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REAL ESTATE AND GLOBAL URBAN HISTORY

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Real Estate and Global Urban History

Elements in Global Urban History

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Abstract: Real estate – capitalist private property in land and buildings – is the ground of modern cities, materially, politically, and economically. It is foundational to their development and core to much theoretical work on the urban environment. It is also a central, pressing matter of political contestation in contemporary cities. Yet it remains largely without a history. This Element examines the modern city as a propertied space, defining real estate as a technology of (dis)possession and using this definition to move across scales of analysis, from the local spatiality of particular built spaces to the networks of legal, political, and economic imperatives that constitute property and operate at national and international levels. This combination of territorial embeddedness with more wide-ranging institutional relationships charts a route to an urban history that allows the city to speak as a global agent and artefact without dispensing with the role of states and local circumstance.

Keywords: real estate, cities, political economy, urban theory, global history

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