MAKING AFRICA URBAN

CONFERENCE
The Transcalar Politics of Urban Development
MONDAY 29TH - WEDNESDAY 31ST JULY 2024

MAKING AFRICA URBAN

The Transcalar Politics of Urban Development

This project investigates how the future of African cities is being shaped by transnational processes based on sovereign, developmental and private investment in large-scale urban developments in Accra (Ghana), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Lilongwe (Malawi).

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Jennifer Robinson is Professor of Human Geography at University College, London (UCL). She has authored numerous papers and her books, include *Comparative Urbanism: Tactics for Global Urban Studies* (2022) and *Ordinary Cities* (2006). Her research interests are rooted in a postcolonial critique of urban studies and the politics of urban development.
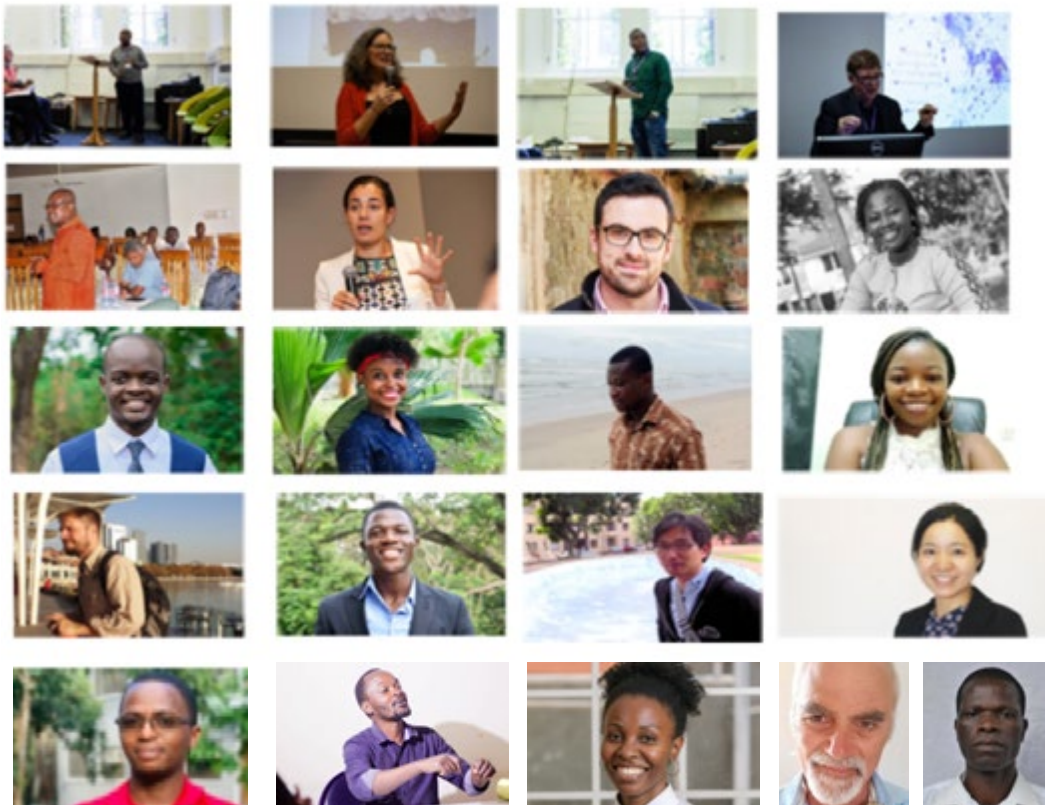
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Reframing Urban Development Politics: Transcalarity in Sovereign, Developmental and Private circuits, by: Jennifer Robinson, Phil Harrison, Sylvia Croese, Rosina Sheburah Essien, Wilbard Kombe, Matthew Lane, Evance Mwathunga, George Owusu, and Yan Yang. Forthcoming, Urban Studies (2024)

Project website

urban lab

UCL GEOGRAPHY

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MAU

TEAM

Find out more about the Principal Investigator, lead collaborators, postdoctoral research assistants, PhD students, and others involved in Making Africa Urban.

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(North West Wing, LT G22)

5.30-6.30 PM
Plenary Panel
(IAS Forum,
Institute of Advanced Studies)

TUESDAY 30 JULY

PARALLEL SESSIONS

9.00 -10.30 AM, 4.00 – 5.30 PM
Panels A and B
(Roberts Building, Sir David Davies LT G08, North West Wing, LT G22 and IAS Forum)

11.00 AM - 12.30 PM, 2.00 - 3.30 PM, 5. 30 - 7.00 PM
Plenaries A, B and C
(North West Wing, LT G22)

WEDNESDAY 31 JULY

PARALLEL SESSIONS

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Panels D and E
(North West Wing, LT G22, IAS Forum, Engineering Front Building Executive Suite 103)

11.00 AM -12.30 PM, 2.00 – 4.00 PM
Plenaries D and E
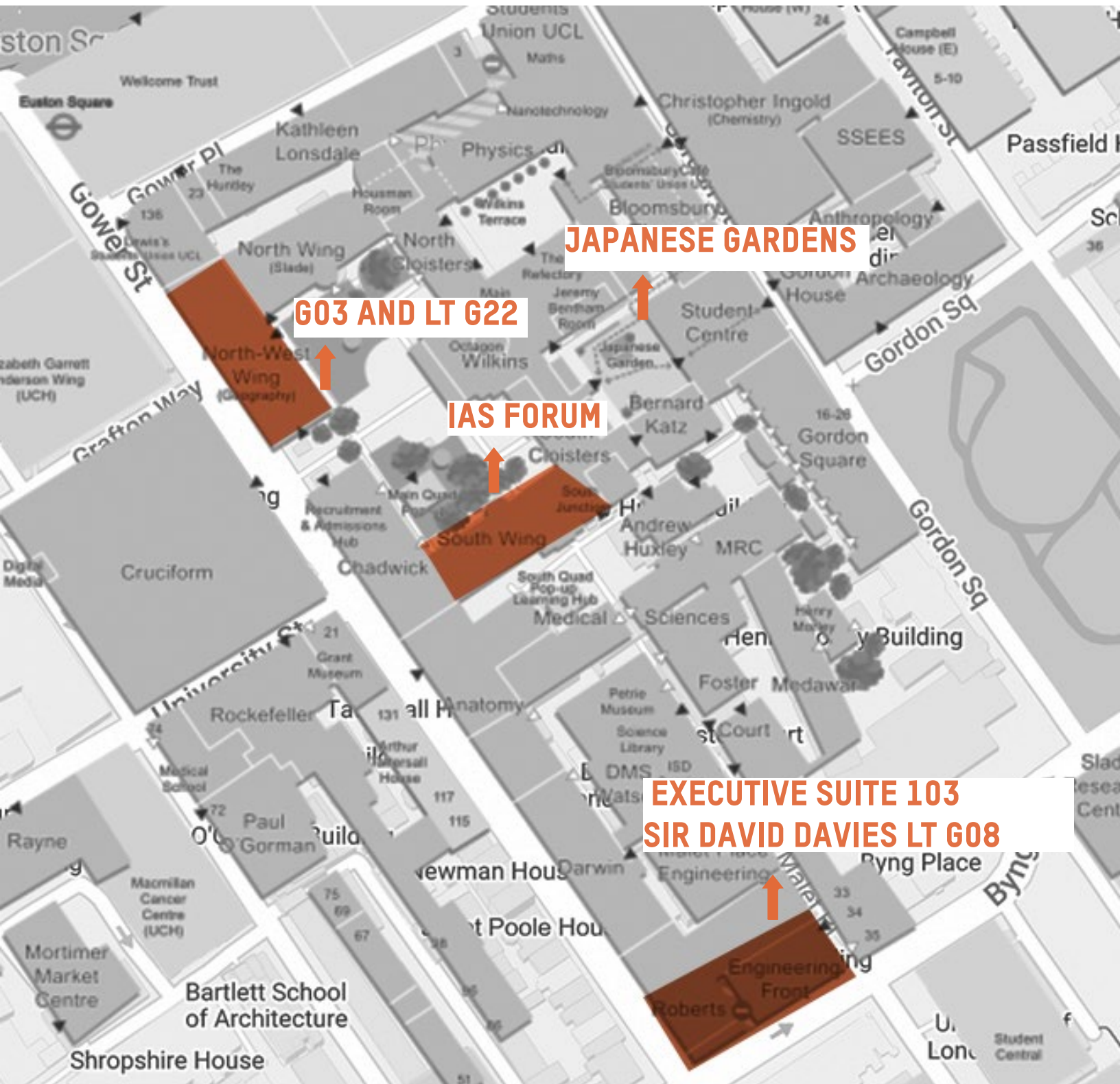(North West Wing, LT G22)

6.00 -7.30 PM
Closings: Theorising urban development politics from Africa
(North West Wing, LT G22)

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MAPS

COFFEE, TEA AND A PLACE TO MEET OR WORK IS AVAILABLE IN NORTH WEST WING G03 LUNCH IS IN IAS FORUM

There are many cafes and shops around the area.
For directions to venues click in the map.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

THE TRANSCALAR POLITICS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

DAY 1
29 JULY

REGISTRATION G03 FROM 12.30 PM

1.30 - 1.40 PM

1.40 - 3.00 PM

WELCOME (Professor Jennifer Robinson)

MON

NEGOTIATED STATEHOOD AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLITICS: INSIGHTS FROM AFRICAN CONTEXTS

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3.30 - 5.00 PM

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DAY 1
29 JULY

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Professor Fulong Wu (Bartlett School of Planning, UCL)
Governing China's urban development: state entrepreneurialism

Chair: Professor Jennifer Robinson (Department of Geography, UCL)

5.30 – 6.30 PM

PLENARY PANEL
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WHO INVESTS, WHY, AND WHO BENEFITS?**

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Urban Development in Africa- Lessons from Dar es Salaam

Anton Cartwright (African Centre for Cities, UCT, and Econologic)
Making sense of investment in urban Africa: what potential for enhanced investment flows?

Chair: Professor Philip Harrison (University of the Witwatersrand)

7.00 – 9.00 PM

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DINNER:
BBQ Japanese Gardens,
Wilkins Courtyard

DAY 2
30 JULY

9.00 – 10.30 AM

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James Duminy
Thinking problematically about the city: The state and planning as a site of urban innovation

Mariana Reyes Carranza
Keeping up with peripheral urbanisation: the automation of spatial planning in Kajiado, Kenya

Donald Brown and Mtafu Manda
Rural-urban planning and governance in 'transitional spaces': Comparative insights from Southern Africa

PANEL 2

State as (contested) Idea
Chair:Rosina Essien
(IAS Forum)

Fenna Hoefsloot
Broker bureaucracies: sweet talking the state in a context of digital transformation in Nairobi, Mumbai, and Guadalajara

Varvara Karipidou
State Effects and Political Contestations: The territorialisation of the local state through urban planning initiatives

Abdi Tahir
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Noor Mazhar
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Patrick Belinga Ondoua
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Emmanuel Awohouedji
The rules of the games: resemblance of urban practice and national politics in Benin's age of revelation

Lindsay Sawyer
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JULY

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11.00 AM – 12.30 PM

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Dr Japhy Wilson (Bangor University)
The Cannibal Capitalist State and the Zoonotic City

Dr Selamawit Wondimu Robi (University of Sheffield)
Bypassing as Authoritarian Urbanism: Party-statecraft and the fragmentation of Ethiopia's urban-industrial Nexus 2001-2018

Commentary: **Dr Ben Clifford (Bartlett School of Planning, UCL)**
Chair: **Professor Jennifer Robinson (Department of Geography, UCL)**

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Dr Matt Lane (University of Edinburgh)
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Chair: **Professor Philip Harrison (University of the Witwatersrand)**

3.30 – 4.00 PM COFFEE BREAK

Photo: Wilfred Jana

DAY 2
30 JULY

4.00 – 5.30 PM

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Wilfred Jana
Unpacking the Lilongwe
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Emma Colven
Splintered Adaptation:
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Stefan Ouma
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(IAS Forum)

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DAY 2
30 JULY

TUES
DAY

5.30 – 7:00 PM

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Professor Colin Marx (Development Planning Unit, UCL)
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Professor George Owusu (University of Ghana)
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7.00 - 9.00 PM

Drinks reception and snacks in IAS Forum (Institute of Advance Studies)

DAY 3
31 JULY

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Aleksandra Milentijevic
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Sabatho Nyamsenda
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31 JULY

WED NES DAY

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Professor Garth Myers (Trinity College, Hartford)
Transcalar Governance and Urban Development in Zanzibar

Dr Evance Mwathunga (University of Malawi)
Impacts of Chinese developments in Lilongwe (TBC)

Commentary: **Professor Catherine Sutherland (University of KwaZulu-Natal)**

Chair: **Dr Rosina Essien (University of Ghana)**

12.30 - 2.00 PM LUNCH BREAK (AT IAS FORUM)

Photo: George Owusu

DAY 3
31 JULY

2.00 – 4.00 PM

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Professor Michael Chasukwa (University of Malawi, Zomba)
Bypassing Government: Aid Effectiveness and Malawi's Local
Development Fund

Professor Philip Harrison (University of the Witwatersrand)
The contradictions of sovereignty within sovereign circuit investments:
Transnational development financing in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Dr Robin Bloch (Urban Lab, UCL)
Stuck in the Middle: Government, Development Partners and Investors in
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Commentary: **Professor Michele Acuto (University of Bristol)**
Chair: **Professor Jennifer Robinson (Department of Geography, UCL)**

4.00 – 4.30PM COFFEE BREAK

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DAY 3
31 JULY

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PARALLEL SESSIONS

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Théo Bendahan
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Carolin Dieterle
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(IAS Forum)

Rosina Essien
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Qusay Amer
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Harsh Mittal
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An interplay of actors and interests in Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments

Yohei Miyauchi
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Farhan Anshary
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DAY 3
31 JULY

6.00 – 7.30 PM

FINAL ROUNDTABLE PLENARY

A CONVERSATION ON THEORISING URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLITICS FROM AFRICA

Professor Stefan Ouma (University of Bayreuth)
Professor Garth Myers (Trinity College, Hartford)
Professor Wilbard Kombe (Ardhi University)

Chair: Professor Jennifer Robinson
(Department of Geography, UCL)

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU

WED
NES
DAY

MAKING AFRICA URBAN

THEMES OVERVIEW

(NOT) THE STATE

The nature of the "state" is strongly in question when viewed from the perspective of cities in different African contexts. The important role of national government actors in urban development is a key theme which moves discussion away from the US-based theorisation of urban development politics. And the diverse interests of these actors provides a basis for critical reflection on the nature of "state" power – personal and party interests, rent-seeking, opportunities for accumulation, advancing particular institutions, electoral and public profiles. Alongside this, there exist clear opportunities for statecraft, developmental programmes, and the emergence of negotiated and hybrid formations of "statehood". We are eager to engage with wider theorisations of "the state", statehood, and empirical analyses of the diverse interests of state actors from different urban contexts. Here also the relations between state actors and communities might be revealing of the interests and power relations of "stateness" or government actors in different situations.

TRANSCALAR GOVERNANCE

Urban developments in Africa are strongly shaped by circuits of investment and policy circulations associated with developmental, sovereign and private actors. This stream is concerned to understand how actors with different spatial reach, origins and embeddedness together constitute the political formations that shape urban development outcomes. Ideas such as "transcalar territorial networks" or "territorial regulation" might be useful here, as well as detailed examination of the different power relations amongst actors (e.g. international investors and national government actors; private investors and traditional authorities or local communities) and the political configurations which emerge on the terrain of large-scale or other urban developments. Reaching from transnational actors to community based processes of participation or resistance would be very welcome.

