

MOTHER BIRD, HOVERING OVER THE CITY

*Space, spirituality & a community-based urban
praxis*

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SUMMARY

Mother bird hovering over the city: space, spirituality and a community-based urban praxis,

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In his thesis, *Mother bird hovering over the city: space, spirituality and a community-based urban praxis*, the promovendus adopted a trans-disciplinary, praxis-approach to consider participatory, critical and liberationist planning and city-building processes. His journey was about the soul of the city, embodied in its spaces and its people. It reflected on unfolding urban spaces, tracing dynamics in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of Tshwane's inner city between 1993 and 2016. The narratives emerging from this neighbourhood was brought into conversation with a range of other narratives, hoping to discern and propose a vision for a community-based urban praxis.

The journey originated from a deliberate option for the city's most vulnerable people, hoping to contribute towards a city characterised by radical forms of inclusion, sustainability and justice. It recognised that space is not neutral and spatial constructs are shaped by deep value frameworks that are prejudiced, exclusive and oppressive, or equalising, inclusive, and life-affirming. What the promovendus sought to discern and outline was a spirituality that can infuse planning praxis and spatial thinking: making spaces that will mediate dignity, justice and well-being.

Key words:

spirituality;
urban space;
community-based;
praxis-approach;
trans-disciplinary;
mother bird;
liberationist;
Berea-Burgers Park;
contextual-narrative;
co-construction

Part I of the study considered a new epistemology, identity and methodology, expressed in the metaphor of "becoming like children", requiring a new self-understanding for those involved in planning, city-building or place-making, but also amongst urban citizens and vulnerable urban dwellers: to reclaim their own voice and agency in processes of city-making.

In Part II of the study, after describing and deconstructing urban spaces and discourses in a contextual-narrative way, a spirituality and ethic of urban space are developed. It argues for a radical shift from planning as bureaucracy and technocracy, to planning as immersed, participatory artistry: opening up to the "genius" or (S)pirit of space – the Mother bird – hovering over urban spaces, responsive to urban cries, of humans and earth alike, and inviting us to be co-constructors of new and surprising spaces, mending and making whole.

CONTENTS

xxii Preface

Stories, being storied and re-storying

xxii

xxx Acknowledgements

xxx

01 Introduction

Why embark on this journey?

liv

1. Introduction to the journey	01
2. The context of the journey	07
3. Questions to be explored	09
4. The central theme of the journey	11
5. Scope of the journey	12
6. Maps for the journey	13
7. Own assumptions on the journey	15
8. How do I approach this journey? Methodological considerations	16
9. Literature informing the journey	24
10. Clarifying key words for the journey	26
11. Join in on the journey...	38

PART 01

Epistemology – Identity – Methodology

43 Chapter 01

“To know as we are known”: towards a contextual-narrative planning epistemology

1. Journeying between the paradoxes	45
2. Shifting paradigms	48
2.1 Modernism	
2.2 Postmodernism	
2.3 Post-postmodernism	
3. Knowing together	53
3.1 From expert-driven to collective journeys	
3.2 Knowing as loving (Parker Palmer)	
3.3 Mutual learning (John Friedmann)	
3.4 Reflective practitioners (Schon)	
3.5 Listening and talking (John Forester)	
4. Towards a contextual-narrative approach	59
4.1 Contextual	
4.1.1 Planning from below	
4.1.2 From theory to praxis	
4.1.3 A new epistemology	
4.1.4 Commitment to the poor / the “other”	
4.1.5 From institutional captivity to people-centred approaches	
4.1.6 Incarnation / full immersion	
4.1.7 Participatory politics	
4.1.8 Embracing multiple publics	
4.1.9 Transformation	
4.2 Narrative	
4.2.1 Listening	
4.2.2 Deconstructing grand narratives	
4.2.3 Imagining future stories	
4.2.4 Co-constructing strong narratives	
4.3 A contextual-narrative approach	

75 Chapter 02

“Becoming like children”: identity and urban praxis

1. Deconstructing modernist planning	76
1.1. Cultural captivity	
1.2. Male-dominated cities	
1.3. Soul-less planning	
1.4. Planning hierarchies: between professions; “experts” and “non-experts”	
1.5. Official planning histories vs.. “noir” side / untold histories	
2. The challenge of software infrastructure	81
3. Planning as political act	83
4. Planning as spiritual act	85
5. Re-imagining the art of place-making	96
5.1. From deconstruction to new imagination	
5.2. Audacious planning	
5.3. Creative planning	
5.4. Visionary planning	
5.5. Planners living with paradox	
5.5.1 Planners as servant leaders	
5.5.2 Planners as political mystics	
5.5.3 Planners as reflective practitioners	
5.5.4 Planners as wounded healers	
5.5.5 Planners as enslaved liberators	
5.5.6 Implications of the contextual-narrative approach for planning education	

99 Chapter 03

“A praxis-approach to city-making: critical moments in the urban journey”

Moment 1: Entering urban space	103
1.1 As flâneur...	
1.2 ...with the eyes of a child...	
1.3 ... imagining...	
1.4 ... nurturing intuition	
1.5 ...seeking / choosing community	
1.6 ...in the labyrinth; journeys of adventure	
Moment 2: Reading urban space	112
2.1 Reading from the margins	
2.2 Deconstructing official narratives	
2.3 Discovering local wisdom, retrieving local narratives	
2.4 Reading symbolic, non-verbal language	
Moment 3: Imagining urban space	117
3.1 A hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of hunger	
3.2 Critical imagination of an alternative consciousness	
Moment 4: Co-Constructing urban space	119
4.1 Regeneration: between resistance and reconstruction	
4.2 Communities of resistance and imagination	
4.3 A journey of co-construction	

PART 02

Doing the city together

Moment 1

Entering urban space: Narratives describing Berea-Burgers Park and the inner city of Pretoria, Tshwane

131 Chapter 01

Personal and community narratives

1. The story of a neighbourhood: Berea-Burgers Park 131
2. Personal reflections: 1973-2015
 - 2.1 Growing up in the inner city: defying the myths (1973-)
 - 2.2 My cruel awakening: the story of Elim Church and the boys of the streets
 - 2.3 Personal & organisational community engagement
 - 2.4 Engaging stereotypes; fostering new identity
 - 2.5 A changing Berea-Burgers Park: 1993-2015
 - 2.5.1 From exclusive space to claimed space
 - 2.5.2 From claimed space to battered space
 - 2.5.3 New exclusions, new reclamations and transforming space
3. The re-writing of a story: narratives from Berea-Burgers Park and Tshwane's inner city 154
 - 3.1 Demographic changes
 - 3.2 Socio-cultural change
 - 3.2.1 From silent co-habitation to a multiplicity of voices
 - 3.2.2 The vulnerability of the voiceless
 - 3.2.3 Different views on social change
 - 3.3 Economic change
 - 3.3.1 The city as "battered woman": exploited and discarded
 - 3.3.2 The street corner enterprise
 - 3.3.3 Economic challenges
 - 3.4 Physical change
 - 3.4.1 Residential properties
 - 3.4.2 Housing the poor
 - 3.4.3 Buildings have stories: abandonment and recycling
 - 3.4.4 Open spaces

191 Chapter 02

Institutional change and urban regeneration

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Institutional changes in relation to Berea-Burgers Park | 192 |
| 1.1 Local, provincial and national government | |
| 1.1.1 City of Tshwane | |
| 1.1.2 Gauteng Provincial Government | |
| 1.1.3 National government | |
| 1.2 Private sector | |
| 1.3 Informal trade | |
| 1.4 The religious sector | |
| 1.5 NGOs / CBOs / FBOs | |
| 1.6 Local communities & residents | |
| 2. Urban regeneration: diverse institutional responses | 215 |
| 2.1 Local government | |
| 2.2 Single-purpose interventions: NGOs, business, government | |
| 2.3 Public companies | |
| 2.4 Precinct management | |
| 2.5 City Improvement Districts | |
| 2.6 Community Development Corporations | |

227 Chapter 03

Public places, sanctuary spaces

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Public places: change, identity & ritual | 227 |
| 2. Sanctuary spaces: between churches and city; between sacred and profane | 236 |

Moment 2

Reading urban space: deconstructing behind the façades

247 Chapter 04

Institutional change and urban regeneration

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Perpetual dependence on outsiders: where are the people of the city? | 248 |
| 1.1 Planning through presence versus absentee planners | |
| 1.2 The silent asset and agency of citizenry | |
| 1.3 Trivialised faith-based resources | |
| 2. On participation and partnership: window-dressing for whom? | 255 |
| 2.1 How participatory is participation? Beyond theory toward radical participation | |
| 2.1.1 Participating in crafting local development plans | |
| 2.1.2 Children's participation | |
| 2.1.3 Pitfalls in participatory approaches | |
| 2.2 Are partnerships for revitalisation real partnerships? | |
| 3. Where are the poor? | 263 |
| 3.1 The urban poor and social inclusion | |
| 3.2 Considering Tshwane's flagship project: the Mandela Development Corridor | |
| 3.3 Planning, policy & poverty: the invisible ones | |

271 Chapter 05

What has become of city-making? Between fallacy, deficiency, commodity and conspiracy

1. How integrated is integrated development planning?	271
1.1 Functional & social integration	
1.2 Integration of vision, policy & plans	
1.3 Sectoral integration	
2. Deficiency-based planning models	276
2.1 Engaging Tshwane's Policy and Planning Documents	
2.2 Selective Acknowledgement of Assets	
2.3 An Asset Register	
3. The fallacy of urban renewal: displacement versus place-making	280
3.1 Urban renewal: revisited "from below"	
3.2 Urban renewal, gentrification & displacement	
3.3 Urban renewal: radically re-imagined	
3.4 Urban renewal: branding, identity & place-making	
4. Urban space: commodity, gift or threat?	288
4.1 Urban space: assigned meaning	
4.2 Urban space, access to housing & the Tshwane Inner City Strategy	
5. Conspiracies of silence: what planners don't speak about	292
5.1 Planning without values; a city without a soul	
5.2 Complicity with / refusal to name bad power	

Moment 3
Imagining Urban Space

299 Chapter 06

Discovering an alternative imagination: towards a spirituality of urban space

1. City as womb: beyond skyscraper or battered woman 305
 - 1.1 City as skyscraper
 - 1.2 City as battered woman
 - 1.3 City as womb
2. City as cathedral of the soul 309
 - 2.1 Purpose of the cathedral
 - 2.2 Collapsing the distinction between public and private, sacred and profane
 - 2.3 Discovering beauty against the odds
 - 2.4 Befriending darkness
 - 2.5 Soul spaces are not sanitised spaces
 - 2.6 Soul-less simulations
3. Clown city: a place of fantasy and festivity 316
 - 3.1 The lost art of fantasy and festivity
 - 3.2 Art and play as expressions of a compassionate city
 - 3.3 Festivals in the city
 - 3.4 Clowning in the city
 - 3.5 Harlequin spaces for harlequin people
4. City as community of communities 329
 - 4.1 Warm, inviting places
 - 4.2 the gift community: a place of mutual exchange
 - 4.3 Virtual community
 - 4.4 The city as multiple, multilayered, overlapping communities
 - 4.5 Between individualism and community
 - 4.6 What only communities can do...
5. Sustainable cities, communal economies 338
 - 5.1 Sustaining the earth
 - 5.2 Sustainability through peace-making
 - 5.3 Sustainability through communal economies
 - 5.4 Self-reliance in communal economies

5.5 Sustainable land use and sustainable buildings	
5.6 Sustainable institutions	
6. Ethical cities	347
6.1 An ethic of responsibility and compassion	
6.2 An ethic of crumbs or an ethic of breaking bread	
6.3 Exploring an ethic of urban space: an interdisciplinary task	

355 Chapter 07

Embodying an alternative imagination: practising an ethic of urban space

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Embodied presence | 355 |
| 1.1 Creating an embodied, incarnational presence in small, local places | |
| 1.1.1 Creating an embodied presence | |
| 1.1.2 Asserting that small and local is beautiful | |
| 1.1.3 Solidarity with the poor, the small, the other | |
| 1.2 Redeeming the spirit of place: space and spirituality | |
| 1.2.1 The category of (S)pirit | |
| 1.2.2 The mother bird: hovering over our urban spaces | |
| 1.2.3 Creation-centred spirituality: finding the spirit in all of life | |
| 1.2.4 Planning: a collective act of discernment and calling forth, together | |
| 2. Interconnected community | 366 |
| 2.1 Seeking the common good | |
| 2.1.1 Recognising our interconnectedness: what we do affects others | |
| 2.1.2 From scarcity to abundance | |
| 2.2 Feminising the city: practising solidarity with all oppressed | |
| 2.2.1 Whose city is it? | |
| 2.2.2 From flâneur to flâneuse | |
| 2.2.3 Discovering an eco-feminist spirituality of space | |
| 2.3 Creating & fostering a multiplicity of warm, inclusive communities | |
| 2.3.1 Creating community | |
| 2.3.2 Just hospitality | |
| 2.3.3 Mutuality in conversation | |
| 2.3.4 Planning in community | |

2.4 Creating visions of inclusive, integrated cities	
3. The power of people	382
3.1 People can make a difference: fostering radical participation	
3.2 The power of good citizenship	
3.3 Mobilising faith-based resources	
3.4 Building on local assets & agency: the art of socio-economic empowerment	
3.5 Remembering partnerships	

397 Chapter 08

Communities and movements of hope: between resistance and reconstruction

1. Communities and movements as the carriers of hope	397
2. Fantasy, celebration & beauty: hidden resources for resistance & reconstruction	399
2.1 Fantasy and celebration	
2.2 Aesthetics or ethics? The healing power of beauty	
2.2.1 Integrating ethical and aesthetical concerns into city planning	
2.2.2 Creating and/or discovering beauty: an ethical imperative	
2.2.3 The monopolisation, "marketisation" and "commercialisation" of beauty and art	
2.2.4 Reclaiming beauty: beyond the visual; beyond the professional	
2.2.5 Aesthetics, civility and the good city	
2.3 Celebrating resistance	
3. Communities of hope	412
4. Movements of interconnected communities	415
5. On resistance	417
5.1 Rhetoric, respectability or resistance	
5.2 Marginality as "site of resistance"	
5.3 Prophetic anger	
5.4 Beyond the myth of a-political urban spatial praxis	
5.5 Planning: a tool of repression or a tool of inclusion	
5.6 Resistance starts with us	
6. On reconstruction	422
6.1 Reconstruction could be resistance	
6.2 Redistributive reconstruction: on abundance and inclusion	
6.3 Centring towards wholeness	

Moment 4

Co-constructing urban space: towards a community-based urban praxis

431 Chapter 09

Co-constructing urban space: a small portfolio of engagements from the inner city of Tshwane, seeking the common good

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Some community-based engagements | 436 |
| Tshwane Leadership Foundation | |
| Community forums | |
| Feast of the Clowns | |
| Yeast City Housing | |
| Centre for Urban Transformation, including the Institute for Urban Ministry | |
| Burgers Park Village | |
| Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative | |
| Local churches and church conversions | |
| Tshwane Homelessness Forum | |
| Urban Studio | |
| 2. The value-based character of community-based urban engagements | 463 |
| 3. Promise or weaknesses of community-based urban engagements | 465 |
| 3.1 Promise of community-based urban engagements | |
| 3.2 Weaknesses of community-based urban engagements | |

473 Chapter 10

Co-constructing urban space: towards an integrated community-based urban praxis

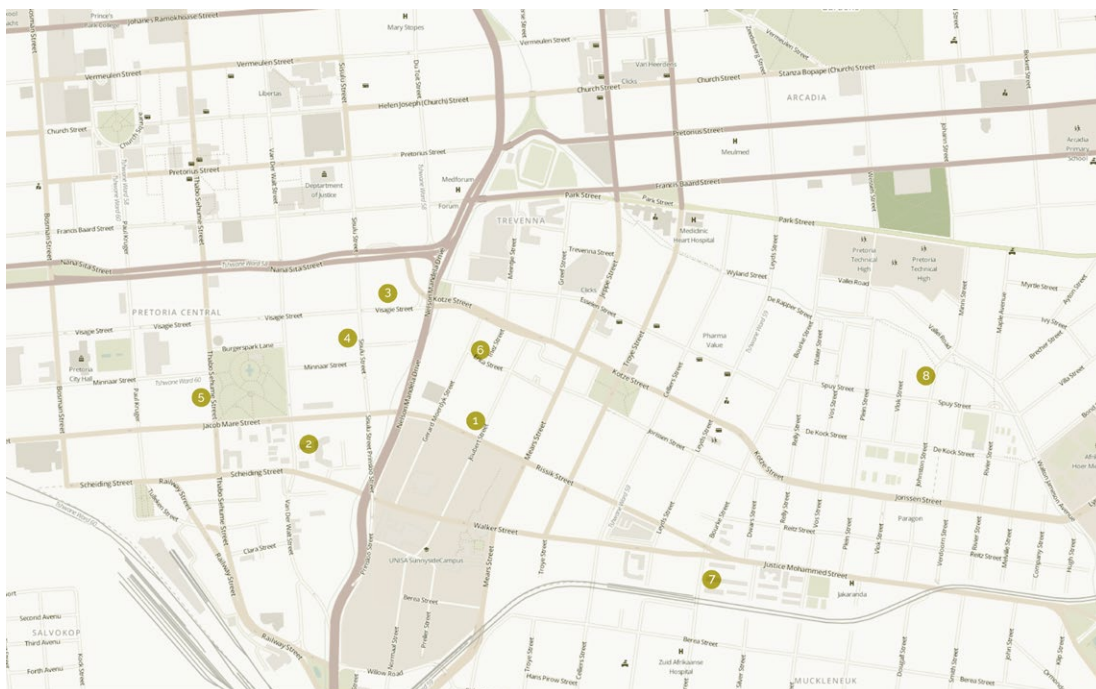
1. Moments in the journey of a community-based urban praxis 474
2. Centring around the “mother bird hovering over urban space”: rooting in a spirituality and ethic of urban space 478
3. Fostering community: between resistance and reconstruction 478
4. Building on local assets; overcoming local challenges 481
5. Finding creative synergies, expanding the tables of the city 482
 - 5.1 Bringing our assets into synergy
 - 5.2 Local synergised assets and the institutional frameworks of the city
6. A multiplicity of small, local solidarities, reclamations & transformations 485
7. Co-constructing hospitable, caring and just urban villages 487
 - 7.1 A process of co-constructing...
 - 7.2 ...towards hospitable, caring and just urban villages

491 *Conclusion*

Leading out faith-fully: when deep speaks to deep

494 *List of Figures*

502 *Bibliography*



Map indicating Residence in Sunnyside and Berea-Burgers Park.

Fig. 1. Nel, 2017. *Mapping home.*

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Flamarion | 1974 - 1993 | 5. Parkzicht | 2000 - 2008 |
| 2. Fairhaven | 1993 - 1994 | 6. Erica | 2008 - 2009 |
| 3. Parkholm | 1994 - 1995 | 7. Muckleneuk Lanterns | 2009 - 2013 |
| 4. Oranjehof-Suid | 1996 - 2000 | 8. La Coruna | 2013 - |

A PREFACE

*Stories, Being Storied, and Re-Storying*¹

1. "Story, storied and re-storying" are used here in the way that these concepts are used by; Landman, C, 2009, *Township Spiritualities and Counselling*, Pretoria: Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, pp.234-238; Eliastam, J, 2015, *Re-storying Xenophobia in South Africa: A Postfoundational, Narrative Exploration of Ubuntu in the Eastern Cape*, Unpublished PhD-thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria & Müller, J, & Trahar, S, 2016, Facing our whiteness in doing Ubuntu research: Finding spatial justice for the researcher, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 72(1). DOI: 10.4102/hts.v72i1.3510

AT HOME

I grew up in Sunnyside. It is adjacent to the Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city. For the past 46 years these two neighbourhoods, only divided by Nelson Mandela Drive and the elusive Apies River, were home. When I was young I felt sheltered by the streets and buildings; the voices of neighbours and noises of city life made me feel strangely protected. I felt embraced and had a sense that I belonged. I do not feel it everywhere. But I felt it here.

Sunnyside is an inner city neighbourhood in Pretoria, South Africa. Similar to the Burgers Park neighbourhood, these neighbourhoods were all white when I grew up, with the exception of some maintenance or gardening staff looking after the well-being of the many apartment buildings that lined the streets of this neighbourhood. They used to live in the workers' quarters, usually hidden away at the bottom of the building somewhere.

ONLY FOR "US"

It was not until much later that I realised: the warmth and embrace I felt in the inner city was not shared by others. If you were homeless or poor or black, you were not welcomed in my neighbourhood. It was only meant for people "like us".

In my twenties, as a young student of theology, I became aware of a growing number of boys who started to make the streets and parks of Sunnyside home. They were almost all black at a time when Sunnyside was still a white neighbourhood. This was the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. It was the last pangs of apartheid and the boys represented a threat to the "white only" existence of this neighbourhood, but also of the entire city. Vulnerable, unemployed and mostly poorly educated

boys represented a new city which the carefully protected constructs of power would not dare imagine. I worked with friends in setting up the first overnight shelter for boys living and working on the streets, in an old abandoned church, then on Jeppe Street, now aptly named Steve Biko Street. This journey, which I describe in more detail later, would alter my life irrevocably.



Fig. 2. Nel, 2017. *Sunnyside and the church.*

INVITATIONS TO CONVERSIONS

My immersion and relationships with these boys, and the pain it brought, as well as interspersed immersions in Hillbrow, an inner city neighbourhood of Johannesburg, and an African-American neighbourhood on the south side of Chicago, became locales for conversion: confronting me with issues of race and class, gender and power; the ways in which prejudice based on such categories shaped urban neighbourhoods, investments and disinvestments; and the distance of the church, theology and theological education from issues of urban change, social justice and radical socio-spatial inclusion.

These were invitations to re-assess myself, my own faith assumptions and vocational commitments, and my own identity as a white, heterosexual male, seeking to be serious about the claims of Jesus, in a fast-changing city. These were invitations into a life-long quest for a just city, in which every person will belong and share meaningfully and fairly in both the resources and the making of the city.



Fig. 3. Eisner, 1986. *Man sitting on stairs.*

VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND PLACES

Since 1993 I was part of a community known as the Tshwane Leadership Foundation². It grew from the collaboration of different inner city churches, and since inception it was committed to integrate some of the city's most vulnerable people – homeless women and men, girl children living or working on the streets, people living with chronic psycho-social

2. For the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, see www.tlf.org.za

illnesses, and people trapped in cycles of substance or other abuse – into communities of care, empowerment and justice, whilst at the same time journeying in solidarity with vulnerable places, seeking to support its rejuvenation without anyone being displaced.

Seeing the city from places of vulnerability, and through the eyes of those who are vulnerable are to see with different eyes. We quickly learnt, of course, that people were not only born vulnerable, but also made or left vulnerable because of systemic exclusions of oppression, prejudice and injustice. We also learnt about agency rising in vulnerable places and amongst vulnerable places, against the odds, carving out new beginnings from below.

COMMUNITIES FROM BELOW

Over a 20 year period we saw small, fragile communities, coming into being from below, creating social and housing infrastructure where there was nothing, and access to social, health and other services that helped break cycles of poverty and homelessness. In these communities we quickly learnt that services alone, without attending rigorously to systemic exclusions that made services necessary, were just treating symptoms. Just alternatives had to be found, policies needed change, budgets and investment had to be provided, and planning of local urban neighbourhoods had to be deliberate about making space for vulnerable people; about restoring vulnerable places to dignity and wholeness in close partnership with the people living there.

These were in some ways communities outside the walls of the church and communities outside the city's gates. And yet, they refused to remain outside, creating local festivals, training institutes and conferences, homeless summits and daring housing projects, small communities and whole urban villages, daring to invest in vulnerable places where others of more power chose to disinvest.

xxv |

ENGAGING PLANNING

As we journeyed in solidarity with vulnerable people and places, seeking to create social and housing infrastructure that provided access to previously excluded groups, enabling institutional and planning environments were required. However, pro-poor planning often seemed to be a myth and institutional bureaucracies hell-bent on retaining the status quo. This led me to a personal journey wanting to qualify myself as an urban designer. I hoped to contribute more deliberately to the shaping of local urban neighbourhoods – combining theological visions and planning methodologies – in ways that would be radically inclusive of vulnerable and poor people. In the absence of an appropriate programme to pursue

that, I then embarked on the journey that became this study.

I now found myself discovering a new world of plans and policies and planning practices. Not prepared to be bogged down by the impossibilities of weary adults, I dared to ask: “Why must things be this way?” “Why should suburban constructs and fears determine my neighbourhood and its future?” “Why must we suffer the consequences of bureaucratic plans done by planners who do not stay in our neighbourhoods?” “Why don’t we allow the intuition and the logic of ordinary people, children, and the very vulnerable, to enthuse our planning and our plans with gritty visions and daring dreams?” “Why can certain people not be housed?” “Why must planning only be for planners?” Behind these many questions was a sincere desire to contribute in a small way to a re-imagined planning praxis: one that will place vulnerable people and places at its centre, and, with humility and awe, work for soul-ful urban places, marked by dignity, sustainability and justice.

POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS JOURNEY

I have done this research not as a professional planner, but as an urbanist-theologian, who spent many years as an urban practitioner and social and housing activist. I had desire to engage the discipline of planning both critically and imaginatively, shaped by deep journeys with local urban communities. It is my hope that this journey, in some small ways, can contribute to the discipline of planning, to the art of city-making, to the visions and discourses of making good and inclusive places, and to an agenda of socio-spatial justice. It has indeed helped me to give languages to much that was – in my mind and practices – organic, intuitive and born from immersed urban engagements in communities.

I anticipate or submit the following as possible areas of contribution:

- o Space and spirituality: a city with a soul
- o Between theology and city planning: embracing a transversal rationality
- o Practising a transdisciplinary approach
- o A praxis-approach to planning and city-making
- o Community-based embodiments

SPACE AND SPIRITUALITY: A CITY WITH A SOUL³

The study recognises that space is not neutral. Behind spatial constructs and fractures lie deep power lines – social, economic and political – determining the futures of spaces. These are expressions of deeper value frameworks that are prejudiced, hierarchical, exclusive, and oppressive; or

3. De Beer, S, 2013. *Tending to the soul of the polis: Towards a politics of animation*. Unpublished paper presented at “The Soul Conference”, Oxford, 28 June – 1 July 2013

inclusive, equalising and life-affirming. This is not a new assertion. What I seek to discover and outline though, almost playfully, is a spirituality that can infuse planning praxis and spatial thinking, in ways that will turn the city on its head: making space/s for vulnerable people that will mediate dignity, justice and well-being. I connect spirituality and space, insisting that the city has a soul which needs to be tended. I try to develop it under the headings of discovering and embodying an alternative imagination: towards a spirituality of urban space and practising an ethic of urban space.

BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND CITY PLANNING: EMBRACING A TRANSVERSAL RATIONALITY

Fig. 4. Nel, 2017. *The church and the city.*

The study has its origins in an embedded local practice, struggling to make sense of changing urban environments and asking how I as an inner city resident, faith-based practitioner and practical theologian can best participate in processes that shape local urban communities. Originating from this immersed position, the study engages in conversation with both critical theological discourses such as liberation, feminist and eco-feminist approaches, and with diverse planning and critical spatial discourses, hoping for the emergence of a transversal rationality with which to engage our cities.



Van Huyssteen (2006:19) contrasts transversal rationality with the idea of one universal, organising truth that has to have validity for everyone and everything. Transversality is characterised by

the dynamics of consciousness, the interweaving of many voices, the interplay of social practices... all expressed in a metaphor that points to a sense of transition, lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting, and conveying without becoming identical (Van Huyssteen 2006a:19).

Van Huyssteen (2006a) says that the concept of transversal rationality is

fused with consciousness and self-awareness, and this consciousness is then unified by an experience of self-presence, emerging over time from a remembering self-awareness / consciousness in which diverse past experiences are transversally integrated as we reach out to others (Van Huyssteen 2006a:21).

xxvii |

PRACTISING A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

If transversality is the broad epistemological paradigm, then transdisciplinarity is the methodological approach emanating from it. This study hopes to not only propose but also embody a transdisciplinary approach (Klein 2001) to research, planning and urban spatial thinking or urban place-making.

Personally, I move between theology, planning and other disciplines in order to imagine urban planning in South Africa today. I do so from a very local perspective, considering the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city, and its immediate surroundings. I also move between a practitioner, resident / community member, activist and scholar / researcher approach in considering the city (from below). At another level I work consciously at creating transdisciplinary spaces for action, reflection, dialogue and research, embodied in a number of the community engagements presented towards the end of this study.

A PRAXIS-APPROACH TO PLANNING AND CITY-MAKING

I consider a possible strength of this study an appropriation of the praxis-cycle (Holland & Henriot 1982) as a proposed method for participatory, critical and liberationist city planning processes. The praxis-cycle is presented here as a specific method within what I call a contextual-narrative approach to planning and city-building. A praxis-approach insists on the importance of reflective practice being shaped by a number of intentional, interactive and cyclical moments: our multiple immersions; our critical readings of urban spaces, with others, and particularly with those who are denied full access to such spaces; our collective re-imagining of the city from below; and our participation in co-constructing imagined new spaces. The way in which I present my research also follows the logic of the cycle, moving from a description of my own narrative to a description of the Berea-Burgers Park community of the inner city; followed by a deconstruction of the urban façades and various critical readings of local urban policy; imaginative reflections of doing planning and city-making differently, rooted in a spirituality and ethic of urban space; and, finally, considering the co-constructing of the city with reference to a collage of very specific community-based urban engagements.

COMMUNITY-BASED EMBODIMENTS

| xviii

Communities can do things for themselves. The ways in which planners, politicians, private sector and planning processes most often engage people and places, particularly in challenging or transitional urban neighbourhoods, are too often to deny local agency, knowledges, experiences and wisdoms, not creating hospitable and authentic spaces for inviting such local resources into. Such resources are alive in communities, every day, holding sometimes fragile weaves together, in spite of limited resources or support. The agency of communities is often staggering and dismissed at our own peril.

I concur with Donna Shaper (1989:120) when she says: “Only communities can restore streets to dwell in and land to grow in and schools to learn in. They can do these things because they understand what’s really important, which is their life together”.

The insistence, and unapologetic bias of this study, is to advance a community-based urban praxis, locating urban planning and place-making processes locally, in communities, with communities deeply shaping the visions and outcomes of such processes, intuitively knowing what is best for them. This study seeks to imagine planning and city-building with the eyes of a child, growing up in an ever-changing urban neighbourhood. It considers stories, including my own; the ways in which neighbourhoods are storied, from above or outside, but, more importantly, from below or within; and it considers re-storying planning or re-storying cities.



Fig. 5. Nel, 2017. *Community*.

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE...

This journey would not have been possible, was it not for people embracing and encouraging me on the way. Not only did this journey make me ask and express: “Who am I?”, but also: “Whose am I?”

Initially I was invited to enter this PhD-journey by the former head of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Pretoria, Professor Sakkie Badenhorst. His encouragement probably meant much more to me than he ever knew.

The communities of the inner city, in which I always felt embraced, not only enabled this journey, but shaped the content and values contained in here. These include people from my earliest memories of Sunnyside, to current neighbours; those I lived with joyfully, and those reminding me that life is not just smooth.

Without the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF), Yeast City Housing and other expressions of faith or citizens’ action, I would not have grasped the power of community, the beauty of bottom up actions against the odds, the power of local agency, in faith, to make and change places for the better.

The communities emerging from the faith responses of TLF – and the women and men and children who formed part of these communities – shaped my way of thinking and had me ask a simple but permanent question: “How do we shape a city radically inclusive, affirming and empowering of such communities?”

| xxx

I have huge appreciation for Mark Oranje, professor and current head of the Department of Town and Regional Planning, who accompanied me on this journey as my supervisor, as a conversation partner, and as someone I learnt to trust and respect. His faith in my journey, and his faith in the redemptive possibilities of planning, and of planning itself being redeemed, was hugely empowering.

My mother raised me, with my sister, in Sunnyside, Pretoria. My deep respect for the inner city, its streets and its people, came from her. An inner city resident for forty years, she cared with great passion and courage for her apartment building and its people, and the street on which she lived: she embodied much of what this study is about; she embodies the mother bird. And she never gave up on me completing this journey.

Towards the end of the journey, Kathleen Nel contributed hugely, by formatting the text into a beautiful end product. Not only did she read the text with great interest, which was very encouraging, but she contributed ways to visualise and embody the ideas contained in this study. The original drawings are all hers. The visual effect makes the text seem much better than it really is.

Editing of chapters 7-9 and the Bibliography was done with great precision by Carusta van der Merwe. There is nothing like the details of a Bibliography to steal one's joy. Having someone else do it so carefully, means a lot.

Wilna de Beer was my companion on this journey for the past 25 years. She embodies community- and faith based courage, action, immersion and innovation. Thank you for believing in me, even when it was not necessary or prudent to. And thank you for doing a meticulous job with editing the final text, for making insightful suggestions throughout, and for trying to read my mind, making sure I delete parts which seemed indulgent or angry. Your life is etched onto many of these pages.

xxxi |

The children of the inner city, and particularly the 8 boys who died at the Elim Church on 12 March 1992, shaped my life forever, in the direction of justice. If nothing else, might their spirits breathe through this text.

Finally, but definitely not the least: in writing this I considered my two girls, Goitsemodimo and Kinkinwin, who entered this world through the safe arms of inner city communities, and who held me safely, when I needed it. I trust that their lives will speak of a mother bird, forever hovering over the city, to protect and sustain, to enliven and make strong.

To

Goitse and Kiki



*"Ah, God,
I was but a child
when I discovered you
and knew,
with a child's
passionate, loyal conviction
that you were real.
You were my playmate - "*

(Gateley 2000)

xxxiii |

Fig. 6. Nel, 2017. *Curiosity*.



Fig. 7. Nel, 2017. Locating the study, adapted from Google Earth 2017.

INTRODUCTION

Why embark on the journey?

4. The City of Tshwane is the name of the metropolitan municipality of the administrative capital of South Africa, still known as Pretoria. In this study I will consistently use Tshwane, the abbreviated form, in reference to Pretoria

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNEY

This journey is about *the soul of the city, embodied in its spaces and its people*. It reflects on unfolding urban spaces, tracing dynamics in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of Tshwane's⁴ inner city between 1993 and 2016.

Although the focus is on one small neighbourhood, the narratives emerging from this neighbourhood are brought into conversation with many other narratives and discourses, hoping to discern a vision for a *community-based approach to urban praxis, or city-making*.

This journey originates from a *deliberate option for the city's most vulnerable people*, and hopes to contribute towards a city characterised by radical forms of inclusion, sustainability and justice.

At the root of this journey is the strong belief that western dualisms separating sacred and secular, soul and body, physical and spiritual, are not sustainable and need to be revisited. Instead, this study seeks to explore *the relationship between space and spirituality*, asserting that there is a connection. Values shape urban space, and the question is whether these values are serving humanity and creation, or facilitating its decay and destruction. Spaces and places (external) reflect values (internal), which speak of our morals, ethics, commitments

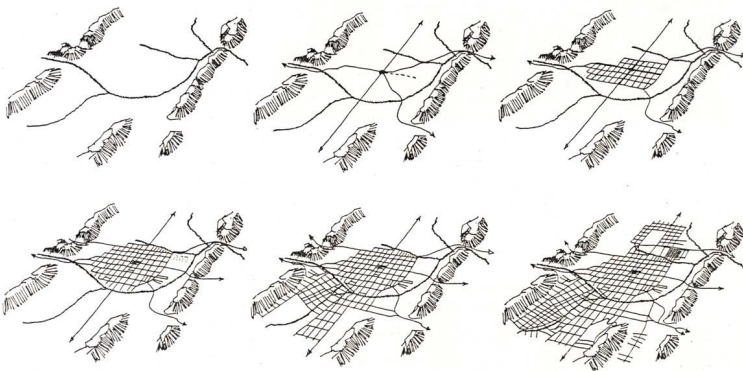
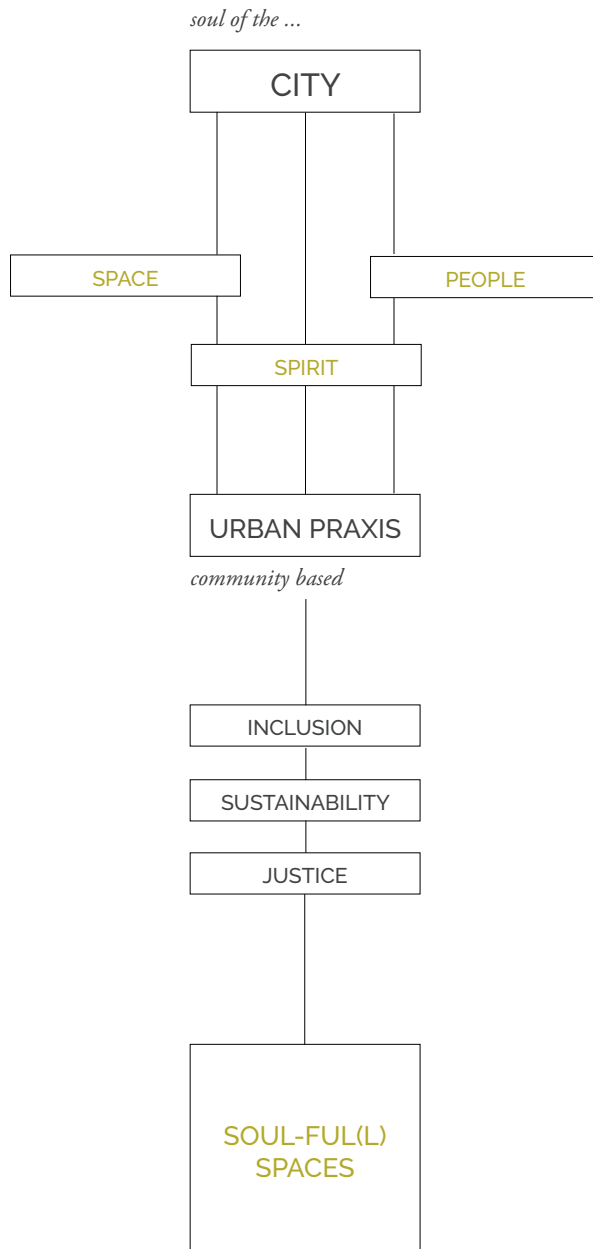
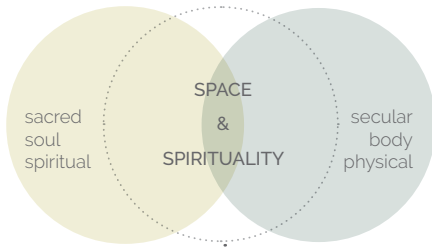


Fig. 8. Jordaan, G. 1989. The development of Pretoria.

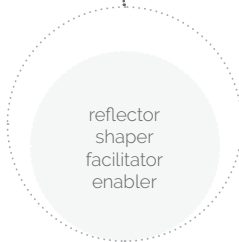


| 2

Fig. 9. Underlying argument



how do our values shape urban space?



and priorities. Spaces are not only reflectors but also enablers, facilitators and shapers of certain behaviour, values, and relationships.

What are the values that lie behind spatial expression? What kinds of behaviour, values or relationships are embodied through spatial expression? How are the people of the city included or excluded from spatial processes? How can communities and local value-driven movements help develop inclusive “soul(full)spaces” that enhance integration, wholeness, equity, justice and peace?

...social configurations produce effects. That is, the way in which society (more specifically, the city) is organised spatially can have an impact on how that society / city works (Massey, Allen & Swift 1999:162).

It is a question of how these elements – spaces, values, people – interface in creating each other. The notion of power / powerlessness is a recurrent theme in this discussion, and gets explored in

different parts of the study.

The sub-title provides a vision in a specific direction. “(A) community-based urban praxis” proposes urban spatial development that will not only be rooted in the narratives of local communities and people, but that will actively encourage local communities and people to author their own spatial narratives. Herein lies a strong plea for democratised planning and development, decentralised power and decision-making, and a deep affirmation that the daily users of space – a child, an elderly person, the person with a disability, residents, new migrants – should contribute significantly to help determine the neighbourhood s/he wants.

At a deeper almost spiritual level it suggests that all of humanity and creation carry sacred marks of grace, and if this is true our city-making engagements should be transformed accordingly.

Fig. 10. Dualisms

Part I of this study considers in three chapters a new epistemology, identity and methodology in the direction of a community-based urban praxis. It explores a different way of knowing (epistemology), that will not be exclusive but participatory, inviting the stories of communities and people into the planning process, and allowing them to help imagine a preferred story for their neighbourhoods. A prerequisite is a new self-understanding for those involved in planning, city-building or space-making. Simultaneously it requires a new self-understanding among ordinary citizens, and particularly marginalised citizens: to reclaim their own voice and agency in processes of city-making.

The metaphor of “becoming like a child” is suggested and developed, recovering the forgotten resources that are characteristic of childhood, such as wonderment and surprise, play and artfulness, imagination and intuition. It suggests a radical shift from planning as bureaucracy and technocracy to planning as participatory artistry, thus opening ourselves up to *the Mother Bird hovering over our urban spaces*, responsive to the cries of urban people and places alike, and inviting us to be co-constructors with the (S)pirit, of new and surprising spaces, birthing hope and bursting with life. It explores the use of a *contextual-narrative approach to city-making and proposes the praxis cycle as methodology for engaging the city*, always centring around or engaging from within a deep connectedness to the “genius” or S(s)pirit of space (the Mother Bird).

4 **Part II** of the study reflects and unpacks engagement with urban space – doing the city together – *through the four critical moments of the praxis cycle: entering, reading, imagining and co-constructing the city.*

Focusing on the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of Tshwane’s inner city, it describes the *socio-cultural, economic and physical changes* that occurred in this neighbourhood, *institutional responses* to such changes, and the effects this had on *public and so-called sacred spaces* (Part I, chapters 1-3). It also *deconstructs behind the façades* of what meets the eye, to gain a better *critical understanding of the official texts and dominant*

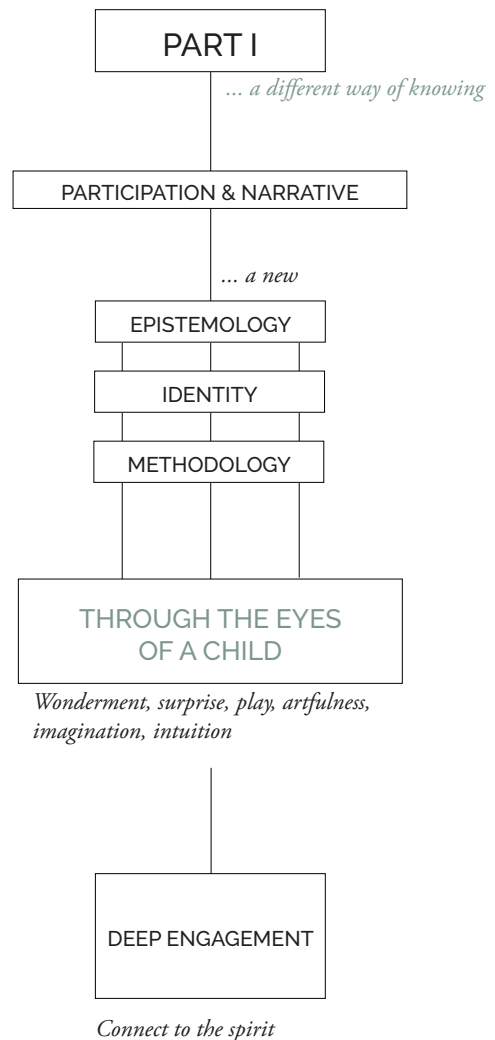


Fig. 11. Part I diagram

narratives that shaped inner city change in Tshwane (Part I, chapters 4-5).

Chapters 6 to 8 of Part II then goes further and explore *the development and embodiment of an alternative imagination, through carefully fostering a spirituality and ethic of urban space, carried by local communities and interconnected, intersectional movements* working for urban justice. These chapters explore the kinds of values, metaphors, processes and practices required to evoke, nurture and sustain a radically different imagination of what urban space could look like.

Chapter 9 presents ten (10) *small narratives representing local community-based engagements for urban change in Berea-Burgers Park*. It reflects on the values shaping these narratives, the promise held by such local narratives – small yet strong – but also on the weaknesses, challenges or limitations – internal and external – of community-based engagements with the city.

Chapter 10 serves as a *summary* seeking to capture the essence of what has unfolded throughout this journey. It proposes an *integrated community-based urban praxis, participating in the co-construction of urban space, from below and from within*.

The study itself is *trans- (and post-) disciplinary*, and reflections combine insights from town and regional planning, theology, architecture, development studies, and narrative therapy / theory, in conjunction with my own lived experience and practical knowledge generated in dialogue with local neighbourhoods over the past 25 years.

The main interest of the study is the creation of liveable, viable and radically inclusive urban (inner city) places – marked by dignity, equity and justice – contributing to the interdependent well-being of all people and communities, with a specific bias towards the full integration of people who are normally particularly marginalised, vulnerable and excluded.

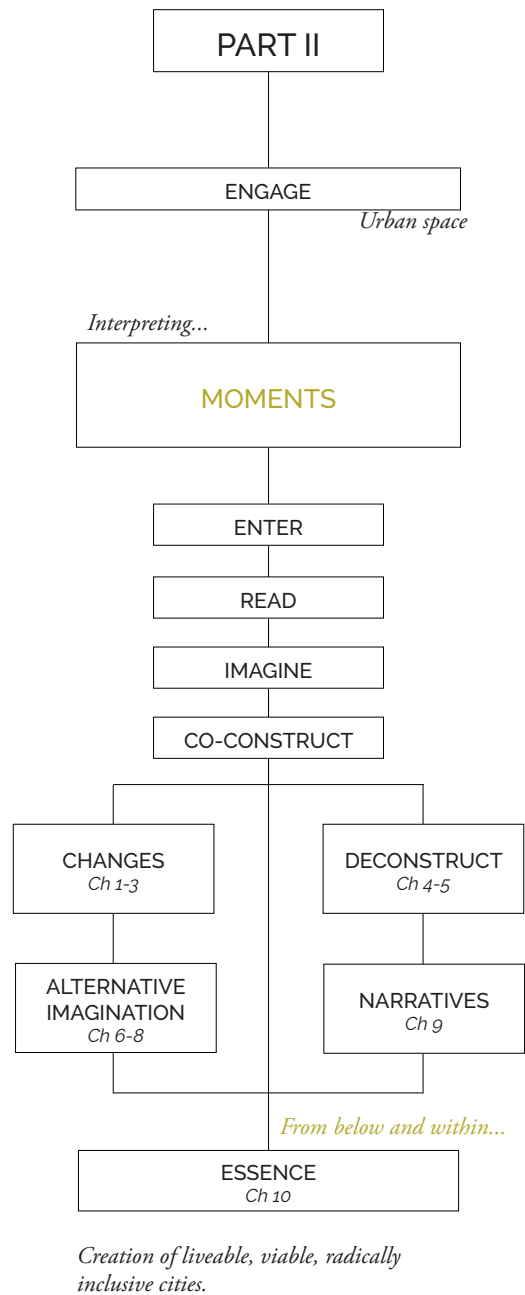
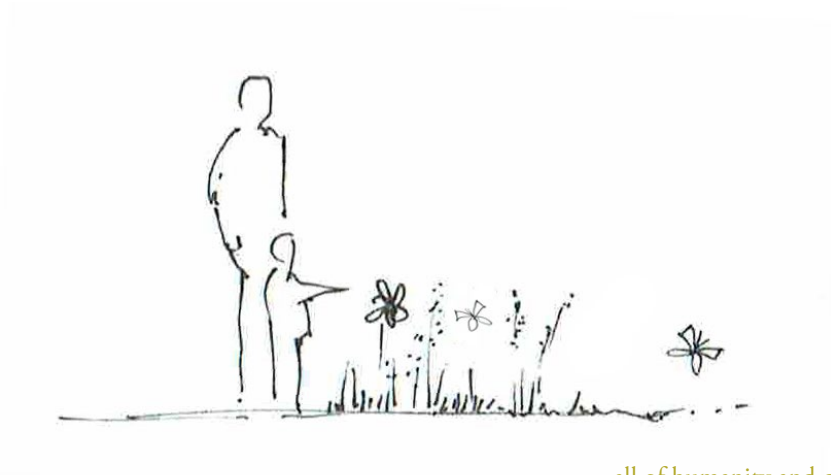


Fig. 12. Part II diagram

16



...all of humanity and creation carry sacred marks of grace...

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE JOURNEY

This research (journey) and writing (narrative) takes place primarily from within the context of the inner city of Tshwane, focusing on the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city. This is one of the oldest parts of the city known as Pretoria, but today it is just a very small geographical area within the ever-sprawling City of Tshwane. Although this journey is focusing on this neighbourhood, it will read this local context against broader urban narratives, unfolding in the City of Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa and globally.

Let me state my reasons for selecting this specific area.

The *first* reason is personal. The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood is where I have lived and worked for almost 20 years, where my struggles and hopes are most incarnated. I value this opportunity to reflect in a slightly more intentional and structured way on these experiences, since reflection often only happened “on the run”. Apart from the literature study, the research component of this study is largely done through participatory action research, or, perhaps even more accurately, *solidarity action research* (cf. Higginbottom 2008:158-170; Chatterton, Pickerrill & Hodkinson 2010:245-275).

I was participating actively in the neighbourhood and many of the processes I reflect upon, not only as a community organiser, minister and leader of an organisation, but also as a resident of the area, a first-time property owner, and a human being seeking to live well in my own neighbourhood together with my family. I was deeply affected in a personal way by decisions taken

about the area, and the dynamics and developments of the area. I can therefore not pretend to be an objective outsider to the community I write about, since much of my research and thinking was shaped by our collective engagement in and with this neighbourhood.

It is for this reason that my own research in this regard can be understood as more than participatory action research, in which a researcher might participate in the life of a community for a period, mostly as an outside observer, after which the researcher again withdraws from an area. In this case my research flows from a deep solidarity with the area and the issues affecting the area, also and specifically with issues such as homelessness, which therefore also became a matter of self-interest (cf. Pierce 1997). I will often refer to my own personal participation and experiences, as well as that of the faith- and community based movement that emerged in this area over the period stretching 1993-2016 (cf. 2002 De Beer & De Beer 254-263).



Fig. 13. (left) Nel 2017. *Child's curiosity*
Fig. 14. (above) Nel, 2017. *City streets*.

Of course, being an urban professional, a property owner, and an organisational head, gave me a different self-understanding to start with, compared to the person who was homeless and living across the road from our organisational property on the pavement. This does not pretend to be an 'objective' study because my uniquely personal experiences shape much of what is written here. I do very intentionally seek to also give voice to those who are often not heard in the urban discourse, and negated in planning processes for local neighbourhoods.

The *second* reason relates to the unique character of the South African city (De Beer & De Beer 2002: 254-256). The dynamics and processes of the South African city in post-apartheid times, make it the ideal context for research on urban planning and development issues. It is a living studio for dialogue and discourse on past, current and emerging urban planning and development theories. It is a daily contest for space (cf. De Beer 2008), as socio-economic and political forces, as well as diverse people and cultures (in the broadest sense of the word) are battling it out to determine who can be included and who will be excluded. The challenge to find a new planning and development praxis within the city, against the backdrop of Harvey's question (2012:236) about whose city it is – who has a right to the city – is very real.

How do we craft cities that will include every person – regardless of who they are and simply because of their humanity – fairly, appropriately and meaningfully, into itself?

The *third* reason relates to specific institutional interventions or processes aimed at regeneration (cf. Chapter 4; 3). If we consider the inner city in particular, various processes, mechanisms, plans and policies were designed, aimed at urban regeneration. The Pretoria Inner City Partnership (PICP), the Inner City Spatial Development Framework, the Inner City Office, the Section 79-committee, City Improvement Districts, and Urban Development Zones, were all attempts made since 1993 to re-create the inner city.

Part of this study will be to reflect critically on these processes, in terms of how they contribute to regeneration; the kind of regeneration they facilitate and who the beneficiaries are / are not. I will introduce specific community-based mechanisms and processes, as well as informal initiatives, exploring in how far such mechanisms and initiatives could perhaps be more rigorously and appropriately implemented as alternative approaches to the dominant urban interventions – mostly from above and from outside – done by public and private sector.

The *fourth* reason relates to the specific praxis that is emerging from within the community- and

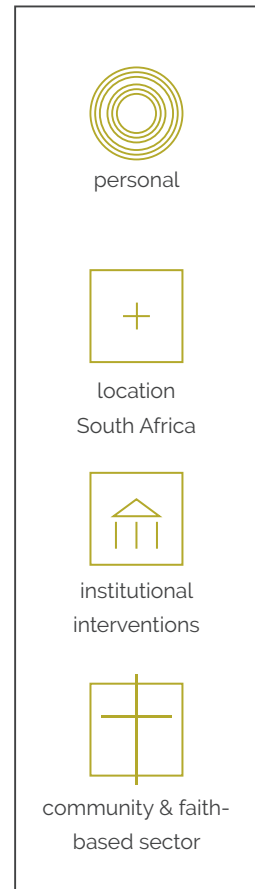


Fig. 15. Reasons for the study.

faith-based sector. The movement to which I have belonged since 1993 have articulated the objectives they are working towards quite clearly (De Beer & De Beer 2002:257-263):

- the inclusion of inner city residents in shaping the future of the inner city (through community organising, local community forums, and participatory processes),
- the re-integration of homeless communities and other at-risk individuals or groups into inner city society,
- Investment that is socially inclusive – purchasing and re-developing property and experimenting with the re-creation of old urban spaces, connected to the real issues and struggles of vulnerable inner city people; and
- the creation of healthy and liveable inner city

communities, through the provision of decent, affordable housing, new utilisation of urban church spaces, social infrastructure, and various urban services.

In chapter 9 of Part II I introduce ten local urban engagements – particularly community-based approaches – in a critical way.

Although this study focuses on a very local journey, I trust that some of the reflections emerging from these practices and stories, will encourage fellow travellers working in many different cities as they seek to express a daily praxis of engagement. I also trust that it might contribute in a small way to inform the meta-narrative of the South African city, even if it only means a *small voice of concern or disruption against a mighty stream of silent consent.*

3. QUESTIONS TO BE EXPLORED

The urban journey is one of paradox and struggle. On the one hand the city represents the collective hopes of millions migrating to it; on the other hand it embodies the pain of loss, abandonment and rootlessness. If an urban journey is undertaken with vulnerable urban people, it is by definition a messy and unclear journey; it is often a journey marked by unjust power dealings and deliberate socio-economic exclusions.

Our own urban journey of more than 20 years, primarily incarnated in the inner city, was marked by a perpetual battle for the soul of the city: a battle for life or death, as the economy of the inner city was at risk, large-scale disinvestment

affected its viability, landlords abandoned property, new landlords exploited poor tenants and allowed slum conditions in certain buildings, marginal people struggled to find a place to call home, and officials and politicians had

inside fights whilst communities asked for delivery and action. This contest also became visible in the utilisation or abandonment of space, the content of different spaces, and the meaning assigned to space (cf. De Beer 2009).

It has become clear in my own journey that there are certain values, assumptions, policies and driving forces – which I broadly want to term spiritualities – at work behind the utilisation or development of space. These could be constructive spiritualities nurturing the soul of people and the soul of the city, rooted in love and affirming the sacredness of life, humanity and creation. But they could also be destructive spiritualities, focused on accumulation of power and wealth in ways that marginalise some and exploit others, thriving in the tension between law and lawlessness, or chaos and violent repression.

The central research question will deal with the issue of how urban space can be liberating, humane and just, nurturing the soul of a place; and the values, processes, postures and partnerships required for facilitating such space. The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood serves as focal point.

Various city strategies, policies, processes, programmes and projects are under discussion or implemented, which also impact upon Berea-Burgerspark. The authors and implementers of these processes are national, provincial

and local government structures, private sector groups, church- or community-based organisations, residents groups, non-government organisations, and / or public-private partnerships.

Three *sub-questions* lurk in the background of this study, dealing with three related issues:

- How well are local communities, the poor, vulnerable and generally excluded groups, included in local city-making processes and/or integrated into urban spatial arrangements?
- How well are local urban communities (with specific reference to residential and marginal communities) empowered, and planning professionals prepared to accept local communities, to be co-owners of local city-making processes?
- How well does urban regeneration or urban renewal projects facilitate deep transformation (or reconstruction) of urban space – overcoming poverty and socio-economic-spatial exclusion from the city – or are such projects merely contributing to further marginalisation or dislocation?



4. THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE JOURNEY

MOTHER BIRD, HOVERING OVER THE CITY:

Space, spirituality and a community-based urban praxis

I chose to title this study “Mother bird, hovering over the city” with as sub-title “Space, spirituality and a community-based urban praxis”.

Fig. 16. Nel, 2017. Genius Loci at God's Window.

The central outcome of this study is to propose a community-based urban praxis, that will participate consciously, critically (resistance) and constructively (reconstruction) in processes of city-making and spatial formation.

I propose rooting such an urban praxis in a spirituality and ethic of urban space constantly opening itself for the life-giving, life-affirming Spirit of place to invite, disturb, prompt, partner with us in recreating / healing / liberating / transforming local urban spaces.

Such a spirituality and ethic are influenced by traditions of liberation and eco-feminism, embracing all of creation and recognising both human failure and human

imperative to sustain creation. Informed by the same traditions it also opts for solidarity with all oppressed beings, recognising our interdependence as living beings with all of creation.

I depart from a sense of the “genius loci” (Norberg-Schulz 1980) or spirit of place that needs to be discerned and honoured if we are to make soul spaces that will tend to the soul of the city. I describe the “genius loci” in a broader and more inclusive sense, once again borrowing from eco-feminist language, considering the “Mother bird”⁵ – creative Spirit – hovering over the city, longing to see fractures mended, dignity restored, life upheld.

5. In the Ancient Near East there was a rich tradition to connect God and the mother bird, or, “the Mother-Goddess and the vulture, to which rich notions of protection and regeneration were attributed” (Schroer 1998:280-281); Palazzo (2002:81), in reflecting on the feminist theology of Christina Rossetti, speaks of God's relationship with creation as “tender and nurturing, like a mother bird”; or, as Martin Buber explained it, God's ruah or Spirit was presented as a giant mother bird “whose wings quietly move” (cf. Schottroff 1998:24-25)

5. SCOPE OF THE JOURNEY

This is a *transdisciplinary journey* integrating insights from town and regional planning, architecture, theology, development studies and narrative therapy, but gearing its reflections towards planning cities or making urban spaces that are humane, inclusive and just.

I try to bring my theological understandings of the city and my diverse urban engagements into a coherent reflection on space and the values shaping it. It is a reflection of an urbanist / theologian / citizen seeking to live creatively within the paradoxes of urban life, and doing that from a perspective of all people and spaces bearing signs of God.

The journey proposes a *contextual-narrative approach*, in which the local context and its stories are allowed to speak, to inform the way we understand the city and its space, as well as the way in which we utilise, design and develop such space.

As a contextual study, the focus is on the *inner city of Pretoria, Tshwane, with emphasis on the Berea-Burgerspark area of the inner city*. The approach I take is

people-centred, with a specific solidarity with poor or marginal citizens, but secondly also in companionship with the residents of the city of whom I am one.

As a narrative study, I allow stories of individuals, groups, communities and processes to surface. Throughout the research I raise deconstructive questions, dealing with power and powerlessness, and the way in which dominant stories, myths and stereotypes, contribute to exploitative and exclusive urban spaces.

