

## 2. theory

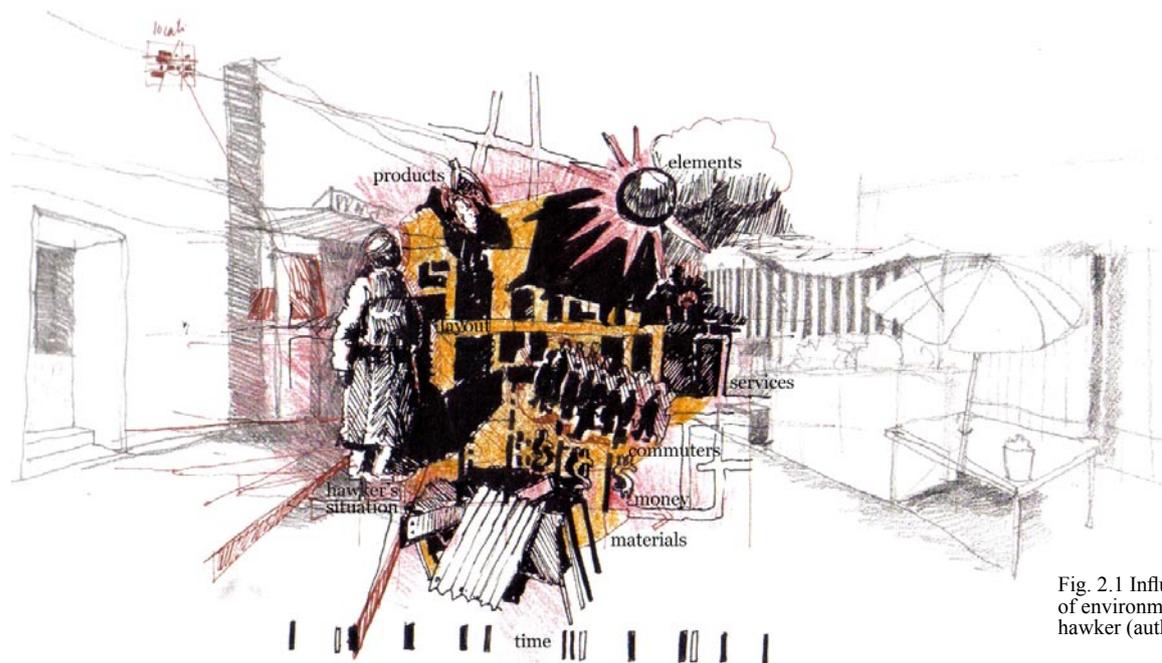


Fig. 2.1 Influences of environment on hawker (author,2006)

## 2.1 NEEDS OF POOR, MARGINILISED COMMUNITIES



Fig. 2.2 Various needs apparent in Marabastad displayed as symbols (Miller, 1994:39)

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

Squatter settlements are areas where people illegally set up house on public land; 'slums', a term used interchangeably for 'squatter settlements' are defined as thickly populated, squalid parts of a city, inhabited by the poorest people in cities (Webster's, 1994: 1380,1343). The physical characteristics and needs include very poor living conditions, unemployment, insecure shelter, unsanitary or no disposal of waste and little or no access to services. Such communities, although not recognised by most, are intricately layered constructs consisting of interwoven physical, social & economical components. Hardoy et al (1989:40) state that outsiders to slums (especially government) are under the impression that such communities are random or unplanned, without considering the possibility that the specific physical and social layout is not an ad hoc phenomenon but a fine-tuned organisation. Slums in the South African context can be similarly characterised.

### MARABASTAD DEFINED ACCORDING TO THE ABOVE DEFINITIONS

While much of the material and research about people in squatter settlements concern people in and around their home environments, Marabastad is for the moment not a predominantly residential community. Marabastad's only residential component at present is people illegally sleeping in empty buildings, in sub-letted apartments and in hawker stands due to financial restrictions. Others sleep in shops trying to curb robbery. Therefore, although Marabastad is in many respects similar to ordinary squatter or slum settlements, it needs to be classified in different terms and since the nature of most of its uses are work-related this naturally influences the current needs of the community. Hence, Marabastad can be classified as a community consisting mainly of mobile, ephemeral users using it either during the day as trading platform or as a thoroughfare from their homes to town and back.

