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Authors
Croese, Sylvia
Kombe, Wilbard

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Sylvia Croese and Wilbard Kombe

ABSTRACT

This article brings together recent debates in urban and development studies to illuminate the understudied politics and compromise involved in the rollout of globally funded urban development in Africa. The argument presented builds on a detailed analysis of the World Bank's urban development portfolio in Tanzania, with a specific focus on the Dar es Salaam Metro-politan Development Project, to draw attention to the disjuncture between rising urban investments and persistently low levels of city-level autonomy in urban Africa. Challenging views of cities as either active agents or mere subjects of urban development, the article focuses on the negotiation strategies that have been employed by donors and recipients alike to enable the continued disbursement of urban development funding. The pragmatic and non-confrontational nature of these negotiation strategies is illustrated by highlighting the role of a transnational community of urban development professionals who contribute to embedding local support for policy reform from within. It is argued that while this community has been key to enabling the massive growth of the World Bank's urban lending portfolio in Tanzania, it has also contributed to undermining effective local government reform, thereby reshaping conventionally assumed pathways and understandings of urban agency and development.

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INTRODUCTION

This article brings together recent debates in urban and development studies to illuminate the understudied politics and compromise involved in the rollout of globally funded urban development in Africa. Widely seen as the last frontier of urban development investment, there has been a resurgence of large-scale infrastructure development in Africa since the onset of the 21st century (Goodfellow, 2020). Much attention has been paid in this regard to the role of bilateral partners such as China and its Belt and Road Initiative (Lisinge, 2020), or to that of a growing uncharted array of private consultants, property developers and transnational corporations (Moser et al., 2021). However, such studies overlook the importance of multilateral development lenders such as the World Bank, which play a significant role in reshaping Africa's rapidly growing cities through large-scale urban investments (Cirolia et al., 2021).

The role of multilateral development banks in urban infrastructure investment in Africa is coupled with an urban turn in post-2015 global development agendas, which have come to position cities as 'pathways to sustainable development' (Parnell, 2016: 529). Urban infrastructure investments by global lenders are seen as key to closing existing development financing gaps, as the cost of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa alone by 2030 has been estimated at US$ 1.3 trillion a year, far beyond current financial capacities (UNECA, 2020). Scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which global goals such as the SDGs have reinforced the rise of a financialized logic of international development, with traditional development aid increasingly being reorganized into development interventions around partnerships with private finance (Gabor, 2021; Mawdsley, 2018). To enable the formation of such partnerships, myriad actors and tools are deployed to prepare, measure and facilitate the rollout of urban investments through the 'reformatting' of local planning, finance and governance processes (Bigger and Webber, 2021; Leitner et al., 2018). From this perspective, cities are seen as increasingly being turned into standardized spatial expressions of global finance (Schindler and Kanai, 2021; Wiig and Silver, 2019).

Notwithstanding the merits of these critiques, our aim in this article is to draw attention to what we see as a much more fundamental issue shaping the pathways of urban development finance, which is the mismatch between rising urban investments and persistently low levels of city-level autonomy in the context of urban Africa. Despite the global discourse on the importance of cities for urban development — and the fact that the African continent is set to represent a key hub in this increasingly urban world (UNDESA, 2018) — African national governments continue to be the main conduits through which finance for urban development is channelled. Moreover, while most African governments pay lip service to the kind of global development discourses that emphasize the importance of decentralization and local institutional strengthening, in practice many city governments remain weak and are purposefully kept so, as cities represent a key site for sustaining the political dominance of incumbent regimes (Goodfellow and Jackman, 2023).

We illustrate the disjuncture between the growth in urban development finance and existing levels of city-level autonomy in Africa through the case of World Bank investments in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. As of April 2024, World Bank financing in Tanzania amounted to close to US$ 10 billion, cementing its role as one of the country's chief development financiers (OECD, 2018, 2022). Comprised of 26 national projects, urban-centred investments represent a major component of the Bank's lending portfolio in Tanzania,[1] illustrating its call to open the doors of Africa's cities to the world (Lall et al., 2017) by spearheading a new urban development path to allow the continent to better leverage and maximize finance for development in post-2015 years (World Bank, 2015b, 2017).

By analysing the rollout of the Bank's urban lending portfolio in Tanzania over time, we firstly challenge the rise of normative views of city agency in global development policies and associated literatures that posit city governments as central drivers of urban development (Acuto and Parnell, 2016; Angelo and Wachsmuth, 2020). Instead, we foreground the role of national agents in shaping the outcomes of World Bank-funded urban development interventions. In so doing, we show how state actors actively respond to global finance logics and attendant geopolitics so as to 'attract global investment and ensure the economic development of its most politically privileged urban centres' (Jonas and Moisio, 2018: 356). Moreover, rather than taking the power of global actors in subjecting local actors to all-encompassing processes of capitalist urbanization at face value, we focus on the negotiation strategies that have been employed by both sides to enable the continued disbursement of development funding, even in the face of limited or uneven outcomes (Whitfield, 2009). We illustrate the pragmatic and non-confrontational nature of these negotiation strategies by highlighting the role of a transnational community of urban development professionals who contribute to embedding local support for policy reform by working as, for, or in collaboration with World Bank officials in Tanzania. We argue that while this community has been key to enabling the massive growth of the Bank's urban lending portfolio in Tanzania, it has also cushioned the impact of central government interventions which undermines the ability of city authorities to govern their territories effectively. Bypassing city authorities in the governance of urban development has implications, not only for the capacity of cities to act as agents in charge of their development destiny, but also for the assumed extent to which

1. See World Bank website: www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/overview#2 (accessed 10 June 2024).

international development financiers are able to mould them as an object of wider financializing relations, processes and practices (O'Brien et al., 2019).

