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– CONCEPTUALIZING AFRICAN URBAN PERIPHERIES

PAULA METH, TOM GOODFELLOW, ALISON TODES, SARAH CHARLTON

Abstract

Recent years have seen a rising interest in peri-urban spaces, urban frontiers and new suburbanisms, including in African contexts. However, given the scale of urban growth and the extreme diversity of formations emerging on the geographical edges of African city-regions, a deeper understanding is needed of the drivers of peripheral urbanisms and the lived experiences of urban change in these spaces. Based on a comparative research project in South Africa and Ethiopia, this article draws out the epistemologies of researching African urban peripheries and presents a new conceptual framework. It offers a language for interpreting processes of peripheral development and change, highlighting five distinct but overlapping logics which we term speculative, vanguard, auto-constructed, transitioning and inherited. Rather than describing bounded peripheral spaces, we argue that these logics can co-exist, hybridize and bleed into each other in different ways in specific places and at different temporal junctures. Centring our methodological practices of comparative analysis, and privileging the voices of those living in urban peripheries, the article employs critical readings of urban scholarship before exploring how these five logics illuminate the complex processes of urban peripheral evolution and transformation. Formulating these logics helps to fill a lacuna in urban conceptualization with potential relevance beyond African contexts.

Introduction

Reflecting on a major international research programme on ‘global suburbanisms’, Keil (2018: 41) notes that we live ‘in the age of the urban periphery’. Scholarship on African cities has recently begun to explore this, evidenced by the proliferation of literature on peri-urban spaces (Mbiba and Huchzermeyer, 2002; Kinfu *et al.*, 2019), urban peripheries (Sawyer, 2014), suburbanisms and ‘new centralities’ (Mabin *et al.*, 2013; Güney *et al.*, 2019), by-pass urbanism (Sawyer *et al.*, 2021), urban frontiers (McGregor and Chatiza, 2019) and ‘postcolonial suburbs’ (Mercer, 2017). Collectively, this literature bolsters Keil’s claim that urban peripheries exhibit greater diversity ‘than perhaps anywhere else in the modern history of city-building and re-building’ (Keil, 2018: 13). It is increasingly apparent that the geographical edges of cities are characterized by dynamism as well as stagnation, boredom as well as violence, and luxury alongside destitution. Meanwhile, debates on ‘extended’ urbanization and its ‘planetary’ reach (Brenner, 2013; Brenner and Schmid, 2015) render a focus on urban frontiers, liminal spaces and dispersed urban forms all the more important. Indeed, if it is in the peripheries that twenty-first century urbanization is ultimately taking shape, then despite some recent scholarly attention, the work of researching, analysing and conceptualizing this has only just begun.

The authors would like to acknowledge the empirical and intellectual contribution of Tatenda Mukwedeya, Zhengli Huang, Jennifer Houghton and Metadel Sileshi Belihu to the conceptual framework presented in this article. The research project was also supported by Sibongile Buthelezi, Yohana Teffera and Fikile Masikane, who completed data collection, interpretation and analysis. Feedback provided by participants at the 2019 Institute of British Geographers conference has also assisted in the refinement of our conceptualizations. We gratefully acknowledge funding from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the SA National Research Foundation (NRF) which supported the research project. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. Paula Meth holds a dual affiliation and is also an Honorary Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand.

This article discusses our conceptualizations of African urban peripheries following our ESRC/NRF-funded research project, ‘Living the Urban Periphery: Investment, Infrastructure and Economic Change in African City-Regions’ (2016–2019). Our research focused on how transformation is shaped, governed and experienced in the spatial peripheries of three African city-regions: Gauteng and eThekweni in South Africa, and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Comparing these urban formations enables us to explore countries that are vastly different in terms of economic status and urban land tenure systems, but which have important similarities in their developmentalist orientation and the dominance of state-sponsored housing provision. We argue that the distinctiveness of these countries in being at the forefront of peripheral housing and infrastructure provision in Africa makes them especially relevant for thinking about the development of urban peripheries more generally. Meanwhile, our comparison of Gauteng and eThekweni within South Africa enables us to examine the peripheries in areas of former mining and industrial investment, sometimes now in decline, alongside those being reshaped by new state-led and commercial mega-projects. Through these multiple lines of comparison, drawing on Robinson’s (2016) exhortation to engage in comparison beyond the usual conventions of comparability, our wider project generates fresh insights, with broader relevance to urban peripheries globally.

The article’s contribution is specifically conceptual, drawing out the epistemologies of researching African urban peripheries and offering a conceptual framework to inform the practice of analysing geographic peripheries. It opens with a critical reading of theoretical and empirical material examining urban peripheries, with an emphasis on work on African cities. Attention is drawn to the insights but also limitations of some of this work, particularly its varied ability to engage with the complexities of urban change as narrated by residents in these spaces. The article then centres our methodological practices, which privilege the voices of those living in the urban peripheries in shaping our conceptualization, and reflects on our ability to generalize through the comparative analysis of these cases. We show how our mixed-method approach places a particular emphasis on in-depth, multi-method qualitative research with residents, alongside a range of other methods.

Based on the extensive body of empirical research underpinning this project, we argue that peripheral spaces are not simply Cartesian spaces identifiable through mapping and boundaries and understood through abstracted trends, but that they reveal their essence through the voices and views of those living there. Thus, we are concerned less with the representation of these spaces than with peripheries as ‘lived space’, although we also explore the economic and political drivers and planning processes that produce these spaces. Because its focus is conceptual, the article does not detail the complex experiences of residents revealed through our project, although it builds on their narratives (alongside those of key informants involved in shaping and governing urban peripheries from the outside) to inform our conceptualizations.

Following a discussion of our project’s methodological approach and case selection, the article turns to its core contribution: the conceptualization of five distinct (though often intersecting) logics of urban peripheral development emerging from our research. We became aware during the course of our project that defining the periphery as a singular concept was insufficient; we are also attuned to Schmid *et al.*’s (2018) call for new vocabularies to describe processes of urbanization, given the limitations of dominant concepts in Urban Studies—particularly in capturing urban formations in the global South. Our main contribution in this article is therefore to unpack the urban periphery concept in new ways, through placing attention on peripheral *areas*, urban *processes and practices* evident in peripheral sites, as well as the *experiences* of a wide variety of residents living in these areas. Drawing on these various epistemologies of the periphery, the five peripheral logics we propose are *speculative*, *vanguard*, *auto-constructed*, *transitioning* and *inherited*. The value of this classification lies not in

describing exclusive bounded instances of the urban periphery; indeed, we reject this approach. Instead, we argue for an approach that recognizes these modes of peripheral development as logics that can co-exist, hybridize and bleed into each other in specific places and at different temporal junctures. Rather than being discrete categories, the five logics privilege the dynamic, interconnected and multi-scalar aspects of urban change occurring in African cities. We conclude the article by considering the significance of these logics for studying other urban peripheries, within Africa and beyond.

Existing conceptualizations of urban peripheries

Urban peripheries have been conceptualized in a number of ways, which variously highlight their drivers, economic dynamics, spatial characteristics and key actors, with most accounts focusing on one or other dimension. Early conceptions of urban peripheries saw them as places on the urban edge, transitioning from rural to urban, with limited economies, and where land costs, densities and access to economic opportunities were lower than more central areas. This was often conceptualized as a moving edge, as earlier peripheries were absorbed into the city and new ones emerged.

Literatures on peri-urbanization have emphasized this rural-urban interface, the processes of urbanization, changing land uses and associated land conflicts, and the influence of tenurial systems, *inter alia* (Mbiba and Huchzermeyer, 2002). This literature has been important in African contexts such as Ghana, where growth is occurring on customary lands at city edges, with distinct tenurial and management systems (Gough and Yankson, 2000). The peri-urban concept is also relevant for those African cities where urban-rural distinctions are blurred and where the absorption of densifying rural settlements (Potts, 2018), or piecemeal lateral expansion (Sawyer, 2014), are significant parts of urban growth. Such edges might be less regulated spaces, providing easier access for migrants and cheaper housing for the urban poor (Simon, 2004). However, while the earlier literature often saw these as places of poverty, more recent work documents increased middle-class occupation and housing construction (Mbatha and Mchunu, 2016; Bartels, 2020; Mercer, 2020).