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FINANCING DEVELOPMENT

Contributions are welcome here which explore the diverse ways in which financing for urban development is secured. From the experiences of urban development in many African contexts, there is little in the way of the "wall of money" driving a putatively global financialised investment in wealthier urban contexts. We especially welcome contributions which probe how financing for urban development is brought forward in such situations – for example, drawing on sources such as existing business and land assets, shaping planning systems and decisions, political influence, or innovations in financial vehicles in the absence of large scale foreign capital. We are eager to explore the nuanced asset geographies which enable urban territories and development projects to be rendered investable. Insights from urban and agrarian developments are welcome. We are also pleased to hear about case studies which probe the relationships between global financialised investors and embedded national and local political and financial actors. How are calculations about investability, profit and urban form transformed, or emerging, in and across different contexts?

TRANSNATIONAL ACTORS

Detailed analyses of particular transnational actors and their politics and interests would be welcome here, including sovereign actors (say, Chinese government actors); developmental organisations (like JICA, KOICA, World Bank, DFID); and private sector actors, such as those investing in FDI or real estate development, financialised investors, or developing or promoting global perspectives on urban investment opportunities (e.g. policy think tanks or global consultancy firms). What are the changing motivations and drivers of such investors? How do the terms and conditions of powerful international agencies and governmental actors shape urban development outcomes, or become swerved by the negotiations associated with such investments. What characterises the settings and protocols of such negotiations, and how are these sidestepped or transformed through the negotiations?

THE POLITICS OF LAND IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In many African countries, dual land systems are influential in shaping urban developments. Allocations of land by traditional authorities, family or communal landholders often provide opportunities for developments of all kinds, from large-scale international projects to the rapid expansion of suburban homes on urban peripheries. The politics of traditional leaders, cultures and entitlements make the irregular allocation of land, including encroachments on major projects, difficult to control. Customs of land occupation can also bring challenges for large scale developments arguably in the public interest e.g. for flood control or resilient infrastructure developments. Efforts to synchronise dual land systems e.g. through new digital innovations, may reinforce, transform, or generate new power relations determining urban outcomes. Contributions which explore these dynamics in relation to the politics of urban development will be very welcome.

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Photo: Kofi Kekeli Amedzro

ABSTRACTS
by Author's surname

ABLO, AUSTIN DZIWORNU

From gated communities to privatized cities: Land, capital and the changing face of urban development in Africa.

The growth and transformation of African cities are driven by multinational developers, businesspeople, urban citizens, and political stakeholders. The influx of private capital is transforming African cities ranging from the development of gated communities, ultra-modern shopping centers and private cities. Private cities such as the $250 million Appolonia City of Light project in Ghana, rely on large-scale land acquisition which has led to land dispossession, created social divisions, political fissures and deepen socio-cultural and economic divisions in peri-urban communities. The article sheds light on the land acquisition process and the new forms of urban inequalities that arise from privatized city projects. The Appolonia land is a stool land – thus, communally owned. However, the lease was brokered by some community elites without a broader community buy-in. This has exacerbated existing inequalities and transformed the socioeconomic, spatial, and institutional context of the community. The project is beneficial to investors who secured 'sweet land deals' legitimized by the state. There is a centralization of communal wealth among local elites who brokered such deals to make economic and political gains. Conversely, livelihoods dependent on the environment suffer dispossession through the loss of farmlands, created livelihood uncertainties. The commodification of communal land disrupts social relations and land tenure arrangements and exacerbated chieftaincy dispute in the community.

AMEDZRO, KOFI KEKELI

Examining the roles and interests of transnational actors in Large-Scale Urban infrastructure delivery in Tema: The case of Tema Port Expansion Project.

Recent literature on large-scale infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa largely revolves around infrastructure deficits, financialization of infrastructure and the increasing dominance of Chinese State-Owned companies (SOEs) in Infrastructure provision. The tactics, roles and interests of these Chinese SOEs and outcomes of infrastructure they deliver particularly around ports and Belt and Road Initiatives are well documented. A large-scale infrastructure project in Tema, Ghana which was funded via a syndicated loan with multiple transnational actors such as IFC of the World Bank Group, European maritime firms and bank, Chinese engineering firm and banks, American engineering consultancy firm, South African Bank and a host of others show the diverse roles and interests of these actors in a transcalar territorial network aside the obvious finance logic of profit-making. The paper argues that once there is financialization of infrastructure, sources of funding and other resources related to project delivery and geo-politics are not relevant in the process of place-making in the African context. This calls for recipient countries of large-scale infrastructure to focus on wider metropolitan and citizens' benefits/interest for a more just and well-coordinated urban development in addition to usual environmental and social impact assessments and financial logics of these projects .

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ABSTRACTS by Author's surname

AMER, QUSAY

The Transcalar Politics of Urban Development.

Out of the approximately 110 million individuals who have been forcibly displaced worldwide, 6.6 million refugees dwell in camps (UHNCR 2023). That implies that a significant proportion of the refugee populations reside in alternative settings, particularly urban areas, a subject that has garnered academic and non-academic attention, as well as humanitarian efforts. The increasing of the population, as well as the massive migration to cities especially in the global south, puts enormous pressure on the capacity of infrastructure and public facilities, such as education, health, and public space.

The city of Amman attempts to cope with the pressure arising from the influx of refugees, particularly following the Syrian uprising in 2011. The country hosts refugees of 57 nationalities, who are awaiting resettlement in a third country. As an active member of different international networks (such as: Connective Cities, Covenant of Mayors networks, and the Mediterranean City to City Migration Project MC2CM, a network initiated by the UCLG), the administration of Amman tries to exchange ideas with cities such as Lisbon, Vienna and Beirut on municipal issues relating to the reception of refugees.

This paper aims to answer how translocal networks influence local planning policies and governance approaches in dealing with migration. By focusing on the planning and production of physical interventions in different urban spaces and on the participation of all actors who are involved in the process, the paper answers 1) how the circulation of knowledge affects institutional settings, 2) which spatial conflicts and negotiation processes shape the places of refugee care in urban contexts, 3) and what the concrete spatial manifestations that emerge as architectural or infrastructural products from spatial conflicts look like. The paper aims to understand how refugees react to the already established governances and which kind of policies should be developed to face the situation.

ANSHARY, FARHAN

Urbanisasi: urban migration and changing imaginaries of "the city" and "the periphery" in Indonesia.

Planning practices have been criticised for privileging the city while putting non-city spaces aside in their considerations. Is such a problematic differentiation still reproduced, and more importantly, how does it affect existing socio-ecological arrangements and possibly contribute to maintaining injustice? To answer such a question, my presentation will look at how different spatial strategies imagine "the city" and "the periphery" through the case of urbanisasi of Jakarta, Indonesia. Urbanisasi in popular Indonesian understanding refers to the phenomenon of immigration to the city, and it is often depicted as a big national threat, countered with violence. However, for more than ten years, the state's attitude towards urbanisasi to Jakarta has shifted to a less hostile one. I argue that at least this changing attitude should be contextualised in the light of transcalar interconnection between three "somewhat diverging" narratives: 1) changing framing of mobility as human right, 2) changing framing narrative of urbanisation as solution as promoted by international non-governmental organisations, 3) increasingly reified city-countryside binary within the national government. While the lessened violence toward urbanisasi might be welcomed, I contend that the change still does not make existing policies address adequately some roots of problem, such as how urban policy is disconnected from the issue of land dispossession in the countryside—a key factor that pushes urbanisasi to occur.

ABSTRACTS by Author's surname

AWOHOUEDJI, EMMANUEL

The rules of the games: resemblance of urban practice and national politics in Benin's age of revelation.

Since 2016, The Republic of Benin, West Africa has been going through a major development program aiming to "reveal the country to Beninese and to the whole world" and rightfully titled, "Revealing Benin", or "Bénin Révélé". International Financial Institutions have praised the country for its economic prowess and performance whereas other organizations have pointed out the social and democratic cost of such performances highlighting the turn to an authoritarian leadership and the growing complaints about rising living costs. The Revealing Benin program is being implemented in nine main sectors which have been since subdivided into twenty-one. This paper draws from twelve months of ethnography investigating infrastructures in Benin. Through an in-depth analysis of the reconstruction of "Rue de l'Espoir" or the "Street Called Hope" and of the urban life surrounding it, specifically a group of card players, this paper suggests that the urban leisure practice of card playing and the national politics unfolding in the country bear similar traits of actions, but dissimilar traits of effects.

BELINGA ONDOUA, PATRICK

The enunciation of the State through the city. Lessons from Cameroon.

The State does not exist, that is a fact. Just think of the French jurist Léon Duguit, who said and regretted that he had never had lunch with the State. And yet, the State is there, everywhere: in the discourse of actors, in projects, in public policies, in government abstractions, in international programmes, through public services and public power, and above all in all the political science classics. So how can one grasp it and locate it concretely, if not be able to have lunch with it? To answer this question, this contribution starts from the premise that the city is a high place for the manifestation of the State. Drawing on the ideas and work of Gilles Deleuze, taken up by Jean-François Bayart, it suggests that, within the city, the State can only be understood as a phenomenon of enunciation. On the basis of experiences drawn from research in Cameroon, it explores three specific situations in which the State is enunciated in the city: a- the State as something that is contested; b- the State as something that is desired; and c- the State as an authority that is constantly negotiated.

ABSTRACTS

BENDAHAN, THÉO

Laying the groundwork for the anchoring of financial capital? Austerity urbanism, the renewal of active land policies and the financialisation of urban redevelopment in the Paris city-region.

Laying the groundwork for the anchoring of financial capital? Austerity urbanism, the renewal of active land policies and the financialisation of urban redevelopment in the Paris city-region. In the past decade, researchers have drawn attention to the key role played by cash-strapped, rent-seeking national and urban governments in constructing new frontiers for the anchoring of finance capital into the built environment. Focusing on the recent renewal of "active land policies" in the Paris city-region, the present paper aims to contributes to this literature on the financialisation-state nexus. Drawing on the study of a large-scale redevelopment project conducted in the suburban town of Fontenay-sous-Bois from 2011 to 2022, it provides two main insights. Firstly, it shows how the public purchase of privately-owned land in the Paris city-region has been rekindled since the late 2000s, namely through the creation of a tax-funded, central-state agency known as Etablissement public foncier d'Île-de-France (EPFIF). Secondly, it demonstrates how such an active intervention deployed by this state agency on land markets has been instrumentalised by some local authorities in order to maximise and capture rent gaps emerging from urban development, ultimately encouraging the delivery of non-residential, financialised property schemes. This strategy is adopted by local governments in an attempt to 'fix' funding gaps resulting from a steep decline in traditional central state grants, in a context akin to "austerity urbanism". Overall, the article provides a context-sensitive, transcalar analysis of the active, co-dependent role played by central and local state actors in the financialisation of urban development.

BLOCH, ROBIN

Stuck in the Middle: Government, Development Partners and Investors in the Making of Urban Development Outcomes.

Urban development – and specifically the making of the built environment, its associated (even constitutive) technologies, infrastructures and services, and the wider spatial formations which result – emerges from political economy processes which feature a array of relationships, interests and behaviours. State institutions and agencies, development partners (both International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and bilateral partners) and private sector investors are key but not exclusive actors. The complex of negotiated and purposive actions which results is always country context specific (often more so than city specific), and is determined by the particular political and economic dynamics at play. However, there are common – even somewhat predictable – patterns, procedures, and outcomes, in brief regularities, that can be discerned in contemporary urban development across different experiences. These urban development (or perhaps better, city building) conventions are identified and examined. The analysis draws on the practice and outcomes of three recent and diverse consultancy projects conducted for IFI clients: a Structure Plan for the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) in Ghana; a Spatial-Economic Strategy for the Jinja-Kampala-Mpigi (JKM) Transport Corridor in Uganda; and a climate-resilient infrastructure and services investment programming initiative for seven of Cambodia's secondary cities. Urban development outcomes – and reforms – arise from negotiated and often surprisingly collaborative processes that are nonetheless inherently political. A middle ground is often found. That said, outcomes are simultaneously conditioned, indeed often limited, by technical and economic conditions and constraints that tend to be overlooked.

ABSTRACTS

BRILL, FRANCES

Multi-layered international development-led urbanisation.

African urban development is embroiled in a multitude of transnational actors' (often competing) agendas. In this presentation I argue that in cases of international development organization-led urbanization, processes become further layered, creating barriers to knowledge transfer and increasing costs. Building on the idea that transnational actors have always required local knowledge (cf. Ballard and Harrison, 2019), I draw on my experience working in the sector to critically reflect on the challenges of institutionalized understandings of 'country-driven'. Specifically, I draw on an application for government funding by a UN-hosted fund to explore how development finance actors influence urbanization and its governance in three ways. Firstly, from a political perspective, country-first discourse and narratives of equality driven by projections of shared development trajectories privileges on-the-ground knowledge held by international actors. Secondly, tracing the process of applying for funding demonstrates how, despite narratives of country-driven approaches and a concerted effort to de-centralize decision-making, would-be-necessary urban development remains heavily influenced by centers of global influence. Finally, from a financial perspective, structures of development finance funding other development finance institutions, coupled with a pressure to deliver so-called 'innovative' finance mechanisms (see Hughes-McLure and Mawdsley, 2022 for a discussion), leads to a peeling away of money throughout the process and ultimately increases costs for funders. On a final note, I reflect on my own position in a global consultancy firm and its role in perpetuating these challenges – shaping each stage of the negotiation.

BROWN, DONALD & MANDA, MTAFU

Rural-urban planning and governance in 'transitional spaces': Comparative insights from Southern Africa.

In this paper, we address the following question: how is rural governance transforming in transitional spaces, and what are the implications for establishing urban planning systems in historically rural areas? Here, we conceptualise 'transitional spaces' as those with overlapping rural-urban features in constant flux. Our interest is in emerging towns and peri-urban areas where a range of transformations are occurring often outside the local states' reach. We locate our enquiry in Malawi through a comparative analysis of Karonga, an emerging town, and Mzuzu, a small city with an expanding periphery. Rather than relying on abstract planning theory, we argue for situated understandings of how decisions about urban planning and development are made in the real-world. Such understandings must be informed by an appreciation of the role that local institutions (notably the chieftaincy) play in decision-making, and the potential that such institutions pose for achieving more sustainable planning outcomes in transitional spaces.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

CHASUKWA, MICHAEL

Why Do Angels Fight? Aid Bypass and Financing of Urban Projects in Malawi's Pooled Development Funds.

Many international development aid policies such as Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action and Busan Partnership emphasise on using domestic institutions and procedures to deliver aid to poor countries. These development policies aim at achieving aid effectiveness, building capacity within national institutions and control aid proliferation. Despite donors and aid-receiving countries agreeing on using national institutions to deliver aid, reports indicate that much of aid is still delivered through bypass institutional structures. Concerns about corruption and weak implementing capacity in developing countries that negatively affect attainment of the intended results have facilitated usage of bypass arrangements. Based on primary data, this paper examines how multilateral and bilateral development agencies bypass government machinery to channel aid for the urban window projects in Malawi - a third world country in Southern Africa. The paper focuses on Local Development Fund - a pooled development funds– with the World Bank, African Development Bank and German Economic Group (KfW) as participating donors and the then Local Development Fund Technical Support Team, purportedly acting on behalf of government. We establish that project management units, earmarked funds and specialized procurement arrangements are some of mechanisms used by donors to circumvent public machinery in delivery development aid meant for implementation of urban window projects such as rural growth centers and semi-urban secondary centres. The paper establishes that bypass arrangements weaken further the capacity of developing countries to formulate and implement their own development. The paper argues that whilst bypass institutional structures achieve short-term gains displaying successful and visible 'donorship,' long-term gains are obstructed by institutional void and competition among actors associated with most of bypass arrangements of aid delivery. The paper indicates that donors, who are development angels, fight because the logic of politics of aid is not compatible to aid effectiveness agreements they sign up to at the international and domestic level. The logic of politics of aid brings a fight among development angels as they pursue visibility, impact that may comprise quality, better international relations, and pressure to spend to balance books. The paper concludes that bypass institutional structures of aid delivery increase aid fragmentation and fall outside preferred aid modalities of poor countries because, among others, weaken domestic institutions.