The needs of the Marabastad community thus include the ubiquitous requirement of jobs, sufficient infrastructure (i.e. road upgrading and stormwater facilities, etc.), services (i.e. waste collection, sanitation and health services) and the provision of appropriate workspace – also substantiated by Hardoy et al (1989:6), who state that the needs are *“adequate means of livelihood, a secure shelter, access to clean water, health care and education, protection against natural disasters and contamination from wastes – as well as basic political and civil rights.”*

## 2.2 PROBLEM AREAS

The term ‘problem area’ is derived from the book, *Microplanning* (1988) by Goethert & Hamdi. Microplanning is a planning process grounded in community participation and is a response to local circumstances (economic, environmental, social, etc.) to ensure appropriate development through which the community can be educated/trained with the vision of improved environment conducive to people’s upliftment. The process encourages programmes that are problem-driven and programmes flexible enough to adapt as new problems arise – programmes that are impossible through pre-planning and ‘pre-packaging’ (Goethert et al, 1988:7). Hence, the term ‘problem area’.

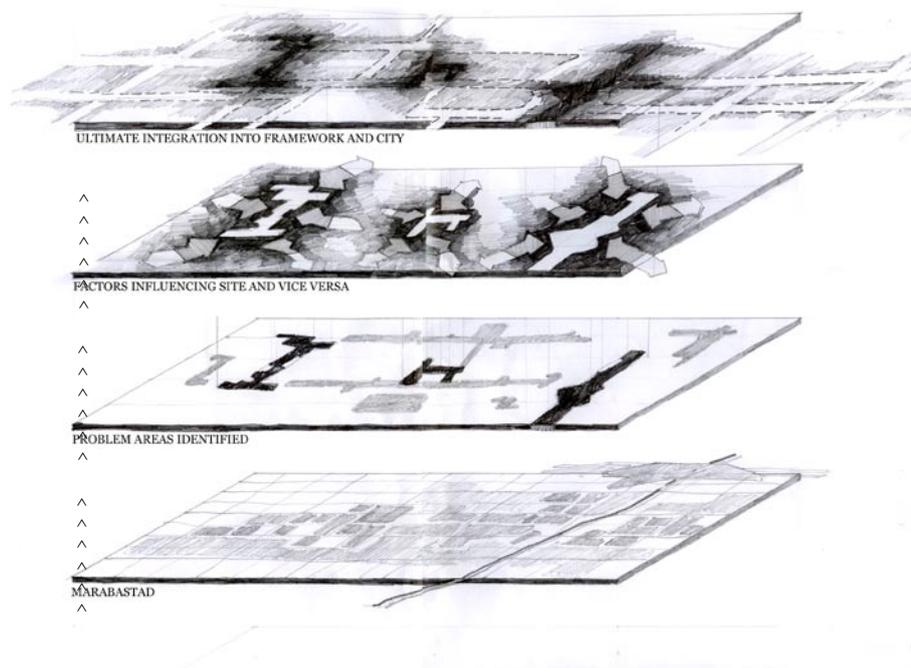


Fig. 2.3 Process of problem area identification, determining its influence on the environment and vice versa, and ultimately after its development, how it integrates into the rest of the development framework (author, 2006)



Fig. 2.4 First problem area discussed: squatter characteristics (author, 2006)

#### PROBLEM AREAS IN MARABASTAD

Problem areas in Marabastad cannot be circumscribed by one definition, for this reason three types of problem areas are identified in Marabastad. Firstly, there are problem areas that can be described as ‘architecture/zones of transgression’ – as described by Doron:

*“The squatters...the street vendors...practise architecture and transform the architecture that already exists. These marginalized communities not only occupy places, they also change them. Most clearly they do this in those places that the discourse sees as void or wasteland, derelict or residual. In short, they are involved in two focal points of architecture and planning: changing the uses of places, and changing the design of places. Sometimes they do this only by being there, sometimes they act/work/live in places that were not planned for these purposes, and in other cases they literally build or renovate them. Looking at the architecture they create and the means they use, I will call it Architecture of Transgression, i.e. taking existing architecture and plans of these areas to their limit and there opening up a new space. They also act using methods and materiality at the boundaries of architecture and planning and find other possible means for creating architecture. Their presence, and above all their architecture, transgresses the idea of what architecture and planning is, thus creating an Architecture of Transgression.”* (Doron, 2000:57)