Our argument builds on a detailed analysis of the World Bank's urban development portfolio in Tanzania, which currently covers the country's entire urban system of 30 cities and towns to the tune of a combined US$ 1 billion in concessional loans (World Bank, 2021a: 7). About a third of this portfolio is dedicated to the implementation of the Dar es Salaam's Metropolitan Development Project (DMDP). First launched in 2015, the DMDP was designed to improve urban services through infrastructure development and informal settlement upgrading, while strengthening the institutional capacity of the governing authorities of the rapidly growing megacity of Dar es Salaam at a time when these were seen as 'complex, fragmented, and inefficient' (World Bank, 2014: 2). Over the course of the implementation of the DMDP, its main components of infrastructure development and urban upgrading were generally successfully implemented (World Bank, 2015a, 2020). However, the Bank faced significant difficulties in strengthening Dar es Salaam's governing structures. Instead of the creation of the envisioned special metropolitan authority, by 2021 then President John Magufuli had disbanded the Dar es Salaam City Council. While its mandate was officially transferred to one of the city's five municipalities, the President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) effectively came to function as the City Council's stand-in, giving the country's president direct access to the projects it oversaw. Despite the fact that these interventions directly countered the initially mutually agreed upon objectives of the DMDP, in December 2023 the World Bank and the Tanzanian government signed a US$ 385 million loan for a second phase of the DMDP, in order to further improve urban services and institutional capacity in Dar es Salaam.

Our research on the DMDP, and the urban projects that preceded and followed it, consisted of the examination of official project documentation and other World Bank reports, studies and publications. This work was complemented with a total of over 30 in-person and online confidential interviews and personal communications with development experts working in or having worked in Dar es Salaam. Illustrative of the transnational nature of the urban development community that we describe, our informants represent a mix of professional experiences, backgrounds and nationalities. Most international World Bank officials had performed missions in a range of different countries, but some had been based in Tanzania for years and were hired locally or subcontracted as consultants. Tanzanian World Bank officials or consultants in turn had often occupied a range of positions over the course of a single professional career, sometimes as (former) national and local government officials or as academics.[2] Due to these variable

2. The second author of this article is part of this group of development professionals.

occupations, most of our informants would only grant us confidential interviews or would not allow interviews to be recorded. As such, care was taken to guarantee the anonymity of all of our informants through the anonymized transcription of recordings or the taking of anonymized notes. Research in Dar es Salaam took place over the course of four rounds of fieldwork. We organized and coded the preliminary findings from our research conducted in November 2021 and April 2022 around key themes, which were shared with a selected set of development professionals representing the World Bank, government authorities and local universities during a validation workshop session held in Dar es Salaam in August 2022. Follow-up interviews were conducted during this period, followed by a final round of field work in March 2023.

Mindful of the limitations of generalizing from a single case study, our aim here is first and foremost to shed light on the complexity of the Tanzanian urban development landscape. Yet, we believe that the Tanzanian case offers a fruitful avenue for interrogating existing assumptions around the nature and workings of urban development policy, cooperation and agency in Africa. We therefore start not only by framing our discussion of the negotiation of urban development within a longer genealogy of World Bank funding in Tanzania, but also by historicizing the urban turn in global development lending and cooperation more generally to illustrate a longer history of central government resistance to global lending conditionalities. Analysing World Bank-funded urban development in Tanzania shows that, while the compromise that donors and recipients have found to manage such resistance over time has ensured support for the continuation of development funding, this compromise has undermined effective local government reform, thereby reshaping conventionally assumed pathways of urban development.

NEGOTIATING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In the vast literature on the World Bank there is a widespread consensus about the Bank's remarkable ability to manufacture demand for its services, despite consistent gaps between the discourse and practice of its developmental 'will to improve' (Murray Li, 2007; Pincus and Winters, 2018). Less attention is paid to the ways in which lending may be contingent on the convergence of mutual interests at particular moments in time, akin to a 'development dance' between donors and recipients (Swedlund, 2017). Building on contributions to the literature on the history and political economy of development aid, our focus in this section is on shedding light on the strategies employed by development financiers and national political elites in the negotiation of development, as a backdrop to our discussion of the operationalization of World Bank lending for urban development in Tanzania.

Before doing so it is worth noting that although the centrality that cities are accorded in global development goals such as the SDGs is unprecedented, a recognition of the importance of cities for achieving development is not entirely new. Cities first started being recognized as both sites and actors in global development frameworks in the early 1970s with the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment in 1972 (Kosovac and Acuto, 2020), while the first United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development of 1976 represents an early contribution to the development of what is now referred to as a 'global urban agenda' (Cociña et al., 2019, Parnell, 2016). Nevertheless, the limited scale of urban investments during this time indicates that the Bank faced significant challenges in operationalizing this early shift towards urban and poverty-oriented lending (Cohen, 1983).[3]

Part of the Bank's limited success in expanding its urban development lending portfolio can be attributed to a series of internal challenges, deriving from its own limited technical expertise and experience in the area of urban development as a result of its initial focus on financing large-scale infrastructure, industry and rural development in post-war Europe (Finnemore, 1997). Yet, just as important was the strong resistance among national governments in developing countries against urban development lending through direct support to local governments. Leaderships of countries with an absence of democratic traditions, including many with military governments, authoritarian regimes or one-party states that had recently become independent, resisted the empowerment of local governments, particularly those of capital cities which represented important symbols of national pride and political power (Cohen, 2001: 45). Governments were able to shape the nature, implementation and outcomes of international development aid agreements in line with such policy preferences by using the global economic, political and ideological conditions deriving from the ongoing Cold War to increase their negotiating capital (Fraser, 2009).