The praxis I was engaged in between 1993 and 2012, and in a different capacity since 2012, serves as the basis from which the research was conducted. Many of the existing processes and programmes in which I was engaged were integrated into the narrative.

6. MAPS FOR THE JOURNEY

I suggest a number of maps for the journey, to help myself and any companions that might join en route, to be on the look-out for certain landmarks (sometimes landmines), but also to be open for discoveries along the way.

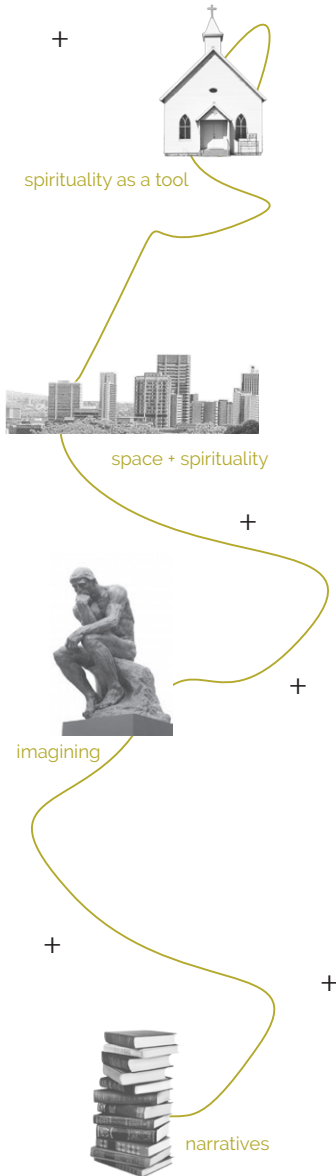


Fig. 17. Nel, 2017. The four maps.

Obviously there might be surprises on the journey that might challenge some of my prior assumptions, and therefore change the outcomes somewhat. In Mark Gevisser’s, *Lost and Found in Johannesburg* (2014), the author describes his childhood obsession with maps and how he created mapping games to discover Johannesburg. As part of this journey of discovery he found that his map book would not guide him from Sandton to Alexandra, and that Soweto was not mapped at all.

It suggests the limitations of maps – “the true nature of any city is never evident in what we can see” (Barac 2013:38) – but also raises questions as to the ways in which maps are constructed: *through whose eyes do we see?*

MAP 1

To discover the necessity of recovering spirituality as a tool for urban transformation (chapters 2,3 & 6).

Thinking of space from an ethical and value-base, and bringing the spatial discussion in dialogue with discourses on spirituality, will be like a thread running through this whole journey. Although I do not spend much time speaking *about* spirituality, I employ metaphors

and language that seek to root (route) the journey in such a way that companions and spectators alike would be able to discern spirituality at work.

I discover spirituality as a resource for radical urban transformation, in the outward-focused, “earthy”, transformative, and socio-political spiritualities of Latin American liberation theology (Gutierrez 1988; Boff & Boff 1986, Boff 1988), black theology (Boesak 1977, 1987; Cone 1975, 1984), or the African-American inner city church (Walker 1991). In places like Harlem, New York City, and the South Side or West Side of Chicago, it is the spirituality of the African-American church, more than anything else, that provides the vision and resources for urban transformation.

It is also important to recognise the important role of spirituality in inner city communities like Hillbrow (cf. Winkler 2006), Albert Park in Durban and Sunnyside, Pretoria, from a sociological perspective. Local churches often provide the first entry point into the city, the first community of belonging, a place of reference, a haven for consolidation. In a publication on Hillbrow, *Bleakness and Light* (Morris 1999), the author

indicates that 50% of the residents of Hillbrow are active in local churches. In Pretoria, more than 40 new churches were created in the inner city in the past 20 years. Three new mosques have been established in the inner city in the same time. The urban context accommodates religious diversity and is fertile ground for new religious expressions, religious cults, and quasi-religious movements (cf. Berryman 1996; exploring religious expressions in a number of Latin American cities).

And yet, the spiritualities underlying these different religious expressions are not necessarily engaging their local contexts in life-giving manners, often escapist in nature and world-denying in scope. This study assumes a spirituality that consistently seeks to affirm creation and humanity holistically. It borrows from creation-centred and eco-feminist spiritualities that celebrate the presence of the sacred in the realm of our physical and earthly spaces.

MAP 2

To discover the essential relationship between space and spirituality, demonstrating how value-based planning and development can contribute to liberating, humane spaces (chapters 6).

This study connects spiritual and spatial, faith and the city, soul and body, ethics and economics, values and planning, pleading that we should overcome our superficial

dichotomies, and rather embrace life in totality. It argues for deep interconnections between the values we hold and practice and the socio-political-spatial implications thereof. Soelle (2001:3) speaks of it as “the relationship between mystical experience and social and political behaviour”. And McAfee Brown (1988) demonstrates the false dichotomies between spiritual and physical, soul and body, in his work *Spirituality and Liberation*. Both of these scholars have shaped my own thought deeply.

As such, the nature of the spirituality I propose would be earthy, holistic, life-affirming, connected and connecting, holistic, communal and liberating. At the same time, it is proposed that these characteristics would be the characteristics of a new or imagined planning praxis, entirely immersed in a spirituality of life. Such a planning praxis could help to affirm that all space is sacred and needs to be managed, developed, and nurtured accordingly.

MAP 3

To explore an urban spatial framework that is rooted in and that draws from an alternative imagination of what the city could be (chapter 6).

The fundamental pillars of such an alternative imagination would be:

- space as place of the soul
- humane space that affirms humanness and dignity
- fair space that facilitates social



Fig. 18. Nel, 2017. Exploring

justice

- sustainable space that values creation and its limited resources

MAP 4

To explore and propose an urban praxis that is radically democratised, communal and rooted in a value-based spirituality of space that is life-affirming and empowering (chapter 5, 7).

Local narratives and other tall stories are investigated, and proposals made in terms of possible practical strategies for a re-created,

re-conceived urban praxis, that will hopefully help re-create and nurture life-giving urban spaces. This will flow from an assertion of an epistemology from below and from within – honouring local narratives and initiatives as sources of life-giving knowledge.

Similarly, I will deal with strategies to resist existing planning, policy, design and development practices that give life to some and deal death to others; and I will imagine and propose planning, policies, design and practices that will consistently be on the side of life, justice and abundance for all.

7. OWN ASSUMPTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

The following assumptions are part of my own paradigm and will therefore shape the reflections of this study. These assumptions are derived from my liberation theological roots, my own embeddedness in urban praxis for the past 25 years, my deep respect for local wisdoms, experiences and knowledges of urban people, and exposure to progressive or radical urban thinkers.

The city has a soul, and – if honoured and nurtured – space within the city can be life-affirming.

- Inherent to the social spirituality of the faith movement to which I belong (commonly known as Judeo-Christian spirituality), there are certain values and principles that might, if discovered and applied to the urban built environment, have a life-giving impact on the way in which urban space is re-created.
- Urban planning and development have to go beyond urban renewal discourse, which is often superficial and temporary, to a place of real transformation, addressing the root problems in urban society without displacing them elsewhere.
- The planning and development of urban space need to be done in holistic, integrated ways.
- Planning needs to be done in transdisciplinary, participative ways, including the range of role players and community representatives

not only in planning and consultation processes, but also in the actual implementation processes.

This should be done not to be politically correct or to pay lip service to legislation, but because it could fundamentally alter the way in which planning and planning outputs work. Communities will start to take broad-based ownership for planning, envisioning, implementing, managing and sustaining their own neighbourhoods.

- Planning and development of urban spaces need to be people-centred: cities are for people and not people for cities.
- I affirm the poor (or “the other”) as a central category for consideration when urban spaces are planned and developed, precisely because they are often excluded from conventional planning processes. We always need to ask: Who will be excluded from this? How will they be accommodated?
- There are dominant stories that need to be deconstructed and challenged, since they re-affirm stereotypes and the exclusion of certain individuals and groups from mainstream urban development processes.
- Planning, design and development practices within the urban environment, are often done without considering the underlying values they represent. These need to be deconstructed and a process of value-based planning and policy-making needs to be encouraged.
- Integrated development plans, spatial frameworks, and related urban policy, can be liberating tools to empower urban people in general, and the poor in particular, to experience wholeness and well-being within liveable and viable spaces - but only if some of the above assumptions are part of the planning enterprise.
- Urban church properties, and church-owned properties, can play a significant and even central role in helping to nurture a life-giving spirituality of space; if these buildings become open structures, in dialogue with the world, and at the service of the community.

8. HOW DO I APPROACH THIS JOURNEY?

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I am not a tourist in my city, but I journey as a resident, sometimes insider, often outsider. I do not reflect objectively, but I reflect from a position of solidarity, participation and insertion, being part of that reality as resident, beneficiary / victim, community organiser, social activist, practical theologian, Board member, consumer, and so on. My reflections are therefore also constructions that are shaped by my own positions.

The broad paradigm from which I depart is *trans- (and post-) disciplinary*, not only integrating different disciplines but allowing the diverse knowledges of local community-based urban practices, urban practitioners and urban social movements to disrupt and inform my own urban understandings. My own transdisciplinary approach is also shaped by post-foundational discourse as found in Van Huyssteen (1997, 1999 & 2006), Müller (2003 & 2012) and others.

Methodologically I follow a *contextual-narrative approach*, allowing narratives from the local context to inform my thinking and praxis about urban design and spatial development, deconstructing the dominant stories of space that exploit and exclude, and discovering so-called tall stories or strong narratives, representing the preferred reality of an alternative imagination.

The contextual-narrative approach will find its specific embodiment in the hermeneutical cycle or *praxis-cycle of Holland and Henriot* (1984; cf. also Schreiter 1985). I adapted the praxis-cycle in this study as the framework for doing research, for organising my written reflections, but also, and more importantly, as a proposed approach for city-making or urban planning processes.

The praxis-cycle has grown out of the grass-root struggles of slum communities in Latin America,

struggling to make sense of their own contexts, learning to read their contexts, to analyse it, to imagine possible alternatives, and to formulate actions in response to their struggles. Used extensively by contextual and liberation theologues, I use the praxis-cycle in this instance to study urban spatial arrangements and engagements. I also propose the praxis-cycle as methodology for a community-based urban praxis.

The praxis-cycle follows *four distinct moments*, each with a different hermeneutical emphasis.

I use “moment” not in a rigid or static sense, but as “ongoing moment” in the way used by Geoff Dyer (2007) when he writes about photography. Darwent (2005) describes it as “a series of stills, each entirely self-contained and at the same time each linked to all the others.” I use “moment” to suggest a deliberate and reflective pause, to attend to that moment’s emphasis, whilst simultaneously being interconnected, or flowing into each other, all part of an ongoing cycle or dance.

The *first moment* is the moment of insertion, or immersion, **entering urban space**. In this moment we simply allow the realities of the city to confront, challenge and “know” us. Usually this moment would surface a multitude of impressions and questions.

The *second moment* is the moment of social analysis, engaging deeper

with the questions surfaced, **reading urban space** and deconstructing texts and narratives shaping the city. This is an intense moment in which multiple and often contradictory readings will take place, as we would invite different narratives, voices and perspectives, all considering the city from different vantage points.

The *third moment* – **imagining urban space** – focuses on critical reflection in the light of the insertion and analysis experiences, but going further in surfacing, discerning and outlining an alternative imagination of what urban space could be like.

The *fourth moment* is a *strategic moment* in which the imagination or vision of the previous moment is now translated into a *plan for action*. I speak of it as **co-constructing urban space**: the moment when local communities assume their own agency to make change, doing the city together.

Although this study is emerging from my own journey in the city in which the community I was a part of used the praxis-cycle quite intentionally for its own action-reflection processes, this study offers a more conceptual contribution, taking a few steps back and seeking to articulate and advocate a specific approach to urban engagement, in which this hermeneutical cycle can play a central role.

The four moments do not necessarily follow each other in a linear

way. It is possible to move between them rather dynamically. The cycle is on-going in the sense that it requires and promotes on-going deepening of questions, analysis, reflection and engagement. Therefore a dynamic interaction between the moments, instead of a rigid and mechanistic approach, is what makes the cycle so attractive. Having said that though, an intentional emphasis on each moment when in the moment, is crucial.

Different authors suggest spirituality either as a separate moment in the cycle (cf. Cochrane, et al 1991), or as the core around which the different moments centre, and by which these moments are informed. I opt for the second approach in which spirituality or values are at the core of the cycle, informing everything we do as we engage the city. That is also the nature, and the proposition, of this study. Like a central thread throughout the study, the imaginative discernment of a different city is prompted by the ‘genius loci’, or (S)pirit of the city.

The praxis-cycle would also be used to organise this text as follows:

INSERTION:
Entering urban space
(Part II; chapters 1-3)

ANALYSIS:
Reading urban space
(Part II; chapters 4-5)

REFLECTION:

Imagining urban space
(Part II; chapters 6-8)

PLANNING:

Co-constructing urban space
(Part II; chapters 9-10)

Being a qualitative research project, the *specific research methods* I employ throughout the praxis cycle correspond with that of a qualitative research approach.

In some ways the study could be regarded as *auto-ethnographical*⁶, or at least elements of the study, as I relate much of my own personal journey in and with various local urban processes. It definitely took the form of *Solidarity Action*

Research (SAR)⁷ which is a more personally immersed, long-term approach than that of *Participatory Action Research* (PAR). In addition to using a predominantly solidarity action research method with traces of Auto-ethnography, and *participant observation* throughout, I also conducted *documentary analysis*, reflecting critically on official documents and texts, and bringing it into conversation with personal and communal narratives and experiences. Obviously the whole study was underpinned by *engaging literature* that is relevant to the topic.

6. Ellis, Adams & Bochner describes this approach in their 2011 article entitled "Autoethnography: an overview", in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Volume 12, No.1, Art.10, January 2011

7. Chatterton, Pickerill & Hodkinson advocate Solidarity Action Research as an approach in their 2010 article "Beyond scholar activism: making strategic interventions inside and outside the neoliberal university", *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, Vol.9, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 245-275

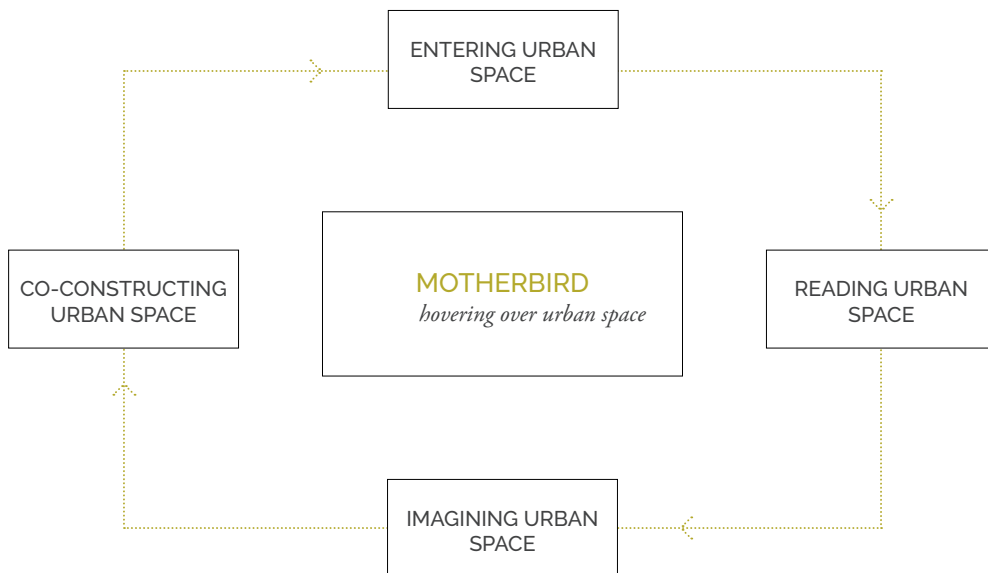


Fig. 19. Urban Praxis Cycle

MOMENT 1

THE FLÂNEUR



Fig. 20. Nel, 2017. The Flâneur

The *first moment* is the moment of insertion, or immersion, **entering urban space**. In this moment we simply allow the realities of the city to confront, challenge and “know” us. Usually this moment would surface a multitude of impressions and questions.

MOMENT 2

THE READER



Fig. 21. Nel, 2017. The Reader.

The *second moment* is the moment of social analysis, engaging deeper with the questions surfaced, **reading urban space** and deconstructing texts and narratives shaping the city. This is an intense moment in which multiple and often contradictory readings will take place, as we would invite different narratives, voices and perspectives, all considering the city from different vantage points.

MOMENT 3

THE DREAMER



Fig. 22. Nel, 2017. The Dreamer.

The *third moment* – **imagining urban space** – focuses on critical reflection in the light of the insertion and analysis experiences, but going further in surfacing, discerning and outlining an alternative imagination of what urban space could be like.

MOMENT 4

THE MAKERS



Fig. 23. NeL, 2017. The Makers.

The *fourth moment* is a strategic moment in which the imagination or vision of the previous moment is now translated into a plan for action. I speak of it as **co-constructing urban space**: the moment when local communities assume their own agency to make change, doing the city together.

9. LITERATURE INFORMING THE JOURNEY

In terms of my broad theoretical paradigm I draw on literature describing transdisciplinarity, post-foundational theory, liberationist pedagogy, contextual theology and narrative theory (cf. among others Klein, Grossenbacher-Mansuy, Häberli, Bill, Scholz and Welti (2001), Van Huyssteen (1997, 1999, 2006), Müller (1996, 2003, 2012), Palmer (1983), Freire (1970, 1973), Freire and Freire (1993), Boff (1987, 1997). Methodologically I adapt the praxis-cycle of Holland and Henriot (1984) for the purposes of city-making, and resonate deeply with solidarity action research as described by Chatterton, Pickerill and Hodkinson (2010).

Specific contributions on spirituality, and literature discussing the relationship between spirituality and space, are considered in the literature study. The important work of Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, (1980) and a significant dialogue with his book from a church architecture perspective, entitled *Die Wiederkehr des Genius Loci: Die Kirche im Stadtraum - die Stadt im Kirchenraum* (Neddens & Wucher 1987), provide foundational insights into this study. Similarly I resort to Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff (1987, 1997) quite often, both for his exposition of *ruach*, or Spirit, and his emphasis on a liberatory praxis from the perspective of the poor.

Through the work of the Biblical scholar, Walter Brueggemann (1977), I introduce reflections on space, as they are manifested in the issue of land. The works of Dorothee Soelle (2001) and creation theologian Matthew Fox (1983) are helpful in terms of challenging dualistic worldviews and offering integrated eco-spiritualities. I engage Jung (1993), Warren

(1990) and Gebara (1999) as dialogical partners and interlocutors of an eco-feminist approach to life and the city.

The literature component of the research process provides a broad overview of different approaches to urban problems, ranging from programmes such as “Model Cities” in the 1960’s, to urban renewal programmes as captured in slum clearance and gentrification processes, to the more contemporary approaches of business improvement districts, economic empowerment zones, community development corporations, and partnerships for urban revitalisation. I am specifically interested in retrieving alternative urban imaginations from the perspective of those excluded from the city (cf. Jacobs 1961; Harvey 2012; Huchzermeyer 2011).

In terms of city planning itself I draw rather generously from the texts of Sandercock (2001, 2003) and Oranje (1997, 2014), who present planning in a way that insists, at once, a return to its idealistic roots, but also a re-awakening

of utopian visions for radically different urban visions. In addition I draw from the insights of urban theorists such as Mabin (2000), Harrison (2006; 2008), Todes (2011), Forester (1987; 1989; 2007; 2013) and Friedmann (1973). Examples of urban innovations and emerging urban social movements, globally and locally, are woven into a re-imagination of urban space, referring amongst others to the work of McGuirk (2014) and Harvey (2012). In a broad sense I would like to locate the study within an epistemological framework known as “southern urbanisms” or “African urbanism, as imagined by Edgar Pieterse, AbdouMaliq Simone and others (2013).

The literature study will not only deal with formal publications on the above-mentioned topics, but will also make use of a documentary analysis of recent and relevant material emerging nationally, and in the City of Tshwane, particularly in relation to the inner city. Spatial frameworks, strategic documents, policies on social housing and homelessness, and minutes of meetings dealing with inner city revitalisation and land use, will be retrieved and reflected upon.

I bring formal literature into conversation with policy and strategic documents, including the National Development Plan (2012), Integrated Urban Development Framework (DCOGTA 2014), Tshwane City Strategy (2004), Tshwane Inner City Development

and Regeneration Strategy (2005), Tshwane Integrated Development Plan: 2011-2016 (April 2011), City of Tshwane Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (June 2012), and Tshwane Vision 2055 (2013).

I will draw from material that contributes to the debate on cities from a theological perspective, ranging from the classic by Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (1978), to more recent contributions by a scholar such as Andrew Davey in *Urban Christianity and Global Order* (2001). Jean-Marc Ela, *La ville en Afrique noire* (1983), is a rare urban theological reflection by a prominent African theologian. In 2014 a number of us contributed to a special edition on *Urban Public Theology in South Africa* (cf. Swart & De Beer 2014) with the view of constructing local theological thought in response to urban change. In 2016 a series of articles entitled *Spatial Justice and Reconciliation* (cf. De Beer 2016) was published to discern a theological agenda for spatial justice in the South African context.

Both these publications gave voice to contemporary South African scholars considering urbanity and spatial justice from diverse theological perspectives. These collections also included authors from city planning, jurisprudence and philosophy, considering urban spatial justice in South Africa from and between these different disciplines.

10. CLARIFYING KEY WORDS FOR THE JOURNEY

10.1 CONTEXTUAL

In chapter 2, I provide detail with regard to my proposed contextual approach to planning. Here it would suffice to say that the contextual approach, as it was developed within social sciences, theology and liberation movements, constitutes a fundamental shift away from a dogmatic, modernist approach to science, life and development, embracing elements that are more identifiable with a post-modern approach.

Deist (1990), for example, speaks of a contextual or situational ethic, describing it as

(a)n approach to the problem of moral behaviour in particular circumstances operating not with a fixed set of ethical norms (ethics) but endeavouring to apply the criterion of neighbourly love appropriately to each particular set of circumstances.

What would be the loving way in a particular socio-historical context? In a contextual approach there is an epistemological shift, as knowledge is no longer understood as a set of rigid dogmatic truths, but knowledge is contextually determined – historically and sociologically – obtained in our mutual journey, as we discover together and negotiate what we know. It is often a knowledge brokered by “unlikely” people on the margins of society, such as those that participated in base communities in the Latin American church of the liberation.

There is a shift away from the formation of theory as an elitist enterprise conducted from

above, to participatory processes in which local communities and local people become fellow pilgrims on the journey (cf. participatory planning and participatory development).

A contextual approach tends to be more human-centred or people-centred.

Slogans such as “cities as if people mattered” and “development as if people mattered”, were introduced. In theology the concept of humanisation has been emphasised more in recent years. (De Beer 1998:153)

Narratives from the local context are important in this approach, instead of a blind, universal application of meta-theories.

(T)he context is allowed to raise its own critical questions in the light of which current theory is revisited and revised. (De Beer 1998:153)

A contextual approach would argue for reflective practitioners (Schön 1983:65): people that will continuously engage in a theory-practice cycle of action and reflection; actions informing

theories, and theories informing actions, without the one having precedence over the other.

There is a specific commitment to “the poor” / “the other”, attempting to read the city through their eyes, and to stand in solidarity with them as we seek for social and economic justice.

Although it bears marks of a post-modern paradigm, a contextual approach refuses to be trapped in perpetual exercises of deconstructing dominant discourses, but is very specific and insistent on discerning actions towards societal change. It demands a radical reconstruction that will at the same time facilitate liberation/s from dominant and oppressive stories, and facilitate transformation/s into an alternative or a preferred story. In this thesis I deliberately seek for new stories, as people dream about them, ritualise them, and enact them.

10.2 NARRATIVE

I suggest a contextual-narrative approach (cf. De Beer & De Beer 2002). Narrative approaches in science, research and therapy, also find their roots in post-modern discourse and particularly in theories of social constructionism (cf. Boyd 1996). It therefore overlaps in its epistemology with the contextual approach, steering away from rigid, dogmatic truths that are universally true for all people at all times and in all places, and rather affirming and embracing

the unique life journeys of different people, communities and cities.

A narrative approach invites stories and story-telling as a central part of this discipline. The stories of communities and people, the stories behind the stories, the official stories and the hidden ones, and the deconstruction of these stories, as well as the retrieval of hidden stories, are important disciplines within a narrative approach (cf. Bons-Storm 1996; De Beer, Tumi & Kotze 2001; Freedman & Combs 1996; Kotze & Kotze 2001; Morgan 2000; Müller 1996; White 2000).

Cities are made up of layers and layers of stories; generations of stories; some overlapping and some conflicting, some official and some hidden. These stories collectively become the discourses that give shape to reality and our understanding of it. These stories help to assign meaning or question the meaning.

This study will interweave narratives of the inner city and one specific neighbourhood; narratives told by different texts – policies, plans, proposals; the untold or hidden narratives of poor and marginal people; and the official narratives of those holding formal positions of power in the city. As I narrate some of the stories and reflect on them, it might become clear to the reader how I am also storied by them (cf. Müller 2012).

Again, I do not pretend to be an outside, objective listener. In some of the stories I choose to narrate, I was an active participant, taking on different roles at different times. Sometimes I was an initiator or an agitator; and other times a friend or a critic. My bias, preferences and dislikes will be portrayed as I re-tell these narratives. In the way I narrate the story, interpret it, and assign meaning to it, I hope I might invite others into the story of the city in new ways; not to accept dominant stories uncritically, not to trivialise their own stories of hope unnecessarily, but to intentionally create and narrate tall stories, new stories, different or alternative stories, that make space for voiceless people, that “story” their lives and hopes.

It also has to be said that I found some distance from the narratives I introduce here, if not emotionally, then at least in terms of my full-time work presence that has relocated to the campus of the University (cf. De Beer 2013a). This has given me some critical distance from which to engage the narratives anew.

10.3 SPIRITUALITY

When I use the term spirituality in this study, I will use it in its broadest sense, and also in its narrower religious sense.

Firstly, I suggest that every urban community has a *local spirituality* currently shaping it. This corresponds with the Roman concept

of “genius loci”, described by Norberg-Schulz (1980). This concept suggests that every being, person and place, has a guardian spirit, a genius that gives life. In urban theological circles, Robert Linthicum (in McAlpine 1991:15) refers to the “brooding angel” of the city:

The political system of a city is infused with a spiritual essence, a “soul”, unimagined and unexplored inner depths. The angel of a city is the inner spirituality that broods over the city. And that spirituality has immense power - either for good or for ill.

What is it that you feel in a Calcutta, a Moscow, a Bangkok, a Mexico City, a Washington, a Nairobi? I would suggest that what you sense is the soul of that city.

Part of the task of the interpreter or reader of the city, is to identify that “inner spirituality”, to deconstruct the story behind the shaping of the city, and to identify the forces, powers, or values that give shape to the city. These forces might include the values, languages or commitments inherent to constructs such as capitalism, communism, socialism, neo-liberalism, materialism, Buddhism, Christianity, democracy, and so forth. Such an analysis will help affirm and construct life-giving stories, which have the potential to nurture the soul of the city and its people, and on the other hand it will help to deconstruct and dispel dominant stories that are destructive to the city and its people.

Secondly, I use the term spirituality to refer to the goal of nurturing a life-affirming spirituality of urban space, which means negotiating

and nurturing a contextually sensitive value framework that will be the foundation upon which a humane and just city can be built. This could also be referred to as a spatial spirituality translated into an ethic of urban space (chapter 6). It is a value-based and value-driven perspective on urban planning, policy-making and development, with humanisation and socio-spatial, economic, political, gender, child and environmental justice as pillars. Such values could only be nurtured on a common journey, with space to share our different stories, to voice the unheard stories, with the possibility of discovering and envisioning an imaginative story rooted in mutual values, and strategically working towards realising the imagined story / city.

In chapter 6 I embrace an eco-feminist spirituality (Jung 1993) of urban space considering solidarity with all oppressed beings as a priority, rooted in an understanding of our interdependence as living beings in creation.

Thirdly, I refer to spirituality in its narrower sense of religious spirituality, drawing from the impact of various religious spiritualities on the creation of space, investigating the constructive contribution that an authentic and liberationist Judeo-Christian spirituality (cf. Dorr 1984; McAfee Brown 1988) can make towards the re-creation (re-construction) of urban space. It can however, also make a destructive contribution through

maintaining dualisms that separate sacred and secular, and city and church; through silence in the face of oppressive spaces and the forces behind them; or through collusion with forces that create exclusivist spaces that are not sustainable, humane or just.

Being a theologian by profession, I have always engaged urban issues from a (Judeo-Christian) faith perspective. Theologically I have been deeply influenced by a specific paradigm, namely the contextual-liberational approach to theology, development and the city (cf. Gutierrez 1988). This approach is critical of the status quo, works with a hermeneutic of suspicion, operates from the perspective of solidarity with the poor / the “other”, seeks new ways of knowing, and - in its urban expression - it seeks models of urban life that will include, empower and affirm the poor / the “other”. It will also liberate the rich, in ways that will reassert the notion of interdependent human community. In my theological thesis (De Beer 1998:295), I refer to a spirituality of urban transformation as

the discipline of opening ourselves up to God's Spirit, who is creating within us a new imagination... and the values, commitments, rituals and actions, that will realise this transformed inner city reality.

This (theological) working definition might be equally useful within the broader vision of space and spirituality: what are the values, commitments, rituals and actions that could facilitate

transformed urban space? How do we create – within the technocratic and bureaucratic processes of planning – “mystic” spaces in which the Spirit can breathe new imagination? I will suggest later on that this is only possible within the context of communities, of shared learning, of participation with the “other”. It is in such contexts that the wonder and surprise of the Spirit might disturb our knowledge patterns and planning processes – perhaps for the better.

In my journey, I will seek for the soul of the city in all its facets.

10.4 TRANSFORMATION

I do not travel naively in the city. To the contrary, I travel with discontent at the way things are, at the way some people are excluded, and others abuse their power. I travel with the strange tension of loving my city, and at the same time hating what it does to people (cf. Bos 1992). I travel with the desire to see the best of my city accentuated, and the worst radically transformed, altered, or even eradicated.

In this text I will speak of transformation in the sense of transformational development (cf. Van Schalkwyk 1999) of urban space, suggesting thereby that transformation is not a product, but an on-going process of change (a series of changes), cutting at the roots of problems and transforming the city into the preferred story of what the city could and should

be(come). When I use transformation it relates to socio-economic-political-spatial-environmental change in the direction of greater access to resources, equity and justice for all the city’s people; it speaks of change in the sense of healing, or re-membering, fractured people, neighbourhoods, systems and the environment, to their original intentions.

Transformation, in my understanding, suggests radical change or reconstruction within the urban environment, addressing problems at their roots, and therefore going beyond mere renewal enterprises which often displace the poor, and which bring nothing more than superficial and temporary change. It suggests fundamental change or a metamorphosis (a continuous series of changes in the process of maturation).

In the cities of the global South it can also refer to processes of decolonising city planning and city-making (cf. Friedmann 1987; Harrison 2006; Gibson 2009; Kgosidintsi 2015; Mbembe 2015), discovering local knowledges that could shape new forms of urbanity uniquely responsive to local realities and challenges. Harrison (2006:319-335) speaks of the necessity to engage “post-colonial literature and theory”, as well as “the epistemologies, rationalities and value-based traditions of the non-Occidental world” as possible intellectual resources guiding the transformation and decolonisation of (Western) planning paradigms.

The goal of transformation should be understood within the broader framework of fostering an alternative imagination (preferred reality) of the city (cf. Brueggemann 1978, 1986; De Beer 1998: 280-294). This in itself is an on-going journey of discovery, realistic about the fact that we will never re-create paradise in the temporal city, but working towards establishing signs of the new and imagined city (cf. Sandercock's notion of the urban utopianism). These actions of envisioning and working towards a new (reconstructed) city, are part of the agenda of transformation.

Transformation is also a term broadly used in contextual theological circles, as the goal of our engagement with the context – to participate in processes of radical change, restructured economic and power relations, and liberation of the poor, knowing that these processes will never come to a complete end (cf. Bosch 1991).

10.5 SACRED SPACES, SACRED PEOPLE (imago Dei)

I travel as a broken human that often has to be reminded that I am actually in the image of God. I travel in a broken city that often has to be reminded that it too is envisioned to be the city of God.

A traditional African worldview embraces all of life, all of humanity and all of creation as sacred. This was similar in the traditional Hebrew worldview that forms the foundation of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and also in other middle-eastern cultures. Later on

in this study I will argue for an integrated view of life that goes beyond the western dualisms that we have inherited: affirming that all of life is sacred and therefore secular and religious, body and soul, city and church, carry sparks of the divine within them. It is with this assumption that I maintain the sacredness of spaces and people alike. And working with this as premise, it will seriously challenge the way in which we include or exclude anyone from planning processes, planning and outcomes, and spatial arrangements. It will challenge the ways in which we think about space and its use/ful(l)ness.

When the Hebrew Bible speaks of humanity in the image of God, it seeks to give expression to the beauty, potential and sacredness of human life. The image of God is a metaphor that expresses the best qualities of female and male, speaking of creativity, sustenance, compassion, passion, beauty, nurture, care... It seeks to affirm the need of all humans for these qualities, and the potential of all humans to carry and offer these qualities.

Applied to the city and urban space, it suggests a journey that will discover and integrate the best of so-called “masculine” and “feminine” planning, to combine “hard” and “soft” issues, software and hardware, in planning and development processes, to feminise the city where it has lost its nurturing qualities, and, to even

go beyond that in order to build truly integrated cities and spaces, that will carry within them signs of the imago Dei, of the beauty and image of God (cf. De Beer 1998:343-344).

10.6 A TRANS- (AND POST-) DISCIPLINARY Approach | Personal and anecdotal:

Increasingly I find it difficult to locate myself narrowly in terms of professional or disciplinary identity. I will explore the idea of the labyrinth more in chapter 2, which will help explain my lostness. And yet, in this labyrinth of paradox in which I find myself, I also truly find myself and my identity again, precisely in the paradox, both professionally and also personally.

Initially I travelled as a theologian with a desire to be a pastor of people living on the streets. Later on I found myself comfortable with being defined even more specifically as a theologian of a certain school, namely a contextual theologian or a liberation theologian, practising an option for the poor.

Then I became comfortable with seeing myself as a social activist, resisting the forced removals of informal houses from Marabastad, or the sequestration of first-time home owners, not properly advised by estate agents, property managers, or commercial banks.

And yet, in the process of activism I also sought to embody some of what I imagined and spoke about. In co-founding and developing a social housing company and a series of other initiatives, the label of being a social entrepreneur was attached to me. So I could see myself on some days and in some meetings as a practical theologian guiding pastoral workers to discern faith actions appropriate to their respective contexts. On other days I could see myself as a housing practitioner considering housing plans and housing finance. And then there are days when I could consider myself primarily an educator or academic, supervising postgraduate students, or publishing scholarly articles.

None of the self-understandings mentioned above are mutually exclusive. In fact, they represent rich and overlapping layers informing, correcting and deepening each other. All of these postures or

Fig. 24. Clarke, 1970 - 1973, Two children in the Cape Location, Marabastad.



labels expressed themselves in intensive engagement with the urban reality. How do we create access to vulnerable urban people? How do we create social infrastructure? How do we create decent, affordable spaces to live in, or friendly and hospitable spaces for social exchange?

In a very real way the movement to which I belong(ed) was and still is about "creating space" in the city, whether it is the space to listen, a safe space to reveal one's HIV-status, a space to cry or laugh or express myself, a space in which I can live and raise my family, the space to participate equally with others in spite of my status or language or colour, a space for play and prayer, for resistance and celebration.

All of these engagements that sought to "make space" happened in the transitional urban reality of the inner city. It has physical, social, political, economic, cultural, recreational, creative, emotional, educational and spiritual dimensions. And yet, I have never qualified myself academically to work in the built environment, even though I have found myself immersed in housing and related activities for many years now.

So what am I? Urban practitioner, urbanist, place-maker, city-builder, community organiser, housing advocate, 'thorn-in-the-flesh', and urban theologian all come to mind as different embodiments of what the city invites me to be(come). On many Sundays, for ten years, I preached in a local inner city church, trying to relate issues of faith to the city that we live in, and trying to mobilise resources of faith for city transformation.

By now the labyrinthine dilemma, paradox or adventure might be clear to you. This small interruption was included, partly to help me locate myself, but also to try explain the nature of this study, suggesting the debunking of narrow professional or disciplinary categories to allow new ways of knowledge to transform us, our professional self-understandings, and our ways of engaging with and making cities.

This study seeks to create dialogue between social and natural science, between religion and urban planning. In narrative theology many today are using the term “practical wisdom” or “local wisdom” (cf. Müller 2000), referring to the emergence of contextual knowledge / praxis, that are always very local, concrete, and specific, and often growing from inter- and in this case also transdisciplinary dialogue.

A contextual approach to science suggests a circular and interactive process between theory and practice, and learning or knowledge becomes praxis-based, which means an integration of theory-practice (or allowing for the emergence of local, practical wisdom). A contextual approach invites non-academic and experiential knowledge into dialogue with academic knowledge, acknowledging the validity of knowledge gained through experience. This study deliberately argues for a subversion of hierarchical epistemological constructs in favour of circular and communal discoveries and journeys.

I concur with what Jessop and Sum (2001:89) speak of as a post-disciplinary approach, rejecting “the discursive and organisational construction (and worse of, fetishisation) of disciplinary boundaries”. In such an approach, says Sayer (1999:5), “scholars forget about disciplines and whether ideas can be identified with any particular one; they identify with learning

rather than with disciplines”.

The emphasis is on a new kind of knowledge generation that occurs in contexts with an emphasis on transforming knowledge and with learning that is transformative. It is not, as Buscher and Cruickshank (2009:2) assert, “built on a wholesale dismantling of boundaries”. Writing from the perspective of design and digital technologies, they suggest that a post-disciplinary approach is rather about “actively negotiating and forging new boundaries between designers, users, and other experts rather than simply abandoning boundaries or working ‘across’ boundaries” (Buscher and Cruickshank 2009:2).

Jessop and Sum (2001:89) speak of “the gradual decomposition and/or continuing crisis of orthodox disciplines and... the rise of new transdisciplinary fields of study and a commitment to post-disciplinarity”. Whereas disciplines “separate what needs to be understood as a whole... “(p)ost-disciplinarity fosters study and intervention as a holistic endeavour” (Buscher and Cruickshank 2009:2).

I have become increasingly uncomfortable with the narrow, and often unhelpful – even forced – boundaries of disciplinary constructions and felt drawn to a trans- and post-disciplinary approach, from a theological or faith perspective. Klein and colleagues (2001:4) describes transdisciplinarity as “different academic disciplines

working jointly with practitioners to solve a real-world problem”. The emphasis is not on a particular discipline but on a specific “real-world problem” and the collective search to generate transforming knowledge in order to address and even overcome the problem.

Such an approach corresponds with Edgar Pieterse’s vision of decolonised knowledge production in urban Africa, an articulation of emerging and diverse urban knowledges in the global South, known as “southern urbanisms” (Pieterse 2004), and his argument for the co-production of knowledge at both local and global levels (Pieterse 2014). We are seeking to embody this approach in an Urban Studio (cf. Part II: chapter 9), “a ‘city level studio’ in which practitioners, citizens and city officials could ‘work with academic researchers to jointly decipher the most urgent questions that require sustained attention” (Pieterse 2014:20; cf. also Evans & Marvin 2008; Robinson 2008; De Beer & Smith 2017).

A trans- and post-disciplinary approach to the generation of knowledge is consistent with broader epistemological shifts that are differently described as post-modernism and now also post-post-modernism, post-structuralism, and post-foundationalism (cf. Van Huyssteen 1997, 1999; Müller 2011). It moves beyond a foundationalism that longs for universal truths that are a-contextual, and practices

a transversal rationality (cf. Van Huyssteen 2006:19; Harrison 2006:331-332).

10.7 THE “POOR” / “THE OTHER”

This study is not objectively unbiased. It deliberately seeks to consider the city from below, allowing the realities of the poor or the “other” to serve as mirror for how we measure the success of the city. The problem with labelling certain groups of people is exactly that: once labelled it tends to create distance, walls and a depletion of possible agency, psychologically speaking. I therefore struggle to find terms that will not be viewed as derogatory, condescending or patronising.

When I refer in this study to the “poor”, “vulnerable”, “marginal”, or “excluded” at different times and in different ways, it is by no means meant to perpetuate their exclusion but rather an acknowledgement of the way in which many urban dwellers are dehumanised in a multitude of ways. When speaking of “the poor” or “the other” in this text, I do not only refer to what is often called the “poorest of the poor”, in whichever way one defines that. I use it in a much broader sense to include people who are economically and / or socially marginal, excluded, at-risk and particularly vulnerable (also including the “poorest of the poor”). Sometimes in the text I refer to this group also as the “other”, those who are considered

“The term ‘postdisciplinarity’ evokes an intellectual universe in which we inhabit the ruins of outmoded disciplinary structures, mediating between our nostalgia for this lost unity and our excitement at the intellectual freedom its demise can offer us.”

Julie A Buckler (2004:2)

to be different, not belonging to “us” or to “our group”.

When I use these terms in my context, it could include people who are homeless and unemployed, refugees, children, women, the aged, people with disabilities, substance abusers, ex-prisoners, low-income workers, the LGBTQI community, people living with chronic mental illness, and so forth.

Postmodern theory demonstrates a similar shift from the dominant white male view to a view that embraces and centralises “the other” (Oranje 1997:213), particularly “the other” as embodied by marginal or voiceless groups in society. Postmodern theory gives attention to issues affecting women and children, and human rights foci in various disciplines. It also celebrates diversity, a politics of empowerment, communitarianism and “hyper democracy”, and new and emerging local social movements.

The centrality of “the other” also found its way into planning practice, with a sensitivity against white males dominating the planning profession, a new focus on the environment, encouraged also by the Local Agenda 21 movement, local culture finding its way into planning, and emphasis being placed on process and participation (Oranje 1997:215). In this study “the poor”, “the other”, will be the central position from which urban discourses, plans, policies and practices will be assessed.

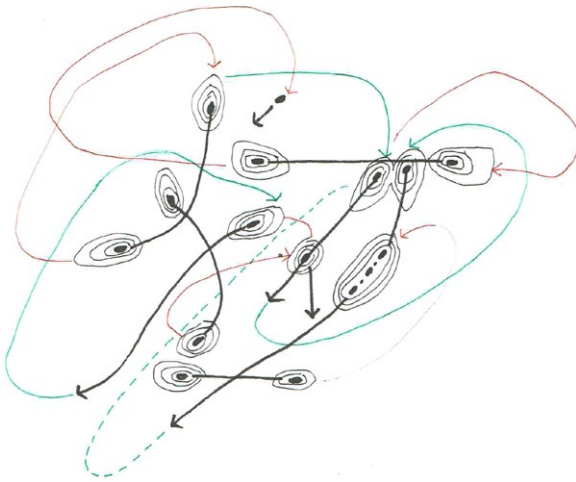


Fig. 25. Nel, 2017. Journey.

11. JOIN IN ON THE JOURNEY...

A journey like this is a very personal one, marking the end, perhaps, of one phase of life and consolidating one's position at that time. It offered me the opportunity to reflect critically on a personal and collective journey of more than 20 years in the inner city of Tshwane, in the light of different engagements, narratives, experiences, and texts. Hopefully it could also make a small contribution to the theoretical and practical reflections of others who are engaged in and with changing and/or vulnerable communities, as residents, activists, planners or practitioners.

In the ever-growing, ever-changing cities of South Africa and the global South, my hope is that this could be a small contribution to rethink exclusivist urban (spatial) planning practices and processes: from hierarchical external interventions to a bold acknowledgement, affirmation, and invitation of diverse local knowledges creatively at work to shape communities from below and from within.

138 It would like to raise a foundational question: Do we have a contextual urban praxis, locally appropriate to serve the goals of democratised, decolonised, de-racialised, and radically inclusive cities (cf. Oranje 1997:287-288), or can we be the ones to not only insist for such a praxis but to innovate our own praxes in order to be both appropriate and aligned to bigger transformational goals?

My further hope would be that any reader of this study would consider the values driving their own, and dominant, planning and city-building processes: Whose interests are served? Is the soul of the city fostered, or depleted of its “soulfulness”? If a nagging disconnect / desire can be elicited with urban practitioners to interrogate the ways in which our own values, biases and prejudices shape how we see, read and engage the city, and then to consider re-imagining ourselves and our urban praxis in the light of being “known”, this would be a worthwhile journey.

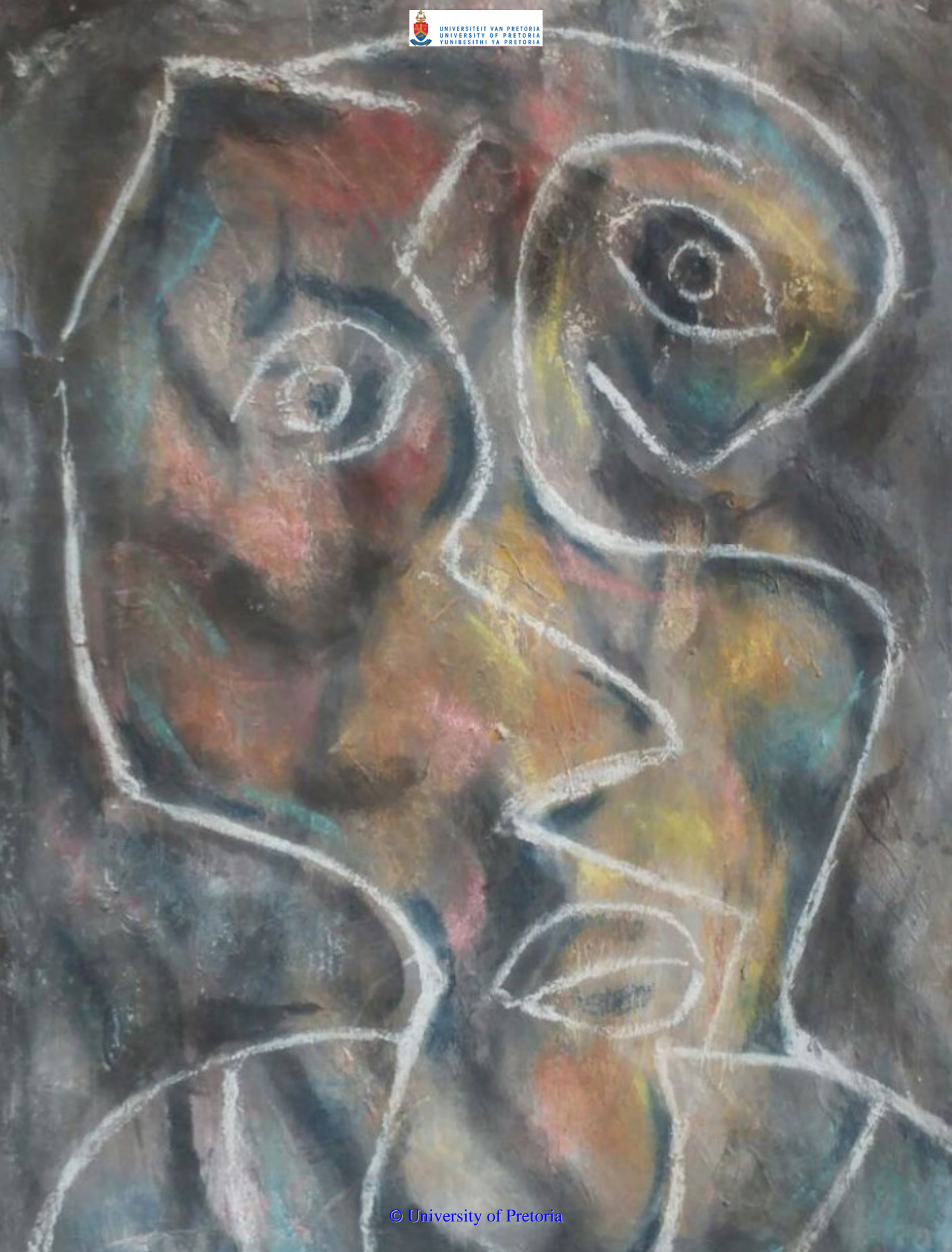
At most, my hope would be that some would embark on a journey of considering the possible content, practices and disciplines of a spirituality and ethic of urban space. How will our urban engagements, how will we ourselves, have to be transformed if they / we are to mediate people-centered, compassionate, humane, just and sustainable cities? How could our own urban engagements, and the urban communities in which we take responsibility, be humanised and dignified, to honour every individual and all of creation, as sacred gifts to all of us?

39 |

Not only should this be considered at philosophical level but hopefully be concretised into strategic and practical actions flowing from a community-based – and value-driven – urban praxis: precipitated by deep personal and / or institutional transformations.

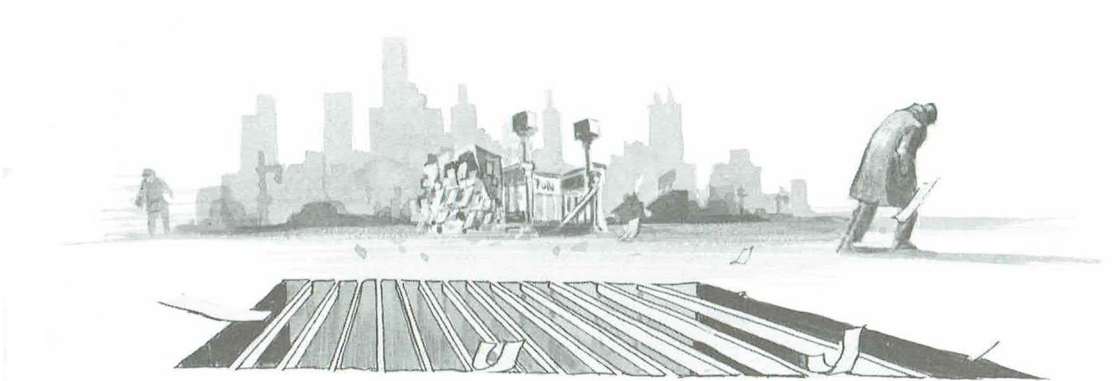
Fig. 26. Nel, 2017. Children





PART I

Epistemology - Identity - Methodology



...the (hi)stories we tell of cities are (hi)stories of ourselves.

Jane Rendell (2000:130)

Chapter 01

TO KNOW AS WE ARE KNOWN

Towards a contextual-narrative planning epistemology

This chapter raises questions with regard to planning epistemology: “Who knows?”, “How do we know?”, and “How do we gain knowledge?” Does the knowledge of planners give them power over communities, or does it equip them to empower communities? Is the local knowledge of communities ever integrated into the body of planning knowledge? What are the sources of our knowledge? How do planners understand the knowledge or perceived knowledge they have? A close relationship between self-knowledge and other-knowledge is suggested: it is only as we are known that we can know.

Jane Rendell (in Borden & Rendell 2000:130) writes about this, suggesting that “(K)nowing the city invites and evokes a need to know the self, the one who seeks knowledge”.

In a book by the Afrikaans folk singer, Koos Kombuis (2015:7-9; 172), he writes about getting lost in what could only be the Burgers Park neighbourhood. He is looking for his mother living in an apartment close to the railway station. His description is revealing the fact that he does not know the neighbourhood; he feels himself a stranger; and, based only on a very quick and superficial observation, probably fuelled by his own

discomfort of the area (“I simply do not feel safe anymore”, p.8), he makes sweeping value judgments. He speaks of garbage, overpopulation and signs of poverty taking root everywhere; until he gives up on finding his mother and leaves. The story he tells of Burgers Park probably says more about him than providing an insightful perspective on the nature of this neighbourhood.

I found it hard to look at my neighbourhood through his eyes. I simply do not view my neighbourhood in pathological terms only. I probably felt a sense of disappointment: here was an alternative (prophetic even) white Afrikaner

Fig. 27. (previous) Taylor, 2014. Give me a break I am trying to find myself.

Fig. 28. (left) Eisner, 1986. Sad streets.

voice, speaking of my neighbourhood in a way not dissimilar to the average white or middle-class suburban discourse. Both his response to what he encountered, and my own response of disappointment, tell something of our own unfolding (hi)stories.

There is a dialectical relation between self-knowledge and other-knowledge. Rendell locates this within a feminist perspective in which the personal is an important epistemological vantage point: “Who I am makes a difference to what I know, conversely what I know makes a difference to who I am”.

The epistemological question is explored and a specific approach, dealing with a number of issues, is proposed:

- the challenge to embrace “paradox” and “chaos” as urban facts and “journeying” as a way of being planners
- the shifts from modernist planning approaches, with an emphasis on reason and progress, and the pretence of being value-free and a-political, to a postmodern deconstruction of these myths, exploring the close connection between perceived knowledge and power, and suggesting that so-called “neutral planning” was simply a façade hiding very clear political objectives and outcomes, in our context both the colonial and apartheid city projects

- the contrasts between a modernist captivity to grand narratives and universal truths with a new way of being and knowing, journeying with local communities, affirming local knowledges, and constructing local stories with local people

In addition, this study is deliberately positioning itself in relation to that which Edgar Pieterse (2004:1) and others speak of as emerging “southern urbanisms”, acknowledging the urgency of embracing an epistemological shift that will be true to unique urban forms emerging in the global south. Pieterse (2004:1) prompts us to ask very specific epistemological questions:

“How best can meaningful knowledge about the city be produced? What should we produce knowledge for? And what do these questions mean for the politics of knowledge production in the global South?”

This chapter, in response to the challenge of Pieterse and others, leads to the proposal of a contextual-narrative approach to planning and city-making, combining a contextual commitment and immersion, with a critical reading of local narratives, and the imagination and co-construction of hopeful future narratives, discerned from below and from within communities.



Fig. 29. Wessels, 2015. A child plays in a corridor of a hospital turned into a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.
Fig. 30. Wessels, 2015. Three men share a room with seven others in a hospital turned into a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.



1. JOURNEYING BETWEEN THE PARADOXES

In the novel by Phaswane Mpe (2001:60), *Welcome to our Hillbrow*, he describes the paradoxical struggles of urban life in which pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity meet; where Hillbrow and Tiragalong both compete for his soul; where he gets torn between the seduction of death and dreams of life; where the constructs of modern progress and pre-modern bewitching both interpret him, without even asking him who he thinks he is.

45 |

And so when you finally come to this part of your journey to embrace the seduction of suicide the spinning of cars the prostitution drug use and misuse the grime and crime the numerous bottles diving from flat balconies giving off sparks of red and yellow from mid-air reflections of street and flat neon lights to crush on unfortunate soul's skulls... Bohlale and the Hillbrow child dying as they hit the concrete pavements of Johannesburg Refilwe rewriting the version of your living and dying Tiragalong condemning both you and the Bone of your Heart the scarecrow woman of your fiction stifled by repressive forces of democratisation and Hillbrow and Tiragalong flowing into each other in your consciousness.

Urban communities today are defined by diversity rather than similarity; by ambiguity rather than certainty. Struggling and / or transitional urban communities in particular, offer an invitation into a journey of chaos and adventure, where embracing paradox is essential for meaningful, creative and hopeful encounter.

Yet, there are many who choose to sidestep paradox: professionally through non-participatory processes and exclusionary policies; spatially through gated communities and subtle or less subtle segregated neighbourhoods; personally through individual choices of who to work with, whose issues to represent, and in which community to make their personal home. These choices almost all carry within them deeply political and spiritual significance, although planners would still like to portray an image of non-political, value-free neutrality.

The choices planners make identify on which side of power they work, and to which communities they belong. In almost all cases, planners belong to upper middle class communities and work on behalf of the status quo, on behalf of those who pay their salaries, yet they plan “as if” they have the interests at heart of those of whom they know very little.

Modernistic planning, shaped mostly by North American and European planning constructs, with a high regard for so-called

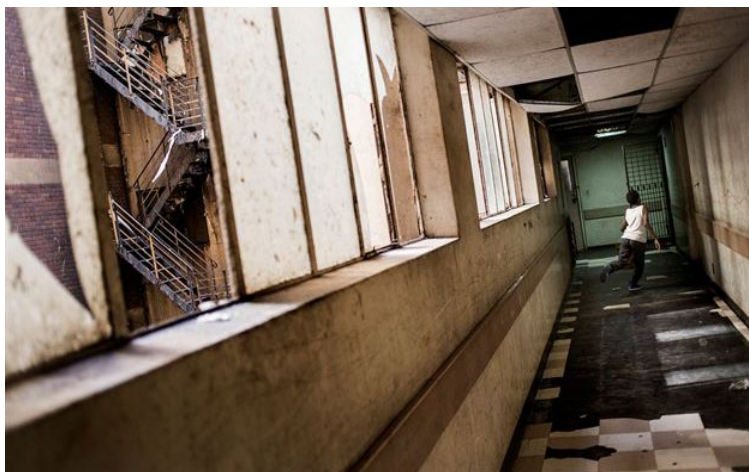


Fig. 31. Wessels, 2015. A child runs down a corridor of a hospital turned into a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg.

experts and professionals, tends to prefer working within rigid certainties rather than carving out meaning from within the chaotic paradox today’s cities represent. Often such planning seek to capture the city in the narrow categories of how they “see” or “know” the city, regardless of whether their views or knowledge have validity for anyone else, or indeed, for the communities who are on the receiving end of their planning decisions. They work with universal truths and general principles, with little concern for local knowledges or contextual details which might offer new, creative and even redemptive resources for the city-building process.

Even though academic theory has shifted to embrace and incorporate postmodern (cf. Leitch 1996:133; Oranje 1997: 210-211), and even post-post-modern thought (Boomkens 1998:33-34), and with that a new appreciation for multiple knowledges, for diversity, and for the relative nature of our perceived knowledge or truths,

the praxis of planning, when interfacing with power, resources, and local people, often falls back into the rigidities of the past. The same modernistic epistemologies and analytical tools are applied to contemporary contexts that are vastly different and differing.

The character in Etienne Van Heerden's (1993:184-185) novel, who happens to be the local politician, says it like this:

Daar is geen verband tussen ons holle retoriek en dit wat met ons - binne en buite ons gemoedere - aan die gebeur is nie. Komiteewerk soos hierdie, openbare posisies, stadspolitiek en siviele diens is alles rituele wat ontwyk, wat konstruksies skep waarin die deelnemers hulleself besku(i)t. Die werklikheid is vormloos, is vuil en stink, en ondefinieerbaar.

Translated it sounds like this:

There is no connection between our shallow rhetoric and that which happens to us - within and outside our emotions. Committee work such as this, public positions, city politics and civil service, are all rituals that evade, that create constructions in which the participants hide (shit) themselves. The reality is shapeless, is dirty and smelly, and undefinable.

Bureaucratic planning is often more comfortable with constructing safe (hyper/virtual/sur)-realities for themselves, than being exposed to an ambiguous city in which the reality is not as defined and clear. It would already help if planners could at least acknowledge these paradoxes and work more intentionally, creatively and self-critically with and within them.

Pile and Thrift (2000:303) speak of the project that was captured in their book, *Cities A-Z*, saying that this project was not interested to "know" the city, since "cities continually unsettle and disturb any claim to 'know' what is exactly going on". Rather, they sought to explore the "tensions involved in knowing cities - the different knowledges and objects of knowledge that are possible." Pile and Thrift (2000:303) speak of the city "as a patchwork of intersecting fields, as a discordant symphony of overlapping fragments".

