helpful host for project activities. His close knowledge of the Lingang case shaped our research questions and informed our analysis from the beginning. Phil Harrison also gratefully acknowledges the support of the South African Research Chairs Initiative of South Africa's National Research Foundation.

Author Note

Katia Attuyer, is now affiliated to University of Birmingham, UK.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: We acknowledge funding from the ESRC for an Urban Transformations grant ES/N006070/1, 'Governing the Future City: A Comparative Analysis of Governance Innovations in Large Scale Urban Developments in Shanghai, London, Johannesburg'.

ORCID iDs

Jennifer Robinson https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7716-4770

Fulong Wu https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4938-6066

Zheng Wang https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0758-2202

Notes

1. We cite our interviews in each study area according to the position of the informant in that context (State, Consultant, Developer, Community).
2. We acknowledge the helpful observation of one of the referees for this article that in some aspects our approach varies from that of Peck and Theodore (2007) as we are concentrating on a different 'scale', the development project rather than local government. We use 'scale' here in an ordinary language sense of different governmental entities rather than theoretically freighted; more generally, our insights emerge in relation to a different spatial imagination of transcalar territorialisations.
3. 'The *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)* is a locally determined fixed charge on development which usually takes a relative form, such as "£X per square metre of new development" ' (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018: 6). 'S106' contributions are based on bespoke agreements on planning gain, negotiated on a development-by-development basis.

References

Aalbers MB (2017) The variegated financialization of housing. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 41(4): 542–554.

Allen J (2016) *Topologies of Power: Beyond Territory and Networks*. London: Routledge.

Allen J and Cochrane A (2007) Beyond the territorial fix: Regional assemblages, politics and power. *Regional Studies* 41(9): 1161–1175.

Ballard R, Dittgen R, Harrison P, et al. (2017) Megaprojects and urban visions: Johannesburg's Corridors of Freedom and Modderfontein. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 95(1): 111–139.

Beall J, Crankshaw O and Parnell S (2002) *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg*. London: Routledge.

Beswick J, Alexandri G, Byrne M, et al. (2016) Speculating on London's housing future. *City* 20(2): 321–341.

Brenner N (2005) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brenner N (2019) *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brenner N and Schmid C (2015) Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City* 19(2–3): 151–182.

Brenner N, Peck J and Theodore N (2010) Variegated neoliberalization: Geographies, modalities, pathways. *Global Networks* 10(2): 182–222.

Brown J (2015) *South Africa's Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics*. London: Zed Books.

Choplin A and Hertzog A (2020) The West African corridor from Accra to Lagos: A megacity-region under construction. In: Labbé D and Sorensen A (eds) *Handbook of Megacities and Megacity-Regions*. London: Edward Elgar, pp. 205–221.

Colenutt B (2020) *The Property Lobby: The Hidden Reality Behind the Housing Crisis*. Bristol: Policy Press.

DeVerteuil G and Manley D (2017) Overseas investment into London: Imprint, impact and pied-à-terre urbanism. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 49(6): 1308–1323.

Deville J, Guggenheim M and Hrdličková Z (eds) (2016) *Practising Comparison: Logics, Relations, Collaborations*. Manchester: Mattering Press.

Drozdz M (2014) *Regeneration b(d)oom: Territoires et politique de la régénération urbaine par projet à Londres*. PhD Thesis, Université de Lyon II, France.

Evans P (1995) *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fernandez R, Hofman A and Aalbers MB (2016) London and New York as a safe deposit box for the transnational wealth elite. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 48(12): 2443–2461.

Forrest R (2016) Commentary: Variegated gentrification? *Urban Studies* 53(3): 609–614.

González S, Oosterlynck S, Ribera-Fumaz R, et al. (2018) Locating the global financial crisis: Variegated neoliberalization in four European cities. *Territory Politics Governance* 6(4): 468–488.

Goonewardena K (2018) Planetary urbanization and totality. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36(3): 456–473.

Halbert L and Rouanet H (2014) Filtering risk away: Global finance capital, transcalar territorial networks and the (un)making of city-regions: An analysis of business property development in Bangalore, India. *Regional Studies* 48(3): 471–484.