To circumvent the political and institutional challenges posed by central government resistance against decentralization, the Bank employed a pragmatic approach to the implementation and coordination of urban investments, signalling both a logic of non-confrontation, as well as a wider belief in efficiency over reform. In some cases, this approach translated to working in urban centres outside of capital cities (Cohen, 2001: 45–46). In

3. Although World Bank veteran Cohen (1983) provides a unique set of financial data to illustrate the increase of World Bank lending for 'urban projects', in later work he concedes that 'From an urban perspective, the quantity of urban assistance has always been small. While the exact numbers have been the subject of much debate by the few people who have actually done the hard work to understand the numbers, the reality is that urban aid has been a small proportion of total aid and even smaller when compared to the efforts made by the low and middle-income countries themselves' (Cohen, 2001: 41). The difficulties of categorizing investments as 'urban' remain today, as sectoral projects in areas such as education or infrastructure may cut across urban and rural areas.

others, the Bank worked through special units attached to local city councils or line ministries, as this approach 'generally achieved better results than one that uses existing institutions' (Cohen, 1983: 26). In countries such as Tanzania, it took years for the Bank to start funding any kind of urban development project.

The limited scale of urban development funding in Tanzania illustrates the negotiating strength of Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first post-independence president. Under his leadership, the government skilfully used its position as a geopolitically strategic yet stable development partner to leverage support from various global superpowers (Bigsten et al., 1999). In line with the focus on 'deconcentrated' growth under President Nyerere, who went as far as abolishing all local governments in 1972, the Bank's support to Tanzania therefore remained limited to regional- and district level-led planning and rural development (Lamberg, 2021). At the same time, President Nyerere managed to attract other sources of international assistance to develop a new capital city in the country's rural hinterland of Dodoma (Beeckmans, 2018). Support for investments in basic services in the country's existing cities only followed once these started to significantly deteriorate in the face of rapid urban growth. Even so, a World Bank-funded Squatter Upgrading and Sites and Services Programme (SUSSP) initiated in the 1970s focused mainly on investments in urban infrastructure such as roads, water, drainage and electricity, as well as delivery of serviced land/plots for low-income home builders, rather than the capacitation of local governments (Campbell, 1988). In the implementation of this programme, the Bank mainly dealt with central government agencies, such as the Urban Water Authority, which were better staffed and funded than local governments, even after their reinstatement in 1982 (Liviga, 1992).

Between 1972 and 1977 Bank lending to Tanzania doubled, alongside an overall increase in aid flows from both multilateral and bilateral donors, making the country one of the largest recipients of development assistance on the African continent (Wangwe, 1997). Yet, in the 1980s relations between the Nyerere government and the World Bank grew increasingly hostile as the latter became openly critical of Tanzania's agricultural and economic policies. Under Nyerere's strong anti-reformist leadership, these policies were rapidly plunging the country into major economic crisis, even if many of them had initially been supported by the Bank itself (Payer, 1983). The Tanzanian government's resistance against market economic reforms echoed that of many governments across the continent during this time. In response, the Bank employed a mix of coercion, persuasion and co-optation in its lending policies, which recipients countered with a blend of strategies ranging from non-negotiation or politicization to more non-confrontational approaches, such as the feigned implementation of reforms (Fraser, 2009). As the volume of loans and the resulting inter-dependence between donors and recipients grew over time, interest in the direct enforcement of conditionalities decreased (Mosley et al., 1991). In this context, embedded approaches to building support for policy reform became central to ensuring the continuation of development aid.

EMBEDDED SUPPORT FOR POLICY REFORM

In his study of the inner workings of the World Bank, Michael Goldman (2005) has evocatively shown how a key tool in building the Bank's hegemonic 'imperial power' has been its ability to successfully manufacture its own demand, 'through the production of new transnationalized institutions, networks, norms, beliefs, and professionals' (Goldman, 2005: 34). Tanzania represents a model case of this approach, illustrated by the central role played by a transnational community of development professionals in embedding local support for policy reform by working closely and effectively with external donor agencies.

World Bank President Robert McNamara (1972–82) played an active role in the production of an early version of this transnational community through what during the 1980s became a common strategy to build buy-in and consensus around the need for structural adjustment reforms. In Tanzania, this involved the creation of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which was funded by the Bank but composed of both expatriate and Tanzanian economists, development planners, town planners, engineers, environmentalists, and finance experts. Many of them had studied in the United States, making them familiar with the tenets of market economics. Upon their return, they were hired by the Tanzanian government, contributing to creating fertile ground for driving policy reform 'from within' (Bigsten et al., 1999: 26; Holtom, 2005: 560). On the face of it, the members of the team appeared apolitical, but in reality, these were individuals who were well connected to various levels of the Tanzanian government and wider donor community. Also referred to as members of an 'epistemic community' (Holtom, 2007: 238), they formed a 'pocket' of ownership of reform processes within the state, allowing for the ostensible 'rollout' of liberal political and economic change in the years that followed (Evans and Ngalwea, 2003; Harrison and Mulley, 2007: 19).