The equation between geographic peripherality, poverty and marginality has also been challenged by authors such as Peberdy (2017), drawing on Wallerstein's conception of the periphery as a social and political rather than spatial construct, and Pieterse (2019), who points to deep poverty and social marginality in central areas of Gauteng, South Africa's economic heartland. For Pieterse, the polycentricity of the Gauteng city-region and the multi-directionality of patterns of movement nullifies a simple core-periphery binary. These critiques are important in avoiding simplistic assumptions about the spatial periphery, who lives there, and why. Yet they do not tell us much about these places themselves or the lived experiences there, which may involve socio-economic marginality alongside wealth and privilege. A further conceptualization of peripheral urbanization is put forward by Caldeira, who instead of locating it specifically at the geographic fringe of cities sees it as 'a way of producing space' (2017: 4), largely equating it with auto-construction that unfolds 'transversally in relation to official logics, and amidst political contestations'. This can involve dynamism, entrepreneurialism and collective action, including on urban edges but not limited to them. Caldeira's account thus focuses on one important process through which many urban areas grow and change, but it does not tell us specifically about processes on the spatial periphery and their multi-faceted dynamics.

While several of these conceptions focus largely on incremental growth, literatures emanating initially from the USA in the 1990s pointed to the emergence of major new economic centralities on the urban edge (Garreau, 1991) and the growth of new forms of residential and mixed-use estates (including gated communities), much of it driven by the private sector or through public-private partnerships. The 'Global Suburbanisms' project from 2009 explored the many forms of non-central

growth now emerging, expanding the concept of ‘suburban’ beyond its North American middle-class/mid-twentieth-century associations (Keil, 2018). A key focus has been the physical growth at scale of residential neighbourhoods across diverse urban localities worldwide, as well as the transformation of existing suburban spaces (Güney *et al.*, 2019), emphasizing differentiation among and within suburban spaces.

Taking an African focus, Mabin *et al.*'s (2013: 13) review highlighted ‘the accelerating densification/retrofitting of existing suburbs’ and ‘the emergence of new centralities away from the traditional cores related to new performances of city life in African cities’. Bloch (2015) pointed to the growth of the middle class and economic expansion, underpinning new forms of urban development on the periphery—trends echoed by Mercer (2017; 2020). The relevance of ‘suburbanism’ in African contexts has also been heavily debated, with Andreasen *et al.* (2017) arguing that it is a better way of describing the process of households moving from Dar es Salaam’s centre to the periphery to build housing incrementally than ‘peri-urbanization’, whereas Sawyer (2014) argues that it has little meaning for households in Lagos, where similar (but more varied) forms of ‘piecemeal urbanization’ are occurring. By contrast, Buire (2014) finds that urban peripheries are providing new ‘orderly’ suburban lifestyles and homeownership in large new state-led apartment developments some 20–30 kms from Luanda. Across diverse forms of state-sponsored housing in southern Africa’s urban peripheries, including in Maputo (Melo 2017), eThekweni and Johannesburg (Charlton and Meth, 2017), there are complex resident experiences that reflect the ‘everyday realities’ of establishing lives in new edge localities (Lemanski *et al.*, 2017). While these studies suggest that different forms of housing and lifestyles are emerging in the urban peripheries, they are all associated with very long commutes exacerbated by poor infrastructure, suggesting that being *geographically* peripheral produces a distinctive experience of the urban.

A recent literature points to the growth of ‘new cities’ (mainly satellites) in Africa (e.g. van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018; Cote-Roy and Moser, 2019). Linked to ‘the assumption that African markets are poised for unprecedented growth’ (Cote-Roy and Moser, 2019: 2359), new cities are being promoted both by private developers in search of profitable real estate markets (van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018) and by entrepreneurial states seeking to attract investment by re-imagining their cities (Cote-Roy and Moser, 2019). In practice, most developments are large upmarket residential schemes, despite claims that they would be inclusionary and multi-functional (*ibid.*). In contrast to previous ‘new town’ approaches, contemporary forms are more often residential (sometimes coupled with special economic zones) and driven by private developers or through partnerships (Harrison and Todes, 2017).

While much of the discourse around new cities emphasizes economic growth and modernization, the history of satellites as places of failed growth, decline or economic instability also needs to be noted (*ibid.*). More generally, much of the literature on urban peripheries emphasizes new growth, or the consolidation of rural or informal settlements that might have emerged incrementally. There is less work on the transformation of large existing housing estates and ‘townships’ on the urban edge, which emerged in the context of earlier histories (but see Lemanski *et al.*, 2017; Güney *et al.*, 2019). Previous urban edge development is important in South Africa, given its apartheid history, but not unique to it. The spatial inheritance of urban peripheries is thus significant.

Our work contributes to this growing scholarship to inform grounded, contextualized understandings of peripheral urban change. We conceptualize urban peripheries in a way that is both spatial and deliberately broad: as geographical edges of cities or city-regions that may have their own internal centralities and margins, that may be ‘new’, ‘old’, rich or poor, and that can have varied histories as rural or urban spaces—but that, crucially, are perceived by residents as being in some sense remote and

as having limited accessibility to a primary ‘core’ or relevant urban hubs. This breadth allows us to unpack the varying logics that shape different kinds of periphery, and to differentiate the overall concept from other associated concepts in the literature. Thus, the periphery can encompass spaces at much greater distances from traditional ‘cores’ than is associated with the term ‘suburb’, including places at the edge of city-regions beyond reasonable commuting distance, and sometimes infrastructurally disconnected from the urban core rather than contiguous with it. However, peripheries are not necessarily *marginal*, in that they may themselves be economic hubs and spaces of new centralities (Mabin *et al.*, 2013; Keil, 2018). Nor are they necessarily *frontiers* in the sense of being spaces imagined as previously vacant in which the state seeks to establish new territorial authority and a socio-spatial re-ordering (Rasmussen and Lund, 2017; Simone, 2011; McGregor and Chatiza, 2019). In short, an urban periphery *may* be a suburb, marginal or frontier space, but equally it might be none of these—or indeed all of them at once.

Knowing the peripheries and capturing the everyday: our cases and methodological approach

To explore the drivers, governance and experiences of life in urban peripheries, our study adopted a comparative and multi-nodal case-study approach involving the selection of seven case-study areas across three city-regions, each of which contained several distinct nodes. The elements of these multi-nodal cases differed across the cases, but usually included multiple forms of housing, providing insights into different classes of residents with varied histories of urban presence and experience. This variation is not exclusive to urban peripheries. What is specific to them, however, is that these trajectories of mixed settlement, growth and decline are coupled with the opportunities and challenges of geographic distance from the urban cores as well as the associated features of cheaper, less dense and poorly serviced land. The significance of examining urban change at the scale of the periphery is explored through our methodological and conceptual analysis, detailed below.

Within Gauteng province, South Africa, the study focused on three distinct cases (see Figure 1). The Lufhereng/Protea Glen/Waterworks case covers three settlements located to the west of Soweto, Johannesburg, on and just beyond the municipal boundary. It comprises Lufhering, a state-subsidised ‘mega-human settlement’ of mixed-income (including ‘RDP’)¹ housing on formerly agricultural land, planned for about 20,000 households with the initial phases mainly accommodating people from informal settlements; Protea Glen, a lower-middle-income private-sector development with a shopping mall; and Waterworks, an informal settlement then marked for relocation to the neighbouring municipality and recently demolished. Although it reflects both state and private-sector investment, this periphery is distant from the priority growth areas of the municipality. The second Gauteng case is Ekangala/Rethabiseng, towards the eastern edge of Tshwane municipality near the town of Bronkhorstspuit. Originally established through apartheid policies to relocate black people to locations remote from former large White-only urban settlements, it includes the nearby declining, but still economically significant, Ekandustria site, established through related industrial decentralization policies. This case includes a mix of established and more recent RDP houses as well as the Phumekaya informal settlement. The third Gauteng case is Winterveld (predominantly in northern Tshwane although also crossing a provincial boundary), a sprawling and often poorly serviced site tied to apartheid homeland policies of forced relocation and patterns of displaced urbanization, again targeting peripheral locations. This case includes Checkers (a sparsely populated area in the

1 An informal term referring to South Africa’s Reconstruction and Development Programme, through which government-funded houses, currently around 40 m in size, were given for free to qualifying very low-income households.