Harrison P, Rubin M, Appelbaum A, et al. (2019) Corridors of freedom: Analyzing Johannesburg's ambitious inclusionary transit-oriented development. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 39(4): 456–468.

Hart G (2018) Relational comparison revisited: Marxist postcolonial geographies in practice, *Progress in Human Geography*, 42 (3): 371–394

Holston J (2007) *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hsing Y (2010) *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kanai JM and Schindler S (2019) Peri-urban promises of connectivity: Linking project-led polycentrism to the infrastructure scramble. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 51(2): 302–322.

Kanai M and Schindler S (forthcoming) Infrastructure-led development and the peri-urban question: Furthering crossover comparisons. *Urban Studies*. DOI: 10.1177/0042098021 1064158.

Keil R (2017) *Suburban Planet: Making the World Urban From the Outside In*. Cambridge: Polity.

Landau L and Freemantle I (2010) Tactical cosmopolitanism and idioms of belonging: Insertion and self-exclusion in Johannesburg. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36(3): 375–390.

Lauermann J (2018) Municipal statecraft: Revisiting the geographies of the entrepreneurial city. *Progress in Human Geography* 42(2): 205–224.

Lee CK and Zhang Y (2013) The power of instability: Unraveling the microfoundations of bargained authoritarianism in China. *American Journal of Sociology* 118(6): 1475–1508.

Lees L (2014) The urban injustices of new labour's 'new urban renewal': The case of the Aylesbury estate in London. *Antipode* 46(4): 921–947.

Lefebvre H (1996) *Writings on Cities*. Edited and translated by E Lebas and E Kofman. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Lefebvre H (2003 [1970]) *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Lefebvre H (2009 [1940]) *Dialectical Materialism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Le Galès P (2016) Neoliberalism and urban change: Stretching a good idea too far? *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4(2): 154–172.

Leitner H and Sheppard E (2020) Towards an epistemology for conjunctural inter-urban comparison. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 13(3): 491–508.

McFarlane C (2019) Urban fragments: A subaltern studies imagination. In: Jazeel T and Legg S (eds) *Subaltern Geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 210–230.

Massey D (2005) *For Space*. London: SAGE.

Mayor of London (2016) OPDC strategic review findings – 31.10.16. Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc_review_findings__final_31.10.16_0.pdf (accessed 16 December 2021).

Mayor of London (2018) *London Housing Strategy*. London: Greater London Authority. Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_lhs_london_housing_strategy.pdf (accessed 24 July 2018).

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) The incidence, value and delivery of planning obligations and community infrastructure levy in England in 2016–17. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-106-planning-obligations-and-the-community-infrastructure-levy-in-england-2016-to-2017-report-of-study (accessed 15 November 2021).

Mosselson A (2017) 'Joburg has its own momentum': Towards a vernacular theorisation of urban change. *Urban Studies* 54(5): 1280–1296.

Moulaert F, Rodriguez A and Swyngedouw E (2003) *The Globalized City: Economic Restructuring and Social Polarization in European Cities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Murray M (2017) *The Urbanism of Exception: The Dynamics of Global City Building in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nurick S, Boyle L, Oliver A, et al. (2018) An investigation into the relatively low uptake of residential stock within South African Real Estate Investment Trusts. *Journal of African Real Estate Research* 3(1): 61–80.

Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) (2018) *Old Oak North Development Framework Principles, Local Plan Supporting Study 32, Consultation June 2018*. City Hall, London: OPDC. Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/32._old_oak_north_development_framework_principles_1.pdf (accessed 12 September 2018).

Parker A and Appelbaum A (2020) On the defensive: The residential strategies shaping densification in Johannesburg's northern suburbs. In: Rubin M, Todes A, Harrison P, et al. (eds) *Densifying the City: Global Cases and Johannesburg*. London: Edward Elgar, pp. 202–212.

Parnell S and Pieterse E (2016) Translational global praxis: Rethinking methods and modes of African urban research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40(1): 236–246.

Parnell S and Robinson J (2012) (Re)theorizing cities from the global south: Looking beyond neoliberalism. *Urban Geography* 33(4): 593–617.

Patel S, Baptist C and D'Cruz C (2012) Knowledge is power – Informal communities assert their right to the city through SDI and community-led enumerations. *Environment and Urbanization* 24(1): 13–26.