It is in the paradox of different and sometimes seemingly opposing knowledges that we start to engage the city as it is. It is in the city exposing our own knowledge or lack of it, our biases and assumptions, indeed in the gaining of self-knowledge that we start to see the city with new eyes, no longer to control but to serve, no longer to capture, but to journey alongside.

We have to find ways to engage and embrace paradox, to position and find ourselves within it, to carve out meaning and a future imagination within the multiplicity of readings / knowledges that meet us in the city. It is an approach to journeying within the city "that allows for reciprocity between discourses which may well be at odds with one another" (Barac 2013:42).

I deliberately use the term "journeying" (De Beer & De Beer 2002: 261-262) as it suggests

“not-knowing” as a departure point: open to surprise, with others, sometimes even arriving at places not known before (cf. Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001; Boyd 1996:220; De Beer & De Beer 2002:277). At another level journeying suggests the possibility of never arriving completely, but always being “on a journey” towards the “new city”. Not only do we have to engage paradox in

the “new city”, but we also need to embrace “journeying” as a way of being with communities, in the process of discovering alternative stories, and co-constructing hopeful futures (cf. De Beer & De Beer 2002; Oranje 1997:27). It is an approach that allows an openness for “emergent urbanisms” (Makeka 2013:446), not yet seen or articulated.

2. SHIFTING PARADIGMS

The shifts taking place in science over the last decades were liberating. They took us from our captivity to reason and progress, to a new fascination and appreciation for imagination, fantasy, stories, intuition, faith, magic, and other aspects of life that were previously denoted as less than science, and worse even, irrational. Yet, these deeply human phenomena are what often distinguish good cities from mediocre cities. We would do well to retrieve these into newer planning praxes. There is a certain playfulness that is lost, that needs to be recovered if we are to build cities for people.

2.1 MODERNISM

The era of modernism has its roots in enlightenment, with the emphasis on reason, rational science and technological progress. Experience, intuition and story, were often dismissed in this era as non-scientific and therefore not valid in the process of research or theory development.

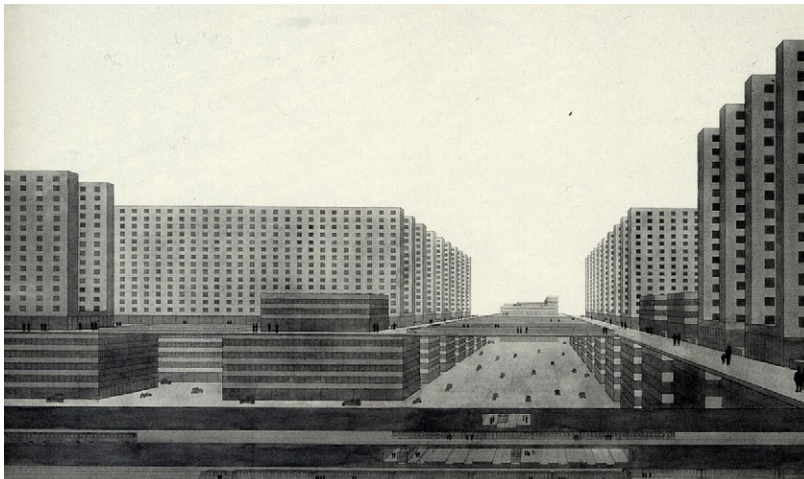


Fig. 32. Hilberseimer, 1924-1929. Vertical City.

Modernism also gave birth to the so-called grand narratives (Boomkens 1998:32): the universal myths, religious systems, or all-encompassing explanations of the world and humanity. These systems or ideologies determined very rationally and “scientifically” how life should be lived, and facilitated the so-called emancipation of human beings.

One example is the grand narrative of “the market” that is still pervasive in popular urban development discourse. It actually affects local neighbourhoods around the world, often in deeply disconnecting and excluding ways. In reaction was the counter-narrative of the revolution, in which oppressed people everywhere find solidarity with each other and march towards a new society. Economic and development theories have, for a long time, been influenced by these discourses.

In planning circles the modernist era often led to an erasure of whatever came before, on the premise that the rationality of modernism offered universal and eternal solutions. Moses in New York City and Hausmann in Berlin created city plans “so as to achieve a radically new departure point that could be a true present” (Berman 1989:331). These grand solutions often disregarded local histories, feelings and aspirations.

In development theory the period after World War II is known as the modernisation-period in which

there was a growing concern about the development of the so-called Third World. This concern was another result of modernism, based on western progress-thinking, reliant on the technological advances of the West, and assuming the absorption of western values and life-style. It equated development with economic growth and suggested that economic growth will automatically trickle-down to the poorest sections of communities (cf. De Beer 1998:132; Treurnicht 1997:18-21).

Development is therefore equated with a universal process of modernisation where western values, production systems, technology and consumption patterns have been simulated by poor countries in an attempt to modernise their societies along capitalist lines (Treurnicht 1997:18; cf. Fair 1982:5)

Especially since the 1970’s there has been a strong reaction against “developmentalism” with its base in such “growth-orientated modernisation and progress-thinking” (De Beer 1998:132). It overwhelmingly contributed to the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. The debt crisis of African and other southern countries is one of the symptoms of this era. Very often it was “nothing more than new and underhanded ways of increasing the power of strong economic groups” (Gutierrez 1988:17).

In the hands of powerful people development became a tool of marginalisation and disempowerment (Swanepoel & De Beer 1997: xi)



Fig. 33. Miller, 2012. Michenzani, Zanzibar.
Fig. 34. 1970s Modernisation of Michenzani, Zanzibar.



150

Growth theories have often proved to fail the poorest sectors of the community and the so-called “trickle-down effect” is now regarded by many as a myth (cf. Wallis 1994:144-145), yet still uncritically advocated in local urban planning processes and programmes without regard for proof to the contrary.

Since the 1970s there has been a growing movement of people advocating alternative development

strategies. In Latin America liberation theologies developed largely in response to the failure of “developmentalism” to break the captivity of the poor and oppressed. These theologies represented a strong critique of modernisation and developmentalism, and mobilised local communities of resistance that often developed creative local alternatives. On the other hand it could be argued that these theologies of liberation sometimes became servants of a new grand

narrative, imagining a political utopia that did not consider the multiple publics in which it operated and the possibility of new oppressions developing as soon as the first oppressor has been overcome.

2.2 POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism constituted a break with the grand narratives of modernity (Boomkens 1998: 32; Lyotard 1984; Spocster 2004). Some of the features of the postmodern paradigm include its refusal to totalise narratives; its rejection of reason as foundational or universal; the importance of critical analysis of the usage of language; a sensitivity to racial, gender and class differences; an articulation of the margins; its acknowledgement of the connection between knowledge, interest and power; its criticism of modernism and enlightenment “as discursive constructions and sites of struggle” (Leitch 1996:133); its openness to a multiplicity of interpretations and discourses; a distrust of so-called experts; and a reduction in boundaries between different academic disciplines (Leitch 1996:133; Oranje 1997: 210-211). It would be a mistake though, to regard postmodernity as the complete opposite, or indeed the end, of modernity (cf. Oranje 2002:173). Oranje suggests that we should rather understand it as a continuation or radicalisation of some modernist ideals, or even a wake-up call for modernity.

Postmodernism is in one sense therefore, a reaction against the negative results of science and reason. Sandercock (2003) writes about modernist planning’s affirmation of homogeneity, for example, in a world that is increasingly diverse. In architecture (Turner 1996:7) postmodern thought has led to a new affirmation of plurality, diversity and multivalency. It seeks to understand phenomena “in their uniqueness, the uniqueness redefining cultural discourse and allowing different realities to exist in urban space” (Harvey 1992). And Allmendinger (2011) explores what shape planning paradigms, planning theories and planning practices might, or should, take in postmodern times.

Postmodernist theorists such as Lyotard (1984) and Foucault (1975) argue for a deconstruction of grand narratives and suggest that we rather move towards embracing a plurality of overlapping smaller or local narratives. Foucault, for example, is pleading for the efficacy of *more widely distributed but specific and local critiques on current practices of social and political use of power* (Boomkens 1998:33), as a way of deconstructing dominant discourses. He does not suggest this as an alternative to global solidarity and connectedness. He does suggest, though, a global connectedness that should take new forms, celebrating and rising out of local rootedness.

And yet, as the next section also indicates, postmodernism comes

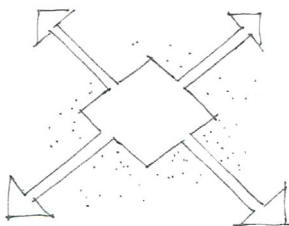


Fig. 35. Nel, 2017. Tabula Rasa

with its own weaknesses, its own shadow side. Oranje (1997:280) cautions against “*the Beastly* sides of postmodernism, its nihilism and endless relativism”. He calls for a faith that can counter the shadow sides of postmodernism, in order to truly embrace all human beings and “non-human life forms who share this Earth with us”.

2.3 POST-POSTMODERNISM

Boomkens (1998:33) speaks of the failure of the grand narratives and how postmodernism was able to identify these failures. However, he questions whether postmodernism can explain the failures of the past and correct them. He suggests that postmodernism fails to offer much of its own, except for a critique and analysis of modernism. In that sense it is a product of modernism, a parasite of the modernist crisis, instead of presenting something authentically new. It is diagnostic but not necessarily transformational. Likewise, Allmendinger (2001:25-26) expressed a suspicion towards postmodernism’s critique of totality, as what postmodern theorists themselves offer, are very much, once again, new meta-narratives.

Boomkens (1998:34) also cautions against the possibility of postmodern theory becoming a new grand narrative, just falling into the trap of that which it is advocating against. In this regard the work of Tom Turner (1996) is then introduced who speaks of post-post-modern life in architecture, urban

design, and other disciplines. Whereas modernism worked with “one way, one truth, one city”, and postmodernism almost suggests that “anything goes”, Turner’s post-post-modernism tries to move beyond both these approaches.

Turner (1996:9) suggests that postmodern planning was “anti-planning”: “When the hoped-for urban paradise turned into a hated ‘concrete jungle’... planners lost heart. Post-postmodernist planning is a sign of returning self-confidence”.

Turner (1996:9) also introduces the notion of faith as an element that tempers reason, and suggests an integration of reason and faith that will help facilitate a more holistic planning praxis.

They are strongest in those who place their hands on their hearts and are willing to assert “I believe”; faith always was the strongest competitor for reason; faith in a God; faith in tradition; faith in an institution; faith in a person; faith in a nation. The built environment professionals are witnessing the gradual dawn of a post-post-modernism that seeks to temper reason with faith.

In many poor urban communities faith and religion are basic life resources that serve not only to provide personal meaning and sustenance in desperate circumstances, but often also become resources for local community transformation. Postmodernism often questions the basic tenets



Fig. 36. Nel, 2017. Venturi’s Mother’s House

“Turner’s post-postmodernism wants to combine the critique of postmodernism, but move beyond that to a more integrative discipline” (Turner 1996:9).

of faith communities. When these tenets constitute a suffering people's only hope – the magic of resurrection, its hope of new beginnings – destroying such can deprive people and communities of the one resource that could transform their existence. They who are poor cannot afford the

luxury of questioning away their only hope. From this perspective, postmodernism could also be viewed as an elitist luxury that cannot be afforded by the poor.

Turner's post-postmodernism wants to combine the critique of postmodernism, but move beyond that to a more integrative discipline (Turner 1996:9)

3. KNOWING TOGETHER...

Epistemology is the question of gaining knowledge. What do I know? How do I know that I know? How do I gain my knowledge? Is it real knowledge? Who knows? What rights does my knowledge give me as a planner? What is valid knowledge? What is the relationship between knowledge and power? Whose knowledge is valid or valuable in the planning process? (cf. Sandercock 2003:60).

I tried to summarise it for myself elsewhere, by asking: Whose knowledges shape the city? (De Beer 2014).

3.1 FROM EXPERT-DRIVEN TO COLLECTIVE JOURNEYS (John Short)

non-expert division Short (1989: 69) advocates radical participation.

In a modernist era, scientific knowledge was limited to that which could be rationally argued. The experiential or emotive were seen as a-scientific and therefore not valid sources in attaining knowledge. Knowledge about cities and how they should be planned was the monopoly of experts, often at the expense of people in communities.

There are many people in the city whose voices are rarely heard. They live in a city of other people's making. In a city like Cape Town there is growing discontent with the reality of urban life, at least for the majority of black Capetonians, determined by others – former colonisers or neo-colonisers – perpetually estranging black migrants entering the city. The unheard voices and the pain of the excluded need to be incorporated in the task of urban reflection, deconstruction and re-imagination.

Short (1989:53) argues that “(o)ur cities are too important to be left to the `experts’”. He (1989:51) suggests that “(t)he development of the expert is a function of the creation of the non-expert”. Instead of such an expert /

We need to feminise the city, unmasking patriarchal and hierarchical city-making processes



Fig. 37. Miller, 2016. *Unequal Scenes*: The extreme divide between rich and poor in South Africa.

and products; we need to encourage the engagement of the young and the old; we need cities which reflect the needs and preferences of all citizens. If not, we impoverish our cities and our society. We banish some to the margins at the expense of the few. The real wealth of a city lies in the collective and individual creativity of all its citizens.

It is in the collective journeying of all the citizens, that we can engage urban challenges creatively and inclusively. Short seems to suggest that knowledge lies in the collective journey. The language of planning “and the community of users cannot be separated” (Oranje 1997:22; cf. also Rorty 1982:xviii-xix, 174; Hall 1994:18,130). Knowledge is shaped communally.

Yet, this is not the kind of knowledge that most experts /

professionals are about. Theirs is often a monopolised knowledge keeping the planning and design of cities and neighbourhoods away from people, thereby creating power hierarchies and retaining professional securities. This is the opposite of a liberating planning praxis that will revel in the creative participation of all citizens, bringing to the table their own imaginations, insights and intuitive knowledges (cf. Van Herzele 2004).

Van Herzele (2004:197) speaks of the role of non-professionals in the urban process: “...the role of non-professional forms of knowledge and understanding also becomes an important issue. Contemporary practices tend to be more open to a wider variety of inputs than more traditional forms of professional expertise”.

3.2 KNOWING AS LOVING (Parker Palmer)

The Quaker sociologist, teacher and writer, Parker Palmer (1983:2) writes about knowledge in a way that roots it ethically, and challenges the way we have obtained, understood or practiced knowledge. Many people who obtained so-called good educations, have been schooled in a way of knowing that treats the world as an object to be dissected and manipulated; a way of knowing that gives us power over the world.

Such ways of knowing often breeds a kind of arrogance that seeks to manipulate the world into our image. We use our knowledge to re-arrange the world and to satisfy our drive for power, distorting and deranging life rather than loving it for the gift it is.

This is the kind of “knowledge” that Pile and Thrift (2000) challenge in their reading of the city. Instead of treating the city as “object” to be “dissected”, they recognise that we too, in the process of engaging the city, are to be exposed, dissected and known by the very city we investigate.

Palmer (1983:7) places knowledge within a moral or ethical framework.

But I have come to see that knowledge contains its own morality, that it begins not in neutrality but in a place of passion within the human soul. Depending on the nature of that passion, our knowledge will follow certain course and head toward certain ends.

Palmer (1983:7) suggests two primary historic sources of knowledge, namely curiosity and control, both being amoral in their “need to know that allows no guidance beyond the need itself” (curiosity) and its tendency to abuse power, to manipulate and to be corrupted (control). Palmer (1983:8) suggests another kind of knowledge that

is available to us, one that begins in a different passion and is drawn toward other ends.

This is a knowledge that originates not in curiosity or control but in compassion, or love - a source celebrated not in our intellectual tradition but in our spiritual heritage.

The goal of knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds. A knowledge born of compassion aims not at exploiting and manipulating creation but at reconciling the world to itself. The mind motivated by compassion reaches out to know as the heart reaches out to love. Here, the act of knowing is an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own. In such knowing we know and are known as members of one community, and our knowing becomes a way of reweaving that community's bonds.

A number of themes arise for me from Palmer’s thought. He roots the process of knowing morally. In *To Know as We are Known*, Palmer (1983: 16) writes: “A knowledge that heals and makes whole will come as we look creation in the eyes and allow it to look back, not only searching nature but also allowing nature to search us as well”.

Is there not much the city wants to tell us: of our exploitation of its resources; of the ways in which our prejudice has limited some to live in parts of the city where we would never live ourselves; and many have been excluded from parts of the city because they were disabled or women or black? What will our city tell us about past practices of planning, and how would that implicate the planner, and me as practitioner / citizen / researcher? Palmer (1983:16) suggests that moral or ethical knowledge will find its source in compassionate love, will create a community of knowing, will “make itself vulnerable to be known as well, and in such a process of mutuality will emerge a knowledge that can facilitate healing and wholeness”.

Is that not the kind of knowledge that we want to obtain in planning - that will ultimately lead to the healing of broken places and healthy urban communities?

There seems to be a prerequisite, if we are to take Palmer’s thoughts seriously: it will require the willingness to journey with the city with compassion, in the literal sense of the word’s meaning, which is “to suffer with”. The kind of knowing Palmer has in mind requires of us to struggle with the city, to allow the city to struggle with us; it requires of us to struggle with others, and particularly those who experience deep forms of exclusion, in order to find a better city. It asks of us to treat all people and communities with deep respect

as fellow pilgrims with their own knowledge. And finally, it requires that we will make ourselves vulnerable to be exposed for our own lack of knowledge and prejudicial planning, and to instead form coalitions of planning and action that can share different kinds of knowledge, whilst mending that which is fractured.

The moment we place knowledge within an ethical context of love, it is possible to re-introduce other categories as well. Is it not curious that someone like Einstein could say “only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding, can lead to discovery; the daily effort comes from no deliberate intention or program, but straight from the heart” (Sandercock 2003: 61).

3.3 MUTUAL LEARNING (John Friedmann)

John Friedmann describes the polarity between experts and actors. Experts rely on their science-based professional knowledge, while actors rely on their experience of local places. Friedmann (1973) suggests that both parties are extremely and equally important and proposes what he calls a praxis of “mutual learning” (cf. also Groome 1980:135-260). This could only be facilitated by a transactional style of planning, with greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and skills, human worth and reciprocity, and the importance of dialogue or conversation.

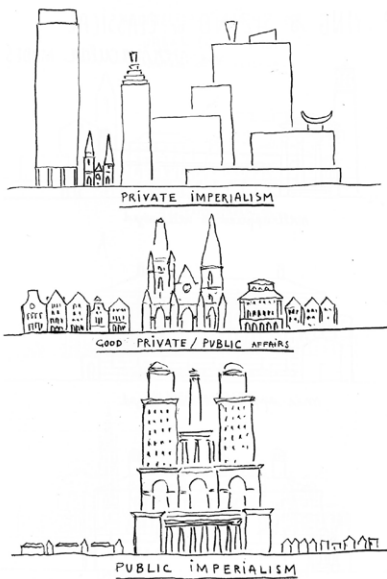


Fig. 38. Krier, Public vs Private Imperialism.

Friedmann (1987; 1993), in later texts and building on his original work, explored radical planning models that are characterised by decolonisation, democratisation, decentralisation and self-empowerment, still stressing mutual learning as part of deliberately political land innovative planning paradigms.

The shift towards transdisciplinary research (De Beer 2014; 2014a; Klein 2001), mostly advanced in the social sciences but increasingly also in theological inquiry, is characterised amongst other things by the close collaboration between so-called “experts” and “actors”. In the final chapter of this study, I will describe the Tshwane Homeless Summit that took place in 2015 as a possible embodiment of such a shift (cf. De Beer & Vally 2015).

3.4 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE (SCHÖN 1983:65)

Schön (1983: vii) contrasts the “hard knowledge of science and scholarship” with the “soft knowledge of artistry”. To integrate these he suggests the nurturing of reflective practices. Much of urban engagement is mechanistic, following the whims of the market and public and private sector discourses, with little time and attention being given for the important task of listening carefully and deeply to the impact of urban engagements on local communities and people. And then to reflect critically on urban practices in the

light of people’s expressed experiences thereof.

Contemporary urban practice requires the formation of reflective practitioners, across the spectrum of disciplines: urban planners, architects, development practitioners, urban religious workers, or urban policy-makers. There is a profound requirement for a new generation of city-makers, whether one engages the city as urban planner, architect, development practitioner, non-profit activist, urban religious worker, urban policy-maker, or local citizen. What is required is people with skills who are able to reflect critically on local urban practices, both their own and those of others. Reflective urban practitioners are people who are able to “reflect in action” and to reflect on action, as “participants in a larger societal conversation” (Schön 1983:353).

Schön regrets the loss of art and creativity in planning, as if it was ever meant to be a clinical, passion-less science. He suggests that reflective practice is one way of retrieving the resources of art and creativity, utilising these as gifts for critical reflection and re-imagination.

3.5 TALKING AND LISTENING (Forester 1987; 1989)

For Forester planning is a communicative activity, and he shifts the emphasis from mere technical analysis to “a more qualitative and interpretive mode of inquiry,

seeking to understand the unique and the contextual rather than arriving at general rules for practice” (cf. Sandercock 2003:67).

Forester and his colleagues propose a new way of knowledge or epistemology, that incorporates critical self-reflection to uncover own rationalisations and hidden biases, creating space for discourse and conversation (talking and listening) and attaining knowledge through experiential learning and practical action in the world (Innes 1995:186; in Sandercock 2003:67). This is not dissimilar to Schön’s emphasis on reflective practice. What Forester emphasises though is an emphasis on communicative activity in the process of planning.

In more recent works of Forester (2006; 2013), he emphasises the potential role of planners as *facilitative leaders*, ensuring consensus in situations of conflict or contestation, through mediation and negotiation.

This corresponds to a similar emphasis of Watson (2003) and Harrison (2006) speaking of planning as mediating and negotiating between conflicting rationalities.

Again, the potential gift of sharing between disciplines becomes clear. Planning education conventionally does not prepare planning professionals with the softer skills of communication and human engagement. Collaboration between planning and social



Fig. 39. Unshackled, by Selema, age 10.

sciences, humanities, theology and visual arts, hold great potential for unlocking diverse resources, all important in discerning different kinds of knowledge, in listening well, and in articulating visions from below.

Children’s experiences of and visions for the city can creatively be heard through the use of play, story-telling, photography and the arts.

3.6 EPISTEMOLOGY OF MULTIPLICITY (Sandercock 2003)

Arguing a similar approach, but from another angle, is the work of Leonie Sandercock. Sandercock (2003:76-79) proposes an “epistemology of multiplicity”, or the need to embrace new and multiple ways and sources of knowing. She suggests that we should be intentional in knowing through dialogue, knowing from experience, learning from local knowledge, learning to read symbolic,

non-verbal evidence, knowing through contemplation, and knowing through action learning.

Harrison (2006:331-332) speaks of it as

a transversal rationality that allows us to move across multiple positions. Border thinking or transversal rationality assumes a capacity to reconcile, or at least engage with, alternative ways of seeing and thinking, and produce new and creative fusions.

Such diverse sources of knowledge can be located, says Swilling (2013:78), in the “hundreds of thousands of initiatives... underway within slum communities around the world... slowly but surely stitching together ways of connecting slum dwellers to flows of water, energy, food, mobility

and building materials”.

I have introduced the work of very different scholars and authors here above, suggesting that there are important overlaps of insight in comparing their work. In a way, the convictions of people like Short, Schön, Friedmann and Forester, all come together in Sandercock’s vision for the planning profession.

I will now try to integrate these modes of knowing into my proposed hermeneutic or praxis cycle for planning. These shifts also demonstrate striking similarities with the contextual approach that I would like to suggest here.

4. TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL-NARRATIVE APPROACH

I suggest the development of a contextual-narrative approach to planning that will integrate a number of critical aspects into a more coherent methodology. In this section I will introduce the critical elements of the approach, and later in this chapter I will arrange these into a method known as the hermeneutical or praxis-cycle.

4.1 CONTEXTUAL

There are a number of specific features to a contextual approach. I integrate the insights from various authors in the built environment, with that of contextual theology as it was developed in response to situations of oppression (cf. De Beer 1998: 63-64). I suggest that some striking complementary features emerged, as the theologies growing from oppression responded to some of the same

praxes or patterns of knowledge and power that people like Short, Forester, Sandercock, and others, in planning circles would critique. These features are not restricted to a single discipline as they represent a specific paradigmatic shift in scientific endeavour at large.

4.1.1 Planning from below

There should be a shift from an expert-driven planning approach, doing planning “from above” or

“from outside”, to planning done with the people, by the people, and the planner being facilitator, companion, and co-author.

At the same time this represents a shift from universal and general principles to local contexts, discovering what is particular to local communities, and retrieving local knowledges in the planning process. It also represents a shift from grand narratives to specific, localised, and often “tall narratives” (cf. Boomkens 1998:36-41) that represent alternative possibilities which at the same time could have universal meaning.

4.1.2 From theory to praxis

A second shift is from the primacy of theory to the importance of praxis. It represents a shift in focus from “orthodoxy” (the right theory) to “orthopraxy” (the right praxis). What will be a valid planning praxis (the “right” praxis) in particular contexts, respecting and affirming local hi-stories, dreams, struggles and aspirations, that will facilitate appropriate design and intervention? Innovative planning praxes need to be designed in local neighbourhoods, with and for the design of such neighbourhoods.

“Praxis” is a political term denoting more than “practice”, but referring to “reflective practice”, to a “theory-practice” or “action-reflection” model (cf. Holland & Henriot 1984; Cochrane, et al 1991; Heyns & Pieterse 1990:26-40). This is in line with Schön’s

proposal for reflective practitioners who are able to “reflect in action”. In theology it is spoken of as “doing theology”; in other words, it is more than a philosophical exercise; it is the integration of reflection with committed action (De Beer 1998: 64). Therefore I have decided to call Part II of this study “Doing the city together”, suggesting city-making as an on-going, collective process of acting-reflection-imagining-discerning together.

4.1.3 A new epistemology

The approach advanced here requires new or other ways of knowing. A contextual approach embraces a way of knowing that “is a dynamic process of discovery, as people from different groups journey together”, imagining a future story for their specific context (De Beer 1998:63). In this approach dialogue, experience, participatory action, contemplation, symbols and metaphors, and multiple local knowledges are all affirmed as sources for knowing (cf. Hearn 2002; Foth, Odendaal & Hearn 2007; Eflin 2008; De Beer 2014). My personal experiences, and the collective experiences of the people, communities and organisations I have worked with over the past 20-something years, are interwoven with the knowledges and experiences of urban dwellers, practitioners, activists, artists and thinkers, in different parts of the world.

4.1.4 Commitment to and priority of the poor / the “other”

During the 1990’s in South Africa the planning focus shifted, at least theoretically, to include a focus on social justice, equity, quality of life for all people, as well as ecological and physical sustainability (cf. Oranje 1997:170). This corresponds also with Allmendinger’s (2009:148-171) emphasis on planners as advocates or equity planners.

In a contextual approach those who are normally marginalised or voiceless in the planning process, are given special consideration and are intentionally included and affirmed as valuable and important role players. This, once again, is a political and moral commitment to plan with and on behalf of those who are often side-lined: children, people with disabilities, people who are homeless, sole parents, minorities, refugees, sex workers, and others. At the same time it is a more honest way of assessing the city in which we plan: How successful is our city-building programme really? In how far does it integrate the most vulnerable citizens? Are spatial configurations representing all people, even the “little ones”?

4.1.5 From institutional captivity to people-centred cities

In a contextual approach to theology the focus shifted from the church as an institution to the

world and its challenges. The church could only truthfully exist for the sake of the world. It also implied a self-critical reflection on the institutional church itself in its relation to the world. It used the tools of social and ecclesial analysis (cf. De Beer 1998: 64).

Similarly, a contextual approach in planning would require a shift from its bureaucratic and institutional captivity to a more people-centred (human-centred) approach where roles are exchanged and the city and its people become the “experts”. The purpose of planning is not the plans or policies in themselves, but can only be assessed in terms of what such plans and policies mediate for people, places and neighbourhoods alike.

Jaime Lerner (2000:18), the former mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, says it well: “Planning must be geared to people, not to centralised bureaucratic structures. We have to decentralise, simplify decisions, funds, initiatives”.

4.1.6 Incarnation / full immersion

Incarnation is a theological term, referring to the humanity and materiality of God: God becoming flesh (“in carne”) refers to both the humanity of God but also the earthiness of God. In church language an “incarnational ministry” would mean “to be grounded in a specific context with specific challenges, needs and opportunities,

investing ourselves and working alongside its people in solidarity with them” (De Beer 1998:64). It is not just about solidarity with humanity in its brokenness, but also to the brokenness of the earth.

Not everybody might subscribe to any form of God-talk. Using it as a metaphor, however, it speaks of deep solidarity with humanity and creation, to the point of immersing oneself completely as a pilgrim in time; exchanging even one’s position of status to a position of inverted status; the king becoming servant; the expert becoming listener / learner.

This assumes, or insists on, an understanding of planning as vocation, involving passion, going beyond mere monetary self-interest (cf. Oranje 1997:171; 2014), and embracing the deep yearnings of the earth, the poor and those who are suffering, as our own yearnings.

Müller (1996:24) speaks of an eco-hermeneutic approach, emphasising that we will only understand the context if we experience the context, if we participate fully in the context, and if we make the context our home. Dewar (1977:89) stated the following: “If planning is to have any relevance at all, it must be context-related; that is, it must be informed by the fundamental realities of the situation in which it is practiced...”.

Changes to planning as a profession need to be aligned to the present context in which planning is to be practiced (cf. Oranje 1997:8). This will require both “humanising” the discipline of planning, finding new solidarities and embodiments in how it understands itself and practices planning. It will also require re-locating planning from a narrower locatedness within the built environment, to a broader embeddedness in nature and creation at large.

Planners, shaped by such shifts, will now immerse themselves in communities in new and more radical ways, not as objective and momentary participants, but as fellow pilgrims with people – being in deep solidarity. Such planners will even choose to live in the communities they plan for. This is a call for a moral, political, and even spiritual commitment.

A contextual approach rests on the moral conviction of sojourning with fellow pilgrims in deep solidarity. It is more than brief observation, survey or discussion. It is about investing ourselves to the point of being known, so that we can know in a new way with the other.

4.1.7 Participatory politics

Such a deep and vested immersion as proposed in the previous point will help us to engage in a participatory politics (Friedmann 1992:vii; Sandercock 2003:34-35).

On the one hand it will be *political*: we will be moved from our a-political planning to a place where we make a commitment, where we affirm certain priorities, where we state upfront our moral convictions and biases, for the sake of wholeness, equity and social justice. On the other hand it will be *participatory*: if the interests of communities we plan for never become our interests, our participation will always be restricted. Only if we experience some of the issues experienced by those we plan for and with, will our engagements seize to be about furthering our own agendas in subtle or manipulative ways. And if we cannot experience it, then at least we should develop a posture of deep listening to the point of gaining deeper understanding.

Only once we immersed ourselves in such a way, will our participation and our politics not only demonstrate sensitivity and respect, but start to bear signs of transformation from below. We will not have to dictate the agenda but be servants of neighbourhoods and the collective agendas discerned from below.

4.1.8 Embracing multiple publics

Sandercock (2003) cautions, however, that political choices or commitments are not always that easy. Urban communities and interests are diverse; we have to recognise the multiplicity of experiences, knowledges, aspirations

and fears, and find ways to work within such a context of multiplicity.

It should start at least with recognising and embracing multiple publics and multiplicity as a fact of urban life, instead of trying to wish or plan them away. Once we find a way of embracing them, we have to develop what Elaine Graham (2008:15) speaks of in the context of urban public theology as “bilingualism”, and what Sandercock (2003) speaks of as “multicultural literacy”. How do we engage diversity and multiple publics in ways that are credible and creative without being paralysed? How do we allow for the multiple publics to become rich and vibrant sources of transformation from within?

4.1.9 Transformation

Transformation implies going beyond the postmodern powerlessness or lack of confidence, envisaging real, lasting and fundamental change for the better. A contextual approach has as its goal the positive transformation of communities. But, in as far as the contribution of planning goes this can only be facilitated by planners and a planning profession being transformed first.

Müller (1996:28-30), speaking from the perspective of therapy, suggests that “real change happens within our narrative encounters with the context”. It is in encountering the stories of people and communities, that we will change,

and become facilitators of change.

Sandercock (2003:34-35) suggests a “radical postmodern planning practice” as an example of a transformed praxis. She suggests a radical shift from one-sided emphasis on rationality to embracing practical wisdom (cf. Müller 1996). Her approach is characterised by the following attributes:

- people-centredness
- embracing other ways of knowing (epistemology)
- community empowerment as objective
- affirming multiple publics and nurturing multicultural literacy
- advocating democratic, participatory politics
- placing the power of the story in a central position
- suggesting a shift from comprehensive, integrated plans (blue-prints) to more contextual, people-centred interventions with a specific and deliberate focus based on local analysis

The two aspects highlighted by Oranje (1997:199) are:

- “massive inequalities, homelessness, poverty and despair, inherited from the past”; and
- “the emergence of postmodern tendencies / tentacles / “isms” in a society still set / embedded in the ways / mindsets of modernity/ism and pre-modernity in which a mass reconstruction and development drive must take place.”

Although Oranje already mentioned these challenges twenty years ago, the acuteness of the challenge has become more urgent today, precisely because so few heeded the call twenty years back. Inequality and the despair of poverty, in its glaring nature, have sown the seeds of a revolution that could go in any direction. This begs for a planning revolution implying the transformation of planning practices into a praxis-approach single-mindedly devoted to deep socio-spatial transformation.

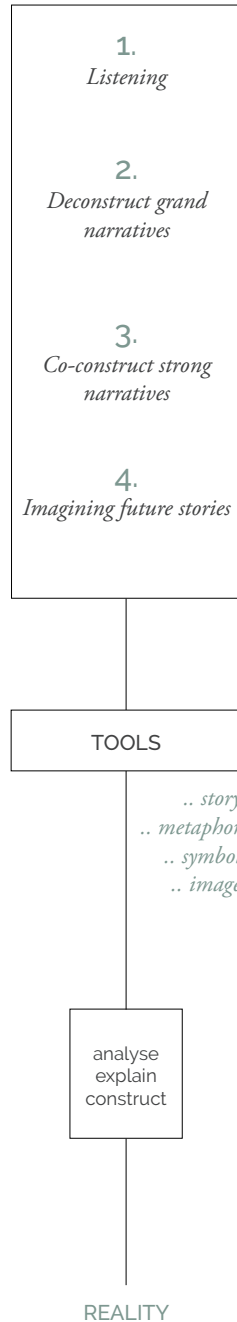
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In Oranje’s thinking (1997:199) there are two major aspects of the South African context providing cues in terms of whether planners still had a role to play, and if so, what the focus and nature of that role would be. Both these aspects require transformation of the urban, but also therefore of the planner and planning professions.

4.2 NARRATIVE

The features of a contextual approach address issues of commitment and priority, identity and epistemology. The different features almost naturally lead to engaging the stories of individuals and communities, but the stories of the planning profession and the planner’s own story, also become

NARRATIVE



important. It is the narrative aspect of this approach that will lead to true conversion or transformation of planners, communities and cities.

The problem in the past was that stories were often dismissed as emotive, subjective, furthering self-interest, not-knowing, and told by non-experts. Stories were not acknowledged for the intuitive knowledge they carried, or for their value in shaping people-centred and appropriate communities. Some might have acknowledged the validity of stories privately, but publicly (and technically) stories were not valued. The epistemological shifts embraced in this study, acknowledge, validate, invite and require the power of stories.

Central in the narrative approach is the use of metaphor. Turner (1996:79) suggests that “metaphors have a supremely creative role: in literature, arts, architecture, planning and design”. He continues to say that “metaphor constructs meaning and is an essential part of creativity”. Metaphors provide a system of thought that can supplement or bypass logic. The interest in using metaphor accompanies the “declining faith in the objectivity of science” (Turner 1996:79). It is a critique of modernism. In a narrative approach story, metaphor, symbol, and images are once again appropriated as legitimate tools to analyse, explain or construct reality.

Fig. 40. The narrative approach.

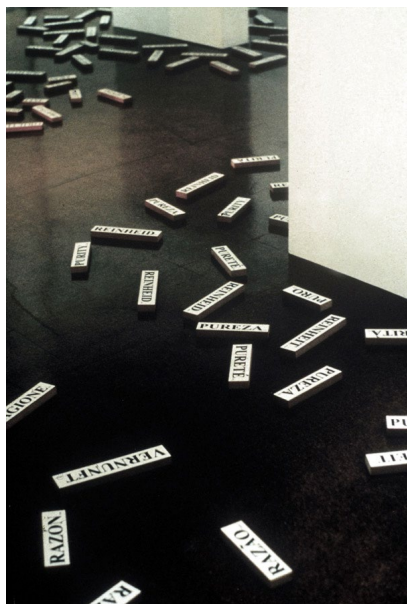


Fig. 41. Boshoff, 1997. Writing that fell off the wall.

I speak about the narrative approach using four headings: listening; deconstructing grand narratives, co-constructing strong narratives; imagining future stories.

4.2.1 Listening

In a contextual approach, and indeed in most of the features listed there, the aspect of listening and conversation or dialogue is central. It requires a “listening approach”, as opposed to a “knowing-approach”. One of the basic principles of a narrative approach is that it adopts a “not knowing” posture, simply refusing to pretend all knowledge, and opening itself up to learn from the narratives of the neighbourhood, or the people and organisations residing in the neighbourhood.

A contextual approach will listen

well to multiple stories and layers of stories that present themselves to us in urban communities. Contextual experiences are related in narrative form and these narratives become the basis for doing planning (cf. De Beer 1998: 65; Müller [about theology] 1996:3).

Creating honest space for story-telling will facilitate the kind of “mutual conversation” that has the potential for “mutual conversion” of both planner and community member, towards shaping space meaningfully (cf. Cowan & Lee 1997).

A narrative approach starts with nurturing our listening skills. Without the ability to listen and to listen well, stories will not change us and our neighbourhoods. I therefore suggest listening, after creating a presence and committing ourselves to the “other”, as a first step in the planning process. Forester speaks about the “work of listening”, both in planning and in everyday life.

We can hear words, but miss what is meant. We can hear what is intended, but miss what is important. We can hear what is important, but neglect the person speaking. As we listen, though, we can learn and nurture relationships as well. Listening is an act of being attentive, a way of being in a moral world. We can make a difference by listening or failing to do so. And we can be held responsible as a result (Forester 1989: 108)

In these words of Forester the ethical, relational, and human-centred aspects of planning, together with the challenges

Writing that fell off the wall

Artist's description:

The writing that fell off the wall consists of fourteen free-standing walls with solid labels strewn about them on the floor, spelling out various bankrupt ideologies in seven different languages. It is an installation, made for the Africanus Biennale 1997 - Johannesburg. The theme of the Biennale was Trade Routes - History and Geography.

The most important commodities offered for sale by Africa's colonists were ideological in nature. THE WRITING THAT FELL OFF THE WALL provides a walk-about tour of this philosophical merchandise that has gone out of business. Its pathways grant a look at how idealistic assurances that were once proudly offered for sale by the pioneers, are disqualified.

of discernment, transformation and accountability, are addressed by a practice of good, honest and attentive listening. This might be considered a “soft” skill, yet it has the potential to transform the way we do planning and shape communities. At a deeper level, it has the potential to transform us.

Sandercock (2003:76) says that listening well “means to be able to ask good questions about deeper interests, about what others care about, hope for, and fear. Listening is a deeply hermeneutic activity”.

It will help us to understand people, communities, the city and ourselves. It is important also to listen to ourselves, to the way in which the language games of planning and development are played (cf. Oranje 1997:13; 34), how we have been co-opted into such games, and how we ourselves use language to exclude or include, to resist or reconstruct, to segregate or integrate. Listening (critically) to ourselves is an important task.

4.2.2 Deconstructing grand narratives

Thrift and Pile (2000:xiii) question whether something as dynamic as the city can ever be captured appropriately in language. They also express the difficulty of integrating very diverse elements or characteristics of cities into a coherent reading of the city:

... how to find a rhetoric that balances the seditious, the patient, and the oppressive side of cities with their spontaneous vitality and capacity to induce play? Cities are too often written as either monster machines or improvisatory frontier lands, rarely as both at once.

It is important therefore to analyse the language used to describe cities, to deconstruct it critically, asking questions of these discourses, such as: Who uses such language? Why? Whose interest is served? Who validates it? Are there other languages or discourses to describe the same reality? Would the unofficial version of the same reality be very different? How will it differ and why? (cf. also Oranje 1997:13).

Language is used to construct reality in the image we prefer, and then it gets validated by social consensus (cf. Lyotard 1984). This is also an apt description for so-called grand narratives: those stories that are validated by social consensus as the final and sometimes only truth, even if it is a lie. Lyotard (1984:10) states that the way language games are played is

Blind Alphabet

Artist's description:

To put sighted people at a disadvantage I needed to impose upon them a sense of the disappointment blind people suffer when they are restricted. The way I 'blind' sighted visitors to the artwork is to hide the sculptures in small boxes, under wire mesh. The art gallery's signs reading 'Don't Touch' prevent them from opening the boxes, so that they are overcome by frustration. Furthermore, the lid on every box is inscribed with a text in Braille, which is foreign to most sighted people. Then, to cap everything, there are hundreds of these sculptures in row upon row, in close proximity. The sighted visitor feels denied, lost in a labyrinth that might lead nowhere. As one blind guest said: '... you had it all -- now it's our turn to have it all -- this is ours'

Fig. 42. Boshoff, 1990 - ongoing, Blind Alphabet



“the object of a contract, explicit or not, between players”.

The language of inner city decay is an example. When the racial make-up of South African inner cities changed, newspapers started to print on their front pages that these communities were becoming slums. Businesses, politicians, estate agents, and the general (white) public reached social consensus that this was the case. As a result businesses disinvested, white people sold property and moved away, banks red-lined areas, and decay started to set in. These actions – language that spreads myths, policies of non-investment and practices of disinvestment – became self-fulfilled prophecies through which the very prophets of doom made their own visions of doom reality.

It was also a function of capital and its ways. As David Harvey (1978:124) explains:

capital represents itself in the form of a physical landscape created in its own image, created as use value to enhance the progressive accumulation of capital... Under capitalism, there is a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of crises, at a subsequent time. This temporal and geographical ebb and flow of investment in the built environment can be understood only in terms of such a process.

The inner city was built by capital at a specific time in its own image. But then came a time of political transition and the disinvestment

of capital threatened to destroy its own making. Apart from disinvestment, poor management of urban change and a lack of multi-cultural literacy on the side of policy-makers and city managers also contributed to a process of decay. Colonialism used language to colonise, and decolonisation uses language to resist. The construction or deconstruction of language is a central part of any planning process. The construction of liberating and transformational language is one of the concerns of this study.

4.23. Imagining future stories

What is proposed here is a process that could potentially facilitate the transformation of local realities from their current form and condition, to their preferred or imagined form and condition. Through careful listening, a deconstruction of existing grand narratives (and their myths), and a retrieval of local stories of hope (and their power), planners in partnership with people and communities can develop the resources to imagine preferred realities.

We need to emphasise the importance of “story” in finding and nurturing an alternative imagination. Those who are not part of our technocracies can often better express their struggles, hopes and visions by way of telling stories: how it used to be; what happened last week; how they see their street in future.

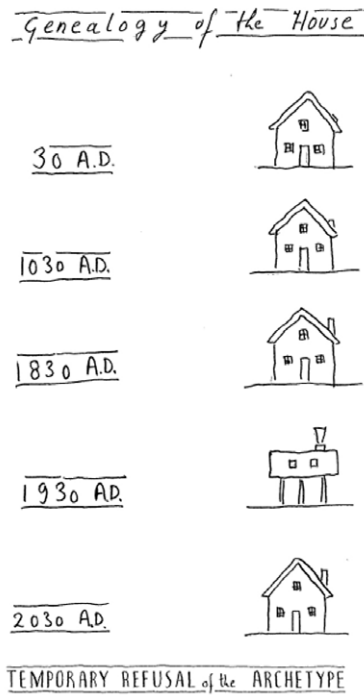


Fig. 43. Krier, 1998. Temporary refusal of the archetype.

Sandercock (2003:182) suggests that for a long time, “‘story’ was thought of in the social sciences as ‘soft’, inferior, lacking in rigour, or, worst insult of all, as a ‘woman/native/other’ way of knowing”.

More analytical tools were sought for academic enquiry and research. Yet, in recent years, the validity of story has re-surfaced and been appropriated in many disciplines. Instead of being soft and lacking in rigour, stories could be powerful subversions of the status quo; serving to unmask powerful constructs of abuse and exclusion; and visually presenting alternative imaginaries to what we now know. Sandercock (2003:182) speaks of narratives as powerful imaginative resources: “In order to imagine the

ultimately unrepresentable space, life and languages of the city, to make them legible, we translate them into narratives”.

Planners need to create spaces for the stories of people and communities to be told and heard, as it will help to form the basis for a new praxis that has as its core the task of re-imagining.

The garden city-concept is an example of an imagined future story or preferred story, turned into reality. Garden cities were based upon the metaphor of the garden as symbol of “safety, beauty, of production, of harmony between man (sic) and nature” (Turner 1996:81). A garden city was supposed to resemble these characteristics, so that “walking through the town can be like flickering through a dramatic picture book” (Turner 1996:85).

Biblical prophets used to deconstruct the reality as they observed and analysed it around them, and then provided clear images of the reality that could be. The prophet Isaiah imagines a city where children will not die young, where people will live in the houses they build, and share in the fruit of their produce, where the lamb and wolf will dwell together. It is a vision of a “new city” without infant mortality, with new and inclusive economies, accessible housing, and reconciled neighbourhoods (cf. Brueggemann 1998:243-245).

The same prophet, in chapter 58,

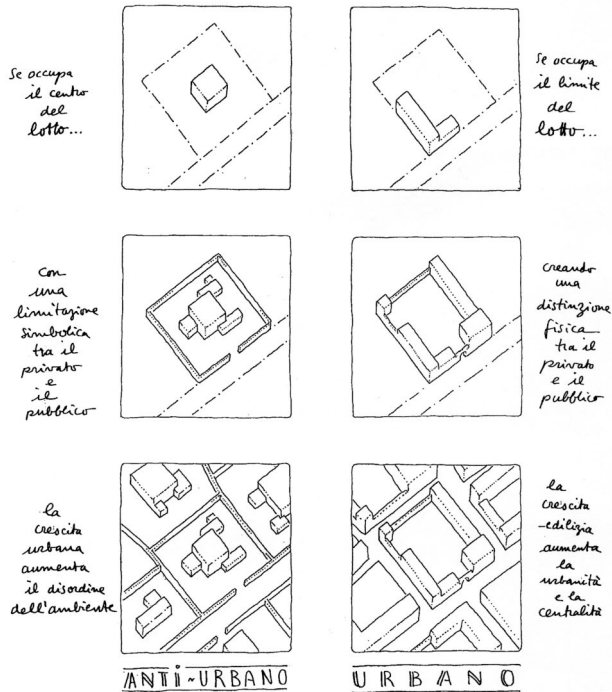


Fig. 44. Krier, n.d. Anti-Urbano & Urbano.

envisages a spirituality that is connected to issues of poverty and justice, and imagines the restoration of city streets with housing for all. These are practical images that invite the reader into a new kind of connected spirituality, and a new kind of participatory politics, both being rooted in and informed by communities and not disconnected from very real challenges.

We can just think of Martin Luther King, Ghandi and Nelson Mandela to remind ourselves of the power of the alternative imagination: to think the unthinkable; to see the impossible; to hope beyond all hopelessness. And a common thread in the visions of these leaders was the radical inclusiveness it anticipated, where

children and outsiders would be significantly part of the new community.

Turner (1996:84-85) refers to the work of Gordon Cullen (1971) who envisions that “human imagination can begin to mould the city into a coherent drama”. Cullen suggests that there are “pictures”, “dramas”, and “images” that can help to set the city alive. He contrasts, for example, a long straight street that has little impact on the emotions since it is so monotonous, with a street and courtyard in contrast, the various elements “in juxtaposition” to each other, containing dramatic elements that bring the city to life, that make the city visible. “In planning”, Turner (1996:85) says, “the boundaries

between myth, history and fiction are not so consequential as one might think”.

How do we allow a creative fusion of the myths, history and fiction into our plans for our streets, buildings and neighbourhoods? How can these become narrative spaces (cf. Connah 1998:16-22) that will be an extension of our collective – and diverse – memories, but also our collective – and diverse – imagination/s?

4.2.4 Co-constructing strong narratives

Although being critical of grand narratives, Boomkens (1998:39) suggests that we should not discard grand narratives completely nor continuously deconstruct them, but rather find ways to write “strong narratives” (narrative therapy speaks of “tall stories”).

Boomkens (1998:39) suggests strong narratives as an alternative to the circular game of modern construction and postmodern deconstruction. Strong narratives are the construction of “local” histories, in line also with the proposals of Lyotard (1979) and Foucault (1975). In writing such “local” histories, Boomkens suggests the careful selection and organising of facts, and paying attention to local details. He uses as an example of such a strong narrative, Foucault’s “Surveiller et Pimot” (1975:40), which relates the history of a modern prison and delinquency.

Strong narratives, in their attention to detail, often apply exaggeration as a way to accentuate a point. This is used as a rhetorical means to give additional power to an argument. Furthermore, strong narratives not only describe the local in a detailed and informative manner, but often also represent an alternative narrative to the dominant narrative, exposing the myth and relativity of the dominant narrative.

Although local, Boomkens (1998:40) and others argue that such carefully constructive local narratives provide insight into global ways in which power and other forces work. They also propose that strong narratives, locally developed and articulated, often have universal power and meaning. The concrete nature of the narrative is its power (the so-called “pars pro toto”-effect (Boomkens 1998:40).

In her book *Cosmopolis II*, Leonie Sandercock (2003: 182-204) devotes an entire chapter to “the power of story in planning”. The kind of story she had in mind was this local tall story, or strong narrative, representing an alternative story, and giving deep insight into the workings, struggles and visions of a local community. Flowing from such a storied encounter, planning can truly be on the side of people.

4.3 A CONTEXTUAL-NARRATIVE APPROACH

This table is a summary of the material presented in this chapter. In the following chapters the praxis cycle will unfold, representing the characteristics of a contextual approach in terms of commitment, priority, identity and epistemology. At the same time it will draw from narrative methodology in order to imagine and co-construct alternative, sustainable, inclusive and just future stories.

CONTEXTUAL (commitment, priority, identity, epistemology)	NARRATIVE (methodology)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. planning from below 2. praxis-approach 3. a new way of knowing 4. commitment to and priority of the poor / the "other" 5. from institutional capacity to people-centred cities 6. incarnation or full immersion 7. participatory politics 8. embracing multiple publics 9. transformation as goal 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. listening and conversation 2. deconstructing grand narratives 3. co-constructing strong narratives 4. imagining future stories



Fig. 45. Collection of photographs from IunIShackled a child's perspective on being free and restricted in the city (2014)



Fig. 46. Nel, 2017. Becoming like a child [stills from the film Amelie]

Chapter 02

'BECOMING LIKE CHILDREN'

Identity and urban praxis

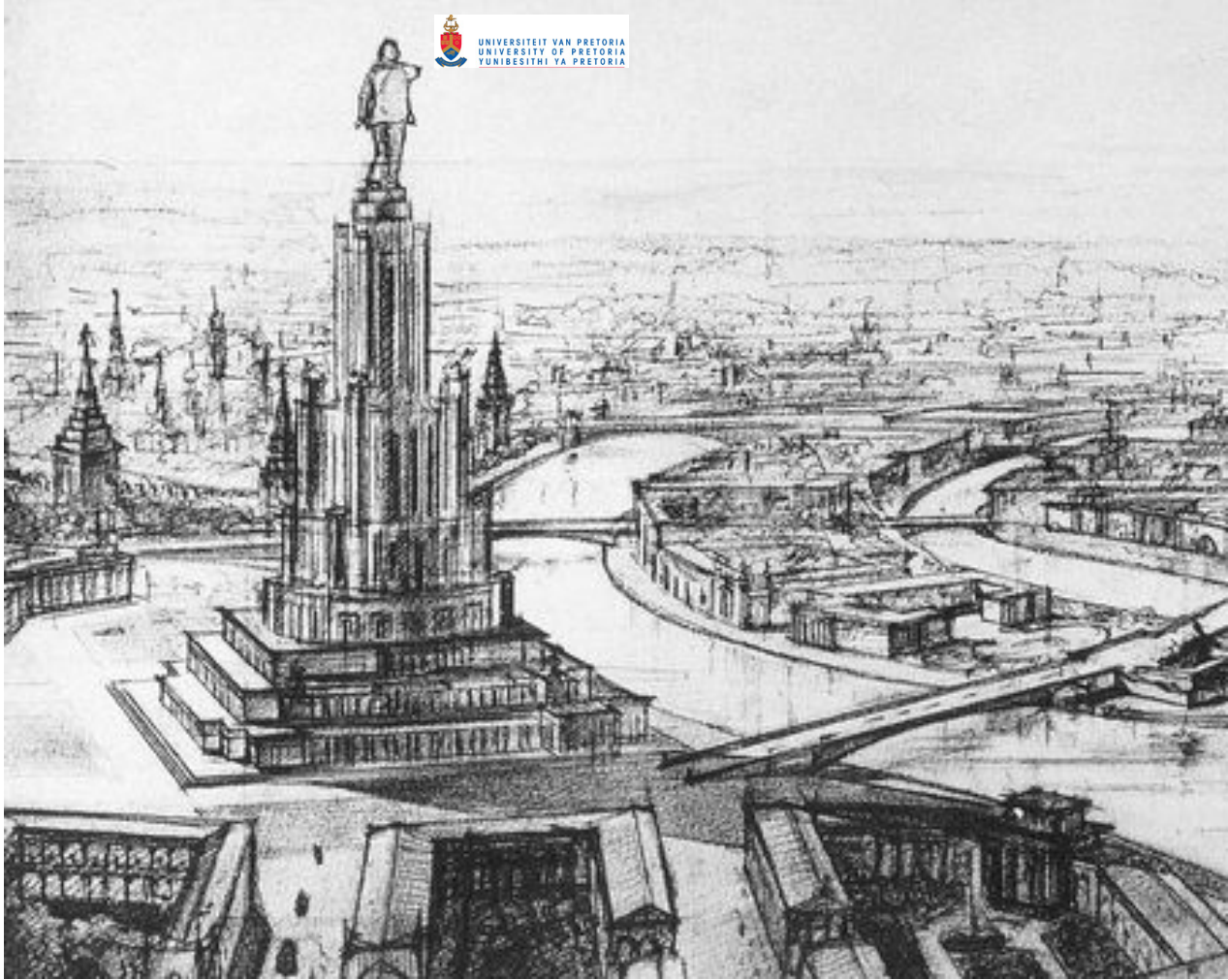
The previous chapter has already suggested a fundamental break with modernist planning practices, with clear implications for the commitments and identity of people in the planning (or built environment) professions. It challenges the dichotomy of “expert” and “non-expert”, suggesting, rather, processes of mutual learning and radical participation

What it fundamentally requires from the planning professionals is to become humble like children, entering urban communities cautiously, with a “not-knowing” approach, open to be surprised by the discovery of local knowledge and insight, and ready to journey with likely and unlikely partners. I therefore use the metaphor of “becoming like children” in providing a title for this chapter.

At the same time it wants to suggest a move beyond the relativistic paralysis of postmodernism, reaffirming again notions such as

faith and fascination, festivity and fantasy, as appropriate and potential resources for planning praxis. These are the ingredients children are made of. It also suggests moving beyond paralysis, in the insistence that change or transformation is possible, and should be facilitated. We need to re-activate the imagination of a child, and believe that it is actually possible to turn imagination into reality, even against the odds.

In this chapter I focus on the professional identity of the planner in relation to urban praxis.



1. DECONSTRUCTING MODERNIST PLANNING

Sandercock (2003) suggests the need to deconstruct modernist planning wisdom if we want to work towards an alternative city, and to provide it with new content based upon “reconsidered concepts of democracy, social justice, citizenship, multiculturalism, and multiple publics, and along with these, new qualities of planning imagination”.

| 76

The modernist city has “always been fraught with ambiguity” (Sandercock 2003: 28). On the one hand it was a city of achievement – sanitation; electricity; engineering, transport networks; and so forth. On the other hand it was a city of failure – the destruction of the past; the creation of anonymity; pollution; exploitation. It is indeed important to retrieve and build upon the values and lessons of the past where they served humanity best. At the same time it is important to deconstruct language, policy and planning history, where it failed humanity.

Who is building the city? For whom?



Fig. 47. Unbuilt Palace of Soviets, c. 1933.

In reflecting on the identity of planners, critical questions to be asked are: Who is building the city? For whom? Mandated by whom? Whose agenda is served? Whose money is used? Is it serving the interests of the private sector and multinational corporations or does it include, very intentionally, the most vulnerable, who cannot foot the bill of the latest innovation?

77 |

These questions also relate to the question framed by the “right to the city” approach, asking simply: who has a right to the city? (cf. Lefebvre 1996; Soja 2010; Harvey 2012).

Planning is always closely related to power. It is vital therefore to deconstruct the power constructs of planning and to fill planning with content that will liberate it to a place where it in return will have a truly liberating impact on the cities it seeks to shape (cf. Innes 1995; 1996; Healey 1993; 1996; and Forester 1987; 1989; 2013).

Deconstruction could help to imagine new planning approaches and envisage new planning identities (cf. Turner 1996:129).

1.1 CULTURAL CAPTIVITY

Although the landscape of post-modernity and the urban landscape are landscapes of difference, the planning profession too often “unreflectively expresses the norms of the culturally dominant majority, including the norms of how that majority likes to use space” (Sandercock 2003:21).

Planning is a discipline marked by cultural captivity. For that reason Dalton (1993) and Rodriguez (1993) proposed the recruitment of multi-ethnic women and young planners into planning schools to transform the way planning works (cf. Oranje 1997:4). How would the philosophy and practice of planning be transformed if those teaching at academic institutions in the South African context represented the diversity of South Africa’s people, but also collaborated more intentionally with communities, community practitioners and academic disciplines across the spectrum? Or would it make any difference?

1.2 MALE-DOMINATED PLANNING / CITIES

Planning was also a male-oriented/-dominated discipline (cf. Oranje 1997:184). Feminists have deconstructed the traditional way in which male-female constructs have determined cities and space. Such a deconstructive reading of the urban environment would “examine the hierarchical relationships between land use activities

and between the constructive professions” (Turner 1996:130), showing hierarchies of power, representing mainly male interests. He (1996:131) says: “Traditional relationships should be deconstructed. Those imagined deep structures, which currently disfigure the built environment, are human constructs”.

Short (1989:69) speaks of the way in which the city symbolises male power. There is a real need to feminise the city – for too long it has borne only the imprint of male perceptions and male power. In apartheid planning this was expressed in the great emphasis on control and segregation (Oranje 1997:174-176).

1.3 SOUL-LESS PLANNING

Modernist planning ignored much of what should constitute the soul of the city – “the city of memory, of desire, of spirit; the importance of place and the art of place-making; the local knowledges written into the stones and memories of communities” (Sandercock 2003:3). The faith of city-builders was in their rational knowledge and technical skill, and they thought they could control the urban environment using these means.