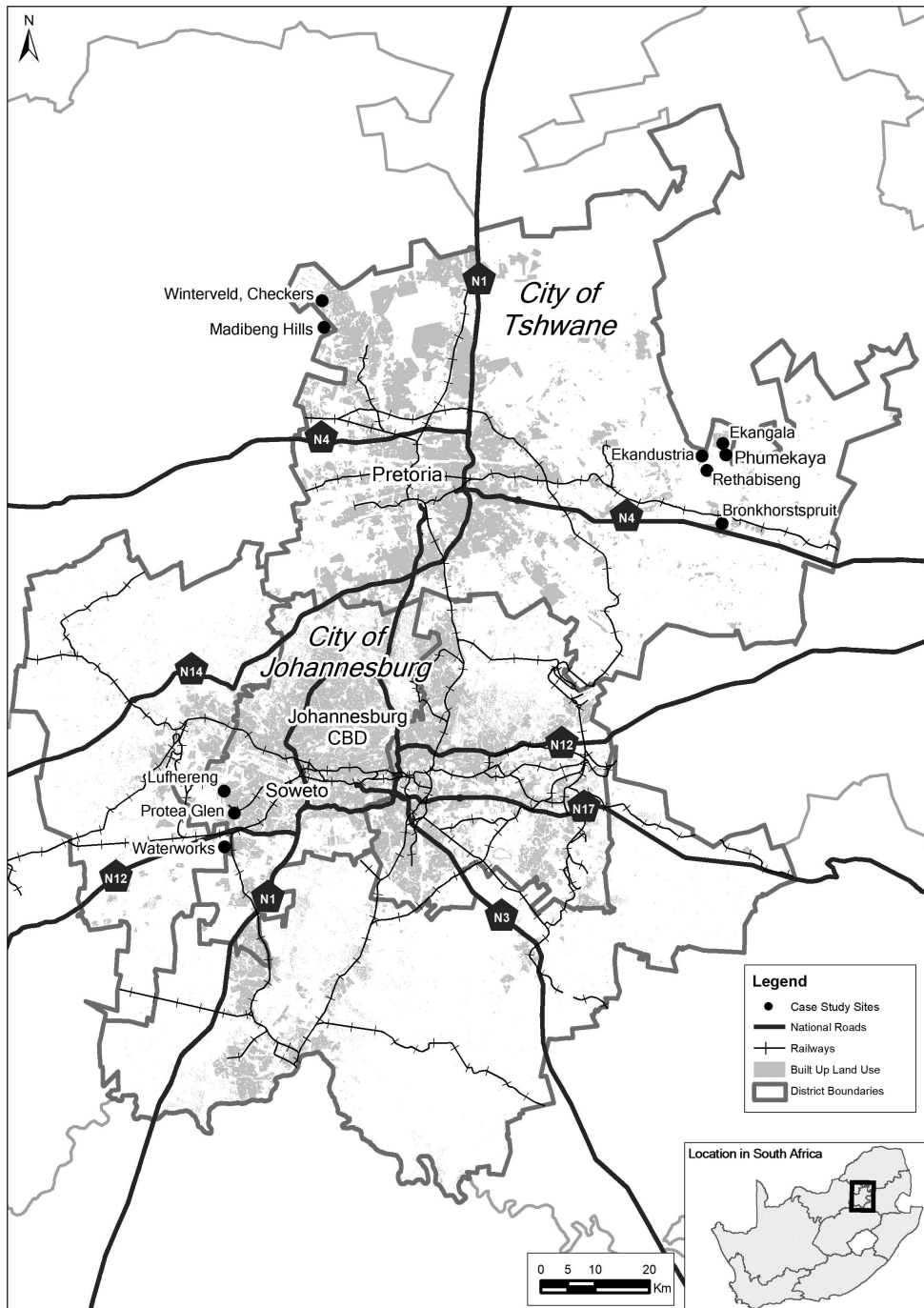


FIGURE 1 Gauteng case studies (map produced by the authors)

northern part of Winterveld) and the Madibeng Hills informal settlement, located just over the border from Tshwane. The entire case comprises a mix of RDP housing and informal properties built on larger plots, including those that have been illegally sub-divided.

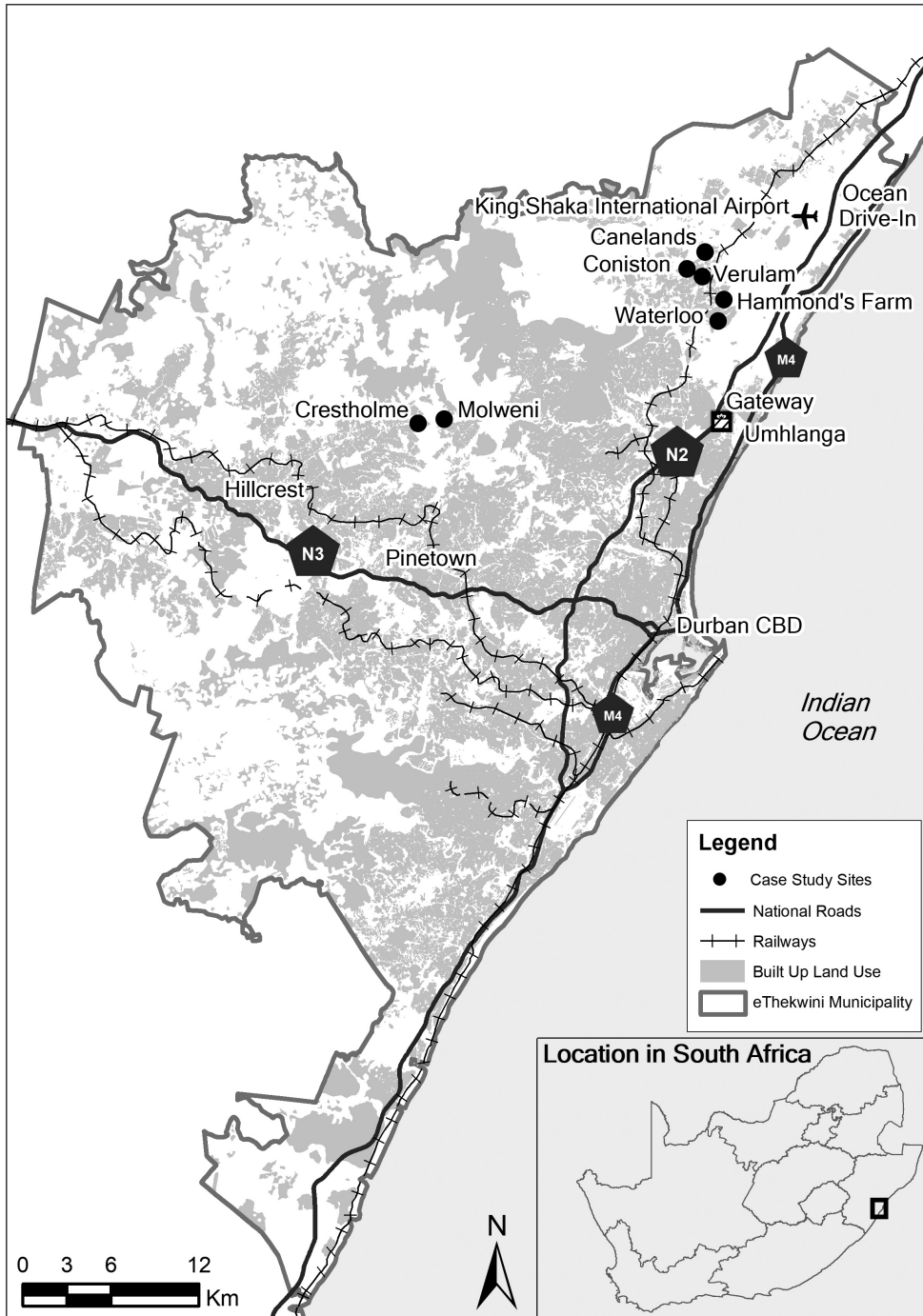


FIGURE 2 eThekweni case studies (map produced by the authors)

