Settings of community engagement: beyond the Janus-faced post-political in 'neoliberalised' London

Katia Attuyer & Jennifer Robinson

Published online: 20 Nov 2024.

Submit your article to this journal ⬀

Article views: 46

View related articles ⬀

View Crossmark data ⬀

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Settings of community engagement: beyond the Janus-faced post-political in 'neoliberalised' London

Katia Attuyer (ID) and Jennifer Robinson (ID)

Drawing on an in-depth analysis of the politics of a large-scale urban development in London, as part of a wider comparative project, this paper reconsiders the post-political conclusions of an earlier round of research on large scale developments in Europe. Through a critical re-reading of Jacques Rancière's analysis and attending to insights from wider accounts of urban politics from the majority urban world, including our own comparative research on Johannesburg and Shanghai, the paper considers the potential of political contestation and engagement. Concepts such as 'insurgent citizens', the 'arts of citizenship', and the multiple roles of the state, provide focus for a nuanced assessment of the achievements and potential of residents' and wider community engagements in planning in the case of Old Oak, north-west London. First designated as an 'Opportunity Area' and then a Mayoral Development Corporation, substantial investment has been made by the Mayor of London in stimulating development around the site of a new High Speed Train station at Old Oak. Community mobilisation took the

1

form of a network of existing organisations and residents across a large area, encompassing a diverse population and including large swathes of railway and industrial land, making connections were hard to forge. The ambition of the Mayoral Development Corporation created a range of different settings for progressing planning and development, from open engagements with communities over planning visions, to informal and restricted discussions of development applications, secretive master planning initiatives, and highly legalistic procedures of formal inspection. Disaggregating the unitary assessment of politics embedded in post-political analysis, the paper identifies the series of 'settings' in which different combinations of political openings, closures and opportunities for advancing concerns of community-based movements can be located. The analysis signposts scope for a more targeted political ambition, based on a community-based strategic assessment of the fragmentation of planning practice. Notably, the negotiations to determine planning gain between planners and developers were identified by the community groups as crucial to shaping development outcomes, with the growing demand to open these to public scrutiny.

Introduction

I n late democratic states, urban politics emerges in the context of formal citizen participation shaped by institutionalised forms of representation, set amidst the often countervailing dynamics of powerful interests associated with capitalist development and state agendas. At some moments, political mobilisation as well as participatory and collaborative forms of planning have allowed citizens and states to secure significant public gains from urban development (Healey et al. 1997). However, processes of neoliberalisation of governance, notably the withdrawal of central government funding for urban development, have seen many local states become dependent on private interests to bring forward urban development. Along with this, participatory techniques have been incorporated into highly stylised planning consultations seeking to quell and divert dissensus (Mayer 2020). Strong critiques of these processes have dominated academic and political discussions (Beebeejaun 2018; Lederman 2019; Rosol 2010).

In these contexts, Erik Swyngedouw (2011) sees little scope for 'properly political' or transformative outcomes to emerge within urban political organisation and participation. Participatory 'stakeholder' governance is for him a format which lacks clear lines of political accountability, and in which the 'holders' are often pre-selected by institutional actors. This political formation can be seen as relatively authoritarian and features institutions often withdrawn from public scrutiny, characterised by peremptory and unpredictable forms of engagement. Governance beyond the state for him therefore has a Janus

face, entailing promises of enhanced democratisation and accountability on the one hand, but also non-representative, autocratic and technocratic forms of governance. Further, the proliferation of non-formalised associations and arenas for negotiating interests mean powerful actors can often secure their goals without scrutiny (Swyngedouw 2005). Drawing on the work of Jacques Rancière, Swyngedouw has argued that there is no point in participating—or resisting:

> The act of resistance ("I have to resist the process of, say, neo-liberalization, globalization or capitalism, or otherwise the city, the world, the environment, the poor will suffer") just answers the call of power in its post-democratic guise. Resistant acting is actually what is invited, *but leaves the police order intact*. (2011, 377, emphasis added)

In this paper, we build closely on Swyngedouw's sense of the Janus, or split, nature of governance to interrogate community engagements in London. Through a detailed case study of one large-scale development, we explore the consequences for community mobilisation of the coexistence of relatively open participation in policy making and the hidden and secretive nature of planning decision making. But we also take inspiration from theoretical and empirical insights from a wider range of contexts, determined by the comparative project in which our research was undertaken (see Robinson et al. 2021, 2022). This leads us in some different analytical directions. Firstly, learning from the multiple forms of state agency in Chinese urban development (Shen, Luo, and Wu 2020), we seek to expand the analysis beyond these two faces of power—the overtly democratic; the cynically authoritarian. Different roles of the state constitute different settings for political engagement and different opportunities for change. And, secondly, to look more closely at these processes of engagement and participation we take inspiration from analyses of urban politics in contexts with more informalised governance. We learn from the detailed attention writers from these contexts pay to micro-politics and the fine arts of association, insurgent citizenship, popular mobilisation, patient engagement and emergent political voice (Benjamin 2008; Bénit-Gbaffou and Oldfield 2014; Chatterjee 2004; Diouf and Fredericks 2014; Fourchard 2023; Holston 2007; Lee and Zhang 2013). Similar experiences inform an alternative reading of Jacques Rancière based on South African politics, which has led Julian Brown (2015) to argue almost exactly the opposite to Swyngedouw. Drawing on Holston's conclusions about the slow but effective achievements of 'insurgent citizenship' in Brazil, he notes that transformative politics involving an expansion of 'voice' and 'equality'—Rancière's terms—can and does emerge in many settings with potential to transform power relations (see also Davidson and Iveson 2015).

Our proposition, then, is to view London urban politics through the theoretical lens of insurgent urban citizenship and patient organising as forms of urban political mobilisation seeking to achieve better outcomes *now* for current and future residents (Patel, Baptist, and D'Cruz 2012). We frame as an open, empirical question the nature of the relationship amongst the actors and institutions associated with different sites of engagement: what do they add up to, politically? We argue that assessing the significance of political mobilisation

3

should not be foreclosed in an overarching theoretical assessment, but subject to interrogation as 'a matter of concern', rather than a 'matter of fact' (Larner 2014, 192). Thus, we explore several settings for community engagement in planning during the early phases (2013–2023) of a large-scale development in northwest London, known as Old Oak Park Royal. We attend to the different power relations and opportunity structures which emerged in the different settings of engagement between communities and state actors as well as developers. Considering multiple settings can provide new insights to wider strategic analyses of how to expand opportunities for voice and equality in London's urban development politics.

The politics of urban development in London: learning from elsewhere

A common assessment of post-political, Marxist and wider critical studies of urban governance in liberal democracies is that, despite various settings for participation being on offer, a deceptive, cynical and manipulative political system can be identified—where exercises in participation are simply the hidden face of power (Swyngedouw 2005, 2011). In a general sense, participation and engagement might be a part of 'flanking mechanisms' around governance crises generated by neoliberalisation or constitute efforts at ideological legitimation in situations of exclusion and significant power imbalances (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010). Planners and practitioners respond in kind with the view that community mobilisation is undertaken by 'usual suspects' or NIMBY protestors who do not have the public interest in mind (Beebeejaun 2018; Lederman 2019). Certainly, there are abundant examples of the ways in which participatory activities have been framed in a narrow way, designed to solicit outcomes only within certain parameters (Drozdz 2014; Lees 2014; Watt and Minton 2016). But we can also identify many examples across London where community mobilisation has stretched state actors to take different courses of action and advanced new discourses and practices of urban development (Taylor 2020; Teo 2021). Under New Labour (1997–2010), for example, Raco (2005) had a more optimistic assessment of stakeholder or participatory forms of urban governance. He determined that the new forms of development corporations, with their structured forms of engagement with different actors, held out scope for democratisation and for achieving progressive political goals. Nonetheless, wider developmental, political or financial processes and power relations could overwhelm any gains from participation.

In this paper we take a forward-looking and pragmatic view of urban politics which seeks to encompass these different possibilities. We are interested to assess what political openings might be emerging after and in response to processes of governance change often ascribed to 'neoliberalisation'. In the UK context, this requires us to take account of the national planning policy and political context which frames a pro-development and private sector dependent approach to urban planning but at the same time has left intact, and in fact expanded, the significance of longstanding and considerable discretionary power to extract value from developments through the planning process (Booth

2007; Canelas 2018; Flynn 2016; Robinson and Attuyer 2020b; Thompson and Hepburn 2022; Thornley 1991). In addition, the 'localism' agenda has for a decade opened up (limited) opportunities for local residents' groups to shape the planning process (Wills 2016). At the same time there has been increasing pressure on local states to mobilise their territory for property development and 'growth' in the face of post-2010 fiscal austerity which has strongly impacted UK Local Government (Beswick and Penny 2018). A weight of planning policy and law continues to inscribe a welfare state agenda in the urban environment at the same time as the income streams to deliver this are increasingly restricted. This has led to the planning system's near-exclusive reliance on planning gain to deliver core infrastructure for development and also to meet ambitious targets for housing delivery (Crook, Henneberry, and Whitehead 2015; Inch, Wargent, and Tait 2023). All told, when complementary public funding is absent, this has obvious adverse effects on the quality of the built environment with an increased framing of urban form features (i.e. tall buildings, high densities) deemed undesirable in the past as acceptable in planning terms. The amount of developer contribution and quantity of housing delivery which this enables is often cited as a reason for this (Robinson and Attuyer 2020b).

Nonetheless, deeply embedded traditions of community-based organisation and engagement press at the forms of engagement and decision-making on offer in sometimes strategic and progressive ways (Brown, Edwards, and Lee 2014; Watt and Minton 2016). Bearing all these in mind, there is unlikely to be a straightforward evaluation as to whether practices of participation close down or open up opportunities for building political voice and achieving presence of new subjects in urban politics (see Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014, for a range of perspectives).