Modernist architects, planners, engineers - Faustian heroes all - saw themselves as experts who could utilise the laws of development to provide societal guidance. The hubris of the city-building professions was their faith in the liberating potential of their technical knowledge and their corresponding belief in their ability to

transcend the interest of capital, labour, and the state, and to arrive at an objective assessment of 'the public interest' (Sandercock 2003:3)

therefore, be deconstructed (Turner 1996:131).

Turner (1996:121) elaborates:

Planning as routine has way too often replaced planning as adventure (Berman 1989:243), “freezing the creative energies” (Oranje 1997:49) in planning, resulting in a “death sentence for the spirit” (Berman 1989:242-243; cf. also Oranje 1997:49). The result of such planning practices is then often made visible in public projects which Makeka (2013:450) described as “arduous and soul destroying”.

In cities, there is a concealed power struggle between the partisans of transport, social justice, gracious housing, religion, commerce, fine building, spacious parks and healthy environment...

...society employs a range of experts to bring them about: engineers, lawyers, architects, priests, teachers, industrialists, environmentalists and others. Each professional guru dedicates itself to constructing an idealised aspect of the public welfare, which constitutes its private welfare.

1.4 PLANNING HIERARCHIES: between professions; “experts” and “non-experts”; spatial forms

This leads to a competition for priority and budget, each believing in its own discipline as being the most important. To obtain priority and resources, it becomes “necessary to gain power and influence” (Turner 1996:121). Often such power is constructed through the use of specialised discourse only known to the initiated few (the “expert”).

Planning hierarchies are human constructs that are in need of continuous assessment and deconstruction.

Experts develop specialised discourse comprising words, metaphors, a narrative, work practices, visual images, artefacts, and where possible, laws. Specialised discourses become a means to power, just as man-centred discourse was a means to male dominance in past millennia

(Turner 1996:121)

There are hierarchical relationships between different professional disciplines: planners, architects, engineers, building contractors, and project managers. If ways are not found to facilitate synergetic relationships between these, it could potentially lead to fragmented planning, design and implementation.

In reading past and present cities, the cities themselves communicate something of the power relations and planning hierarchies that exist(ed) within them.

Different aspects of the public good should be stressed in different places. To achieve variety in land use patterns, there should also be a variety of relationships between the professions, not an institutionalised decision-making tree. Relationships between the constructive professions should,

...reading the built form of ancient cities, one can discover which ... of experts have held power in past

periods. The church and the military have inscribed their glorious subtexts on many towns...

...reading maps of modern cities, the cities themselves tell us about the power relationships between experts.

(Turner 1996:122)

Closely linked is the hierarchy of spatial form that is sustained through zoning regulations, with different weight given to different uses, whether commercial, industrial, high-density residential, low-density residential, recreational, green spaces, social amenities, and so forth. Depending on the status of the discipline or its place in the hierarchy, its priority will determine spatial form. Simply but powerfully put: “Power expresses form” (Turner 1996:121).

Another hierarchy, less subtle and more overt, is that of “expert” and “non-expert”, not adequately recognising the “expertise” and practical wisdom often hidden amongst members of communities. In seeking to build humane, inclusive and socially just cities, such hierarchies need to be deconstructed in order to give shape to an inclusive, participatory planning praxis that will design in close conjunction with local communities and their needs or aspirations. This might lead to different spatial expressions and forms.

1.5 OFFICIAL PLANNING HISTORIES VS.. “NOIR” SIDE / UNTOLD HISTORIES

Sandercock (2003:38) suggests that there is “the official story of planning history” and then there are the untold stories, the “noir” side of the story, or the insurgent histories. These alternative histories “challenge our very definition of what constitutes planning”. At the same time, they provide us with a possible alternative planning paradigm, and thus with a “future imaginary”.

It is therefore important to retrieve and retell the noir face of planning (Sandercock 2003: 37), the shadow or phantom stories (cf. Meylahn 2012:57-63), the unwritten or untold histories, as well as the new movements.

bell hooks speaks of the potential of subversive spaces and practices to help imagine alternative futures:

Subversive historiography connects oppositional practices from the past and forms of resistance in the present, thus creating spaces of possibility where the future can be imagined differently – imagined in such a way that we can witness ourselves dreaming, moving forward and beyond the limits of confines of fixed locations

(bell hooks 1994)

The problem, says Sandercock (2003:37), is that professions mould their members just as nations mould their citizens, in terms of their understanding of the past, “causing them to forget those events which do not

accord with a righteous image, while keeping alive those memories that do". She then quotes from Kundera who said that "the struggle of people against power is a struggle of memory against forgetting" (Sandercock 2003: 37; from Appleby, Hunt and Jacob 1994:270).

If one reflects on planning history in the US, the voices of women, African-Americans and other "invisible" minorities, have been systematically excluded (Sandercock 2003: 40-49). It is not merely the task of adding forgotten or untold stories (almost as an afterthought), but - if these stories are to help shape alternative planning paradigms - there is the more fundamental challenge of "reconceptualising planning history", in this case "by using gender and race as categories of analysis" (Sandercock 2003:47).

The official planning history of South Africa coincides with the

history of the unfolding apartheid city. The South African city was carefully constructed to implement apartheid policy, and planners were the facilitators of such implementation. Hidden behind a facade of apolitical planning practice, they participated in one of the most extraordinary exclusivist and demeaning political projects of modern history.

It would also be important to retrieve the alternative histories of activist movements such as Planact (2012); or the story of places like Hillbrow and how it became an alternative urban space long before official policy had changed. These stories could offer resources for an alternative planning paradigm. How many planners have unlearned what they have been conditioned to know for so many years? What qualifies them to plan sensitively, inclusively and humanely after 1994, if they were unable to do so before 1994?

2. THE CHALLENGE OF SOFTWARE INFRASTRUCTURE

Charles Landry (2000:128) suggests that the cities of today have one crucial resource: their people.

...human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination and creativity are replacing location, natural resources and market access as urban resources. Harnessing these qualities and allowing them to express themselves in initiatives and projects is what urban vitality is about.

The diversity, complexity and challenges of today's cities require new paradigms of engagement. Landry (2000:8-9) says that the 21st century city is in desperate need of

appropriate 'software' infrastructure, referring to some of the qualities quoted above (cf. also Healey 1997). We have the technical and technological expertise ("although

new inventions are still welcome”), but the challenge of today is to understand the city as a whole, as a living organism, in which a great amount of focus should be given to human interaction, social dynamics, relationships, networks, and well-being. Such software infrastructure is as essential as roads and sanitation, as is the need to acknowledge this requirement.

Landry (2000:9) suggests that “governing, organising and managing better and generating civic vitality can make the difference between success and failure”.

Landry (2000:9) continues to say that “the key applications of creativity will lie in the realm of democracy, organisation, governance and management - social and political innovations - as much as in new technology”.

Contemporary urban problems “...require us to think about new organisational forms and a revitalised democracy that harnesses people’s commitment, engagement and potential (Landry 2000:9)”.

The shift that Landry is pleading for is from technocratic / bureaucratic planning to participatory, people-centred, and interactive planning.

A serious obstacle is the way in which power, politics and planning often collude to resist the innovations of communities and people. They tend to retain technocratic / bureaucratic practices

that “plan for people” instead of “with people”. Their resistance might have its origin in different factors: a lack of will; a lack of knowledge; feeling threatened; being subverted; dislike of competition; captivity to the “expert”-model; old paradigms; fear; and so forth. Often resistance quenches innovation and potentially good initiatives are still-born.

Preparing city-builders for today and tomorrow therefore requires the development of software capacity amongst planning professionals, politicians and members of civil society, as well as the capacity to facilitate appropriate software infrastructure. It has implications for the way in which planners are trained, the skills they acquire or develop, and the way in which they walk with communities.

Landry (2000:9) mentions a number of important imperatives / preconditions that new planning paradigms should intentionally incorporate:

- accepting one’s own way of approaching issues as limited
- involving those affected by a problem in implementing solutions recognising
- creative and lateral thinking as an important part of the planning process
- providing an environment for problem-solving that will encourage learning for both decision-makers and those affected by decisions

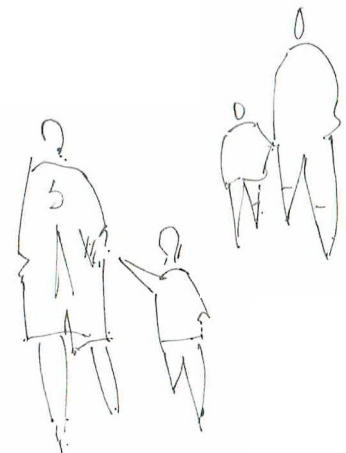


Fig. 48. Nel, 2017. Children 2

- a willingness to consider the inputs from other disciplines (even if they initially seem irrelevant to the issues at stake)
- generating solutions that are culturally, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable
- appreciating that the potential resources for planning are more extensive than often considered, including citizens' interests, organised communities, existing research institutes; and so forth
- being aware of the multiple dimensions of vitality and creativity
- developing new indicators for vitality, success and failure (deconstructing current indicators might be helpful as they are often determined

culturally, by the dominant group, by male considerations, and so on)

Much of what Landry describes as preconditions for new planning paradigms, also resonate with a transdisciplinary approach to research and action. It is very intentional about collaboration between professionals, communities and researchers in sharing different kinds of knowledge and then fostering collective and integrated visions and actions, informed by such knowledge. It is also very insistent on finding solutions in conjunction with communities being researched (cf. De Beer 2014; 2014a; De Beer & Vally 2015). And in the process of joint research, software infrastructure is being developed

3. PLANNING AS A POLITICAL ACT

John Forester (1989:25) suggests that all planning activity is political in nature, because relationships of power are always involved and systemic inequalities influence outcomes. Leonie Sandercock (2003:67) builds on this assertion of Forester, suggesting that planning should “(be) aware of systemic inequalities”, and should “(m)ake sure all points of view are heard, and not only those of the most articulate or powerful”.

83 |

Sandercock (2003:211-212) identifies a clear need to expand the political horizon of planning, bringing to an end the pretence of a-political or value-neutral planning.

If we want to achieve greater social justice, less polluted environments, and broader cross-cultural tolerance, and if planning is to contribute to those social goals, then we need a broader and more

politicised definition of planning's domain and practices. These practices will have to include mobilising constituencies, protests, strikes, acts of civil disobedience, community organisation, professional

advocacy and research, publicity, as well as the proposing and drafting of laws and new programmes of social intervention

If we consider planning as a political act, there are initial political questions. One such a question would be: "For whom to work, on behalf of which set of forces or struggles?" (Sandercock 2003:211). This is not always an easy choice, simply because not all community practices are inclusionary (or liberating) practices, just as not all state practices are always repressive or exclusionary. Sandercock (2003:21) suggests that planners should be engaged in working with and mobilising communities to work for social, economic, environmental and cultural justice, whilst at the same time resisting practices of "the state" that will hinder such freedoms flowing from higher degrees of justice.

A second political question in the planning process, once committed to participatory planning, would be: "To whom should we listen?" (cf. Sandercock 2003:77). The obvious answer would be: to all relevant stakeholders. Yet, "(i) identifying relevant stakeholders is itself a deeply political question". Sandercock suggests that it implies "all those affected" but then should be interpreted not only

as those affected financially, but also those affected emotionally, or physically or as "to-be-displaced tenants". She emphasises that "(w) e should make an effort to listen to those who are least powerful" in the context of ever-present power relations (games) in the planning processes.

A third question would be: "To what should we listen?" Sandercock (2003:77) answers her own question by suggesting that part of the planning process should be to retrieve oral tradition, and to listen to stories, especially untold / hidden stories: "... the telling of stories is nothing less than a profoundly political act" (Sandercock 2003: 204).

The act of listening itself becomes political as it validates people and empowers them in terms of what they know and what they could offer to the process. This is listening, not as a technique of co-optation or silencing, but rather listening *into* joint and liberative actions.

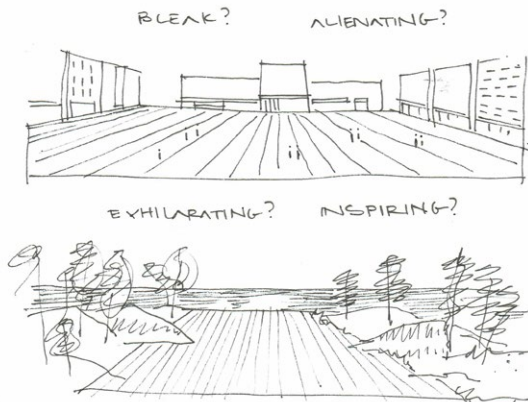


Fig. 49. Alienating or inspiring (adapted from Dee 2001)

4. PLANNING AS A SPIRITUAL ACT

The “*genius loci*” (Norberg-Schulz 1980) refers to the spirit of a place. It insinuates a connection between spirituality and space. Those involved with planning and place-making cannot escape from the dilemma that we find ourselves in when spaces are oppressive, exclusive and alienating. In the short-term it might still benefit the few, but in the long-term the victims of alienation will revolutionise space in ways that will change it forever. It seems urgent to explore beyond a narrow technocratic understanding of planning in order to root our praxis in values that will serve humanity and creation sustainably and inclusively, and in ways that simultaneously will serve to transform oppressive, exclusive and alienating spaces fundamentally.

The western mind has embraced dualisms and dichotomies uncritically. There is a marked separation of sacred and secular, private / personal and public; soul and body; spiritual and physical. The first categories are usually viewed as the higher good and the second category as being subdued by them.

Planners are deeply influenced by these dualisms. The result is planning that facilitates progress for some, and exclusion of others; isolationist individualism instead of interdependence. It fails to embrace clear social and ecological agendas because people and the earth are secondary to profit and progress. This is clearly not sustainable in terms of planners’ contribution to the well-being of the earth and its resources, as expressed in urban spaces.

The built professions, as they are, play such a fundamental role in shaping the city and its people: “... architecture and landscape design are relatively permanent and relatively public arts. They affect

the land itself, in addition to the owners, users, neighbours, future generations, plants and animals” (Sandercock 2003:214).

Consequently there are hugely important ethical considerations, tying in with some of the previous questions of this chapter: Who plans?; For whom?; Whose interests are served?; Who are excluded? Planning and its resultant plans tell a story of the values, commitments and priorities of planners and their masters (those who pay their remuneration).

Soelle (2001:3) suggests that the relationship between mystical experience and social and political behaviour has not been explored adequately. Is there any relationship between mysticism and politics, between spirituality and space, between soul and body? Is there any relationship between our internal commitments and our external actions? Western dualisms have steered us to the contrary, but Soelle (2001:3) seeks “to erase the distinction between a mystical

internal and a political external”.

Soelle (2001:3) says that everything that is within needs to be externalised, for the manna not to spoil. One can turn this suggestion around, saying that whatever gets expressed externally is a demonstration of what lives internally. Curiously, it would often be (Christian) religious planners that would have the most difficulty with this assertion, because it might expose the (lack of) integrity between their internal and external lives.

Traditional African worldviews are more holistic, embracing all of life as sacred, doing away with false dichotomies. This thesis wants to suggest that all of life, all of created space, is sacred, and therefore planning of these spaces in ways that will affirm the sacredness, explore and give expression to its beauty, provide meaning and nurture to its inhabitants, is essentially a spiritual act.

Planning that fails to embrace itself as a spiritual act – planning as mysticism, or planners as mystics – runs the risk to be driven not by values aimed at the common good, but by agendas of progress and exclusion that are at the cost of those who are vulnerable or weak.

Sandercock (2003:221-227) suggests a planning praxis that will be more in tune with the city of memory, the city of desire, the city of the spirit, building upon the “joys, hopes, fears, the sense of

loss, expectation, adventure” that are naturally alive in cities”.

“Modernist planners became thieves of memory”, Sandercock (2003:222) says, but at the same time they became thieves of desire, bodiliness, the spirit, ecstasy, expression, community, wherever they succumbed to technocratic bureaucracy that has closed itself to the possibility of surprise, awe, and wonder.

Various religious persons throughout the centuries looked and lived critically in their resistance to dualisms that restricted God and morality to sacred spaces; or restricted secularity and bodiliness to profane spaces. They expressed their critique in unconventional ways, often inverting (sacred) power creatively through clear and public solidarity with the powerless (profane), claiming all spaces as potentially sacred.

Stories about the life of Francis of Assisi point to his insistence on removing the boundaries between what are sacred and what are profane (Soelle 2001:241). He is the clown of God that models a different way: “The anarchy of love restores order; it ridicules social division built up on the basis of possessions. It knows no limits”.

He demonstrates this with his own life when he kisses the lepers, not as an act of charity alone, but as a radical act of justice, confronting their exclusion and wanting to eradicate the walls that restricted

their spatial access, forging new bonds of solidarity and community (Soelle 2001:240-241). Soelle (2001:97) asserts: “We have neither the right nor even the possibility to limit the number of places of mystical experience”.

The vocation of the planner would therefore be not simply to facilitate technical processes, but indeed to imagine and midwife the birthing or recovery of soul places, places in which humanness, community, mystery and awe, can be found, celebrated and transferred for generations to come. And sometimes the planner’s task would not be to plan or create such spaces but simply to recognise and affirm and include them in the planning process.

Soul places will by definition be inclusive, whole, energising and inspiring, and as such they would constitute spiritual spaces. It is in that sense that planning could be a spiritual act.

Once planners could go beyond professionalism in working out their own professional identity, they might discover a vocation that integrates internal values and commitments, with external actions, plans and political and ethical choices.

They will then indeed become servants of humanity and servants of creation, shaping soul spaces.

5. RE-IMAGINING THE ART OF PLANNING

5.1 FROM DECONSTRUCTION TO NEW IMAGINATION

Once able to imagine an alternative city – accessible, participatory, inclusive, vibrant, caring, sharing – Sandercock (2003:208) imagines a planning discipline that would be able to facilitate such a city of her vision.

I want a city where my profession contributes to all of the above, where city planning is a war of liberation fought against dumb, featureless public space; against STARchitecture, speculators, and bench markers; against the multiple sources of oppression, domination and violence; where citizens wrest from space new possibilities, and immerse themselves in their cultures while respecting those of their neighbours, collectively forging new hybrid culture and spaces. I want a city that is run differently from an accounting firm; where planners 'plan' by negotiating desires and fears, mediating memories and hopes, facilitating change and transformation.

This is a vision of a discipline that will make a radical shift from being a-political administrators of bureaucratic routine to political animators of people-centred adventure. It is about innovative planning preceded by a more innovative self-understanding of what planning, place-making or city-building should be.

In imagining a radically transformed planning paradigm, Sandercock (2003:2) speaks of the death of the rational city with its “modernist notions of technical rationality providing order, coherence, regulation, homogeneity”. In its place, she retrieves resources of insurgent citizenship, civil society and social movements as resistant

forces against “modernist planning with its antidemocratic, race- and gender-blind, and culturally homogenising practices”. Hers is a call for planning to practice radical democracy, being sensitive to racial and gender issues, demonstrating multicultural literacy, and expressing these in design that is culturally, racially and gender-sensitive.

Oranje (1997: 189-191) describes the shifts in the role of planners, particularly in South Africa, since the 1910's: planning changed from communicator (1910's and 1920's) to researcher, logical analyser and synthesiser / designer (1930's); in the 1940's and 1950's the planner became coordinator in serving the community's needs, and in the 1960's the bureaucratisation of planning intensified with professional planners now becoming apolitical, technical experts or bureaucratic administrators. Some exceptions were people like Mallows advocating for the planner as innovator.

In the 1970's and 1980's little changed, although the professional researcher or teacher of planning emerged, and later on the entrepreneur-planner as well as the advocacy planner, primarily

“We have to struggle to replace a functionalist, bureaucrat God with an artist God - that is to say a God who loves both beauty and risk” (Maitland 1995: 43).

at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal and the Witwatersrand. In the 1990s planning professionals reinforced or added the roles of facilitator, mediator, conflict and project manager, communicator and visionary, pro-active, creative, and entrepreneurial problem-solvers (cf. Oranje 1997:191). But often planners have become stuck in bureaucratic systems and simply administrators of the status quo.

Against this background of an ever-changing planning profession, various scholars since the 1990s propose new planning paradigms. First there were people like Robinson (1991:1); Ramarumo (1994:9-10); Bester (1995:4); Ndzombane (1995); Amankwah-Ayeh (1995:11) and Oranje (1997:170). It became an even more urgent call in the later work of people like Mabin (2000), Harrison (2008), Todes (2011), and Oranje (2014).

In *A Big-Enough God*, Sara Maitland (1995: 39-43) speaks of God’s creativity that never allows us to rest on our laurels, but always urges us into becoming, making new, re-creating. But, says Maitland, for that to happen God needs to be liberated from our narrow god-pictures, to embrace the fullness of her creativity. The

same could be said of professionals in many disciplines – whether planning, construction, theology, or social work. There seems to be an almost universal tendency to become technocrats without the creative passion that can still imagine a changed world.

5.2 AUDACIOUS PLANNING

Apart from the content of planning, a new paradigm also requires a new “attitude”. Sandercock (2003:214) speaks of “an audacious planning practice” that dares to break the rules. Instead of the risk-averse reality of “the bureaucracy” – politicians and the planners who serve them – the cities of today require audacious planning: flexible, adventurous, responsive, contextual, risky, truly participatory praxis.

Of course such praxis will make many politicians and officials nervous; especially if real participation is practiced and the agency of local people and local neighbourhoods is galvanised to resist soul-destroying urban interventions and instead advance community-driven urban formation. Instead of embracing local agency as a tremendous resource in urban space-making, which is actually the intention of current local government legislation and policy, it is often frowned upon, or resisted, probably simply because of the ways in which politicians and planners feel threatened.

...make a radical shift from being a-political administrators of bureaucratic routine to political animators of people-centred adventure. It is about innovative planning preceded by a more innovative self- understanding of what planning, place-making or city-building should be.

5.3 CREATIVE PLANNING

In reference to Landry's work, Sandercock (2003:216-220) also pleads for creative planning that is liberated from the narrow bureaucratic confines of yesteryear. Landry (2000) applies the tools of brainstorming, mind-mapping, visualisation, and imagination. He often applies resources and metaphors that at first glance do not strike you as relevant to planning or spatial design at all. But he lures the creative out as a transforming resource in city-making processes.

Creative planning could also apply the rarely utilised tools of the creative arts – dance, theatre, mime, drama, song, visual arts – to much greater effect. In some Dutch neighbourhoods theatre and the arts are used with great effect, replacing tedious meetings with creative spaces in which to engage local residents in consultative and imaginative ways, often rather informally, interwoven with jazz or theatre performances, soliciting

real and informed inputs about local neighbourhoods and citizens' visions, without it being a threatening or bureaucratic process.

Does what the French priest, MD Chenu, observe about theology, not also apply to planning and city-building: "The greatest tragedy in theology in the past three centuries has been the divorce of the theologian from the poet, the dancer, the musician, the painter, the dramatist, the actress, the movie-maker" (cited in Fox 1983:180)?

It is indeed the gift that these artists and artistic expressions bring that has the potential to transform the way we understand our vocations, our cities, and ourselves. Artists often penetrate the heart of a problem and provide clarity of vision that could just serve the search for a new imagination.

5.4 VISIONARY PLANNING

In planning creative cities, Landry (2000) suggests that planning should be more engaged with a *vision of transformation* than with technicalities such as land-use codes, which take up all the time of some planners. Such a vision should provide broad guidelines that will help facilitate innovative city-building. Such a broad visionary framework will also help to discern the specifics of proposed projects. Landry is of the view that such a visionary approach will go much further to serve the public good. This will indeed constitute a shift from bureaucratic routine to political innovation, which implies visionary leadership.

Sometimes planners coming from a bureaucratic tradition, find the challenge of vision or innovation overwhelming. Jaime Lerner (2000:18), former mayor or Curitiba, Brazil, and an example of visionary city-building, speaks of the need to start where we are, even if we start in small ways: “At the root of major transformations lies a small transformation; that is a small change may be the beginning of a major one”.

He (2000:19) suggests that we need to develop a clear future objective as a real guide for present efforts (cf. Landry 2000).

It means for instance having the bus as the embryo of the subway, having the handrail of a stair up the hill as the basis for the infrastructure in a slum. Having a backyard shop as the basis for

economic change.

That is why we need an urban policy able to generate change now, without having to wait for 20 years for it to happen. The important thing is to make it happen now and then take time to improve on it.

5.5 PLANNERS LIVING WITH PARADOX

Planning is to journey with paradox. It is not just about living with and embracing the paradox, diversity, and ambiguities of the city. It is also and at an even more fundamental level about embracing the paradoxes of one’s own identity/identities, and integrating paradoxes within one’s personal and professional identity.

It might be the paradox of a presumed expert having, at the same time, to be a listening, “not-knowing” learner; or the paradox of urban-suburban, rural-urban, township-inner city realities; or the paradox of African and western consciousness, or cultural diversity; or, like the *flâneur*, being outsider and insider at the same time; central figure and marginal clown; or the journey between individualism and community; between (in)-dependence and interdependence.

In this regard I want to suggest the work of Donald Messer (1989) who suggested a number of paradoxical images to assist ministers of religion in their own self-understanding and understanding of their professional identity.



Could we dare to view planning or city-building for a moment in the broadest sense of the word as a ministry to humanity and creation, embodied in cities and towns, in as far as it is meant to be a servant of instead of a ruler over?

Perhaps I can describe this “ministry / service” in the sense in which Harvey Cox (1965) speaks of it in his classic work *The Secular City*. He suggests that the work of the urban church is the task of healing urban fractures. I would like to suggest that this should at the same time be the work of city planners and city-builders anywhere: to contribute towards healing the urban fractures; to facilitate ways out of fragmentation; to bring about wholeness.

Planners who find themselves at home within institutional religion might find this a helpful metaphor, but my sense is that this could be equally helpful to those who view themselves as “secular servants” without necessarily having a sense

of vocation in a more religious sense. Maybe it is at this point that the artificial distinctions start to fade away. Who would not want to see a world more whole and connected than the one we currently occupy? It might also be useful for planners and faith communities to engage each other in terms of meaningful dialogue and partnership that will help build new and more humane cities.

In returning to Donald Messer, I would like to suggest an adaptation of his five metaphors for those who are involved in planning, city-building, and place-making, as a tool for self-understanding in their journey between paradoxes.

5.5.1 Planners as servant leaders

The first metaphor is that of servant leader (Messer 1989:97-105). The planner should be a servant of the people seeking to contribute to the good of a city in which all people, particularly those

often forgotten, will be “at home”. The sub-title of the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery*, 1997, was “Batho Pele”, which is a Sesotho expression meaning “people first”. Are public servants, but also planners, mindful that what they are actually busy with should be to advance the well-being of people and neighbourhoods? Way too often such consciousness has been replaced by public servants and planners *ruling technocratically through bye-laws and policies*.

Servant leadership is not a weak concept, as some would want to suggest. A posture of humility should not be equated with subservience. Our cities need bold, brave, strategic and innovative leadership more than ever before. What it also requires though is a leadership that is shaped by servanthood expressed in solidarity; a leadership shaped by the very communities served by the planner. It is a leadership that would allow for itself to be transformed by the pain of people’s on-going exclusion, because of its servant journeys of close solidarities. In return, such personal transformation would probably ensure a kind of leadership able to transform the technocratic nature of planning to make it more accessible and inclusive.

Servant leaders are people who will make sure that urban innovation is not restricted only to those with means, but contributing in particular to those who face some of the greatest urban challenges: land

and housing; water and sanitation; education and training; skills and employment. Servant leaders will gear policy towards those who are often forgotten in our cities.

5.5.2 Planners as political mystics

Planning is at the same time a political and a spiritual act, never neutral of the political environment in which it is embedded. Therefore planning also requires “political mystics” (Messer 1989: 116-134).

On the one hand planners should consider very deliberately the ethics and values that (should) drive their planning praxis. Values of community, interdependence, beauty, justice, compassion, and equality, need to be considered and integrated into our planning and urban theories. The sacredness of space and the divine dignity of every human being should be at the core of our planning theory.

Once we have re-affirmed a clear value-based vision for our cities, built on universal principles of justice, humanness, equality and dignity, planners need to help resist everything that affects that vision.

The planner, as political mystic, crosses the divide between natural and social sciences, between hardware and software infrastructure, between concrete plans and compassionate solidarity. Soelle (2001) offers an excellent discussion of

political action and mysticism in her book, *The Silent Cry: On Mysticism and Resistance*.

Not only is an embrace of this paradox potentially helpful to overcome what McAfee Brown speaks of as false dichotomies, but it could also serve as a potential liberating resource for the activist planner at a personal level. The burden of politically-conscientised planning at times becomes such that planners who lack silent and reflective spaces or practices in which to contemplate, meditate or reflect on their actions, might over time lose the original passion with which they entered the planning journey, simply resorting to become bureaucratic functionaries, following the road of least resistance (cf. Oranje 2014). Without being clearly rooted in a certain value framework, and in reflective communities, it would be difficult to sustain advocacy planning or a planning praxis that imagines and makes radical change.

5.5.3 Planners as reflective practitioners

To sustain the paradox of political mysticism or value-based planning activism, probably requires another paradoxical metaphor, namely that of the reflective practitioner. This corresponds to Schön (1983:65) who really pioneered the concept of reflective practice and reflective practitioners, but also with Messer (1989:153-169) describing the “practical theologian” or “practising theologian”.

This is a person that can reflect critically and constructively on her own practice, always considering its impact on humanity and creation. At the same time it is a person whose practice is informed and strengthened by ongoing and rigorous theoretical engagement, as well as engagement with communities affected by our plans. Reflective practitioners are therefore lifelong learners, seeking quite deliberately to root their practices in clear value frameworks.

The planner as reflective practitioner is committed to unassuming reflection and contemplation, but equally committed to bold action in solidarity with those who are often side-lined from conventional planning processes. They embody a praxis-approach in their continuous dance between action-reflection.

5.5.4 Planners as wounded healers

The wounded healer (Messer 1989: 81-96) corresponds with the proposal of “therapeutic planner” (Sandercock 2003:162). Theologian Harvey Cox (1965), in *The Secular City*, proposed as one of the most important functions of the urban church the task to heal urban fractures. Cities are places of deep fracture and fragmentation, dealing wounds at a personal, communal, neighbourhood and systemic level on a daily basis. It does so through intentional and unintentional exclusion, bureaucratic abuse and systematic denial

of access to urban resources for millions of urban dwellers.

The wounded healer, appropriated to planning, suggests planners who are able to go beyond professionalism, bringing their very personal journeys – including their own experiences of suffering and woundedness – into processes of planning and urban engagement (cf. Nouwen 1972). It considers the personal weakness, prejudice and baggage of the planner, and how his / her prejudice, assumptions or personal pain, contribute to the planning process, either negatively or positively. In South African contexts, cities and towns were segregated through race-based planning practices and this legacy will remain with us for decades to come. In this context planning cannot be done in the absence of rigorous self-reflection and collective reflection on issues and discourses of race and class, and how that affects investment, disinvestment and on-going urban spatial fragmentation.

In a sense this raises the question of how grace operates in the debate about space. Professionals that have been deeply wounded by life need to embrace that woundedness even as they relate to communities that they serve through planning. It is our wounds that teach us the value of grace, and that helps us to be in solidarity with other wounded people. Once we know such graceful solidarity, it will be more difficult to hide behind technocratic rhetoric or

bureaucratic rule books.

Once planners and city builders intentionally integrate their own personal narratives into their professional journeys, they might be more able to facilitate soul places, the kind of places that mediate healing and integration, places in which they could see themselves living with their children.

How many planners would live in the neighbourhoods they plan for poor people?

5.5.5 Planners as enslaved liberators

Lastly, Messer (1989: 135-152) speaks of enslaved liberators. On the one hand planners need to recognise their own captivity to a certain cultural paradigm, a certain school of thought or era in planning. We are all children of our own generation. How many planners live in gated communities, too scared to live in the very urban places they planned or designed?

On the other hand, planners need to be facilitators of new freedoms, open to be liberated themselves from their own cultural and other prejudices that shape their notions of the city and city people, and involuntarily how they would plan the city; but also to be liberated from city images and visions that are exclusivist and only affirming of some. The task of the planner should be to become facilitators of new city visions that are affirming of all, based on the sacred

that is present in everybody and everything.

This is the paradox of being trapped in the dominant culture, being beneficiaries of neoliberal capitalism and a neocolonial city, whilst at the same time recognising how unsustainable such a city is, and desiring to free us all from that which tramples the weak (cf. De Beer 2015).

5.5.6 Implications of the contextual-narrative approach for planning education

The implications of the proposed contextual-narrative approach are that it requires new commitments and priorities, new ways of knowing, and new skills, from planners. If we imagine a generation of planners and city-builders who are able to serve humanity and creation in ways that are inclusive, affirming of our communal interdependence, and working towards the essential objective of greater sustainability, then

curriculum development needs to tailor curricula that will facilitate the desired outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and values.

Matthew Fox (1983) speaks of marrying science, art, mysticism and social transformation in our educational programmes. As a creation theologian he suggests that theological institutions should lead the way in going beyond dualisms of all kinds to embrace such an integrated educational model. Similarly, one could argue that if we are to build good cities, soul cities, people's cities, we would do well to develop educational programmes and planning praxes that will combine science (technical knowledge), art (aesthetics, self-expression and beauty), mysticism (spirituality, values, ethics) and social transformation (justice, common good), as the corner stones or pillars on which to build.

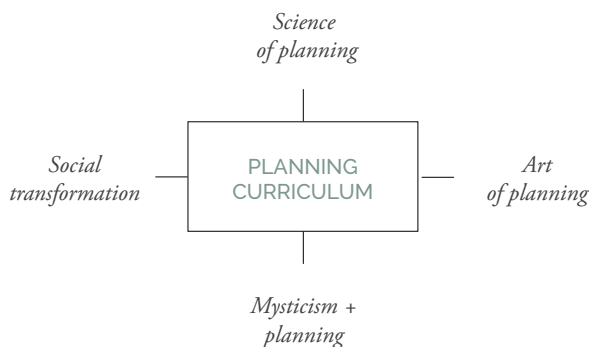


Fig. 51. Planning curriculum.



Fig. 52. Nel, 2015. Marabastad 01.

Chapter 03

A PRAXIS-APPROACH TO CITY MAKING

Critical moments in the urban journey



This chapter serves to concretise the contextual-narrative approach by suggesting a hermeneutical or praxis-cycle (Holland and Henriot 1984) that incorporates four critical moments in the urban journey. The particular approach described here is proposed as a methodology for city-making. It is the same methodology that anchored my research for this study, and the critical moments of this approach form the chapter outline for Part II of this study.

This approach is borrowed from the discipline of grass-root theologians working contextually in Latin American slums with the very poor. Over time it has been used and adapted for various contexts and purposes, in many parts of the world. I reconstruct the cycle to be appropriate in a planning environment. The praxis-cycle I propose has four critical moments.

MOMENT 1

| Entering urban space

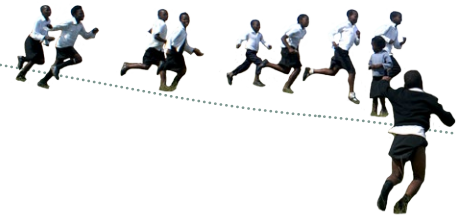
The first deliberate moment is the moment of insertion or immersion, in which the planner is exposed to communities, entering in a “not-knowing” way and finding his / her way into the labyrinths of knowledge and experience already present in the host community. In this moment many questions, struggles and hopes, will surface, not only from within the community but the planner will also be confronted with his or her own fears, prejudices and possible aspirations.



MOMENT 2

| Reading urban space

In the second moment the questions that surfaced before need to be analysed, explored and deconstructed. The stories of people and communities are listened to and heard, and the broader socio-cultural narratives (cf. Bons-Storm 1989) explored. Metaphors, symbols and rituals that sustain, or oppress, the local community, might be retrieved in this moment. The planner now delves deeper than what they confronted sometimes superficially in the first moment, asking the “why”-question very often. Quantitative or empirical research could be done alongside qualitative enquiry.



MOMENT 3
| Imagining urban space

The third moment of the planning process provides the opportunity to reflect on the exposure, narratives and facts that have surfaced, to discern between the paradoxes, and to imagine the city or community that could be. In this moment the planner should be intentional about being reflective. At the same time this could be a creative phase, applying the tools of people like Landry and others. What is important is that this moment, not unlike the other moments, should be very deliberate in allowing for creative participation in which the diverse people of a local community have an opportunity to share their own knowledges, fears, aspirations and dreams. Careful attention must be given to invite the voices of those mostly unheard.

MOMENT 4
| Co-constructing urban space

The fourth phase of the process is when the collective imagination that started to unfold in the previous moment needs to be translated into design. At this stage of the process strategic interventions need to be proposed, and this is also the time for the audacious and creative interventions previously proposed. Innovation, artistry and strategy need to come together at this point in order to co-construct preferred realities in the context of various urban challenges and problems. It is also the difficult moment of negotiating the art of the possible. What are realistic initial steps that can be taken en route to the ultimate vision?



Fig. 53. Nel, 2017. Moments.

At its core: the spirit of the planning process



These four moments flow from a prior value-commitment to journey in a certain way with communities, in order to empower and facilitate wholeness. Said differently, these four moments and the cycle itself should have at its core a spirituality, or value base, that informs the whole cycle. This is what drives the planner, or what holds the praxis-cycle together, gearing it continuously towards empowered and whole urban people, neighbourhoods and systems.

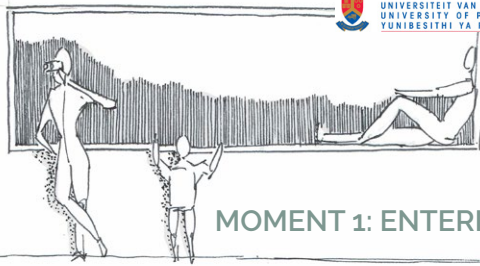
We can understand the cycle's orientation towards empowerment and wholeness through listening to how Soelle (2001:111) defines empowerment.

Empowerment is the new, feminist horizon wherein creation is seen as power that shares itself. We shall understand the divine power of creation correctly when we detach it from the images of patriarchal power to command and experience it - in the image of Hildegard von Bingen - as viriditas (green power), the life-energy that shares itself. This energy causes all creatures to shine in the beauty of their

perfection. "The way we are, we are members of each other. All of us. Everything. The difference ain't in who is a member and who is not, but in who knows it and who don't." These words tell of the mystical, non-hierarchical relationship of all living things, which is a cosmic bond that leads onward to ecojustice.

The cycle assumes on-going assessment during and after every moment and especially after the fourth moment, which implies implementation. It proposes an on-going process of immersion, engagement, reading, analysis, discernment, imagining, construction, community-building, assessment, and back again to the drawing board. It facilitates deepening relationships and interventions, taking us beyond bureaucratic and superficial planning exercises. It is in line with Lerner's suggestion that we should act now, within the boundaries of what we know best, and then spend the next 20 years to turn that which we piloted into the best it could be (cf. Lerner 2000:18).

Fig. 54. Nel, 2017. Dreaming of identity.
Fig. 55. (opposite) Nel, 2017. Ways of being.



MOMENT 1: ENTERING URBAN SPACE...

This section considers the possible postures of entering urban space.

1.1 AS “FLÂNEUR”...

One of the metaphors used by philosopher Walter Benjamin (1982) was that of the *flâneur*. I suggest this figure as a possible metaphor for entering the city. The *flâneur* has its social basis in journalism: to read and observe urban life as well as discover coincidental details within the standardised existence of the masses. The presentation and absorption of news, as done by journalists, happened “al flanerend” (Boomkens 1998:108).

In journalism there is the curious mix of distance and closeness / intimacy; of feeling at home, yet being part of the anonymity and standardisation of the masses. The journalist, as with the *flâneur*, is at the same time observer / spectator / voyeur, and also participant of urban life. That is the art of journalism: to observe and discern within this paradox of distance and closeness, the details that distinguish movements and happenings of the masses (Boomkens 1998:111).

As we enter urban space we find ourselves within the paradox of urban life; observing and participating, reading and being read. The very identity of the *flâneur*

carries within it this same ambiguity: being spectators and observers of urban life; yet at the same time being the powerless prey of anonymous glances and keen observations of the urban masses. Boomkens (1998:111) speaks of it as “kijken en bekeken worden” (to look and to be looked at). There is a similarity with the earlier suggestion: that we can only know as we are known. Meaningful engagement requires mutual exchange.

The *flâneur* is not only an ambiguous figure but also a transit figure; not only a newcomer in the city, but also a newcomer in a social and professional sense (Boomkens 1998:103; 106). S/he moved in the threshold space between market and utopia, reality and imagination, traditional and modern (and post-modern). S/he represents and captures within her/himself a paradox of unlikely and even contradictory socio-cultural roles. S/he is at the same time marginal and central in the socio-cultural narrative of the time (as spectator, outsider, and co-author).

In a professional sense the *flâneur* is an in-between figure who searched for identity, somewhere between aristocracy and a new

professional connectedness with the masses in their anonymity. Unlike the 20th century artists or intellectuals that self-consciously developed new methods or styles of practice (Boomkens 1998:106) the *flâneur* operated at a different level. Instead of professional pretence they became like observers (Boomkens 1998:107) participating anonymously with the masses in urban life. Rather than fitting everything they saw or thought they knew into tight methods, they were fascinated precisely by that which remained out of reach for most rational methods (Boomkens 1998:107): the mystery, the coincidence, that which cannot easily be known.

In speaking about Bohemian Paris, Boomkens (1998:103) quotes Jerrold Siegel, who described it as follows: “They lived in Bohemia because they could not – or not yet – establish a citizenship anywhere else. Ambitious, dedicated, but without means and unrecognised, they had to turn life itself into an art”.

| 104

The city does not easily let itself be known. Benjamin’s *flâneur* had a sense of this, measuring the urban condition therefore by elevating life to an art, by allowing oneself to be “enchanted: with a childlike feeling for magic, when you observe the urban masses, just to become horrified again by their intense anonymity” (Boomkens 1998:106).

The *flâneur* indeed moved between

the paradoxes of urban life, becoming a paradox in itself: living between the magic of the masses and the lonely anonymity of the individual; between community and isolation; between distance and intimacy. Their way of being had to do with the changing historical and sociological context they found themselves in, where shifts occurred from traditional society to modernity, and the status of intellectuals and artists within this changing (new) world was unclear.

The deconstruction of society as it was known created the *flâneur*, as a curious in-between figure. In the deconstruction of planning today, we might find the *flâneur* a helpful metaphor for entering the city, not having all the answers but journeying with the paradoxes of urban life, a participant observer, with a childlike sense for magic, and the openness to be surprised.

1.2 ...WITH THE EYES OF A CHILD...



Borrowing from the *flâneur*, those tasked with the planning and facilitation of urban places, would do well to embrace the paradoxes, to adopt a “not-knowing” attitude,

Fig. 56. Nel, 2017. With the eyes of a child.

and to recover a sense of awe and an openness for surprise. Walking in the city like a *flâneur*, is to walk with the eyes of a child.

Rilke (1986:55) speaks of the fact that knowledge is never objective, but rooted in our subjective experience. Therefore she asks why we do not “continue to look at it all as a child would, as if you were looking to something unfamiliar, out of the depths of your own world”.

Is the familiarity with our city not often the problem, presuming that we know it all; misjudging the mysterious and evasive complexities surrounding us?

It is of course a question, as asked also by Dorothee Soelle (2001:91): “Can amazement, the radical wonderment of the child, be learned again?”.

Her suggestion is that such learning could only happen in the context of something like “meditation”, which is to embrace “a form of stopping and tarrying wherein individuals or communities intentionally set aside for themselves times and places other than the ordinary ones” (Soelle 2001:91).

Entering the city with the eyes of a child would mean entering softly, quietly, almost meditatively, in order to find the capacity to wonder and be amazed again.

Juliao Mutemba was a priest in Bagamoya, Maputo. In a course

on reading the city he was asked to walk around the block three times, observing, analysing, discerning (retold by his colleague and friend, Swedish priest Pelle Soderback). To Juliao this exercise did not make sense, as this has been his community for many years. He knew it all. Until he walked the walk – this time with different eyes, observing every detail, as the *flâneur*: an insider, but at once a stranger and an outsider; *with the eyes of a child*: seeing as if never seen before, and open to be surprised. On his return he mentioned that he would never look at his neighbourhood in the same way again (Institute for Urban Ministry: 2003). Familiarity sometimes deprives us of magic, surprise, wonder.

We should never seek to capture the city as if we can fully understand its depths, just as we can never capture God or the Mysterious Other. Knowledge is an on-going journey of self-discovery and other-discovery; of re-imagining and re-naming and recovery. Looking with the eyes of a child will help us to keep a sense of awe, which is a prerequisite for on-going and deepening learning.

In his interpretation of history, “magic” (“magiese”) is a key category for Benjamin, and not at all isolated from cognitive or rational knowledge. He likens it to his appreciation of childhood in which spontaneous imagination is still able to make links between observation and actions,

in active and creative ways. Spontaneous childlike imagination is making connections that spill over in “imagined” action that has the power to transform. Fox (1981:22) says: “Children’s cognition had revolutionary power because it was tactile, and hence tied to action”. But, asks Fox (1981:227): “(h)ow do adults make themselves child-like without being childish?”

Fox suggests that “(p)lay is the key. And art is the result of play”. He suggests that adults have lost the ability to be imaginative, because they have lost the ability to play: “A paternalistic culture is dangerous because it takes itself so seriously and in the process aborts all imagination and all ways out of our folly and man-made (sic) problems” (Fox 1983: 227).

He refers to the poet Baudelaire who maintained that the artists could “recover childhood at will”, perhaps because the artist retained something of the child within.

Fox (1983:227) says that adults who lost “the child in them will never participate in the God-given delight of cosmogenesis”. In order to participate in the playful and creative acts of birthing life-affirming spaces, and in order to delight in participating in the sustenance of the cosmic womb, we have no alternative than to cultivate the child within.

Benjamin (1982) hopes to help his readers become better observers, able to see with greater depth into

historical processes. He is looking for the place where consciousness and memory will transcend into subconscious and dream, in the non-linear world of images and senses. It is in this context that Benjamin (Boomkens 1998:90) also applies the world of the child or child-like imagination. He speaks of the child’s ability “het nieuwe zich opnieuw te herinneren” (to call the new anew into memory) (Boomkens 1998:90).

It is not just the positive childhood experiences that are important. Benjamin’s own memory of Paris, compared to the childhood of modern experience in Boomkens’ analysis, led him to imagine a better city. Also the ruins of our childhood might often be the memory that helps us to imagine a new present and future.

1.3 ...IMAGINING...



Fig. 57. Nel, 2017. Head in the clouds.

The kind of imagination that Benjamin spoke of was not a childish, impotent dream. For him imagination had an important function in the historical and critical task of awakening or conscientising. The role of imagination with the child

is to awaken him or her to the manifold possibilities of life. But the critical task, Benjamin felt, was the assimilation of these imagined / dream elements into an awakening that will help shape a new reality.

Unwin and Parker's vision of the garden suburb imagined a place where the poor shall teach the rich and the rich shall help the poor to help themselves. It was a vision of communality and mutuality (Hall 1988:103); of a community that resembled a "day-to-day co-existence which would sooner heal the estrangement of the classes" (Creese 1966:239; Hall 1988:104).

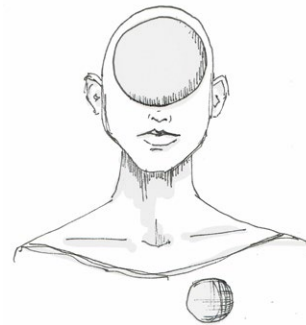
The vision of the garden city is an example of a potent dream; of imagination that awakened a new consciousness and facilitated new and hopeful communities. Yet, the success of the garden city carried within it the seed of its own self-defeat; so successful was it that it soon became a tool for gentrification and exclusion. This could be compared with Harlem and other success stories where urban communities transformed themselves, but eventually this led to renewed lack of access for the poor and vulnerable (Hall 1988:104). This reality justifies more conscious reflection.

It is important to note that imagining is not just a future exercise. The art of imagining relies on the ability to call into memory, to remember. It is when we remember

that we are able to imagine and envision a new future. Ruins often serve as catalysts for visions. The decaying 19th century Paris represents the destructive power of modern history, but also plays a powerful role in articulating a collective dream of an imaginary world that could be better (Boomskens 1998:91). The oppressions of Latin America and South Africa gave birth to collective visions and powerful imaginations of societies that could be.

In his / her journey into urban communities, the planner would do well not to sidestep particularly struggling areas, because it is often here that the most creative responses to urban struggle are developed, precisely because the crisis demands innovation. Struggling urban areas have the potential to be studios of hope and change.

1.4 ...NURTURING INTUITION...



It is important that the exercise of imagination disciplines itself with the qualities of the *flâneur* and the child. It should be an imagination rooted in memory, in local stories and people, in the dreams

Fig. 58. Nel, 2017. Heart and mind

and imaginations already at work locally. Pile and Thrift (2000:308) suggest that they are not seeking for grand theories about the city or for the “deep inner meanings”, but rather “for the clues to the pattern of interaction, clues that allow us to gain a practical hold on the situation”. The smallest details of the city can be clues as to the patterns of meaning. In our quest for master plans we often miss out on the obvious or not-so-obvious clues that lie in the local detail.

These clues Pile and Thrift speak of are the trademarks of an intuitive knowledge, or a practical wisdom (cf. Müller 2003:296). Local people often have an intuitive sense of what will work and what not. Intuitive knowledge is often present amongst long-term urban residents. Pile and Thrift (2000:308) describe it well: “Their convoluted knowledge of the city and its inhabitants resist systematisation, but knowledge it is; a kind of practical knowledge powered up”.

Therefore the importance of affirming and inviting such intuition or local knowledge into urban planning, design and imaginative processes cannot be underestimated. Intuition should be at the heart of imagination.

Pile and Thrift (2000:309) speak of the detective, *flâneur*, and journalist, as “seekers after clues”. Making good urban places might require a new ability to seek and find the clues, the details, and

intuitive knowledge that can help shape a new imagination that can be concretised. It requires planners and facilitators that rely on hardware but also on software, on rational knowledge but also on intuitive wisdom, because both (hard- and software, knowledge and intuition, reason and emotion, expert and citizen) will collectively contribute to the story of the city.

1.4 ...SEEKING / CHOOSING COMMUNITY...

The expert-driven planning model

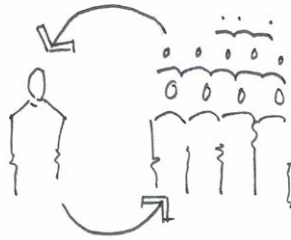


Fig. 59. Nel, 2017: Exchange.

and praxis has often been a private, individualist enterprise, not creating community, not inviting community wisdom, even at the expense of community. In my proposed approach, the planner or place-maker needs to choose, seek and build community. This involves concepts such as participatory planning models, participatory democracy, citizens’ engagement in planning, and so forth. But a vision of radical and real community participation complicates processes as it would also allow the emotive aspects of the community’s experiences to surface.

What was missing from most of the planning literature is the

recognition of the need for a language and a process of emotional involvement, of embodiment (Sandercock 2003:163). What is needed are planning processes that allow the “whole” person to be involved, and that create space for emotions to surface, and even to inform the outcome of the process (Sandercock 2003:163).

Most planners try their best to keep planning processes as clinical and sterile as possible, ruling out the possibility or desirability of emotional expression. The challenge in diverse contexts is not to down-play, avoid or transcend difference, but to acknowledge it and to engage with it (Sandercock 2003:165). Such difference might include different experiences, different ways of expression, and the likelihood of conflict.

Sandercock (2003:76) refers to Forester’s (1989:1999) acknowledgement, that

in planning practice reason and emotion, fact and feeling, are usually tightly entwined, and anger and fear are always close at hand because people have large stakes, emotional and financial, in the built environment. In many situations, planners are dealing as much with people’s passions as with their own earnest technical predictions.

Forester emphasises the importance of listening, and Sandercock speaks of this as gaining knowledge through honest dialogue. It could rightly be asked however, if planners truly deal with people’s passions, or whether these are

dismissed as undesirable for a good planning process.

What is important is “(t)The creation of a safe space in which parties could meet and speak without fear of being dismissed, attacked, or humiliated” (Sandercock 2003:161).

Such spaces will affirm the community and its important contribution, and will create mutuality between planner and community.

In line with the previous paragraphs about intuitive knowledge, Polanyi (1962) asserts that people usually know more than they can actually say. Sandercock speaks of it as “knowledge from experience” (Sandercock 2003:77). Part of the planner’s task is to affirm and tap into that knowledge.

Particularly when they are working with disempowered communities who have always received messages about their ignorance and/or inferiority, planners need to begin the process of communication by helping people to articulate what they already know. This can be as simple as sitting at someone’s kitchen table and saying “tell me about your street / village / neighbourhood”

(Sandercock 2003:77-78)

When we create honest spaces for reflection, expression and exchange, affirming every participant and his/her contribution equally, valuing the knowledge and wisdom coming from communities, and being transparent about our own lack of understanding, then something of a therapeutic moment could occur

(Sandercock 1998:162-166). Such planning would enhance a sense of community. It would be planning as embodiment or embodied planning; messy, in community.

1.6 ...IN THE LABYRINTH/S; JOURNEYS OF ADVENTURE

Rendell (2000:130) says that “(K)nowledge is labyrinthine. In writing the city, I am writing myself...”. And this is an on-going process, as black kultuv (1990:7) writes about it: “Myself, woman, womb, with grilled windows, veiled eyes. Tortuous streets, secret cells, labyrinths and more labyrinths”.

The planner who embraces the labyrinthine nature of the journey opens him/herself to a world of surprise. At first the labyrinth presents us with a deceptive analogy: the environment in which we move seems to be the same wherever we go; but it is precisely this deception that gets us lost.

In describing how people find their way around cities, and what tools people use to read the city, different metaphors are used. Some prefer the metaphor of rats in a maze, borrowed from experimental psychology (Tonkiss 2000:1). But Tonkiss (2000:1) suggests that “(P)art of the art, or science, of making maps is the possibility of losing one’s way”.

Tonkiss (2000:1) continues to say that “cities are more fluid than mazes... It isn’t always necessary to

follow the prescribed routes. It isn’t always sensible”.

Tonkiss actually suggests the possibility and the gift of losing one’s way. Benjamin is not suggesting ways out of the labyrinth. In his *Parisian passages* (1982) the masses *become* the modern urban labyrinth. The passages represent the threshold between public and private, the connection between seemingly irreconcilable opposites. Benjamin explores ways in which to find one’s way in the labyrinth. Somehow the planner is challenged with the task not of undoing the chaos and ambiguities of the city, which is an impossible enterprise, but to find one’s way creatively and constructively in and through these.

Many planning professionals choose to avoid the labyrinth in which they seldom walk, neither get lost – through avoiding participatory planning; through inserting planning schemes that do not make sense of the labyrinthine nature of communities; through withdrawing into their own gated communities (either physically or in their minds); and through offering blueprints that negate the details – and detours – of local stories.

Instead of walking, searching and losing themselves in urban labyrinths, they escape and explain; instead of integration they reinforce dichotomies of wealth and poverty, public and private; instead of artistry they resort to official

bureaucracy.

“Leren leven in het labrynt” (learning to live in the labyrinth) forms the central tenet in the passage-work of Benjamin; learning to live in the chaos of the city, in the paradoxes of urban life. The labyrinthine journey is a process of learning, swinging between desperate attempts to survive on the one hand, and momentary sensations of embrace, being secure, or homecoming on the other (Boomkens 1998:92).

In Berlin, Benjamin had such an experience, finding his way through the city, getting a grasp of it, and experiencing something of being at home, and being homeless (“ontheemd”) at the same time. Eventually he leaves Berlin full of despair, and chooses to (re-) activate the memory of his childhood dreams, locating himself in Paris, finding his way through the streets, summarising the first attempt of the child-like masses to get moving on the streets, the boulevards, the passages of Paris. But it was Paris as labyrinth that he recalls, a labyrinth full of lost souls (Boomkens 1998:98), “een dwaalwereld” (a world of wanderers).

Wie er de weg niet weet, zal nooit ergens aankomen. Maar wie weet te dwalen, die zal het labrynth weten te bewonen. Prezies in de paradoxale samhang van dwalen en wonen ontwikkelt Benjamin zijn begrip van modern ervaring, van moderne identiteit...
(Boomkens 1998:98)

(The one who does not know his/her way, will never arrive anywhere. But the one who knows that s/he is wandering, will know how to live in the labyrinth. Precisely in the paradoxical coherence of wandering and inhabiting Benjamin develops his idea of modern experience, of modern identity... (Literal translation))

In experiencing Berlin and Paris, Benjamin learns how to live with uncertainties; how to embrace chaos. It is a perpetual paradox / cycle of journey and habitation, where you never actually arrive, where you are always a sojourner somewhere between homecoming and homelessness.

We are walking this “errant path: without clear limits, plots or storylines, embracing this ‘amazing grace’. The loss of limits and boundaries and the discovering of endless connections” (Taylor 1984:62). Once we arrive at this place, it is indeed a place of grace; since it opens up new opportunities to be surprised, by the stranger, by the detour, by the details.

MOMENT 2: READING URBAN SPACE

The first and second moments correspond with the narrative insistence on listening and deconstructing (cf. 4.2.1 & 4.2.2). Reading urban space is the rigorous discipline of reading various texts, listening to diverse voices, and deconstructing layers of meaning.

2.1 READING FROM THE MARGINS...



A contextual-narrative planning paradigm is intentional about reading from the margins. This means to listen carefully to the voices of people living on the margins. Marinda Schoonraad (2002:65-70) was asked to deliver a paper on the theme: “Are cities built for women?” She chose to broaden the theme to include “the other”, all those vulnerable or often excluded groups for which cities are not intentionally built. How will our reading of the city differ, if we read the city with those others, and through their eyes? Reading urban space has to make the invisible visible.

The Biblical prophets are known for their sharp analysis of society. The yardstick that they used time and time again was to ask what society – government, economics, religion – did to its most vulnerable members: the poor, the stranger, widows and orphans, children and slaves.

To read from the margins once again affirms the importance of reading with the eyes of the child; but this time the metaphor should be stretched to include reading through the eyes of all those who are not mainstreamed in planning processes. If their voices can be heard and their concerns and proposals entertained and integrated in urban plans, how different will the city look?

Reading from the margins also implies, once more, to read with the innocence of a child, with the expectation of magic and surprise, of a good world, with the dream-like imagination of a better tomorrow. Reading from the margins will always lure us into the collective lament of those deprived from urban well-being because of unjust urban systems (cf. Rah 2015). Lament and imagination go hand in hand. Imagination often becomes re-birthed in moments of agonising lament.

Reading from the margins requires planners to position themselves specifically and intentionally, not neutrally, which is a political act but also a spiritual / moral / ethical act. It seeks to awaken a consciousness of society for those who are

Fig. 60. Nel, 2017. Reading.

excluded or invisible, placing them on the agenda (political act), but it also seeks to affirm the dignity of those who are dehumanised and excluded, and to affirm the image of God in them, retrieving theological language (spiritual act). It assumes a position of deep respect in the way Richard Sennett (2003) speaks of it in reflecting on the housing projects of inner city Chicago.