We selected two cases in eThekweni municipality, South Africa (see Figure 2). The first, in northern eThekweni, is located near the relatively new King Shaka airport and the city’s growing economic node of Umhlanga/Gateway, and illustrates the idea

of relative geographic peripherality. The case includes Hammond's Farm (a new RDP housing settlement) on former farmland; Waterloo (an older consolidated area of state housing); the Canelands/Coniston informal settlements; and parts of Verulam, an older commercial centre. The second case is Molweni/Crestholme, located to the outer west of the city-region and dominated by peri-urban Molweni, which includes large areas of traditional authority land with houses mainly on larger plots enabled by tenurial arrangements. Here RDP housing is evident among traditional structures and row housing. Adjacent is the wealthier settlement of Crestholme, consisting of private and gated properties occupying large tracts of land afforded by lower land prices, with a recently built shopping mall.

In the city-region of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, two cases were studied (see Figure 3), which again were multi-nodal. The first, Yeka Abado/Legetafo, is located in the northeast of the city straddling the border with Oromia (a separate regional state). Yeka Abado is primarily characterized by a major new settlement of state-subsidized condominium housing with 18,000 housing units located on former farmland. Although subsidised, unlike the RDP housing units in South Africa these condominiums are not distributed for free. In Yeka Abado they are internally differentiated through two distinct housing typologies: the majority are '20/80' condos (where a 20% deposit is needed, with the remaining 80% taken as a bank loan), while the remainder are '10/90' condos (only 10% deposit needed), which are much smaller units targeting low-income and displaced households (see UN-HABITAT, 2011; Ejigu, 2012; Planel and Bridonneau, 2017; Kassahun, 2021). There are also informal housing areas and displaced farmers' settlements, as well as substantial upmarket gated communities—including one large estate, CCD Homes, in the neighbouring Legetafo area to the east of the city border.

The second Addis Ababa case, Tulu Dimtu, is located in the southeast of the city, again straddling the border with Oromia. Tulu Dimtu encompasses a substantial

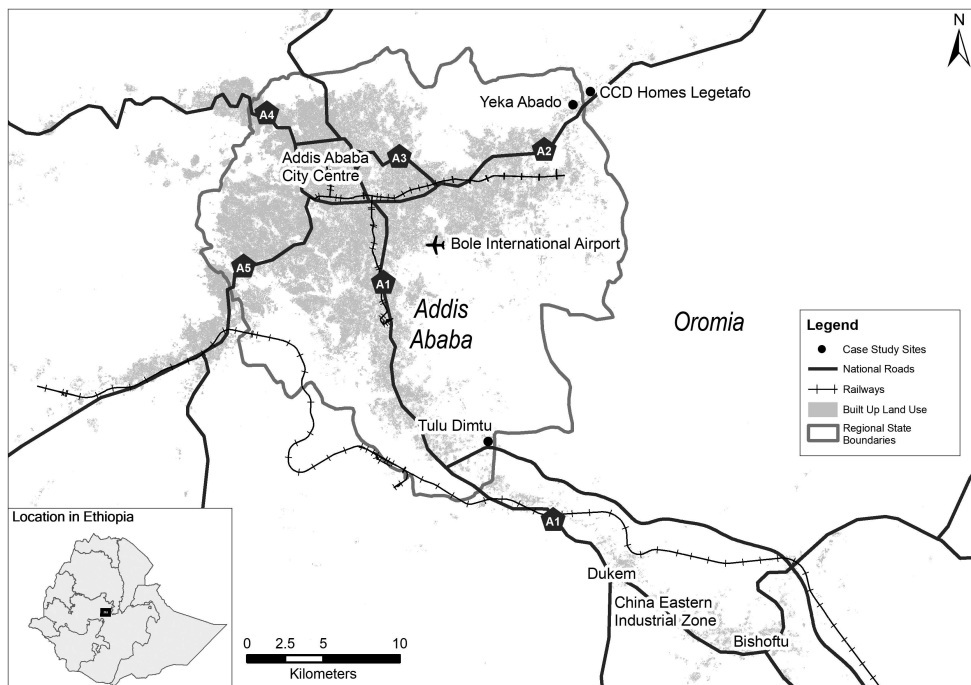


FIGURE 3 Addis Ababa case studies (map produced by the authors)

area of new condominium houses (10,000 units, all of which are the 20/80 type), split by a major arterial road, again built on former farmland. Also included in our case was neighbouring informal housing and an expansive area of cooperative housing: multi-storey, multi-household units developed by residents collaboratively in small groups through a government-sponsored scheme. Several major industrial zones lie just beyond the city border within fairly easy reach of Tulu Dimtu, including the major Chinese-owned industrial park next to the nearby town of Dukem.

In all of the cases we used a mixed-methods approach, with a particular emphasis on qualitative data to undergird our centring of lived experiences; this included initial stakeholder and community workshops followed by the dissemination of around 50 solicited diaries across each case (350 in total). Diary entries were invited over a two-week period and focused on residents' everyday lives and experiences, including any changes or challenges they observed in their neighbourhood. Some residents agreed to provide photographs to accompany their diaries and to enhance their explanations, with a few even submitting videos. Diary transcripts and images were used to structure subsequent interviews with all participants to extend our understanding of their experiences.

Quantitative methods supported and contextualized our qualitative findings. In each case, 200 surveys were carried out with residents, split across the nodes of each case (1,400 in total). These focused on residents' movement histories and household composition, employment, quality of housing, and services. In addition, in each city-region we interviewed key informants including government officials, planners and developers, focusing on key drivers of urban change and problems and priorities from their perspective. Our wider analyses were also informed by available statistics and maps, and also visual insights through professionally produced images of all the cases by Mark Lewis, a Johannesburg-based photographer. The practices of comparison we employed were dynamic and iterative, drawing on Robinson's (2016) 'genetic' and conceptually 'generative' comparative tactics. Our genetic tactics, alert to the 'the strongly interconnected genesis of often repeated urban phenomena' (*ibid.*: 6) explored interconnected but differentiated (*ibid.*: 18) historical processes, influences and everyday experiences within and across our cases. At the same time, we employed conceptually generative tactics—i.e. the selection of 'cases with shared features to generate and revise concepts' (*ibid.*: 6)—to bring cases and their similarities and differences into conversation, for the explicit purpose of conceptual innovation.

Significant moments of 'generative' comparison involved numerous whole-project team meetings for sharing and interrogating the data, multiple joint presentations and writing tasks (Meth *et al.*, 2021b), and targeted stakeholder engagement events, including exhibitions of the photographs we had commissioned. These all served to 'provoke and enrich' (Robinson, 2016: 18) our interpretations and entrench the comparative insights. This process enabled ongoing comparative discussions about the epistemology of the peripheries, including how to interpret disparities between our quantitative and qualitative data, the triangulation of different positionalities, and subtle differences between orally narrated accounts and the written diary entries. Through these conversations we noted multi-scalar comparisons and divergences, debated analytical trends, considered theoretical interconnections, and co-produced the conceptual framework we outline below. It is to these conceptual developments that the article now turns.