A recognition of the transnational nature of this embedded development policy community is important as it allows for transcending the typical distinction that is made between 'international' and 'national' development experts or 'posted' and 'national' staff in the literature on development aid (Kamruzzaman, 2017; Sundberg, 2019). To date, most members of the transnational development community in Tanzania may be considered 'local' in terms of their nationality, but their background and experience often transcend their locality. Many of them have spent periods abroad as part of their studies or have had other international exposure through study trips or simply through their long-standing experience of collaborating with international donors. Importantly, in a country where Kiswahili is the national language, this also means that they speak fluent English. The transnational nature of their experience and skill sets makes them trusted and valued by international agencies and government authorities alike. Scholars of policy transfer therefore see transnational development professionals as playing a central role in the 'promotion, legitimation, mediation and adoption' of global policies (Porto de Oliveira, 2020: 54; 2017). We agree that the role of transnational development professionals as 'policy ambassadors' has been used by the Bank to enable the rollout of policy reform in Tanzania. However, we will show that the role of these professionals also serves government interests by securing continued access to development finance in the absence of effective political commitment to reform.

An early example of the fragility of the coalitions underpinning policy reform can be found in the high-level political resistance against the intrusive nature of the second round of economic reforms of the early 1990s (Bigsten et al., 1999: 4; Nelson, 1989). Bilateral aid to Tanzania was eventually suspended following a massive tax exemption scandal that broke in 1994 (Holtom, 2007: 235).[4] But rather than doubling down on conditionalities, aid was re-introduced under an even more embedded model of development cooperation under the premise of good governance, partnership and participation (World Bank, 1992). This model entailed a greater role for development professionals to act as brokers between the Tanzanian government and global aid industry, widening the scope of the transnational aid domain (Gould, 2005; Green, 2014). Alongside an increasing number of NGOs and civil society organizations, this expanded aid domain came to include a growing urban community of practitioners involved in the offering of technical assistance and specialist services to the Tanzanian central and local government, the Bank and other multilateral agencies such as UN Habitat as employees, researchers, consultants or advisors. As we will show in the next sections, the role of this embedded group of transnational development experts was central to the successful reactivation of an urban turn in development lending, despite persistent central government resistance against decentralization.

REACTIVATING THE URBAN TURN

Until the 2000s, most World Bank loans to Tanzania had been focused on economic reform or directed at funding interventions in traditional aid sectors such as rural development or health and education. By 2015, the Bank was financing infrastructure and local institutional strengthening

4. It is notable that whilst bilateral donors including Nordic countries such as Norway suspended their financial support, the World Bank did not. In fact, the Bank was the strongest player lobbying the bilateral organizations on behalf of the government of Tanzania, not to suspend their support despite the governments' reluctance to reform (Selbervik, 1999).

in Tanzania's entire urban system of 30 cities and towns to the tune of a combined US$ 1 billion in concessional loans, of which roughly a third was dedicated to implementing the stand-alone DMDP (World Bank, 2021a: 7) (see Figure 1[5]). Yet, the much-touted reference to the Bank's urban development portfolio as a 'flagship urban programme' in Africa[6] belies the ways in which embedded forms of support for policy reform have continued to function as a smokescreen, concealing the inherently politicized nature of the relationship between international donors and the Tanzanian government (Harrison, 2001; Kelsall, 2002; Mercer, 2003).

Following the increasingly evident failure of structural adjustment and a period of general self-doubt in the mid-1990s (Pender, 2001), the early 2000s marked a period of renewed energy and attention within the World Bank and international development sector at large to what by then was increasingly acknowledged as a growing global 'challenge of slums' (UN-Habitat, 2003). Recognizing the importance of an enabling institutional environment for addressing the challenge of urban development, the Bank initially focused its efforts on supporting fiscal decentralization (Jones and Ward, 1994; World Bank, 2000). In collaboration with other donors such as the Danish International Development Agency, the Bank started to develop analytical work in this area, building on existing, more advanced, work in Latin America, East Asia and South Asia, and the rollout of local government development projects in countries like Uganda, Zimbabwe and Senegal (Steffensen and Trollegaard, 2000). Lessons from these experiences were incorporated in the development of a Local Government Support Programme (LGSP) for Tanzania (2004–12), which sought to improve accountability in the use of local government resources and the management of intergovernmental transfers (World Bank, 2004).

The LGSP built on a Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which had been initiated under the reformist leadership of President Benjamin Mkapa (1995–2005) in the transition to multi-party democracy, with large-scale donor support. Implemented in two phases (1998–2008 and 2008–13), the aim of the LGRP had been to devolve and decentralize power and resources from the central to the local government level in order for local governments to more adequately and inclusively deliver services and development (Kombe and Namangaya, 2016; Tidemand and Msami, 2010). Following the same rationale, the LGSP introduced a new Local Government Capital Development Grant (LGCDG) system for all urban and rural local governments as a central tool for achieving fiscal decentralization. The idea was for this grant to be discretionary and performance-based, allocated

5. This figure depicts key city-wide projects funded by the World Bank in Tanzania and not the many other projects in sectors such as transport and sanitation that were also implemented in urban areas during this time. For a full overview of the World Bank portfolio in Tanzania see: www.worldbank.org/en/country/tanzania/overview#3 (accessed 21 June 2024).
6. Interview senior World Bank official, 10 August 2022.