CARTWRIGHT, ANTON

Making sense of investment in urban Africa: what potential for enhanced investment flows?

That rapidly expanding African cities require more investment in infrastructure, housing and services is well documented. Less-well documented is why this investment has been so difficult to mobilise and that existing investments are not always delivering on potential. Efforts to increase investment appear stuck between irreconcilable perspectives: the demand from financiers for 'bankable projects', concerns about debt:GDP ratios, and requests for 'concessionary finance' from African countries perceived to be financially risky. Whilst underpinned by the logics of their proponents, the respective framings conceal the real-world constraints on public and private finance in African cities, the implications of not mobilising this investment and the realities of how finance is currently flowing. Crucially, none of the existing perspectives has proven capable of mobilising the quantity or type of investment required. The talk will focus on the promise and limitations of efforts on the African continent to change the quality and the quantity of investment flowing into African cities. These efforts include Africa's approach to new risk metrics and Modern Monetary Theory, just energy and carbon transactions, blended finance and country platforms. The discussion is deemed important in the context of increasing demand for investment and new supply side options emerging from bilateral partnerships, the BRICS Bank, African Development Bank and the Green Climate and Loss and Damage Funds.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

COLVEN, EMMA

Splintered Adaptation: Water Crisis and Speculative Urbanism in Jakarta.

Infamous for its flood risk, congested canals, and rapid rates of subsidence, Jakarta has become synonymous with the stereotypically 'risky' Asian mega-city. Nonetheless, speculative real estate development remains profitable and seemingly unaffected by these risks. Facilitated by the Indonesian state, the profit-seeking activities of private developers and investors continue to transform the northern coastal region, which is acutely vulnerable and exposed to both chronic flooding and water shortages. This paper asks: how does Jakarta's water crisis shapes the feasibility, profitability, success, or failure of property development? How does the real estate industry respond to this crisis? I draw on in-depth interviews with consultants and bureaucrats, and an analysis of secondary sources relating to water and property, including industry reports, news media articles, and government documents.

This paper demonstrates that, while state efforts to address flooding and water shortages are hampered by politico-economic factors, private developers have the resources to protect their developments from environmental (and financial) risk. These actors subsequently promise and market security to prospective buyers. Yet while providing protection for those who can afford it, Jakarta's real estate industry undermines the city's future. Investments in private flood defenses displace floodwaters and risk onto neighboring kampungs. Residents' lives are thus made more risky, vulnerable, and uncertain by pervasive conditions of speculative urbanism. This paper provides insights into splintered ecological security, a process that is created in tandem with acts of financial and environmental speculation, with implications for residents well beyond the walls of private real estate projects.

DAWSON, KATE

Sand Banks: City-sand formations in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

This presentation thinks through the socio-materialities of sand as a way into the politics of land and city-making in and around Freetown. Like elsewhere, demand for this grainy material is driven by construction activities, where sand – alongside cement and water – is a key ingredient in concrete. As Freetown continues to undergo expansion and densification, the demand for sand has been met by extracting the material from the city's wider environs, including riverine environments and beaches. Outside of its concrete manifestations, sand is also a significant feature of Freetown's broader landscape, seen through the islands, riverine edges and coastal beaches which are entangled with the city's socio-material form. Thinking with city and sand in these multiple ways brings to light a range of socio-spatial formations, which together showcase how material city-making is a deeply contested process connected to both more stable plots of land, as well as more fluid land formations borne out of shifting sedimentary materials across the region. By turning to landscapes of sand in Freetown, the presentation shows how land is a contingent socio-natural category, produced, unmade and politicised in different ways. The presentation builds tentative insights from interviews, informal conversations and a workshop with stakeholders across the Western Region, undertaken in collaboration between the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), UCL and the University of Gothenburg, alongside secondary work, with a view to build further insights through primary research in the near future. At present, the analysis takes shape around three socio-natural formations which provide staged landings for reflecting on the political ecologies of sand, and by extension, land: namely, the offshore sandbank, the banked edge and the vote bank. Coalescing around the notion of the bank, the presentation considers how land is un/made through a set of [sandy] socio-natural exchanges that weave together people, space and power in the city.

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DENG, HANDUO

Financing and developing a grand greenway system in Chengdu, China: a perspective of state entrepreneurialism.

Socio-ecological goals and local growth momentum are often portrayed contradictory in urban development and governance studies. Many urban environmental upgrading projects are critiqued as greenwashing, while visions of enhancing ecological quality and environmental justice are constrained by financing gaps and prone to growth imperatives. The paper engages with the literature by examining a grand greenway development project in Chengdu, China. As part of Chengdu's vision of the 'park city,' the greenway trails span over 500 kilometres and connect 133 km^2 of parks, green spaces, and community service facilities citywide. The research scrutinises state intentionality and approaches to developing and financing the greenway system. It reveals the local party-state leader's political commitment to the Chinese central state's 'ecological civilisation.' Political aspirations drove the local leader to align with the central mandates of environmental justice and social inclusiveness, making the development rationale beyond value capture. Yet the municipality mobilised a wide range of economic interests, particularly property development, to finance greenways and fused a long-term economic strategy towards green transition. Instead of relying on fiscal funds, it deployed state-owned development corporations to leverage capital market funds, build the greenway, and maintain daily governance. The governance was market-based but different from private governance. Chengdu's greenway development illustrates state entrepreneurialism. To achieve extra-growth objectives, the state plays a dominant role and mobilises entrepreneurial market tools in the grand greenway development. State entrepreneurialism is a perspective from China's urban development but offers conceptual insights to a wider context. It reveals not only the salient role of the state but also the structural coherence of urban governance with context-sensitive economic development models.

DIAZ MEDALLA, ALEJANDRO

Ciudad del Niño and the city as a state project. Contesting neoliberal urban development?

Situated in San Miguel's municipality (Santiago de Chile), *Ciudad del Niño*, established in 1943, served as a boarding school-style town, a collaboration between a private corporation and the Chilean state, mirroring the "Boys Town" concept in the US. Closed in 2001, the corporation later repurposed its 27.2-hectare urban area for private investment. In 2019, local authorities approved a project comprising 23 residential towers, promising 5,041 new apartments and an estimated 20,000 residents, sparking significant opposition by the local communities. In the 2021 elections, the defeat of the right-wing mayor by Erika Martinez, a central-left council member, was attributed to her pledge to stop the project. Currently, Mayor Martinez, in collaboration with the National Government, leads a new initiative for social housing and a large public park, emphasising density constraints under a right-to-the-city principle. Despite being hailed as a "state project" and presented by President Boric as "The biggest Habitable Park in the Metropolitan Region", neighbourhood organisations, crucial in opposing the original project, feel excluded from post-election decision-making. Amongst the real estate sector opinions vary, some perceiving a threatening state intervention in the urban land market, while others view it as a positive urban politics precedent. This case underscores the conflict between private and public entities for urban space and the evolving role of local governance amidst increasing demands for participatory decision-making in urban development. Initial findings suggest that transcalar relations amongst actors can extend the influence of local governments and grassroots organisations facing metropolitan-local struggles over urban space.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

DIETERLE, CAROLIN

Collective land formalisation beyond the rural-urban divide. Shining a light on peri-urban Africa.

Rapid urbanisation in Africa is intensifying processes of land commodification in peri-urban regions, where rising competition for land is driving the conversion of 'customary' or collectively held land to private property. Subject to multiple actors, institutions and interests, these processes are poorly understood, yet constitute a central feature of African urbanisation. Outside of urban contexts, the transformation of collectively held land has long been the subject of vibrant debates on African land rights, the global 'land rush', and rural land use change. This paper aims to contribute to current discussions on land commodification and formalisation by linking 'rural-based' and 'urban-based' debates on land commodification. So far, scholarship and policy agendas around land formalisation have been mostly kept separate between the rural and urban spheres, which impedes meaningful comparative analysis. Given that urban and rural land are fundamentally intertwined with each other, any ontological, epistemological, and methodological divides that obscure these interconnections are problematic. More recent trends in urban studies indicate a move beyond the rural-urban dichotomy to challenge the concept of cities as bounded, fixed, or generalizable. In line with these approaches and drawing on existing studies, as well as scoping research in Gulu, Uganda, this paper aims to challenge the traditional rural-urban dichotomy by focusing specifically on peri-urban zones, where both market-promoting and market-restraining formalisation processes are happening at the same time, and where rural and urban debates and dynamics around land commodification converge in unexplored ways.

DUMINY, JAMES

Thinking problematically about the city: The state and planning as a site of urban innovation.

An understanding of urban innovation cannot be limited to the harnessing of technologies sourced from the private sector, to engagements with civil society, or to the entrepreneurial spirit of informality within models of governance that position the city as a laboratorial site of experimentation. What government does, and what built environment professions do, in and through governance-related activities, including the establishment of durable procedures of government, must be incorporated into the purview of urban innovation. Yet, typically the place and role of the state within urban governance remains caught within a limiting critique of neoliberalism or a depiction of the state as incorrigible, at best, and oppressive, at worst. Planning, for its part, is presented in some critical accounts as a monolithic domain of state stasis; a procedural system for the reproduction of pre-existing and future inequalities. However, an alternative view of city transformation would place urban planning as a potential driver of governance innovation. Here we draw upon recent experiences of planning reform in South Africa, focusing on the development and application of a process known as the Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP), to consider the implications of seeing the state as a site of problematization, and planning as a site of innovation in urban governance. Such a perspective draws attention to the temporalities of response, rupture, uneven institutionalization, and setback that attend acts and processes of innovation unfolding within the state. It highlights the demand for successful innovations to navigate cross-sectoral and multi-scalar imperatives, and draws attention to the enduring need to establish meaningful links between the fiscus and other modes and instruments of governance that can sustain or transform urban regimes.

ABSTRACTS

FOURCHARD, LAURENT

Negotiating statehood and manufacturing twilight institutions.

This presentation will follow the journey of two analytical frameworks (manufacturing twilight institutions and negotiating statehood) poorly used in urban studies, but which could help to develop comparative insights from the political urban experiences of the African continent. Twilight institutions were developed by anthropologist Christian Lund to bring out the plurality of local political landscapes where relations of power and legitimacy are negotiated in day-to-day social encounters. If the concept was not crafted to understand urban situations, it has been increasingly used to explore the making of variegated urban authorities. It reflects a long tradition of grounded empirical research and could renew classical approach on client patron relationships, to understand situations of authority beyond this patronage lens, to reconceptualize the elusiveness of the state and bureaucracy in urban society. It differs but completes what political scientists Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard have labeled negotiating statehood, a critique of state failure literature which insists on the need to rethink the historicity and legitimacy of the state and the embeddedness of bureaucratic organizations in society. While approaching the situations of local institutions vis à vis state authorities in different ways, both frameworks could help researchers to politicize the urban world, to explore competing authorities and to bring the state back in urban areas in analyzing arenas of negotiation and conflicts between state and non-state authorities. The two frameworks will be tested empirically in using the case of popular transport in Lagos (Nigeria).

GENES, MARIAM

Financing Urban Development: Real Estate Investment along Road Corridors in Dar es Salaam.

In African cities like Dar es Salaam, urban development is influenced by both government and private sector initiatives. In Tanzania, the government funds large-scale infrastructure projects, such as road construction, primarily through loans and grants from development partners like the World Bank, AfDB, JICA, KOICA, to mention some. The private sector, in turn, engages in small to large-scale real estate businesses and developments along these new roads, shaping the urban landscape. This paper examines two road corridors in Dar es Salaam to explore the types of real estate developers involved and their financing sources. Preliminary findings suggest that the sources of finance vary based on the type of developer (whether individual, corporate, or state-owned), the project's scale, and whether the developer is local or foreign. Local private developers, including individuals and companies, typically finance their projects through existing business profits, bank loans, pre-sales and joint ventures with both nationals and foreigners. State-owned developers, such as the National Housing Corporation (NHC), primarily rely on own profits, bank loans, pre-sales, public-private partnerships (PPP), and the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) contracts. These insights are therefore crucial as they reveal the diverse sources and methods of financing real estate in Dar es Salaam, and highlight the factors influencing the financing preferences and decisions of different developer types.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

GONZÁLEZ, SARA

State as a Social Relation:
Contradictions and Contestations in
Urban Development Strategies in the UK
and Spain.

This presentation starts from the proposal (developed by Bob Jessop) that the State is a social relation rather than a fixed and well-defined entity or organisation. I discuss, in a relational way, state urban development strategies across two European countries with very different welfare and state configurations: UK and Spain. The presentation draws on empirical research that I have been involved with in the last five years which has looked at gentrification and alternatives and contestation in retail and commercial spaces in cities. I discuss how across the UK and Spain the state pursues what might seem contradictory urban development strategies, in different ways across the two countries. In particular, I analyse a spectrum of state strategies that treat urban retail spaces all the way from pure commercial assets where to extract rent value to public health anchors or urban commons in the cases of Newcastle, Bury and Bradford in the UK and Barcelona in Spain, depending on the particular configurations. Given the understanding of the state as a complex, porous and even contradictory form, I also reflect on the role of urban social movements, citizen campaigns and community groups in contesting and shaping these state strategies and ultimately shaping urban retail spaces.

HAFEZ, NIHAL

The politics of heritage revitalization in Downtown Cairo.

The research tackles the politics of heritage in Cairo post-2011 revolution by studying the case of the recent heritage revitalization in Downtown Cairo- the centre and the core of the 2011 revolution. It argues that heritage revitalization projects in Downtown Cairo are tools for state making under the military regime and for the state to gain control over the area after its occupation by protests from 2011 to 2013 and after its association with revolutionary meanings. Post 2011 movement, the Egyptian state declared a vision to make Downtown Cairo a 'green heritage area' and, for the first time, invites and encourages the private sector (al-Ismailia Company) to contribute to developing national heritage under its supervision. The research questions this new relationship between the state and the private sector and argues that the new strategy for calling the private sector creates a new 'heritage regime', in other words, new modes of practice and new frameworks for heritage governance. I suggest that this new regime is not a neoliberal strategy for intervention and cannot be de-politicized given the socio-political moment in Egypt. To unpack the suggested heritage regime and understand it within its context, I attempt to trace the power hierarchy between the state and the private sector, problematize the narratives of state-making and control of space throughout this relationship and identify its strategies of intervention in urban spaces and the meaning behind them. I rely on three main bodies of literature: Critical Heritage Studies; statehood; and urban regime theories. The research contributes to critical heritage literature by tackling Middle Eastern practices of heritage and going beyond UNESCO frames and rules and brings decolonizing critical heritage as an approach for the case study.

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ABSTRACTS
by Author's surname

HARRISON, PHILIP

The contradictions of sovereignty within sovereign circuit investments: transnational development financing in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

In Africa, there is a profound contradiction in the struggle for national sovereignty as a post-colonial objective. On the one hand, national elites struggle to control their territory, resources and population, autonomously of external influence, but, on the other, they require financial resources to consolidate this control which are not available domestically. Compelled to accept international financing, they compromise on their desire for sovereignty, setting up an enduring tension in governmental intention and action. The tension is especially acute in the case of aid-dependent Tanzania which adopted 'self-reliance' as its primary development goal. Despite the apparent incongruity, national actors have not given up on self-reliance as an ideal, using a range of strategies to strengthen national sovereignty even as they accept international funding from multilateral agencies and global sovereign actors. At the same time, global sovereign actors are driven by their own ambitions, approaches and domestic politics, and by the need to protect their own national reputation against risk, although this is mitigated by their need to sustain legitimacy in recipient countries. The presentation explores the processes of negotiation – or the synergising of interest – between global and national sovereign players in relation to investments in urban infrastructure in Dar es Salaam, with reference to the investment activities of East Asian sovereign investors (that is, China, Japan and Korea). It explores processes in producing 'non-controversial' infrastructures such as bridges, flyovers and road upgrades, but also refers to 'controversial' cases where interests have not synergised and where proposed investments have either failed or have uncertain outcomes – namely, the Bagamoyo port development, Kigamboni new city, and the Dar es Salaam port upgrade. The paper shows that national sovereignty is continually renegotiated, including through ongoing processes of transnational investment by global sovereign actors. The outcome of these engagements are reflected materially in the production, and non-production, of territory.