The urban periphery as a spatial phenomenon: one concept, five logics

As noted above, in contrast to work that conceptualizes 'peripheries' primarily in economic, cultural or political terms, this article embeds our understanding of peripheries in terms of geographic particularities. We recognize that 'being peripheral' is subjectively experienced and determined and not necessarily tied to spatial coordinates.

However, our project specifically focused on the geographic fringes of cities, without pre-conceiving these spaces as necessarily politically, economically or culturally peripheral within the wider city-region. Rather, they include key sites of power, wealth and prestige. Emphasizing the geographic qualities of urban peripheries invariably means emphasizing distance. Our cases were located on the urban edges of cities or city-regions, and accessibility, visibility (particularly by the state) and mobility are central concerns in all these areas. However, although all our cases are distant in commuting terms from the primary urban core, we understand their 'location' in relative terms, taking into account other urban hubs, 'new centralities' and actual and desired destinations, as well as what these distances mean in terms of lived experiences. We see these geographic elements of urban peripherality as producing particular urban expressions, and we consciously note these as the article progresses. These speak to our wider claim regarding the empirical and theoretical value of studying urban peripheries, since processes and lived experiences are intimately shaped by the geography of peripheral living.

Urban peripheries are therefore relational spaces. This does not just refer to how people perceive their relationship to 'the city'; there are relational qualities evident at multiple scales. Even within one peripheral area, there can be strongly contrasting neighbourhoods or settlements (e.g. formal versus informal housing) which draw their identities in contradistinction with one another. Moreover, differentiation and relationality also occur between streets and individual plots with varying degrees of access to transportation and services, marking important axes of inequality. Our conceptualization builds from the spatial; but alongside conceptualizing peripheral areas of cities, our five logics also point to *urban processes and practices* and *urban experiences* in different parts of the city. Residents' practices within and experiences of the periphery are also relative, and depend on what (or when) they are being compared to: one person's tranquillity can be another's boredom, for example. Despite this apparent heterogeneity, our conceptual logics—which are not mutually exclusive—work to encapsulate core characteristics and trends.

Once the parameters of our concept of the urban periphery had been established, we collaboratively mapped out common features across all peripheries (i.e. what makes the urban periphery relevant and meaningful as a generic concept) as well as the factors which differentiate these peripheral spaces from each other. Unifying features include their relative geographic distance from an urban core, their changing and changed land use, their lower economic density compared with more centrally located areas, and the widespread (but not absolute) insufficiency of infrastructure and services. Geographic urban peripheries are also largely, though not entirely, residential. Positive qualities such as fresh air, tranquillity, cheaper land and larger plots are common. These spaces can be significant urban footholds for new households or migrants to cities. The areas, or pockets therein, often attract speculative investment because of their perceived potential for profit. They often appear unfinished, as 'works-in-progress'. Changes are often incremental rather than wholesale, although interventions can often occur at substantial scales, made possible by the availability of land. Over the long term, development may become so significant as to restructure the region. At the same time, for residents, urban peripheries can feel boring, offer limited employment opportunities and prove inaccessible, particularly for those without private means of transportation.

Our research reveals sharp distinctions too, both within and between peripheries. Some peripheral areas or nodes are economically dynamic, while others are stagnant or declining. Some present significant opportunities, yet others speak only of marginality. Some areas are very densely populated, while others feel sparse or desolate. Peaceful qualities rub up against violence and aggression, and in some places the state feels omnipresent, whereas in others its absence is palpable. These commonalities and differentiating features of urban peripheries are summarized in Table 1. This exercise enabled us to make sense of the paradox of peripheries being so diverse and yet still a coherent and distinct spatial

TABLE 1 Common and differential characteristics of urban peripheries

Common characteristics	Differential characteristics
Distant from primary urban 'core'	Proximal to economic hubs/distant from all hubs
Changing forms of land use, often combining urban and rural	Dynamism/stagnation
Actual and perceived distance from job opportunities	Opportunity/marginalization
Relatively low economic density	Residential density/sparsity
Relatively cheap land; Sites of potential or actual speculation	Wealth/poverty Acquisition/dispossession
Infrastructure and service deficits; Incremental or unfinished built environment	State absence/state presence
Challenges of accessibility for some residents	Transport options/transport difficulties
Associated with boredom and slower pace of life	Tranquillity/exposure to violence
Place identity defined partly in relation to proximity or access to urban hubs	Connected/isolated; Visibility/invisibility

SOURCE: Authors' research

category for analysis. Some of the individual features identified as common are obviously present in other urban (or rural) areas that we might not consider to be urban peripheries; taken together, however, they are constitutive of urban peripheries. Meanwhile, the binary opposites we identify (some of which co-exist in the same spaces) illustrate the spectrum of variation within and between urban peripheries.

Drawing on our data and analyses, we then identified five 'logics', each of which refers to a specific set of practices, processes and experiences associated with urban peripheral spaces. The logics are not all-encompassing or absolute, neither are they hierarchical or exclusive. Instead, they operate in hybrid and overlapping ways: any one case study area may have one or more logics applied to it. These logics operate as interpretive tools for making sense of urban experiences and processes of change. Each logic can be thought of as corresponding to a 'quintessential type' of urban periphery, none of which exist in pure form anywhere, but which serve as useful heuristics for interrogating the dynamics of changing spaces at the urban fringe. Temporality is a key element of these logics, as our conceptualization attends to change over time and offers ways of making sense of sometimes very gradual changes to urban space.

We conceptualize our five logics as follows: (1) the speculative periphery; (2) the vanguard periphery; (3) the auto-constructed periphery; (4) the transitioning periphery; and (5) the inherited periphery. We now discuss each of these in turn.

– The speculative periphery

This logic describes processes of speculation adopted by urban actors in relation to peripheral areas (including homeowners) and speaks to the more general trend of 'speculative urbanism', which is manifesting in particularly stark ways in parts of Africa and Asia (Goldman, 2011; Goodfellow, 2017; Gillespie, 2020). Investment is commonly undertaken by private developers, sometimes in partnership with the state as co-developer (and/or significant funder of underlying infrastructure), or in a more abstract manner through urban planning policy and visions for urban change. Generally, the purpose of these practices is profit generation through investment in land purchasing/leasing and building construction. The outcomes in built form can vary significantly, and may include small or substantial housing estates, commercial properties, light or heavy industry, agri-business, retail facilities (particularly shopping malls), as well as multi-use developments and new cities. Investors originate from diverse contexts, both national and international.

The logic of speculation in urban peripheries bears witness to the common perception of the availability of relatively cheap land in large parcels, along with the idea

that access to such land might be quicker and less obstructed by planning regulations, NIMBYism, or historical ownership claims. Indeed, the varied use of farmland for urban expansion across multiple cases evidences both the profit-seeking practices of powerful large-scale farm owners, as well as the weakness of poorer farmers to contest land expropriation. Equally important is the expectation that demand will grow in these areas and land will therefore increase in value—often radically—due to processes of urban expansion or nearby planned or actual developments (Shatkin, 2016). Whether such increases actually materialize is variable and uncertain. Being situated on or adjacent to administrative boundaries can contribute to these benefits, facilitating different regimes of municipal taxation and planning. Land on the periphery may fall beyond a municipality's planning visions, or lie just over the boundary in an adjacent municipal authority with different plans or more limited capacities, potentially rendering it more open to investor-controlled development—as was the case historically in northern eThekweni (Todes, 2014). Boundaries may produce particular opportunities for profit because a degree of access to the urban core alongside differential planning controls can prove attractive, which is what we found with our Legetafo case of high-end luxury housing across the border from north-eastern Addis. Indeed, the speculative periphery may also be associated with different governance regimes, where large developments (including gated estates and new cities) are managed and regulated wholly or partially outside of (weak) municipal systems (Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer, 2018). While land speculation is clearly a pervasive feature of urban development across the world, it is these specific dynamics of land pricing, anticipated demand, boundary effects and overlapping governance regimes that give the *speculative periphery* its distinct logic.