By the above quote is implied that the people who use the space most frequently, are the people who decide how the space is used and occupied. This is especially true of squatter settlements, where the people make do with what is at their disposal – renovating areas with the material that is available. According to the authors of *Squatter citizen*: “[i]t could be said that the unnamed millions who build, organise and plan illegally are the most important organisers, builders and planners of Third World cities.” (Hardoy et al., 1989:15). According to Nicks (2003:203) there is a tendency among urban designers and landscape architects to over-design in the context of low-income areas. He states that only minimal design is required in such areas and that further appropriation of the space will be filled in by the users. These references signify that architects and planners can and should only have limited ‘engagement’ in the final planning of areas such as Marabastad, and should hand the final, continuous appropriation of space over to the users (Doron 2000:57).



Fig. 2.5 Second problem area discussed: natural area misused (author, 2006)



Fig. 2.6 Third problem area discussed: unsafe areas between buildings (author, 2006)

Secondly, there are open, natural areas that are ‘wasted’. An example of this in Marabastad is the area adjacent to the Steenovenspruit. To begin with, the spruit’s natural quality and function was warped when it was channelled. A campaign to naturalise the spruit is not at all implied, but a salvaging of what the spruit might offer the community of Marabastad. In addition, the open area around the spruit and the spruit itself is literally ‘wasted’ upon with the dumping of rubbish on it. Another manner in which the area adjacent to the Steenovenspruit is wasted is the fact that the activities taking place on the site are not taking place under ideal circumstances. It is a common phenomenon in Pretoria that the leftover areas and areas peripheral and adjacent to watercourses are neglected. The current usage of the area should be a good indicator to what the future function of the space should include. Thirdly, there are a handful of historically significant exterior spaces in Marabastad that are neglected and are deemed unsafe because they are underutilised and it is worth inspecting the reasons why they are considered thus. The renewed use of these areas will create the possibility of re-instating value into historically significant areas that are presently disregarded, in favour of both the users of Marabastad and potential visitors. Hence a summary of three types of wasted spaces identifiable in Marabastad:

- a) Problem areas: areas illegally occupied – squatter characteristics
- b) Problem areas: natural area – underutilised and misused
- c) Problem areas: areas between buildings unutilised and unsafe

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF USING PROBLEM AREAS

The reason for choosing problem areas in Marabastad as sites for intervention, is that most other areas in Marabastad are already – although not ideally – relatively well appropriated to its users’ functioning. The areas to be addressed are the ones most in need of improvement, be it environmentally, spatially, economically, physically or socially. Another reason for choosing problem areas is that they are potentially dangerous areas. Neglected areas tend to collect waste, which poses problems of waste contamination and evildoers might be inclined to hide in dark, unsurveyed, disordered or overgrown places. Problem areas can also impact negatively on the viability of Marabastad as a place for visitors. ‘No man’s lands’ usually have a negative connotation and people steer away from dirty or deserted places, while areas that display the appearance of maintenance, create the impression of being safe and tend to attract more people. This is substantiated by the *Broken Window Effect* strategy. It is a strategy proposed to prevent vandalism and states that if problems occur in an area (i.e. a broken window in a building or scattered litter), the best would be to fix the problem within a short time. The reasoning behind fixing problems as soon as possible is that if, for example, a window in a building is broken, vandals will be more prone to break more windows in the building, which might eventually lead to them breaking into the building itself and even squatting in the building. Likewise, if sidewalks are kept clean and an image of cleanliness is instated in an area, people will be more keen to keep the area clear from rubbish. Its aim is to limit and hopefully eliminate petty crime ([http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/198203/broken\\_windows](http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/198203/broken_windows)). Another benefit of using problem areas is that where they are situated in places that are already developed, one can work within existing parameters and, often, with existing infrastructure, which can guide intervention decisions – resulting in designs that are well-adapted to their environments.

The advantage of developing problem areas is that areas that were once unutilised, unproductive, and considered as threats, can now be transformed into areas conducive to improving the overall display and nature of Marabastad (Doron 2000:52).