Here we find it helpful to read Rancière against the critical Marxist interpretations of Swyngedouw. Julian Brown (2015), for example, draws on Rancière to explore the emergence of new political subjects on the terrain of post-apartheid. He identifies many settings of political mobilisation, through lawcourts, in contested accounts of police violence, in squatter or service delivery movements, in claims to the right to protest. South African urban movements have also sought to shape state practices and have associated with state institutions for implementation. South Africa constitutes a situation in which delivery of urban based services has been closely tied to citizenship entitlements, and thus urban politics has been central to wider political mobilisation (Lemanski 2020). Thus, it is not hard to consider the multiplicity of contestations on the ground in urban situations as part of a wider political narrative of national transformation—even if this is unmatched by empirical connections amongst diverse political actions. Brown concludes, then, in a positive tone drawing heavily on James Holston's (2007) Brazilian analysis, that 'a society of equals can be forged in the present moment, by South Africa's already-insurgent citizens' (161). Important for this historical moment of state capture and economic crisis in the country (Chipkin et al. 2018), in which the possibilities for political change seem generally bleak, he concludes that in South Africa, 'we have not reached the end of politics, and that change is possible' (162).

In contrast with the 'relentless pessimism' (Larner 2014, 19) of post-political analyses, in many places where politics is considerably more formally restricted

than in London scholars pay close attention to the nuanced possibilities for reframing political discourses and securing political gains for the poor (Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2014; Benjamin 2008; Chatterjee 2004; Diouf and Fredericks 2014; Holston 2007). These kinds of politics are not necessarily spectacular or even intuitively oppositional but include the patient engagements built up over long periods of time, for example, in the practices of the Slum Dwellers International (Patel, Baptist, and D'Cruz 2012), and the insurgent citizenship of Brazilian Favelas (Holston 2007). These practices recognise the need for sustained engagement to achieve real improvements in the lives of poor urban dwellers as soon as possible, as well as pressing for longer term shifts in power relations. This echoes Ferguson's re-assessment of the politics of neoliberal forms of government in light of the question, what if politics is 'about getting what you want?' (2010, 167).

With a not dissimilar methodology of patient engagement drawing from long traditions of community—based mobilisation around planning and development in London (Anson 1981), the London-wide network, Just Space, has made significant achievements of voice at the highly technical and intimidating but statutorily mandated public planning hearings on the Mayor's London Plan (Lipietz, Lee, and Hayward 2014). With a commitment to community led initiatives, Just Space has invented a role, a voice at the table alongside representatives of some of the world's largest businesses, the 33 London boroughs as well as major global developers and house builders. They have put forward demands for equality and inclusion in the planning process. Thus, one astute commentator, Martine Drozdz (2014), observes that:

> The consolidation of the network (Just Space) which culminated in its presence in metropolitan democratic arenas constituted a moment of "politics", as in the sense meant by Rancière (1999), Dikeç (2005) and Swyngedouw (2011). It resulted in a perturbation in the "police", the spatial and institutional order which consigns the voice of the opponents of regeneration to the local scale.

The model of organising of Just Space—mutual support amongst strongly community-led movements—was replicated in the case we explore here, and Just Space participants and members of their wider network also offered some technical advice to the community groups we worked with (see Hayward and Brown 2020). In this paper, we interrogate, across multiple settings within the course of one specific large-scale development in London, how community groups sought to achieve both enhanced voice and specific benefits for local residents and future Londoners. In Rancière's terms, we argue that the 'part that has no part' in the political order—that which, in identifying a wrong, institutes an analytic of the whole rather than sectional interests, and potentially introduces a torsion in the existing order—might as well emerge from within processes of patient organising, close to and even entwined with forms of police power, as well as remotely from them (1999, 31). This can be identified in patient community engagement with city-wide and local plans, as well as a wider range of strategies of contestation to establish more favourable terms for communities to shape individual developments and influence longer term plans (Brown, Edwards, and Lee 2014; see also Scott, Redmond, and Russell 2012).

The case-study we focus on is known as the Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) area. It covers land in West London straddling 3 local authorities (boroughs)—Hammersmith & Fulham, Ealing and Brent—and comprises a mix of industrial, railway, residential and brownfield land. In 2012, central government announced their intention to route the High-Speed train (HS2) through this neighbourhood, including building a major new station which would connect to the planned (and now recently constructed) London Crossrail. This triggered discussions at local level about the possibility to use the planned 'transport super-hub' at Old Oak Common as a catalyst for regeneration to harness London-wide benefits in terms of commercial developments, housing provision, as well as opportunities for nearby residents who have suffered from high levels of deprivation (Interview, Local Planners, 2013). Discussions led to a report in 2013 co-produced by the Greater London Authority, the boroughs and Transport for London detailing a new future for an area of 10 square kilometres (1000 ha). At that time it was deemed capable of accommodating 9000 new homes and 90,000 new jobs (Greater London Authority 2013). While the 3 Labour leaders at borough level initially envisaged they could coordinate the regeneration efforts via a partnership, a trend towards the centralisation of powers in Mayoral hands quickly appeared. This was first evident in the designation of an Opportunity Area by the GLA which meant a stronger role for a Mayoral team in the development alongside local planners (OPDC 2015b). This resulted in expanding the boundaries (650 ha) and recalibrating the targets (25,500 new homes and 65,000 jobs). Subsequently, within the scope of new powers accorded in the Localism Act (2010), the then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, established the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC), the second Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) in London (after the post-Olympics London Legacy DC). The OPDC became the planning authority and regeneration agency for site on the 1st of April 2015. Boroughs largely handed over their powers to determine planning applications to the OPDC and their planning policies were superseded by new planning frameworks produced under mayoral leadership. Both the OPDC planning committee and the OPDC Board are dominated by non-elected experts appointed by the Mayor, although local boroughs do have substantial presence on the Planning Committee. In the first phase of the development, a local resident active in community organising and a local business representative were both appointed to the Board. In our interviews, senior members of the OPDC frequently evoked the need to speed up and secure delivery as one reason to be somewhat removed from local politics (OPDC Officer 1, 20-09-2016), but community members objected strongly to the distanciation from local accountability and local planning concerns, and the diminished role for elected local representatives.[1]

Methodologically, we set out to map the different settings (formal and informal) in which the future of the OPDC area has been imagined, shaped, discussed and decided. To this effect, we conducted more than 80 interviews roughly equally spread across residents, property developers and government actors (elected representatives and officers), with over 40 conducted between 2016 and 2018. The interviews were typed and analysed thematically by the two authors to develop a narrative and historical analysis of unfolding events,

as well as individual and organisations' perspectives and changing positions. This analysis informed a critical review of the policy discourses (internal within the project, and inter-referencing to other projects and locations), influences and their changing nature. We also used ethnographic methods, observing community meetings organised by residents, as well as participating in and contributing to community based organisations, public consultation workshops and formal hearings hosted by government officials or developers as part of the planning process. We triangulated this rich observational data with data from document analysis. Planning documents produced by the OPDC and planning applications from developers were collated and analysed, often to inform our conceptual analysis while also feeding practical information into community based discussions and preparations for public engagement, which we discuss below. These included documents from both the policy-making (different drafts of the local plan) and development management teams (which report to the planning committee) of the OPDC. All planning committees ran by the OPDC from 2016 to 2018 were attended. Some public events were transcribed verbatim from video recordings made available on the OPDC website, while in other cases we took notes during the event.

Valued encounters: self-organising for participation in plan-making

Self-organising

In the London context where most urban development is private sector led, the OPDC is responsible for the development of new planning policies to guide developers when they formulate their proposals and applications. During an extended period of consultation on several versions of local plans and policies (from 2013 to 2022), local residents and business groups used channels set up by the state to seek to influence the future of the area by securing a broad policy approach which reflected their concerns and visions. But they also installed their own spaces of self-organisation. As the development is very large in London terms, and stretches across three local authority areas, those impacted by the development are not usually in touch—or, as we discovered in some of the community discussions, not even likely to visit one another's neighbourhoods or town centres. Drawing on both many years of community organising experience and the Just Space network's model of mutual support amongst community-led organisations that operates across the London-metropolitan area (Brown, Edwards, and Lee 2014), in 2013 Sharon Hayward of the London Tenants' Federation (LTF) initiated a network of community organisations and residents group in the OPDC area (and surrounds) which became known as the Grand Union Alliance (GUA), after the Grand Union canal which transects the area (See Hayward, Brown and Attuyer, this volume). She reports that in conversation with the Just Space organiser at the time, it was suggested,

Well, why don't we in the way that Just Space works at a London-wide level, why don't we look at how this might work at the local level? So, we'll go into some of

the opportunity areas, we'll go into some of the borough areas where there's loads of development going on and see to what extent we can influence [planning].

Funded initially by Trust for London (TFL),[2] a private philanthropic organisation, this project sought to build capacity for the diverse range of existing community groups to respond to large scale developments—community networks were also initiated in the post-Olympic London Legacy Development Corporation area. The LTF community development workers were the main facilitators until 2018, when funding ceased and the Just Space volunteer (a former planner) who had been supporting the network in a technical expert/ advisory role, also took on some of the network facilitation work in co-operation with a long-standing GUA member and continuing assistance from the lead researcher on this project. After initial meetings in Spring 2013, convened by Just Space volunteers and UCL staff and students, the core organisations had been identified, including a number of residents' organisations and nascent neighbourhood forums, Friends of Wormwood Scrubs and Harlesden Town Centre groups, as well as churches and local homeless and employment activist group, Crisis. Some initial interviews with local planners helped the network to understand the origins and scope of the plans and the likely future development trajectory, and volunteer UCL student work, supported by the lead researcher on this project, started to explore the issues with local residents (see, for example, McCarthy and Bagaeen 2014, 9; UCL Just Space 2014).