Law and Da Costa Marques (2000:119-121) write about invisibility, referring to the way in which people deny the existence of beggars at their windows, or homeless people on the streets. They suggest that such denial is either a result of lack of recognition, or because recognition is too real. We deny the existence of a reality because we do not know or because we know too well. They speak of the second denial, not as “civil” inattention based on deference but as “civic” inattention, “(n)ot attending to those who do not belong” (Law & Da Costa Marques 2000:121).

They suggest that there is a rare place in between not knowing and knowing too well, which can be both interesting and disturbing, and in there “vision is possible for a moment” (Law & Da Costa Marques 2000:121).

The task of planners and those of alternative consciousness should be to create those moments in between – to help people into the gaps between not-knowing

and knowing too well, where they could be interested, disturbed and considerate of a new and alternative vision. Brave planners will dare to create spaces where those not recognised will meet in circles with those who choose not to recognise them, sharing stories of fear and hope, humanising both the ignored and those who ignore.

Planners have a task to read from the margins, and to help others read from the margins. They have a responsibility to introduce the unheard voices from the margins in ways that will awaken those who have become numb. Cornel West (2014) speaks of it as the task of “allow(ing) suffering to speak”.

Law and Da Costa Marques (2000:229-230) relate an incident in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. Expensive apartments were to be built in Sao Conrado. The target market for purchasing these apartments was rich business people. The marketing brochure showed the apartments close to the beach and in the background a hilly green landscape. Where the green open space was in the picture, was indeed no open space. One of the largest and best-known favelas of the city, Rocinha, with more than a hundred thousand people, was located right there.

As absurd as it might sound, a possible explanation offered by Law and Da Costa Marques (2000:230), is the fact that these favelas were not indicated on the official maps of Rio de Janeiro

(although, that is to give the marketers very generous benefit of the doubt!).

Until very recently the favelas were regarded as temporary dwellings. These temporary dwellings, it is true, house three million of the ten million inhabitants of Rio. But even so, they were treated as something that would shortly be removed. No official property tax was being levied on them. So obviously they did not exist.

Most planners do not live in unrecognised urban neighbourhoods that cannot even be traced on maps. Yet, they have to plan for these neighbourhoods, or they plan around them as if they do not exist. And ignoring such neighbourhoods does not necessarily affect them physically or at the level of their consciousness, perhaps because they have never been lost in the labyrinth of forgotten neighbourhoods. Reading from the margins requires losing oneself in the labyrinth of disparate cities, and paradoxical realities.

2.2 ...DECONSTRUCTING OFFICIAL NARRATIVES...



For many years (1993-2002) the dominant discourse about inner cities in South Africa is that of “decay”, “slums”, and so forth. And the dominant vision is “to get feet back”. What this really means is that black (and poor) residents were now in the majority, and

white business disinvested. Black in this discourse too often equalled decay and white business equalled “salvation”. Even ruling party politicians want feet back in neighbourhoods where thousands of people already live, but seemingly invisibly.

Today, in places like Woodstock and Salt River in Cape Town, and Maboneng and Braamfontein in Johannesburg, regeneration, renewal and revitalisation became the buzz-words, with a new confidence in the possibility of positive inner city change. A “pioneer” generation of gentrifiers reclaims the city, and although much of what they do are innovative and exciting, they often show deep disregard for the way in which their interventions displace poor and vulnerable people, instead of making them part of adventurous new city-making processes.

Often the reclamation projects of inner cities are spearheaded by campaigns against crime and grime, and the physical waste is way too often removed along with homeless people, without the average citizen asking where homeless or low-income people have gone to. We live in a society where large percentages of urban populations are regarded as dispensable and treated as such in urban regeneration processes.

In a magazine article the headline reads “SA Cities seek salvation in regeneration” (Le Roux 2005). It refers to the regeneration of our



Fig. 61. Nel, 2017. Deconstruct.



Fig. 62. Eisner, 1986, Backdrop.

inner cities, with Johannesburg's CBD at the forefront. It does not assess the impact of booming property prices and regeneration on the poor and low-income residents of the inner city. It speaks of salvation without social justice. Crime, grime, illegal immigrants, the poor, unwanted elements, is the discourse that is now replaced by urban renewal, world-class city, Africa's leading capital.

Cape Town is a good case in point. In the past few years, Cape Town became South Africa's inner city "success story". One after the other office blocks were converted into luxury loft apartments and the inner city became a zone of choice for business and upmarket residents alike. In telling the official story, nobody speaks of the displacement of street children and homeless people to neighbouring communities causing the social fabric of host neighbourhoods already under pressure, to be at even greater risk. It does not quantify or qualify how much of the growth and new wealth actually trickled down to the Cape Flats and neighbouring communities

Leonie Sandercock (2003:119) speaks of the Cape Town reality, saying that it was

...seek(ing) to restructure urban space into a sophisticated consumption environment (with an eye on the tourist market), has a focus on security and law enforcement, with 8.5 million Rand initially allocated for surveillance equipment, rather than focussing on addressing the social problems of the inner city.

The same approach is evident in Johannesburg, Pretoria and other South African cities. Sandercock (2003:119), with reference to Cape Town, frames the challenges as planning dictated by white fears for an emerging black population. However, although the centrality of white capital is often evident, in both Johannesburg and Pretoria it is also black policy-makers succumbing to the temptation of militarised space and foreign investment, at the expense of local people and communities, failing to intervene politically in order to safeguard people's on-going residence and full integration in communities being regenerated.

2.3 ...DISCOVERING LOCAL WISDOM; RETRIEVING LOCAL NARRATIVES...

Central in a reading of the city, should be the need to sit with local people and to learn from local knowledge. Sandercock (2003:79) suggests that there is

the lingering belief... that local knowledge is 'tainted' by self-interest: that is, by the passions, whether greed, love, attachment, anger, faith, power, prestige, beauty. I suggest that many planners, because of their positivist training, are afraid of the presence of these emotions in the community, do not know how to deal with their emotion in the midst of what is meant to be rational deliberation, and therefore choose to hide behind the apparent safety and alleged objectivity of data. We are a profession in a state of arrested emotional development.

Residents of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of Tshwane's

inner city know their way around the Burgers Park, a public open space. Yet, decisions about closing certain gates were made without dialogue with residents. The real problems facing the Park and its use(rs) are not addressed: cleanliness over weekends, run-down children's play area, lax security guards, and crime problems in surrounding illegal residential facilities. When there is dialogue it is antagonistic and none of the suggestions coming from residents and community organisations are considered in political decisions regarding the Park.

Obviously there are also other (political or economic) agendas or forces at work in decision-making about public spaces that are not always transparent. Therefore dialogue and public participation are not always honest and are often unpopular interferences with such (hidden) agendas.

The Biblical anecdote about the local wisdom found with a poor man in a small city applies. The predictable response to – or rather denial of – his wisdom is a sobering reminder of our own reality.

I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: there was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. Now there lived in that city a poor man but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. So I said, "wisdom is better than strength". But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no

longer heeded
(Ecclesiastes 9:13-16)

Elsewhere I have argued for a community-based urban praxis based on the retrieval of local knowledge and wisdom, asking the question: Whose knowledges shape the city? (De Beer 2014).

2.4 READING SYMBOLIC, NONVERBAL LANGUAGE

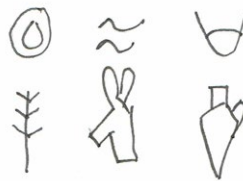


Fig. 63. Nel, 2017. Nonverbal languages

One of the most powerful languages in world cities today is the language of graffiti artists. In Stockholm, Sweden, there is a female community priest, originally from Chile. She is still most fluent in Spanish, after many years in Stockholm, and she still speaks Swedish like a Latino. But her friends and companions are the youth of the immigrant communities in Stockholm, and she learns much about them and their journey, from their art on the city's walls. Although she cannot speak Swedish fluently she has learnt to understand the vernacular of public art and it helps her to read her community well.

Michael Mata is a planner, pastor and theological educator from Los Angeles. Mata (2000) emphasises the importance of being able to

read the city. He says that he can tell who will be killed next and by which gang through being able to read the graffiti on the city's walls.

Are planners “multilingual” or “multi-literate” enough to be able to read the language of these sub-cultures? And how does it inform the way in which they go about their planning or design processes? What does it tell them about the dynamics, struggles or morale of local communities? How do they include such groups in planning processes, communal discernment, and actual design? How do they make space for the vernaculars often not expressed or understood by mainstream society?

It is not just about reading what has already become “text”. We also have to engage the arts and other media to assist us in our processes of urban planning and design, where we are still creating

“texts”. In terms of the exclusion of people living with disabilities from our urban spaces, the penny only dropped for me in a very real sense, when I was exposed to integrated dance. We were working with a professional dance company that merged people living with and without physical disability into the same dance programme, beautifully showing the integration of (dis)ability through the arts. Suddenly I read our own spaces, church facilities, and the theatre in which they had to perform, in a new way, through their eyes and experiences. If they are not part of the planning process, the chances are almost complete that they will be excluded from the plan.

Music, paintings, poetry and theatre, all carry with them commentary that is worth listening to, if we are to read the city and its culture well.

MOMENT 3: IMAGINING URBAN SPACE

Moment 3 corresponds with the contextual-narrative approach's emphasis on imagination. This is a reflective moment in which experiences, stories, figures, facts and both local and technical knowledges, are brought together for consideration. Through reflection with local communities and people, space is imagined in terms of what it could be and do for people.

117 |

3.1 A HERMENEUTIC OF SUSPICION AND A HERMENEUTIC OF HUNGER

Exponents of contextual, liberationist or feminist traditions use a hermeneutic of suspicion, which is “a form of ideological critique” (Soelle 2001:46). It is a hermeneutic that “begins by suspecting every text, every tradition, in terms of its legitimising role in promoting the domination of the particular tradition” (Soelle 2001:46).



Dorothee Soelle (2001:47) speaks of the way in which women today know that all Biblical texts for example are written from within a patriarchal social structure with related implications. She wonders, however, if this rightful suspicion in itself is enough to lead us out to a new place? She is afraid of a critical consciousness that might only lead to despair, hopelessness, and paralysis. Instead she suggests that it is not suspicion but hunger that leads people in the developing world to seek for alternatives: the hunger for bread and liberation. Similarly it is not suspicion but a hunger for spirituality that leads people in the developed world to seek for alternatives. She argues for a hermeneutic of suspicion to be complemented by a hermeneutic of hunger.

A contextual-narrative approach takes an implicitly suspicious look at grand narratives and official discourses. It analyses them for what they fail to say, and for whom they exclude from the discourse. But there is the danger of a paralysis of analysis. That is the concern of Soelle as well. A hermeneutic of suspicion should help us to develop a critical consciousness and a sound critique. But then we need a hermeneutic of hunger

– for soul spaces, beauty, community, dignity, equity, justice – to take us beyond suspicion and a critical consciousness to imagination and a hopeful or alternative consciousness.

3.2 CRITICAL IMAGINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS



It is in our mutual hunger for the common good, for soul spaces, that we might find it possible to imagine an alternative. But a prerequisite would be how we enter the city. Because unless we create spaces for our own numbness to be awakened, this mutual hunger would not be felt, and a common vision not be imagined.

Sandercock (2003:2) shares her dream with her readers.

I am dreaming cosmopolis, my utopia, a construction site of the mind, a city/region in which there is genuine acceptance of, connection with, and respect and space for the cultural Other, and the possibility of working together on matters of common destiny, the possibility of a togetherness in difference. But I also want to practise utopia. A city politics of possibility and hope. I want to outline a planning imagination for the 21st century that is utopian and critical, creative and audacious.

Fig. 64. Nel 2017. Hermeneutic
Fig. 65. Nel 2017. Alternative consciousness

Could we dream of a planning practice that would include dream and work, contemplation and action, reflection and practice, mysticism and politics, ethics and space, soul and body? This would take us beyond so-called neutral planning to an engagement that is rooted in certain ethical values (spirituality) and committed to certain political ideals (social justice; the common good). Sandercock (2003:61) offers contemplation as another “new” source of knowledge. Mysticism has always argued that the most worthy knowledge is attained “through contemplation and meditation, and communicable only through poetic image and metaphor”.

Much of what was said in the first two moments would now come into play. Through contemplative reflection on the initial moments

in our journey into communities, we could start to see the outline of a new imagination. The deconstruction of official discourses would already expose myth and evoke new images of what could be. The awe and surprise of unexpected knowledges and beauty, present and at work in urban communities, would offer the resources for a new imagination. The new mutuality emerging from dialogue and participation in communities, would present the partners that could turn new images into reality.

It is really only in the context of communities that such an alternative imagination / consciousness can be birthed, developed, grown and sustained (cf. 2.4.2 below). In chapters 8 and 9 of Part II I discuss such communities of resistance and reconstruction that could simultaneously become communities of hope.

MOMENT 4: CONSTRUCTING URBAN SPACE

4.1 REGENERATION: between resistance and reconstruction

The most current discourse on inner cities uses the language of “regeneration”, “renewal” or “revitalisation”. Regeneration is even offered as salvation for the problems of the inner city (Le Roux 2005). Yet, it has become clear that regeneration is not a neutral term and practice, but often excludes vulnerable groups from its vision and determination to regenerate the city. It works with a strong modernist ideology of economic growth and the envisaged trickle-down effect, which still has to be demonstrated anywhere in the world. It often displaces problems elsewhere, without necessarily transforming communities from the inside out, in ways that are integrated and wholly inclusive.

I would not necessarily do away with “regeneration” as a term or a goal, but would argue for

an alternative vision of what such regeneration should entail. My proposal is for a vision of

regeneration that will hold resistance and reconstruction together. Some who struggled for political liberation in South Africa and other parts of Africa, have replaced a liberation- or resistance-agenda with an agenda of reconstruction. Yet, often they have embraced the new political paradigm rather uncritically, and replaced a hermeneutic of suspicion with a hermeneutic of idealism. Theologians such as Mugambi (1995) and Villa-Vicencio (1992), as well as grandiose national plans embodied first in Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macro-Economic Strategy for South Africa (1996), and then in the National Development Plan (2012), represent such a shift towards idealistic reconstruction, almost void of resistance.

In speaking to academics and activists in Sao Paulo, Brazil, they suggest an agenda that will marry resistance and reconstruction. This is similar to Soelle's integration of suspicion and hunger; or the dual task of evoking a critical consciousness and nurturing an alternative consciousness.

If the poor are still excluded, if they are displaced under the political banner of "a better life for all", yet the promises and conditions under which they have moved are not honoured, we cannot speak of reconstruction without also practising resistance. If global economic forces and the workings of neoliberal capital have a profound and often destructive local impact,

we cannot speak of reconstruction without a critical analysis that will affect the way we speak and think of reconstruction.

The Johannesburg-based urban practitioner, Neil Fraser (2007), refers to the language used by a Colombian city politician who suggests the concept of "democratising urban space" as an alternative to regeneration. This provides a strong departure from an exclusivist concept to an inclusive vision of urban space that will democratise - socially, politically, economically, aesthetically. What would such a space look like?

Democratising urban space would entail resistance to all those forces that want to retain exclusivity. It will entail reconstruction in ways that facilitate multiplicity, diversity, commonality, optimal public participation, full access, and so forth. Planners need to journey with communities in ways that will embrace this dual task of critical resistance and imaginative reconstruction. Only then will regeneration have a chance to be truly humane and just, and on the side of the poor.

Fig. 66. Nel, 2017, Communities



4.2 COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE & IMAGINATION

The approach I propose affirms and builds community. Resistance and imagination can only be sustained in communities.

Dorothee Soelle (2001:191) suggests that the developed world lives in a prison of globalisation and individualisation. These, she says, are two sides of the same coin.

...we live in a standardised, globalised economic order of technocracy that demands and achieves total disposition over space, time, and creation. Its engine runs on, driven by the coercion to produce more and confirmed by technological success of unimaginable proportions. And this engine is programmed for ever more speed, productivity, consumption, and profit, for about twenty percent of humankind (Soelle 2001:191)

She suggests that human beings within this system are alienated, yet at the same time strangely dependent and addicted (Soelle 2001:191): “The more globally the market economy structures itself, the less interest it demonstrates in the social and ecological webs in which humans live, and the more it requires the individual who is without any relation whatsoever”.

The individualisation of human beings is in the interest of the globalised economic order; it alienates us from other human beings, from other communities, from the other, and the Other (Soelle 2001:191-192). Where the globalised economic order starts to

have disastrous effects on the social and ecological environments in which life has to be lived, it indeed calls for resistance. But such resistance needs the very communities that often ceased to exist, or still exist in very impotent ways, as a result of the very order we speak of.

For those who are committed to build good cities, the affirmation and strengthening of community wherever we find it, therefore becomes a vital task. It is precisely in the presence of caring communities that still show solidarity with humankind and creation in general, that the seeds of a new society will be found. It is in such alternative communities, who demonstrate alternative lifestyles that the seeds of both resistance and a new imagination are to be found.

Soelle (2001:194) speaks of dedicated groups, non-governmental organisations, and sectors within churches that commit themselves voluntarily to action, to critical openness, and to be bearers of hope within contexts of despair. These groups seek to be and to build community, affirming our global and local interdependence, despite and defying the odds that seem to be against them.

Seeking community will be expressed in local and global solidarity, in innovative local and global partnerships and in new alliances of all sorts - south-north, urban-suburban, community-private sector. It is important to

stress the movement-character of these alternative communities (cf. Soelle 2001:194). They always want to resist the temptation to be bureaucratized or institutionalised, although strong institutional infrastructure is vital to build and sustain strong movements. David Harvey (2012) considers such local and transnational movements in his book *Rebel cities: from the right to the city to the urban revolution*.

Movements by definition are more flexible and responsive, ready to shape and be shaped, contrary to bureaucratic institutions that are paralysed by policies often not on the side of people.

Soelle (2001:194) refers to Jacob Bohme when she speaks of these movements as the carriers of an alternative hope; she says: “Bohme conceives of God as a movement, as something flowing, growing, driving, as a process. When we engage ourselves in the process we become part of the God movement and are connected with all others”.

These communities have the responsibility to develop not only sound analyses, and alternative models, but also a new language “that keeps us awake and shares the memory of liberation and the promise of freedom for all. We need a different hope than that of political strategies and scientific prediction” (Soelle 2001:197).

But this new language should

not only be verbal, theoretical, or intellectual. Soelle (2001:197) suggests that resistance and the dream of an alternative will not succeed, “without songs, rituals, or dancing”.

In her very creative doctoral thesis, Korean theologian Mikyung Chris Lee (2005) writes about Madangguk, or public theatre, as an alternative way of communication. The Madangguk is a very traditional mask dance that was re-appropriated by the people’s resistance movements in the era of Korean dictatorship. Common people – factory workers, farm workers, students, housewives – danced out their political grievances, their resistance against an unjust regime, their dream of an alternative society. This art form was democratized as was the public spaces in which it was performed. A mode of communication was developed that was accessible to all participants.

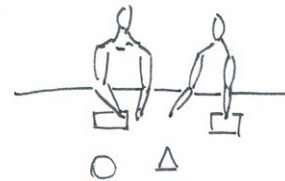
She explores the Madangguk in the context of restricted speech, but also in terms of its usefulness for the dialogue between church and society. Similarly, I want to suggest that the use of creative arts (such as public theatre) generally has the potential to facilitate new kinds of dialogue, to raise consciousness, and to nurture an alternative imagination. In the South African history artists often helped to express the struggle of black South Africans and the vision of a new South Africa. The language of the arts can often penetrate the

minds of people and institutions in ways that conventional speech cannot.

Resistance and imagination live side by side and fuel each other. But imagination is dangerous, as Matthew Fox (1983:203) asserts.

Images are not always easy to trust, for they bear within themselves, precisely because they are new, a capacity to disturb the peace, to question the peace, to rock the status quo, to wonder about the way things are, to suggest that at times chaos - which precedes birthing - is holier than the order that currently reigns. It is in this sense that biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann observes that "Every totalitarian regime is frightened by the artist... Indeed, poetic imagination is the last way left in which to challenge and conflict the dominant reality."

Fig. 67. Nel, 2017, Co-constructing



The importance of communities that find the courage to resist lies in their recovery of the “strength of the weak” (Soelle 2001:205).

The basic experience of resistance is receiving the gift of power. An exodus from imposed and self-generated impotence takes place. Life gains a new direction that can be detected from small signs whenever people feel confident to speak to the almighty bank manager, school principal and base commander.

Resistance itself lays the foundation for an alternative imagination in as far as it gives new confidence to live the hopeful alternative. It transcends the “paralysis of analysis” (Soelle 2001:205) by “confronting the life-threatening power”.

Planners and place-makers need to seek intentionally for communities

in which they can analyse / deconstruct, resist and imagine. Without such communities they would run the risk of bureaucratic self-absorption. It is in communities where we are with each other, and with the “other”/”Other”, that we are opening up to the surprise of the labyrinthine city

4.3 JOURNEYS OF CO-CONSTRUCTION

Co-constructing or co-creating space is an invitation to a new kind of planning that will create hospitable and participatory spaces for people to engage in as co-creators with each other and, theologically speaking, with the Creator. As Soelle (2001:61) says it: “For Meister Eckhart, all authentic deeds are those that emulate the original act of creation. They are deeds that spring from life and love”.

Listening to Eckhart we can deduct that not all acts of planning are necessarily “authentic deeds” because not all acts of planning necessarily facilitate life or spring from love. Not all acts of planning emulate the original act/s of creation. There are planning practices that are facilitating exclusionist and even oppressive urban space/s. What is proposed here is planning actions that will have their roots in

a spirituality that maintains and advocates the sacredness of creation and humanity, and the spaces in between.

The Quaker tradition holds that God is present in everyone (Soelle 2001:172). George Fox (cf. Nigg 1959:274ff) said “Walk joyfully on the earth and respond to that of God in every human being”. Even in the poorest urban communities, people that carry something of God in their being surround us. Working with this as a point of departure, would radically change the way of the journey, and cannot but include all of these as co-creators of a new city.

However, the bureaucratic captivity to certainties, or the “obsessive preoccupation with security” (Soelle 2001:234) that marks many of our urban renewal projects, tend to exclude or restrict creativity.

Security becomes an idol when creativity is banished. For, as we have seen, vulnerability is the matrix for creative birthing. Security obsessions become sources of killing the artist. As Jung puts it, “Security and peace do not lead to discoveries”. Boredom and acedia do not lead to breakthroughs.

This refers both to securitisation in dealing with issues of (perceived) crime and violence, but also to the personal security of professionals, monopolising planning space, feeling threatened by so-called lay people wanting to inform and shape processes. In the process of co-constructing we need to deal with personal issues of security

and vulnerability, and we need to delight in the discovery of wisdom and compassion, sometimes in unexpected places.

Soelle (2001:236) suggests that a discovery of our co-creativity with God is in itself liberating. Both the planner and the people are co-creators with the creative spirit that is brooding over the earth.

This theme too awakens us to be the instruments of divine grace that we are called to be. It renders life powerful, meaningful, worthy of sacrificing for. Will not healing come from the deepest resources of individuals and of collective humanity? If creativity is such a deep resource, are not those who arouse us to our capacity as co-creators initiating our salvation and redemption?

This language might be too spiritual for the a-religious person. Yet, the concept of co-creativity as a liberating possibility, at a deeply personal level, makes a lot of sense. It touches on the issue of moving beyond personal success to the kind of significance that has meaning and value, that can make a lasting contribution to humanity as a whole.

Too many planners today might be caught in a planning practice that is void of such a healing vision; but re-affirming the possibility of planners and place-makers contributing to co-create life-affirming, humane and liberating spaces, might facilitate profound liberation at personal and professional levels.

Co-constructing urban spaces can remain a noble philosophical ideal, just as participatory local government in the South African context often proves to be. Local councillors (politicians) have invented innovative ways around real participation or radical democracy, before they have even grappled with the meaning of participatory local government. We have to turn noble ideals into real grass-root alliances.

Sandercock (2003:157) proposes that planning professions should never work alone. She says: “(T)hey are most effective when they act in a transparently political way, in association with residents, politicians, and mobilised communities, negotiating an (always temporary) consensus about the best ways of living together”.

She speaks of such collaboration as gaining knowledge through action (action-learning). She also specifically refers to shared action between planners with community leaders, activists, residents, and so forth. The moment of co-construction requires a very practical process of bringing all role players and affected people around the table in order to not only discern a new vision (imagination), but also to start to translate this vision into clear and realistic strategies that can be implemented.

Whereas the third moment is a more reflective, almost theoretical moment, this fourth moment of co-construction is the strategic

moment in which planners and people together create proposals that will affect the destiny of communities. Planners require the skills, not only of doing individualist designs and proposals, but also of facilitating collective processes from their initial stages, through the moments of re-visioning, to a place of strategic planning and implementation. It requires skills in facilitation, strategic planning, conflict management, institutional and organisational dynamics and development. It also, once again, requires multicultural literacy, or, collaboration with other disciplines that can add much value to the creative process of planning, design, imagining and co-construction.

Once communities have truly participated in shaping their own futures, their levels of agency, ownership and sustainability will take everybody by surprise.



PART II

Doing the city together



Fig. 68. (previous) Taylor, 1992. Remnant Voices
Fig. 69. Nel, 2017 Tshwane - Berea-Burgers Park and Sunnyside.

NARRATIVES DESCRIBING
BEREA-BURGERS PARK
AND THE INNER CITY OF
PRETORIA, TSHWANE.

MOMENT 1

Entering urban space:



| 130

Fig. 70. Burgers Park Pavilion (Source: Ablewiki)

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY NARRATIVES



Fig. 71. Meiring, 1988. Burgers Park Pavilion.

1. THE STORY OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

1.1 BEREА-BURGERS PARK: A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OR A LIVED NEIGHBOURHOOD

This chapter tells the story of change and hope in the inner city of Pretoria, Tshwane, with a specific focus on the Berea-Burgerspark area of the inner city. Over the past 20 years the inner city has gone through various cycles of change. These changes presented political, socio-cultural, religious, economic, and institutional challenges. The Berea-Burgers Park area experienced these changes rather dramatically.

What is offered here is a “thick description” (cf. Geertz 1973; Browning 1991). This term implies a tentative and rather subjective description, based on personal observations and experiences, as

they are perceived by those of us working together in community forums, local organisations, and local churches, and those of us living in these areas as residents.

Others might provide other observations and perspectives looking at the same realities. My discourse on the corner vegetable shops might differ from those of law enforcers, local government officials, or even other-minded residents. An aged white person might have a different understanding of the racial changes that occurred in our community than I, or a young black student living in the same area, would.

The narratives I relate reflect “(d)ifferent social stories, with distinct rhythms” (Massey, Allen & Sarre 1999:160), which “routinely code and divide city space”. And although they are distinctly related to the unfolding story of Berea-Burgers Park they are also universal in terms of mirroring similar stories elsewhere.

...cities are the intersections of multiple narratives: the stories which came together in Chicago, the intermingling of rhythms in Sao Paulo, the long-distance interconnectedness of Madrid and Tenochtitlan... individual cities have distinctive stories to tell; they have their own trajectories. One of the most significant advantages of 'thinking spatially' is that it enables us to see these different narratives as genuinely co-existing (Massey, et al 1999:171)

In the next chapter I will deconstruct these narratives, and offer a more critical analysis of urban spatial and developmental practices currently affecting the Tshwane inner city reality.

When I refer to neighbourhood in the following paragraphs, it is

with a certain affirmation of what is (emerging), but at the same time with a certain longing (dream) of what could be. To refer to Berea-Burgerspark as a neighbourhood is in itself a social construction, as it seeks to provide clearer meaning and identity to a loosely connected area with differing levels of interaction and exchange. Compared to a place like New York City or Chicago, or even Johannesburg or Cape Town, it is more difficult to speak of neighbourhoods when speaking of central Pretoria. The clear symbols of identity, civic capacity, places of exchange and visible boundaries are often absent. However, there are some basic ingredients that might turn local geographical areas into real neighbourhoods (cf. Jane Jacobs' classic 1961 work, *The death and life of great American cities*).

This chapter will, for example, refer to the Berea Community Forum, now sadly defunct. The boundaries of this Forum, a local resident forum, were self-constructed by its members, and Berea as a collective term for the whole area of Berea-Burgerspark was also a construction.

The “real” Berea is probably the two or three southernmost city blocks within this area, whilst the area the Forum was referring to is referred to in the newspaper's property advertisements as Burgers Park, Pretoria Central, Berea, or sometimes even Sunnyside, depending on the message the advertiser wants to convey or



Fig. 72. Nel, 2017.
Berea-Burgers Park.

the prejudice s/he is addressing. A decade or two ago Sunnyside was generally seen as a slightly “better” area than Burgers Park and higher property prices were achieved there.

As local role players engage in the story of Berea-Burgerspark, and become active in writing its future story collectively, a sense of neighbourhood is both imagined and experienced.

1.2 FORGETTING AND REMEMBERING PLACES

I choose to narrate the story of Berea-Burgers Park to ensure that it is, remains or becomes a “remembered place” (cf. Markusen 2004; Lee & Yeoh 2004). Markusen (2004), in her article entitled *The Work of Forgetting and Remembering Places*, speaks of forgotten places “as communities and ecologies that are deprived of leadership

and stewardship by the actions and attitudes of people both present in and absent from these environments”.

Lee and Yeo (2004:2298) speak of it like this: “Forgotten places are often seen as ‘the victimised, passive, or invisible ‘other’ to global spaces and processes”.

In capitalist society the process of forgetting is often “an explicit, conscious and strategic process” (Lee & Yeoh 2004:2298), based on “the monopolisation of space and the relegation of weaker groups in society to less desirable environments”.

Forgetting is often a way of erasure by those with more power, manipulating and controlling space in the name of the Market, creating what Lee and Yeoh (2004:2298) speak of as “non-places” (shopping malls, airports and railway stations), at

FORGOTTEN PLACES ARE OFTEN SEEN AS "THE VICTIMISED, PASSIVE, OR INVISIBLE 'OTHER'" TO GLOBAL SPACES AND PROCESSES.



the expense of the “real places”. In such scenarios a Monte Casino or Melrose Arch in Johannesburg will replace the vibrancy and viability of a Cyrildene or a Yeoville, creating sanitised simulations, distant memories, of real spaces.

Forgetting and remembering are becoming “fluid but intentional acts intimately threaded into power struggles among different classes of actors” (Lee & Yeoh 2004:2300).

For a long time, Marabastad in the northwest of Tshwane’s inner city constituted such a forgotten place, through the deliberate policies of forced removals, and its isolation from the rest of the inner city in terms of planning and investment. In more subtle ways other inner city communities also run the risk of being forgotten, through public and media discourse, the disinvestment of resources and withdrawal of leadership.

Places like Marabastad, Berea-Burgers Park and Salvokop in the inner city of Tshwane need to be remembered, not only by registering their physical existence, but through a very intentional *re-membering process* (cf. De Beer 2013a): ensuring their full integration into the socio-spatial fabric of the city, including its people very actively as members of the urban household, sharing as citizens in the local economy.

Markusen (2004:2305) suggests that external and internal choices and actions could contribute to impoverish (or assign value to) certain places, by “the deployers of money and physical capital, external allocation of public-sector moneys and infrastructure, external symbolic analysts who process understandings and create ideologies about places, and local resource-wielders, decision-makers and knowledge workers”.

Fig. 73. Nel, 2015. Marabastad
Fig. 74. Clarke, 1970-1973. The alley leading off 5th Street next to the tailor shop, between Grand Street and Bloed Street.



On the other hand, Markusen (2004:2308) also speaks of those local residents with strong emotional and material ties to place. Their histories, homes and friendship ties are deeply embedded in the region and their livelihoods often dependent on the physical environment or on serving others in the population.

Markusen (2004:2308) suggests that such households “may resist the devaluation of place”. Value is assigned (valorisation), inflated (over-valorisation) or taken away (devalorisation) from contemporary urban communities through a combination of external and internal actors and forces (cf. Sassen 2000:41;60;182; 1998:xxxiv; Davey 2001:31-32).

In this journey I embrace the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood as an important place of transition to some and stability to others, mediating new life options, access to new opportunities and resources, and with the possibility of connectedness.

I understand Berea-Burgerspark, Salvokop, Marabastad, Sunnyside West, Sunnyside East, Arcadia Southeast, Meintjieskop, Central Business District, West Capital, and Boom Street as being distinct areas with unique qualities that might define and story them into distinct neighbourhoods. There is also the possibility of creating completely new neighbourhoods in areas that are currently undeveloped (for example the Zoo precinct or the Mandela Development Corridor).

Fig. 75. Nel, 2017. Neighbourhoods.

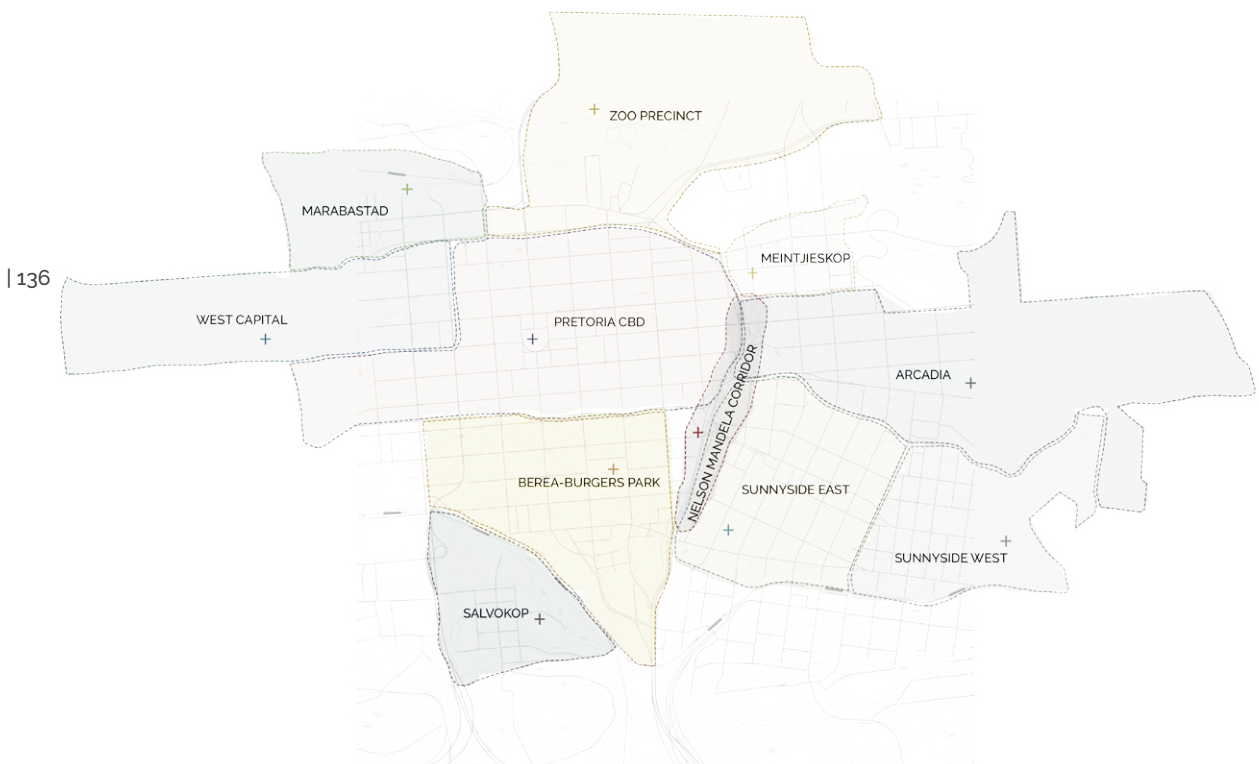




Fig. 76. Clarke, 1970-1973.
Sunday morning in Marabastad.

I might seem to be preoccupied with a desire to imagine or even construct neighbourhoods. At the root of this desire is a deep sense that affirming the soul of a place include characteristics such as local identity, social cohesion, neighbourliness, and spaces for social exchange, which all help to facilitate and define place. Places that are not neighbourhoods, lacking most of the characteristics listed here, become non-places, deprived of soul. If people then have to live in such places, it would also mediate certain levels of deprivation.

In new urbanism there is a strong focus back to traditional neighbourhood design, which was a popular concept amongst planners between 1940 and 1970 (cf. Oranje 1997:182), but also integrating an appreciation for transit-oriented design, smart growth policies and the so-called urban village with an emphasis on local self-sufficiency (Grant 2006:57). In a sense all four of these approaches assert the value of local, self-sufficient neighbourhoods with common elements such as mixed use, mixed housing types, compact form, walkable

environment, attractive public realm, clear edges and narrow streets (Grant 2006:57). The urban village concept is a “neighbourly concept”, helping to construct neighbourhood where it does not exist (cf. Grant 2006:60; Kelbaugh 1997:122).

Even in the Tshwane Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework of 2012 (City of Tshwane 2012: 61) the lack of *neighbourhood* is lamented:

One of the major problems with the establishment of residential areas in the CoT is that these areas more often than not are merely housing estates and not neighbourhoods in the true sense of the word. This applies to both middle income and lower income areas.

Vibrant spaces such as the Maboneng Precinct in Johannesburg is an example of the creation of neighbourhood in what used to be a non-place. The danger of external agents creating such interventions is obviously insensitivity for existing traces of place or neighbourhood or community, threatening to deplete what is already there. When external investors or entrepreneurs decide to contribute to the regeneration of an area, local authorities would do well to

create incentives and opportunities for that whilst insisting, through policy guidelines, that proper collaboration with local communities should take place, optimising local ownership, and resisting any forms of socio-spatial displacement or exclusion.

Local neighbourhoods need to inform their own future. This could include fostering partnerships between diverse and seemingly competing role players, seeking synergies between local initiatives and visions, and potential developments or investments from the outside. Neighbourhood life can be stimulated through relaxed zoning regulations, with local capacity-building processes and decentralised neighbourhood management structures. A neighbourhood incentive scheme that would finance innovative grass-root initiatives to manage and develop healthy, viable and sustainable neighbourhoods need to be explored and implemented.



Fig. 77. Sunnyside in the 60s. south-eastern corner of Esselen and Greeff Streets

2. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: 1973-2015

2.1 GROWING UP IN THE INNER CITY: DEFYING THE MYTHS (1973-)

I grew up in Sunnyside, the highest-density neighbourhood of Tshwane. In 1993, after having lived in Sunnyside for 20 years, since 1973, I moved about five blocks west to live in an apartment building in the adjacent Berea-Burgerspark area of the inner city. With a beautiful view over the award-winning Burgers Park I found my entry into this “new” neighbourhood refreshing and exciting.

It was the beginning of a relationship with this part of the city and a growing commitment to sustain this as a viable, liveable and inclusive inner city community.

Twice we had to move due to our rental apartments being sold, until we decided to purchase an apartment of our own in 1996. We lived on the eleventh floor and when we moved in there was only one black family on our floor. In 2000 we were the only white family living on the eleventh floor. Our neighbourhood was characterised by rapid racial change, changing social dynamics, and diverse responses to these changes.

Perhaps it is important to start by referring to my childhood in Sunnyside. Growing up, this was really the only space I knew as home (except for the week-end trips to my grandparents’ home in the East Rand town of Benoni, about 50 kilometres east of Tshwane, now incorporated into the metropolitan municipality of Ekurhuleni). As my only home, I always experienced and affirmed the inner city as positive, safe, humane, and life-giving.

As a white South African, I have obviously not experienced the exclusionary character of the inner city that denied the majority of South Africans right of ownership

and residence in the inner city, except in workers' quarters with poor facilities usually built at the back (Pretoria) or on the roof tops (Johannesburg) of apartment buildings.

Yet, from a white perspective, growing up in Sunnyside was seen by some (whites) as growing up without privilege. I remember how it was sometimes considered by some with pity, and by others with stereotypes, just like growing up in Danville (Tshwane) or in Vrededorp (Johannesburg) met with certain preconceived ideas of who and what you should be. I always sought for opportunities to defy these myths.

My years in an apartment in Sunnyside, and my subsequent years of moving to seven different apartments in close proximity to each other, all marked my "growing up": my own transition from childhood to adulthood, from student to professional, from innocent bystander to conscientised activist, so that I could still speak of my life and presence in the inner city as "growing up" in the inner city.

I can also describe it as a "growing down" into the more vulnerable spaces and experiences of the inner city, or a "growing into", as a relationship of closer solidarity or attachment with my surrounding spaces or environment has developed over time. Perhaps, in some ways the challenge remains to "grow back" to the place where I once started, seeing as a child, open for wonder and surprise, now tempered by new experiences and discoveries, but not having to be domesticated by such. It is perhaps a choice, of whether one will still allow the magic of the city to work its charm, disarming you repeatedly, just when the cruelty of the city wants to harm you. It is in finding this magic that perhaps one can continue to engage and overcome the pain.

2.2 MY CRUEL AWAKENING: THE STORY OF THE ELIM CHURCH AND THE BOYS OF THE STREETS

I had a dramatic awakening when I became involved with children living on the streets of Sunnyside (cf. De Beer & James 2014: 79-89). While still studying, I was



Fig. 78. Sunnyside in the 60s.



Fig. 79. Newspaper clipping about Elim Church fire.

8. There is a brief description of the event and Klatzow's perspective on it, in his autobiography, *Steeped in Blood: the life and times of a forensic scientist* (2010:139-141).

part of a small team of people who – rather naively, at least in my case – set out to open a night shelter for boys living on the streets. At that time in 1990 there was no such facility in the city, and hardly any black people lived in formal housing in Sunnyside. These children, all being black, with one or two exceptions, helped me to read Sunnyside, its streets and its spaces, in new and different ways, through their eyes and their experiences.

Reflecting back I realised that they helped me understand that the space which I embraced as home was not the neutral space I had in mind. It was really a contested space. It was a space that excluded the majority of South Africa's people, often using cruel, even violent measures to do so. The "owners", custodians, managers, or manipulators of this space did not want to share it with these children, with the poor, with black people, with the "other" in general. The forces that wanted to keep this an exclusive neighbourhood were much more destructive and evil than I realised.

We obtained an old church property to use as a shelter for boys living on the streets of Sunnyside. The Elim Full Gospel Church just recently relocated to the suburb of Hillcrest, probably also pre-empting the inner city change that was about to occur, and sold their building to enable them to build elsewhere. Anglo Properties bought the church building in

Sunnyside from the Elim Church, but did not have immediate use for the property. They allowed us to turn it into a boys' shelter as a temporary measure until they were ready to develop the property.

Every night 20-25 boys, aged between 8 and 18, slept in this facility. We reappropriated liturgical spaces, using the baptismal font as a communal bath after the afternoon soccer matches, and the worshipping space as a recreational area for different activities. The vacant Sunday School rooms became the bed rooms, and the church gallery the common area where boys had supper and breakfast, where group work was held, and vocational skills offered.

On the night of 12 April 1992, this building burnt down and 8 boys were killed. The morning after the fire, police bulldozers moved in to demolish the church that was used as a shelter, before any formal investigations could start. Conflicting police statements, the demolition process, and preceding events of police harassment at the shelter, raised much suspicion and we were convinced of a police cover-up backed up by an apartheid legal system. A highly credible independent fire investigator, David Klatzow (2010:139-141), describes this event in his autobiography⁸, and how he found that this had to be arson, based on all the pieces of evidence he could reconstruct. A church building of this size and nature could not be destroyed in such a brief period



Fig. 80. Newspaper clipping about Elim Church fire.

without it being caused by human intervention.

The police had their own fire investigator who construed another picture with different facts. The inquest could never prove arson beyond any doubt and none of the alleged perpetrators or suspects was ever brought to book. Since then different attempts were made to reopen the investigation, and there are still one or two of the surviving boys, now men in their late 30's, seeking for justice.

The pain of this experience helped to erase romantic and naive notions of urban space, stating in no uncertain terms the contest for territory, for the very soul of the city, and the depths to which people will sink to ensure they retain their exclusivist enclaves. And yet, on the other hand, this experience also called me deeper into this context, bidding me to

resist the exclusions, to imagine the inclusions, and to give practical and creative expression to a vision of space as life-affirming home for all who are in the city.

2.3 PERSONAL & ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of my journey in this community, I was engaged in various local community organisations, such as the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (previously known as Pretoria Community Ministries) (n.d.), which was created by a partnership of local churches; Yeast City Housing (n.d.), a church-owned social housing company; the Boards of Trustees of two apartment complexes in which I lived; the Berea Community Forum; and a civil society initiative called the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative.

Although all of these initiatives were permanently under-resourced and below capacity (which will be addressed later in this study), they offered valuable local responses to change, innovative socio-spatial alternatives to the dominant story of the city, and deep insights and knowledges that need to be retrieved and built upon (cf. De Beer 2014).

Later in this chapter I will uncover some of these. Here I simply want to mention four important discoveries that have profoundly influenced me, and that form, in some ways, the foundations of this study.

I have discovered that *small is indeed beautiful* (cf. Schumacher 1973). I daily discovered the potential and power of small grass-root initiatives to transform local places. Those initiatives that started small and insignificant a few years back, mostly with almost no resources, continued over the years to impact people, neighbourhoods and policy alike. Without embracing the notion of small beauties, these would not even have started and the same people, neighbourhoods and policies would have been left unaffected.

It is Jamie Lerner (2000:18) who spoke of the successes of Curitiba, Brazil, suggesting that small beginnings have the potential of becoming larger urban transformations. Similarly, emerging from their small beginnings is the possibility of caring and liberating local

institutions, owned and driven by local people and not external agencies.

Secondly, leading from the previous discovery, I have discovered the importance of *local ownership and participation in the well-being of communities*. Without local ownership external agendas will determine the future of neighbourhoods. Local communities are able to co-determine their own futures, only to the extent that they are able to take ownership of it. And such ownership is only as a result of developing and asserting an own critical consciousness in the manner described by Freire, Biko, and others.

Thirdly, *we discovered together that local communities have an asset- and resource base that is often largely untapped or under-utilised* (cf. Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). Identifying and mobilising this asset base should be a key component of any appropriate strategy for healthy urban communities. These assets include physical, economic, human, intellectual and cultural assets. In so many of the so-called participatory processes initiated and run by the local municipality since 1993, these assets were undervalued, underestimated and undermined, perpetually failing to build on their potential.

All communities have people with gifts, skills, experiences, memories and visions that could contribute to healthy urban communities.

Combining the visions and gifts of the people, with a will and desire to see change, and the ability to identify, motivate and organise such human capital, are the first steps in building local movements of change.

Fourthly, after a journey of more than 20 years I am affirming *the potential importance of spirituality in city-building*, mobilising faith resources as part of a new appreciation for the importance of software infrastructure in building creative and sustainable cities. Faith, when understood not in other-worldly terms, together with other resources that are part of a vocabulary of spirituality, such as vocation, compassion, sacrifice and care, could be vital ingredients in building more humane cities that affirm *all* people.

I will refer back to these on-going, sometimes surprising discoveries, as I start to recognise them as fundamental building blocks in a community-based urban praxis.

2.4 ENGAGING STEREOTYPES; FOSTERING NEW IDENTITY

Whereas the previous discoveries are reminders of the inherent good hidden away in urban areas, the forces of stereotyping and prejudice are often so hard at work, that these local assets are neglected and remain undiscovered.

Stereotypes are critical for consideration in an exploration of space as they represent the kind of

values that invite people in or keep people out. Stereotypes reduce certain neighbourhoods or people to be defined in terms of “who they are not” (their weaknesses, deficiencies, problems) instead of appreciating them for “who they really are” (gifts, assets, strengths).

The simple but colourful children’s story below is featured in a series of books aimed at contributing to instil life values in South African children. It is a story of inclusion and exclusion, describing a situation where certain animals were only defined in terms of what they did not have, and therefore prejudiced and excluded. The loss of not defining them in terms of what they actually had to contribute only dawned upon the other animals much later.

RETELLING "HORNS ONLY! A STORY OF ACCEPTANCE"

(featured in the Heartline Series "Stories that Talk" 2006) adapted from a story by Gcina Mhlophe, Fathima Dada & Leoni Hofmeyr

Zebra and Monkey were best friends. They ate together, sang together, and most of all, loved to dance together.

One day, they saw other animals going to a party. They were keen to go with. But rhinoceros told them: "Only animals with horns can come to this party. Go away!"

But Monkey made a plan. He said, "Let us make our own horns! Then we can go to the party too". So Zebra helped Monkey collect sticks and plants which they used to craft their own horns. Soon they had their own sharp horns, ready to join the party.

When they joined the other animals they danced and danced. Soon Monkey and Zebra became the life and soul of the party.

All of a sudden, because they danced so much, their horns fell off. And everybody stopped dancing.

"Where are your horns?" all the animals shouted. "Get out of here!" And Zebra and Monkey left sadly.

But suddenly the party wasn't that much fun anymore. The soul was gone.

"I miss Monkey and Zebra", Buffalo said. "We were unkind", Giraffe responded. "Why must they have horns anyway?", Duiker asked. The animals thought and thought but could not come up with an answer. So they called Monkey and Zebra back to the party.

All the other animals without horns could now come too. Elephant and Crocodile came, and Hippo came too.

And it became the best party ever!

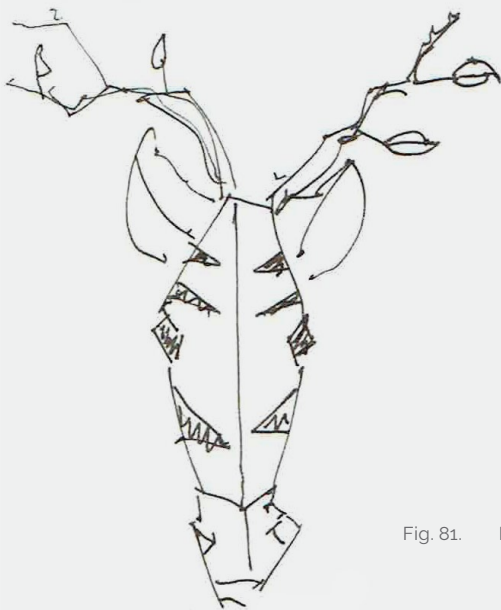


Fig. 81. Nel, 2017. Zebra's new horns



Although Zebra and Monkey lacked horns, what they had gave life and soul to the party, and was sorely missed by all those who had horns, once they experienced the gift of “the other”: the Zebra and the Monkey. This children’s story speaks volumes to the ways in which communities are regarded by so-called experts and professionals. We often plan neighbourhoods without buildings on the inherent assets present in those neighbourhoods, or perpetuate the stereotypes of dominant groups within a locality, instead of calling forth the strengths and contributions of those who are rather deliberately or sometimes accidentally marginalised.

Stereotypes are often based on assigning singular and reductionist identities to people, or

disregarding the identity of people (Sen 2006: 18-28). Our constructions of race, class or gender, are not absent from our planning discourses and practices. Without an acknowledgement of own stereotypes or prejudices planning professionals will simply perpetuate the apartheid city that we inherited. Stereotypes cloud our planning practices and planning proposals.

It is often not the lack of technical skills that is our challenge in the city, but a lack of soft skills including how to address and overcome our own stereotypes and prejudices, and those of others, in facilitating urban planning processes, in envisioning inclusive communities, in overcoming socio-spatial fragmentation, in dealing creatively with diversity, and ultimately

Fig. 82. Boikhutso, 2015.
Tambotie building - Sunnyside
today 01
Fig. 83. Boikhutso, 2015.
Sunnyside today 02
Fig. 84. Boikhutso, 2015.
Maroela building - Sunnyside
today 03



A leading official in our local government, tasked with housing of the city's people, goes on record in formal meetings with a concern about bringing too many poor people into the city. Yet, he fails to recognise the fact that social housing projects in Tshwane maintained a 95% rental income level without any debt to the city for almost 20 consecutive years since 1994. In the same period, sectional title properties and middle-income apartments accommodating mostly middle-class owners and tenants ran up debts of millions of rands with the local municipality. Planning should not be based on a misconstrued sense of whom it is that contributes to or detracts from an area.

in creating a healthy, inclusive and sustainable city.

2.4.1 Own stereotypes

Urban practitioners have to deal with their own personal stereotypes and prejudices if they are to facilitate good urban communities. Preconceived ideas about what “the poor” will do to a local neighbourhood, will determine how far we are prepared to facilitate pro-poor policy and planning processes, in ways that are intentional. Allowing local communities to participate in determining the nature of social interventions, services, policies and plans, will help transform those interventions, services, policies and plans in ways more aligned to the actual context and its requirements.

Dealing with own stereotypes is asking for a shift beyond expert-driven approaches to mutual learning processes, where together we discover afresh what local neighbourhoods have, what they need, what they envision, and how best to help facilitate partnerships and resources to translate local visions into sustainable futures.

This implies embracing and discovering a new identity for all of us who hope to facilitate lasting urban change. If we consider ourselves as the “urban saviours” the change might occur for as long as we are present. But when we depart, the positive change will depart with us. It is in the strength of local partnerships, local ownership and local agency, that sustainable long-term change will occur.



Dealing with own stereotypes mostly demand personal displacement. Paolo Freire (1992:33) reflects on his four and a half years of exile, living in Chile, away from his home country of Brazil. He acknowledges the epistemological consequences of his exile, the way in which it facilitated different and new ways of knowing, away from the comfort of his familiar environment. Freire (1992:33) says: “It was the first time, with the exception of a brief visit to Bolivia, that I had had the experience of distancing myself geographically, with its epistemological consequences, from Brazil”.

The first moment of the praxis cycle requires of us to enter the city in a way that signifies deep immersion and growing solidarity. This might include what some

would call class suicide or race suicide, meaning to deeply identify with the pain or struggles of those other than ourselves, especially if we happen to be white men. Without opting for displacements or dislocations such as the one Freire describes, it would be hard for us to locate ourselves with the poor or the other in ways that are somewhat authentic. The kind of ‘exile’ that has epistemological consequences would lead us out from what we know to new places and probably a shifting personal identity.



Fig. 85. Nel, 2015. Marabastad and the skeletons of Schubart Park.

2.4.2 Anti-urban stereotypes of others

It is not just personal stereotypes that need to be engaged. The challenge presented by those who perpetuate anti-urban, anti-inner city stereotypes also need to be engaged rigorously.

Not long ago I sat in the posh office of a suburban lawyer who complained about the fate of a family member's child having to grow up in the inner city. Not understanding his concern, being a product of an inner city upbringing, I asked him to elaborate on the dark future that would be the result of her current living environment. It dawned on me in those few minutes that the average suburbanite in our city has constructed an invisible wall between Magnolia Dell (a park between the eastern suburbs and the inner city) and anything west from it. Whatever happens west, is not understood, not known, and therefore feared and stereotyped. Sometimes the stereotypes might have validity, but many times they are based on ill-informed speculation.

I find the average church member who listens to our inner city stories and journeys often patronising as they pity us for our brave decision to stay in the inner city. Ironic, as I often pity suburban people for being excluded from the dynamic and exciting processes of cultural diversity and negotiation taking place from day to day in inner city realities.

And yet, my own reading of suburban minds might also be fraught with my own stereotyping and prejudice.

The challenge is how to effectively expose stereotypes – our own and those of others – and nurture a new consciousness. I suggest that this is only possible if and where we create spaces of mutuality: where diverse people engage on equal terms, sharing concerns and visions, weaknesses and strengths, and help each other to have a glimpse of these respective worlds we inhabit.

2.4.3 Anti-poor discourses & practices

Some embrace the city through presence and investment, not having anti-urban sentiments but being highly idealistic of the city's future. And yet, they might harbour deep anti-poor sentiments, expressed either subtly or overtly through actions and policies that intentionally exclude the poor. They would suggest that the city has great potential to work well, but the poor would reduce the viability of the city, and therefore need to be located elsewhere. In this kind of discourse the poor becomes the perpetrator only and never the victim; a “deficiency” and never an “asset”. Freire (1992:11; 37-39) speaks of how the poor or oppressed internalise such dominant discourses about them until they too accept that of themselves.

Homeless communities are often victims to stereotyping and resultant exclusion or displacement. Culhane and Fried (1988:184-185) describe how homeless people are stigmatised by society. Their research demonstrates “how the economic, social and cultural contexts of homelessness are ignored and how homeless people are caricatured as ‘tramps, bums, alcoholics and psychotics’” (Culhane & Fried 1988:184).

In a context where anti-poor discourses and practices dominate how we build cities, we need to ask critical questions as a matter of urgency:

- o How do we move away from an “us-them” scenario, to a scenario where we affirm that all of us, also the wealthy and the homeless, belong to the same urban household, as interconnected, interdependent human beings?
- o What kind of processes do we need, to evoke a new response to the urban poor, and to discover, embrace and nurture a new personal and collective identity that will operate not from a position of *distanced stereotypes*, but rather from a position of *immersed solidarity*?
- o How do we facilitate exchange between private investors, government officials and the poor, whether they are low-income working families or homeless people, to carve out visions inclusive of the

concerns and dreams of these very different groups of people?

Anyone who is concerned with the soul of the city needs to be concerned with the exclusion of some, because that is a direct indictment on the soul of the city, and our collective humanity as a citizenry, for our want of caring, warmth and hospitality. Even if only from a perspective of self-interest, the long-term effects of generations of exclusion need to be considered in terms of societal upheaval: how the violence of systemic exclusion breeds cultures of violence expressed against those seen as the perpetrators of systemic violence (cf. Conn 1987:153-190; Barndt 1991:75-100).

A major part of our challenge is to deconstruct the myths about the poor, telling alternative stories, hosting spaces where those who are poor will speak for themselves, constructing inclusive visions together, backed up by workable and proven models of inclusion. Such alternative models need to be documented and broadcasted boldly and widely as hopeful alternative narratives, with the potential to shape policy and space that will be on the side of all people.

We always have to be drawn to a restored and inclusive city, where all people will share at the table of humanity, because until such time all is not well, and there is work to be done.

2.5 A CHANGING BEREABURGERS PARK: 1993-2015

Spatial configurations in Berea-Burgers Park changed perpetually since the early 1990s and the process of change is still underway. The reflections offered here are based on my experience as a local resident and community organiser working to retain a sense of healthy community life.

2.5.1 From exclusive space to claimed space

What was an entirely *exclusive space* for white people only until the early 1990s, changed to a situation where the inner city neighbourhoods were the first to become multi-cultural, and to this day it remains amongst the most diverse neighbourhoods, although now predominantly black, at least in Tshwane. Exclusive space became *changing space* since the early 1990s and especially after 1994. These spaces are continuously changing as they tend to remain transitional for its residents, and there is a constant flow of disinvestment and investment of different kinds.

In the euphoria of a new South Africa, these were exciting times for those that welcomed the new era. The sporting victories – Rugby World Cup (1995) and Africa Cup of Nations (1996) – saw thousands of people from all walks of life and different races, dancing and singing through the streets for hours. The changing space now

became claimed space. What used to be exclusive, slowly changed and was now being claimed as people's space without discrimination.

Claiming space was also evident in a new street population with increasing numbers of homeless people, refugees and children living and working on the streets. Apartment buildings became overcrowded and there was an influx of people living in informal structures in Marabastad.

But this is also where the new challenges became evident. As some claimed the inner city as their space, others left. And some of those who claimed space did it without taking the kind of responsibility that goes with claims or entitlements.

2.5.2 From claimed space to battered space

In the residential property market, a combination of profiteering estate agents (mostly white), inefficient bank officials (then mostly white), ill informed new property owners (mostly black), racial undertones in the management of many buildings (almost wanting / waiting to see black newcomers fail), and the irresponsibility of some residents (both black and white), all culminated in claimed space becoming battered or abused space (cf.4; 2.3). This will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter under the heading "Buildings have stories".