HECKEL, MANUEL

Water utility rejection of private development finance in Kenya.

Despite the decade-long promotion of private development finance by Development institutions and plans to 'escort' finance into sectors such as water supply and sanitation, the so-called 'Wall Street Consensus' (Gabor 2021) has barely touched ground and private finance has remained 'present-in-absence' (Bernards 2023) across the global South. A so-called 'finance gap' has been widely evoked to rally governments and institutions behind the international agenda of increasing borrowing from commercial sources towards achieving national and international goals. Years of grooming by donors has created some potential borrowers (e.g. water utilities), but this hard-won 'bankability' has rarely led to sustained private investments. Kenya's water sector exemplifies this. Limited and irregular private development finance flows have persisted despite coordinated work by a range of national sector organisations and international Development institutions to 'escort' country's most promising water utilities to local capital markets. Notwithstanding a range of de-risking and assistance measures to increase utilities' creditworthiness and bankability of their projects, even (near-)creditworthy utilities have rejected private development finance. Faced with this rejection, donors and sector organisations have recently changed gear and aimed to align utilities' valuation of private development finance with theirs. This rehash of 'attitude adjustment', I will argue, has been critical to establish utilities' eagerness to emit debt and a steady private development finance flow to basic services sectors, transforming the natures of utilities, services delivery, and urban development.

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ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

HILBRANDT, HANNA

Municipal Structural Adjustment: Conceptualizing the efforts of global climate finance initiatives in Mexican secondary cities.

Over the last decade, development practitioners, international financial institutions, municipal networks, and global philanthropies have argued for the necessity to increase private sector investment in 'sustainable' urban infrastructures. In this paper I examine global climate finance (GCF) initiatives that respond to this call, focusing on the ways in which they work to create the institutional preconditions for such investment. By placing these interventions in the lineage of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), I develop the notion of Municipal Structural Adjustment (MSA) as an analytical framework for examining the fields of intervention and modes of policy making through which these initiatives seek to reform municipalities' governance structures, innovate planning tools, and introduce financial instruments.

Empirically I focus on GCF initiatives that work with Mexican municipalities, such as the Inter-American Development Bank's "Emerging and Sustainable Cities Initiative". Building on expert interviews with development officers, municipal officials, planners, and consultants, I analyze these initiatives' efforts to reform urban bureaucracies. I argue that in difference to earlier SAPs in which development actors enforced a clear package of reforms by holding national governments hostage to "conditionality-laden" policy measures, GCF initiatives adapt their modes of intervention to the particularity of policy making at the urban scale. Thereby they exert power trough soft power mechanisms, whereby cities are offered support on a voluntary basis and agreed spheres of influence are slowly expanded, or the introduction of financial and legal technicalities shapes governance decisions in invisible but effective ways.

HOEFSLOOT, FENNA; GUPTA, NEHA; FLORES, JESUS & MBUGUA MUTHA-MA, DENNIS

Broker bureaucracies: sweet talking the state in a context of digital transformation in Nairobi, Mumbai, and Guadalajara.

Intermediaries play crucial roles in the implementation and functioning of the state in the transition towards digital governance. As a restructuring of networks, information flows, and territories – the digitalising state implies the transition towards the digitalised interaction between the state and its residents, signalling a potential shift in the position of intermediaries in this process. Drawing on interviews with brokers and key informants in land administration and ethnographic observations in Nairobi, Guadalajara, and Mumbai, we explore the interplay between digital technologies, paper-based systems, typists, consultants, and citizens in the digitalising state. This urges us to consider digitalisation in many ways goes against the novelty and excitement ascribed to the dynamics of modernising and digitalising state governance. Paying attention to the geographies of information flows shows how digitalisation in practices unfolds in both the offices of the state as well as in subaltern, hybrid spaces and through acts of brokerage. We argue that the paper-filled offices of the print shops and cybercafés are the sites where a potentially different range of alternative digital futures are exposed. Outside of the tropes of control, seamless connection, or the globalising effect of digital technologies, these spaces give insight into the deeply institutionalised cultures and ways of organising civil and political life in which digital technologies are introduced.

ABSTRACTS by Author's surname

HUANG, ZHENGLI

Lucrative Infrastructure and Intentional Bypassing: Comparing two Chinese financed infrastructure in Kenya.

This research delineates the evolution of Chinese finance in infrastructure development in Kenya, transitioning from a Government-to-Government (G2G) to a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model, as exemplified by the Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Nairobi Expressway. The paper employs empirical evidence from the town of Voi for the SGR case and Nairobi for the Expressway. Both projects resulted in enclosed linear spaces; however, they demonstrated distinct approaches to generating value through different forms of "enclaving." In the case of the SGR, the focus is on the anticipation of increased land value. Nevertheless, this has led to uneven development in Voi, employing "passive enclaving" through displacement and isolation while concentrating investments in specific areas and for certain people. Conversely, in the PPP-financed Expressway, the emphasis is on the location of affluent individuals, deliberately bypassing and excluding others. The paper contends that the shift from a G2G to a PPP financing model introduces new challenges and risks in infrastructure development in Africa, redistributing power and risks, particularly through the potential commodification of infrastructure projects. As private investment seeks profitability in infrastructure, the value-adding process hinges on controlling access to these developments and ensuring their efficient utilization.

After the introduction section, the paper first examines the shift in China's finance from G2G lending to PPP and the rationale behind it. It will also analyze the redistribution of interests, power, and risks among different stakeholders and what it entails for project planning. Subsequently, the study delves into two case studies, analyzing how each project was planned and how infrastructure became commodified in the shift of the finance model. The fourth section analyzes the access of both infrastructure at local levels, especially how this access is controlled (in the SGR relatively loosely, while in the Expressway project access was intentionally tightly confined) and what this entails for urban enclaving and bypassing. This is followed by the conclusion that PPP is contrary to being a panacea for sustainable infrastructure development. Rather, further privatization and commodification of infrastructure will amplify the bypassing and inequality embedded in large-scale connectivity infrastructure projects.

JANA, WILFRED

Unpacking the Lilongwe Water and Sanitation Project (LWSP): Transcalar Networks and Power Relationships.

In this paper, I investigate the complex dynamics of urban development initiatives in the water sector in Lilongwe city. Despite the existence of urban actors with clear cut roles, the water sector in Lilongwe shows complex transcalar dynamics involving local, and global actors influenced by varying ambitions and motivations. Using the 'transcalar territorial network' framework (Halbert and Rouanet 2014), I examine how actors on the World Bank funded Lilongwe Water and Sanitation project navigated the complexities of divergent motivations, ideologies, and power dynamics, effectively managing associated risks in the process. This analysis problematizes the dichotomization between the local and the global, and instead embraces a more integrated approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness and mutual influence of various scales and actors. Through this analysis, I explore the role of the World Bank as an actor that is embedded and contextualised despite the common perception of the World Bank as a transnational institution imposing its own agenda on beneficiary nation states. I also explore the role of the Lilongwe Water Board as a 'pocket of effectiveness' (Hickey 2023) with modernist ambitions and how it maintains this status by efficiently organising itself to embrace the Banks project. Through these two discussions, I show how actors made the landing of finance capital for the project possible by navigating the contradiction of the World Banks developmental agenda, and the Lilongwe Water Boards commercial logics, ultimately shaping the outcome of the project.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

KARIPIDOU, VARVARA

State Effects and Political Contestations: The territorialisation of the local state through urban planning initiatives.

This paper investigates the complex dynamics of urban initiatives, focusing on post-democratization urban planning and development in Eastern Europe, particularly in Bucharest, Romania. Despite the existence of stringent, centralised urban planning legislation, the urban development landscape in Eastern Europe is significantly influenced by a diverse range of politically and economically motivated actors, operating from the global and national levels down to the very localised grassroots level of administrative organisation and urban governance. The decentralised governance model and highly informal political culture in Romania contribute to fragmented and suboptimal urban planning initiatives. This is attributed to the involvement of a multitude of actors, both public and private, in urban development and governance. The transcalar associational networks formed through their practices and interactions further complicate these processes, manifesting in effects ranging from legal and formal to highly informal or with blurry legal backgrounds. Associational networks play a dual role in shaping planning by driving deviations and intersecting with political, economic, legal, and administrative processes. This research emphasises the imperative for a systematic exploration of the multilayered features of urban policies involving state and non-state actors, as well as global, national, and local dynamics. Through the analysis of planning processes and the redistribution of the state's regulatory capacity to local districts, a distinctive understanding of post-democratization state formation around planning emerges, revealing state-like effects across processes and actors. The identified planning deviations occur in relation to legal and regular frameworks, exposing conflicting rationalities within the state and allowing for a nuanced comprehension of multilevel connections in urban processes.

KLINK, JEROEN

Fictitious value for discretionary money. Brazilian conversations around the trans-scalar making of urban assets.

This presentation is organized in three parts. In the first, I will outline some of the theoretical drivers behind our research program and the associated field work on urban development politics and finance in Brazilian cities. This will briefly cover three related dimensions: (i) the need to move from studies on urban financialization to work that fleshes out the relationships between money, credit and finance; (ii) the potential of linking urban political economy to a variety of disciplinary fields that contribute to provide a deeper understanding of the social constitution of urban development markets; and (iii) the role of planners as more than innocent bystanders in urban development politics through the capitalization of projected streams of asset-related income and the leverage of discretionary upfront cash. In the second part I will provide some illustrations of ongoing empirical work, while the concluding part wraps up with some observations on how Brazilian case-based research and learning on urban development politics and finance might contribute to broader international conversations and theorizations organized around land, labor, and money.

ABSTRACTS

KOMBE, WILBARD

Negotiating Urban Development: Global Urban Policy and Compromise in Dar es Salaam.

The reflections presented in this discussion centre on the debates in urban development. The aim is to illuminate the little understood of politics and compromises involved in the roll out of globally funded projects in large cities in Africa. The focus is on the World Bank financed project in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The findings are based on data and information from the literature reviews, over 30 face-to-face and online confidential interviews and communications with development experts working or who have worked in Dar es Salaam.

It is noted that the Bank has been successful in executing its mission in Tanzania despite sustained government reluctance against decentralization and weakened local government/ governance system. This is attributed to several factors chief among them being the resolve to strike compromises for mutual benefits of the state and donor; critical also was the establishment of a team of largely local development professionals with track record of working networks with the international organisations as well as with the central and local government.
The paper argues that deeper analysis of the tensions and the inherent interests of both global development finance and governments are central to understanding the negotiated nature of the city development and urban agency in Africa.

KOMU, FELICIAN

Urban Development in Africa - Lessons from Dar es Salaam.

Dar es Salaam city is one of the world's fastest growing cities along the Indian Ocean in Tanzania with an annual growth rate of 5.1%. It was once a citadel of industrial production with three large textile factories, the only bicycle-making factory in Eastern Africa, the largest meat packing factory in 1970s-1990s, and thousands of salary-earning populations. Areas around the then thriving industrial zones exhibit dense housing most of which developed by individual households outside the formal planning

system. During 1980's, a general downfall of national economy resulted in shutting down the industries, weakening urban authorities, discouraging new investments and a general decline of urban living. Nevertheless, Dar es Salaam continued to attract rural migrants looking for jobs. Unfortunately, the immigrants worsened the emerging unemployment problem. With exploding population, public land reserves as well as land considered to be hazardous was squatted upon by the immigrants. Overwhelmed by the growing population and steady urban infrastructure, the Government dissolved the Dar es Salaam city council in June 1996 and in its place a self-managing City Commission was put in place. The commission's work was facilitated by a UN Habitat programme, the Sustainable City Program (SCP) of 1990. Despite the tangible impacts of the Commission work especially in resolving solid waste management, urban transport and worsening housing condition, the Commission would later be blamed for disarming community-based organisations and suppressing democracy (Myers, 2014). It was officially wound up in 1999 in advance of the national general election. Up to early 2010's the city's economy could be described as being marked by lack of and poor urban infracfucture, booming informal settlements, low level of investement in housing, and exhorbitant rent charges in all real estate sub-markets.

The turn-around for Dar es Salaam came with the Second-Generation Financial Sector Reforms in Tanzania (2003) and the launching of Tanzania Housing Finance Project in 2010. The city whose population accounts for nearly 9% of national economy benefited most from the reforms. Improvements in the regulatory frameworks about land/property rights, introduction of secondary mortgage facilities and establishment of new public real estate companies created a fertile ground for new investments both for the local and international investors. Resilience measures taken in the post global financial crisis of 2008 also played a role in attracting new actors in the city's urban development. The city's landscape has significantly changed ever since. The dominant single family housing typology is gradually being replaced with multi-family housing, more reasonable rental charges in office and retail as well as high-end housing resonate not only in the city but also in other towns as well.

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It is the intention of this presentation to highlight the kind of investments currently being pursued in the city with special focus on their contribution to urban development in the context of the 2016-2036 Dar es Salaam Master Plan. A dive in land, property rights and housing needs as enablers of investment will be necessary to explain why cities like Dar es Salaam are failing to attract investment. Housing is the most significant investment in any city that defines the city's landscape and well-being of its citizens.

KOMU, FELICIAN; KOMBE, WILBARD & NYAMSENDA, SABATHO

Land Acquisition for Public Infrastructure, Community Engagement and Compensation Concerns: The Msimbazi Case, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

In 2018, the government of Tanzania with support from the World Bank launched the Msimbazi Opportunity Plan (MOP) based on 'charrette' design principles. The key objective of the MOP was to transform 'the basin from a hazardous liability into a beacon of urban resilience'. The MOP was in response to the ever-recurring floods and subsequent destruction of houses and infrastructure, as well as loss of life in the basin. For instance, the 2011 floods claimed 40 lives, led to 200 injuries and displacement of 2,000 families, a large part of the lower Msimbazi was therefore declared hazardous land.

Four strategies were formulated which included mitigation, protection, transformation, and governance over the 400 ha of Lower Msimbazi Basin. In the implementation of the plan, around 2,400 households had to be relocated after being compensated for their developments. However, out of these 184 households rejected the compensation package for various reasons primarily unfair compensations. Also, there have been persistent complaints associated with disregard of land rights of the residents.

The key issue which this paper raises is: what underlines these decisions made, discontents and position taken by the government and other actors at various levels? This paper uses a qualitative case study mixed methods approach to understand the historical development of the land and its inherent rights in the Msimbazi Basin. Specifically, the paper uncovers the

tensions between World Bank protocols, the grey nature and complex history of settlement and expectation from land users, and the choices made by the government in regard of enforcement of certain regulations.

The paper argues that implementation of a resettlement programme in a vibrant informal area on a prime location as is the case with Msimbazi Basin must be considered carefully; and require an inclusive approach that ensures substantive engagement of the people that will be affected. Besides, latent values that are not captured in the standard compensation protocols such as stable and continuous raising house/room/bed rents ought to be included in the compensation package. The market value-based method of compensation and the loss of income from the rents lies at the centre of conflicts between the state and the displaced. The need for national guidelines and protocols on declaration and occupation of hazardous land, timely intervention especially where an imminent climate change will have adverse effects on settlement is wanting. Finally, where rigid national laws and land governance practices are implemented along tested international standards like the World Bank Environmental and Social Safeguards, there ought to be an agreement on an amicable mechanism to mitigate grievances.

LANE, MATTHEW

African Experiments in Infrastructure Financialization: An Urbanisation of Sovereign Debt in Malawi.