Once the community organisers were funded (through TFL and the ESRC grant supporting the research reported in this paper), they invested great efforts to recruit and raise awareness of the OPDC development amongst local groups and residents in the wider area surrounding the anticipated OPDC borders, and to alert people to the benefits of supporting each other in response to this project via the GUA. Their work involved mapping existing local groups, going on walkabouts to understand local conditions, asking for a slot at meetings of local housing associations, working closely with community organisers on large housing estates, and using existing networks—for example, prior to supporting the GUA, the second community worker was involved in Sobus—a structure providing services to local charities and voluntary groups. Door knocking to engage with local residents and businesses was used when gaps in representation were identified.

Harlesden and other neighbouring areas of the OPDC development are highly diverse, with a higher than average young population, and a higher than average Black British, Black/ African/ Caribbean population for London—in the 2011 census, this was recorded at 19% in the OPDC region (i.e. the neighbouring areas likely to be affected—so the target of the GUA organising) compared to 13% in wider London, and 17% in Inner London, with 49% of the population indicating their ethnicity as 'white' (OPDC 2017, 18).[3] The residents' associations therefore naturally attracted a highly diverse group of regular attendees and active participants from the beginning, which was strengthened through the determined work of the community organisers and wider networking on the part of the group.

The large, and mostly uninhabited OPDC area itself represented an impediment to building a network, as local groups likely to be impacted were dispersed around the edges. As the community organisers noted,

> There are not enough groups in East Acton, from Hammersmith and Fulham or there are groups that are facing local problems and they seem very far away. For us to engage just with residents where there is no groups, it's very difficult because of the scale of the project so we did a lot of kind of, we did door knocking

This was the case for local businesses (many from Black and Minority Ethnic communities) in Harlesden, who were not strongly organised. Within the limits of their resources, the organisers tried to engage those who usually would not participate in planning matters. There were successes but also difficulties, not least because of the long-time horizons of the development, as explained here by one of the community organisers:

> The other difficulty I think to bring people in it has to do with the fact that It is not an urgent concern for people. So they don't know what will happen exactly; they think that – when I say 'they' I refer to different comments from people that I've heard – so they might say: I won't be alive in 20 years, I won't be around in 20 years. Let's wait and see what will happen, or I have more important things in my life right now, I don't have time for this. Trying to involve people to influence things that will happen in fifteen years' time; and even if I am trying to emphasise sometimes that yes this will happen in fifteen years but the decisions are being made now

The mode of organising within the network sought to enable diverse views to be expressed in a safe space where different opinions would be accepted and respected rather than effectively systematically erased through efforts to achieve consensus, or by dominant individuals or groups. As expressed by GUA members and facilitators, having some conflicts aired and not resolved did not preclude GUA members working together and sharing knowledge whilst supporting each other to develop skills and understanding. On this basis they could make common demands '(w)here appropriate, and when there is consensus' (GUA, Statement of Intent n.d., 14). Attention was given to avoid the agenda being dominated by any of the participants, hence a more horizontal organisation was agreed on, with no Chair or leader, and continuing facilitation from the community organiser.

In this 'invented' space members contributed ideas and viewpoints based on their own experiences and expertise rather than relying on planning officers' vision and knowledge in order to forge an opinion on a planning document or to imagine a possible future for their area (GUA 2015). Through their daily practices in the area residents and businesses had acquired detailed knowledge and brought many diverse skills and interests to the group including personal interests or professional experience in planning, architecture, heritage and local history, government, transport, communications or environmental policy. Residents also extended their knowledge through reading and engaging with the numerous, lengthy background documents prepared by the authorities for policy development. More than 60 long, detailed documents were prepared for the initial Local Plan consultation process, and more for each revision of the plan, constituting a formidable obstacle to community engagement. Nonetheless, by the time of the third round of submissions on major local plan consultations (on the Regulation 19 draft local plan in July 2018), the community organiser could observe that

> Around 100 resident and community members, many representatives of a much larger constituency of 45 resident and community groups and small businesses, engaged in GUA meetings and events covering discussion on the regulation 19 and previous regulation 18 versions of the draft Local Plan and whose views were captured as far as possible in the GUA's collaborative response to the regulation 19 Local Plan. (GUA 2017–18 annual report; see also GUA 2018)[5]

When the 'public' is invited to comment on planning policies, they often lack the knowledge needed to do so. Asymmetries in knowledge are amongst the first barriers to engaging in public debate on urban development (Laskey and Nicholls 2019). But through mutual support and networking activities within the GUA, long and very detailed responses expressing residents' concerns were submitted to the various planning consultations, with support from the energetic LTF worker, one representative of the London-wide Just Space network, and the lead researcher (co-author here) on this project. Members supported each other to develop skills in analysing and commenting on a highly technical plan and the extensive evidence-base that supported it, ultimately extending to hundreds of documents. Responding with the correct wording, policy references, and in the time frame of the consultation period is a complex task which was facilitated with great dedication from the paid worker and through many residents volunteering their time. Facilitators were concerned, though, as to whether their work in pulling together community responses properly expressed what people were saying. One organiser worried that her work in collating responses was undermining residents' self-organisation: 'That one is problematic for me, individually, because I think empowering people is not about doing things for them' (Community organiser 1, 15-12-2017). But the value of this support and the sense of empowerment is tangible in our interviewees' comments:

> The GUA was like a foundation course. [...]I was starting to take knowledge from different local experts or people who were knowledgeable and engaging and wanted the best for the area. That was I think a breakthrough. (Community Representative (CR) 8, 19-10-2017)

> we've all become quite skilled at the subjects that we are engaged in. In fact, you know, sitting around in a meeting room, we can all talk in planning language because we sucked it in all the time. (CR7, 09-11-2016)

By responding to calls from the OPDC to collaborate in the production of a local plan and by responding in the required format, submitting documents written in a language amenable to the planning process, the GUA became recognised at an early stage as an important actor in the area with a legitimate right to be heard (willing to invest effort and time, able to adopt a collaborative approach). This arguably rendered it more difficult to dismiss them or label them and their members as unreasonable, or as people who do not understand the ways planning works.[6] Engagement and contestation from such a standpoint at a minimum necessitates a mandated statutory response from the state, rather than mere dismissal; it cannot simply be treated as 'noise' from unreasonable dissidents (Rancière 1999, 22–26). Rather it establishes a position from which new claims

11

can be made and new gains can be secured. Civil servants and politicians had to respond to community requests voicing their needs and demands at the right time and in the correct language.

Residents living in the core of the development area, who were going to be deeply impacted by the HS2 construction, were already well networked through earlier collaborations over local issues, such as pollution from industries and location of recycling plants, and also through their efforts to engage with the opaque structures of the HS2 bodies (Community representative 8, 19-10-2017). They launched an initiative to found a Neighbourhood Forum—a planning entity which could take responsibility for highly localised plan-making, subordinate to Local plans and the metropolitan-wide London Plan (Wills 2016). This affords them a more official status in consultations, scope to draw their own plans for their neighbourhood (subordinate to the OPDC Local Plan) and potential to secure influence over the use of some of the income from the development. Designation of the full area applied for by this group was refused by the planning authority in the face of objections from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, as well as some business actors. A possible 'false flag' objection from a potential alternative neighbourhood group, with highly inaccurate membership credentials, also undermined the application. They were offered a mis-shapen sliver encompassing only existing residential areas, with no developable land.[7] Although the Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum (OONF) members had hoped for a closer working relationship with the OPDC, over time a sense of betrayal emerged and they remained closely aligned with the efforts of the GUA. Together with continuing Just Space support, the GUA and the OONF along with other local community-based groups have met regularly for over a decade, contributed to the planning policy process, to formal public hearings and to individual planning applications. A valuing of shared expertise in the face of the huge challenges of preparing responses to the planning consultations brought the groups together.

Contesting the terrain of 'invited' participation

On the whole, planning policy workshops held in the course of preparation of the OPDC local plan were seen positively by GUA and OONF members. Their use by the OPDC to gather information, as 'fact-finder exercises' (Community Resident 8; 19-10-2017) that might lead in time to better policies was regarded as beneficial. Network members and community organisers reported finding evidence of their influence in suggested amendments to the plan, feeling that policy has been enriched with community ideas, especially through the shared identification of place making potential across the site, including in relation to protecting local heritage assets and local employment. In our interviews, residents commented positively about their interactions with the OPDC and the policy development team during the early phase of policy development. They suggest that the officers behaved somewhat differently compared to other bodies in terms of participation and information sharing:

> Yes whatever how much you criticize it; it's many times better than it used to be and I contrast Old Oak Common to ten, fifteen years ago at (name area) which is a very hierarchical, top-down way. (…) The reason I am mentioning it is that you should not

get the impression of London as all being as Old Oak Common, because it is much, much better I think. [CR7]

But while GUA members engaged in consultation processes, they also sought to shape or to disrupt the terms of their engagement. Simple gestures such as attending workshops on apparently highly technical issues, such as the determining of planning charges on new developments, had the effect of *placing themselves in discussions where the presence of a community voice is not expected*:

> So, for example, the latest community infrastructure levy consultation that took place (....) there was a point [made] that usually in this consultation, it's only developers that respond so it would be good to have the community perspective. (Community Facilitator (CF) 1, 12-12-2016)

Involvement in such debate required assimilating highly technical information. For example, in a targeted consultation about a possible 'community infrastructure levy' (CIL) to contribute to financing the OPDC development, detailed knowledge was required of the regulations surrounding its collection, use and implications for other sources of financing.[8] Residents engaged in public discussions led by the CIL officer and through close examination of the planning documents opened up questions about the funding model upon which the development rests and how the disbursement of funds will be decided. The proposed prioritisation of funding for transport infrastructure to unlock urban growth was received with skepticism (personal observation, CIL meeting, November 2016) and concern was expressed that such choices could lead to negative outcomes for current and future residents in the form of an under-provision of social infrastructures (GUA 2018).