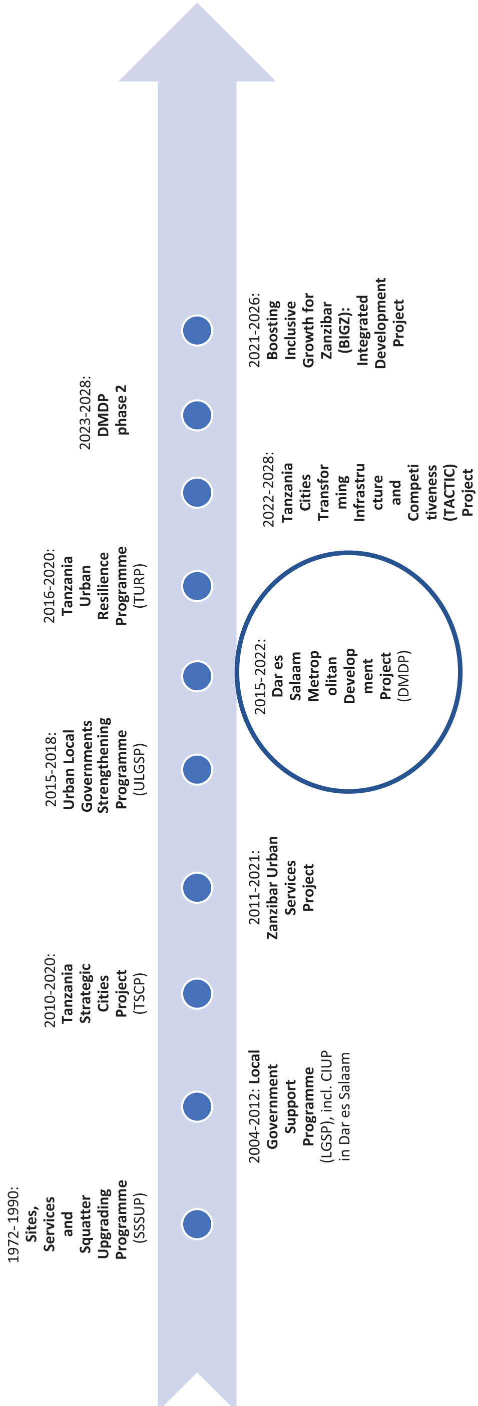

Figure 1. World Bank Urban Portfolio Tanzania

annually with its size being based on local government performance in order to improve transparency and accountability (Boex and Martinez-Vazquez, 2003; Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2010).

According to a senior development consultant involved in the design of the LGCDG, the system was relatively successful, and donors were 'eager to pour money into it'.[7] At the same time, donors pressured the central government to incorporate and institutionalize these grants into the central budget system so they would no longer be funded through external support. The negotiations that followed illustrate the ways in which both the Bank and the Tanzanian government navigated the intense contradictions that existed between them in order to secure the continued disbursement of development finance. While the Bank saw local government strengthening as a tool for improved service delivery and accountability, for the government ruled by the CCM party (Chama Cha Mapinduzi, literally, Party of the Revolution), strengthened local governments could play into the hands of opposition parties (Nyamsenda and Collord, 2023).

Prior to the introduction of the LGCDG system in 2005, there had already been a number of 'early warning signals' that pointed to a lack of effective commitment to decentralization at the highest level of the Tanzanian government.[8] Although the aim of the LGCDG system — and the wider LGSP — was to strengthen local governments, in the early 2000s the government adopted a public service reform programme which revoked the power of local governments to hire their own staff. Instead, this power was centralized in the Presidential Office and Ministry of Public Service, thereby contradicting what had been laid out in the government's decentralization policy and the ruling party's corresponding election manifesto. The Bank tried to address these signals by asking the government to issue a so-called 'letter of sector policy', outlining the government's commitment to fiscal devolution and local government capacity building (IEG, 2016). Although signed by the Minister of Finance, efforts to strengthen local governments continued to be frustrated through delays in the transfer of funds to local governments and interference from the central government in terms of how and by whom these grants had to be spent. These recurrent interventions meant that the LGSP's success in local institutional strengthening in practice was very limited (Mgonja and Tundui, 2012).

In the face of this covert resistance to decentralization, the Bank adopted a multi-pronged approach to the expansion of its urban lending portfolio. Similar to the Bank's earlier experiences of working in contexts hostile to local government strengthening, programmes such as the LGRP and the LGSP had covered a number of different cities so as not to single out the politically sensitive capital city of Dar es Salaam, perceived by the government as a potential opposition stronghold. Yet, following the World Bank's success

7. Interview senior consultant, 21 April 2022.
8. Interview senior consultant, 21 April 2022.

in improving basic urban services elsewhere, including under the SUSSP of the 1970s, a senior Bank official had managed to include a 'very small sleeper component' in the LGSP, which was aimed at increasing access to infrastructure and services in unplanned and underserved areas of Dar es Salaam.[9] While the rest of the LGSP had been funded through a basket of donor funds, the Bank was the sole funder of this Community Infrastructure Upgrading Programme (CIUP), which had no direct linkages with the other component of fiscal decentralization (World Bank, 2013: 11–12).

Even though it only covered a small part of the city of Dar es Salaam, the successful implementation of the CIUP signalled a subtle shift away from the Bank's focus on fiscal devolution to one on urban infrastructure development, in what many had started realizing would soon become 'Africa's next megacity' (World Bank, 2014: 2). As a test case of 'let's get back to the urban',[10] the CIUP served to demonstrate the transformative value of 'no regret' infrastructure investments in the improvement of basic services.[11] This same focus on direct infrastructure investments came to be replicated in a series of other World Bank-funded urban projects such as the Tanzania Strategic Cities Project (TSCP), which was implemented in eight different cities between 2010 and 2020, as well as the Zanzibar Urban Services Project, which kicked off in 2011.