The speculative periphery also references changes in urban power relations, as investments generate power for institutions (such as developer conglomerates or partnerships) and often cement power for particular governance structures (municipalities or national government, for example) through the promise of tax revenue and onward investment chains. Yet speculative practices can also undermine the capacities of weaker governance regimes hoping to manage urban change according to shared principles (e.g. sustainability or inclusive planning), especially if their institutional capacity to deliver basic services such as water is compromised by speculative landowners. Bureaucratic institutions may lack the capacity to challenge either the investors or politicians around such speculative intentions and decisions. For example, the economic development of northern eThekweni occurred following pressure at the national, provincial and private-sector level, despite significant limitations in its sanitation infrastructure and in defiance of the municipality's plans for containing city growth (Sim *et al.*, 2016).

The logic of the speculative periphery is also evidenced through small-scale speculative practices, including those managed by individuals or small organizations who target the peripheries for their profit-making potential. This can be both problematic and productive for residents living in these spaces, particularly where weak political control by the state (at varying scales) renders certain areas more prone to predatory speculative initiatives. In our study we see evidence of this in both Winterveld and Ekangala, where local 'big men' control whole areas, providing both housing and access to electricity. This offers a significant service and resource to residents unable to access formal housing, or who live off the national grid, but it is accompanied by complex power relations which shape a climate of fear and dependence. These kinds of practices can also contribute to dynamic urban change, as the provision of informal housing and electrification can transform a barren uninhabited space into a relatively dense settlement. Similarly, our study revealed evidence of small-scale speculation occurring through the sale or rental of government-provided housing in both South Africa and Ethiopia. In Lufhereng, Johannesburg, for example, adverts in the secondary market of state-subsidized

housing emphasized rental possibilities. Meanwhile, in the peripheries of Addis Ababa, an extremely vibrant market in the (often illegal) re-sale of condominium housing units is a key site of speculation, particularly with the announcement of new condominium projects periodically shaking up the housing market. Despite the benefits that some actors reap from speculation in the peripheries, these benefits are highly selective: those lacking the skills to work in new enterprises or the resources to acquire (or hold on to) land or housing often find themselves on the sharp end of speculation-driven change.

– The vanguard periphery

The vanguard periphery is a logic in which major investments led or facilitated by the state—often in the form of mass housing, infrastructure, a large-scale industrial or commercial venture or some other flagship investment—are undertaken by way of stimulating the broader development of an urban periphery. These may not in themselves be profit-making or directly motivated by economic gain; sometimes they constitute political projects to gain support among key urban groups or to project a particular image on the national, regional or global stage. Both apartheid-era and post-apartheid housing projects on the urban periphery might be seen in this way. However, vanguard investments often pave the way for the logic of the speculative periphery described above, such as the continued expansion of private housing developments in Protea Glen (Butcher, 2016). As Shatkin (2016) notes with respect to Asian mega-cities, the state often makes strategic investments in peri-urban infrastructure to stimulate the monetization of land. In other cases, vanguard projects on the periphery are smaller and more experimental in nature, effectively using the periphery as a testing ground for new ideas and practices.

Included in this categorization are practices of urban policy experimentation, which may reflect multi-scalar or national state ambitions or commitment, and may also be bound up with election promises or constitutional obligations. In our study, examples include new forms of state housing, particularly those experimenting with mixed, integrated forms of housing and design such as Lufhereng in Johannesburg. In this case, new low-income housing designs were implemented in close proximity to middle-income dwellings in order to produce a more textured neighbourhood as well as overcome the monotony associated with previous state housing developments. In Addis Ababa, the construction of differently financed (and hence differently sized and designed) condominiums on the periphery aims to provide a varied housing offer to the city's residents, but also to perform a vanguard function by stimulating new private developments in the surrounding area and new urban economic hubs.

These substantial investments by the state are assumed to be *generative*, in that their purpose is to attract and produce new developments over time: new housing estates are expected to draw in small businesses and services, for example. Temporality and the fulfilment of a future vision is a key aspect of their existence (Meth 2021a). In Lufhereng, the planning and delivery of state housing was accompanied by investment into infrastructure to underpin housing for purchase by lower-middle-income residents: the accompanying economic plan assumed that together, these diverse dwelling types and income groups would help stimulate new local production of goods such as steel windows and cupboards (Charlton, 2017). In Addis Ababa, the design of condominiums with around 10% of the ground-floor space designated for retail meant that businesses were attracted to these new sites of high-density residence relatively quickly (see Figure 4). Moreover, in Tulu Dimtu particularly, condominiums have been sited deliberately far from the urbanized part of the city (with open farmland in between) but strategically close to emerging industrial corridors. The intention is that the space between city and periphery will be 'filled in' over time in response to this vanguard investment (Goodfellow *et al.*, 2018).



FIGURE 4 Retail space in Yeka Abado (photo © Mark Lewis)

The vanguard periphery, like all our categorizations, must not be viewed in isolation or as a bounded spatial intervention. Rather, it constitutes a logic that reflects, facilitates or responds to concurrent urban changes occurring elsewhere in the city, such as inner-city regeneration, gentrification or changes in land use. In Addis Ababa, condominiums on the city edge are a response to efforts to ‘renew’ central Addis Ababa and formalize the city more generally (Abebe and Hesselberg, 2015; Haddis, 2019), and are thus linked to displacement and relocation. Tied to this are efforts to densify the city and to maximize and capture land value. Meanwhile, Hammond’s Farm in eThekweni is a significant state investment carried out partly in response to the demands of a private landowner to the north of the city, whose land (Ocean Drive Inn) was illegally occupied by informal residents for many years. Her desire to develop her land in view of other recent investments nearby meant that the state was obliged to step in and re-house the residents on former farmland that had been designated for residential development.

As with the selective benefits of speculative development, vanguard investments similarly benefit particular individuals and not others, or have contradictory impacts. Residents in Tulu Dimtu suffer from a lack of transport provision, with overcrowded and slow services the norm. This directly affects their daily routine and capacity to engage in trade, work, attending school or accessing services (Belihu *et al.*, 2018; Meth 2021a). In Hammond’s Farm, very few residents own cars and instead depend on informal taxis to access work and services—long-running tensions between taxi and bus companies make travel here costly. Despite being reasonably well-located in relation to the fairly new northern economic hub of Umhlanga/Gateway, residents feel spatially isolated, particularly from employment opportunities (Meth and Buthelezi, 2017; Houghton, 2018). In this case, wider infrastructural provision has failed to meet the demands of this significant housing investment.

Vanguard practices may also include explicitly political interventions tied to opportunities associated with borders or boundaries, or to disputes over territory or governance. In contrast to the speculative logic identified above, in these cases

the primary motivation may be political (e.g. to control land, access voters, establish power bases and political allies, reduce power blocs or overcome conflict) rather than simply as a profit-generating operation (Kinfu *et al.*, 2019; McGregor and Chatiza, 2019). Some of the investments in condominiums in Addis Ababa may be viewed in this way, in the context of the government's desire to regain urban support after losing almost all its parliamentary seats in the capital after 2005 (Nunzio, 2014; Planel and Bridonneau, 2017). However, the approach to vanguard investments in the periphery of Addis Ababa has changed in recent years. Following the attempt to implement the Addis Ababa and Surrounding Oromia Special Zone Integrated Master Plan in 2014, major social unrest erupted in Oromia, ultimately contributing to the regime change in 2018 (Mohamed *et al.*, 2020) and fostering a much more cautious approach to the periphery.

Sometimes vanguard investments clash with other state logics (e.g. between spheres or tiers of government), and vanguardism may evidence contestation, competing policies, or disagreements relating to spatial strategy. The Lufhereng example illustrates this tension in multiple ways: the development of this site ran contrary to city planners' view of it as lying 'outside' of the desirable and developable city edge, but the city fell in line with the province to support the project, with housing delivery and other imperatives overruling locally-derived planning principles (Charlton, 2017). Furthermore, Lufhereng's peripheral location makes life there problematic for poor people, who live marginalized lives and are unable to access services and employment easily (Williams *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the residents of vanguard peripheries may experience them as relatively isolated, slow-to-consolidate places lacking facilities, jobs or other economic opportunities, in contrast to the grand ambitions behind them. In South Africa, these kinds of spatial practices are possible in part because the system of welfare payments and social support enables people to try to survive in such sites.