This laid the grounds for a significant community critique of the financing model for the OPDC local plan (GUA 2018; OPDC 2015a) which was raised extensively in public hearings on the plan, and also found its way into Just Space engagements with the metropolitan-wide 2017 Draft New London Plan (Just Space 2018). In that setting, the potential lack of funds for social infrastructure in favour of prioritising transport infrastructure and 'affordable' housing was raised by Just Space, based on the GUA analyses, and their concerns were explicitly recognised by the Planning Inspectors report (Planning Inspectorate 2019, paragraph 90). An amendment was successfully introduced to a policy in the London Plan aiming to entrench this prioritisation London-wide, emphasising the need to ensure 'that developments remain acceptable in planning terms' (Mayor of London 2019, DF1C), Through the London-wide community-led networking, the OPDC community concerns were able to influence planning policies at a metropolitan scale.

The planned agenda of consultation workshops was also not taken at face value, as participants often expressed unease about the format and aims of workshops—consultants hired for the social infrastructure workshop faced insistent questioning when they asked attendees to undertake trivial exercises, such as to review the relative importance of 10 elements of pre-defined community infrastructures (from nurseries to pubs and CCTV). The more technical inputs and more informed engagement of the OPDC planners, who regularly organised and presented workshops and patiently answered questions,

13

were much more highly valued than formulaic exercises by outside consultants who were not generally knowledgeable about the development.

The format and content of public consultations was also taken up by the group as a whole, which collectively sought at an early stage to shape how the OPDC itself would engage the public in the development of the plan, and what expectations would be placed on developers submitting planning applications to engage in public consultation. Submissions and suggestions on this from the GUA were, in part, integrated in the first OPDC Statement of Community Involvement, defining the rules of engagement to apply in the planning process.[9] While the OPDC included most of the GUA-proposed 'Ground Rules', omission of certain principles and concerns about only partial implementation led to more lobbying and a new version in 2017 offered stronger openings for engagement. A number of specific suggestions were not adopted, though, including mention of 'collaboration', 'co-production' (with the community), or 'encouraging community-based options' (in terms of policy), along with requests to be involved in discussions about the allocation of planning gain income (GUA 2016).[10] When the OPDC was restructured in 2018, with new leadership, both the policy and practice of community engagement became more discretionary and some elements were watered down or allowed to lapse (OPDC 2019). For example, on CIL charges, consultation would be by letter and public advertisement, with the OPDC only required to 'Consider holding meetings, discussion events and drop-in events / exhibitions to discuss the draft and seek feedback.' (OPDC 2020); and popular planning forums to enable public discussion with developers about their applications have not been sustained. Frequent requests for the OPDC to contribute to fund community engagement were not successful: 'if the OPDC were really serious about community engagement, then it would ensure that communities are better resourced to respond professionally' (Community Representative 5, 15-08-2017).

More generally, following the initial valued exchanges in the context of early policy development, encounters and engagements with planning policy officers unfolded in divergent and less transparent ways over the extended period of planning policy consultation. This was most notable in the parallel development of planning ideas in the more restricted setting of negotiations between developers and planners about design and financial elements of specific development proposals.

Discretionary inclusions: planning applications and developers

At the same time as planning policy was being developed by the planning officers responsible for policy at the OPDC, a second group of officers, who had not been involved in the planning consultation process, were meeting regularly with developers who were interested in bringing forward applications to the OPDC Planning Committee. Negotiation of public benefits from planning, based on the public ownership of development rights, and securing agreement for ensuring that developments conform to policy requirements is a longstanding and key feature of the post-war British planning system, seen

as a site where professional planning expertise and discretion can be exercised (Crook, Henneberry, and Whitehead 2015). The sites where these negotiations take place are a combination of meetings between planners and developer teams, closed on the grounds of business confidence; and a planning committee which has early and privileged access to developer proposals. This can lead to the committee staging debates on issues which have already concluded, for the benefit of the public audience (OPDC Planning Committee 2, 26-10-2016). Elected representatives from the three constituent boroughs sit on the planning committee, but they are outnumbered by members appointed by the Mayor. 'Public' contributions to debate are restricted to 3–5 min, notified in advance.

It became clear to community groups that the planning officers who were closely involved in negotiating—and directly shaping—a development, are also the ones who receive the application, assess it, and advocate its acceptance to the planning committee. By this stage, the planning committee can only generally endorse the application, at risk of legal challenge from the developers. Speaking time at the planning committee was used to highlight residents' concerns to the elected members, who were also lobbied by residents. Elected committee members used the Planning Committee to argue for more affordable housing and community benefit, at times voicing dissensus with the mayoral approach despite their common affiliation with the Labour party (personal observation of Planning committee, 1.03.17). However, behind the closed doors of planning negotiations, planning officers sought to influence plans to meet statutory housing targets and campaign promises of the Mayor (as a Mayoral Development Corporation). The OPDC project became one of the tools to demonstrate commitment to his electoral campaign pledge and OPDC planners were very clear that this political priority underpinned their assessments and advice. As one planning committee member noted,

> some of the schemes we've given permission to, I didn't particularly like. I have some understanding, with the view [that] they are too tall but you don't get the maximum affordable housing if you reduce. [...]. The fact is the mayor has said my priority is a certain number of affordable housing, even if most of them are in the intermediate and that is a political decision. (Planning Committee 1, 9.11.2017)

Given the high level of poverty in the OPDC area, the value for local people of the type of affordable units negotiated by officers was far from evident. Only 61 social rent (out of 985 'affordable' units) had been negotiated by June 2021, while 71% were intermediate products aimed at higher earners and prospective homeowners (OPDC 2022, 22). By 31 March 2022 this had not improved, with social rent units remaining at 61 out of 5230 total homes negotiated (OPDC 2023).

In addition, a major learning for the group as the planning applications unfolded was that planning, design and finances are closely intertwined: this became a focus of discussion initiated by community groups at the public hearings on the local plan. Development charges—CIL and S106 payments—rest on the profit made by developers. So, the denser, taller, and more high-end a development, the more money the state earns. As the community network experienced the operations of the 'development management' process, it became clear that the drive to secure planning gain income was shaping the wider policy

15

making approach too. The evolving local plan came to reflect the 'direction of travel' of planning application negotiations towards greater height and density of developments (OPDC 2016b).

This led to an upending of some hard-won early policy gains by the network, such as the agreement for low rise development on the sensitive edges next to existing neighbourhoods (OPDC 2016a). Quite the reverse occurred— early developments in these areas were pushed higher to secure stronger early income streams for the planning authority to provide the required infrastructure. The 'sensitive edges' of the development therefore became a key site for intensification in order to achieve the OPDC housing and financial targets (OPDC 2016b, 2018a).

Are community voices present in these settings? Planning officers claimed that they are alert to wider public opinion and seek to reflect that in their engagements during the pre-application phase—including advocating to protect specific community interests at times (Planning Officer 2, 17.08.2017). A popular community church was protected in this way, although the OPDC were not diligent in following up the S106 agreement they negotiated, and the developer let that agreement lapse, subsequently evicting the church in favour of a new group.

From the community point of view there is a dissonance between the policy-making and development approval process. In theory a direct link between the two should exist, with the developer proposals expected to match the vision expressed in the emerging local plan. And this was the basis for the extensive work undertaken by the GUA, and later the Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum, on seeking to influence the Local Plan. While this has been the strategic assumption behind the patient engagement practices of the GUA network, two features of the planning process in London mean this is not exactly how it works. In the UK discretionary planning system there is in-built flexibility with the use of terms such as 'should' and 'ought to' rather than 'will/ can' (Schulze Bäing and Webb 2020) in policy documents. This is rationalised as a means to accommodate the uniqueness of each site, as well as hard-to-anticipate circumstances—in the OPDC this involved a heavy infrastructure bill, a challenging site in terms of levels, persistent failure to secure central government grants and changes in local leadership. Plans set a range of priorities and objectives for an area; but they operate more like a wish list, and in individual cases decisions are made 'on balance' (OPDC Planner 4, 12.09.2016).

Contrary to countries with rules-based zonal planning systems where standards of development are prescribed in the local plan and permission to develop is granted automatically upon demonstration of compliance, the unique UK system involves making decisions on a case-by-case basis where the local body can attach conditions to permission to reflect some of the locally-evidenced needs (Booth 2007; Gallent, de Magalhaes, and Freire Trigo 2021). The discretion afforded to planners has however been reduced through the introduction of national rules over the last decade that allow developers to escape some political and community demands if it affects their scheme financial viability. The main rationale behind such reforms has been the belief that the UK approach creates uncertainty, hence increased risks, inflating sought rates of return or deterring engagement in development

(Gallent, de Magalhaes, and Freire Trigo 2021). Similarly, the introduction of fee-paying pre-application advice by UK planning departments is also driven by the desire to instil confidence for developers, given a palpable sense of what the authority may or may not accept, while reducing public spending in a context of austerity-driven local budgets shrinkage (Slade, Tait, and Inch 2022). During this pre-application process, a common understanding of which policy requirements can acceptably be dismissed is sought. Should a reduction in building height to conform to the policy in the local plan be prioritised when discussing the scheme with developers? If so, are the officers open to less in the way of developer contributions—a smaller road to access the site, perhaps or, crucially, less affordable housing or social infrastructure? if policy requirements on affordable housing and social infrastructure cannot both be met, which one should the planning team try to secure? These decisions are undertaken in a closed setting under the purview of planners with no direct accountability to the community affected (Developer 1, 16-08-2016). Input from various statutory bodies is sought (e.g. Heritage and transport bodies, the GLA, London Fire), and there is some consultation with the planning committee behind closed doors, but citizens are not invited to participate. All citizens are invited to respond to is the result of negotiations (in the form of an application, which is very hard to contest) rather than being able to influence their scope and financial logic.