The fact that many businesses disinvested and banks red-lined some areas, contributed to trends of decay in local neighbourhoods. Absentee landlords were only concerned about collecting rental incomes once a month but allowed properties to deteriorate quickly. Estate agents made quick profits without educating new property owners sufficiently about what they were getting themselves into, and then abandoned the very same neighbourhoods. Many of the new property owners did not take real ownership for the well-being of their buildings or neighbourhoods, which also contributed to decay in different parts of the inner city.

2.5.3 New exclusions, new reclamations and transforming space

If 1994-2000 was a time of changing, claimed and battered space, the new decade since 2001 slowly ushered in the next stage of the unfolding story. Banks started to re-invest, new tax incentives of national government followed, and a large recapitalisation project was introduced for properties hosting government departments.

Increasingly it was emerging as an era of new exclusions. Affordable and subsidised municipal housing had to make way for grand development projects housing central government offices. Homeless people and other vulnerable groups were continuously harassed on the streets. The new investors' confidence in the inner city caused

an increase in property values, effectively excluding all low-income earners, and those seeking to create social housing found it difficult to access land or property that was financially viable.

Ironically, the period between 1994-2000 provided a window of opportunity for the poor, allowing them increased access to the inner city. If the time of so-called decay was good news to the poor and the time of urban renewal means their exclusion, something is wrong with the dominant narratives we subscribe to.

Perhaps it is some of these factors, together with the continuous reality of violence and abuse against children, women and the poor, that led some of the staff in our community organisation to suggest "Taking back our streets" as our annual theme for 2007, and for our annual community festival, Feast of the Clowns.

In a context of new exclusions and increased polarisation there is perhaps the imperative for a new reclamation of space. Whilst the post-1994 era required the reclamation of space by black South Africans, the post-2004 inner city required a new reclamation by the people of the city collectively, and the poor and vulnerable in particular. Those who are increasingly concerned with matters of the common good, good governance, and healthy communities, are required to participate in public spaces – participating, submitting

proposals, critiquing, creating own initiatives – in ways that will constitute a renewed sense of ownership, indeed a reclamation of that which has been taken for granted. A growing sense of apathy needs to be replaced with vigorous participation of citizens in speaking about and shaping their own futures. I reflect on this task of reclamation elsewhere, bringing the realities of the inner city and its challenges into conversation with Bikos’ quest for true humanity (De Beer 2008).

More than 20 years ago already Freire (1992:2) described the response of the rising citizenry in Brazil response to ever-growing corruption in governance and all spheres of society.

Even young adults and teenagers crowd into the streets, criticising, calling for honesty and candour. The people cry out against all the crass evidence of public corruption. The public squares are filled once more. There is a hope, however timid, on the street corners, a hope in each and every one of us. It is as if most of the nation had been taken by an uncontrollable need to vomit at the sight of all this shamefulness.

It is only once there is sufficient rage at that which is wrong, balanced by a deep love to see radical change that such hope-filled movements can be born. It is Freire (1992:4) who speaks of *Pedagogy of Hope* as such a book “written in rage and love, without which there is no hope”.

In the South African society at the end of 2016 there is a growing

anger that gives birth to social movements. Whether this anger is contained and directed by love is still to be seen. Because without love anger fuels hatred and destruction. But anger accompanied and directed by love could give birth to hopeful and reconstructive revolution.

The challenge all along was to achieve and sustain a critical mass of committed people that would claim the space of Berea-Burgerspark responsibly and in ways that were truly transforming. Tolerance, inclusion or integration on their own will not result in healthy communities, if other factors that contribute to viability, liveability or sustainability are absent.

As citizens respond to new exclusions by strengthening grass-root movements to reclaim both physical and dialogical spaces, there is a need to embrace visions and strategies of transforming space. This would include the on-going challenge and vision to nurture space that is not death-dealing but liberating and life-affirming; bringing about not superficial change or renewal, but often a radical restructuring of social and economic relationships for the sake of the common good; and facilitating radically inclusive neighbourhoods providing broad and fair access to even the most vulnerable. A combination of strategies and broad-based partnerships – locally birthed, owned and developed – is required to achieve this vision.

3. THE REWRITING OF A STORY: NARRATIVES FROM BEREJA-BURGERS PARK AND TSHWANE'S INNER CITY

The previous section gave a broad introductory overview of changes and challenges in the Bereja-Burgers Park neighbourhood since 1994. In this section I will give a more specific account of changes in the demographic, socio-cultural, economic, physical and institutional environments of the inner city. I will make special mention of the changing face of public places and churches.

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

The Bereja-Burgerspark neighbourhood has 98 residential complexes and 29 houses providing approximately 6,530 units, and housing approximately 20,000 people. It has changed from a community that was 100% white in the early 1990's to being 92% black in 2015 (cf. Statistics South Africa 2011). Many buildings have a very diverse population, where cultural negotiation – intentionally or unintentionally – has become a way of life. The area is not only very culturally diverse but also accommodates a range of people of all ages. Older people tend to be white and a large youth component is predominantly black. There is a large student population in Bereja-Burgers Park, representing various tertiary institutions.

Most white people with alternative options left the area for suburban neighbourhoods. Very few white professionals remained as a result, while many upcoming black professionals have moved into Bereja-Burgerspark as a way out of township life. The income level of people in the Bereja-Burgers Park neighbourhood is very

diverse. It varies from low-income workers and unemployed people living in sheltered environments or single room residential facilities, to lower-middle and middle-income people in sectional title schemes, to a few upmarket penthouses.

This trend represents different discourses about the inner city. To young black professionals the inner city is a positive place, a retreat from disadvantaged circumstances in the surrounding urban townships. It is a sign of upward mobility and for many who are left behind in the townships it might even be a withdrawal from township challenges. On the other hand, white professionals and suburbanites viewed

Fig. 86. Boikhutso, 2015. NAP TIME: A homeless man is sleeping
Fig. 87. Boikhutso, 2015. DIRTY CITY: A dirt-filled stream of water in Sunnyside is used by homeless people.
Fig. 88. Boikhutso, 2015. A stream of dirty runs down a river in Sunnyside, Pretoria.



the inner city increasingly as a negative place, a deteriorating part of town that required withdrawal to the suburbs. Such withdrawal is also a sign of their upward mobility.

I subscribe to the description that some North Americans used of their “white flight” from the inner cities starting in the 1960s, speaking of it as sophisticated racism, suggesting that racial prejudice is hidden behind various other reasons cited for white withdrawal (cf. Barndt 1991:54; 75-100). Another perspective would be that both black and white people who are upwardly mobile view the inner city as transitional. This is the nature of upward mobility: it too often implies a retreat into a more individualistic life-style, away from the crowds, embracing suburban securities (and often homogeneities). That is why North Americans also described the “second flight” as the black middle-class flight (cf. also Bob Lupton’s 1993 publication on “reighbouring” economically depressed areas).

Since the beginnings of 2000 even the notion of the inner city as a transitional zone has been challenged. In the centres of Johannesburg, Cape Town and even Tshwane, there is also a new demand by high-income earners for luxury housing options, which was unthinkable 10 years ago. Urban Ocean (Urban Ocean n.d.) is a property development company that has taken the lead in the Johannesburg CBD converting old art deco buildings into New York City style apartments, drawing high-income earners into inner city living. More recently Propertuity Investments (2017) has taken an old industrial precinct of the inner city of Johannesburg by storm by conceptualising and creating the Maboneng Neighbourhood. Suddenly high-end earners, black and white, are attracted again to these regenerated neighbourhoods, often very vibrant but at the same time very securitised, determining who is welcome and who not.












































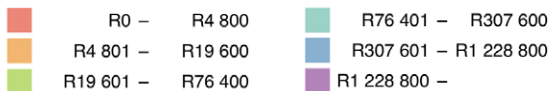
	WARD 80	WARD 82	WARD 10
	<p>The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood is divided between ward 60 and ward 80. The bulk of the (residential) area falls within ward 80, comprising a very young population, predominantly black and a sizeable % of people coming from other African countries.</p>	<p>Ward 82 comprises a number of eastern suburbs, traditionally known as part of the old east, predominantly white and more affluent. Lynnwood, Menlopark, Hazelwood and Ashlea Gardens form part of this ward.</p>	<p>Ward 10 is in the far east of Pretoria, forming part of the growing Mamelodi township, and adjacent to Phomolong. The majority of people in this ward live in informal dwellings.</p>
Population	 26,803	 20,018	 39,968
Size	 1,7 km²	 15,2 km²	 4,6km²
Density	 15,633.1 people/ km²	 1,313.8 people/ km²	 8,735.5 people/ km²
Median Age	25 	29 	26 
Population Group	92% Black  5% White 	25% Black  69% White 	99% Black 
Province Of Birth	 31% LIMPOPO 15% Gauteng 17% Outside S.a.	 41% Gauteng 15% N.a. 11% Outside S.a.	 43% LIMPOPO 15% MPUMALANGA 28% Gauteng 17% Outside S.a.
S.a. Citizen	 77%	 77.3%	 94.5%
Housing Type	 93% Apartments	 72% Single-Dwelling House	 60.2% Informal Dwelling
Ownership	 88% Rental	 53% Owned 3% Owned	 32.5% Owned 32.5% Rent-Free

Fig. 89. Nel, 2017. Ward Summary infographic (information from Wazimaps).

WARD 80		WARD 82		WARD 10		
	R53,600.00		R230,700.00		R29,400.00	Income Household (Pa.)
	96%		97%		92.5%	Water (Access)
	99.7%		99.7%		49.5%	Elec. (Access)
	97%		97.6%		56%	Flushing Toilets
	92%		97.6%		52.2%	Refuse Disposal
	47%		56.6%		46.7%	Employed
	75%		80%		52%	Employed (Formal Sector)
	R4,800.00		R19,200.00		R2400.00	Monthly Income (Ave.)
	47%		64%		57%	Internet Access
	80%		72.9%		39.1%	Matric or higher
	89%		86%		89.6%	Age 5-17 attending school
	39		9		39	Child-headed households
	92%		67%		54%	Child-headed households



One dot = 10 households



Annual household income from Census 2011. Note that some 800 000 people living in institutional settings are not included in household statistics.



Fig. 90. Density map indicating annual household income in and around Pretoria CBD (Source: Adrian Firth - dotmap)

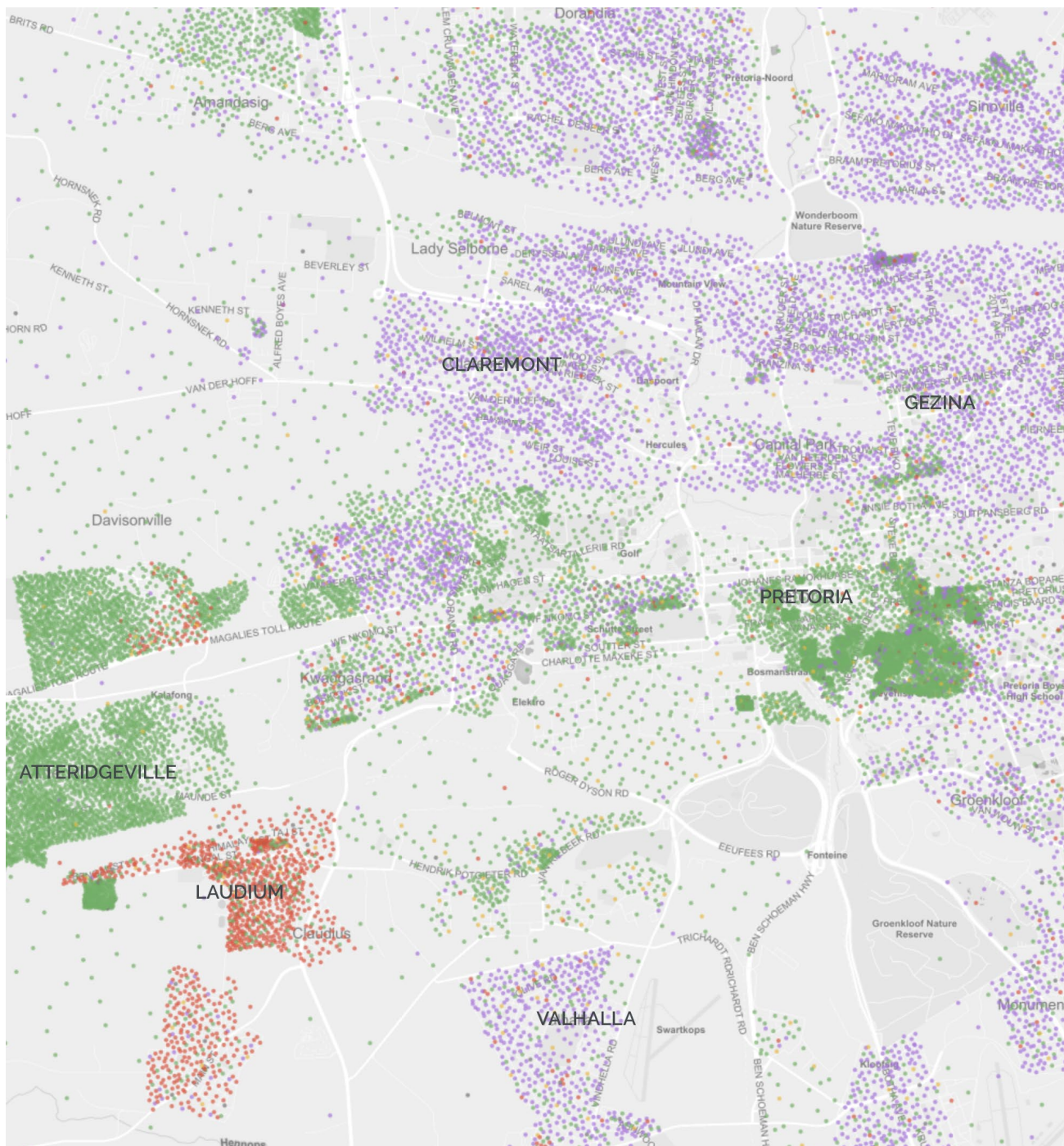


One dot = 25 people

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| ■ Afrikaans | ■ English | ■ Sesotho | ■ Setswana |
| ■ isiNdebele | ■ isiXhosa | ■ siSwati | ■ Tshivenda |
| ■ isiZulu | ■ Sepedi | ■ Xitsonga | ■ Other |



Fig. 91. Density map indicating home language in and around Pretoria CBD (Source: Adrian Firth - dotmap)



| 162

One dot = 25 people

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Black African | ■ White |
| ■ Coloured | ■ Other |
| ■ Indian or Asian | |

From self-identification in Census 2011.

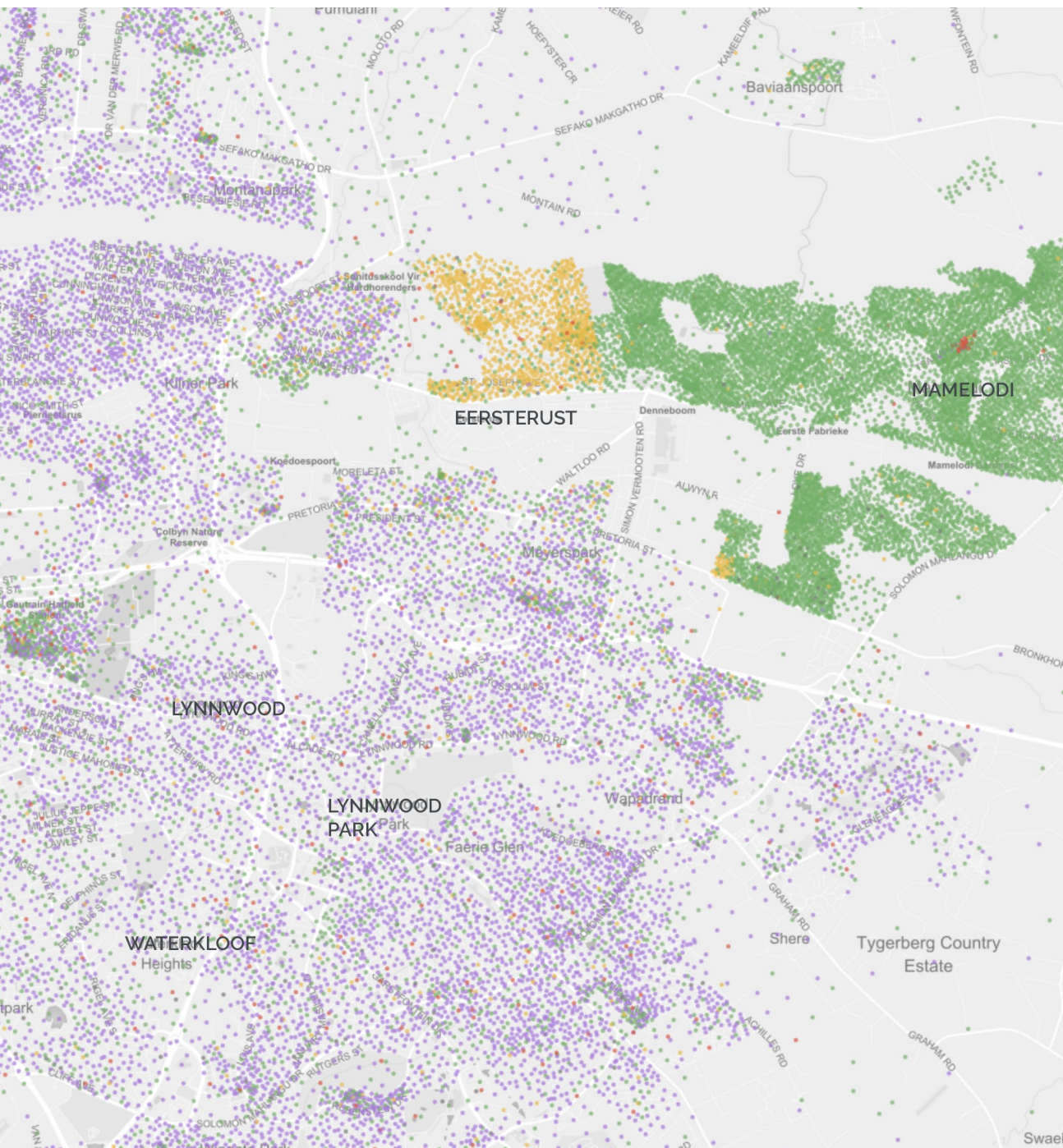


Fig. 92. Density map indicating racial demographic in and around Pretoria CBD (Source: Adrian Firth - dotmap)

3.2 SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES

Socially the area has changed significantly. This could be described at its best in a qualitative way.

3.2.1 From silent co-habitation to a multiplicity of voices

When I wrote this piece at first, I spoke of the change that occurred from isolated privacy (before 1994) to an increasing sense of community (post-1994). And yet, on second reflection, I thought I might have done an injustice to the nature of community prior to 1994. People lived together rather peacefully, but did not have to deal with diversity as homogeneity was forced by apartheid legislation. Social exchange did happen between people in apartment buildings, in local churches and in the corner shops. In many places there was a deep sense of caring. And yet, social exchange still remained more reserved, orderly, quiet, and definitely confined to your own racial and even cultural group.

This has been transcended since 1994 and more dynamic and spontaneous forms of social exchange have occurred, reflected in busier and noisier streets, passage ways and elevators in apartment buildings; more active weekend social activity in the neighbourhood; and very vocal participation in significant sporting events. Sundays were silent, almost solemn days before, with a feeling of sombre sacredness

(which is my experience of many suburbs every day of the week).

This has changed over the past 10 years so that Sundays have now become days of much activity: many people walking the streets (often with Bible in hand), many families and couples having picnics in Burgers Park, children playing on the pavements, young men washing – and showing off – their cars; the sombre sacredness has made way for a sense of liveliness and exchange that can be re-read as sacred spontaneity if you choose to.

Obviously it would be superficial to interpret greater activity, noise and more frequent exchange as better or deeper community. The contrary might also be true. Perhaps it will be better to speak about a shift *from silence to voices, from reservedness to display, from more limited social exchange to more frequent, dynamic and diverse forms of social exchange.*

I prefer to speak about voices, as noise is reflecting a different and more negative discourse. Although noise has become a problem to black and white residents of the area alike (loud music, pubs infringing on the bye-laws, fire crackers over Christmas and New Year) the real shift has been from silence to the proliferation of many different voices.

I think of voice both in an audible, physical sense but also in a metaphorical sense: the more dynamic

interaction and street life that are evident on the city's streets, but also in the sense of diverse people becoming more visible. Now the voices of black and white, old and young, South Africans and immigrants are frequently heard: in apartment buildings, in the voices of my next door neighbours, in the interactions of street vendors, in the diverse worship expressions and languages of local churches, in the kind of restaurants opening up, in the clothing styles and dress, in the concerns raised at the parents' meetings of local schools, and at the public meetings of local community or residents' organisations.

There has been a general shift from *homogeneity to heterogeneity*. There was a shift *from reservedness to display*, which was probably a shift to embracing a more authentic African identity. Celebration and mourning are more visible features of local community life. People come to the streets to celebrate and will party until late into the night. Bus-loads of people will arrive at an apartment building, either to celebrate with an individual on personal achievement, or to mourn with them on personal or family loss.

Despite the above changes, often for the better, there is an on-going challenge to grow from *fragmentation to non-fragmentation*. Inner city communities have always been fragmented communities, sustained and kept together only by white privilege. The fragmentation today is often evident in the lack

of sustained interaction between the multiple voices, the replacement of true reconciliation with almost resentful tolerance, and the lack of clear political vision for the inner city apart from top-down interventions that deal more with capital investments into government infrastructure, than with the "flesh and bone" human communities living in the city.

3.2.2 The vulnerability of the voiceless

This section would be incomplete unless it identifies those who are still socially *excluded* or particularly *vulnerable* in the inner city, despite changes, and who have yet remained virtually voiceless. The inner city has been a catch-basin for some of the most vulnerable people of the city since the early 1990s.

Children living and working on the streets, homeless individuals and families, commercial sex workers (sometimes as young as 11 years of age), refugees, the aged, and people with chronic mental illness, all found a refuge in the inner city. A number of buildings became refuge for people with very low, or no, income, often characterised by absentee landlords, with poor management, overcrowding and generally poor living conditions being the order of the day. At the same time a number of well-managed buildings were specifically created to offer low-cost social housing options, and carried themselves with a sense of

innovation and pride.

Informal trade mushroomed since 1994 and informal traders are perpetually at risk of being removed from their corners of activity. Their goods are frequently confiscated by the Metro Police, often without the right procedures being followed, sometimes not returning their goods, which amounts to legitimised theft from informal traders.

The inner city became a place of concentration for particularly vulnerable people, often as the first point of entry for both rural and foreign migrants into the city. Instead of responding hospitably or compassionately to such vulnerability, the city's most dominant responses seemed to have been a toxic combination of increased policing and criminalising of vulnerable people, exclusionary policy or the complete absence of policy guiding responses to migration. The city itself is responsible therefore for making the lives of already vulnerable people even more precarious.

It is curious how a city with a vision of being a leading African capital city, seems to exclude the most vulnerable through lacking a pronounced vision of social inclusion for the inner city, backed up by appropriate policies, strategies and budgets to facilitate such inclusion. It seems as if the city regards the most vulnerable mostly as detrimental to its own development and image, and therefore

ignoring their presence, or criminalising them, has become the *modus operandi*.

3.2.3 Different views on social change

Unfolding inner city realities, including socio-cultural change, evoked different responses. Assessments of change are never neutral but shaped by racial, ethnic or class biases, and often such assessments are based on ignorance, making value judgments without having engaged the inner city firsthand. This becomes hugely problematic when it then shapes urban policies, plans and practices.

My own discourse on social change in our neighbourhoods has been largely celebratory, affirming the diversity, the new or more varied signs of community, and the vibrancy accompanying change. It is not a romantic, uncritical affirmation, however. I am deeply concerned about a culture of entitlement, people asserting individual rights without taking equal responsibility. I am concerned with the general apathy of inhabitants of the inner city, not practising active citizenship, not caring about the rights or plight of the most vulnerable among us, and not taking ownership for the present or future well-being of inner city neighbourhoods.

The dominant discourse of the media, town planners, private sector and suburbanites, often held that "people have left the

inner city”. This I always find amusing as there are clearly many more people in the inner city than when I grow up. The sub-text is that “our people” left: white people, people with money, or middle-class people. Such views of the inner city are deeply disrespectful of the thousands of people living in these inner city neighbourhoods, making ends meet often against many odds, raising their families as best they could, and resisting negative change with all their might.

The retreat of white people since the mid-1990s was accompanied in some quarters by fear and hopelessness. This was reflected in the destructive discourse of banks redlining inner city areas, particularly between 1995-2005 (cf. Nengome 2005:35-36; Mahlaka 2015), even when properties were well-managed and showed good financial statements. The media, business and banks have contributed systemically to processes of inner city decay and mounting pressures on inner city neighbourhoods because of the actions they took.

If our views of the socio-cultural changes of the city are largely shaped not by our immersion in such communities, but by ignorance, prejudice and paradigms foreign to these communities, we will be unable to accompany exciting visions of radical inclusion that are not only emerging but being lived

3.3 ECONOMIC CHANGE

Around the turn of the 19th century, the neighbourhood of (Berea-)Burgers Park was home to the local elite, and formed the southern boundary of the city. It was an expression of the new wealth generated on the gold fields, which spilled over to Pretoria. Many grand villas were built in this area between the 1870's and 1890's, evident today only in a few remaining buildings such as the Melrose House (then owned by George Hays), and the house in Burgers Park itself which was the official residence of the government botanist. Today we have come a long way from those early beginnings.

3.3.1 The city as “battered woman”: exploited and discarded

Letty Russell (1988:20-21) writes about the city as battered woman, first used for what she had to offer and then discarded: exalted, exploited, violated, abused, hurt, old, forgotten.

Estate agents (mainly white) made a quick profit in the 1990s from naive first-time home owners (mainly black), selling properties without providing proper property owner education to their “victims”, often setting them up for disaster. New owners knew of mortgage loans and usually paid faithfully, but the intricacies of owning a sectional title unit were never properly communicated, leaving both

individual property owners and complexes very vulnerable.

Many agents did not accompany the dynamic processes of change responsibly, partly because of their own prejudice but also because they probably lacked skills to work in this new and dynamic environment. Once disaster struck and property owners and sectional title property complexes⁹ went into crises, the very same estate agents withdrew from the areas in which they often irresponsibly generated their profit, washing their hands off these areas once deterioration set in.

Banks became successful in local neighbourhoods, but closed down local branches when the neighbourhoods started to change. Many businesses and church structures treated the inner city in similar ways, using it to become profitable, powerful or well-established, and then disinvesting, often leaving behind a negative legacy (cf. Barndt 1991:75-100).

Between 1990 and 2000 many buildings became vacant in the inner city, both as a result of provincial government relocating from Pretoria to Johannesburg, as well as businesses disinvesting from the inner city and relocating to shopping malls in the eastern suburbs of the city. Instead of valuing these vacant buildings as potential assets of urban regeneration, social inclusion or local economic development, they were often regarded as liabilities and allowed to seriously

deteriorate. The worst examples in Pretoria's inner city are probably the Schubart Park and Kruger Park complexes. Once accommodating more than 800 families, what make these properties, now completely vacant and utterly vandalised, so shameful is the fact that they were owned and supposedly managed by local government.

Church properties were sold without consultation with the larger faith-based community in the inner city, even when there were attempts at dialogue by those faith-based groups who vowed to remain. There is at least one example where a large church-owned youth hostel was sold at a drastically reduced price to a landlord with no interest in the well-being of either the city or their tenants, and who then allowed the property to become a "near slum" facility. Scrupulous profiteers picked up so-called "bad" buildings on auction and exploited vulnerable people desperate to find accommodation closer to urban services and employment, charging rents out of proportion to the quality of accommodation they offered.

3.3.2 The street corner enterprise

A more optimistic metaphor than the battered woman is that of the *street corner enterprise*. In the absence of typical street corner cafés, with one or two exceptions, almost every street corner in Berea-Burgerspark, now hosts

9. Sectional title properties are similar to what is known as condominiums elsewhere in the world. These are apartment buildings where people purchase an individual unit and receive a title deed for their "section" / unit of the complex. Usually owners of sectional title units will have mortgage bonds with commercial banks which they have to service monthly. The communal areas of a sectional title complex (passages, elevators, gardens, parking) are communally owned by the body corporate (the collective of property owners). In addition to servicing the monthly mortgage bond, there is a monthly levy that each owner has to pay the body corporate in order to maintain the communal areas and to pay the salaries of those employed by the body corporate (caretakers, cleaners, security personnel). See also the Sectional Titles Act, 1986 (Act No. 95 of 1986).

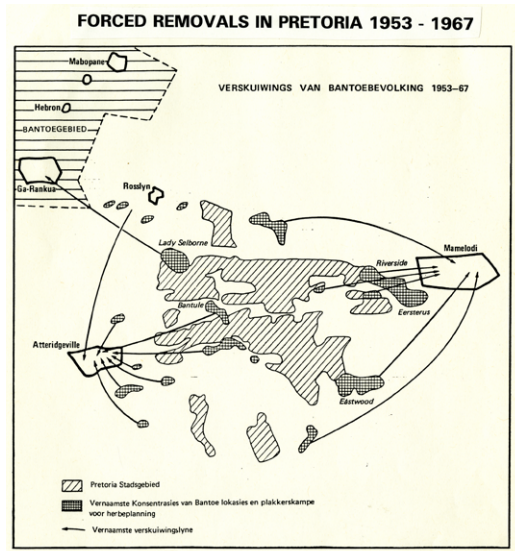
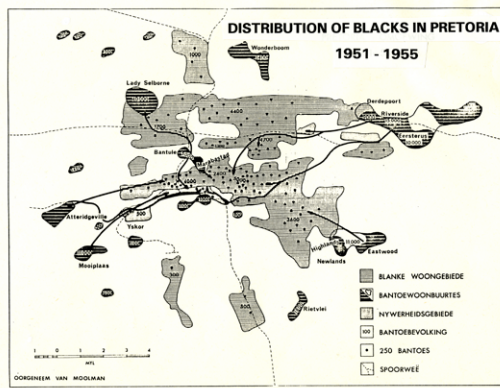


Fig. 93. Map indicating forced removal during 1953-1967 - Pretoria (source: van der Waal Collection)
Fig. 94. Map indicating the distribution of the black population between 1951 and 1955 Pretoria (source: van der Waal Collection)



a street corner vegetable seller, the occasional newspaper vendor, *magwenya*¹⁰, sweet stands, and even upholstery or shoe repair vendors.

10. Magwenya or vetkoek is a ball of dough deep-fried in oil.

Various discourses are alive with regard to informal trade in the inner city. One discourse views informal trade as a hiding place for criminal activity. This is propagated by some formal business people and law enforcement officers, and although this might sometimes be true, it is a cruel generalisation. Another discourse is framed in the language of urban management, proposing managed

alternatives to street vendors, such as official market places to organise, control and formalise economic activity. Such a view could have both positive and negative implications. It could provide better crime-free urban spaces, with storage space for traders. But often it implies cost to traders that their businesses cannot necessarily absorb.

It seems, at least in Berea-Burgers Park, as if the street corner enterprises have become places of community. During lunch times and after hours the informal traders are often joined by cleaners of buildings and sometimes residents, becoming places of fellowship. These are becoming *anchor points, places of exchange and places that transcend the fragmentation of classes and economy*. This is an added value in addition to the obvious economic access created by people for themselves, but also the value brought by services being as close as possible to their customer base.

In the Berea-Burgers Park area the situation of informal trade is not “out of control”. It will be wise to build proactively on this mainly positive situation, forming a possible triangular partnership between the local community, the existing informal trade sector in Berea-Burgerspark, and local government, to maintain, strengthen and even expand the informal economic sector. Instead of criminalising this sector it is a hugely beneficial asset to the city that should

be galvanised and optimised as much as possible.

Whereas the “battered woman” metaphor applies to big players leaving local communities to its decay once they have done their exploitation sufficiently, the “street corner enterprises” is a strong narrative illustrating “small people” creating alternatives from below. The outward move of disinvesting big business is impersonal, completely disrespectful in its disregard for the possible effects of their disinvestment. The move from below, as initiated and driven by informal traders, is intensely personal, both in the immediacy of its benefits for local families, but also in the social relationships formed in local neighbourhoods.

In communities of rapid change and consistent transition, it seems as if these corner places have become to some like anchors or beacons, providing the only places of personal exchange and stability in a changing environment. Somehow big urban strategies

need to take notice of these small sprouts.

Unfortunately the shadow side of small, local enterprise is the more negative trends of drug trafficking, illegal liquor stores (shebeens), and the opening up of poorly managed spaza shops in the few remaining residential houses. Although small, bottom-up activity needs to be encouraged and community-driven, the entry of destructive forces needs to be arrested. Local communities probably need to provide more pro-active self-leadership in terms of determining the kinds of local initiative it wants to embrace, informed by a clear framework of vision, as well as clarity on how it could address the needs and concerns of the community best.

3.3.3 Economic challenges

There are a number of economic challenges in Berea-Burgers Park (cf. Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative 2005).



Fig. 95. De Klerk, 2015. Kruger Park's basement, Pretoria

Fig. 96. De Klerk, 2015. Kruger Park, Pretoria



A first challenge is the generally *uncoordinated and incoherent economic activity* in the area, not well woven together through a shared vision for the area. The economic activity is marked by a patchwork of hotels, small enterprises, retail stores and informal traders, operating in different parts of the neighbourhood.

A second challenge relates to *informal trade*. One solution would be to build on the asset of the informal sector, by providing management support, designated areas in which to facilitate unhindered trade, formal structures for storage space, and organisational capacity. In cases where informal traders or small enterprises are ready to scale up, they need to be assisted with advice and the necessary support to enable that. This might include access to finance, physical infrastructure or technical support.

A third challenge relates to *formal business in the precinct* (cf. the map locating formal businesses). An anchor industry that probably helped sustain the Berea-Burgers Park area in more significant ways than being recognised is the *hospitality industry*. On the one hand there are a number of hotels performing well – Burgers Park, Capital Protea and Manhattan – mainly serving visitors to the area, hosting government departments and conferences, and offering some local employment options.

These hotels have played an important stabilising role in the area

and from time to time contribute to social development objectives in the area. It would be wise to discern with the hotels, since they are often long-time property owners in the area, how best to facilitate a broader-based economic strategy for the area that is locally owned. New hotels such as Morning Star and Park Lodge have recently opened and contribute very positively to the local neighbourhood. Historic buildings like Victoria Hotel, opposite the Tshwane Central Station, and the Belgrave Hotel, have not been as successful in terms of attracting strong clientele. With the right support they might be strengthened and their locations make them ideal levers for local socio-economic regeneration.

The *Paul Kruger Street Precinct* offers the greatest concentration of retail activity. Local services and employment opportunities are offered, but somehow this Precinct is still failing to facilitate real economic regeneration.

On the corner of *Scheiding and Boom Streets* a new retail development by City Property offers a welcome injection into the area, largely focusing on commuters using taxis and trains.

On *Jeff Masemola Street* a couple of small retail shops have opened up in recent years, often very haphazardly with uncertainty about the legalities of property conversion or even trading from these premises.



The *Berea City* development in the south of the area was a promising small shopping centre development created during the middle of the 1990s. It was never able to sustain businesses supposedly geared for the local market. It might be that the market was misinterpreted, or the location not accessible enough for local residents, but Berea City has effectively become defunct.

More recently, the *Gautrain Station* sparked some investment in and around the Tshwane Central Station. This was not optimised in terms of economic opportunity however, and only a few franchises, probably owned by people from outside the neighbourhood, were established.

The challenge relates mostly to the ways in which coordination between formal enterprises take place, as well as the cooperation between formal and informal trade, formal business and local resident concerns, and formal business and socio-economic investment in the area. A coordinated vision, finding creative synergies and alignments, might go far in building a more self-reliant local economy.

A fourth challenge is for *local self-reliance*: could it be imagined that Berea-Burgers Park will grow in capacity to a place where they can now embrace new visions of self-reliance, developing their own local economic engines with the capacity to start and sustain

appropriate local enterprises, engage in economic activity, and generating profit that can be ploughed back locally?

A last concern has to do with *historic spatial planning* of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood. Major roads run through the area, seriously affecting the possibility of a close-knit community. The neighbourhood was clearly affected by planning that prioritised the access of private suburban vehicles into the city centre, over the well-being of local inner city neighbourhoods. It is clear that a lack of coordinated civic agency in the 1980s and 1990s contributed very detrimentally to the fragmentation of the neighbourhood.

Mechanisms need to be found to break down the barriers between the commercial sector of Paul Kruger Street (south), and possible new commercial nodes, and the residential component of Berea-Burgers Park. Residents of Berea-Burgers Park are in many ways dependent on Sunnyside for some of their needs, as it is more accessible, especially at night time. And yet, there is a potential buying power of more than 20,000 people residing full-time in Berea-Burgers Park, as well as a few thousand people moving through the area daily to and from the Tshwane Central Station.



3.4 PHYSICAL CHANGE

The physical infrastructure of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood was under severe pressure since the early 1990s. In previous sections I have already alluded to that fact. This includes the state of residential, office and commercial property, abandoned buildings, parks and open spaces, pavements and streets (cf. also Prinsloo & Cloete 2002).

3.4.1 Residential properties

Residential properties in this neighbourhood include sectional title complexes (condominiums), rental apartment buildings, single room residential facilities, hotels, residential hotels, and some transitional or special needs housing facilities. Various forces are at work in these buildings and various processes underway to manage, restore or reclaim buildings.

The bulk of residential properties in this neighbourhood are sectional title properties. What happens to these properties will largely affect the quality of the neighbourhood. Traditionally it has been held that the ownership of individual units somewhat guaranteed greater interest in preserving the quality of the property but also surrounding neighbourhoods. That might still be the case, although, as explained before, many of these property complexes have gone through very trying times.

Between 1994 and 2001 many buildings in the Berea-Burgers Park area (and elsewhere in the inner city) experienced a culture of non-payment, resulting in deteriorating physical conditions as well as increasing debts with the local authority. Individual owners often paid their mortgage bonds faithfully but failed to pay their communal levies. This resulted in buildings not being maintained and failing to pay their municipal accounts. A number of buildings did not have electricity in the common areas, no working elevators, dark passage ways, dangerous conditions especially for women and children, and impossible conditions for the old, disabled or frail.

Sectional title ownership was a new reality for black buyers who were for the first time able to own property in a place of choice. Not only did estate agents and banks often not inform new owners well of their responsibilities as owners, (cf. 3.3.1 here above), but the trustees of sectional title complexes¹¹ also failed to guide and support their new neighbours into a thorough understanding of the responsibilities and pitfalls of sectional title ownership.

The social and racial transition in the city needs to be understood. Trustees are fellow property owners elected by the body corporate – the collective of property owners – to administer the affairs of the whole complex. In the 1990s they were mainly white, and often resented

11. Sectional Title Property Complexes have a Board of Trustees. Trustees are functioning like the management team of a sectional title complex. The Board of Trustees is made up of owners of individual units and annually elected by the Body Corporate. Usually the caretaker and a representative of the appointed property management company will be ex officio members of the Board of Trustees, without voting rights.

the fact of new black owners. It often felt like the white property owners almost wanted the black property owners to fail.

The dominant discourse in many buildings, and peddled by property management agencies¹² in the city, all *still* white-owned, was that racial change in itself caused the break-down of the social fibre and physical well-being. In other words, black people were irresponsible, did not want to pay, or could not run their buildings well. If that should be true, and racial change was inevitable, there was nothing that could be done to retain healthy inner city areas ever again. But that represented a certain racial (racist) discourse which was very widespread and accepted through social consensus. Black equalled bad.

In the Berea Community Forum a different approach was taken. It viewed the challenge not so much as one of diversity or racial and social change, but rather as an issue of how well change was managed: proper information and education, close monitoring of payment, and good systems and procedures, all had to be ensured.

Managing agents were often unable to facilitate constructive processes of empowering healthy cultures in buildings, either because of a lack of skill, a lack of will, or because they lacked the soft skills necessary to negotiate the social and cultural diversity that now appeared. Sometimes a

lack of owners' understanding of or interest in the management of their own affairs, made it impossible for the managing agent representing them, to manage the stock well. Only in those blocks where local property owners took charge of the situation, was it possible for managing agents to provide a meaningful support service, and was the recovery of deteriorating properties possible.

The pressure on the residential property sector in the Berea-Burgers Park area reached a point where a small but growing movement of people started to resist these downward forces. Individual property owners took greater ownership for whole apartment buildings, studied the sectional title act, called out the exploitative and often abusive and patronising attitudes and practices of property managing agents, and facilitated interventions that actually turned negative buildings around.

Towards the end of 2001 there were 18 buildings listed for sequestration because of bad debts with the local municipality. This would have meant that first time home owners would have lost their properties, even in cases where individual owners were not in arrears but the body corporate was. As a result of some positive interventions in buildings, as well as the facilitating work done by the Berea Community Forum, a local stakeholder-forum, the number of buildings in crisis was reduced to 5 by the beginning of 2005.

12. Property management agencies are different from estate agents. Estate agents are property brokers, serving as agents between sellers and prospective buyers. Property management agencies are set up to provide property management services to property owners, either to an individual owner of commercial or residential property, or to the body corporate of sectional title property complexes.



MAP OF SHOPPING CENTRE LOCATIONS.

Stories of gradual, and sometimes radical, recovery served as a source of hope. It also challenged the discourse that blamed race for the decay, since now it was recovery facilitated by largely black property owners.

A combination of factors has probably contributed to the gradual recovery of properties. It is by no means complete, and in some ways always incomplete, as the transitional nature of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood means the constant exit of some and entry of others. Every residential property needs close care and attention, on a daily and rigorous basis, to ensure its well-being. The factors that in this case contribute to recovery included that owners took full responsibility for their properties; stronger buildings twinned with weaker buildings and coached them out of trouble; community organising resisted inappropriate and exploitative sequestration; banks slowly re-investing in the area (gaining new confidence); managing agents in some cases developed softer skills that are required; and national, provincial and local government emphasise inner city regeneration with some incentive schemes and flagship projects.

A smaller portion of the residential property sector in Berea-Burgers Park is rather diverse, including rental apartments, single room facilities, residential hotels, social housing units and some transitional / special needs housing.

Although the diversity is in principle positive in terms of creating a healthy mix of incomes and housing types, the number of units in these different types is too few to create significant access to diverse people with diverse needs. Although hopeful examples already exist, if this portfolio of properties can be expanded significantly, this might become a community modelling the radical inclusivity advocated in this study.

The infographic on the following two pages indicates the *current housing typology* of the area.

3.4.2 Housing the poor

According to official local government housing statistics, there are 189,539 households in the metropolitan area of Tshwane on the waiting list for formal housing (cf. Gwarubana 2017). This means they either live in informal housing, in backyards, on the streets, or in overcrowded housing units with family or friends.

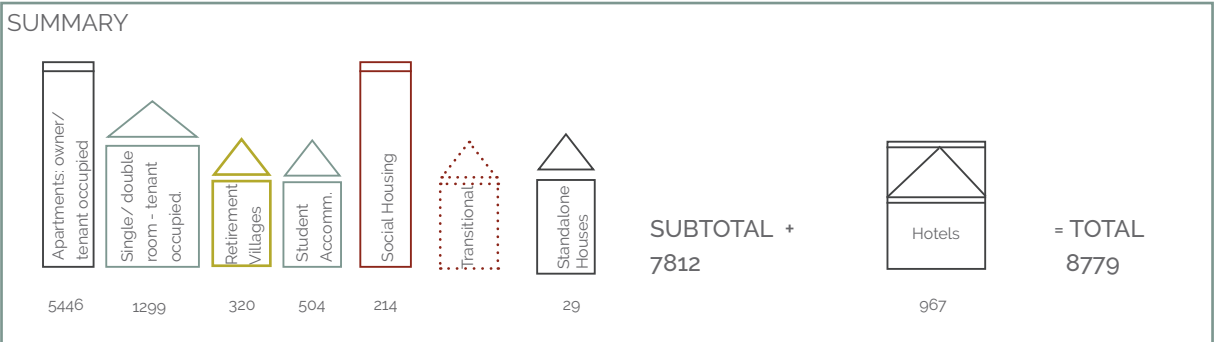
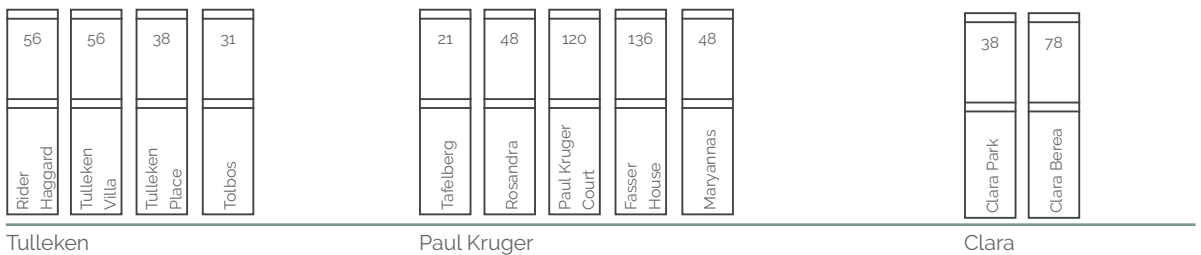
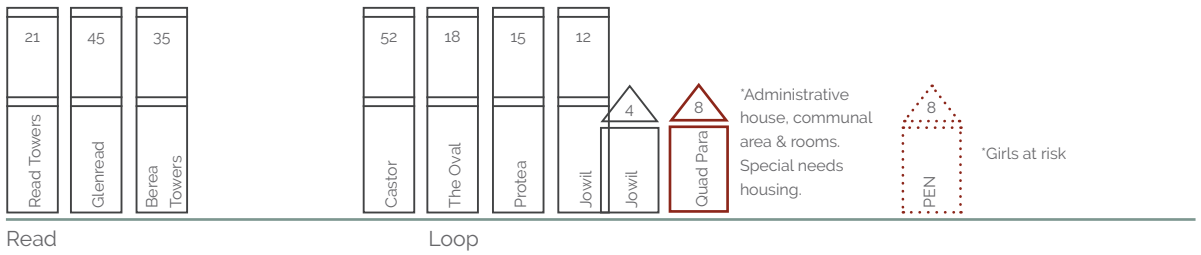
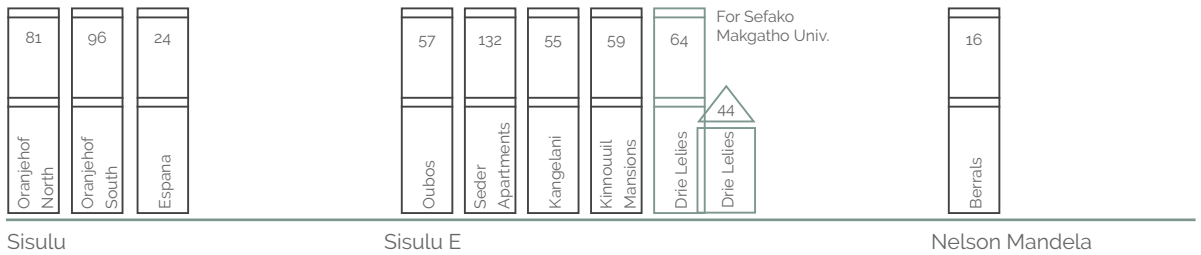
There are only two registered social housing companies¹³ in the city, currently offering 871 social housing units to low-income families, and aiming to have 1363 units under management by 2017 (Mofokeng 2017). Of the approximately 6,530 housing units in the Berea-Burgers Park area, only about 3-4% are for social housing purposes, which is way below what it should or could be.

Fig. 99. (opposite) Nel, 2017. Map of shopping centres locations.

13. Social housing is aimed at people earning between R 1,500 and R 7,500 per month. Social housing institutions are established in terms of the Social Housing Act, no.16 of 2008. Currently there are two registered social housing companies in the City of Tshwane – Yeast City Housing, a faith-based housing institution, and Housing Company Tshwane, an entity owned by the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality



Fig. 100. Nel, 2017. Infographic illustrating housing typologies and occupancy in study area.



1,132 units were lost due to the eviction and subsequent destruction of the Kruger Park and Schubart Park complexes, under the watchful eye of the city. This occurred in the same period in which the Tshwane IDP (City of Tshwane 2011: 87; 89) indicated that proper access control will be secured at Schubart Park after which renovations would follow. Instead, the 813 units in Schubart Park was evacuated in 2011 and residents never allowed to return, even though the Constitutional Court ruled in October of 2012 that residents should be allowed back into the buildings (cf. Brand, De Beer, De Villiers & Van Marle 2013:283).

Collectively the number of housing units produced per annum is a far cry from the number of people on the waiting list, and this housing backlog is growing as migration into the Gauteng City-Region and therefore also into the City of Tshwane intensifies.

A leading housing official in local government voiced his concern with creating too many opportunities for the poorest sector of society in the inner city. This was in 2001, but his views affected housing policy and set back the city in terms of social housing delivery with at least ten years. And there is no accountability for such an official.

Although not official government policy and rather contradictory to

official national housing policy, this discourse seems to have found its way into the practice and commitments of local government. In their article, Brand, et al (2013:285) speak of the tension between official inner city regeneration discourse and inclusion of the poor in the City of Tshwane.

The purpose of the Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy is to form the foundation for the regeneration of this area through the introduction of certain key interventions. In the 39 pages of this document the poor gets a single mention as one of the strategic focus areas: "To ensure the community's well-being by addressing poverty and making essential services and facilities available and affordable."

There is clearly no priority given to the poor in general, and the integration of the poor through affordable and accessible housing in particular. There is a sense that the presence of the poorest would necessarily lead to ghetto-situations, slum conditions and social break-down. There was no coherent social housing policy or any housing policy for the inner city until 2006. Now, for the first time, there is a draft inner city housing framework on the table. Currently ad hoc-decisions are still made, often detrimentally affecting the creation of social housing units and access for the poor.

The following case study is a deconstruction of this negative discourse on housing the poor in the inner city.

THE POOR VERSUS THE MIDDLE-CLASS: Who is to build the city?

In 2001 an important observation was made. Yeast City Housing (YCH) is a social housing company that managed two single room residential facilities in Berea-Burgerspark by 2001. Although one of these buildings had significant problems until 1998, with non-payment and large debts, it has recovered fully. Both buildings accommodated people with incomes (in 2001) lower than R 1,500 per month (single people) and lower than R 2,500 per month (families). Yet, YCH, at that stage, maintained an average monthly rental income of 98% and had a 100% occupancy rate since 1993. The co-operation of residents was astounding, the buildings kept neat, noise levels under control, and crime almost non-existent.

Surrounding sectional title buildings in 2001 accommodated young professionals, upcoming middle-class people, and students. Many of these buildings had huge problems with the non-payment of levies, vandalism, noise, and disrespect for property and fellow residents alike. A sectional title property complex, adjacent to YCHs offices, had no electricity in the common areas for 7 years, meaning dark passages, no elevator for older people or children living on the 8th floor of this building, and general unsafe conditions. Yet, the residents of this building comprised people who could buy property or afford related higher rents than paid in social housing units.

Our observation from this small narrative is that middle-income people do not guarantee healthy neighbourhoods just as poor people do not guarantee decay. There are many other factors playing a role, including "ownership" – physically and/ or psychologically, and management.

Social housing organisations such as Yeast City Housing (YCH) are overwhelmed by the huge demand for affordable accommodation, which is much higher than the number of units currently on offer. YCH has expanded its footprint in the city but is still unable to come close to addressing the waiting list for social housing in the city.

There is a real challenge to develop a significant percentage of social or affordable housing in the inner city, as part of a broader, balanced housing strategy. Contrary to popular belief, the more affordable developments, if managed well and held by appropriate social and other support infrastructure, often provide the social stability needed to sustain communities, as people tend to stay longer, identify with the local area and start to take greater ownership of its future.

In deconstructing the old apartheid city, one of the challenges is to reverse the trend of displacing the poor to the fringes of the city. However, government since 1994 has been unable to radically deconstruct the apartheid city structure. To the contrary, the spatial configurations of the apartheid city has not only been maintained but even perpetuated. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (2014) is emphasising the urgent necessity for spatial restructuring of the (not yet) post-apartheid city. Most current city plans and projects still, to a large extent, embody and perpetuate the apartheid spatial structure.

The inner city is strategically placed to help construct a new reality that will demonstrate an inclusive and transforming city. The opportunities offered by vast tracks of empty land as well the potential for densification and mixed-income and mixed-use developments, could play a key role in ushering in this new city, marked by radical and wide-spread socio-spatial transformation.

3.4.3 Buildings have stories: abandonment & recycling

Every building has a story. Some buildings were abandoned and allowed to go into complete decay. Other buildings were recycled and rehabilitated with great care. Other buildings were never allowed to deteriorate. The origins of buildings also have stories. Some stories are of bold dreams for what owners or developers saw. Other stories are more exploitative and exclusivist. But buildings are never merely neutral concrete structures void of any history or narratives.

A trend that emerged since 2000 was the occupation of vacant office buildings which then got used for residential purposes, often without proper conversions. This led to a number of so-called “bad

Fig. 101. Eisner, 2006. The building.

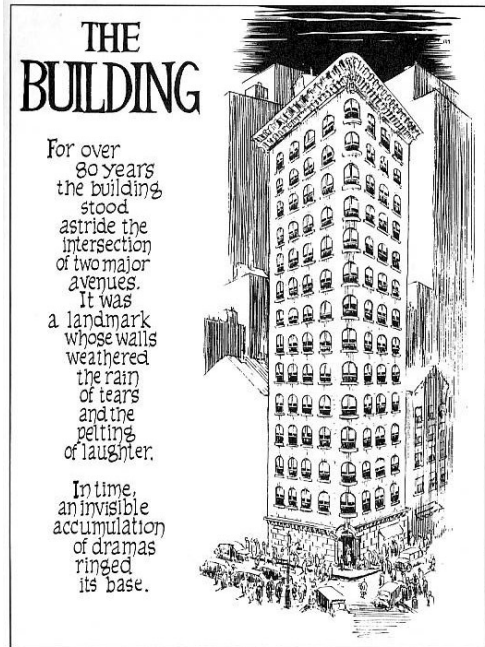




Fig. 102. City Property, Reuben's place, 173 Pretorius st, Pretoria.

Fig. 103. City Property, Reuben's place, 173 Pretorius st, Pretoria.

14. "Bad buildings" obviously describe a certain dynamic where a formerly decent building collapsed in terms of management, maintenance, property quality and general conditions. Some would argue that no building is inherently bad and even coining a building in such a way might become a self-fulfilled prophecy condemning a building and labelling its residents in a way that is not liberating.

buildings¹⁴ where tenants pay market-related rents, in exchange for poorly maintained accommodation, municipal services often not being paid (at the expense of tenants), and the over-all decay of buildings. In comparison to the city centre of Johannesburg with its more than 80 so-called bad buildings or hijacked buildings, the City of Tshwane has not really gone so far down that road.

There are also examples in other parts of the inner city where proper conversions took place turning office buildings into residential apartments, usually facilitating very positive change. A number of buildings owned by City Property (2015) and Yeast City Housing (2014) have been converted to residential and other

new uses in very innovative ways. *Prinsman Place* was the first conversion of an office building into a residential facility in the City of Tshwane, done by City Property in the early 1990s. Subsequently they have continued to facilitate the conversion of vacant buildings in the inner city, as well as one greenfields residential development mostly focusing on providing housing to lower-middle income people..

The property of the City Methodist Mission was re-developed over time into a multi-purpose community centre including 27 new housing units, a pre-school facility as well as health facilities.

Yeast City Housing facilitated a creative redevelopment of a piece of land adjacent to the Burgers Park to now combine special needs, transitional and long-term family housing, a housing information office, various social services, and communal space. It subsequently also facilitated the conversion of two old office blocks and a second church property.

Three examples of vacant office buildings that have become residential accommodation without any conversion, are Alphen House, Villa Zietschaan and the Bauhaus Inn. In all three cases the properties have been rejuvenated since 2005. However, in two of the cases the tenants were evicted and regeneration was achieved through displacement.

The long-term effects of regeneration without integration need to be considered. Is this transforming the city or merely shifting difficult challenges elsewhere? Can proper alternatives not be created? Can buildings not be restored without displacing people? What are the strategic, proactive interventions that can prevent bad buildings and facilitate better and inclusive utilisation thereof? (cf. also Trafalgar 2004:9-10).

Existing buildings and land, even when rather dilapidated, should be seen as vital assets in the process of regenerating the inner city. The challenge is how some of these properties could specifically be accessed for the purposes of lower-income people or people who are particularly vulnerable and excluded from mainstream processes.

Or differently said, how can mixed-income, mixed-use facilities be facilitated that will intentionally include low-income and vulnerable groups? If South African cities in general, and inner cities in particular, will fail to combine economic viability with social inclusivity, inequality will persist and deepen, and the anger of the excluded will not be contained.



Fig. 104. Yeast Housing, Sediba House.



Fig. 105. Yeast Housing, Litakoemi, Visagie Street.
Fig. 106. Yeast Housing, Jubilee Centre, Burgers Park Lane.



Fig. 107. Yeast Housing, Tau Village, Struben Street.
Fig. 108. Yeast Housing, Livingstones Community House.





Fig. 109. Nel, 2017. Vacant Propertieix in Berea-Burgers Park. The properties on Nana Sita between Kgosi Mampuru and Thabo Sehume are vacant buildings, the rest are vacant (open) sites

3.4.4 Open spaces

The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood has a number of open spaces which are under-utilised or unutilised.

The *Burgers Park* is an award-winning park, created in 1874 and declared a National Historical Monument in 1979. Owned by the city, it is a vital local asset that can be used as a base for community regeneration. It is well

The Park has restricted access, controversially obtained due to collusion between the City of Tshwane and the then owner of the Burgers

maintained and well utilised by the general public. Since 2000 it has become recognised for the asset it is in a more intentional way. Today it hosts an annual community festival, the Feast of the Clowns, drawing up to 20,000 people in August, as well as a range of other community events. However, it has not unlocked its optimal potential yet. There is a kiosk, a Victorian band stand, and a conservatory, all offering opportunities to be further developed.

Park Hotel, in the early part of the 2000s. This is a serious hindrance to accessibility, as only two gates are open. The children's play area



Fig. 110. Layout of Burgerpark titled "Rij en Wandelpark, Oude Botanische Tuin, Pretoria" between Andries, Visagie, Mare and Van der Walt streets. Plan signed by "S.W. Wierda, Hoofd, Departement van Publieke Werken, Z.A. Republiek"

is also not necessarily as child-friendly as it should be, especially considering the high numbers of children using it.

The *Berea Sport Grounds* is located at the southern entrance to the neighbourhood and until the 1970s it hosted the provincial cricket and bowling headquarters for what is today known as North Gauteng. Changing hands to Transnet and now to the National Department of Public Works, the facility is an important asset, both by virtue of the built area being declared a national monument, but also as the only potential facility in the neighbourhood that can

address vital social, recreational and cultural needs of local people.

Until recently the space has occupied two schools, but the sporting facility is hardly used and very inaccessible for local use. In 2011 the historic façade was seriously damaged by fire and now the property stands vacant. The facility lends itself to a multi-purpose development that could include educational, social and recreational uses. However, current information is that it might be redeveloped to host a national government department. Properties such as these are not considered in terms of the local social and economic

well-being of neighbourhoods. This is a striking example of positive infrastructure to facilitate local community transformation, but instead is considered for yet another monumental development to host a national government department.