More important for the Bank's success in expanding its urban development portfolio in the city of Dar es Salaam through projects such as the CIUP was the way in which the Bank was able to capitalize on the expertise of a group of local municipal officials, planners and development experts who had previously been involved in a UN-Habitat and UNEP-funded project called Sustainable Dar es Salaam (Myers, 2005). Through this project urban professionals were trained in participatory planning methods and taken on international study trips, which influenced their professional trajectories for years to come. For many, the experience set them up to become consultants to the World Bank under projects such as the DMDP, which in many ways represented a scaled-up version of the CIUP.[12] Those with links to local universities and research centres in Dar es Salaam were hired to contribute to the growing number of background and feasibility studies that formed the empirical evidence base required to justify the need for increased urban investment in Tanzania (Muzzini and Lindeboom, 2008). Others ended up being hired to support the implementation of the DMDP at the level of its municipal implementation units.[13]

At the central government level, the success of the CIUP contributed to creating the necessary demand for infrastructure development lending

9. Interview senior World Bank official, 4 May 2022.
10. Interview urban development consultant, 31 March 2022.
11. Interview senior World Bank official, 10 August 2022.
12. Interview former Dar es Salaam City Council town planner, 22 November 2021.
13. Interview former municipal director, 5 April 2022.

among government technocrats who came to share the growing realization of Bank officials that the universal application of previous projects such the LGSP and its LGCDG across all local governments had diluted its impact and not adequately addressed the mounting capital investment needs of the country's growing urban centres.[14] The support of selected government officials, especially within the (then) Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG),[15] was central to building a transnational urban development policy community that could support the conception and implementation of projects such as the DMDP from within. In order to strengthen its own technical capacity, the Bank also started to bring in experienced urban planners as field-based project staff, while raising awareness in the larger donor community around the importance of cities by convening special events and roundtables on urbanization.[16] Bank officials also successfully lobbied to create a separate PMO-RALG office in Dar es Salaam in order to reduce the frequent and long travel times to its headquarters in the country's administrative capital of Dodoma. The PMO-RALG office in Dar went on to house the DMDP's Project Coordination Unit and officials were taken on field and study trips to Asia to see urban upgrading programmes, so that they could become 'champions' of urban development themselves.[17]

CHALLENGES TO URBAN REFORM

While the contributions of this growing transnational community of urban development professionals were central to the Bank's success in expanding its urban development portfolio, challenges to effective urban reform remained. As in previous years, embedded support for policy reform within the state bureaucracy did not necessarily reflect political support for reform across higher levels of government. Indeed, despite a golden age in donor–state relations under the leadership of the outward-looking President Jakaya Kikwete (2005–15), a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, a major corruption scandal in 2014 contributed to a pause in the General Budget Support dialogue that had driven donor coordination since the early 2000s (Gray, 2015). In response to this type of high-level non-compliance, the Bank started experimenting with different funding modalities that could

14. Interview President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government official, 14 March 2023.
15. Between 2000 and 2005, the previous Ministry for Regional and Local Governance (MRLG) was transferred to the Presidential Office, becoming the PO-RALG. Between 2005 and 2015 it was transferred back to the Prime Minister's Office before returning to the Office of the President in 2015.
16. Interview senior World Bank official, 4 May 2022.
17. Interview senior World Bank official, 22 September 2022; Interview senior World Bank official, 21 February 2023.

better hold the government to account. For instance, the Urban Local Governments Strengthening Programme (ULGSP), which was launched around the same time as the DMDP and extended the Bank's existing support to eight cities under TSCP to another 18 cities, was financed under a Programme for Results modality. According to the Bank itself, this modality is designed to better link disbursements to the achievements of tangible results, by building in conditionalities to make sure outcomes are delivered (World Bank, 2011).

Despite the tensions between the Tanzanian government and international donor community during this time, the inception process for the DMDP was relatively smooth considering the size of its budget and the fact that this was the first major World Bank-funded project in Dar es Salaam. Negotiations took place with little political interference between Bank officials and technical staff within the PMO-RALG, which was to become the project's key implementing agency, and in 2015 it was signed off by the Ministry of Finance in the capacity of borrower. Four components were listed in the final project document, with the majority of the loan being destined for capital investments in priority infrastructure (US$ 158.5 million) and upgrading in low-income communities (US$ 106.1 million) in the municipalities of Kinondoni, Temeke and Ilala, and the remainder for institutional strengthening and capacity building (US$ 21 million), and implementation support and monitoring and evaluation (US$ 14.4 million) (World Bank, 2015a).

Over the course of the implementation of the DMDP, its main components of infrastructure development and urban upgrading were generally successfully implemented. By June 2020, 152 km out of 206 km of planned roads had been completed, including streetlights and pedestrian walkways. Moreover, about 35 km of standalone stormwater drains, seven modern markets and two *daladala* bus stands had been built, in addition to a health centre, football playground, community parks and 20 solid waste collection points. According to the Bank, 2,688,985 persons were directly benefiting from this improved infrastructure, which far exceeded the end of project target of 1.5 million beneficiaries (World Bank, 2020). The success of the DMDP's implementation was largely due to the rapport and good working relationships of trust built between Bank officials, consultants and the staff of local governments and key ministries, from the Permanent Secretary level to the engineers in charge of the project's day-to-day implementation. Even though the leadership of the project management team changed hands over time, the close collaboration between these professionals contributed to a high degree of continuity in the Bank's presence in Tanzania.[18]

The successful implementation of infrastructure investments also represented a fortuitous convergence between the Bank's focus on the need for

18. Interview urban development consultant, 31 March 2022.

bulk urban infrastructure and the policy agenda of President John Magufuli, who took over the Tanzanian presidency in 2015 after having served for 10 years as Minister of Works. President Magufuli rolled out a populist state-led development agenda prioritizing rapid industrialization and heavy infrastructure investments. However, his handling of the country's economy and human rights led to rising tensions in the government's relations with international donors and investors.[19] The Bank's focus on infrastructure development assuaged these tensions as 'in a landscape of serious infrastructure deficit everything is required. Everything is required. So, there's nothing that you can do to say that this was not required'.[20]