This paper contributes to understanding the 'asset geographies' that operate to establish infrastructure debt as a financial asset by examining the material, economic, and political relations that are enabling distinctive forms of urban financing in Malawi. It explains how the successful private financing and delivery of urban road infrastructure projects has not only been able to emerge from the backdrop of an otherwise restrained fiscal landscape in Malawi; but has become somewhat of a model and benchmark for financial innovation in the wider region. This approach opens up new perspectives on the financialization of urban infrastructure. Starting from the African context, we highlight a series of overlapping spatial and temporal dynamics which have operated to

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assetize certain roads in Malawi, specifically for the domestic bond market. Through our analysis we raise the question of whether an 'urbanisation of sovereign debt' is taking place as the urban becomes an increasingly vital arena for new forms of finance-driven statecraft to unfold, including in what currently remains one of the world's most ostensibly rural countries. This serves to challenge perceptions of urban Africa as an inert landscape, inconducive to flows of private-sector investment. Instead the paper points to the unique ways in which the past, present and future of urbanisation in Malawi are animated to render infrastructure as bankable, and thus a future urbanising Malawi as investable. More generally, we argue that an asset geographies approach supports analyses of infrastructure financialisation focussed on the emergent political and economic dynamics of investment, rather than globalising processes of financialisation.

LINDELL, ILDA

The contested spaces of large-scale infrastructure projects in Maputo, Mozambique.

Large-scale transport infrastructure development has been a key priority in Maputo in the last decade. Such developments are intended to expand capital-intensive flows and connections to distant places, as well as spearhead a new kind of urban development that seeks to break with the pervasive informality of urban living. New and shifting political configurations have emerged to implement and monitor these infrastructural developments, along with preemptive as well as forceful interventions such as displacement. However, these infrastructures both shape and are shaped by informal everyday practices, and control over infrastructural spaces is continuously contested. Informal practitioners (such as unauthorized traders) re-insert themselves into spaces previously reclaimed for the infrastructure, and position themselves at strategic new road intersections, where they are able to participate in, create or expand their own distant connections. They cunningly navigate political institutional configurations as well as territorial administrative boundaries, as they seek to minimize losses or make the most of the big infrastructural changes. The ways in which the new infrastructures are experienced and contested are however highly diverse, partly reflecting differing experiences

of widening/shrinking spatial reach and of the enabling/disabling effects of the infrastructures. The paper uncovers some of this diversity by exploring sites in the central city and at the edge of the city, that are marked by different socio-material and political processes. Based on fieldwork in Maputo, the paper highlights the situated and uncertain outcomes of large-scale infrastructure projects.

MARX, COLIN

Land management and equitable spatial transformation: Case study of eThekwini Municipality and the Ingonyama Trust land.

Durban is unique among South African cities in resembling the situation more common across other African cities. That is, it has, at least, three 'layers' of land management practices (statutory, customary – through the Ingonyama Trust Board, and informal) all interacting in seemingly frustrating, unintended, and unpredictable ways. In such processes, the compounding effects of these interactions apparently produce winners and losers and with the aggregate effect for the sustainable city, poorly understood. While formal land management systems have emerged from highly regulated and legal systems, the emerging practices are messy, complex, layered, and often co-constitutive. These are underscored by performative, complex land tenure systems spanning tradition, formal and informal land markets, which operate as distinct and yet interrelated systems shaping urbanization dynamics on the periphery. This leaves local municipal management facing numerous and complex practices associated with the changing use of land, particularly in the context of urban planning systems that favour freehold over other tenure systems. It also seemingly conflicts with the purpose of customary land allocation systems, as well as localized informal systems that emerge. In this context, we examine the land management practices addressing the question of how layered land management practices, changing land values, and planning for equitable spatial transformation interact because of urbanization. Our primary concern is to understand the ways in which these interactions can be discerned as producing systemic effects on the development trajectory of the city as a whole.

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MAZHAR, NOOR

Incremental Densification: The production, regularisation, and regulation of rental housing markets in Cape Town, South Africa.

Residents have incrementally built, developed, and provided rental housing, with varying degrees of compliance to building regulations in backyards of houses in formal, fully serviced neighbourhoods. Backyard dwellers have previously been 'invisible' to planners because backyard housing has conventionally been viewed as transitional housing. However, recently, the City of Cape Town has acknowledged that it is neither possible nor practical to provide subsidised houses to all its residents. Therefore, regulatory provisions have been put in place to facilitate homeowners and small-scale landlords to formalise and regularize these units.

There is a plethora of literature that evaluates the successes and failures of slum upgrading and renewal programs by the international organizations and governments. Similarly, in the absence of adequate provision by the state and the market, scholarly work has celebrated the incremental provision of housing, infrastructure and services while simultaenously cautioned against its precarity. At the heart of these research are two assumptions: eventual homeownership, and the absense of the state and inadequecy of the market. This research challenges both these assumptions, and aims to understand the ways in which the city, residents, other stakeholders form unstable coalations and "engage transversally" (Caldeira, 2016: p.4) to co-produce, regularize and regulate rental housing and markets in Cape Town. It nuances the agency and autonomy attributed to incremental and self-building and provisioning practices by exploring the interaction between these practices, the state and capitalist forces, and in turn examines how these are produced, reproduced, and obscured through these interactions.

MBIBA, BEACON

Credit to the Party: Ideology and Temporalities of Zimbabwean Statecraft in a Turbulent World.

Much of the literature on African politics treats the urban as separate from the national. It also misses the foundational role of enduring ruling party ideologies; how the party ideology shapes the character of the state and permeates the everyday in urban areas. Politics is about how power is acquired and used. This presentation suggests that national and urban politics are one and argues that while strategies do change and are contextual, in Zimbabwe, the ruling party ideology and principles have not. Using a historically aware narrative, the presentation maps the pillars of this ideology and principles. This desktop review of Zimbabwean literature illustrates how at critical moments, the ZANU (PF) ruling party-state continuum mutates into 'State Informality" which enables deployment of both repressive and generative urban strategies to retain power. Crucially, this state informality pervades relations with and treatment of opposition parties, diaspora and civil society, contemporary urban and peri-urban land transformations, services delivery as well as ongoing delivery of infrastructure projects. From this we may start to compare and contrast the character, politics and fortunes of sister liberation parties in East and Southern Africa [from KANU (Kenya), Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania), UNIP (Zambia), MCP (Malawi) FRELIMO (Mozambique), ANC (Azania) and SWAPO (Namibia)].

MIYAUCHI, YOHEI

An Ethnography of JICA's Master Planning in African Cities.

Although the formulation of master plans has been recognized as outdated, in recent years, urban master plans have become increasingly popular throughout Africa (Harrison & Croese 2023). It is particularly interesting to note that JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) has developed many of Africa's urban master plans, recognizing urban master planning as an important component of its development assistance, and has spent a budget unmatched

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by other donors. JICA is recognized by other donors as a "master of master plans," and JICA's deep engagement with local governments and community members sets it apart from other donors (Croese & Miyauchi 2023).

This presentation will illustrate the "transcalar politics" surrounding JICA's urban master planning process through four key points. (1) JICA's direct and indirect relations with stakeholders: I will discuss the case of Dar es Salaam, where JICA created a transport master plan communicating with the World Bank, which had already begun construction of a BRT system. (2) the transfer of knowledge and technology to the local community: I will start from the discourse that "the process (creating the master plan) is more important than the result (implementation of the infrastructure project)," which is frequently expressed by JICA officials. (3) TOD (Transit Oriented Development) legacy of Japan: I will analyze how TOD is important for Japan's urban development, and (4) the urban development debate between planning-oriented groups versus financing (real estate markets) oriented groups: I will show how JICA officials are conflicted when making master plans to accommodate various opinions within different Japanese ministries.

MILENTIJEVIC, ALEKSANDRA

Right to the Post-Socialist City: From planning activism contesting large-scale development to a new municipalist practice in Belgrade, Serbia.

Citizens are getting increasingly involved in contesting large-scale developments, which has also been the case in countries with a socialist legacy. This research analyses the journey of an activist organisation called Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own (DLBD) which was created as a result of fighting against the Belgrade Waterfront redevelopment of a former and disused industrial area and transformed into a permanent political oppositional actor in the City Council and Parliament following their participation at the elections. The analysis is focused on the pre-institutional period between 2014 and 2022, but also looks at the specificity of conditions that existed in the city since 2011. DLBD's growth is shown through five distinctive phases, each one with its specific milestones and goals. Of particular

importance is the topical shift from the Belgrade Waterfront project to all other topics and issues in Belgrade and Serbia, which introduced the new municipalist narrative into the DLBD's functioning. The author argues that the phased growth and transformation of the activists-turned-politicians represents the Right to the Post-Socialist City. This case study seeks to contribute to the post-socialist literature by highlighting the importance of planning processes and how the continuation of activism post-development permission can lead to the creation of institutionalised actors, for which the central requirement is the transcendence of the original development through which the activism itself started in the first place.

MITTAL, HARSH

Topological spatialities of mobile urbanism: The quieter register of power driving smart cities action in India.

The smart city discourse, as much as it has become ubiquitous through socio-spatial practices of mobile urbanism, has also attracted criticism with respect to promoting privatisation of urban governance, ushering in consultocracy in urban administrations, and reducing citizen participation to tokenism. I employ the conceptual focus of topological spatialities, developed by John Allen and other geographers, to understand the working of power driving the smart city action in India, which is a significant site of these criticism. Drawing on fieldwork in smart city events spread over two years (Nov-2016 to Oct 2018) and interviews with participants there, the paper locates a series of attempts to advance the topological reach of consulting firms and International Financing Institutions, with varied agencies and effects. The effects within city leaders include seduction to perform and showcase the transformation of their cities to external audiences but also coercion, coexistence, and accommodations among others working with this impetus. However, the overarching criticism of the Indian smart cities mission in making a visible difference, and also the municipal politics connected to city spaces, appears to have contained the intensity of some relationships that the smart cities discourse espoused city administrations to build and maintain. While the performance gallery, plausibly as a result of these forces, seems to have fizzled away, the (topological) proximity

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with mobile experts persist as the intensity of these relations matters for securing other awards and competitions, resulting in somewhat twisted spatiality of urban governance in India. These insights potentially broaden the debate on the role of governments in facilitating corporatization of urban governance and also make a case for topological spatialities to uncover the nuanced politics of mobile urbanism.

SUTHERLAND, CATHERINE

Co-production, collaborative governance and resilience building in Durban South Africa: from the local to the city scale.

Durban has a long history of building resilience and transformative sustainability through programmes that support the socio-ecological dimensions of catchment management, community ecosystem-based adaptation, water and sanitation innovation and informal settlement upgrading. Experimental governance; learning by doing; and well-developed collaborative partnerships between the local state, citizens, local community based organisations (including conservancies) and research institutions, referred to by Diana Mitlin as urban reform coalitions, help to build the city's resilience. The private sector, at certain times and in some places, engages in these urban reform coalitions, in the interests of capital, corporate social responsibility, and through collective action by those who reside and work in local neighbourhoods. Within the urban reform coalitions and governance platforms that have emerged in the city to build sustainability, the coproduction of knowledge and participation of stakeholders has been the central approach. This has enabled intermediaries or knowledge brokers, to build narratives and discourses about the everyday lived worlds of state and citizens, as they produce and experience the opportunities and risks in the city. International funding organisations have provided third stream funding which has enabled Durban to experiment in this way. However, these urban reform coalitions remain localized in impact, raising questions about the scale at which urban reform needs to take place. The local state calls for the scaling up and universalization of these urban reform coalitions to ensure city-wide resilience and sustainability, while local actors and traditional authorities support a more localized and context specific approach. This paper explores the role of collaborative governance, the scale at which it is most effective, and the challenge of achieving state-led, city-wide sustainable urban development in dynamic cities facing multiple disruptions.

MWATHUNGA, EVANCE

Contesting the sociospatial transformations and public benefits of Chinese large-scale developments in Lilongwe City, Malawi.

Over the last two decades, Chinese large scale urban developments have become a distinctive feature of the urbanisation of Lilongwe city, Malawi's capital, producing landscapes that are continuously contested and renegotiated. The paper seeks to understand the contested nature of these urban territories by focusing on concrete processes and sociospatial transformations in Lilongwe city. To do this, the paper investigates perceived benefits and disbenefits produced by Chinese led urban projects including the emerging peripheral spaces produced in response to the developments, intended or unintended, as well as the contestations and negotiations regarding public benefits of the Chinese led investments in Lilongwe city.

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NEVES ALVES, SUSANA

Supplying water, (re)constructing states? The governance of water in small Mozambican cities.

This paper explores urban statecraft through the lens of the governance of water infastructure in small cities in Mozambique. It engages with the notions of everyday relational states and statecraft to contribute to recent debates on urban infrastructures and the state in geography and urban studies. Drawing on the case study of water governance in small cities in Mozambique, I analyse three key processes through which the state is constructed, re-constructed, and de-constructed in urban and peri-urban Mozambique. First, I analyse the multi-scalar, contradictory and contested process towards decentralised management of water supply, which involved the creation of new centralised national agency and the devolution of mangement to private companies. Second, I look at the everyday practices and relations through which state actors participate in the governance of state-sponsored and 'informal' water systems. Thirdly, I examine digital technologies in water management as a not very successful tool used in attempts to first depoliticise relations between users and utilities, and second to attract new streams of private finacning into water systems. This analysis demonstrates the ongoing tensions between central institutions, and regional and local authorities as well as the multiple international organisations that have permeated the state. It highlights the importance of everyday practices and the vitality of complex and multi-scalar relationships in statecraft in Mozambique.

NJANJI, LISA

Urban planning in Lilongwe:An interplay of actors and interests in Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments.

The paper focuses on the role of urban planning as a mechanism of planning and development control, especially, as it relates to Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments. Specifically, it interrogates how international, national and local actors including planners interact with the legislated role of planning in Malawi. It examines the processes and guidelines with reference to Lilongwe urban planning regulations. This process is then compared to how Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments are actually planned using the case study of the Bingu National Stadium in Lilongwe as an example of a sovereign Chinese Large-Scale development. Drawing from key informant interviews, newspaper analysis and document analysis, it is observed that the planning of sovereign Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments in Lilongwe is not entirely influenced by urban planning principles. Contrary to the view that Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments are imposed on the urban landscape, the dynamics that were involved in the planning processes of the Bingu National Stadium suggest that the planning of Chinese Large-Scale Urban Developments is rather a negotiated process that reflects the interests of various actors in the projects. These actors both local and international, play various roles and decide how urban planning activities should be implemented. From this, the paper concludes that urban development in Lilongwe hinges on multiple factors which include; the nature of the development, nature and type of actors involved and urban planning regulations. Arguably, therefore, urban planning in Lilongwe is not entirely modernist in nature as it has always been viewed but it is rather a dynamic process.

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NYAMSENDA, SABATHO

Community Responses to World Bank–Funded Resettlement in the Msimbazi Basin, Dar es Salaam.

This paper attempts to understand the community response to World Bank-funded resettlement in the Msimbazi Basin Project in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It begins by looking into the decades-long community organising that managed to repeal past phases of forced relocations in the Msimbazi Basin. It then examines the current phase of relocation which was said to have corrected the past mistakes and as such it was to be participatory and voluntary, with full and fair compensation. The paper finds a mismatch between promises made in the original project documents and the actual implementation which was based on partial compensation. By forming independent committees to agitate against what they saw as partial and unfair compensation, community members interacted with various actors, including the World Bank Office in Dar es Salaam as well as different pillars and levels of government. The paper makes two arguments, firstly, that community organising was instrumental in producing a compromise which led to the increase in the compensation package but failed to achieve full compensation promised initially. Secondly, that the final compensation package favored owners over tenants, and among owners, richer ones over poor ones.

OLDSEN-THOR STRATEN, INKEN

Property development negotiations in Johannesburg and Cape Town: advancing policy objectives in the public interest.