The network has therefore consistently pushed for changes in the formal processes of consultation and decision-making associated with individual planning applications. They called for greater transparency and public input into the development management process, for example, and for viability assessments and pre-application discussions to be made public (GUA 2015). Viability determines if a development can remain profitable while contributing to the expected planning obligations and planning gain contributions (Crook, Henneberry, and Whitehead 2015). An open book approach to the viability assessments submitted with planning applications had already been promised by the new Mayor and was reflected in the OPDC Planning Obligations Statement (OPDC 2017). This improved transparency to some extent and was helpful in contests over the reprovision of the local church. Minutes from pre-applications meetings between planners and developers are made available with formal developer applications—although one of the planning committee experts argued against this (personal observation, 12/10/2016). But these reports are variable in their detail, at times comprising only summary notes, and are only released after discussions are concluded. Furthermore, the planning gain agreements remain secret until the heads of terms are agreed after the planning committee approval, and the reasoning based on viability remains opaque.[11]

The relatively amicable relationship associated with settings of community engagement in the early phase policy development broke down as the first of several contentious planning applications were granted permission. Officers' recommendations for approval of early developments resulted in a feeling of betrayal and an urge to use the right to speak at the planning committee to voice disagreement publicly in a more confrontational manner. The contrast between the spirit of the discussions held at the policy consultation phase and the

reasoning applied at development application stage was strongly emphasised by network members:

> But other events, I am inclined, I am beginning to feel a little bit cynical about. I don't doubt the enthusiasm, well the vision of people like (officer's name) and there's another couple of people ... I think they absolutely believe in what they are doing, and then the Genesis [Oakland] development gets walked through at the planning committee, so there's the left hand and the right hand and those are really the problems for me. (Community Representative 2, 03-08-2016)

This led to a fight back attitude from the community. The OPDC Board, executive director and Mayor were lobbied and challenged to rectify what was perceived as a contravention of the draft OPDC plan, including limiting development in sensitive areas. Residents' experiences during this phase of the planning process led them to turn to a wider range of strategies, as expressed by a community worker supporting the network:

> this [Oaklands approval] actually initiated a kind of more active approach, let's put what we want forwards, which I don't think would have happened a year before. [...] There was a kind of sea change. (Community Facilitator 2, 12-12-2016)

Subsequently, the group adopted a range of strategies outside of the formal planning consultation process to try to influence the decision-making process, sending letters and seeking audiences with the OPDC officials and planners, chair of the OPDC board, the elected members on the planning committee, special discussions with the Planning Committee and lobbying Members of the London Assembly and their scrutiny committees (with some success) and inviting a local and sympathetic MP to join meetings who was experienced in urban development issues. The group also submitted a detailed letter to the Mayor, secured media attention and organised a petition to demand the OPDC enact protections put in place in planning permission to prevent forced relocation of a valued local church with a strong social support function (food bank, BAME population, aged support, youth support and nursery). This petition activated the OPDC (but too late) to defend the S106 agreements requiring the developer to protect this community asset.

In a gesture of opening, a Community Review Group (CRG) was established by the OPDC in 2018 which appointed 12 local people (by application, renewed annually) to undertake an early stage review of policy and planning applications. The CRG does not have any statutory role, but the OPDC website suggests this 'complements our commitment to engaging with local community and giving them a voice within the planning process' (accessed 26 April 2023). Our personal informal discussions suggested the consultants organising the appointments were eager to avoid appointing core members of the residents' groups (described as 'usual suspects'), but at least one very active OONF member was appointed. The Review Group has frequently offered criticisms similar to those of GUA and OONF, but the insider role of this group saw them played off as 'critical friends' against the more vocal GUA/OONF community groups—including efforts to exclude

community contributions to proceedings within the GLA public scrutiny committees (London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee—7 December 2022). At this meeting the OPDC CEO directly explained his impatience with community groups who were lobbying for different kinds of outcomes by reference to the need to raise significant income streams from the development process:

> If we do not get that private investment working quite hard, then we are simply not going to see change happening and we are not going to see the benefits that we can capture from that process of private sector investment. There are hard choices, I have no doubt about that.

In this instance, the community network confronted what Slade, Tait, and Inch (2022) call the 'delivery state' logic that nowadays focuses professional planners activities towards the generation of revenues or what we called elsewhere 'value extraction from urban development' (Robinson and Attuyer 2020b). While Slade, Tait, and Inch (2022) follow Ferm and Raco (2020) to argue that value extraction predominates to the point that it erases the surfacing and enactment of other values, our own research in the OPDC development indicates that there remains a complex balancing of priorities, as for the planners value extraction is aimed at securing policy compliance, sustainable development and welfare needs of the new development (Robinson and Attuyer 2020b). But the balance and priorities remain at the discretion of the planners, subject to political direction—in the case of the OPDC, by the Mayor who was driving a hard commitment to high housing delivery targets and raising funds for transport infrastructure.

During the course of the OPDC plan-making process, then, it became clear that the strategy of seeking to influence Local Plan policy, which had been the rationale of the Trust for London and Just Space project, was not sufficient to ensure the tradition of planning as a redistributive state activity with a participatory dimension was honoured to its full potential. Alongside the formal plan inspections, the relatively closed terrain of assessing development applications and planning gain negotiation became a major focus of community concern. Relationships became increasingly conflictual as residents ramped up their multi-faceted campaigns of opposition to the developments.

Based on a practice observed elsewhere, the GUA network asked for additional opportunities to 'cross-examine' (personal observation of GUA-GLA meeting, 15-09-2016) developers and their proposals before they their application reach planning committee examination. This expressed their desire to afford more voice and influence to citizens in the final outcome of the planning process. Planning forums were approved in the OPDC's Statement of Community Involvement, but in later amendments were described as 'presentation events' and restricted to very substantial rather than all developments (OPDC 2019). In these forums, planning officers chair but sit as silent observers—rather than mediators as had been hoped—while residents had an opportunity to question the developers. The effects of the forums were at least performative, acting as a reminder that planning serves multiple interests and that these don't always align. They were a call from the GUA network to render planners publicly

accountable on how they reconcile serving different interests and a means to keep alive a vision of planning as having a wider social duty—often questioned in the wider national context.

Barriers to participation: the secret and opaque lives of the developer-state

Masterplanning in secret
In addition to the several applications for individual developments on private land on the edges of the development which came forward after 2015, the OPDC had been negotiating with central government land holders in the area to secure their contributions to development plans, as 75% of the OPDC land is owned by public entities, largely railway authorities (Mayor of London 2016). In 2017–18 a Masterplanning exercise was undertaken, billed as necessary for agreeing the detailed terms of the land transfer envisaged in the MOU drawn up with Department for Transport and to support a bid of £250 million to the central government for infrastructure funds. This masterplanning process was conducted behind closed doors, without any public consultation nor communication with the main developer in the area, despite the OPDC having access to the masterplanning work they had done privately. The proposal for government funding included a proposal to issue a Compulsory Purchase Order for 25% of the major private developer's land—information which was not conveyed to the landowner, whose support was falsely claimed in the bid documentation (OPDC at GLA Budget and Performance Review, 14 October 2020). Once revealed, on announcement of OPDC's success in securing the funds, this led to a complete breakdown of trust and negotiations with the main developer, which was also of great concern to community members.[12]

The secrecy around the masterplan constituted one element of a broader closure to local influence witnessed by the community following the arrival of a new Chair of the OPDC Board under the Sadiq Khan mayorship in March 2017. In place of the initial CEO who had encouraged considerable public-facing engagement and who sought to foster a consultative style of planning, the incoming Chair of the Board had long experience in central government estate development, and private sector property development, potentially crucial for unlocking state land for the development and smoothing engagements with transport authorities and treasury. These shifts in approach coloured the subsequent phases of community engagement, in the formal public hearings on the OPDC local plan.

Evidence in public
The local plan was submitted for Inspection in October 2018 (OPDC 2018a). This involves a quasi-judicial public hearing directed by the independent Inspectorate of Planning, where residents were hoping to present evidence and argument to achieve gains in policies supportive of their concerns. This was derailed to some extent by the legal battle over whether the main developers' land ('Car Giant') could be subject to a partial CPO and remain a

viable business, and/or whether development of that land, with a profitable business and high relocation costs, could now be considered viable within the plan period (OPDC 2018b). The Inspectors' (landmark) conclusion after a lengthy legal process was to agree with the developer that, given the profitability of the existing business there, the land was not viable to develop for residential and commercial use while delivering the planning gain contributions commensurate with the expected levels of open space and social infrastructure, contributing to much needed transport infrastructure, or providing sufficient affordable units.[13] The central government funding bid was subsequently withdrawn. But whereas the Inspector had suggested to de-designate the Industrial Land use there to keep open possibilities for its future development, the OPDC declined to do this, citing the need for 'planning certainty' for the existing business, and instead focussed planned development on western areas of the OPDC, in and surrounding the Park Royal industrial area. This effectively removed the opportunity for development of the Car Giant site completely. This outcome could certainly be considered suboptimal for both the developer and the OPDC—it has also led to an intensification of the development and a focusing of its impacts more closely on existing communities. As the OPDC noted, 'The revised housing site allocations are focused closer to existing residential communities' (OPDC EIP Library, Document 39, 05-03-21 letter from OPDC to the Inspector confirming submission of proposed modification documents).