There are also other portions of land, or buildings, in the Berea-Burgers Park area that are unutilised, underutilised or perhaps even inappropriately utilised in terms of local community needs. These should be considered as local assets that need to be harnessed locally, and optimally redeveloped for the common good of local people. Visionary community leadership, matched by the good will and vision of planners and politicians, can actually translate such land into levers for socio-spatial-economic change.

One such example is Kopanong, located at 292 Scheiding Street. This was vacant land owned by a local church, and then purchased and developed by Yeast City Housing as a 62-unit social housing complex in 2003. This is a good example of in-fill housing in a local neighbourhood, that could be replicated multiple times. Many

years ago 227 Minnaar Street used to be the site of the SABC in Pretoria. This property was purchased by City Property and turned into a R 40 million housing project accommodating 400 units.

Physical spaces, infused with vision and compassion, can be significant spaces mediating socio-spatial-economic transformation in local neighbourhoods. They offer examples of the unfinished city, yearning to emerge for the well-being of all people, but particularly those forgotten ones.



Chapter 02

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND URBAN REGENERATION

I entered inner city spaces living with my mother and sister since being a small child of 5 years old. Our first home was an apartment building in Sunnyside, only a few city blocks from the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city. As I grew older I was motivated by the spiritual language of “vocation” and a deep desire to contribute to the lives of the city’s most vulnerable people. More than two decades ago, in January of 1993, I started to work for a local community organisation that we created, over the years resulting in the creation of diverse community programmes, intentional communities and social institutions, always seeking for ways to increase access for socially excluded people to housing, urban services, caring communities, social networks, and economic opportunity. In the process and context of doing this, one discovers institutional strengths and weaknesses, hindrances and bridges that either perpetuate exclusions or sometimes are able to facilitate transformations.

191 |

Fig. 111. Clarke, 1970-1973. The south side of Grand Street at the intersection of Grand Street and 7th Street. In the background is the Nawab Miriammen Temple and the high roof and ventilators of the Royal Cinema Theatre on the corner of Grand Street and 5th Street.

In this chapter I reflect on some institutional approaches to urban regeneration generally, through the lenses of institutional changes as they occurred in Berea-Burgers Park. My reflections would be restricted to one specific neighbourhood and would be presented from a community-based perspective.

1. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN RELATION TO BEREA- BURGERS PARK

1.1 Local, provincial & national government

1.1.1 City of Tshwane

The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, known as the City of Tshwane (2015), is responsible both politically and administratively for managing the administrative capital of South Africa, still officially known as Pretoria. The inner city is only a small geographical area within the much larger metropolitan region, competing for limited resources. Within the greater inner city, the Berea-Burgers Park area is one small local neighbourhood.

Naturally a local neighbourhood with about 20,000 people will have to make itself heard and seen if it is to be considered in a city the size of Tshwane. According to the Statistics South Africa (2011), the official population of the City of Tshwane then was 2,921,488 million residents. In 2001 it was only 2,1 million people but by 2011 the population grew to 2,921,488 people (cf. Statistics South Africa n.d.). The inner city remains an important economic hub of the city, as well as the centre of political power, providing the majority of jobs to the residents of the city, and therefore justifying close attention and wise management and investment. What makes Pretoria unique is the prominent

presence of national government departments headquartered in its Central Business District.

The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood literally borders on the Central Business District, or Downtown area, and many government officials are living in apartments in this neighbourhood. This has always been the case, also pre-1994, but then these jobs were filled by white people.

However, although having undergone massive and fast transition between 1994 and 1999, the inner city, at least in the first ten years post-1994, struggled to shake off the perception that it was a neighbourhood of white privilege before. Therefore some politicians and officials since 1994 did not see serious investment in the inner city as justified. Those who held to the image of the inner city of the past, failed to recognise the dramatic shifts in the demographic and socio-economic profile of the inner city since the early 1990s, sometimes resisting local initiatives suspiciously as if they seek to sustain white privilege, even when the clear focus was on transformational development with people from previously disadvantaged communities as main beneficiaries. The new political guard also failed to realise that these neighbourhoods were not enclaves of white privilege anymore, since the city grew to the east, south and north of the city centre.

The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood still hosts a few beautiful old Victorian properties dating back to its heyday when the earliest industrialists and political leaders of Pretoria lived in this neighbourhood. This could be regarded as the first suburb back in those early days, outside of the hustle and bustle of the city centre, and just before one entered vast natural open spaces, south of Scheiding Street.

At a political level the mayoral committee, formed by the Executive Mayor, is the political executive of the city. One of the mayoral committee members has the inner city as portfolio. After 1994 an inner city office was created to be the central organising point for urban regeneration. Earlier I referred to the creation of the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (cf. Coetzee 2005) resulting from this office, with very positive potential to draw together local government, private sector, and local communities for urban regeneration. Unfortunately this process was discredited by the administration that took over in 1999, and the partnership was closed down.

Since then, many strategic documents were approved, both for the greater metropolitan area, but also for the inner city:

- Tshwane Spatial Development Framework (2002)
- Tshwane City Strategy (2004)
- Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration

Strategy (2005)

- Tshwane Integrated Development Plan: 2011-2016 (April 2011)
- City of Tshwane Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (June 2012)
- Tshwane Vision 2055 (2013)

Currently the Inner City Strategy is once again under revision. The fact that the formation of the long awaited Tshwane Development Agency (TDA) has never taken place could be one of the reasons why often strategy after strategy is approved without full implementation.

1.1.2 Gauteng Provincial Government

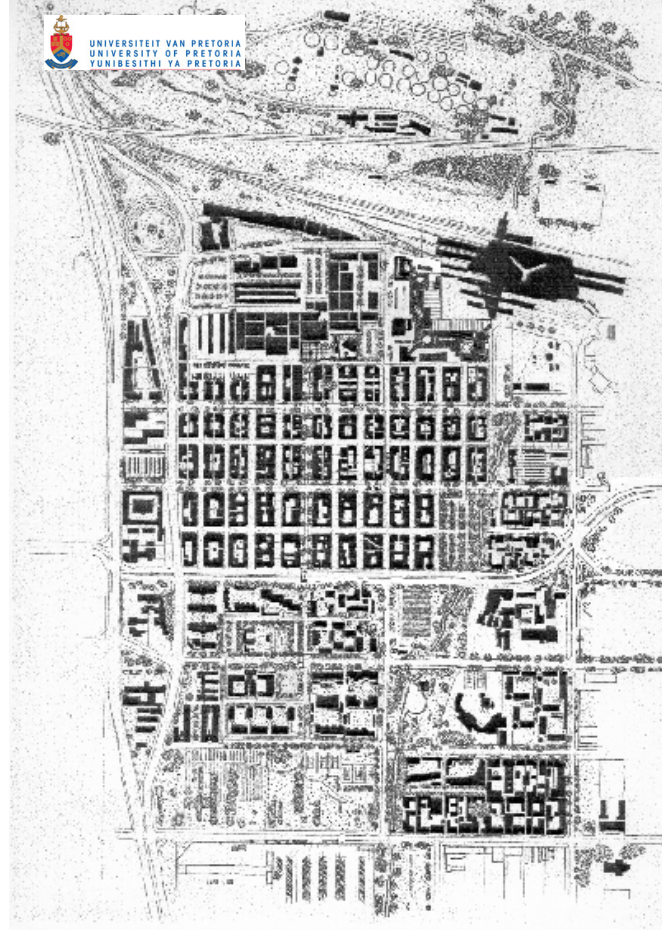
Since 1994 Gauteng Province launched various initiatives aimed at urban regeneration. Vusani Amadolobha was a provincial government programme that included the Gauteng Four-Point Plan on the Regeneration and Integration of Cities, Towns and Township Centres (Department of Development Planning and Local Government 1996).

The four-point plan focused on the promotion of clean and safe centres, fostering compact development, encouraging vibrant commercial centres, and building regeneration partnerships. It also sought “to promote integrated and cohesive development in our cities and towns, which recognises the economic and social realities of the

province”.

The Pretoria Inner City Partnership (Coetzee 2005: 92-111) worked closely within the framework of the 4-Point Plan, and both the comprehensive redevelopment plan for Marabastad and the spatial development framework for the inner city, were supported through this programme. Unfortunately little of these plans have yet been translated into projects, more than 17 years later. The design for the redevelopment of Marabastad, led by architect Azis Tayob, won awards and held great promise. Subsequent city governments since 1999 failed to deliver on this promise.

The Gauteng Province Department of Human Settlements (n.d.) have pioneered innovative urban renewal programmes since the 1990s. The Urban Renewal Programme identified strategic urban localities for investment in infrastructure, local economic development projects and social integration. Recently Alexandra, Bekkersdal and Evaton were identified, in addition to inner city areas, for such urban renewal partnerships. Such partnerships require cooperation and partnerships between all three spheres of government as well as the private sector. Although being a positive initiative, once again the community-based sector is excluded from the language used and the actual partnerships developed. Typical projects undertaken through this programme included the



refurbishment of schools, roads construction, backyard rental accommodation, and skills development centres for local communities.

As part of the above-mentioned drives to facilitate urban regeneration, provincial government approved the legislation that is now used to start and run City Improvement Districts, paving the way for local property owners to take a greater interest in regenerating their own areas.

In addition, Gauteng has embarked on major economic initiatives and structured the Gauteng Economic Development Agency (GEDA), as a promoter of Gauteng as a preferable investment

Fig. 112. Aziz Tayob Architects, 1998. Marabastad Urban Design Framework: prepared as a guideline for the city to develop and integrate this neglected part of the city.

destination, but also the multi-billion rand Blue IQ, noted as “one of the most advanced forms of meso-level planning institutions currently in operation in Africa” (Rogerson 2004:75). The Blue IQ (2002) was designed “to invest in economic infrastructure development in identified mega projects in tourism, smart industries and high value added manufacturing”.

The Blue IQ initiatives have major spatial implications, and it already helped transform places like Newtown, Constitutional Hill, and parts of Kliptown (cf. Rogerson 2004:76-80). The Gautrain project was probably its most ambitious so far, aimed at improved public transport, accessibility and connectivity between major nodes of Gauteng (Rogerson 2004:82-83; cf. also Gautrain 2015). Some of these should really be applauded for the remarkable way in which mostly run-down urban land was transformed into significant socio-political and symbolic spaces, sometimes also leveraging economic development with real local benefits for communities.

In 2012 the Gauteng Economic Development Agency (GEDA) and Blue IQ were merged into the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency (2015). This is an extremely strategic vehicle established by the Gauteng Provincial Government to ensure economic investment and innovation in Gauteng. All of these initiatives go a long way in attracting investment and facilitating economic growth. How well these initiatives do in facilitating greater social cohesion and integration of poorer households into sustainable urban livelihoods remain a question. They have the potential, however, to contribute to employment creation without necessarily having to displace vulnerable people.

At least at a conceptual level, considering Gauteng as a city-region that is globally competitive has also become important (cf. Pillay 2004). This was advocated very actively by then Premier of the Gauteng Province, Mbhazima Shilowa, who even considered the structural unification of Gauteng into a unicity. The idea was to build upon the “unicity” or “megacity” concept that was introduced with the Municipal Structures Act (1998). The “unicity” is a system of metropolitan government aimed at city-wide spatial, economic and social integration (Pillay 2004:351). In Shilowa’s thinking he wanted to go beyond the current metropolitan areas in Gauteng to create one megacity.

The UN Habitat 2001 global

Fig. 113. Clarke, 1970-1973. Nawab Miriammen Temple in Marabastad.



index of city “connectivity” or “world city-ness” listed only Johannesburg (Pillay 2004:353) as a possible global city-region. Shilowa’s proposal is to build on the existing unicities or megacities, positioning the larger part of the province of Gauteng, which is effectively an interconnected, interdependent city-region, as a coherent city-region. The Gauteng City-Region includes the metropolitan areas of Johannesburg, Tshwane (Pretoria), Ekurhuleni (East Rand) and Mogale City (West Rand), with a combined population of 13 million people (GCRO 2015). It is the economic engine of South Africa, generating “a third of the country’s GDP on 2% of its land area” (GCRO 2015). In terms of finances, commerce, education and diplomatic relationships, it is well-connected globally.

1.1.3 National government

National government’s involvement must be understood against the broader framework of its macro-economic plans. After 1994 the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was introduced with a focus on pro-poor initiatives and providing broad-based access to opportunity for those who were previously excluded (cf. Wilkinson 2004:214). This policy was virtually displaced by the controversial Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Strategy of 1996 (Marais 1998:105,130; Wilkinson 2004:214), following neo-liberal orthodoxy with an insistence on growth and the promise of

trickle-down. The National Development Plan 2030 of 2012 (Government of South Africa 2015) is further building upon the foundations laid by GEAR.

Emanating from the National Development Plan, an Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) was developed by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. This framework responded specifically to chapter 8 of the National Development Plan, entitled “Transforming human settlements and the national space economy” (DCOGTA 2014:9). The IUDF is considered a “new deal for South African cities and towns” (DOGTA 2014:9), providing four overarching goals and 8 strategic priority / policy levers to guide integrated urban development. Its emphasis on integrated spatial planning, integrated and sustainable human settlements and active and empowered local communities are laudable and can assist in achieving some of the vision contained in this study. Being a relatively new urban framework, the effects of it still need to be seen. Too often over the past 22 years South Africans witnessed a serious incongruence between sometimes relatively solid policy and strategic proposals and the actual implementation thereof.

Any policy framework or strategy document, however good it is, if failing to capture the hearts of a people, and in this case, ensure that the ‘new deal’ arises from a broad-based shared vision carried by shared values, might not be

translated into reality. This is my greatest concern with the IUDF (De Beer 2016a).

Furthermore, although there are lofty ideals of radical socio-spatial transformation contained in the IUDF, the document is rather quiet in terms of a more self-critical realism about the context in which it would like to see such transformations. It fails to name and analyse, for example, the effects of neoliberal capital and how it shapes the futures of our cities. It could very well also neutralise what the IUDF is setting out to do. Somewhere else I argued: “Social and spatial exclusions go hand in hand and spatial transformation is the central thrust throughout the IUDF. But, although it is the central thrust, the workings of capital can undermine the idealistic visions of the IUDF” (De Beer 2016a).

Even before the introduction of the IUDF, national government has instituted different initiatives geared towards inner city regeneration, and Tshwane in particular would benefit largely from this. A programme of tax incentives has been launched by the National Treasury, providing benefits to private developers or property owners that invest in so-called Urban Development Zones (UDZ). This was to lure investors back into depressed areas. These are designated areas in the inner city, and the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood, which is the focus of this study, falls within such an

UDZ. Some social housing initiatives were funded as a result of these incentives.

Over and above this initiative a special programme has been announced some years ago by the National Department of Public Works for the City of Tshwane to strengthen and solidify its capital status in South Africa and Africa. Re Kgabisa Tshwane (n.d.) is a capital reinvestment programme of R 10 billion, launched for refurbishing old government properties and constructing new government office parks in the inner city of Tshwane, supporting its African capital status. Whilst this was a positive programme for the inner city, creating a positive investment climate and attracting new investments into the inner city, it also raises a number of concerns.

One concern is whether the Department of Public Works was really the right address for steering the inner city regeneration programme, or whether this is really the responsibility of local government, as custodian of both city management and local economic development. There seems to be a lack of coordination between the different spheres of government, and locating this programme in a National Department is taking it far away from local communities as well.

The programme of Re Kgabisa Tshwane displayed little sensitivity for local communities and their needs or aspirations, embarking

rather upon a programme that develops top-down government “monuments” often at the expense of local vulnerable groups. It is market-led with a focus on economic growth, which does not always translate into real benefits for the poor. This became very evident in the recent construction of the headquarters of Statistics South Africa in the Salvokop neighbourhood, adjacent to Berea-Burgers Park. Valued at almost R 2 billion this development took place whilst the neighbourhood of Salvokop, owned by the Department of Public Works, are in complete decay, with little evidence of any property management by the Department, and a lack of political will seemingly preventing strategic action to regenerate this neighbourhood in partnership with the local community.



Without addressing the social fibre of such a community, the effects of such large-scale investments could be that national government becomes the prime agent for socially exclusive gentrification, initiating the displacement of lower-income people to make way for what they regard to be more lucrative investments.

The presence of national government in the inner city has prevented the complete collapse of the city in the 1990s and early parts of this century when private sector disinvested en masse. A parliament decision to retain national government properties in the inner city and to prevent relocation

elsewhere was extremely positive for the city. However, building on such positive decisions and political will to now integrate and empower marginal people and neighbourhoods in the inner city, should be the next phase of action. Whether such will exists politically needs to be established. It has not been evident yet, except in theory, policy or strategy documents seldom being embodied.

1.2 PRIVATE SECTOR

Most of the 1990s have been marked by large-scale disinvestment from inner city areas by the private sector. There was a direct

Fig. 114. GLH Architects , 2016. Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria .
Fig. 115. GLH Architects , 2016. Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria .
Fig. 116. (Opposite) Nel, 2017. Map illustrating tenants and hotels.



MAP OF HOTELS, FORMAL AND INFORMAL TENTANTS.

parallel between the growth and popularity of suburban malls such as Brooklyn and Menlyn, and inner city decay due to disinvestment. This period also included the red-lining and withdrawal from certain areas by major commercial banks, and low occupancy rates for inner city office spaces. When the politics of capital and race collude, it spells disaster for local neighbourhoods.

Some businesses, mainly in the hospitality industry, retained their presence throughout this period and a new market has slowly emerged since 1994. There were some brave private sector groups who remained committed to the inner city throughout the transitional period, and who today leads the way in terms of regeneration programmes. They remained and invested at a time when there was still little incentive for doing so.

City Property is the best example in Tshwane, having led the way in securing abandoned office buildings and converting them into quality residential accommodation. They also complemented these with the development and / or refurbishment of commercial and retail spaces. Unfortunately they have not yet understood the value of social investment in terms of more than the occasional charitable gestures. Understanding social spending as proper investment in healthy urban neighbourhoods sometimes seems difficult for private sector to grasp.

The inner city has a number of smaller shopping centres unlike the massive shopping malls of Brooklyn and Menlyn. Almost all these centres have also been affected by the transition of 1994: some have virtually collapsed, some have recovered and all had to adapt to the new socio-cultural conditions if they were to sustain itself going into the future. Sunnypark has in recent years witnessed huge investment in its upgrading, including the conversion of apartments into a rather luxury Holiday Inn Express Hotel. The Sterland Complex also benefited from a large overhaul and the Sammy Marks Centre in the CBD now boasts some lucrative retail stores that are mostly seen only in suburban shopping malls.

Other shopping centres such as Barclay Square and Arcadia Centre are struggling to sustain itself, experiencing very rapid turnover, sluggish management and a declining number of feet using its facilities.

1.3 INFORMAL TRADE

Due to its high mobility, transport junctions, and concentrations of people, South African inner cities have become very attractive to informal traders. The legislative environment has not always been enabling or conducive for informal trade, however, and individual traders often find themselves in a cat-and-mouse game with Metro Police, with restrictive policies, limited trading licenses and

- Fig. 117. De Klerk, 2015. View of substation in Marabastad from Belle Ombre Station.
 Fig. 118. De Veredicis, 2015. Meat market in Marabastad.
 Fig. 119. De Veredicis, 2015. Produce market, Marabastad.
 Fig. 120. Scholtz, 2015. View of the White Mosque from Jerusalem street, Marabastad.



the lack of earmarked spaces for trading, inhibiting this vital sector of the economy.



In the inner city of Pretoria only 500 licenses are awarded in the Central Business District, including Marabastad (cf. Sebola 2017), which is extremely restrictive – almost non-existent – considering the size of the city’s population. In the Berea-Burgers Park area there is no regulated trading areas, although both the Berea Community Forum and the informal traders themselves have argued for it since 2002. With the creation of City Improvement Districts, informal trading is regulated, but often in such a way that a large number of traders are prevented from continuing their trade, and especially those who are not South African are negatively affected.



A place like Marabastad in the north-western parts of the inner city often have to accommodate the overflow of traders from other inner city areas, creating huge pressures on an already highly pressurised neighbourhood.



It would be interesting to note two different examples with different outcomes, implemented in Johannesburg and Durban, where serious attempts were made to regulate and integrate informal trade into urban regeneration processes.

YEOVILLE, JOHANNESBURG

(Thulare 2004:4-5; Johannesburg Development Agency n.d.)

In the inner city neighbourhood of Yeoville, Johannesburg, informal trade was unregulated and a great cause of concern for formal trade, facilitating crime and affecting local neighbourhood life detrimentally.

Yet, at the same time, Yeoville offered an opportunity to unemployed people to become economically active. In 1999 the local authority embarked on a programme to regulate informal trade, creating a market area with basic structures in a way that integrated informal traders fully into the economic structure of the area.

However, although the new structures were designed for the existing informal traders, and they were also given a first option to occupy these structures, the subsequent cost involved in the construction and maintenance of this market, required a small monthly rental to be paid *by the traders*, which many argued was too high for what they could afford. This attempt at integration as well as neighbourhood renewal excluded some of the traders who traded there before.

WARWICK JUNCTION, DURBAN

(Robinson & Dobson n.d)

Warwick Junction in Durban is situated very strategically where the railway stations, buses and taxis concentrate, similar to Marabastad in Tshwane's inner city. When plans were discussed to rejuvenate this area, research indicated that the collective monthly turn-over of traders in the area was more than the monthly turnover of the upmarket Pavilion Shopping Mall to the northwest of the city. Based on this fact and recognising the existing trading patterns in the area as an asset, the Warwick Junction was designed to incorporate existing trade innovatively into the redeveloped area, even including cheap overnight accommodation for those traveling from rural Kwazulu-Natal to buy bulk from this market. This integrated and highly successful development strategy became an award-winning project that deserves the attention of other cities..

| 202

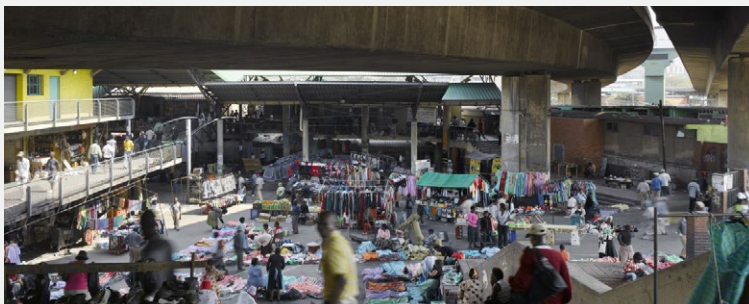


Fig. 121. Quazi, 2014. Warwick Junction.



Fig. 122.

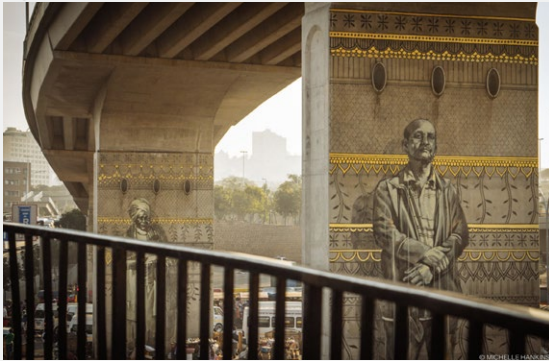


Fig. 123.



Fig. 124.



Fig. 125.

A STUDY OF WARWICK TRIANGLE AT RUSH HOUR, DURBAN, 2014

In July 2014 Faith47 completed the painting of six huge walls, on four of the supporting columns of the N3 viaduct adjacent to the Early Morning Market in Warwick.

"I'm specifically interested in exploring this notion of the informal economy. I was struck by the potent energy of this area. The paintings are portraits of some of the traders in the area, a tribute to the everyday man on the street."

"Art in public spaces creates a visual gap to breathe; nothing is being sold or advertised. There is only a communication from the artist to the passer-by, allowing the viewer to find his or her own meaning within the works. This kind of intervention is necessary, as so much of our public space and city architecture is alienating to the individual." (taken from artists website)

Fig. 119 - 123. Faith47, 2014. Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour



Fig. 126.

Ways need to be found to embrace informal trade as valuable urban social capital to be embraced and built upon (cf. Lyons & Snoxell 2005). Instead of romanticising informal trading and African markets in particular, or worse, criminalising informal traders, in both cases restricting them to the socio-economic margins, the financial and social capital inherent in informal trade and African markets need to be appreciated and mainstreamed into processes and projects that re-imagine our cities, without killing the magic and benefit of informality.

1.4 THE RELIGIOUS SECTOR

The last section of this chapter is devoted to a narrative description of how some churches have undergone significant spatial changes since the early 1990s. I will quote specific examples but I start by making some general remarks.

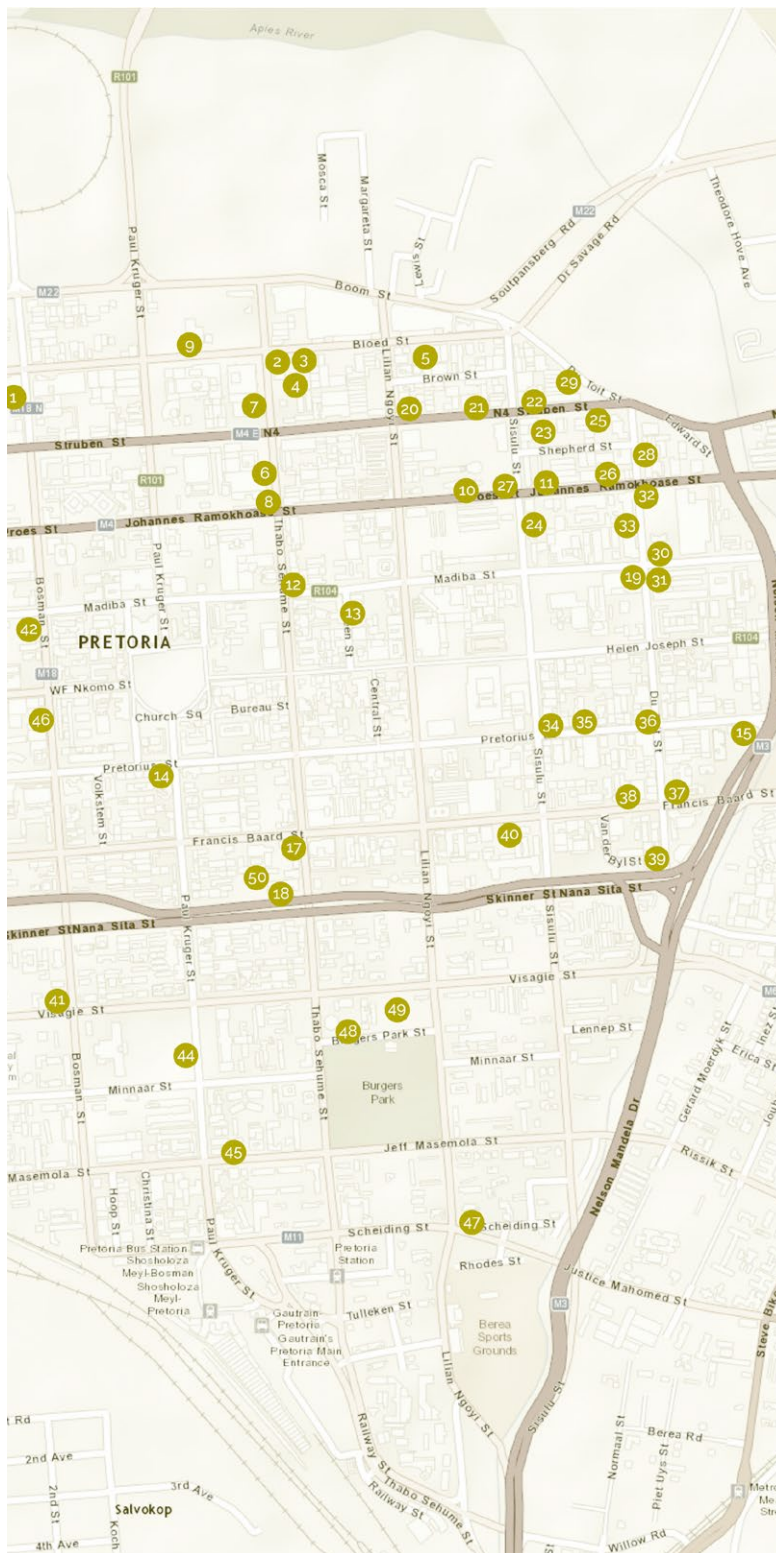
The changing demographics of the inner city certainly expressed itself also religiously. Some Christian churches, mainly mainline protestant churches, were sold and changed into mosques (Johannesburg and Pretoria). Two new mosques were built in the inner city of Pretoria since the early 1990s, and additional spaces are also taken up informally for the religious practices of the Muslim community.

Whilst some churches closed their doors, many new churches opened their doors, mostly black-led

Pentecostal churches, either sharing space with more established churches, or worshipping in shop fronts, office buildings, hotels and museums. Whereas in 1994 we were able to count active churches in the combined areas of Berea-Burgers Park and the CBD to be no more than about 12-15, a recent mapping process identified 57 churches, just in the Pretoria Central, Salvokop and Marabastad neighbourhoods of the inner city alone (De Beer & Botha 2017). This excludes the dense high-rise neighbourhoods of Sunnyside and Arcadia.

The inner city and other vulnerable communities also become fertile soil for movements like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). The UCKG originated in Brazil and operates like a multi-national corporate, with “franchises” at the entry points to cities, at railway stations, near taxi ranks, and in places where (mostly poor) commuters usually concentrate. In her very thorough research, Ilana Van Wyk (2015) describes the nature of the UCKG, not so much in terms of the institutional nature of the church but more in terms of an anthropological understanding of why poor South Africans would flock here. In South Africa more than 1 million people already belong to the UCKG, although it only arrived here in 1997. It has 320 branches country-wide and congregants, who are predominantly poor, already contribute R 130 million annually to the church.

1. Apostolic Faith Mission (Afm)
2. The Revelation Church Of God
3. Pneuma Embassy
4. Redeemed Church Of God
5. The Latter House Glory Centre
6. Forward In Faith Church In South Africa
7. Ultra-City Assembly
8. Every Home For God Ministries
9. Mercy Place Ministry International
10. Christ Embassy
11. The Lords Chosen Charismatic Revival
12. Gospel Pillar
13. Family Convert Church
14. Ark Church
15. Elshaddai Christian Centre
16. Victory Tabernacle
17. Restoration In Christ Prophetic Ministry
18. Phd Ministries Ada
19. Christ Revealing Church
20. Bethesda Christian Centre
21. Tower of Grace
22. Creative Fountain Ministries International
23. New Life for All Ministries
24. Assembly of God-Victorious Church
25. Harvest House International Church Pretoria
26. Glory Christ Centre International Pretoria
27. Glory Christ Centre International Pretoria
28. Redeeming Showers of Grace Christian Church
29. Jesus The Breath of Life International Ministries
30. Mana Church
31. Today Truth Ministries International
32. Today Truth Ministries International
33. Deeper Christian Life Ministries
34. Praise Tabernacle Church
35. Family Mission Restoration Church
36. Higher Grace Christ Redeemer Church
37. Agape Christian Centre
38. Christ Populate Ministries
39. Community of God Ministries
40. Action Chapel International Pretoria
41. Grace of God Ministries
42. Action Chapel International Pretoria
43. Pretoria City Mission Methodist Church
44. Melodi Ya Tshwane Uniting Reformed Church
45. ZCC Chuch - Marabastad
46. Archdiocese of Pretoria
47. Nederduitch Hervormde Kerk Van Afrika
48. Dutch Reformed Church
49. St Mark's Lutheran Church
50. Wesley Community Centre Methodist Church
51. Doxa Deo Apostolic Faith Mission



The ways in which the religious sector engages urban change with insight, is very ambiguous. In the kinds of transitional neighbourhoods that inner city areas often are, religious communities at first glance seem to be very opportunistic and instead of seeking to contribute to the well-being of changing and often vulnerable communities, the emphasis, at least of Christian communities, often seem to be on proselytising, individual spiritual care, and cynically observed, the well-being of the pastor.

There are a few examples however where local churches started to recognise their property as an asset that could play a supportive role in community development, healing or justice initiatives. As a result such churches started to engage not only in relief work but also in creating or supporting community development agencies, housing companies, and other social, economic and cultural development projects.

In the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood there are a number of churches and faith-based organisations at work. Sometimes they find it possible to create synergy in their work and to do collaborative ventures, but sometimes this remains a struggle. The inner city used to have two church forums: the City Centre Churches Forum that represented predominantly traditional, denominational churches, and the Tshwane Ministers

Fraternal, representing mainly independent black Pentecostal churches. The cultures and objectives of these two forums were often quite different, and currently only the Tshwane Ministers Fraternal is still meeting. A new grouping of church leaders and bishops have convened since the middle of 2016, mostly in response to homelessness, and this gathering shows potential to become a collective voices for churches in the city.

Currently there is no inter-religious platform for dialogue that brings together people from different faiths. This should be attended to by religious leaders, not only in terms of collectively considering the city that they share, but also in terms of the larger national challenges faced by all South African citizens, including the way in which politicians are attempting to sideline the religious voice from political engagement.

1.5 NGOS / CBOS / FBOS

There is a wide range of active non-government, community-based and faith-based organisations working in the inner city of Tshwane, and more specifically based in Berea-Burgers Park. Not always intentional in finding collaborations, there is scope for developing a NGO-cluster as one of the assets of Berea-Burgers Park. These organisations could play a much more strategic role in working for the good of the area in which they are located.

Some key NGO's were dissolved since the beginning of this study, or relocated from the inner city. The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) was a very significant voice during the 1980s and 1990s contributing to paving the way for the democratic dispensation. The changing donor environment and shifting priorities of mainly European donors left some non-profit organisations very vulnerable and IDASA had to close its doors a few years ago.

The following list of organisations are currently operating as non-profit organisations in the inner city, and that I was able to locate.

- Lawyers for Human Rights
- Tshwane Leadership Foundation
- People Upliftment Project (POPUP)
- PEN
- Tshwane Home of Hope
- Housing Company Tshwane
- Siyaphila AIDS Project
- Sediba Hope AIDS Partnership
- Institute for Urban Ministry
- Kitso Lesedi
- Homeless Solutions
- Action Labourers for the Harvest
- Christian Social Council
- Yeast City Housing
- Future Families
- OUT
- Xavieri Movement

- Inner city blocks
- City blocks
- Built fabric
- Rivers and spruils
- Shelters & social housing
- Social support facilities
- Refugee support facilities

Social infrastructure support facilities

1. Sediba Hope
2. Pen drop-in centre
3. Inkukuleko Community Centre
4. Crossroads Boys shelter
5. POPUP
6. Tshwane Leadership Foundation
7. Yeast Housing
8. Akanani drop-in centre
9. Gilead community
10. Rivoningo Care centre
11. Lerato House
12. Tau social housing
13. Crossroads Coffee Bar
14. Christian Social Council
15. Kitso Lesedi
16. Homeless Solutions
17. Compassion Centre
18. Tshwane Home of Hope

Social housing and shelters

19. Struben Street Shelter
 20. Thembehlihe Village
 21. The Potter's House
-
22. Litakoemi
 23. Hofmeyer House
 24. Kopanong
 25. Living Stones
 26. Tshwelelang
 27. Eloff Building, Housing Company Tshwane

Refugee support centres

28. Home Affairs: Marabastad Refugee reception office
29. Xaveri Movement
30. South African Catholic Bishops Conference
31. Jesuit Refugee Services
32. Refugee Aid Organisation
33. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

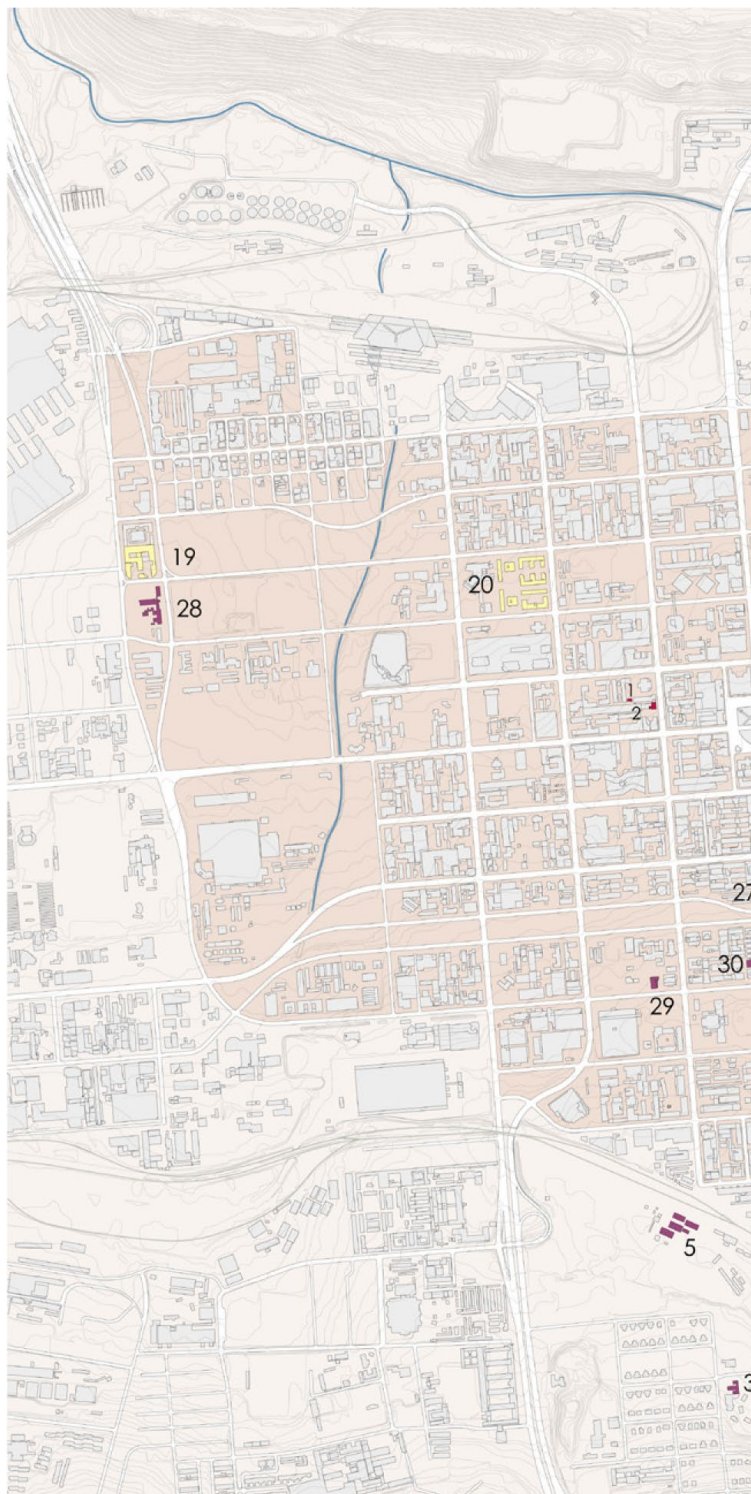
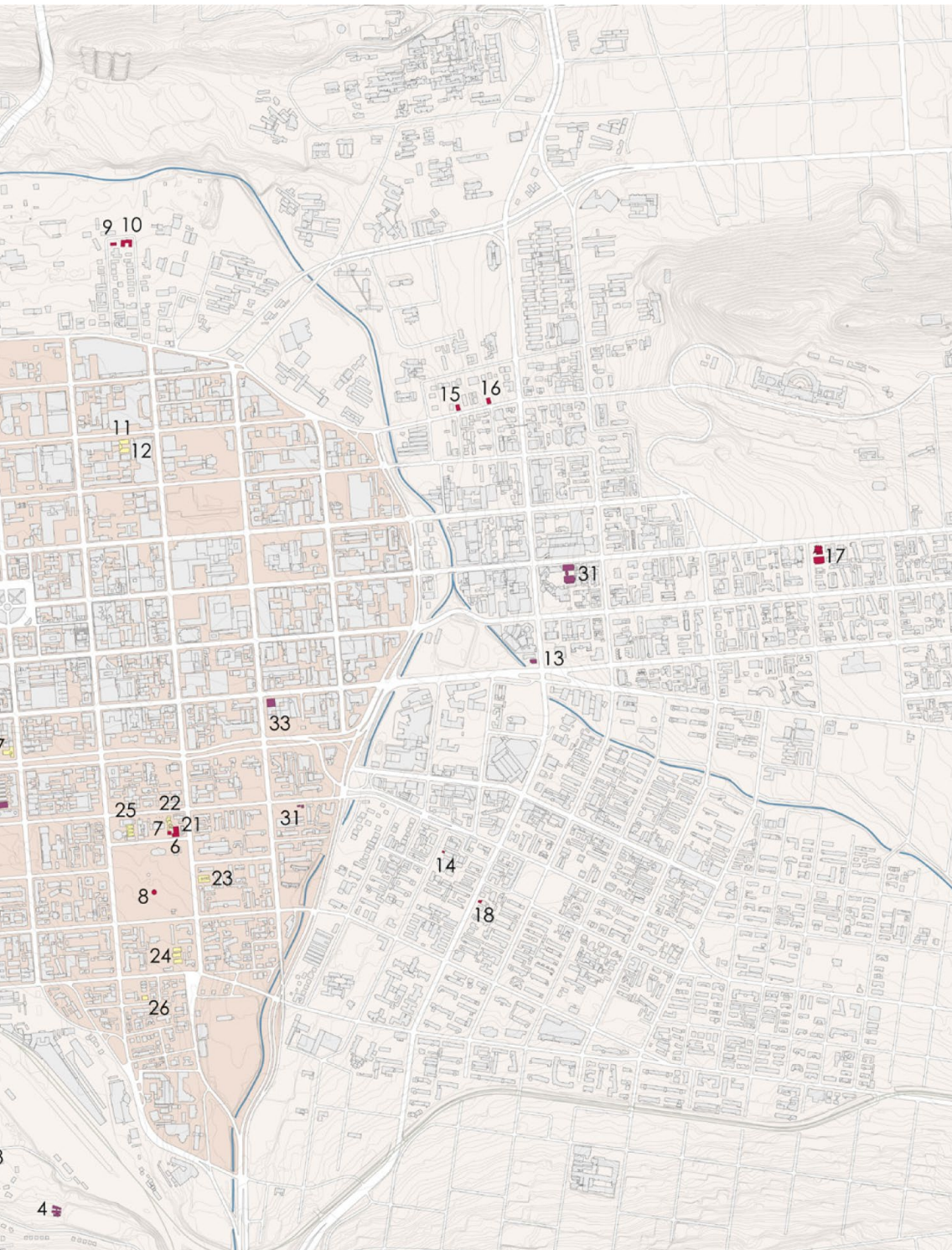
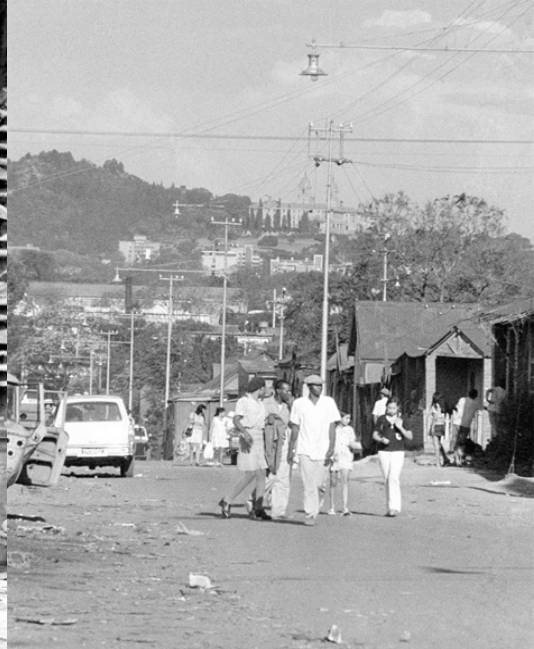
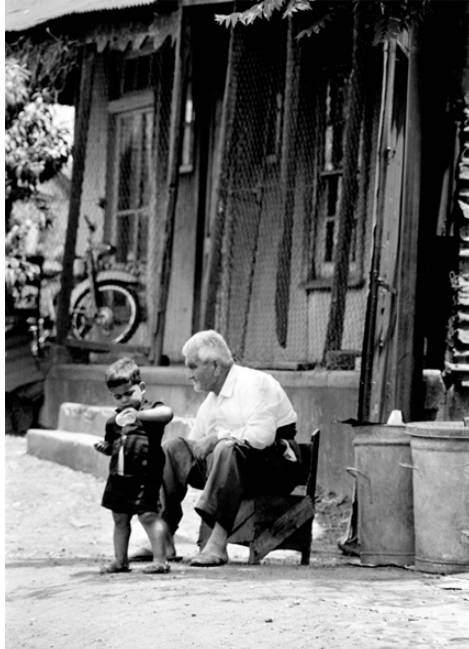


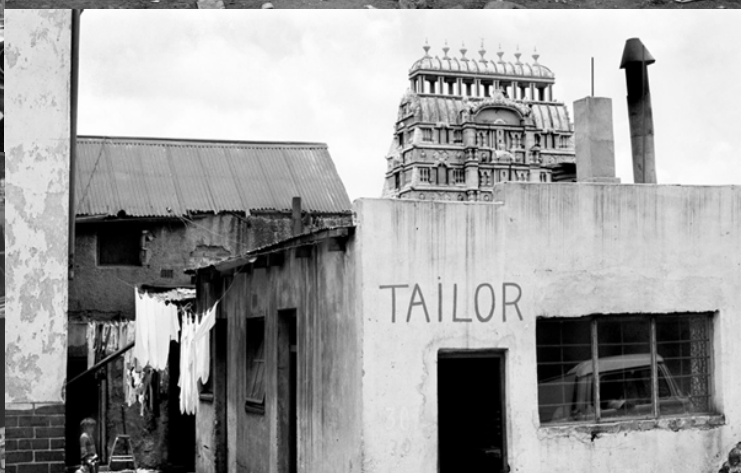
Fig. 128. De Klerk, 2015. Social infrastructure support and refugee support facilities in Pretoria inner city.



COMMUNITIES OF MARABASTAD 1970S

Fig. 129. Clarke, 1970-173. Collection of photographs taken in Marabastad by JFC Clarke between 1970-1973 published in his book *A Glimpse into Marabastad* (2008).





1.6 LOCAL COMMUNITIES & RESIDENTS

Traditionally – between 1970 and 1990 – inner city communities in South Africa were not well organised and did not share in the rich civic tradition of black township communities organising themselves in apartheid times. This was not really necessary as white inner city neighbourhoods shared in the privilege of white power. Of course, communities such as the Bo-Kaap, Woodstock, Salt River, District Six, Marabastad, Fordsburg and Sophiatown, all have histories of racial contestation and some experienced complete destruction of neighbourhoods and community life during Apartheid. This goes back earlier though, before the final stages of implementing the apartheid city plan. Some neighbourhoods, such as the Bo-Kaap, were strangely spared and forced removals never destroyed this neighbourhood, rich in history.

As part of the new democratic dispensation and the demographic changes taking place in inner cities, some signs of community organisation started to appear, although still very tentative in comparison to the robust organising efforts of movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo¹⁵. Local community forums were for example birthed in Tshwane to address local concerns. Often weak, these Forums are generally without financial resources and the greatest percentage of community members

remains rather apathetic. During the discussion of the Gautrain trajectory, threatening the demolition of a number of apartment buildings in the inner city of Tshwane, suddenly church halls were filled to the brim as concerned residents gathered. Until the trajectory was changed to safeguard these buildings, and then residents fell back into apathy.

In the inner city of Pretoria a number of civic groups responded to specific local challenges since 1993. Some are still active and others have become defunct since.

The *Berea Community Forum* is now dormant but gave prominent leadership for a period of about 10 years, resisting sequestration of property owners, providing property owner education, participating in crime prevention initiatives, and being a bridge between the local community and the municipality for everything from street lights to the use of public open spaces such as Burgers Park.

In the adjacent neighbourhood of Salvokop the *Salvokop Resident Forum* was established to provide a platform to residents of this area to organise themselves and to address issues that affect them, ranging from tenant issues to future plans for Salvokop to crime prevention. No resident of Salvokop is a property owners. Today there are the formal tenants of the Department of Public Works, legally occupying one of the 174 old railway houses; there

15. Abahlali baseMjondolo is a shack dwellers' movement, resisting evictions and forced removals of shack dwellers, advocating instead for access to land, housing and services. It is committed to the democratisation of local shack settlements through a bottom up popular system of governance (cf. Abahlali 2016)

are a few hundred back yard dwellers renting from the legal tenants who sub-let the “right” to erect a back yard shack. There are also a few hundred people living in a small but growing informal settlement on the hillside to the west of Salvokop. The future of all three groups of residents is rather precarious as the national government department responsible for Salvokop as the landlord is vague about future plans and whether current residents are in fact factored in at all.

The *Salvokop Development Forum* was launched in response to a call by the previous landlord – Transnet – for proposals on how to redevelop the neighbourhood. The Salvokop Development Forum consists of the Salvokop Resident Forum, the Jopie Fourie Primary School, as well as the church-based and non-profit organisations working in the Salvokop neighbourhood. The purpose of this Forum is to develop a collective voice on issues affecting the neighbourhood with the view of informing future plans in a way that could ensure optimum inclusivity in a redeveloped Salvokop.

Sunnyside never seems to have been able to form a strong community forum. They have been able to organise a *caretakers’ forum* though and this has at times been a strong voice for addressing property, crime and municipal issues in the Sunnyside area, similar to what the Berea Community Forum was able to do in the 1990s.

Two community policing forums – the *Sunnyside Community Policing Forum* and the *Pretoria Central Community Policing Forum* – connect police stations and police officers with community members, both residents and businesses, to address matters relating to safety and security in inner city neighbourhoods.

In addition to these geographically-based forums, issue-based forums were also established since the 1990s. The *Tshwane Homelessness Forum* has gone through different phases but today it has become a rather strong voice informing issues related to homelessness in the City of Tshwane, being instrumental in hosting the city’s first Homeless Summit leading to the adoption of the Tshwane Homelessness Policy and Strategy in November of 2016.

The *Tshwane Counter-Trafficking Coalition* brought together organisations and individuals working to fight human trafficking and to organise services supporting victims of trafficking. Spearheaded during the Soccer World Cup in 2010 by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, the Coalition has shown some significant results.

For many years since the early 1990s the *Tshwane Alliance for Children Working and Living on the Streets* brought together a wide network of concerned organisations and individuals working to address the challenges faced by children living on the streets. What

started out as a challenge of boys on the streets later expanded to a growing number of girl children not only living on the streets but almost always being drawn into child prostitution. Unfortunately this Forum has become almost non-existent today, although the challenge has not disappeared from the city streets.

Other forums such as the *City Centre Churches Forum* and a Refugee Forum at times provided much needed leadership but could not always sustain its work. Currently a new network that was created with great impact on the streets of the inner city is a health network, bringing together community health workers from the City of Tshwane, practitioners, interns and academic staff from the University of Pretoria and outreach workers from different community- and faith-based organisations in the city, to coordinate health services and to make sure that it reached the most vulnerable populations of the inner city.

In terms of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa 1998), each of the 76 wards (regions) in the city has a Ward Councillor who is democratically elected, and a *Ward Committee* of 10 members should be elected by the community, to assist and advise the councillor as community representatives.

The Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood falls within Ward

80 and Ward 60 of the City of Tshwane, together with the western portion of Sunnyside. Over the years the different Ward Committees responsible for this specific neighbourhood have never been particularly effective. These committees were often hijacked by party-political concerns; plagued by incompetent Ward Councillors or ineffective assigned officials; co-opted into supporting Municipal actions not actually approved by the Committee; and seldom representing real concerns coming from within this Ward in ways that led to actual change.

Although the principle of Ward Committees advising Ward Councillors is sound and potentially very constructive, it becomes meaningless structures if an incompetent Ward Councillor has to chair such a Committee (which is what the Act requires), permanently feeling threatened by Committee members because of his or her own incompetence and thereby undermining the potential good contribution that could be made.

Fig. 130. Xenophobia, 2015. Illustrated during the Homeless Summit Interactive session.



2. URBAN REGENERATION: DIVERSE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

In response to the challenge of urban areas, different approaches are followed and different vehicles created by different role players to facilitate regeneration. I would like to suggest that neither public sector, nor private sector, nor community sector initiatives, alone or in isolation from each other, can facilitate the holistic and inclusive regeneration one would like to envisage. It is probably through the creation of partnerships, both formal and informal, between different kinds of vehicles – all affirming the unique strengths / assets of the other and the necessity to work in conjunction – that healthier urban futures should be sought.

At the same time, *regeneration* as a concept is contested. What for some might constitute regeneration could be socially exclusive gentrification. What this study has in mind throughout its reflection would be the kind of regeneration that is radically inclusive and integrative of the most vulnerable sectors of society. I will now introduce a number of regeneration initiatives, often markedly different in approach and ethos.

2.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In line with international trends, South African policy regulating local government and urban development shifted “towards local empowerment and decentralised decision-making” (Hemphill, McGreal, Berry & Watson 2006:59)¹⁶. The intention thereof is to transfer greater responsibility for their own development to local communities, and to encourage multi-partner approaches through which local institutions and organisations work alongside local government to address their own development concerns (cf. Hemphill, et al 2006:59-60; Le Gales 1998; Murtagh 2002; Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo 2005). This meant a shift from “government” (top-down governing of people), to “governance” (bottom-up governance with

people), blurring the state-civil society distinction somewhat (cf. Pieterse 2000; 2004:19; Cento Bull & Jones 2006:769).

At the most basic level certain committees or forums are established in the South African context, to serve as dedicated platforms for discussion, advice and sometimes decision that could help guide urban regeneration. These are legislative forums which operate in the context of approved, multi-year City Strategies (CSs), Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) (cf. Chapter 5, 4; cf. Wilkinson 2004:216-218).

16. Harrison, Todes & Watson (2008), in their work *Planning and Transformation: learning from the Post-Apartheid Experience*, reflect extensively on post-1994 shifts in local government and regional development planning theory and practice

2.1.1 Ward committees

Ward committees, as briefly introduced before, were established to provide a vehicle for civil participation in local governance. It is governed by the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). It provides the platform for local communities to engage their ward councillor (elected politician) on an on-going basis through advice and consultation and to participate in local budgeting processes, integrated development planning, and general developmental objectives.

In the City of Tshwane ten community members are elected democratically by the community for a 2-year period to form the Ward committee advising the councillor on ward issues. The Ward committee is always chaired by the ward councillor. This means, in effect, that the Ward committee is probably only as strong as the ward councillor is. The other challenge is the party political affiliation of the ward councillor. One of the critical issues that still need to be tested constitutionally is whether the ward constituency or the political party of the ward councillor has priority in decision-making. In Ward 60 (now Ward 80) of Tshwane's inner city there were at least 2 occasions where the entire Ward committee of 10 members advised the councillor in a certain way, but he ignored the advice and

followed the route chosen by his party. This brings into question the validity and powers of ward committees, and whether they are not just smoke screens for public participation.

2.1.2 Section 59 and Section 79 Committees

Within the framework of local authority provision is made for dedicated committees to contribute in a more focused way in terms of furthering development (cf. Republic of South Africa 1998; 2000). The section 59 committee is an internal body made up of politicians and councillors. It could be designed for various functions but in different South African cities Section 59 committees have been formed to focus on the task of urban (inner city) regeneration. They will typically include ward councillors from the affected wards, and officials involved with strategic planning, spatial frameworks and related issues.

The section 79 committee is a broader-based advisory committee, making provision for politicians and officials from local government to be joined by representatives from private sector and civil society. This committee has been used rather successfully in Johannesburg for example, to advise on matters relating to urban regeneration and development.

Besides the special purpose vehicles created for action and implementation, local government in

South Africa also made provision for special representative committees, including politicians and local government officials, as well as community and business representatives.

However, in the City of Tshwane the Section 79 Committee has been done away with and a vacuum was left for coordinated planning between government, private sector and civil society regarding inner city issues. A proposal is on the table for an Inner City Commission, which can play a similar role, but whether this will ever see the light is still to be seen.

2.2 SINGLE-PURPOSE INTERVENTIONS: NGOS, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT

Even in the absence of government-led interventions civil society or private sector often responds to urban challenges through creating what I will call here “single purpose interventions”. Some of the interventions are intentionally in the interest of the poor, and others are very effectively displacing the poor. Sometimes such initiatives have the support of local or provincial government, and sometimes they take place even without government support.

In Tshwane and Johannesburg, for example, a private company, City Property, has contributed greatly to urban regeneration in recent years through their market-driven middle-income housing developments. Apart from their impressive

inner city housing footprint they have also completed The Fields, in 2007 already, a comprehensive residential and commercial development spearheading the regeneration of Hatfield, just on the fringe of the inner city.

At the lower end of the market, social housing companies such as Johannesburg Housing Company (2010), Yeast City Housing (n.d.), or the Cape Town Community Housing Company (2013) contributed to urban regeneration through greenfield developments, conversions or rehabilitation of old properties for the purposes of social housing, entering at income levels below City Property. Similarly, community-based organisations such as the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, PEN, MES and others, created essential social infrastructure without which the inner city would probably have experienced far greater challenges.

On the extreme upper end, Urban Ocean (n.d) has identified a niche market in the banking district of the Johannesburg CBD, and defied all conventional wisdom in buying up and restoring old art deco buildings into upmarket loft and penthouse apartments. This has become rather contagious and similar developments have brought about substantial change, expressions thereof being found in Braamfontein (Braamfontein Management District 2012-2015), the Maboneng Precinct (n.d.) and The Sheds@1Fox (2015).

In Cape Town this has become a trend and places like De Waterkant Village (2014), the City Bowl and Green Point are flooded with trendy upmarket apartments representing a new lifestyle, close to the vibe of the city centre yet with the “luxury” and “security” of suburban living. Just browsing for inner city apartments on the internet provides one with a glimpse of the vast array of newly attractive options. What is similar in all these examples is the presence of single-purpose interventions or special-purpose vehicles to drive regeneration entrepreneurially.

The Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) (2006), pioneered in 1992 by Neil Fraser, created a special purpose vehicle to facilitate urban management and regeneration. The CJP was instrumental in promoting a new language about central Johannesburg, in keeping hope alive, and in familiarising various sectors with the concept of City Improvement Districts (CID) until it became a legislated entity.

Some initiatives come and go. Lamé Ebersohn and business partner Elsa Lamb own Café Riche on Church Square and created Orangerie Coalition Champions, to forge coalitions and coordinate projects that will contribute to a vibrant city. They initiated the Wednesday Parade on Church Square, and gathered landlords and interest groups of Church Square into the Church Square Commerce Forum (cf. Blignaut 1998). Lack of support from local

government sadly put an end to the Wednesday Parade and the Church Square Commerce Forum has also become rather dormant.

Museum Park was a non-profit company, based on examples of similar initiatives in other cities of the world, seeking to promote the cluster of museums and heritage sites, in this case mostly situated in and around the Berea-Burgers Park precinct. This has also become defunct although the original purpose and need for such an entity has not disappeared.

Recently two new initiatives emerged in the City of Tshwane, namely the Cool Capital Biennale (2014) and the Capital Collective (n.d), facilitating small-scale urban interventions such as markets, music events, and publicity to rebrand the inner city specifically.

A multiplicity of initiatives, often very innovative and entrepreneurial, creates the sparks necessary for urban regeneration. Yet, often these initiatives are not celebrated, even isolated, and inadequately integrated as part of a coherent



Fig. 131. Nel, 2017. Cafe Riche, Pretoria.

inner city strategy. This reality is minimising synergies: successful interventions are not adequately complementary of each other, and therefore the potential impact drastically reduced. This is especially the case in initiatives serving the underbelly of the city, being less trendy than the developments of Urban Ocean.