This presentation is about property development negotiations and policy outcomes in post-apartheid South Africa. It is based on my PhD project, an analysis of local governments and property developers' relationships shaping spatial change in Cape Town and Johannesburg. A comparative urbanism tactic (Robinson 2022) informed the comparison of three development projects across the two cities (i.e., local and citywide scales). These projects demonstrate new affordable housing models and forms of densification, advancing policy objectives of inclusionary housing and high-density development (Todes & Robinson 2020, Turok et al. 2024). This research revealed diverse interests of private-sector actors promoting the 'public interest'. It identified social goals of developers, and the stake of planning consultants in keeping relationships with municipal planners positive. These private-sector actors were able to shape development planning through long-term relationships with planners. I thus argue that local consultants and developers are not only socially and spatially embedded (Mosselson 2020, Ballard & Harrison 2020) but also temporally. It also demonstrated a greater degree of agency of planners (Healey 1997, Adams & Tiesdell 2010) than usually ascribed to shape development towards public-interest purposes, facilitated by a flexible planning culture in Johannesburg. In one case, a collaborative relationship (Todes & Robinson 2020) formed, resulting in a development that enhanced the integration of low-income groups. In another case, however, residents' resistance (Rubin 2022) hindered negotiations. This research thus demonstrated relationships where planners were able to exercise agency in the public interest, challenging common conceptualisations of the relationship between powerful developers and local government. These relationships are trans-scalar, operating across temporal and spatial scales.

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OUMA, STEFAN

Centering Accumulation in the Study of African Cities.

Thinking beyond clear-cut rural-urban divides, this presentation is a call for centring accumulation in the study of African Cities, and developing respective theoretical concepts. "Accumulation" is much more than "growth" or "development", which cloud the processes through which value is created and/or distributed and how they interact with power relations. "Accumulation" helps us center political economy questions: who owns what, who does what and why, who gets what (broadly defined as "surplus", but including returns that might not be generated from productive labour in a narrow sense) and what do they do with it - in and beyond Africa. It allows us grounding these questions in larger relations and social structures that often transcend the domain of the locale, often amounting to global entanglements (global commodity chains; global investment chains; other social networks, algorithmic infrastructures etc.). Debates on accumulation in Africa also offer the opportunity to link with global debates on increasing wealth divides ("asset-based inequality"), and the rise of the rentier economy.

OWUSU, GEORGE

Politics of Land and Large-Scale Urban Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area.

Sub-Sahara Africa is undergoing demographic transformation involving the rapid shift of the population from rural to urban centres. While the urbanization process on the continent is saddled with several challenges, the twin challenges of land access and management, and infrastructural deficit/gap are probably the most daunting challenges which will define the present and future development trajectories of cities on the continent. The politics of land is primarily centred on who controls and dictates access to land, for what purposes and who benefits. At the same time, growing infrastructure deficit in cities is leading to the emergence of constellation of transcalar actors which see African cities as investible spaces, and in need of land for large-scale urban infrastructural projects to address the deficit. While many studies have been done on urban lands in African cities, the focus has largely been on uncontrolled urban sprawl, loss of agricultural lands, land registration and titling, less attention has been paid to land politics and infrastructure development. Using the West Hills Mall, located in the western part of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), Ghana, as a case study, this study explores the politics of land and large-scale urban development in a Sub-Saharan Africa city. Cognizant of continuing urban population growth and economic growth, and widening infrastructure deficit, this paper asks how opportunities to access land for large-scale urban development are secured, and its implications for various transcalar actors and the marginalization of local government as a conduit for managing the processes of development. In answering this question, the paper draws on interviews conducted across a range of respondents including traditional authorities, mall managers, local government and other state officials, former state employers, and private property owners/landlords.

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REYES CARRANZA, MARIANA

Keeping up with peripheral urbanisation: the automation of spatial planning in Kajiado, Kenya.

Located in the outskirts of Nairobi, Kajiado County finds itself amidst a rapid surge of urbanisation, triggering an urgent demand for essential services and infrastructure. In response, the local government has embarked on a digital transformation journey, leveraging digitisation to steer the region's development and elevate service provision standards. Central to this endeavour is the Kajiado e-Development Application Management System (KeDAMS), a digital platform designed to streamline processes such as construction permit issuance, extensions of lease in privately owned parcels, and plot subdivision approvals, among other land-related services. Drawing from eighteen months of institutional observations and interviews with key stakeholders, this paper delves into the inception and development of KeDAMS, showing the intricacies of planning automation within the nexus of digitisation, data governance, and urban land registration. The paper scrutinises the dynamics of sourcing, capturing, processing, and verifying data pertaining Kajiado's spatial transformation and unravels the intricate web of efforts aimed at monitoring and regulating the city's metamorphosis. Concurrently, the article addresses the manyfold hurdles faced by the local bureaucracy in their pursuit of a seamless, paperless, and fully automated future. Ultimately, the authors posit that the automation of planning in Kajiado remains a complex, nonlinear, and contested endeavour, which can only offer partial solutions to the manifold challenges spurred by the metropolis's growth.

ROBI, SELAM

Bypassing as Authoritarian Urbanism: Party-statecraft and the fragmentation of Ethiopia's urban-industrial Nexus 2001-2018.

Bypass urbanism, the circumventing of the failures and decay of the existing public city through the development of enclaves for the global classes (Shatkin, 2011; Sawyer, 2021), has been widely theorized as a product of neoliberalized urban governance. However, in many parts of the world, the development of spaces of economic liberalization and global integration, like special economic zones, have been instrumentalized to bolster long standing projects of authoritarian state building and durability and circumvent political liberalization, at times even at the cost of market efficiency. In the context of the resurgence of special economic zones and developmental authoritarianism in Africa, I examine how authoritarian politics is shaping bypassing and fragmentation in the urban-industrial nexus. Contrary to the prevalent 'Extrastatecraft' reading of zones that locate the power and administrative authority required to develop them 'outside of and in addition to statecraft', I argue authoritarian institutions like dominant parties and their power elite have become primary agents of bypass urbanism through the spatialized policies embedded in the economic statecraft and governmental reforms they drive to ensure regime survival. Drawing on an in-depth grounded study of the Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Program and its roll out in Hawassa city, the paper brings to the fore the role of the party-state and its cumulative trajectory of authoritarian state reform in promoting bypass urbanism and inhibiting the integration of Industrial parks into the planning and development of their host cities, indicating continued implications for Ethiopia's industrialization and urbanization in years ahead.

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SAMHAN, HANADI & KAHIL, MAHER

Transforming Sacred Spaces: Ru'a Al Madina Mega project in Medina.

Saudi Arabia is undergoing significant socio-economic reforms, utilising megaprojects as catalysts for change and urban transformation. Located across various territories in the kingdom, these megaprojects are explored within the frameworks of neoliberalization and financialisation, emphasising the centrality of financial capital and the role of the private sector in shaping urban landscapes. One such project is the Ru'a Al Madina expansion of the holy mosque in Madina, which aims to accommodate 30 million visitors by 2030. This project, while multi-jurisdictional and involving long time scales and significant financing challenges, is reshaping the urban landscape of Madina from a place of worship to a place of power. Building on Robinson et al.'s (2022) comparative approach, which calls for a conceptual shift in understanding large-scale urban development projects, this paper explores how the intersection of various broader processes, circulating practices, transcalar actors, and territorial regulatory formations compose the holy mosque territory. Given the Ru'a Al Madina project's territorial nature and transnational reach, benefiting from the virtually unlimited demand from the world's 1.8 billion Muslims, the analysis highlights the long-term interactions among diverse actors such as the Public Investment Fund (PIF)—Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund—local state actors like the mayoralty of Madina (Amanat), the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites (RCMC), developers, and consultants. The analysis provides new insights into the role of megaprojects in reshaping urban and socio-political landscapes in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

SAWYER, LINDSAY

Urban ordering in Lagos: the production of tacit governance and tenure regimes and reproduction of state power.

This presentation summarises a forthcoming paper looking at the ordinary governance and tenure regimes of Lagos. These are interpreted as pervasive messy realities and considered as an outcome of tacit urban orderings. By ordinary governance regime I am referring to the everyday modes of accessing infrastructure in Lagos, the vast majority of which is piecemeal and not centralised [Sawyer 2014]. Ordinary tenure regime refers to the process of plotting urbanism [Karaman et al. 2021; Sawyer 2016] which has produced up to 70% of the urban fabric of Lagos and houses most of its population. Both regimes are strongly informal in that they are unregulated, unplanned and the state is not the (explicit) central point of reference. These are tacit regimes: widely evident yet unacknowledged, understood but not stated. This paper explores the implications of this. How have informal regimes become and stayed the norm? How do customary authorities and for instance Resident's Associations, who seem to have sovereignty over their (tacit) domains, fit into understandings of power and governance? What is the role of the state? Following these questions leads to the idea of tacit urban orderings.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

SCHMID, CHRISTIAN

Territories of Extended Urbanization and planetary struggles.

Processes of extended urbanisation have remained largely overlooked by mainstream scientific research and public discourse. However, new concepts and engagements with this kind of urbanisation have recently been developed in certain strands of critical and postcolonial urban research, as well as in architecture and urban design. In our analysis on extended urbanization we could draw four main conclusions: First, territories of extended urbanisation appear today as battlefields of exploitation and commodification, and as regions with asymmetric power relations. Entire regions are transformed into landscapes of extraction, leading to deterioration of ecosystems and evacuation of the social, often far away from public attention. Many forms of extended urbanisation, particularly the construction of urban corridors and the disintegration of hinterlands, imply an enormous waste of resources, leading to the most unsustainable forms of urbanisation. Our second insight was that urbanisation processes are uneven and varied. They can be highly unjust and devastating in social and environmental terms, but they often include also inherent potentialities: their outcomes may offer conditions for connection, encounter, and emancipation. This potential could be called differential urbanisation. It is associated with the creation of a differential space, rejecting exploitative practices and consumer culture, that defies processes of abstraction and commodification, and enables self-determination and commoning. The third insight concerns the stereotype that only "big cities" can provide the advantages of urban life. But also peripheral territories may develop urban qualities, as people create differential spaces through their activities and efforts. The creation of self-governed economic circuits and metabolic loops, regenerative ecologies, solidarity networks, and popular centralities as places of meeting and interaction are opening pathways towards different urban futures. The fourth insight is that peripheries are not simply areas outside cities and urban life; they are always constituted relationally to centralities and other peripheries. As extended urbanisation includes the means to increase connections, it not only generates global connectivity, but also facilitates linking centres and peripheries through social, cultural, political, and economic networks, family ties, and manifold processes of migration and movements. This opens a future of multiple belonging and extended citizenship erasing the "urban-rural divide" and connecting centres and peripheries through social practice.

SHEBURAH ESSIEN, ROSINA

The transcalar politics of urban infrastructure development: The Greater Accra Climate Resilient and Integrated Development Project (GARID).

Resilient infrastructure is heralded globally as one of the most critical needs of cities, particularly African cities since rapid urbanization and climate change present daunting challenges to governments and city authorities also experiencing significant resource and capacity constraints. In the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), Ghana's most urbanized region, perennial flooding has become a 'monster' of the city because infrastructure is inadequate. A wide range of international donors, development agencies, national and supranational institutions (such as the World Bank, China Development Bank and United Nations) are involved in financing major infrastructure investments (e.g., drainage, roads, railways, dam, etc.), requiring close interaction with political decision-makers to implement resilient urban infrastructure development (UID) projects. In this presentation, we focus on the transcalar politics of such urban developments, drawing on the case of the Greater Accra Climate Resilient and Integrated Development Project (GARID). We question assumptions that international policy interventions in response to climate change are reformatting city governments for globally-oriented financialised and market-oriented development. Rather, through this case study we make two observations. First, although UID is being enacted through international actors interfacing with Ghana's ostensibly decentralized model of governance, this process nonetheless fosters a strong centralization of decision-making in national state entities; city governments have little agency or benefit from investments in UID. Secondly, the agency of national actors in UID is strongly evident. We show how the practices of a range of different actors and their networks, notably government ministries, project officials, consultants and communities, shape the 'landing' and 'fixing' of

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internationally funded urban resilient investments in Accra. Also important are the located histories of environmental crises and pathways of urban politics. The study recommends refocusing analytical attention on how transcalar networks of state and non-state actors contribute to the (re)construction of urban territories and their governance through urban developments.

SUTHERLAND, CATHERINE

Co-production, collaborative governance and resilience building in Durban South Africa: from the local to the city scale.

Durban has a long history of building resilience and transformative sustainability through programmes that support the socio-ecological dimensions of catchment management, community ecosystem-based adaptation, water and sanitation innovation and informal settlement upgrading. Experimental governance; learning by doing; and well-developed collaborative partnerships between the local state, citizens, local community based organisations (including conservancies) and research institutions, referred to by Diana Mitlin as urban reform coalitions, help to build the city's resilience. The private sector, at certain times and in some places, engages in these urban reform coalitions, in the interests of capital, corporate social responsibility, and through collective action by those who reside and work in local neighbourhoods. Within the urban reform coalitions and governance platforms that have emerged in the city to build sustainability, the coproduction of knowledge and participation of stakeholders has been the central approach. This has enabled intermediaries or knowledge brokers, to build narratives and discourses about the everyday lived worlds of state and citizens, as they produce and experience the opportunities and risks in the city. International funding organisations have provided third stream funding which has enabled Durban to experiment in this way. However, these urban reform coalitions remain localized in impact, raising questions about the scale at which urban reform needs to take place. The local state calls for the scaling up and universalization of these urban reform coalitions to ensure city-wide resilience and sustainability, while local actors and traditional authorities support a more localized and context

specific approach. This paper explores the role of collaborative governance, the scale at which it is most effective, and the challenge of achieving state-led, city-wide sustainable urban development in dynamic cities facing multiple disruptions.

TAHIR, ABDI

Transcalar exclusionary politics, (sub) state splinter(s), and urban development in Somalia: The Case of Las Anod.

This paper explores the nexus between exclusionary politics, state splinters, and urban development in Somalia, focusing on the conflict in Las Anod, a city in northern Somalia (Somaliland) inhabited by Dhulbahante clans which experienced a major conflict in 2023. It contends that political elites strategically align, realign, and sever ties with prevailing or emerging political orders due to the (in)completeness of political settlements, the (in)equality of participation in governance, access to development investments, and the distribution of aid. In 1991, Dhulbahante elites aligned with Somaliland's unilateral declaration of independence to avoid conflict with the Somali National Movement (SNM), despite lacking constituent support. By 1993, SNM's internal power struggles over revenue-generating sites allowed Dhulbahante elites to further enhance their state in Somaliland's state-building efforts under the new leadership of Egal. These alignments afforded temporary stability but failed to secure long-term constituent support. The current administration's heightened exclusion and attempts to centralize authority beyond the state's capacity have made disengagement appealing. Consequently, the conflict can be viewed as a violent withdrawal from an exclusionary political order. At present, Las Anod is experiencing significant reconstruction efforts. The paper argues that this reconstruction is primarily driven by diaspora communities not only as a communal obligation but also as a political statement. Thus, the reconstruction can be viewed essentially as constituent of broader political agendas beyond the urban sphere. Data for this paper was gathered through interviews with residents and key informants and media monitoring.

ABSTRACTS

by Author's surname

TOPRAK, MELIKE

The Impact of Chinese Developers in Nairobi's Housing Market and The Role of Kenyan Agency.

This paper investigates the transformations in western Nairobi's upper-middle-class neighbourhoods, once characterised by single-story dwellings with gardens, by profit-driven developers, primarily Chinese, and how Kenyan agencies played a role in shaping these investments. The study explores the key components of the real estate assemblage and the factors contributing to their convergence in housing projects. It contributes to Africa-China studies by highlighting ordinary people's relational power and capacity in the assemblage. The central argument is that the Chinese-built urban development projects in Kenya result from intricate dynamics where some pursue profit, social status, and solutions to the housing deficit problem while others are adversely affected. Chinese companies, on the other hand, achieve high profit margins thanks to the networks formerly established between Kenyan government institutions and Chinese firms and China's strong credibility in Kenya. Drawing on the assemblage approach, it addresses a notable gap in the literature on political geography by focusing on urban spaces in the context of Chinese investments in African countries rather than exclusively concentrating on resource-rich nations. The methodology involves semi-structured interviews with 51 participants, participant observations and analysis of urban planning regulations, policy documents and government statistics. In summary, this study seeks to deepen our comprehension of the interactions between Kenyan and Chinese actors in the real estate sector, enlightening their relationships and the intricacies of the urban landscape based on fieldwork findings.