In the early stages of the EIP, prior to the detailed legal contestation of viability, the Inspector did make considerable space for community representatives to make their contributions, often in a supportive fashion. Residents had prepared inputs and participated in deliberations in areas where they felt experienced—for example, in transport, affordable housing, community infrastructure, density and height, design, public and open space, industrial land. Key issues were targeted and GUA and OONF members were accorded the right to present their views on issues of concern to the community groups. The close interaction ('nexus') between very high housing targets, financing through planning gain incomes and building heights and density became a major topic of discussion, and the group engaged closely with OPDC policy statements on tall buildings (OPDC 2018c). Some small gains were made at this stage in inserting or correcting policy wording. Onerous and unjustified targets for housing, the location and height of planned 'tall buildings', protecting existing jobs, protecting existing valued open spaces, environmental sustainability and safeguarding provision of and access to open and play space were all robustly discussed by community members. But once matters became subject to legal contestation, community contributions came only after lengthy technical deliberations, often read out in detail by lawyers. At these sessions, community concerns, discussed at length in regular meetings, were largely voiced by an experienced former planner (working with Just Space), the advisor to the OONF Neighbourhood forum, experienced in urban regeneration issues, and the lead researcher on this project, who dealt with viability issues. After residents' complaints, two days of the hearings were moved to the OPDC area (from a central London venue) to make them more accessible to residents. But in the event these sessions were amongst the most technical, focused on questions of the viability of the one,

albeit major, development area. The question addressed posed a challenge to the entire Local Plan viability, though, and led to numerous rounds of behind-the-scenes negotiations between the planners and the Inspector, in which new details, plans and sites for development (the so-called 'Western Lands') were brought forward, often with no public consultation. Community members spoke out strongly against this and had hoped to pursue a legal challenge (but lack of funds did not permit).

At the same time, representations were being made to the London Plan public inspection process through the Just Space pan-London network on key issues which had been identified by GUA and OONF members. This included the limited general viability of the OPDC Land as indicated in the London Plan Whole Plan Viability Study (Mayor of London 2017), and the circular nature of housing and employment targets, fixed in the London Plan and imposed on the OPDC without any technical assessment of the nature of the land, current uses or the impact of such targets in terms of density, height and public space. This compounded the already severe pressures for intensification of developments to maximise planning gain income streams to pay for infrastructure. As the London Plan inspectors found in favour of the Just Space representations on targets (they are now downgraded to indicative guidelines to be tested in planning processes rather than imposed minima[14]), this became a key platform for residents to challenge the OPDC Local Plan. However, while the Planning Inspector of the OPDC Local Plan recognised the role of London-wide imposed housing targets in driving height and density in the plan, he did not support the relevance of this argument for the OPDC Local Plan as the targets for the OPDC had been set prior to the London Plan change, and subsequent planning work of the OPDC had arguably justified them. The onerous housing targets remain in place, driving the height and density of new developments.

Notwithstanding the limits of their initial wins and subsequent setbacks, residents have refused to disengage. As the land available for development in the local plan period was shifted to the Western areas closer to the existing residential areas, and development applications have multiplied and intensified, the community groups have continued their vigilant attitude, gaining considerable experience in contesting individual developments, and drawing on gains in the policy arena as well as the procedures for influence, to attempt to shape outcomes. Having exploited all the avenues legally available to the public to input into a plan-making exercise they also sought to expand the neighbourhood forum, established in 2016, to include the new development areas contiguous to existing residents. The OPDC invested considerable energy in opposing this, however, based on the existing character of the sites (industrial, few residents), rather than considering the future uses which would greatly affect and be closer in character to the existing residential areas. The OPDC used the opportunity to remove a small new mixed-use zone (which might have generated some income streams for the forum) from the OONF designated area.[15] Even as the uncertainties about the status of the initial rail development gathered pace in 2023–4, with the High Speed train link shortened, and the status of Old Oak as a terminus or interchange on the line under debate, OPDC persisted with ambitious plans for the area.

Conclusions

We have identified several different settings in which communities engaged, or were excluded from engagement, in planning and developing a large-scale development in north-west London. The tactics used are not spectacular, they deliberately chose to rely on gathering evidence to counter the Local Plan and developer applications rather than street or media protests. Paradoxically, the conduct of more spectacular opposition may have been easier to dislodge for the OPDC; by law, planners have no choice but to engage with and respond to the long technical documents in which the residents (with the help of allies with expertise in planning) present their arguments for refusing the future on offer. The discussions and disagreements have now lasted almost a decade; a spectacular gesture may have demanded a less intensive or prolonged response.

The patient and repetitive engagement has forced the officers and experts in the OPDC to give space to residents in the planning process, and to ensure that their concerns remain articulated within policy and heard within planning deliberations and in negotiations with developers. New institutional settings have been devised (a community network and neighbourhood forum, a planning forum, a community review group, numerous ad hoc meetings). Time has been given at board meetings for OONF and GUA members, planners brought to their negotiations with developers issues that community groups raised, and the discussions and negotiations involved in the planning determinations have been aired, to some extent, exposing the thinking behind agreements reached during the planning application process. Power has slightly shifted and planners have had to respond because of sustained, informed and continuous input through planning system which legally requires a reasoned response. Framed in this language, the resident's concerns cannot be so easily dismissed as pure 'noise' (Rancière 1999), sectional interests or the views of the 'usual suspects' (Robinson and Attuyer 2020a).

However, the contrast between the early phase policy development and the approvals of specific applications for planning permission provoked some cynicism about the value or intent of participatory exercises as the gap between the imagined and realised vision for the area became apparent. If we were to read these two 'faces' of planning as intrinsically connected and reflecting an intent to deceive participants in consultation processes, or even as representing a defeat of collective state interests by venal developers, the propositions of the post-political analysts might be validated. However, the argument of this paper is rather to loosen the analytical relationship amongst these, and the other settings of urban development and planning we identified, and to take each on its own terms, rather than to resolve the relationship amongst them into a singular or overarching judgement on political potential.

Attending to the different experiences across the multiple settings of engagement, a different reading is possible. Not only has community engagement had some immediate impact on policy and on reframing the settings for engagement, but through their persistence the residents' groups and the associated project of Just Space and the London Tenants' Federation have shifted the terms of participation, instituting new opportunities through self-organisation and insisting on making contributions at **all** stages of the

23

planning process, instantiating a political subjectivity and voice (as agentful, persistent and informed) and shifting the terms of engagement. Mayer (2020, 90) notes that one 'decisive factor for successful participation will … be whether the rules of the game are changed—not just for the struggle at hand, but also for the next occasion, and the next site.' Further, the groups exposed the strategic terrain of urban development financing and planning in London, suggesting ways forward for future action. The specific contestation in Old Oak spoke powerfully to the power relations shaping the whole, notably, the detrimental effects of the reliance on value-extraction at the scale of the individual development to finance urban development (Robinson and Attuyer 2020b). Policy responses might include applying more of the substantial resources generated through planning gain—£1.9bn in 2018/19 in London, and a further £1.7bn in the rest of the South East (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2020, 47)—strategically at a metropolitan scale rather than fragmented across the limited territory of each development, as with the additional Mayoral CIL charge which financed the Cross-Rail (Elizabeth Line). This could arguably realise stronger public benefit, including social infrastructure and affordable housing. The potential for public funds in the form of grants to finance the delivery of infrastructure in areas with low market value could also be a campaigning point. Perhaps most significantly, community actors have called for the secretive practices of the developer-state and planner-developer negotiations over individual developments to be challenged. Opening up the allocation of these vast resources to democratic oversight and public accountability is urgent. Planning Forums were experimented with but they remain insufficient and would need further refining to work efficiently and have stronger power in planning terms. Lastly, greater emphasis and protection for social infrastructure needs to be provided in national policy; viability is unlikely to be removed as a guiding principle, nor developer profits replaced as a major source of development financing. So for change to occur in outputs, developer business models will need to evolve. More guidance for the scope of planner-developer negotiations, currently unscripted, as well as less discretion may help secure more sustained public benefit. A level playing field with firm expectations for planning gain contributions rather than negotiable targets may foster more inclusive and predictable financial logics, to which developers can respond. In short, the solutions are likely to be multi-pronged and multi-scalar. Not all could be taken-up by the GUA, its members and facilitators but questions have been posed and processes of change were initiated. Thoughts to lobby the central goverment were not followed as the GUA had limited capacity and the decision was made to remain focused on local levers. Yet, these ideas germinated, political agency was discussed and sought. Outside the GUA, members may have started new political actions, all of which we could not entirely capture.

Scholars have claimed planning value has been narrowly re-scripted as that of facilitating development. In their case-study of Bakerdale, Slade, Tait, and Inch (2022) argue that public planners have now internalised this as their *raison d'etre* and they see little hope for more progressive aims to be championed by professional planners; they suggest that resistance will need to come from some other actors. Ferm and Raco (2020) show that the rise of viability exercises has

focused planners' energy on quantitative rather than qualitative aspects of planning in 3 cities, muting alternative paths of development and disciplining elected members in voting for schemes whose benefits they question. While very insightful, these accounts tell us little about citizens' acceptance or challenging of these narratives. They are either outside the scope of study or peripheral in the analysis and quickly dismissed as having been sidelined due to lack of capacity to understand and engage with complex viability issues. This leads to an invisibilisation of community resistance and of the patient work undertaken by both communities and planners to keep alive a residual welfare state / redistributive function in planning. In our case, we find that other elements/values of planning were brought to the fore by GUA network and that with support they placed themselves in political spaces where questions of viability and the objects of planning were discussed and challenged, and where their presence was not simply legitimised by others. What might we say is the impact of this mobilisation? If we conceptualise impact as quantifiable gain (i.e. in number of planning application refused/modified or additional units of social rented units), probably little? If we conceive impact in a more nuanced manner, including the keeping alive of a more comprehensive vision of planning role and pushing for planners to maintain and integrate this commitment, probably more substantial.