In contrast, the Bank faced significant difficulties in enforcing the implementation of two other components of the DMDP, aimed at institutional strengthening and capacity building and implementation support and monitoring and evaluation. A key project indicator in this regard was the creation of a special metropolitan authority. After having been governed through a government-appointed commission comprising a team of bureaucrats between 1996 and 2000, in 2005 the city of Dar es Salaam had been subdivided into three elected municipal councils which were represented in an overarching Dar es Salaam City Council (DCC). However, the municipal councils did not report to the City Council but rather directly to the P(M)O-RALG, with the DCC merely holding supervisory and coordinating functions over cross-cutting urban services such as solid waste collection and transport, but no political power. Moreover, control over important planning, land management and revenue enhancement functions continued to be held at the national level (World Bank, 2014: 2).

The inclusion of this indicator into the project seemed to suggest government buy-in for the need to change the city's governance arrangements by devolving key urban functions to a special city-level authority (World Bank, 2014: 2). However, this change was rejected outright by the Magufuli administration.[21] Instead of creating a single metropolitan government, in 2015 President Magufuli proceeded to expand the existing number of municipalities in Dar es Salaam from three to five; this was followed in 2021 by his decision to disband the Dar es Salaam City Council altogether (The Citizen, 2021). Although the functions of the City Council were not entirely dissolved, they were transferred to one of the existing municipal councils, Ilala. In the absence of granting this municipality the necessary legal and administrative powers to oversee the other municipal authorities, a power vacuum was created at the city level. In practice, the PO-RALG,

19. From 2018 onwards, the Bank itself delayed a number of loans following the government's ban on pregnant students from public schools, as well as the adoption of a law which made it illegal to question government statistics. See https://infrastructurebrief.com/world-bank-approves-delayed-500m-education-loan-to-tanzania/ (accessed 21 June 2024).
20. Interview local academic and senior development consultant, 26 August 2022.
21. Interview local academic and senior development consultant, 8 April 2022.

which functioned as the Project Coordination Unit for the DMDP, became the 'de facto stand-in of the Dar es Salaam City Council'.[22] Having been transferred from the Prime Minister's to the President's Office in 2015, this gave the President direct access to the projects it oversaw, a prerogative that insiders attest he actively made use of.

The subsequent creation of new special executive agencies at the level of central government offered further means and opportunities for control from the top and for bypassing local governments, deepening the undermining of the realization of the DMDP's objective of local institutional strengthening and urban reform. For instance, the creation of the Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency (TARURA) in 2017 resulted in the transfer of asset and finance management of rural and urban roads from local governments under PO-RALG to TARURA. This transfer was justified by the need to root out corruption and vested local interests in tender processes and to improve transparency in all contracts for road projects (JICA Tanzania, 2020). Yet, for development partners such as the Bank wanting to empower local governments, this meant that 'there was technically no other choice than working with [TARURA]' as a good half of the funding under the DMDP went to urban transport and road development.[23] Over time, TARURA was even tasked with taking over the collection of parking fees. As an important source of local revenue generation, this contributed to further cementing TARURA's complete dominance within the DMDP and undermining the role of local governments.[24]

For government officials responsible for the implementation of the DMDP, such moves represented a serious blow to the project's aim to build local government capacity.[25] Top-down interventions also created serious challenges in addressing important social and environmental safeguard issues and grievances. As basic conditions to any World Bank-funded project, these mechanisms are key to ensuring that the people and environment are protected from potential adverse impacts, but they depend on structures and functions that are held by local governments for their resolution.[26] Moreover, these interventions also raised questions regarding the long-term responsibility for the maintenance of infrastructures built under the DMDP.[27] Rather than strengthening the fiscal capacity of local

22. Interview urban development consultant, 31 March 2022.
23. Interview senior development consultant, 21 April 2022.
24. Other central government agencies, such as the Tanzania Revenue Authority (itself a product of donor involvement and established under President Mkapa in 1996 as a response to the tax exemption scandal of 1994), followed by the power supply company TANESCO, were at different times similarly assigned to take over some local revenue collection functions from local government authorities, including the collection of property tax. See World Bank (2021b: 47–48) for an overview of shifts in policies regarding property tax collection.
25. Interview PO-RALG official, 22 November 2021.
26. Interview senior consultant, 11 March 2023.
27. Interview former senior municipal official, 5 April 2022.

municipalities and their capacity to finance and maintain key infrastructures, this capacity has remained weak due to the limitations imposed on their ability to raise own sources of revenue (Amani et al., 2018). As a result, Dar es Salaam municipalities continue to rely on central government transfers for more than three-quarters of their planned expenditure (Nyamsenda and Collord, 2023: 17). Restrictions on their ability to borrow or procure resources or services, or even enter into contracts or agreements with international funders, further reinforce their continued dependence on central government transfers. At the same time, these restrictions have also skewed available funding — such as that provided by the World Bank — towards projects that secure some of the few remaining resources of local revenue generation for local municipalities, such as markets and bus stands.[28]