WARD, CALLUM & MORENO ZACARÉS, JAVIER

Urban Entrepreneurs as Global Rentiers: Real Estate Clientelism and Hegemony in Belgium and Spain.

Despite a number of high-profile cases of political clientelism and corruption in European urban governance, the role of such informal practices in the Global North remains undertheorised from a political economy perspective. We address this by comparing two examples of real estate-based political clientelism in Belgium and Spain. In Spain, a recent political scandal brought to light a national-scale patronage network integrally and systematically entangled in the country's dynamics of inter-urban competition. In Belgium, we focus on Flanders' major city of Antwerp, overviewing how the terminal crisis of the previous centuries' clientelistic system prompted a contested reconfiguration of the boundaries between state and market as part of an ascendant nationalist hegemonic project. In exploring the neoliberal blurring of previously established boundaries between state and market in these cases, we emphasise that rent-seeking and clientelism are not aberrational but core to capitalist governance.

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by Author's surname

WILSON, JAPHY

The Cannibal Capitalist State and the Zoonotic City.

This paper explores the role of the state during the coronavirus pandemic in Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon, which was the hardest hit city in the world during the first wave. It argues that the literature on the urban political ecology of the zoonotic city has not adequately addressed the relationship between capital accumulation and state power in zoonotic urbanization. In the case of Iquitos, this mutating relationship is generating a cannibal capitalist state form, characterised by a fusion of neoliberal governance, systemic corruption, and organized crime, which compulsively devours its own social infrastructures. Prior to the arrival of COVID-19 in Iquitos, the metropolitan health system was already in crisis, due to the corrupt gutting of its budget, and epidemics of dengue and leptospirosis exacerbated by dysfunctional urban governance. Public hospitals swiftly collapsed in response to the coronavirus pandemic, and a black market emerged in medical oxygen. Far from seeking to regulate this market, the regional government was among its principal agents, as politicians financed by narcotraffickers sought to take advantage of the crisis to repay their campaign debts. Meanwhile a mass grave was secretly opened on the outskirts of the city for the disposal of the dead. I argue that the chaos, brutality, and absurdity of these circumstances can best be captured by an ethnographic surrealism, which disrupts the sense-making mechanisms of academic convention, and reveals "the massive degree of uncertainty, deception, bluff and ignorance on which such gargantuan enterprises as the ship of state rest" (Taussig 1997: 144)

WU, FULONG

Governing China's urban development: state entrepreneurialism.

This presentation aims to depict a picture of China's urban governance and introduces the concept of 'state entrepreneurialism' that captures the salient feature of Chinese urban governance. Related to this concept, it discusses relevant theoretical literature on neoliberalism, post-politics, and mega-urban projects, illustrating a new way of governing urban development in contemporary and late capitalism. It also introduces the debate over neoliberal governance and its recent shift under austerity urbanism and financialised governance. Further to this temporal variation, the chapter explains geographical variegation by reviewing East Asia's developmental state and the 'property state'. I expand the scope of the varieties of urban entrepreneurialism, especially the recent municipal statecraft. I also provide a historical account of changing governance in China and recent research on state entrepreneurialism. It illustrates state entrepreneurialism with examples of China's large-scale development projects — new towns in the metropolitan peripheral areas. From this perspective, I strive to reinterpret mega-urban projects such as the Corridor of Freedom in Johannesburg. This presentation will critically reflect on the state's role in urban and regional governance from these examples.

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BIOGRAPHIES

presenter's biographies organised by surnames

Photo: Mariam Genes

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Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Ghana, Legon. As a Human Geographer, Austin draws upon relational perspectives, political ecology, political economy as well as organisational and institutional approaches to explore human-environment interactions at multiple scales. With over 10 years of research experience, Austin focuses on urban governance, natural resource governance, energy, rural-urban linkages, and agriculture. Some of his recent projects are the Norwegian Research Council Funded Project on private urbanism in Accra, Johannesburg, and Maputo. Deploying the concept of enclaves, the project examines the co-production of new forms of urban housing and the management of social inequality. The project traces the emerging cultural orientation and political predisposition that structure contemporary urban practices across the globe. Austin also completed the International Science Council funded LIRA-Africa project that explored wastewater reuse acceptability in Accra and Johannesburg. Here they sought to answer the question of whether, and how, water re-use can address existing demand-supply gaps for water. By delineating criteria for acceptance of reclaimed water from a risk paradigm, the project explores the influence of risk perceptions on the acceptance for various uses, including potable, as the first step to sustainable, demand-driven reclaimed water introduction in these two cities. Currently, he is part of a research team working on the British Academy funded project investigating how different energy infrastructures affect everyday livelihoods, prospects for land tenure, use and accessibility in Ghana. Austin has published in several international peer reviewed journals.

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Professor Michele Acuto is Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement at the University of Bristol, UK, where he is also Professor of Urban Resilience in the School of Geographical Sciences. He was previously Professor and Director of the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne, where he taught the Melbourne School of Design's Studio N on night-time design and planning, having worked before that at University College London, USC, Australian National University, and the University of Oxford. A keen researcher and practitioner of urban policy and innovation – not least after dark – and a renowned voice on the international dimensions of city leadership, he recently authored Managing Cities at Night (Bristol University Press, 2021) and How to Build a Global City (Cornell University Press, 2022). He leads several research programmes centred on urban policy and how cities tackle global challenges, has been co-host and co-producer of the University of Melbourne's Cities After Dark podcast miniseries, and is a regular speaker at major international forums and summits.

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PhD candidate at the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana. He is also an urban (development) planner who works with the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority in Accra, Ghana. Kofi holds a BSc in Human Settlement Planning from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and an MSC in Urban Development Planning from the University College London (UCL).

Kofi's research work is titled *Transcalar Politics of Large-Scale Urban Development Projects: The case study of Tema Port Expansion Project in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area*. Kofi seeks to understand the interests and roles of various actors in Transcalar Territorial Networks in shaping large-scale infrastructure delivery and the outcomes of these projects as well as contribution to the urbanization trajectory.

In this conference, Kofi's presentation centres on examining the roles and interests of transcalar actors in Large-Scale Urban infrastructure delivery in Tema: Social and urban impacts of the Tema Port Expansion Project. He focuses on the dominant roles and interests of powerful sovereign actors, multinationals, International finance institutions, and national state actors in the Tema Port Expansion Project and its outcomes and how it further contributes to the urbanization process.

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Architect and PhD candidate at CRC1265 and Habitat Unit, at the Technical University of Berlin. His research interests sit at the intersection of the production of physical spaces for and by migration, refugees' urban agency, and translocal structures of (urban) spatial governance.

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Doctoral student at the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University. His current research investigates how non-city spaces are imagined through various spatial strategies, especially in a context when certain understandings of the city seem to be very persistent despite their questionable correspondence to the realities. Not only does he investigate what are the existing imaginaries and how they emerged, but he also explores what might be the consequences of the imagining, including how it may contribute to maintaining socio-ecological injustice. His research interests include urban theory, political ecology, politics of planning, cultural political economy, social theory, and Indonesia.

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PhD Candidate in Human Geography and Urban Studies. As an urban scholar, his current research project uses a transdisciplinary approach to investigate urbanization through urban infrastructures, governance, policies and citizen-led urban practices. His work so far has been influenced by literatures on the anthropology of the future, postcolonial governance, urban masculinities, waithood, leisure and urban place making in the Global South particularly in the Republic of Benin, West Africa. He hopes to investigate mega urban projects taking roots in Singapore and spreading to countries like Rwanda and Benin after the completion of his PhD. Emmanuel is also interested in environmental politics, and African history among other topics.

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Political researcher based at the University of Geneva and a member of the Geneva Africa Lab. He wrote his thesis on the link between housing policies, political violence and hegemonic processes in Cameroon. He is currently working on the relationship between the processes of state formation and the policies of new cities in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. His aim is to contribute to establishing a link between critical urban studies and the sociology of the state in Africa and beyond.

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Urban and economic geographer. She is a Senior Scientist in the Department of Geography at the University of Zurich, working on the Responsible City project, and an honorary lecturer at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL. She was previously the Margaret Tyler Research Fellow in Human Geography at Girton College, the University of Cambridge, and before that, a Research Fellow at the Bartlett School of Planning. She has a PhD in Geography from UCL and an MA in Land Economy from the University of Cambridge. She spent the last two years working as a strategy consultant for international development and social impact organizations in Geneva.

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PhD student at the LATTS research laboratory – Université Gustave Eiffel in France. His work focuses on the recent renewal of state-led land purchase and development practices in the Paris city-region, in relation to local public finance, austerity politics, and financialisation. Théo holds a Master's in Urban Planning from the Ecole d'Urbanisme de Paris as well as a BA in European Social and Political Studies from UCL.

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Urban and regional planner and economic geographer, with a PhD in planning from UCLA. He specialises in spatial and land use planning and economic development at all territorial scales, and in urban sustainability and resilience. He has over 30 years of international planning and development project experience in over 30 countries in all global regions. In working for International Financial Institutions, bilateral development partners and national, regional and municipal governments, he has developed an understanding of their diverse planning and infrastructure investment processes and procedures. For the last decade, he was Technical Director: Urban Development at two engineering/advisory services consultancies, COWI A/S (Denmark) and ICF (US). He has also had ongoing involvement in academic research. From 2010-2019, he served as Co-investigator on the Global Suburbanisms: Governance, Land and Infrastructure project, managing research on urban and suburban land use change in Sub-Saharan Africa. He was also Team Leader from 2013-2018 on the UK FCDO-funded Urbanisation Research Nigeria project which conducted research accompanied by data collection on urbanisation, urban planning and development and the provision of infrastructure in the country's cities and towns. He is currently Honorary Professor of Practice at the UCL Urban Laboratory.

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Associate Professor at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London. He is an urban and regional planner with over 15 years of academic and practical international experience in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, North America and Europe. Donald's most recent research is particularly interested in small town urbanization and rural-urban linkages, and associated processes of political, administrative and institutional change. His work seeks to decentre urban planning debates away from existing urban centres, especially the largest, to engage with diverse processes of rural-urban change, with a focus on the role of local institutions, notably the chieftaincy. Donald's geographic focus is primarily on sub-Saharan Africa, and the opportunities that small town urbanisation presents for harnessing the developmental potential of rural transformation through 'hybrid' urban planning.

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Economist focussed on Africa's urban transition, infrastructure and services, green finance, environmental degradation and poverty alleviation. He is affiliated to the African Centre Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town and a Fellow of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) and Cambridge University (UK). He led the programme that produced South Africa's Just Urban Transition Framework and the Coalition for Urban Transition's work in Tanzania and Ghana. He has conducted research and advisory work for African Development Bank, the World Bank, UNECA and local governments on issues of climate change and inclusive urban development. He was a lead author on Chapter 4 of the *IPCC's Special Report on 1.5°C of warming released* in 2018 and a Contributing Author to Chapter 6 of the *IPCC's 6th Assessment Report* (WG2).

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Professor of Political Science based at the University of Malawi in the Department of Politics and Government. He holds a PhD (Political Economy and Development Studies) from the University of Leeds, MA (Political Science) and BA (Public Administration) from the University of Malawi. He is the incumbent Head of Department. In 2022, Michael was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. His research and teaching interests include political economy, development cooperation, development politics, institutions, public policy, land, local governance and agricultural policies as they relate to youth and development. Currently, He has published in international peer-reviewed journals on matters related to development and governance from different perspectives. Michael has published in *Development Policy Review*, *Journal of Public Affairs, Journal of Development Effectiveness, Africa Review,* and *Journal of Asian and African Studies Journal of Peasant Studies, Agrarian South: the journal of Political Economy, Insights on Africa and International Journal of Public Administration*. He has presented papers at international and local conferences in the areas of political economy of development. Michael has worked with the World Bank, ActionAid, World Vision, Malawi Government and FHI360 as a consultant on governance and development issues.

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Lecturer in the Geography Department at King's College London and urban geographer whose research explores themes of flood risk, climate adaptation, environmental expertise and knowledge production, climate and financial risk, and urban water politics. A primary thread of her research centres on themes of urban flood management, policy mobilities and networks of expertise in Jakarta. A second thread of her research explores dynamics of climate and financial risk in coastal cities. Emma is currently a Co-PI with Dr. Zara Shabrina on a British Academy funded research project, titled *Empowering resilience in a sinking city: a Decision Support System (DSS) for participatory knowledge exchange, urban simulation, and modelling*. This project will use a participatory research design to facilitate collaboration between data and social scientists, communities and community organisations, and artists to produce a public art exhibition and a decision support system for Penjaringan, a subdistrict of North Jakarta characterised by high flood risk. She received her PhD in Geography from UCLA in 2018. She holds a BA in Geography from University College London (2012) and MA in Cities from King's College London (2013).

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DAWSON, KATE
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Department of Geography, UCL Lecturer in Environment, Politics and Society. Interested in the relationships between society, space and geological materials. Her work is concerned with tracing out the politics of these connections in the context of diverse urban processes and low-carbon transitions. Dawson's research has primarily focused on sand, as a material at the heart of built environments globally and is presently thinking across cities - including Accra, London and Freetown - in order to grapple with this material and its socio-ecological entanglements with urban life and landscape. Currently, she is also working with a team of interdisciplinary scholars to examine the extractive geographies of platinum, polyhalite and diatomite, informed by insights from South Africa, the UK and New Zealand.

DENG, HANDUO
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PhD student at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL. Her research focuses on urban development and governance in China. Her PhD project examines Chengdu's 'park city' development, including the rationales and financing approaches for mega green infrastructure and ecologically-oriented suburban new cities. In 2023, she published an article in Transactions in Planning and Urban Research discussing the perspective of state entrepreneurialism entitled *Positioning China's state entrepreneurialism within structural coherence and multiple logics*.

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Geographer from the Catholic University of Chile, holds a MSc in Development and Urbanization from the London South Bank University and is currently a PhD candidate at the Bartlett School of Planning at UCL. He has experience in public investment, urban planning, and local development, working with various municipalities and as a consultant. His work focuses on project appraisals for public spaces, urban and regional planning, and territorial intelligence. Alejandro has contributed to research and teaching in physical and urban geography, public investment, project formulation, and geographic information systems. He has lectured at San Sebastian University and the Open University of Recoleta and has been involved in several research projects related to environmental impact assessment, urban justice, and sustainable development. He is a member of the Chilean Society of Geographic Sciences and the NGO Public Space Global. His current research explores the governance of public space in Santiago de Chile as a neoliberal city, and the role that local governments play after the nation-wide protests of 2019.

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Postdoctoral fellow in Global Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She completed her PhD at the LSE Department of International Development in 2022. Her dissertation studied the political economy of large-scale land investments and the diffusion of global governance norms in Uganda and Sierra Leone. Carolin's research focuses on land governance, property rights, and commodification processes in sub-Saharan Africa.

DUMINY, JAMES
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Senior lecturer in human geography at the University of Bristol, UK, and an honorary research associate at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, South Africa. His work addresses urban transformation and its governance in the sub-Saharan African and global context. Recently he has been involved in developing strategic approaches to urban health governance for the WHO, including promoting a more refined understanding of the relationship between urban health and demographic change.

FOURCHARD, LAURENT
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Historian and political scientist, Fourchard is research professor at the Centre for International Research (CERI) at Sciences Po Paris. He is also a member of the Urban School of Sciences Po. His research is located at the crossroads of history, political sociology and comparative urban studies and focuses on the everyday practices of security, criminal threats, politicization of public space and street level bureaucrats - citizens interactions in Nigeria and South Africa. His last book *Classify, Exclude and Police: Urban Lives in Nigeria and South Africa*, (Wiley Blackwell) explores everyday forms of exclusion, classification and vigilantism in popular neighborhoods of Lagos, Ibadan, Cape Town and Johannesburg. He is currently working on a book on a transport organization - considered as a "mafia" - the larger trade union in Nigeria, a central player in electoral politics and the main organization in transport regulation. His papers have appeared in *Africa, African Affairs, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Politique africaine, Politix*.