We might consider, then, that 'the torsion or twist that causes politics to occur' (Rancière 1999, 18), that is not an arithmetic of 'parts' susceptible to consensus but the incommensurable, non-geometric, paradoxical magnitude capable of securing transformation—'the part that has no part' in existing political representation (the 'police order')—may reside in 'nonspectacular forms of community' (115)—the ordinary resident, the imaginative planner. And that this might emerge in the flurry of emails and detail of residents' submissions, the spaces of long community meetings in church halls or on zoom, or the repeated walks around neighbourhoods, replete with the ordinary lives and businesses of Londoners, working for their vision of London's future to emerge.

Ethics statement

Data Protection Registration (Z6364106 2016 06 08) of this project was through the UCL Research Ethics Committee, who issued an ethics approval 9205/001 on 27-06-2016, extended on 09-03-2018- to 30-04-2019. All interviews were recorded or observational notes taken with consent.

Notes

1   See Just Space submission to GLA on this: https://justspace.org.uk/mdc/.
2   Further funding was secured in 2016 through the ESRC research grant which supported this paper. The community organiser was paid 3 days a week for two years, for some time split with a second organiser, as well as expenses for community events and small contributions to Just Space for sharing their expertise.
3   The figure for black residents in the immediate OPDC area was 28%, which is a reflection of the population of certain wards in Harleseden, with much of the

OPDC area consisting of uninhabited industrial and railway lands.

4 A selection of GUA documents is available at Grandunionalliance.wixsite.com; an additional archive is available at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qZvPMToUm4b5qoRm1sF8clL67i3L9U1S?usp=drive_link.

5 The GUA submission noted that the range of representatives of residential and community groups and individuals engaging in GUA events on the regulation 18 and 19 consultations is as follows:Acton Alliance; Art West; Brent Mencap; Brent Cyclists; Canal and River Trust; Chelsea Close Residents Association; City Mission Church; Diocese of London Strategic Development Team; Ealing Passenger Transport User Group; Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery; Friends of the Wormwood Scrubs; Friary Park Preservation group, Hanger Hill Garden Estate Resident Association; HEART; Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre; Hammersmith Society; Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group; Harlesden All Souls Church; Harlesden Methodist Church; Harlesden Town Team; Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum, Harrow Road Business Alliance; Just Space, Lift People (Brent); London Gypsy and Traveller Unit; London Tenants Federation; New Glory International Ministries; Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum, Pentecostal City Mission Church; Pioneer Way Tenants Association; Regents Network; Save Ealing's Centre; Sobus, St Martin's Church; St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum and Residents Association; Stonebridge Somali Centre; Stonebridge and Park Royal Centre Neighbourhood Forum; The Island Triangle Residents Association; Wells House Road Residents Association; Wesley Estate Residents Association; West Acton Residents' Association; West London Line Group; West Twyford Residents Association and individual residents from Old Oak Estate (H&F); Midland Terrace and Shaftsbury Gardens (within the OPDC area) and various parts of Harlesden.

6 Although by 2023, the wearing effect of the GUA and OONF comments on OPDC activities lead to a less generous approach from the then Director, a long term official in the GLA [source]. Perhaps this speaks to Rancière's evocative assessment that the proletariat 'are the class of the uncounted that only exists in the very declaration in which they are counted as those of no account' (1999, 38).

7 See Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum website for many detailed documents. On the designation of the OONF see, for example, http://oldoakneighbourhoodforum.org/?m=201802.

8 'The 1990 Town and Country Planning Act provides for negotiating obligatory contributions—hence 'planning obligations'—to make a proposed development acceptable in planning terms' (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2020, 6): The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a locally determined fixed charge on development which usually takes a relative form, such as '£X per square metre of new development'.

9 London.gov.uk/opdc.sci.2016.

10 See GUA (2015, 2016) and extended analysis of GUA influence on SCI (Jan 2016) at google drive archive maintained by authors: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AAexK34ZQuLoub5-HPSMMyygDqHtCaYZ/view?usp=drive_link.

11 The legal disputes with the major developer made some of this reasoning available for public discussion in relation to this case.

12 All the details of the formal local Plan Inspection process can be accessed here: https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/city-halls-partners/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/get-involved-opdc/local-plan/submission-and-examination/examination-documents. The Car Giant response to the secrecy and proposed CPO are detailed in the following two submissions from them to the Examination process: REP-42-001 DP9 obo Old Oak Park Ltd Position Statement on Matter 3; REP-42-004 DP9 obo Old Oak Park Ltd Explanatory Note.

13 See ID33. Interim findings on viability of Cargiant site allocation at https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/city-halls-partners/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/get-involved-opdc/local-plan/submission-and-examination/examination-documents.

14 The Planning Inspectorate, Report of the Examination in Public of the London Plan, 2019, 31.

15 OPDC Planning Committee minutes, 11 November 2021, 23.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Katia Attuyer 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4731-6048

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

References

Anson, B. 1981. *I'll Fight You for It! : Behind the Struggle for Covent Garden*. London: Cape.

Beebeejaun, Y. 2018. "Public Participation and the Declining Significance of Planning." In *Planning Practice: Critical Perspectives from the UK*, edited by J. Tomaney, and J. Ferm, 85–100. London: Routledge.

Bénit-Gbaffou, C., and O. Katsaura. 2014. "Community Leaders and the Construction of Political Legitimacy. Unpacking Bourdieu's Political Capital in Post-apartheid Johannesburg." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38 (5): 1807–1832. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12166.

Bénit-Gbaffou, C., and S. Oldfield. 2014. "Claiming 'Rights' in the African City: Popular Mobilization and the Politics of Informality." In *Handbook for Cities of the Global South*, edited by S. Parnell, and S. Oldfield, 281–295. London: Routledge.

Benjamin, S. 2008. "Occupancy Urbanism: Radicalizing Politics and Economy Beyond Policy and Programs." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32 (3): 719–729. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00809.x.

Beswick, J., and J. Penny. 2018. "Demolishing the Present to Sell off the Future? The Emergence of 'Financialized Municipal Entrepreneurialism' in London." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42 (4): 612–632. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12612.

Booth, P. 2007. "The Control of Discretion: Planning and the Common-law Tradition." *Planning Theory* 6 (2): 127–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095207077585.

Brenner, N., J. Peck, and N. Theodore. 2010. "Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways." *Global Networks* 10 (2): 182–222. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2009.00277.x.

Brown, J. 2015. *South Africa's Insurgent Citizens: On Dissent and the Possibility of Politics*. Johannesburg: Jacana Press.

Brown, R., M. Edwards, and R. Lee. 2014. "Just Space: Towards a Just, Sustainable London." In *Sustainable London?* Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Canelas, P. 2018. "Challenges and Emerging Practices in Development Value Capture." In *Planning Practice: Critical Perspectives from the UK*, edited by J. Tomaney, and J. Ferm, 70–84. London: Routledge.

Chatterjee, P. 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chipkin, I., M. Swilling, H. Bhorat, M. Buthelezi, S. Duma, H. Friedenstein, L. Mondi, et al. 2018. *Shadow State: The Politics of State Capture*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. https://doi.org/10.18772/22018062125.

Crook, T., J. Henneberry, and C. Whitehead. 2015. *Planning Gain: Providing Infrastructure and Affordable Housing*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Davidson, M., and K. Iveson. 2015. "Recovering the Politics of the City: From the 'Post-Political City' to a 'Method of Equality' for Critical Urban Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 39 (5): 543–559. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132514535284.

Dikeç, M. 2005. "Space, Politics, and the Political." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2): 171–188. http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/d364t.

Diouf, M., and R. Fredericks. 2014. *The Arts of Citizenship in African Cities: Infrastructures and Spaces of Belonging*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Drozdz, M. 2014. *Regeneration b(d)oom. Territoires et politique de la régénération urbaine par projet à Londres*. DOCTORAT DE L'UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE LYON 2, Lyon, GEOGRAPHIE AMENAGEMENT URBANISME.

Ferguson, J. 2010. "The Uses of Neoliberalism." *Antipode* 41 (s1): 166–184. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00721.x.

Ferm, J., and M. Raco. 2020. "Viability Planning, Value Capture and the Geographies of Market-led Planning Reform in England." *Planning Theory & Practice* 21 (2): 218–235. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2020.1754446.

Flynn, J. 2016. "Complete Control: Developers, Financial Viability and Regeneration at the Elephant and Castle." *City* 20 (2): 278–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2016.1143685.

Fourchard, L. 2023. "Comparative Urban Studies and African Studies at the Crossroads." In *Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies*, edited by P. Le Galès and J. Robinson, 58–72. London: Routledge.

Gallent, N., C. de Magalhaes, and S. Freire Trigo. 2021. "Is Zoning the Solution to the UK Housing Crisis?" *Planning Practice & Research* 36 (1): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2020.1829283.

GLA (Greater London Authority). 2013. *Old Oak. A Vision for the Future*. London: City Hall, GLA. Accessed September 16, 2018.

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/oapf_for_web.pdf.

GUA (Grand Union Alliance). 2015. "Community-based Vision and Objectives." Accessed April 2, 2020. https://cc8fo490-obd7-4856-bo3b-c3a1765403dc.filesusr.com/ugd/4e0a01_c1b57dfeb646429c9f9f2e054d9c9c5b.pdf.

GUA (Grand Union Alliance). 2016. *Analysis of the GUA Influence on the Statement of Community Involvement.* https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AAexK34ZQuL0ub5-HPSMMyygDqHtCaYZ/view?usp=drive_link.

GUA (Grand Union Alliance). 2018. "Response to the OPDC's Revised Draft Local Plan Regulation 19(2) Made on 30th July 2018. A summary is accessed April 2, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngovopdc/documents/s58522/Item%2011c%20-%20Appendix%20B_SCI%20Statement%20of%20Consultation.pdf.