Peck J (2013) Explaining (with) neoliberalism. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1(2): 132–157.

Peck J (2017) Transatlantic city, part 1: Conjunctural urbanism. *Urban Studies* 54(1): 4–30.

Peck J and Theodore N (2007) Variegated capitalism. *Progress in Human Geography* 31(6): 731–772.

Peck J and Theodore N (2019) Still neoliberalism? *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118(2): 245–265.

Peck J, Theodore N and Brenner N (2009) Neoliberal urbanism: Models, moments, mutations. *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 29(1): 49–66.

Pinson G (2009) *Gouverner la ville par projet: Urbanisme et gouvernance des villes européenes*. Paris: Presses de la fondation national des sciences politiques.

Planact (2018) Planact's social facilitation role in the research project: 'Governing the future city – A comparative analysis of governance innovations in large-scale urban developments in Shanghai, London, and Johannesburg'. Unpublished report, available from Mike @Planact.org.za.

Raco M (2014) The post-politics of sustainability planning: Privatisation and the demise of democratic government. In: Wilson J and Swyngedouw E (eds) *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 25–47.

Robinson J (2016) Thinking cities through elsewhere: Comparative tactics for a more global urban studies. *Progress in Human Geography* 40(1): 3–29.

Robinson J (2021) New territories of urban politics. In: Million A, Haid C, Castillo Ulloa I, et al. (eds) *Spatial Transformations: Kaleidoscopic Perspectives on the Refiguration of Spaces*. London: Routledge, pp. 269–285.

Robinson J and Attuyer K (2021) Extracting value, London style: Revisiting the role of the state in urban development. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 45(2): 303–331.

Robinson J, Harrison P, Shen J and Wu F. (2021) Financing urban development, three business models: Johannesburg, Shanghai and London. *Progress in Planning* 154: 100513.

Rolnik R (2019) *Urban Warfare: Housing under the Empire of Finance*. London: Verso Books.

Schmid C (2005) Theory. In: Diener R, Herzog J, Meili M, et al. (eds) *Switzerland: An Urban Portrait*. Basel: Birkhauser, pp. 163–223.

Schmid C (2008) Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: Towards a three-dimensional dialectic. In: Goonewardena K, Kipfer S, Milgrom R, et al. (eds) *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*. London: Routledge, pp. 27–45.

Schmid C (2015) Specificity and urbanization: A theoretical outlook. In: Basel ES, Diener R and Herzog J (eds) *The Inevitable Specificity of Cities*. Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, pp. 287–307.

Schmid C, Karaman O, Hanakata NC, et al. (2018) Towards a new vocabulary of urbanisation processes: A comparative approach. *Urban Studies* 55(1): 19–52.

Scott AJ and Storper M (2015) The nature of cities: The scope and limits of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(1): 1–15.

Shatkin G (2017) *Cities for Profit: The Real Estate Turn in Asia's Urban Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Shen J, Luo X and Wu F (2020) Assembling mega-urban projects through state-guided governance innovation: The development of Lingang in Shanghai. *Regional Studies* 54(12): 1644–1654.

Swyngedouw E (2005) Governance innovation and the citizen: The Janus face of governance-beyond-the-state. *Urban Studies* 42(11): 1991–2006.

Swyngedouw E (2011) Interrogating post-democratization: Reclaiming egalitarian political spaces. *Political Geography* 30(7): 370–380.

Todes A and Robinson J (2020) Re-directing developers: New models of rental housing development to re-shape the post-apartheid city? *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52(2): 297–317.

Travers T (2004) *The Politics of London: Governing an Ungovernable City*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wang Z and Wu F (2019) In-situ marginalisation: Social impact of Chinese mega-projects. *Antipode* 51(5): 1640–1663.

Wu F (2010) How neoliberal is China's reform? The origins of change during transition. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51(5): 619–631.

Wu F (2018) Planning centrality, market instruments: Governing Chinese urban transformation under state entrepreneurialism. *Urban Studies* 55(7): 1383–1399.

Wu F (2019) Land financialisation and the financing of urban development in China. *Land Use Policy*. 112: 104412.

Wu F (2020) Adding new narratives to the urban imagination: An introduction to 'New directions of urban studies in China'. *Urban Studies* 57(3): 459–472.