In the absence of an effectively decentralized metropolitan city authority, Tanzania's embedded community of development professionals has provided an important link between the Bank and the government, ensuring the implementation of ongoing projects, especially during the increasingly unpredictable and fluid environment of the Magufuli administration. Yet, this pragmatic politics of non-confrontation also undermined effective urban reform, reshaping the pathways of urban development for years to come. After the president's passing in 2021 and the ascendance of President Samia Hassan, negotiations started about a second phase of the DMDP. Granted as a US$ 385 million loan in December 2023, this project is predominantly focused on the construction of climate resilient infrastructure in a flood-prone area of Dar es Salaam, in line with a wider more recent shift within the Bank towards investments in urban resilience (World Bank, 2019a). Early versions of the project's documentation make reference to the creation of a cross-municipal authority to manage development in the area as a way of strengthening local institutional capacity (World Bank, 2019b, 2021c). The proposal to create such an authority followed an extensive stakeholder engagement process led by a group of urban development professionals who had been involved in the implementation of the DMDP and related projects.[29] Yet, in the final approved project documentation, reference to the creation of this development authority has been replaced by the establishment of an intermunicipal institution to manage shared solid waste services (World Bank, 2023). While this institution is proposed to be financially autonomous and owned and governed by Dar es Salaam's municipal authorities, it is unclear how its creation will contribute to overall local institutional strengthening, instead suggesting the continuation of a trend towards the centralization and ringfencing of strategic urban functions and resources outside of local government institutions (Cirolia and Harber, 2021).

28. Interview local academic and senior development consultant, 26 August 2022.
29. Personal communication urban development consultant, 12 March 2023.

CONCLUSION: RETHINKING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

We set out in this article to bring together recent debates in urban and development studies to illuminate the understudied politics and compromise involved in the rollout of globally funded urban development in Africa. By focusing on the role of the World Bank as a major urban development financier we challenge dominant readings of infrastructure development in Africa as predominantly funded by China or private investors or solely driven by financialized logics of international development.

By unpacking the Bank's urban development lending portfolio in Tanzania, we instead draw attention to the mismatch between the discourse that has marked global development policy since 2015 and the ways in which urban development finance is operationalized at the city level in Africa. Rather than affirming the role of cities as central actors of development, the history of urban development in Tanzania reveals how World Bank finance has enabled a long-standing tendency to undermine the agency and capacity of city governments. Growing urban investments in Tanzania do not represent the result of an autonomous or globally active city leadership, nor have they increased the ability of Tanzanian cities to prepare or attract bankable investment projects or engage in wider global financializing relations, processes and practices.

Building on contributions from the literature on development aid and cooperation, we explain this disjuncture by foregrounding the importance of understanding the ways in which urban lending practices have been historically shaped by negotiations and compromises between donors and recipients. To circumvent the contested nature of city politics, the World Bank has depended on its ability to embed support for policy reform from within, by closely working with a transnational community of development professionals who occupy a unique position between international and national policy elites. In showing how this transnational development community has served the Tanzanian government's access to urban development finance, our findings resonate with work that seeks to reclaim the national state as an agent of capitalism (Alami and Dixon, 2024). This is not just an African phenomenon. National governments across the world have used the city to expand their access to various sources of global finance for infrastructure development, in the process consolidating the centralization of urban functions and decision making (Ergenc and Yuksekkava, 2022; Shatkin, 2022).

The agency of national political elites as exercised in contexts such as Tanzania challenges conventional critiques of the World Bank's power to impose its will on aid-dependent countries and instead highlights the ability of recipients to control local processes of policy making and reform. At the same time, this agency also illustrates the extent to which donors and states have become mutually dependent on each other in service of the continued disbursement of development finance. While we may not go as far as suggesting that this represents the advent of a 'post-aid world' (Mawdsley et al., 2014), the mutual dependence between the Bank and the Tanzanian government has certainly made both sides invested in showing success even when intense contradictions persist beneath the surface. Recognizing the importance of transnational development professionals in bridging the gap between donor and recipient makes it much more difficult to separate specific loan negotiations from overall aid relationships and management structures (Fraser and Whitfield, 2009). It also complicates our understanding of the role of agency in the localization of global development agendas (Croese and Parnell, 2022; Jönsson and Bexell, 2021). Rather than seeing agency as exercised by a set of clearly distinguishable actors, whether international development funders such as the Bank, national and local governments or other investors or development partners, our analysis illustrates how a variety of local actors is involved in the transfer, negotiation and mediation of urban policies, knowledge and development at large (Chiyemura et al., 2023; Enns et al., 2022; Stone et al., 2020).

As the urban becomes a site around which key struggles and negotiations around development finance unfold, it is important to acknowledge the variegated nature of the role that local governments play in shaping the global urban turn in Africa. Rather than the transformational role promoted in global development agendas, in many parts of the continent the city does not represent a strong unitary actor of urban development, as direct political interference by the central government undermines rather than strengthens local government authorities and overall urban governance. Most globally funded urban investment tends to contribute to the maintenance of such deeply entrenched patterns and logics of centralized governance, not challenge them. Understanding this tension and the inherent vested interests that drive it is central for investigating the ways in which global development finance may shape urban development in Africa. Yet, the importance of transnational communities and networks of development professionals in advancing urban development agendas also suggests a more plural nature of urban agency. From this perspective, the city represents a key site for the coming together of a range of different actors engaged in the governance and financing of urban development. Further studies on the politics of globally funded urban development in Africa should acknowledge both the disconnect that underpins the gap between global development discourse and local practice, as well as how this gap opens up a wider and more complex understanding of the negotiated and dynamic nature of the city, development and urban agency.

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Sylvia Croese (scroese@uci.edu) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Irvine, USA, as well as a Visiting Senior Researcher in the School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Wilbard Kombe (kombewilbard18@gmail.com) is a Professor of Urban Land Management and senior urban development consultant based at the Institute of Human Settlements Studies at Ardhi University, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.