### 2.3 STRUCTURE, EMERGENCE AND GOING TO SCALE

A relationship exists between what Hamdi calls structure (2004:73), emergence (2004:73) and going to scale (Goethert et al., 1988:7). In upgrading a community like Marabastad, the relationship becomes very important. With the provision of the correct amount of *structure* to a community in need, while still allowing *emergence*, i.e. entrepreneurship, the opportunity exists for individuals and the community to develop economically through the process of ‘*scaling up*’

#### 2.3.1 DESIGNED STRUCTURE

The term ‘designed structure’ implies the amount of planning and the subsequent physical design a designer proposes for an area being developed, i.e. planning documents, paving and buildings. A number of factors influence the decision on how much structure to provide; the following sub-headings are a description of the various factors:

##### a) Community participation and responsive design

Community participation and responsive design are encompassed by the theory behind ‘Microplanning’ explained in 2.2. Since the knowledge of the users and inhabitants of Marabastad make of them the true designers of their environment, the importance of community participation and involvement is essential. Consultation with the community regarding its needs and preferences is essential in the process of an attempt to improve the environment (Schaugh, 2003:158). Participation has the added benefit that the participants will acquire knowledge that they can then transfer to their home communities. The project endeavours to identify specific activities of the members of the Marabastad community (through empirical research) and the design project should facilitate and complement the existing activities and functioning.

By using interviews (interviewing is the measure of community participation that was possible for the project, although Microplanning advocates community workshops as appropriate participation), on-site observation and research, the possibility exists to make assumptions as to what structure the community would benefit from.



Fig. 2.7 Hawker stall layout on site; stall layout adapted to edges and commuter movement (author, 2006)

b) Small scale intervention; short term implementation

From various examples it has been proven that projects that directly affect a community (esp. concerning income and living conditions), are only effective if delivery is in a relatively short period of time. For the project to be done in a short time frame, it implies that it should be on a small scale. Small-scale interventions as discussed by Goethert and Hamdi have the potential of delivering quick results through which the community can gain trust in the process and in turn, because they were involved, develop self-reliance (2004: 28).

Apart from the fact that smaller projects would generally require a shorter period to be implemented, another motivation for smaller, site-specific development is that it is possible to fill the gap between the immediate needs of the community and the implementation of the development framework proposed for the area. As Hamdi (2004:54) states, the rate and process of implementation of a design should be determined by the assessment of risks according to the manner in which they have an effect on a person's safety:

1. life risks (in the South African context this might include death through violence)
2. risks affecting a person's dignity (social or political conflict or exclusion, land security, employment, education)
3. everyday risks (water, sanitation, food or fire)
4. risk from lack of resources or opportunities (transport, info, education, employment).

Derived from the assessment of the risks, it is possible to phase a project over a certain period according to the immediacy of the risk.

A project without structure would result in an unorganised place and a community without assurance that what was implemented will last. Structure has the potential to provide stability and serve as common ground from which the whole community could benefit (Hamdi 2004:xvii), such as the provision of ablution blocks and water, facilities that a large group of people can use.

Apart from the importance of communities being involved enough in the process and the opportunity for people to act spontaneously, structure is an important factor in a project that could convince local government of the viability of the project.



Fig. 2.8 An example of space appropriation: eating stall in Marabastad, on a two metre strip next to the road and fixed onto an adjacent fence. A comfortable, shaded spot is made with limited provision (author, 2006).

### 2.3.2 EMERGENCE

‘Emergence’ (Hamdi, 2004:73) refers to the freedom planning and its subsequent design grant the users of a space to use initiative and entrepreneurship to change and alter the area. Emergence also refers to the quality of a design to change over time, i.e. the project under discussion’s function might change over time from an area with the flexibility to adapt to changes, to an area that is fixed, with a determined layout and function.

#### a) Space appropriation

Through emergence, a relevant design can develop into a unique interaction between what is provided for the community via the project structure and the manner in which the community uses and appropriates the space. When one enters communities such as Marabastad, one is confronted with a place that has been expertly appropriated to its users’ day to day activities – with the limited resources that they have at their disposal. As Hardoy & Satterthwaite states, the real designers of the slums are, and should be, their inhabitants. Their design responses are naturally more appropriate in terms of the local climate, culture and resources (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1989:15-17). Although the original layout of Marabastad was determined by urban policy around the beginning of the 1900’s (Friedman, 1994:107), the customisation by the Marabastad users of their environment, was a natural occurrence from the outset of Marabastad’s establishment, and it continues up till today.