– The auto-constructed periphery

This third logic partly draws on Caldeira's (2017) conceptualization, identifying the significant role of unauthorized development in shaping the spatial form and lived experiences of many peripheries. It also bears a resemblance to Schmid *et al.*'s (2018) concept of 'popular urbanization', which describes 'the material transformation of the urban territory with strong participation of the inhabitants' (*ibid.*: 35). This logic involves informal efforts to produce and occupy space, largely (but not exclusively) enacted by the urban poor, many of whom are migrants from other countries, cities, neighbourhoods or rural hinterlands, who are seeking to secure an urban footing. The auto-constructed periphery incorporates multiple ways of accessing water, electricity or power alongside the construction of innovative forms of housing and structures for retail.

Again, these built forms can occur in central areas as well as peripheries, as is evident in many cities and as Caldeira's (2017) conceptualization demonstrates. However, the combination of auto-construction and peripheral location poses distinct challenges for accessing work, services and a broader urban life. Our research in both South Africa and Ethiopia picked up on the distinctive challenges of living in these auto-constructed peripheries, compared with other built forms. The combination of distance from an urban core, extreme poverty, and very poor access to infrastructure and services worked to produce highly precarious lives. Within South Africa, the case of the Canelands/Coniston informal settlements in northern eThekweni (see Figure 5), illustrate efforts by urban residents to set up home in spaces that are relatively well-located adjacent to an industrial park (notice the factory in the image), but which lack individual piped water, electrification or formally constructed housing. The site has unsurfaced tracks and is built among dense vegetation. This auto-constructed periphery is critical in providing a relatively low-cost option to residents to potentially gain an income from being located 'near' to the city, and to survive on meagre wages by walking to avoid transport costs (Houghton and Todes, 2019).



FIGURE 5 Canelands/Coniston: informal settlements in eThekweni (photo © Mark Lewis)

The auto-constructed periphery can have particular temporalities associated with its spaces and practices. For some, these can be experienced as spaces of temporariness, particularly where there are threats of eviction or change owing to external pressures on the land or the enforcement of particular planning policies. In Waterworks (near Lufhereng) in Johannesburg, many residents have been re-housed elsewhere to make way for private-sector investment, despite long years of occupation. In many parts of the Addis periphery, including our case of Yeka Abado, the character of auto-constructed settlements has transformed, as they have had to incorporate (or found themselves adjacent to) settlements of farmers displaced from the land on which the condominiums were built (Belihu *et al.*, 2018). Temporalities also vary in relation to the time it takes for informal spaces to receive services, or to be granted legal title. In Winterveld in northern Gauteng, some residents experienced significant delays in accessing any form of security (services or land titles), even over decades.

More positively, auto-constructed spaces can also represent hope, opportunity and possibility—with residents expressing expectations for future investment—and can include more middle-income forms of housing. The logic of auto-construction incorporates wealthier forms of investment which may ignore planning conventions, environmental concerns or building bylaws. Finally, this logic also points to forms of opportunistic governance by ‘strongmen’ who use the informal allocation of land and services to build power, as noted above in relation to Winterveld and Ekangala.

– The transitioning periphery

Our fourth logic is that of the ‘transitioning periphery’, used to capture more incremental consolidation and change. Key here is change in land use or evidence of parallel land uses and socio-spatial arrangements—from rural and agricultural to (or alongside) more urban uses, including formal residential, institutional or retail. Transitioning areas commonly have long histories of settlement (for various reasons),

and the ensuing changes may also speak to processes of formalization, or indeed those of decline and loss. In several African contexts, the establishment of middle-class houses alongside significant densification on land managed by traditional authorities is an important process (Mbatha and Mchunu, 2016; Sim *et al.*, 2018; Bartels, 2020), including in one of our cases, Molweni.

Transitioning peripheries often involve the co-existence of multiple systems of land ownership and regulation, echoing Karaman *et al.*'s concept of 'plotting urbanism', where the allocation and changing use of land proceeds through incremental land commodification in contexts characterized by 'overlapping modes of territorial regulation, land tenure and property rights' (Karaman *et al.*, 2020: 1122). However, our concept of the 'transitioning periphery' also highlights the specific dynamics of the densification of the built environment in geographic peripheries, the associated reductions in plot sizes, and a growth in (often more formal) housing alongside a rising presence of retail facilities. These transitions are commonly characterized by the introduction of services and infrastructure which transform the space through dedicated bulk services, electrical facilities, bus shelters and pavements. Road and transport investments influence access to employment opportunities and retail spaces—particularly malls—as these develop. This evidences differentiated socio-cultural and economic change, which residents experience as significant. For example, in Molweni and Waterloo in eThekweni, the arrival of supermarkets and a shopping mall fundamentally altered residents' spatial-temporal realities (Charlton, 2018). Yet, despite changes in land use, access to land remains critical (e.g. for growing food), as is evident across many of the cases.

This logic also highlights continuity and gradual forms of change. For example, a township settlement may undergo less dramatic change than in the case of vanguard or speculative logics, through investments in institutional facilities, road works, or small-scale housing interventions. Hence it is better to regard such areas as *transitioning* (or *consolidating*) rather than *transforming*. Waterloo in Northern eThekweni illustrates this, as it has shifted from being a housing estate to a more textured and mature 'township'. Other forms of transition may include areas of state housing that experience second waves of beneficiaries, an inflow of tenants and new forms of occupation and investment. Again, the temporal aspect comes to the fore, as areas developing through a 'transitioning' logic may have previously been 'vanguard' spaces but over time have been reshaped in more incremental and less planned ways. We thus see this logic in broad terms, reflecting not just rural to urban changes, but other forms of transitions as well. Rather than representing a singular transition from one form to another, then, a characteristic of this logic may be the sense of a periphery in constant transition. The gradual filling of retail units in the Addis condominium developments is an example of such transition, afforded by earlier vanguard housing investment and the relative dislocation from alternative sources of consumption.

Transition also refers to changing or hybrid forms of governance stretching from traditional leadership mechanisms to democratically elected municipal structures. Changing governance may also involve party political changes which then impact on peripheral spaces by either blocking or promoting particular visions of change. In Addis, for example, the establishment of residents' committees in condominium developments facilitates small-scale transitions through local representation, managing urban gardens and controlling crime. Yeka Abado provides an example of a relatively 'mature' peripheral transition, partly facilitated by changes in local governance (Goodfellow *et al.*, 2018). For residents, the transitioning periphery can account for minor but significant adaptations over time which make residents feel that change is underway, or that their demands as citizens are being heard. In Molweni, residents clearly articulated their sense of shifting from living rural lives to those more akin to township dwellers as a result of progressive investments in roads, housing, electricity and transport. Here

a surprisingly coherent partnership emerged between the co-existing traditional authorities and the relatively strong eThekweni municipality. However, residents living in the traditional authority-governed area identified numerous deficiencies as a result of different funding mechanisms and their apparent exclusion from the wider benefits of municipal policies (Meth *et al.*, 2019; see also Sim *et al.*, 2018). This illustrates the challenges for municipalities when it comes to managing urban/rural divisions in transitioning areas.