GUA (Grand Union Alliance). No date. "Statement of Intent and Community Engagement Charter." https://cc8fo490-obd7-4856-bo3b-c3a1765403dc.filesusr.com/ugd/4e0a01_259134528454 4b8a8ac0075443cf087a.pdf.

Hayward, S., and R. Brown. 2020. "Community engagement in planning in London's Large-Scale Developments." Draft, available from google drive maintained by the authors, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tiz3IeYp9u2lUp9Bu_8reb3KmfHqzd6c/view?usp=drive_link.

Healey, P., A. Khakee, A. Motte, and B. Needham, eds. 1997. *Making Strategic Plans: Innovation in Europe.* London: UCL Press.

Holston, James. 2007. *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Inch, A., M. Wargent, and M. Tait. 2023. "Serving the Public Interest? Towards a History of Private Sector Planning Expertise in England." *Planning Perspectives* 38 (2): 231–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2022.2063165.

Just Space. 2018. "Draft New London Plan: Submission to Consultation Process." Accessed March 10, 2020. https://justspacelondon.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/just-space-on-new-london-plan-complete.pdf.

Larner, W. 2014. "The Post-political and its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics." In *The Post-Political and its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*, edited by J. Wilson and E. Swyngedouw, 189–207. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Laskey, A., and W. J. Nicholls. 2019. "Jumping off the Ladder: Participation and Insurgency in Detroit's Urban Planning." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85 (3): 348–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1618729.

Lederman, J. 2019. "The People's Plan? Participation and Post-politics in Flint's Master Planning Process." *Critical Sociology* 45 (1): 85–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920517719554.

Lee, C. K., and Y. Zhang. 2013. "The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundations of Bargained Authoritarianism in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 118 (6): 1475–1508. https://doi.org/10.1086/670802.

Lees, L. 2014. "The Urban Injustices of New Labour's 'New Urban Renewal': The Case of the Aylesbury Estate in London." *Antipode* 46 (4): 921–947.

Lemanski, C. 2020. "Infrastructural Citizenship: (de)Constructing State–Society Relations." *International Development Planning Review* 42 (2): 115–125. https://doi.org/10.3828/idpr.2019.39.

Lipietz, B., R. Lee, and S. Hayward. 2014. "Just Space: Building a Community-based Voice for London Planning." *City* 18 (2): 214–225. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2014.896654.

Mayer, M. 2020. "Promise and Limits of Participatory Discourses and Practices." In *Doing Tolerance. Democracy, Citizenship and Social Protests*, edited by Barış Ülker and Maria do Mar Castro Varela, 72–93. Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich Verlag.

Mayor of London. 2016. "Memorandum of Understanding." https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc_and_dft_land_transfer_mou_redacted.pdf.

Mayor of London. 2017. "Draft New London Plan Whole Plan Viability Study." Accessed April 2, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_plan_viability_study_dec_2017.pdf.

Mayor of London. 2019. "Draft New London Plan (post-consultation)." City Hall. Accessed March 10, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/intend_to_publish_-_clean.pdf.

McCarthy, J. P., and S. Bagaeen. 2014. *Sharing Good Practice in Planning Education.* York: Higher Education Academy. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/sharing-good-practice-inplanning-education1.pdf.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. 2020. *The Incidence, Value and Delivery of Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy in England in 2018–19.* London: Ministry

of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Accessed July 26, 2024. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-106-planning-obligations-and-the-community-infrastructure-levy-in-england-2018-to-2019-report-of-study.

OPDC. "2021 and 2022 Annual Monitoring Reports." https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/city-halls-partners/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/planning-policy/authority-monitoring-reports-opdc.

OPDC. 2019. "OPDC Statement of Community Involvement." Accessed April 26, 2023. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/dtp_sci_2020.pdf.

OPDC. 2020. "Planning Obligations: Supplementary Planning Document." Draft for Public Consultation. January 10, 2019. Accessed April 2, 2020.

OPDC. 2022. "Annual Monitoring Report 2021-2022." https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/city-halls-partners/old-oak-and-park-royal-developmentcorporation-opdc/planning-policy/authority-monitoring-reports-opdc

OPDC. 2023. "Annual Monitoring Report 2022-2023." https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/city-halls-partners/old-oak-and-park-royal-development-corporation-opdc/planningpolicy/authority-monitoring-reports-opdc

OPDC (Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation). 2015a. *Development Infrastructure Funding Study*. Accessed September 10, 2018. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_old_oak_difs_141015_new_cover.pdf.

OPDC (Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation). 2015b. "Opportunity Area Planning Framework, Final Draft." https://www.london.gov.uk/file/324368.

OPDC (Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation). 2017. "Socio-Economic Baseline Study." Mayor of London. Working Paper 74. Accessed August 20, 2024. https://www.london.gov.uk/business-and-economy-publications/socio-economic-baseline-old-oak-and-park-royal.

OPDC (Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation). 2016a. "Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Draft." Accessed September 16, 2016. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc_draft_local_plan.pdf.

OPDC (Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation). 2016b. "Scrubs Lane Direction of Travel Document." https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngovopdc/documents/g6040/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2015-Dec-2016%2018.30%20Planning%20Committee.pdf?T=10.

OPDC (Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation). 2018a. "Local Plan Second Revised Draft for Regulation 19 (2) Consultation 14 June 2018." London: OPDC: City Hall. Accessed September 12, 2018. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/opdc_local_plan_2018.pdf.

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

OPDC (Old Oak Park Royal Development Corporation). 2018c. "Tall Buildings Statement." Accessed April 2, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/52._tall_buidings_statement_2018.pdf.

Patel, S., C. Baptist, and C. D'Cruz. 2012. "Knowledge is Power – Informal Communities Assert Their Right to the City Through SDI and Community-led Enumerations." *Environment and Urbanization* 24 (1): 13–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247812438366.

The Planning Inspectorate. 2019. "Report on the Examination in Public into the Draft New London Plan." Report to the Mayor of London. Accessed March 9, 2020. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/inspectors_report_and_recommendations_2019_final.pdf.

Raco, M. 2005. "A Step Change or a Step Back? The Thames Gateway and the Re-birth of the Urban Development Corporations." *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit* 20 (2): 141–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/13575270500053241.

Rancière, J. 1999. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Robinson, J., and K. Attuyer. 2020a. "Contesting Density: Beyond Nimby-ism and usual Suspects in Governing the Future City." *Urban Geography* 41 (10): 1294–1301. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1860623.

Robinson, J., and K. Attuyer. 2020b. "Extracting Value, London Style: Revisiting the Role of the State in Urban Development." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 45 (2): 303–331.

Robinson, J., P. Harrison, J. Shen, and F. Wu. 2021. "Financing Urban Development, Three Business Models: Johannesburg, Shanghai and London." *Progress in Planning*

29

154:100513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2020.100513.

Robinson, J., F. Wu, P. Harrison, Z. Wang, A. Todes, R. Dittgen, and K. Attuyer. 2022. "Beyond Variegation: The Territorialisation of States, Communities and Developers in Large-scale Developments in Johannesburg, Shanghai and London." *Urban Studies* 59 (8): 1715–1740. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211064159.

Rosol, M. 2010. "Public Participation in Post-Fordist Urban Green Space Governance: The Case of Community Gardens in Berlin." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34 (3): 548–563. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00968.x.

Schulze Bäing, A., and B. Webb. 2020. *Planning through zoning*. RTPI: Research paper. https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/september/planning-through-zoning/.

Scott, M., D. Redmond, and P. Russell. 2012. "Active Citizenship and Local Representational Politics in Twenty-First Century Ireland: The Role of Residents Groups within Dublin's Planning Arena." *European Planning Studies* 20 (2): 147–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.650905.

Shen, J., X. Luo, and F. Wu. 2020. "Assembling Mega-urban Projects Through State-guided Governance Innovation: The Development of Lingang in Shanghai." *Regional Studies* 54 (12): 1644–1654. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2020.1762853.

Slade, J., M. Tait, and A. Inch. 2022. "'We Need to Put What We Do in My Dad's Language, in Pounds, Shillings and Pence': Commercialisation and the Reshaping of Public-sector Planning in England." *Urban Studies* 59 (2): 397–413. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098021989953.

Swyngedouw, E. 2005. "Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State." *Urban Studies* 42 (11): 1991–2006. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500279869.

Swyngedouw, E. 2011. "Interrogating Post-democratization: Reclaiming Egalitarian Political Spaces." *Political Geography* 30 (7): 370–380. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.08.001.

Taylor, M. 2020. "The Role of Traders and Small Businesses in Urban Social Movements: The Case of London's Workspace Struggles." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44 (6): 1041–1056. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12953.

Teo, S. S. K. 2021. "Localism Partnerships as Informal Associations: The Work of the Rural Urban Synthesis Society and Lewisham Council within Austerity." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 46 (1): 163–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12412.

Thompson, M., and P. Hepburn. 2022. "Self-financing Regeneration? Capturing Land Value Through Institutional Innovations in Public Housing Stock Transfer, Planning Gain and Financialisation." *Town Planning Review* 93 (3): 251–274. https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.2021.41.

Thornley, A. 1991. *Urban Planning Under Thatcherism: The Challenge of the Market*. London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall.

UCL Just Space. 2014. Accessed September 1, 2024. https://ucljustspace.wordpress.com/2014/05/.

Watt, P., and A. Minton. 2016. "London's Housing Crisis and Its Activisms." *City* 20 (2): 204–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2016.1151707.

Wills, J. 2016. *Locating Localism: Statecraft, Citizenship and Democracy*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Wilson, J., and E. Swyngedouw, eds. 2014. *The Post-political and its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Katia Attuyer is at the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK. Email: k.attuyer@bham.ac.uk.

Jennifer Robinson is at the Department of Geography, University College London, Gower Street, London, UK. Email: jennifer.robinson@ucl.ac.uk.