In reference to development in needy communities, Hamdi (2004:xviii) asserts that designers must strike a balance between designed structure and emergence. Structure in development provides a place with stability, security and robustness to deal with change, while emergence invokes the uniqueness of a certain place’s character. The question of where to draw the line on how much structure to provide without inhibiting the process of emergence still remains (Hamdi 2004:73). Through informed choices, participation and experience a level of success might be achieved.



Fig. 2.9 Example of space appropriation: eating stall just outside Marabastad fixed to fence and lamp post (Le Roux & author, 2006).

### 2.3.3 GOING TO SCALE: WHAT THE PROJECT HOLDS FOR THE FUTURE

Going to scale is a natural process that emanates from the successful dialectic between structure and emergence as discussed above. The successful dialectic creates opportunities for entrepreneurship and gives small ‘organisations, events and activities’ the chance to grow (Hamdi, 2004:xix).

#### a) Individual economic upliftment

A simple intervention – such as the provision of a roof over the ladies cooking bovine heads in Warwick Junction – can help individuals to upgrade their business, however small the business or improvement might be (refer to case studies 2 and 3).

#### b) Skills training

A large majority of people in Marabastad are unemployed and a great need exists for job creation. Through the participation of community members in the construction of the project, temporary jobs could be created. Moreover, skills training from which people could permanently benefit could be transferred to the community members involved, providing better opportunities for future employment. Preferably, tendering for construction companies should be awarded to the company providing the most opportunity for skills training and community involvement. In the Thokoza Dam Moroka Park precedent discussed previously, the Johannesburg City Council and DANCED (the Danish environmental development agency) – the agency that funded the project – one of the requirements of the project was that local labour and resources should be used as far as possible so that much of the total contract value stays in the community. Involving the community in the design and construction of the project would play an important role in ensuring community ownership and future maintenance of the project (Darrol, 2002:187).

## 2.4 INTEGRATED URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR MARABASTAD

The following is a quote from the 1998 framework proposal by Aziz Tayob Partnership Architects Inc.:

*“The project brief called for the following deliverables:*

*‘The integrated development plan for Marabastad shall integrate Marabastad within the grid of the Inner City. The integrated plan shall set essential development guidelines for development within Marabastad and the vacant land adjacent to Marabastad. The integrated development plan shall play a very important role in the restitution of Land Claims. The integrated development plan shall consist of:*

- Development guidelines*
- Guidelines for the handling of squatters, illegal immigrants and hawkers.*
- An urban design framework*
- Land use proposals*
- Guidelines for the completion of land claims*
- An integrated plan*
- A framework for implementation’.*” (1998 Framework proposal, Chapter 1)

The Integrated Urban Design Framework (IUDF) for Marabastad (Aziz Tayob Architects Inc.) is an excellent proposal if only its implementation could be accelerated. It poses a very thorough investigation into the current situation in Marabastad and subsequently provides apt guidelines for both the urban spatial development of the area and complementing guidelines pertaining to the human, social, political and economic aspects that should influence the development (section 5.2.3 of the IUDF for Marabastad). The delay seems to be rather due to the slow process of the Land Rights Restitution rather than to an IUDF that is not comprehensive enough. In the meantime, the gap between the immediate needs of the community and the implementation of the framework still exists and the immediate needs of the users of Marabastad are not met. A main distinction between framework implementation and microplan implementation is that microplanning focuses firstly on a specific site rather than a larger urban area as addressed by frameworks (Goethert&Hamdi 1988:17). This study has as its aim to fill the temporal gap between the current conditions of the community and the commencement of implementation of future projects. The projects would be of a flexible nature in order to be adaptable to future projects and frameworks.

## CONCLUSION

With the continual growth and expansion of the ‘microplanned’ projects, and hopefully with the relative success of the projects (measured by assessing whether the goals that were set by the planning were met), local government and even authorities higher up might be convinced and influenced to promote similar small projects. The success of the project holds the potential for other projects to receive better funding and speedier implementation.