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Economist and is currently employed as an Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute of Human Settlements Studies (IHSS), Ardhi University. She has a Master's Degree in Public Policy Analysis and Programme Management and is in the second year of her PhD (Urban and Regional Planning) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Her research areas of interest include urban economics, local economic development, and public policy analysis. For the last seven years to date, she has been involved in multidisciplinary research projects in Dar es Salaam. These include research on urban (in)equality and livelihoods, inclusive urbanization, resilient cities, and rural-urban transformations.

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Professor at the School of Geography at the University of Leeds. She is a critical urban geographer with an interest in the political and economic transformation of cities, neoliberal urban policies, gentrification, and contestation. In the last few years her research has focused on the transformation of traditional retail markets and their social value in the UK, with a comparative lens across Europe and Latin America. In 2022 she joined the Global Food and Environment Institute at Leeds as an Associate Director, where she is developing a collaborative action research agenda on ecologically and socially just food in cities.

HAFEZ, NIHAL
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Egyptian Ph.D. student at the Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL). Her research focuses on the politics of heritage in the Middle East in general and Egypt in particular. She works on exploring the inter-section(s) between political regimes and heritage practices, as well as local heritage practices beyond international frameworks through bringing a Southern lens to Critical Heritage Studies and practices.

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South African Research Chair in Spatial Analysis and City Planning funded by the National Research Foundation and hosted by the University of the Witwatersrand. From 2006 to 2010 he was Executive Director in Development Planning and Urban Management at the City of Johannesburg. Prior to that, he held academic positions at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Natal. He also served as a member of the National Planning Commission from 2010 to 2015, participating in the formulation of the National Development Plan. He has published widely in the fields of city planning and regional and urban development and is currently working on projects relating to city-region governance, pandemic governance, recent histories of planning in South Africa, and large-scale project investment in African cities. His latest books are Harrison, P. *Governing Complex City-Regions in the Twenty-First Century: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa* (Wits University Press); Harrison, P. and A. Todes *The Promise of Planning: Global Aspirations and South African Experience since 2008*.

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In his doctoral research at the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Sheffield, Manuel investigated the commercialisation of development funding in Kenya's water supply and sanitation services sector. He was particularly interested in looking at how the trend to commercially finance basic services has hit the ground in Southern cities and shaped how people currently under-serviced by formal providers may gain access to regulated services. In his current fellowship at the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge, he has continued this work and looked at new donor approaches to scaling private development finance. He is member of the Cambridge Social Ontology Group and has also worked on further developing Social Positioning Theory.

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Associate Professor in Social Geography and Urban Studies at the University of Zurich (UZH) Department of Geography. Her research aims to advance a global, comparative research agenda on processes of marginalization in housing and urban development in the context of globalizing financial markets and heightened climate crisis. In this way, it links the negotiation of global regulatory changes to its imprints on urban life, incorporating different regional foci (e.g. Mexico City and Berlin) and theoretical approaches (including post- and decolonial, feminist, and critical urban theories).

Hanna is trained as an architect, urbanist, and human geographer. Her doctoral dissertation at the Open University's Department of Geography was published by Wiley in 2021 and explored informal dwelling practices in the context of Berlin's increasingly tight housing market and related these to negotiations with the local bureaucracy. Her postdoctoral work at the HafenCity University Hamburg expanded this focus on urban negotiations through an ethnographic perspective on the ways in which local bureaucracies anchor global financial flows in the urban development of cities in so-called 'emerging markets'. Her current work bridges concerns about the financing and governance of the urban and the experience of these financial flows in the inhabitation of Mexican cities.

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Research fellow at UCL, Department of Geography. She has a PhD in Urban Planning from University of Twente's Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) and an MSc in International Development Studies from the University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the relationships between the digitalising state, knowledge infrastructures, and territorial politics. She has researched how digital infrastructures reproduce or restructure inequalities in urban water and land governance in Lima, Nairobi, Mumbai, and Guadalajara. In addition, Hoefsloot was part of the collaborative design of participatory tools for inclusive cities and water justice in the Netherlands and Peru.

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Her recent publications include:

Huang, Zhengli, and Lesutis, Gediminas. 2023. *Improvised Hybridity in the "Fixing" of Chinese Infrastructure Capital: The Case of Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway*. Antipode 55(5):1587–1607

Huang, Zhengli, and Pollio, Andrea. 2023. *Between Highways and Fintech Platforms: Global China's and Africa's Infrastructure State*. Geoforum

Huang, Zhengli, and Goodfellow, Tom. *Centralizing Infrastructure in a Fragmenting Polity: China and Ethiopia's 'Infrastructure State*. In The Rise of the Infrastructure State pp. 122–136. Bristol University Press
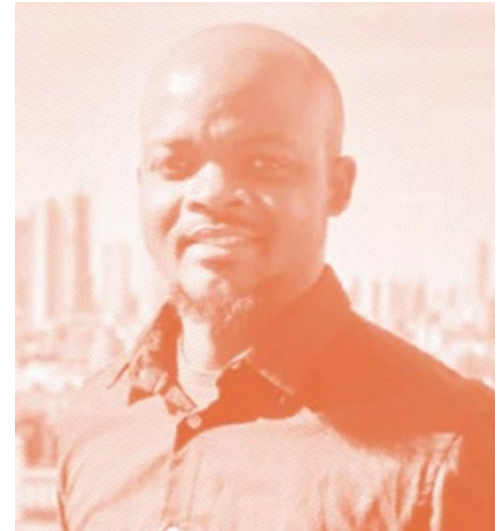
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Urban geographer and planner based at University College London (UCL), where he is a PhD researcher within the Making Africa Urban project. His research primarily focuses on Lilongwe, delving into the transcalar politics of water infrastructure provision. Jana also extends his analysis to developmental circuits across Lilongwe, Dar es Salaam, and Accra. With a broad range of research interests, Jana is particularly passionate about urban politics and governance, especially through the lens of infrastructure. Before joining UCL, Jana engaged in several significant projects. In Lilongwe, he explored the mobility experiences of low-income residents, highlighting issues of transport exclusion and the reliance on informal modes of transportation. Additionally, he investigated the lived experiences of housing policy in Cape Town.

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Interdisciplinary researcher passionate about architecture, urban planning, and geography. With degrees in architecture and geography from Greece and the London School of Economics (LSE), she explores the relationship between urbanisation, development, politics of urbanisation and societal dynamics. Her professional experience in Eastern Europe as an architect and urban planner sparked her interest in informal planning practices.

Currently pursuing a PhD in Geography at University College London (UCL), her research focuses on emergent planning in post-socialist Eastern Europe. Varvara's multidisciplinary approach sheds valuable light on urban studies and planning, bridging disciplines and understanding complex urban development contexts.

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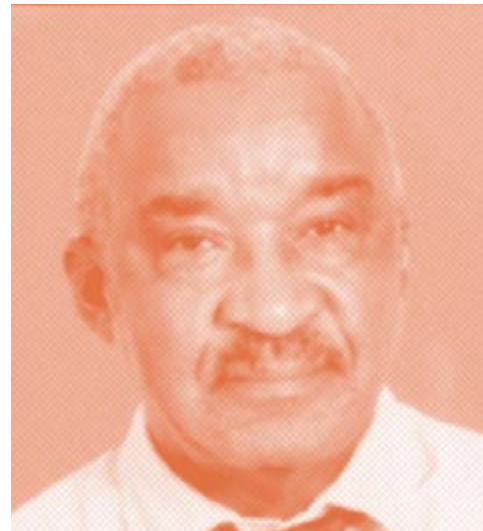
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Based at the Ardhi University, Institute of Human Settlements Studies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He holds a PhD in urban land management from the Technical University Dortmund (TUD), Germany. He has worked extensively in low income settlements in several African cities. His main areas of research include: Urban poverty, informality; urban land governance, the nexus between urban poverty, land and livelihoods of the urban poor, urban inequality and access to basic infrastructure services.

Kombe has won several international grants and has successfully executed several collaborative research projects over the last 10 years. The impact of some of his research works includes direct inputs into Tanzanian national policies such as the Urban Development Management Policy (2015); the National Human Settlements Development Policy (2018); the National Land Policy (2018) and the National Housing Policy (2018).

Professor Kombe is a board member of various professional and public bodies. In 2005/2006, he worked for the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), Pretoria South Africa as a Chief Research Specialist. He has also supervised research projects on variety of research issues. These research projects were executed by MDP Harare and funded by the Netherlands Government.

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Felician has been President of the African Real Estate Society, Board Member the International Real Estate Society, International Valuation Standards Management Board, and Tanzania representative at the International Federation of Surveyors. He has been Chief Editor – J*ournal of Land Administration in Eastern Africa* and *Journal of African Real Estate Research*.

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Background in urban geography and political ecology, he adopts a critical approach to understanding the relationship between climate change and urbanisation.

Lane is interested in the idea of a future in which cities offer radical political leadership in global environmental governance and, crucially, how such ambitions can overcome discourses on the unsustainable and carbon intensive nature of urbanisation, as well as navigate the realities of today's vibrant and diverse (but increasingly fragmented, exploited and unequal) urban landscapes.

Matt has ongoing research interests in the UK and Malawi and has previously worked in Zambia, the United States, and China.

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Ilda Lindell is a lecturer at the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University. Her research addresses the politics of informality with a focus on urban livelihoods, as well as the intersections between infrastructural visions and everyday life in urban Africa. She currently coordinates several research programs, with cases in a number of African cities, exploring large-scale infrastructures and related socio-spatial dynamics, as well as informality, pandemic and recovery. Lindell has published the book Walking the tight rope: informal livelihoods and social networks in a West African city (2002, 2006, Almqvist & Wiksell Intern.), edited the book Africa's Informal workers: collective agency, alliances and transnational organizing in urban Africa (2010, 2013, Zed Books), guest edited several special issues in journals and published a number of journal articles and book chapters. She leads the Urban Africa research cluster at her department.

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Scholar of urban studies and international development based at the Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development (OISD), Oxford Brookes University where he runs a course on infrastructure planning and finance. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI). Over the last ten years, he has contributed expertise to development in practice work of The United Nations, The African Development Bank, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and most recently to The World Bank (2023) Sustainable Cities: Urban Areas and Climate Change in Sierra Leone. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.   Mbiba has roles as Executive Editor, (International Planning Studies), Associate Editor, (Frontiers in Sustainable Cities: Cities in the Global South) and Board Member, (Town and Regional Planning, South Africa).   Current research interests include better data to understand African urbanisation, peri-urbanisation, land transformations, accumulation by dispossession, diaspora-led development and integration of new migrants to the United Kingdom.

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Professional urban planner and a PhD student. Since 2017, she has worked in the local government in one of London's fastest growing boroughs on a variety of large-scale and strategic regeneration projects, at policy making and plan implementation stages, and more recently in Environmental Impact Assessments. Milentijevic is pursuing her PhD degree at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, focusing on the topic of the Right to the City in a post-socialist context of Belgrade, Serbia. In particular, her research examines the growth of participation that started through objections to a redevelopment project in Belgrade and has grown into a permanent political opposition employing new municipalist strategies. As part of her PhD, Aleks has done extensive research on public participation in planning, as well as other planning processes in post-socialist environments.

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Assistant Professor at the Humanities and Social Science department (Hyderabad Campus) of BITS Pilani, where he also received an undergraduate engineering degree. Since then, his diverse academic encounters have shaped his interest in conducting interdisciplinary research on urban matters which include transport, energy, infrastructure, and electronic-waste. His primary interests have been in exploring the everyday politics and policy processes related to these matters and trying to innovate conversation and open-up dialogic space with policy professionals. He is currently at the Geography department of University College London, through a fellowship awarded by the Urban Studies Foundation, where he is further developing his doctoral research on smart cities, done in India while affiliated with the Public Systems Group in IIM Ahmedabad.

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Second year PhD at the University of Cambridge with joint supervision from the Department of Architecture and the Department of Geography. Mazhar's research explores how the state, non-governmental organizations, public interest think tanks, developers and urban residents form unstable coalitions and engage transversally to co-produce, regularize and regulate rental markets in Cape Town, South Africa. Prior to starting the PhD, Mazhar has an MPhil in Architecture and Urban Studies from the University of Cambridge, an MSc in Sustainable Development from the University of St Andrews and a BSc (Hons.) in Political Science from the Lahore University of Management Sciences (Pakistan). Noor has also worked as a Senior Research Analyst at the Urban Unit, which is a technical research wing for the Government of Punjab, Pakistan, and intends to produce research that eventually helps inform policy outcomes.

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Human geographer interested in urbanisation processes in cities of the South, particularly African cities. More specifically, her research centres on questions related to urban infrastructure, water, climate change and socio-environmental injustices in African cities. Susana's work has focused on socio-technical changes, public policies and everyday practices to understand how infrastructures, water and cities are produced, the ways in which socio-environmental injustices are shaped, and how we can intervene to create cities that are economically, socially and environmentally just.

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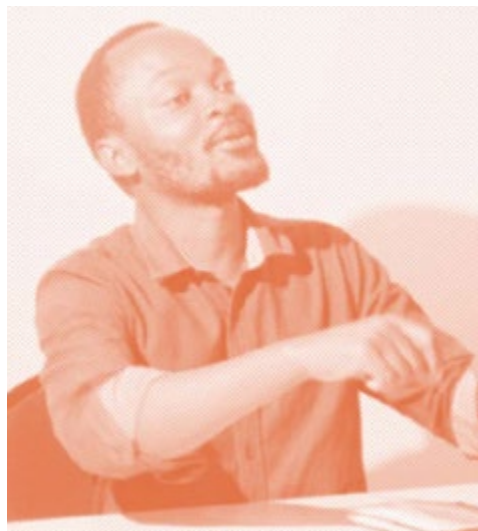
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His doctoral study examines the political economy of informality in Tanzania with the intention to understand the links between trajectories of capital accumulation, forms of labour and (the denial of) access to space in the city of Dar es Salaam. Beyond his doctoral study, Sabatho's broader research interests revolve around rural social movements, urban informal labour organising, capitalist crises, pan-Africanism and North-South relations.

He is also the co-author of *Mikataba ya Uwekezaji Kati ya Nchi Mbili (MIUMBI) na Athari Zake kwa Tanzania* (Bilateral Investment Treaties and their Impacts on Tanzania) and the editor of *Wavujajasho dhidi ya Soko Huria* (The Working People Against the Free Market) and *Wamachinga na Haki-Jiji Nchini Tanzania* (Street Vendors and the Right to the City in Tanzania).

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Stefan is also a member of one of Geography's leading journals: Antipode – A Radical Journal of Geography. For that matter, kindly also check out the Decolonial Thinkers from Africa Series. https://antipodeonline.org/2023/10/27/decolonial-crossroads/

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Since 2023, Mariana has served as a post-doctoral researcher in the *Regional Futures* project, an ERC-funded initiative examining the territorial politics at the digitalisation-urbanisation nexus. Her research investigates the processes through which informational infrastructures become territorialised and how digitalisation extends its reach into new territories. Additionally, she is interested in the extractive dimensions of regional planning and urbanisation, focusing on the materiality of information and communications technology (ICT) and the environmental and geopolitical impacts associated with digital infrastructure.

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Melike has a background in geography. She holds a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from Marmara University, Istanbul, Türkiye. She has two years of professional experience as a project assistant in both the private and public sectors.

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He holds visiting fellowships at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research, Uppsala University, and the Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics. Additionally, Dr. Ward is an Early Career Editor for the journal Finance and Space.

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MAKING AFRICA URBAN

The Transcalar Politics of Urban Development

Photo: Phil Harrison

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