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Jennifer Robinson is Professor of Human Geography at University College London. Her book, *Ordinary Cities* (Routledge, 2006) developed a post-colonial critique of urban studies. She is preparing a new book, on Comparative Urbanism, to develop methodological foundations for a more global urban studies. Earlier empirical research explored the history of apartheid cities, and the politics of post-apartheid city-visioning. Current empirical projects focus on transnational aspects of Johannesburg and London's policy making processes and the politics of large-scale urban developments.

City strategies as repeated instances: from Johannesburg to Lilongwe and London

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This paper places analysis of the city strategies developed in Johannesburg since the late 1990s into wider comparative conversations on urban politics firstly by treating the strategic visioning process as a “repeated instance”, following Jane Jacobs (2012) and inspired by the thinking of Gilles Deleuze. Strategic visions emerge distinctively in many cities, but are repeated across the globe, closely interlinked through circulating policy discourses and personal interactions amongst policy makers. There are thus many empirical grounds for building comparative understandings across different urban contexts. However, and as a second comparative strategy, there is also scope for creative theoretical reflection across the diversity of the processes and outcomes associated with strategic visioning in different cities. Analysing the politics of city strategies allows critical engagement with the wider, very US-centric, literature on the politics of urban development, including urban regimes and growth coalitions, which have formed the staple subject matter of comparative urbanism (Denters and Mossberger, 2006). Thus, this paper will demonstrate how through comparative reflection existing analyses focussed largely on the US and Europe might be effectively internationalised to attend to a much wider range of actors as well as forms of urban politics and different kinds of urban outcomes. How are urban political interests articulated in conditions of the strong transnationalisation of economy, state and civil society, the powerful role of international agencies (donors, advisors, consultants), the centrality of informalised political processes, and challenges of extreme inequality? I will show how these issues are as important in London (at the top of the putative international urban hierarchy) as in Johannesburg (a regional centre in a middle income country), and will reflect on the applicability of theories of governance derived from more structured and resourced institutional environments to a highly informalised context like Lilongwe, and in turn interrogate whether experiences from this poorly resourced context can be introduced into wider analytical conversations on urban governance. Thus the aim of the paper is to explore the potential to insert Johannesburg both empirically and theoretically into the wider world of cities.