– The inherited periphery

Our fifth and final logic is that of the inherited periphery. Areas typified by this logic often exist as spaces of obligation for the national and local state and are a function of specific histories through which political practices at multiple scales attempted to mould areas and people. Such spaces are often now the victims of failed policy initiatives. Our case of Winterveld in northern Tshwane—historically produced through a violent forced relocation programme of the apartheid era—endures as a site of tragedy requiring state attention in order to combat very high levels of poverty, high crime rates and economic failure. Ironically, many of these places have had significant state investment in the post-apartheid South African context, underpinning their population (but not economic) growth, and there may be initiatives to revitalize old state-supported industrial spaces, such as Ekandustria in our Ekangala case. For many weak authorities, these kinds of spaces exert a significant pressure on both their budgets and capacity. This logic extends to colonial practices elsewhere, or other faltering vanguard-like interventions which leave a troubled legacy behind.

These inherited spaces often show evidence of decline (commonly in economic terms), or they reveal an inability to progress in different ways, including in relation to levels of basic infrastructure, the extent and type of investment, and employment opportunities. In these areas, the range of work opportunities may be limited as well as highly precarious, and prone to change if structural and local factors unfold in particular ways. Wage levels may be depressed and the work irregular. This was strongly evident in Ekangala, where de-industrialization has significantly impacted on residents' lives. Industries that previously received some form of state subsidy under apartheid now stand abandoned, and unemployed residents describe their perpetual frustrations with seeking work in an increasingly competitive and limited pond (Houghton and Todes, 2019).

Many residents experience spatial marginalization compounded by weak, expensive and unreliable transport. The relative distance from urban cores is critical here, as is evident in Winterveld, a sparsely populated settlement far from most economic hubs. Residents frequently express negative emotions: they feel neglected, trapped and marginalized, pointing to years of stasis, with little hope of improvement. They describe their loss of faith in the state to deliver on election promises and they struggle to see pathways out of poverty. Importantly, the term 'inherited periphery' does not label the residents in these spaces or their actions as problematic or intrinsically marginal, but instead speaks to the historical origins of the areas' marginality and the consequences of this, including the trend towards declining levels of service or employment. It is worth noting that even major 'vanguard' investments in key sites on the urban periphery can become part of the 'inherited periphery' at later points in time, particularly if the surrounding areas do not develop in the ways intended. In theory, therefore, sites such as Tulu Dimtu in Addis Ababa could become the inherited peripheries of the future if further investment in critical infrastructure fails to materialize and the nearby industrial activities fail to generate sufficient economic activity and jobs. Tied to the troubled sentiments expressed by residents in existing inherited peripheries is the overwhelming experience of boredom—signalling a lack of disposable income, development or entertainment opportunities—and the prevalence of



FIGURE 6 State housing in Rethabiseng (photo © Mark Lewis)

poverty and immobility (Mukwede, 2018). For some residents, however, these qualities of desolation are matched by perceptions of peacefulness, fresh air, tradition and quiet. These ‘boring’ spaces are therefore not necessarily perceived in uni-dimensional ways, and geographic marginalization may be accompanied by a rarer urban quality—that of space. Figure 6 shows state housing on large plots of land in Rethabiseng, near Ekangala.

Weak governance institutions may be present in such areas, including traditional authorities within hybrid governance systems who complain of neglect, under-funding, and sometimes significant hardship compared to neighbouring municipalities. Finally, inherited peripheries may be dominated by the ‘informal strongman’ mentioned earlier. These individuals can yield significant power locally and can prove highly effective at delivering key resources, including housing, electricity and employment. However, residents’ narratives reveal high incidences of dependence on such individuals, alongside intimidation and violence—often unhindered by the state, as strongmen operate beyond their purview.

Conclusions

The five logics outlined above, which constitute the key contribution of our article, are productive for categorizing and analysing different processes of multi-scalar change in urban peripheries in material, experiential, spatial and socio-economic terms. They bring together diverse forces of change and their potentially contradictory outcomes, increasing our understandings of complex urban peripheries and their diversity. Their articulation is informed by a comparative analysis of the narratives of lived experiences of residents living within these peripheries, although the messy empirical workings of these are explored through other research outputs (Belihu *et al.*, 2018; Charlton, 2018; Todes, 2018; Houghton and Todes, 2019; Meth *et al.*, 2019; 2021a; 2021b). These five logics have the capacity to describe spaces in ways that reflect both the imperatives that shape them and, to some extent, the varied emotional realities of the lives lived there. Hence, for example, the logic of the transitioning or inherited periphery is something

we have derived through the epistemology of lived experiences in these places, as well as from identifying structural drivers at the level of policy and economic change. The identification of different urban logics also supports our ability to distinguish and differentiate between our cases, or between smaller spatial sites within them, and it offers a comparative analytical view across very different cases, regions and countries. The five logics also facilitate a differentiation between resident experiences and broader structural processes of intervention and change and thereby speak to the wider question of how urban change is experienced by those living in urban peripheries.

The logics are not intended as singular labels for a particular area; they are not bounded or discrete and can bleed into each other in complex ways. Neither are they distinct from the wider urban form. Instead, the logics provide a way of interpreting the trajectory of urban peripheries in relation to broader urban contexts. Our wider focus, then, is the scale of the city-region, and we utilize these urban logics to understand more thoroughly the realities of urban peripheries in these contexts. To date there has been very little analysis of the kinds of interventions occurring in these spaces, or of the kinds of institutions and individuals seeking to invest and/or influence change in them. Similarly, the lack of detailed qualitative work means that the diversity of experiences on the ground—alongside the comparative interconnections—are largely missed, with analyses risking adopting either homogenizing accounts of urban change or producing case-specific work which struggles to find wider generalizability. Of course, elements of these logics can be applied to non-peripheral urban spaces too. However, we maintain that when these logics are combined with the geographic fundamentals of urban peripheries they produce a complex set of urban relationships which foster particular forms of space, practices and experiences. Our differentiation between the varied manifestations of these, drawing on their shaping factors as well as how they are experienced, provides a conceptual tool with broad resonance across contexts.

Importantly, our five logics facilitate both conceptually generative (Robinson, 2016) and substantive comparison across and within the seven cases presented here. This approach privileges analysis across the logics rather than simply of individual cases, so that we can explore comparable trends and experiences occurring in vastly different contexts, including between different countries. Maintaining the principles of ‘genetic’ comparison (*ibid.*), in our wider analyses we prioritize a strong contextualized approach to comparison, ensuring that each case or particular node within a case is clearly situated within its historical and current context. Although we argue that these five logics are relevant to urban peripheries in other parts of Africa and beyond, we recognize that the question of their broader applicability is an empirical one that requires further investigation. Our case-study countries are unusual (certainly within the African context) in terms of the volume of state investment in housing in peripheral areas, with both being states that have been considered ‘developmental’ in their approach to major public investments (Edigheji, 2010; Clapham, 2018). However, we have taken care to explore not only the nodes of major public investment, but also spaces of state neglect, autonomous development and private-sector investment and speculation. Considerable difference in terms of the political, ideological and economic context between the two countries has also enabled us to explore some real extremes; in terms of land management and tenure, for example.

The existing literature suggests that at least some of these logics resonate elsewhere in Africa. For example, the logic of the transitioning periphery is evident in many other regions, and particularly West African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria (Gough and Yankson, 2000; 2011; Sawyer, 2014). Meanwhile, auto-construction and speculation are pervasive across the continent, and vanguard developments at the urban edge have been extremely significant in contexts such as Angola and Kenya (Buire, 2014; Watson, 2020). There are also many similar resonances in Asia (Phadke, 2014; Shatkin, 2016), and across the global South more broadly (Kanai and

Schindler, 2019; Sawyer *et al.*, 2021). However, we recognize that a range of different logics may be shaping peripheries in specific contexts, and that their scale and form may result in a variety of outcomes, particularly where distinctive patterns of politics or particular agrarian regimes shape the nature of urban expansion (Cowan, 2018; McGregor and Chatiza, 2019). Generalizability from any two countries must always necessarily be limited in scope. However, we argue that the scale of the ambition to transform peripheries in these two contexts—which has generated a range of successes and failures as well as stark contrasts between vanguard areas and inherited areas left behind—makes them a good basis for reflecting on broader trajectories and future prospects. In this sense, our work has implications for the study of urban peripheries globally.

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