The challenge is how dedicated entities now created for urban regeneration, such as City Development Agencies, can build on existing assets, integrating existing and emerging interventions in a way that will help build momentum and help diversify the project of regeneration in such a way that all *people* will benefit. Currently urban regeneration too often still leans towards those with easy access to much resource.

2.3 PUBLIC COMPANIES

Local authorities sometimes create special purpose vehicles to facilitate urban regeneration projects and to be implementing agencies for integrated development plans (IDPs). These could either be public companies owned by local government, or set up “outside” government for greater flexibility and independence in decision-making but often heavily reliant on public funding (Cameron, et al 2004:319; 320).

The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) (n.d) was created to facilitate and manage area-based economic development initiatives throughout the Johannesburg

Metropolitan area, but with a significant focus also on the inner city and its regeneration. The JDA coordinates and manages capital investment involving public and private sector stakeholders. Many of the projects already implemented were done in close conjunction with Blue IQ, a provincial government initiative to facilitate economic investment and development in Gauteng (cf. Chapter 4; 3.2.1). This local-provincial government partnership was implemented with great success in different parts of Johannesburg.

The Constitutional Court, Klip-town Redevelopment, and the Newtown Precinct are all examples of local success stories facilitated by the JDA. The JDA, in spite of being a public-owned company, has worked entrepreneurially and fostered close partnership with other local role players in their implementation of projects.

The Tshwane Development Agency (TDA) has been on the cards to fulfil a similar role for a number of years now. Discontinuity in leadership and political transition slowed down the process. The proposed TDA would probably be a body that can liaise with precinct offices and work closely with them in implementing local regeneration projects and objectives. Instead, the Tshwane Economic Development Agency (2015) was created with a different mandate, not focusing on area-specific regeneration but on city-wide economic development

objectives. The emphasis is on economic growth and hopefully in the process local economic development and employment creation would get attention.

After 1994 the inner city office created the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (PICP) with the intention of playing a similar role to the proposed Development Agency, of facilitating inner city regeneration. Much ground work has been done in terms of research, public participation and extensive studies, but little has been translated into sustainable projects, due to discontinuity in council, political suspicion about the PICP, and the eventual dissolution of this company.

The Tshwane Development Agency, if it ever gets established, is supposed to play the role that the PICP intended to play, but with much more political support and probably well-funded mandates to implement. The reality is that various mechanisms have been created just to be discontinued eventually, but not after substantial funding has been invested into it, without plans being translated into actions.

21 years later and the Marabastad neighbourhood in the north-west precinct of the inner city is still experiencing exactly the same challenges of 1994 (although yet another blueprint for that area is on the cards); the Schubart Park and Kruger Park apartment complexes have been allowed

to deteriorate to a point of no return; and the only projects that are implemented are odes to government in the form of Tshwane House, the new headquarters for the City of Tshwane, as well as buildings hosting national government departments.

2.4 PRECINCT MANAGEMENT

A growing number of urban practitioners advocate a focus-area management approach, i.e. decentralised management, enabling local authorities to create management infrastructure and capacity for smaller, manageable areas, or precincts, as they are often called.

This approach has been followed in Johannesburg's inner city, and the combination of the entrepreneurial initiative taken by the Johannesburg Development Agency (n.d.), with sound local, area-based management by precinct managers, in conjunction with the Central Johannesburg Partnership (2006), seem to be a winning formula. Examples of precincts in the Johannesburg inner city are the Newtown Cultural Precinct, the Fashion District, and the Sporting Precinct which includes the Ellis Park Stadium, the Johannesburg Stadium and the campus of the University of Johannesburg.

A similar approach in Tshwane could have remarkable effects, as it could foster working relationships between dedicated local government officials with responsibility for a certain precinct, and local role players who are already

taking responsibility within local precincts for different spheres, whether business, social development, physical upgrading, tourism, or institutional development.

I could envisage precinct management that further develops the idea of public participation, fostering institutional partnerships between local communities and local government, and managing precincts collaboratively. An example could be to use a local City Improvement District (CID) as a precinct office with a local government official seconded to this office as precinct manager, working closely with the CID manager. In the absence of a CID, a local Community Development Corporation (CDC) or Precinct Office could be established, coordinating collaboration between the city and local community partners.

I could envisage a number of successful precincts, aligned to the Tshwane Inner City Strategy: the Zoo Precinct, the West Capital Precinct, Pretoria West, Sunnyside, Arcadia and Hatfield. This could ensure dedicated partnership development in local communities, creating synergies between civic, private sector and government plans, and building upon local assets in ways that honour local people and dreams.

2.5 CITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Originating in the USA, the concept of Business Improvement

Districts (BIDs) has been popularised in South Africa in the early 1990s and pioneered by leading urban practitioner, Neil Fraser, in Johannesburg. Some of the leading Business Improvement Districts in North America include the Times Square BID, the Harlem BID, as well as BIDs in Philadelphia, Washington DC and other large cities.

A Business Improvement District, in South Africa known as City Improvement District (CID), is a defined local area in which all property owners pay an additional monthly tax into a “special purpose vehicle” known as a Business Improvement District, from which top-up services are developed for the local area (cf. Heimann & Oranje 2008). The theory is that local authority can only offer services up to a certain point. Beyond that point, local property owners then take ownership of the management of their area, and with the additional taxes paid into the “pool” of the BID / CID, top-up services are provided: additional cleaners, security personnel, CCTV-cameras, social service projects, tourism ambassadors, and /or other products could be developed (cf. Wilkinson 2004:221-222).

A good example is the BID in Washington DC (Schaller & Modan 2005: 394) where women and men with bright red uniforms are fulfilling three functions simultaneously:

- serving as tourist ambassadors providing tourist information,
- serving as the eyes and ears of law enforcement agencies,
- looking after the cleanliness of the streets and pavements

In South Africa City Improvement Districts (CIDs) have been created as a similar vehicle to BIDs. Successful CIDs operate in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Cape Town. They tend to work better in areas that are predominantly business precincts, and residential neighbourhoods find it more difficult to rally support for this concept, particularly in areas such as Berea-Burgers Park where the residential sector itself has often been fragile.

CIDs offer great advantages where they are well established but also present serious challenges, especially from the perspective of more vulnerable and less resourced groups. Its positive effects is the additional revenue it unlocks for a local area, the additional management capacity it creates for functions such as cleaning and security, and the way in which it creates a new image for an area, thereby luring solid investment. It tends to provide “an excellent mechanism to package, market, sell, and thus restructure space as a cultural commodity” (Schaller & Modan 2005:395; cf. Zukin 1995; Mitchell 2003). However, almost all the advantages mentioned above often become disadvantages from the perspective of vulnerable groups or

even local residents in an area.

The “primarily commercial function” of CIDs is stressed by Schaller and Modan (2005:396). They describe how CIDs avail themselves of the power to levy self-imposed taxes and/or fees, even though allowed for by legislation, and to then reinvest such funds into narrowly identified community endeavours for aims that benefit a narrow constituency. Those who are not property owners in an area do not have the same power to determine priorities and have no say over the way in which CIDs operate. Ironically, in most cases that I am aware of, the property owners gaining such control in local areas, mostly do not themselves reside in such areas, but only “use” such areas to make profit from. In essence this could then result in grossly undemocratic local processes, monopolised by those who own property.

The negative effects of CIDs sometimes go even further as vulnerable people get displaced through local “renewal” processes that CIDs initiate. CIDs contribute to the disparities of a city like Cape Town with dualistic spatial patterns of inclusion and exclusion, based on class and status (Wilkinson 2004:221-222). Turok (2001) speaks of it as “persistent polarisation”.

The strengthened security mechanisms of CIDs, implementing 24/7 surveillance of local neighbourhoods, not only have positive impacts such as reduced crime

rates but often result in profiling people, criminalising the poor, and harsh measures being taken against homeless people, children living on the streets and informal traders. All groups that do not contribute to the positive brand CIDs hope to establish are systematically marginalised or even displaced. It makes clear distinctions between insiders and outsiders, practising Turok's "persistent polarisation", and thereby CIDs effectively "limit the democratic nature of the public sphere and exclude various views of citizenship and public space" (Schaller & Modan 2005: 394; 396). The emphasis on a clean and secure city often becomes more important than respecting the dignity and well-being of homeless or other vulnerable residents.

In Times Square the Improvement District has taken another route to address homelessness. Instead of criminalising poverty and homelessness they have contracted faith-based groups and nongovernment organisations to render specific social services to the local homeless community, as part of their regeneration initiative (cf. Ryder 2004:1659-1686). Their emphasis was on re-integration of vulnerable communities in the Times Square Precinct as part of a complete overhaul of the area, instead of displacing people who could no longer afford staying there. I was unable to establish how consistent they were in preventing displacement.

The critical challenge is how a useful urban management

mechanism such as CIDs could be implemented in a way that is not socially exclusive and causing additional harassment of already marginal people. To the contrary: can such vehicles be created that combine the same rigour to prevent and overcome crime and to integrate particularly vulnerable people in dignified and just ways in a local neighbourhood? Good cities, soul-ful cities, will not opt for the one or the other, but will ensure both because they respect the dignity of every human being.

It also needs to be noted that CIDs are only one possible institutional vehicle that facilitates local ownership and investment into urban regeneration. Being a successful mechanism in predominantly business precincts, there is a need to explore other mechanisms that could facilitate community-based regeneration where CIDs might not be the most viable model.

2.6 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

A mechanism that has been developed with great impact in the USA and the UK – and elsewhere without necessarily calling it by the same name – is so-called Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

The purpose of CDCs is local community development that will help regenerate a local area socially, physically and economically, but in a way that is clearly

socially inclusive and empowering of local individuals, families and institutions. CDCs is one example of what Chaskin (2005:408) calls “comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs)”, which take different forms, “encompassing various combinations of development, organising and advocacy, and planning, service provision and coordination” (Chaskin 2005:408), but sharing the same principles of local geographical focus. The emphasis of CDCs is on addressing local needs comprehensively, focusing on citizen participation, but doing so in partnership with professionals, both in the planning and implementation of community goals (Chaskin 2005:408). In this regard CDCs are a very different institutional vehicle than CIDs, emphasising local communities and citizen participation, instead of outsourcing local neighbourhood management exclusively to absentee property owners.

CDCs combine the best of entrepreneurship and business practice with community development goals. They are often innovative in how they marry social objectives with economic viability being great models of social *entrepreneurship*.

CDCs could be public entities and there are good examples of such Urban Development Corporations set up in the 1980s in Britain (Cameron, Odendaal & Todes 2004: 319). The CDCs I refer to here are mostly entities created and owned by civil society

themselves, however (cf. Cameron, et al 2004:320).

Community Development Corporations are often initiated by local faith-based organisations (churches and/or NGOs) when they recognise the challenge to go beyond short-term relief work, and to facilitate processes that will ensure the long-term viability and well-being of local communities.

There are also examples of CDCs being formed by a coalition or partnership of local agencies – civic groups, NGOs, and business – recognising the need for a more concerted effort to facilitate long-term change and viability of their local community. In such a scenario these different partners might all contribute towards the operational expenditure of the CDC, but other funding will still be required to enable the implementation of specific projects.

Examples of faith-based CDCs that have done remarkable work in inner cities of the United States are the Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) (n.d.) in Harlem, New York City, Bethel New Life (2015) and Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (2014), both in Chicago, and the Memphis Leadership Foundation (n.d.) in Memphis, Tennessee. ADC was created in 1989 in the basement of the famous Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem with a small grant \$ 50,000. Since then they have multiplied this initial gift through brokering investment

into the Harlem community to a sum of \$ 150 million by the year 2007, and \$ 500 million by the year 2015, focusing on housing, economic revitalisation, human services, education and youth, and civic engagement.

The work of Bethel New Life and Lawndale Christian Development Corporation include the creation of housing projects, multi-purpose health centres, schools, computer libraries, small enterprises, employment agencies, and a range of other innovative local projects stimulating development, regenerating deprived areas, empowering and including the vulnerable and unemployed, combining social transformation with economic viability.

CDCs do not have the same funding base as CIDs would have and generally need to source funding on a project-by-project basis. Many CDCs have

gone beyond complete dependency on external funding sources, instead finding innovative means towards self-sustainability. They creatively combine the values and methods of voluntary associations (social movements) and bureaucratic organisations (institutions) (cf. Chaskin 2005:410), but the most successful ones also add a strong entrepreneurial or business focus generating own resources for greater self-reliance.



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Chapter 03

PUBLIC PLACES: SANCTUARY SPACES

Fig. 132. Historic view of Pretoria, looking east over Church Square, n.d. (van der Waal Collection)

1. PUBLIC SPACES: CHANGE, IDENTITY AND RITUAL

Before 1994 the public spaces (cf. Project for Public Spaces n.d.) of the inner city was supposed to be “neutral” spaces, although they were actually oppressive in their neutrality. They were pre-determined by certain values of domination, power and exclusivity. They were never really public spaces in the true sense of the word, but spaces dominated by a small political minority, and reflecting only white history.

After 1994 it was as if public space was re-discovered and it is still in the process of recovery (Coombes 2004). It has shifted from exclusive space to space of public protest and celebration, to space as a symbol of national pride and identity.

Public spaces have in many ways become spaces of conscience, reminding the citizens of the city of a certain history (Freedom Day Celebrations), of certain future visions (Women’s Day), and of certain moral and ethical dilemmas (HIV / AIDS).

Public spaces are becoming “theatres of memory” and “theatres of prophecy” (Hayden 1995:11), which I will elaborate on later. They are becoming places that capture the collective memory of a people, remembering and re-living the past, but at the same time capturing visions of a better future, as theatres of prophecy, starting to live, embrace and nurture a new and visionary consciousness of what could be. Two reflections on Church Square, right in the heart of our capital city, will illustrate this somewhat.

CLAIMING SPACE:

The Africa Cup of Nations & Church Square

In 1996 South Africa won the Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament. The result was a public display of victory, but at the same time a revelation as to the changing face of the inner city community. Hundreds of people of all races, but mostly black, flooded the streets, dancing until late in the evening. This would not have been the case a couple of years before.

Church Square became the central gathering point. From different directions in the city people spontaneously moved toward the Square, singing, dancing and celebrating. It became a public ritual performed by all participants. This ritual was not only in celebration of the soccer victory. One had a real sense that, for the majority of celebrants who were previously excluded from the city this was also a public ritual for claiming inner city space and for reclaiming the city itself. For those of us who were white, we claimed our belonging to a new nation.

The victory dance became a political / spiritual dance of spatial reclamation!

The second cluster of narratives is based on anecdotal conversations I had with Barbara and Gavin Taylor over many years. They worked and lived at City Methodist Mission in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood and Gavin later became the Methodist Bishop for the Limpopo District, which incorporated Tshwane.

THE TAYLORS AND CHURCH SQUARE

1970s: In the 1970's Gavin Taylor was a young youth minister of a Methodist Church in the east of Pretoria. It was during this time that Steve Biko died in custody, allegedly falling on a bar of soap. This version was not believed by his supervising pastor, himself and some of their fellow church members. They requested permission from the mayor of Pretoria to have a public protest on Church Square. Their request was denied. At that stage Church Square was symbolic of Afrikaner power and exclusively accessible only to some. It was to be used as a platform only for selected voices.

1994: Upon returning to Pretoria to take up ministry at an inner city parish, Gavin and Barbara Taylor went together to Church Square on their first day in the city. This time they walked right into a public protest march, led by the leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, Eugene Terreblanche, on horse back. This and other protest marches from trade unions, the South African Communist Party, and others, were symptomatic of a new era, turning the Square from an exclusive place of Afrikaner domination, into a place of protest and public demonstration, where different opinions were given space to be voiced.

2000: In 2000 Gavin was asked to receive the salute of the President's Guard on a Wednesday morning on Church Square. This has become a new tradition, uniting South Africans, drawing tourists, and re-creating the identity of the Square as a national symbol of unification.

The story of Church Square is still unfolding. The future of Boer President Paul Kruger's statue, at the heart of the Square, and whether it should be retained in an era of decolonisation, as well as the possibility of erecting new symbols that reflect a post-apartheid South Africa more accurately, are important debates that flare up from time to time.

The above-mentioned narratives about experiencing Church Square, are telling a story of the history of space, the politics of space, and the spirit of space. Space is not neutral but always determined by certain values. Urban people can help determine the identity and meaning of space. "New" public spaces can also be created, or old public spaces be filled with new content, to become theatres of memory and prophecy.

Public spaces lend itself to public rituals, whether of celebration or commemoration, of lament or meditation; they provide opportunities for the collective to congregate and to construct identity and meaning, often in ways that cannot be orchestrated (as the celebrations on Church Square illustrates), but often also by way of carefully choreographed public theatre or liturgy (as the Wednesday morning Parade illustrates).

Public places should be the ideal platforms for local people to act

out dreams and visions, struggles and aspirations, actions and rituals. Public places themselves also have identity, or are in search of identity. Public places could very well be regarded as those spaces within the city that either demonstrate the soul of the city, or the yearnings and visions of people as they seek to redeem the city's soul, or the ways in which the city has lost her soul.

The unfolding of the Burgers Park in our own neighbourhood is another example.

BURGERS PARK

(Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative 2005)



| 230

Fig. 133. Nel, 2017. Burgers Park.

Pre-1987 until 1991

Until 1991 the Park was still managed in terms of apartheid legislation. Annually there was a Rotary-funded Carol Service in the Park, attended by a largely white crowd. The play area was well maintained but with relatively small numbers of children using it. The kiosk was a booming European-style coffee shop, serving tea and cake, and drawing office workers from nearby, local residents, suburban people coming to the city centre to do shopping, and other visitors to the city, living in surrounding hotels.

1991-1999

Since 1994 much has changed. The park became accessible to all people without racial restriction. Since the early 1990s the residential character of the neighbourhood changed and the population became increasingly diverse. During this period there was an influx of tourists residing in neighbouring hotels, or visiting the Park and surrounding museums with tourist buses. In this time the kiosk was quite a popular spot in the park for tourists and local office workers. There seemed to be a growing number of children living in the neighbourhood, and children now used the play area more frequently.

1999-2003

At some stage in the late 1990s the atmosphere changed again. The kiosk did not cater for the new black residents living in the area. Tourists were discouraged from walking the local neighbourhood due to crime – either perceived or real – and tour operators did not bring tourists into the Park anymore. A spate of break-ins at the kiosk, the changing demography of the local neighbourhood, and the reduction in tourist numbers, led to the kiosk closing its doors at some point around 1999. Since then different people tried to create a viable alternative but could never sustain it.

The children's play area slowly deteriorated as there was only a maintenance budget allocated and no budget for improvements. Yet, more children used the park than before. The conservatory was hardly visited and subsequently only got maintained without any vision or development of this facility. The historical band stand was used infrequently. And the caretaker's house, which is a national heritage site, slowly deteriorated under the hands of careless occupiers.

2003-

Since 2003 there is a new discussion about the Park. This is perhaps induced by a combination of factors: greater community ownership; partnerships between local community role players; local concerns about the well-being of the Park in terms of cleanliness, maintenance and safety; the openness of the Parks Department to engage local community role players; and debate sparked by a council decision to lock all but one of the 6 access gates to the park in August of 2004.

A local community festival, the Feast of the Clowns, started in the adjacent Burgers Park Lane in 2000, and expanded into the park since 2003. In the last few years between 15,000 and 20,000 people visited the festival annually during the main day and the Park is packed with activity, with most of its facilities being used well.

Christmas in the Park, just as the Feast of the Clowns, hosted by a local community-based organisation, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, runs for the week before Christmas, combining a Carol Service on the Sunday preceding Christmas day, and a Christmas eve meal on the 24th of December.

These community events utilise the Park and its facilities well, and have become events where barriers between local residents, homeless people, children and older people, black and white, and even suburban visitors to the city, are removed as everyone is united in celebration.

The *band stand* is used to great effect in both of these events, but other community groups, local churches, the Pretoria Central Police Station, and others also use it for awareness-raising events and celebrations.

The *caretaker's house* was recently renovated by the city council and now offers accommodation to international students serving voluntarily internships in various inner city community programmes.

The *kiosk* was rented to a local non-profit entity, the Museum Park, whose mission is to promote and support the local museums. In partnership with local community role players the kiosk has been re-opened in December of 2004 and tailored its menu to local residents and commuters walking through the park. This has subsequently been taken over by Tshepo Urban Trading but due to management problems had to be discontinued again. Currently the Kiosk is only operating on festival days.

The *children's play area* has been upgraded to some extent, but the equipment is not child-friendly and proposals were made by a local planning initiative for upgrading this area.

Although the *Conservatory* is still in a very under-utilised state, there are proposals to create an environmental and cultural education programme for schools, using the Park and its facilities, with the Conservatory at the centre of such a programme.

The *restricted access* has an effect on the viability of the kiosk and the liveliness of the Park. The dormancy of the Berea Community Forum has also ensured that the debate about restricting access is no longer alive in the community.

The Burgers Park narrative illustrates the contest for the soul of space and some of the elements that contribute to this contest: legislation that is either exclusive or inclusive; management that is either technocratic or participatory; functionality in terms of local relevance and changing market dynamics; image or branding and the way it gets used as a gate-keeping mechanism.

There are also other public spaces in the inner city in search of identity, that fail to construct their own, and that are not conducive for the kind of exchange that makes public spaces viable.

Fig. 134. Article in the Pretoria News of 9 Aug 1999 about a plaque won by Burgers Park in a public spaces competition (van der Waal Collection).



PUBLIC SPACES SEEKING IDENTITY

(cf. Hook 2005; Dlamini & Ntuli 2006; Diphare 1999)

The Strijdom Square was a monument in honour of previous apartheid prime minister, Advocate J.G. Strijdom. Ironically, the history of this Square was later overshadowed by another Strydom, this time the so-called White Wolf, Barend Strydom, who went on a killing spree against black people in 1988, killing 8 people. In the past few years the most eventful happening on this Square on most days was the daily presence of a life-sized poster of Madiba (Nelson Mandela), with whom your picture could be taken by a local photographer.

Although there were efforts to re-appropriate this space, among other things with the Jacaranda Festival in the mid-1990s, this Square was hardly used for anything but as a pedestrian thoroughfare. The Jacaranda Festival was discontinued. And the focal point shifted across the street to the Sammy Marks Square and the Church Street Pedestrian Walk.

And then, on 31 May 2001, exactly 40 years after the government declared South Africa a republic, independent of the United Kingdom, the structure supporting Strijdom's edifice crumbled and Strijdom fell into the parking garage under the square. This happened without any prior warning, with no foul play, having some to think of it as an act of fate, or "the hand of God", shattering to pieces a powerful apartheid symbol. The decision was made not to replace this monument, and currently this space is being redeveloped to accommodate a Women's Monument.

The Strijdom Square was renamed to the Lillian Ngoyi Square in 2006. This followed a cabinet decision to name the Square after this struggle stalwart, a resident of Pretoria who helped lead the Women's March of 1956 (Dlamini & Ntuli 2006). This Square does not capture the imagination in the same way that Church Square does. Perhaps the Women's Monument will recreate the Square with new meaning.



Fig. 135. The "Pregnant Oyster" at Strijdom Square, Pretoria before it's collapse. (van der Waal Collection)

Fig. 136. Women's Museum in the new Lillian Ngoye Square, Pretoria, 2016.

Pavements, like parks and public squares, are indicators of spatial change and re-interpretation. The most evident example is the mushrooming of informal trade all over the inner city, changing the face and dynamics of pavements. In the Berea-Burgerspark area of the city, pavements are symbols of male dominance, as men rule the sidewalks with their body language, gestures and approaches to women.

One of my former colleagues, a woman, was too scared to walk on certain streets, or to sit alone at a sidewalk café, or in a city park. She is not scared of criminal activity, but for the uninvited advances of men. Many women cannot walk without being disturbed by men making physical contact with them. The sidewalks are testimony to patriarchy and need to be reclaimed, not only by women, but by children and all those who are made vulnerable. Public space is severely impacted by gender patterns and the violation of people's rights.

For a time certain public spaces in Berea-Burgerspark were claimed by commercial sex workers as the streets that they operated from. This has subsided somewhat now as the on-going harassment by the police caused sex workers to move elsewhere in the city. Once again, different views abound on this matter. Currently commercial sex work is still illegal in South Africa which means that sex workers are criminalised. The clients of

sex workers are not criminalised, however. Criminalisation of sex work often leads to abuse from law enforcement officers, clients and the general public. This raises issues of individual and community rights, human dignity, and private / public space. On Burgers Park Lane, where male prostitutes waited for clients during the early 1990s, there is now a sizeable community of homeless people sleeping on the pavement at night, and a number of them are additionally vulnerable due to substance addiction.

The way pavements, parks and public spaces are used, tells a story of local histories, politics, power and vulnerability, personal and collective values. It captures entrenched stereotypes and dominant behaviour. It provides a platform for experiential living and political statement. It symbolises protest, collective memory and future vision.

2.SANCTUARY SPACES:

BETWEEN CHURCH AND CITY; BETWEEN SACRED AND PROFANE

In her book *Sanctuary*, Christa Kuljian (2013) provides a rich, well-researched and multi-layered narrative of the events that unfolded at Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg. Then Bishop and local minister, Paul Verryn, opened the church to refugees until more than 2,000 people were residing in the building. Being home to them they had to perform all their ordinary activities in this building. Praying, sleeping, sexual interaction, ablutions, quarrels and schooling all co-habited in this space. The “sacred” space of the church was completely “profaned”, considering the goings-on at the church.

From another angle, the church was converted into the sanctuary it was perhaps meant to be, providing safe space to extremely vulnerable people. Elina Hankela’s book (2014) about the same church is entitled *Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry: Being Human in a Johannesburg Church*. Her reading of the situation at Central Methodist Mission is that Verryn sought to reinterpret the meaning of church and church property, in the light of the deeper question – what it meant to be human in a radically changed and changing inner city.

Similarly, although not at all as revolutionary as the case with Verryn and Central Methodist Mission, inner city churches in Pretoria provide another revealing narrative on how space is interpreted, re-interpreted and transformed.

Generally there has been a shift from only traditional, confessional churches housed in cathedrals and historic buildings, and home to white, “respectable” believers, to the proliferation of a large number

of new, independent, and predominantly young black churches, multi-cultural churches, worshipping in diverse ways and places, and through diverse expressions, housed in cathedrals and church buildings, but also in theatres, museums, libraries and schools.

The new face of the inner city church is providing new meaning and identity not only to the church as an institution, but also to cultural, educational and public institutions of the city. Places such as the Tshwane College, Ezekiel Mphahlele Library, National Cultural History Museum, Manhattan Hotel, Capital Hotel, Victoria Hotel and several schools, have all been hosting new churches in the past few years.

Fig. 137. Nel, 2017. Gathering under a tree.



Traditional churches have become home to diverse congregations and sometimes to more than one congregation. Throughout history the meaning of church buildings has changed, largely shaped by contextual and cultural realities, as well as different theologies. It has always carried something of “transcendent associations and spiritual insight” (Norman 1990:6) though.

In Africa today the fastest growing religious movement is the African Initiated Churches (AIC’s) meeting under trees and next to rivers, challenging the notion of church building as prerequisite for sacred gatherings. In the case of the AICs the rivers and trees are denoted with cultic significance and sacred meaning. It is then interesting to note how entry and exit points in and out of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood in several places host AICs under the trees or next to the Apies River, denoting cultic significance and sacred meaning to these open spaces.

Until the 4th century followers of Christ have not met in church buildings as we know them today, but rather in private homes, rooms or even underground chambers of catacombs (Norman 1990:6-8). The first church buildings were only erected in the time of Constantine which also marked the institutionalisation of the Christian faith into the empire (Norman 1990:8). In medieval cities or towns the church was always the largest building rising above others with its gables and spires (Norman 1990:147). And in South Africa, the establishment of South African towns “was mainly initiated by the state and the Dutch Reformed Church” (Oranje 1997:34).

In most religions there is a sense of the divine presence in nature and in the city. Often this is symbolised by buildings representing that religion. Also in the cities of the Islamic world urban form took shape around the mosque. And the temples of Buddha in the Asian world are central places around which culture takes shape.



Fig. 138. Dickerson, Shembe Church procession.

The concept of incarnation, which in the Christian faith refers to God becoming flesh (human and earthly) in the reality of our world, is an expression of heaven descending onto earth, overcoming in a sense the sacred-secular or spirit-body dichotomies. Since World War II church architecture also changed and became more sensitive in terms of surrounding contextual and cultural realities (cf. Norman 1990:280). Often buildings became expressions of the desire of people of faith to live more incarnational lives, engaged with the context in which they live and work, moving from faith as an inner discipline only, to faith as a resource for socio-political transformation.

Until today there exists this tension between those who can only worship when surrounded by “art and imagery to glorify God” (Norman 1990:280), and those asserting that the church is “the community of the faithful and that any building will do”. This should probably be a creative tension embracing both gifts simultaneously: the gift of art and imagery, and the gift of community.

In contemporary churches worldwide the emphasis often shifted to the church as community, significantly altering the architecture of churches (Norman 1990:291). Norman says: “Churches are no longer the place where mysteries are celebrated, or where the Word is dispensed. They are halls of assembly of the ‘People of God’”.

Perhaps Norman is not entirely correct. It is true that many churches do not any longer hold the aura of mystery. But often there has only been a shift from a singular focus on mystery and ritual, or preaching of the word, to a more holistic celebration and embodiment of faith, including ritual, preaching, fellowship and social action.

Perhaps the art of church building today would lie in the creative re-combinations of diverse elements, enhancing an experience with and connectedness to the mysterious, facilitating lively and liberating ritual, creating listening spaces, participating in dialogue and conversation, celebrating in diverse styles, and opening up at the same time to the city around the church. Religious buildings that are spaces in dialogue with urban culture in and around them, would contribute greatly to the soul of the city.

The world has come into the church again, and although this is still a little self-conscious and identifiable in social class terms, it presages what the leaders of Western opinion see as a great new attempt, based in authentic spiritual foundations, to engage society in a fruitful interrelationship of the sacred and the secular (Norman 1990:292)

REDEFINING OURSELVES; reclaiming space: imaged by redefined worship experiences

The Ecumenical Ascension Day Service of 2002 demonstrated a new diversity. The worship expression combined 17th century organ music and hymns with contemporary African and African-American sounds of drums and electric guitars. Black and white South Africans, Nigerians, and French-speaking Africans were amongst the worshipping community. It was an event redefining the worship experience and the worship space. All of this happened in the old Bosman Street Church, which is a significant historical building closely attached to the old apartheid history, home to important leaders in the church that supported apartheid theologically, and hosting the funerals of a number of prominent Afrikaans leaders and prime ministers even.

An old Dutch Reformed Church has recently been purchased by an Apostolic Faith Mission church (a Pentecostal denomination). Immediately the pulpit, central in Reformed church buildings, was replaced by a grand piano, transparent lectern, and a set of drums. The organ is up for sale. Traditional church interior is redefined in this case in much more pragmatic and functional ways, and less dogmatically. It reflects a different set of values, a different discourse on church interior, a different theology.

The current process in Pretoria's inner city stands in interesting contrast to many European cities. Instead of churches being turned into museums or cultural places (e.g. Germany or Holland), museums or cultural places are turned into churches (at least on Sundays).

There is also another dynamic to be found in the ways in which some churches start to re-interpret themselves to become "holistic centres of life", being not only spiritual places, but also social, public and cultural places. In Cape Town the old Buitenkant Street Methodist Church has been converted into the District Six Museum, and adjacent to the Museum are two very significant community projects, accommodating young girls coming from the streets in the Ons Plek programme, and hosting a day care centre for neighbourhood children called the Stepping Stones Children's Centre (District Six Museum n.d; Central Methodist Mission [Cape Town] n.d.). Perhaps these properties are now more sacred in its mediation of life, memory and dignity, than it sometimes was when used only as a worshipping space.

The way in which some church buildings are becoming holistic centres of life, instead of narrow spiritual enclaves, might be a more Africanised interpretation of church building, embracing the whole of life as sacred, and therefore celebrating different dimensions of life, and protesting all forms of death, using the church building as platform and / or venue.

The property of the City Methodist Mission (Wesley) in Burgers Park Lane is one such an example.

... a withdrawn sanctuary to
an engaged civic centre.

PRETORIA CITY MISSION (*Wesley*) (*WesChurch 2015*)

This church, known as the Pretoria City Mission, was really a suburban church merely located in the inner city until 1993. It accommodated an ageing white community, mostly middle-class, and its activities and programme demonstrated an introvert church focusing on itself and its own needs. The building also reflected these values.

Since 1993 it has been a time for reconstructing its own identity, which also had implications for how it understood the use and relationship of the church building with regard to the surrounding community.

The church's name even changed from Wesley Methodist Church to Pretoria City Mission, affirming its outward focus as a "place of mission and service" in the centre of the city. It has become a multi-cultural community with different worship expressions, and facilitated the development of various small income-generating enterprises, including a production line for clerical shirts (City Threads), the production of communion wine and communion bread (City Mannna), a day care centre, a communication centre, a conference centre, a second-hand shop, a book shop, and English Courses for mostly African refugees. In 2003 it completed a 27-unit social housing project in partnership with a church-based social housing association, Yeast City Housing.

In 2004-2005 it added an important HIV/AIDS dimension. The Mahube Healing Centre offered counselling, advise, HIV-testing facilities, an antiretroviral treatment clinic, and support groups to people living with HIV/AIDS. The Mahube Care Centre, since discontinued, was a 6-bed facility for chronically ill patients who need to become stronger before being placed back in their homes.

It has been a venue for community meetings of the local Berea Community Forum, and in 2000 it hosted some of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Amnesty Hearings.

241 |

These creative developments have also been sparked by the church's own existential need to continue to exist, losing some of its suburban membership and financial muscle as it became an inner city church. They had to move beyond mere survival to sustainability, and the need for income-generation has sparked the development of innovative community projects, creating employment, serving the surrounding community, and at the same time supporting the infrastructure of the church to retain its inner city presence.

This church is indeed reconstructing its own story, as it becomes a “narrative” building, inviting the stories and struggles of diverse people, and supporting the reconstruction of lives, families and a community. It has become a space of hope and inclusion, in the midst of inner city space that is often contested and exclusive.

This church is indeed reconstructing its own story, as it becomes a “narrative” building, inviting the stories and struggles of diverse people, and supporting the reconstruction of lives, families and a community. It has become a space of hope and inclusion, in the midst of inner city space that is often contested and exclusive.

BOSMAN STREET CHURCH (*Pretoria Faith Community n.d.*)

This church has traditionally been a powerful symbol of Afrikaner religion and rule at the heart of the city. Until the 1980s it still employed five full-time ministers for its large Afrikaans congregation and it has been home to major events such as General Synods of the Dutch Reformed Church, as well as the funerals of prominent Afrikaner leaders such as Andries Treurnicht and Prime Minister John Vorster.

Today, this church has also become a metaphor for the changing urban landscape of South Africa. The traditional congregation has been absorbed into one new inner city Dutch Reformed Congregation, consolidating five different congregations into one. Since the 1990s the congregation only had two full-time ministers and later none.

The Melodi yaTshwane Congregation of the Uniting Reformed Church (a predominantly black congregation) bought a 50% share in the church property and today has a dynamic and growing congregation worshipping here. The International Church of Pretoria serves Francophone Christians coming from all over Africa.

| 242

Instead of closing its doors as a worship centre, the building has now become home to different congregations, worshipping in different languages, and having their own leadership and structures. It has become a celebration of cultural and social diversity, as the members of the congregations include black domestic workers, students, children, refugees from Francophone Africa, families, professionals and single people.

Part of the development of this church is to re-think the way it understands church space. It hosted a “charity shop” for some time in one of the foyers, trying to re-interpret church space, to create a point of exchange with the local neighbourhood, and to generate income for community involvement.

Both of these narratives, and I could use other examples too, have actively wrestled with the meaning and identity of being church in the inner city. This struggle is reflected in the way they understand and recycle their buildings to retain its worship space at the core, but to develop creative new dimensions around the core. I use “struggle” here in a positive, birthing sense. There is an intentional refusal to withdraw, and a real attempt to engage, offering its space in dialogue with and at the service of the local context.

Although it is still a spiritual space, it is now in a process of being earthed, grounded or rooted in the local community, as it seeks intentionally for ways to connect itself by opening itself. It is also motivated by the understanding that it should be connected to people’s experience and need. It is about contextualising church spaces, and developing a rooted, holistic spirituality that is clearly conveyed by the use of its space.

There is a shift from a *withdrawn sanctuary to an engaged civic centre*. These church buildings still provide sanctuary, but now in inclusive ways that embrace life in its wholeness. It is more inclusive in its invitation to provide sanctuary to refugees, homeless communities, struggling people, and diversity.

The ministry of these churches remains priestly, but now in a broader “secular” sense as well,

understanding not only official church membership, but the community or neighbourhood or city as their parish. In other words, the priestly tasks are no longer restricted to the “sacred” space of the church building anymore, but at work in the “secular” city. On the other hand, the building itself represents this shift, going beyond traditional dichotomies of sacred and secular, and re-constructing itself to be a holistic centre of life in all its different forms. The church building is re-interpreting itself in relation to the city.

This reinterpretation is touching even more fundamentally on church’s understanding of God. The notion that God is restricted to our “sacred church spaces” is increasingly changed with an understanding that the *church as well as the city itself could be sanctuary* (Neddens & Wucher 1987). In the same way the church as well as *the city itself could be mortuary*. It is the way in which we construct church and city that provides identity and meaning that are either life-giving or death-dealing. Sacred spaces do not have to be restricted to church buildings only, and a new reading of church buildings helps to re-interpret and overcome the sacred-secular dichotomy.

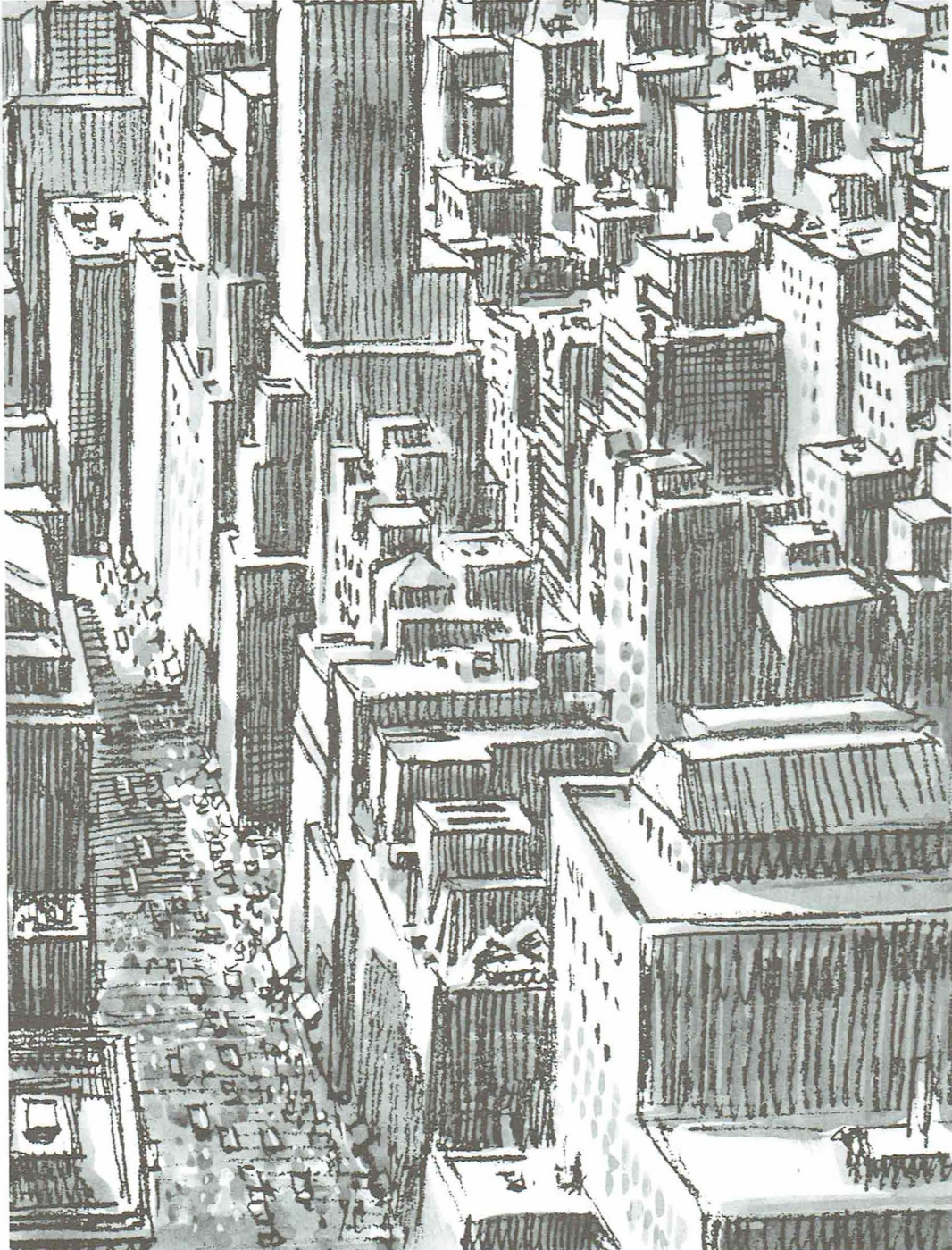
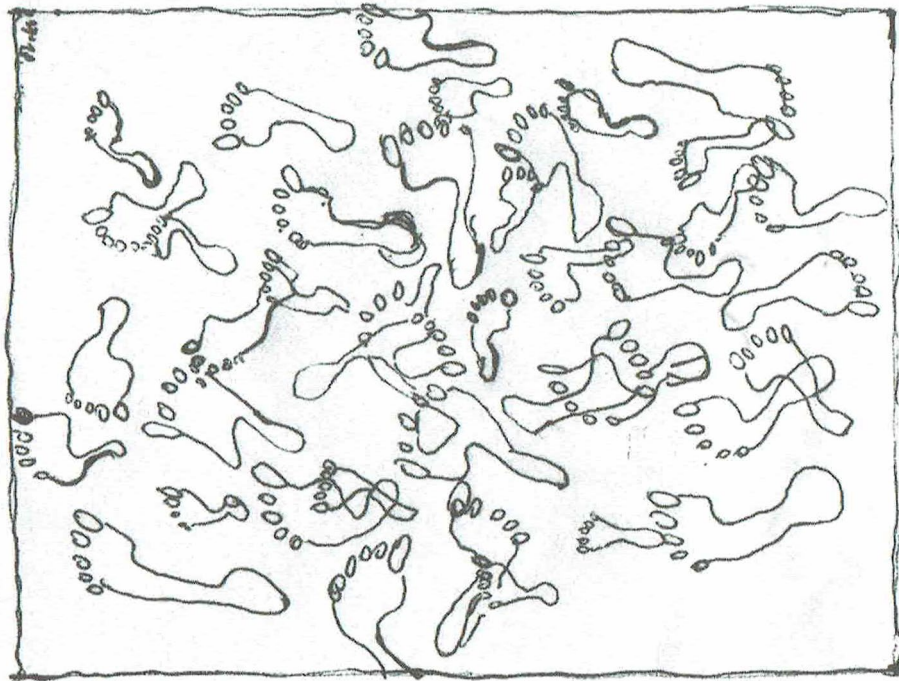


Fig. 139. Eisner, 1986. The City.

DECONSTRUCTING BEHIND
THE FAÇADES

245 |

MOMENT 2
Reading urban space:



| 246

Fig. 140. Dee, 2001. Drawing after Jean Dubuffet
"Traces de pas sur le sable" 1948

Chapter 04

WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?



Fig. 141. Nel, 2017. City

The previous chapters presented a “thick description” or insertion into the inner city of Tshwane, with specific reference to the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood.

In this chapter I offer a critical reading and reflection of this context, exploring “behind” the narratives of previous chapters, and elaborating further on some of the narratives. I do such readings as a way of deconstructing grand (and other) narratives, and do it in a way that will hopefully start to evoke an alternative imagination. I will read and reflect on specific incidents, practices and policies (or the lack thereof) under 12 headings. These headings are formulated in the form of critical questions. They reflect my own biases / suggestions of essential features in redeeming the soul of the city.

In the course of this chapter I interact with the Tshwane City Strategy (CS) (City of Tshwane 2004) and Tshwane Vision 2055 (City of Tshwane 2013), the Tshwane Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (City of Tshwane 2002 and 2011), the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (City of Tshwane 2012), and the Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005), hereafter just referred to as the Tshwane Inner City Strategy, as well as more recent permutations thereof.

These documents provide strategic frameworks for local urban development. The question remains as to how far any of the discourses on participatory planning and development are consistently translated into sustained partnerships and participatory action.

Being an action researcher, interwoven in the reading will be some of my / our own engagement in local spatial and political processes, as they inform my reflection throughout.

As I wrote this section, I just returned from Addis Ababa, a city in which 80% of residents live in slums (UN-Habitat 2011). Exposure to this reality is a harsh reminder that urban regeneration or urban development discourses should never happen in a vacuum. We need to consider the city in the context of global and local exclusion, in which we cannot speak innocently, but in which we have to be suspicious of whose agenda and whose interests are actually served through processes of urban renewal or regeneration. In reading the Tshwane urban narrative, we have to place it against,

or in relation to, an African and global backdrop.

Walter Benjamin (1982) spoke of the flâneur, wandering through the streets of the city, always observing, slowly, almost like someone taking his tortoise for a walk in a busy mall. The “readings” offered in this chapter are almost like wandering with your tortoise through the mall, allowing the interruptions / questions posed by small, local and marginal narratives, in a way that might disturb the grand narratives so often embraced uncritically, so often implemented without pause for thought.

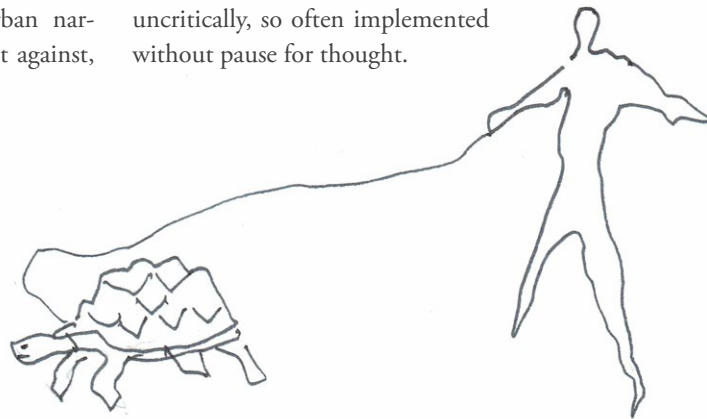


Fig. 142. Nel, 2017. Walking my tortoise.

1. PERPETUAL DEPENDENCE ON OUTSIDERS: WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY?

| 248

Our urban futures seem to be perpetually dependent on planners, politicians, profiteers and consultants that are mostly not residents of the communities for whom they speak (cf. also Schoonraad 2003: 65-69). This is true not only at a global and impersonal scale, but it is also felt intimately at the local level of neighbourhoods.

Even if city strategies speaks theoretically of “public participation” in neighbourhood planning, and in envisioning cities that are truly “people’s places”, these strategies and visions often remain

theoretical in terms of the actual embodiment of such participatory people’s processes and places.

In the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005), Building

Block 12 envisions the inner city as a people's place. However, the integrity and consistency of this vision raise questions. The very methodology used to develop the Tshwane Inner City Strategy denied the people and organisations of the inner city the opportunity to participate meaningfully in formulating the strategy. There was very little engagement with people and their organisations – resident organisations, community forums, churches, CBOs, NGOs, in conceiving and developing this strategy. How can the strategy speak of a people's place without the people's dreams, concerns, frustrations and struggles being heard, to help inform vision and strategy?

Apparently inputs into the initial plan were invited from government departments and the private sector. All the other important stakeholders of the city – residents, religious groups, the non-governmental sector, informal trade, homeless people – were effectively excluded by not having access to information, or not being consulted to provide inputs.

Eventually a newspaper advertisement, with a wrong date, invited comments on the plan. Again, it was doing the bare minimum to fulfil the statutory requirement of public participation. A more inclusive approach could have included diverse spaces such as a one-day summit, focus group meetings, inviting organised forums, known role players, and diverse sectors, into real conversations engaging

the contents, strengths and weaknesses of the proposed strategy, and further developing it with the insights of all concerned. In such ways a broader base of ownership and potential investment would have been secured.

The 2005 document was a result of a process much different to the earlier process followed in the late 1990s. The Pretoria Inner City Partnership was formed in the 1990s by the inner city office of the municipality. It followed a very extensive process of participatory planning resulting in a broad-based partnership, institutionalised in the form of a non-profit company, with Directors representing a range of inner city stakeholders from both civil society and private sector. With political transition that took place between the outgoing Executive of the city in 1999 and the new dispensation under the leadership of Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, much of the work done by the Pretoria Inner City Partnership was wrongfully discredited and very little of its vision and plans came to fruition.

Successfully implemented ventures over the past twenty years were often done in spite of inner city plans, by other parties than local government, such as private and social property developers, faith-based organisations and non-profit organisations. The only visible developments by government were often monumental projects such as National Government

Departmental Headquarters, the Freedom Park Monument or Tshwane House. The development of a Bus Rapid Transport system is one of the first truly significant local government initiatives to be pulled off, coming out of strategic documents.

Planning for neighbourhoods often happens in isolation. There is a denial of the fact that neighbourhoods have their own visions,

strengths and strategies, that could, in partnership with local governments, foster the kind of synergies that might facilitate very innovative, inclusive and less suspect urban developments.

Let me cite the local example of the partial closure of Burgers Park to indicate how people are excluded from local decision-making that affects them directly.

PARTIAL CLOSURE OF BURGERS PARK

In August of 2004 it was decided to partially close the Burgers Park, an award-winning public open space in our neighbourhood, keeping open only one gate, allegedly as a way to reduce crime. Eventually a second gate was opened, partly due to public pressure, but probably more due to a realisation of the nonsensical decision of which gates to close. Yet, crime statistics provided by the local police station as well as the security company contracted to provide security in the Park, disputed the alleged crime haven the Park has become. The Park was not a crime generator but illegal buildings around the Park were. Yet, the people's Park was partially closed whilst surrounding buildings generating crime were left untouched, at least until the beginning of 2006 (16 months later).

The gate initially selected for access was the one least used by the public. It was the only gate that was not close to a pedestrian crossing. It was on the extreme opposite side of the children's play area, reducing their accessibility. And it was the only gate with steps, restricting disabled users. A formal decision by politicians and officials were taken without considering all of these facts.

Who made this decision? It was initially requested by a local business person, who does not necessarily walk in the Park himself and who definitely does not live in the neighbourhood. Requesting this was his right, whatever the reasons for the request. The greater concern was how his request became supported by the local ward councillor (politician), who is also not a resident or user of the Park. Eventually, without consulting local community groups, property owners or

users of the Park, a decision was taken by the Mayoral Committee to close the Park partially.

Where was the community when the decision was taken? This is a good example of a practice that plays itself out every day in urban neighbourhoods: people determining the destiny of local communities, whilst sidelining the people of those communities. It is also an example of a public sector representative cooperating with a private sector individual, for whatever reason, at the expense of the majority of citizens and not regarding the greater good.

Subsequently the ward councillor co-opted some additional local voices in his defence, but these individuals were never representative of legitimate community structures, but were always selectively chosen, insiders to the Councillor's political circles, and the facts presented were always dubious and without substance.

Initially I titled this section “the perpetual dependence on consultants”. Too often it is external consultants who determine the shape of our urban future: they are paid to provide “expert” knowledge and proposals, often not being translated into transformative local projects. One example is the on-going attempt to introduce a policy on homelessness for the City of Tshwane since 1997. Three consultations later, and three consultants being paid to do the same work, this policy has not yet been introduced¹⁷. And only now, as this text is being completed, it seems as if a collaborative attempt at a policy and strategy on homelessness might succeed. But it is 18 years and a few thousand homeless people later.

However, consultants are not the only group we depend upon. There are also the very planners

designated to one's local area, who are most often not residents of the area themselves, and who will seldom be. They are the politicians who are encouraged to live in the Wards they serve but seldom do. They are the developers who are mainly driven by profit, and seldom by the common good or social objectives. They often see the possibility of generating profit from vulnerable communities very opportunistically, and sometimes leave behind a trail of vulnerable people, and even abandoned or run-down buildings. They are also the volunteers of charitable causes, arriving just to disappear as abruptly when the adventure seems less adventurous.

I propose that ordinary citizens in general, and people of faith in particular, could participate in ways that would fundamentally shape the future of urban communities

17. Since writing this Chapter, the City of Tshwane adopted the Tshwane Homelessness Policy and Strategy, resulting from a comprehensive research and public participation process, described in more detail in Chapter 9 of this study

for the good of all people, but especially those who live there, and those who are particularly vulnerable. I further propose that these people might intuitively have a better sense than the professional planners, of what their neighbourhoods need. And I therefore explore models of radical participation in which professional planners and local citizens work as partners to read, interpret, reflect, imagine, plan and implement together.

1.1 PLANNING THROUGH PRESENCE VERSUS ABSENTEE PLANNERS

Can inner city, or other urban neighbourhoods, be planned ethically by absent professionals, or determined by absent politicians? I was part of a movement that sought to facilitate social infrastructure and local community development. Its focus was and remains to create a presence in places of vulnerability, where there is social and economic disinvestment. The programmes that we have developed have all grown from being present in particular areas, building relationships, gaining insight into local dynamics, and becoming credible companions over long periods of time. We have discovered that any other approach would be fatal for what we wanted to facilitate. Without creating a long-term, lasting presence, we cannot engage credibly, understand fully, and intervene effectively.

Translating lessons learnt from local community activism, to planning for local neighbourhoods, I ask whether it is possible to facilitate social interventions in credible ways if we remain outsiders without intentionally becoming insiders, or at least engaging in authentic and long-term dialogue with insiders. How do planners think they can plan well – and credibly – for neighbourhoods that they know little about, and in which they have never lived?

In the late 1960s and 1970s authoritarian approaches to planning were challenged by new approaches, such as “social planning, community-based planning, participatory architecture, process architecture, advocacy planning, self-building, and sweat equity” (Ellin 1996: 65). These approaches represented a more participatory, community-based praxis in which presence played an important role.

Should this not become part of the job specification of planners – to live in the neighbourhoods that they have to plan for; to experience the dynamics and processes of those neighbourhoods first hand; and to form the kind of authentic partnerships that will draw from local knowledge, learn from local interpreters and plan and design with local people? I would plan differently if my own future and that of my family and children depended on it. This is just common sense.

1.2 THE SILENT ASSET AND AGENCY OF CITIZENRY

Ordinary citizens living in local neighbourhoods are a largely underrated asset, both in terms of reading and interpreting local issues correctly, but also in terms of effecting change and facilitating sustainable and sustained regeneration. Citizens represent a tax-base that in itself is powerful in terms of brokerage. The organisations in which ordinary citizens participate have intellectual, physical, financial, cultural and social resources that provide a tremendous asset base on which to build.

Yet, it might be that it is precisely such an asset-base, once mobilised by an organised citizenry that sometimes presents a threat to local political processes, because it tends to develop an independent voice and alternative power base that will not necessarily toe the party political line. Emerging citizen's movements are often treated with suspicion, co-opted into silence or manipulated into consent, and seldom acknowledged as equal partners with unique gifts.

In one slum community of Addis Ababa local government is doing little to upgrade the area. But there are 1,200 local resident volunteers who offer various services. They build and upgrade their own houses, build roads, and dig ditches for sewerage. The unemployed youth built their own 3-storey youth centre where they learn skills, develop capacity and

engage in recreational activities (cf. visit to Addis Ababa 2004). Citizens can do things for themselves and their neighbourhoods that government and even business cannot do.

Why is this fact often negated in urban management and development discourse?

1.3 TRIVIALISED FAITH-BASED RESOURCES

Some of the most innovative and transforming slum upgrading projects in Addis Ababa and inner city development programmes in the United States are facilitated by faith-based organisations. For many in those poor communities, the church is their only anchor, and it has become platforms to generate vision, mobilise resources, and construct hopeful change.

And yet, very often government- or private-led urban regeneration programmes do not see faith-based institutions as potential partners, choosing rather to define for them a role that is often narrow and other-worldly, partly based on ignorance, but sometimes as a deliberate attempt to exclude them when the advocacy role of faith-based movements is at odds with the official discourse of what should be. Elaine Graham (2009), in reflecting on the process that culminated in *Faithful Cities*, a theological report of the Church of England with regard to the status of cities in the UK, names as one of the greatest challenges for the church in the

UK the task of faith literacy, which is to educate government on the actual role played by faith-based organisations in urban Britain in terms of providing social infrastructure, investing in community well-being, and contributing to social cohesion and urban peace.

Developing true partnerships with local faith communities can foster a planning praxis that is rooted in communities, under-girded by spirituality, and aimed at hope. Yet, such a partnership contains the dangerous possibility of subverting unhelpful power relationships. Perhaps that is why faith-based groups, in exploring formal partnerships with local government structures in Tshwane, often experienced their requests as being trivialised. An extreme example is when a previous Executive Mayor's spokesperson suggested left-over food from Mayoral functions as the brightest possible idea for the content of partnership. What made it even more offensive was that the Mayor in question, at that time, happened to be a liberation theologian himself, therefore supposedly understanding the importance of grass-root actions that defy charity and long for justice.

Faith-based communities in poor urban communities are often the most strategic civil society agencies. They are often the most consistent institutions, providing social networks and organisation, and giving people a sense of belonging and purpose, in spite of desperate circumstances around

them. This should be seen as a largely unutilised asset for urban regeneration (cf. Winkler 2006; 2006b).

Faithful Cities (The Archbishops' Council 2006:2-4), the 2006 report of the Church of England on the status of cities in the UK, coins the term faithful capital in describing the current, potential and unacknowledged contribution of faith-based organisations in urban society. Faithful capital is distinguished by its language and practices (The Archbishops' Council 2006:3). The language of love, hope, forgiveness, restoration, justice, and compassion, humanise the urban discourse. Practices of hospitality, patience, perseverance, participation and partnership are cited in research done by the William Temple Foundation as characteristics of many urban faith-based organisations. This is a potent resource not to be trivialised in processes of urban regeneration.

2. ON PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP: WINDOW-DRESSING FOR WHOM?

2.1 HOW PARTICIPATORY IS PARTICIPATION? BEYOND THEORY TOWARD RADICAL PARTICIPATION

2.1.1 Participation in crafting local development plans

I would like to suggest that the viability of poor urban areas could be strengthened immensely by planning processes that are truly participatory. If people are offered space in which to share their needs and visions, their concerns and their assets, owning both the planning and the implementation process, the design – and sustainability – of local urban communities will be much more authentic. Although this is echoed nowadays by most urban plans and policies, stressing the importance of participation (cf. Pieterse 2004:3; Friedmann 1992; Rakodi 1993; Gerometta, et al 2005), the great distance between embracing it theoretically and practising it consistently and thoroughly, leaves us exactly where we were before participation was introduced.

We might be worse off now since “participation” as an idea has been co-opted in a way that neutralises the power of true participatory planning. In the 1990s the planning profession in South Africa realised that the majority of South Africans only experienced the dark side of planning, had to be familiarised with the potential role of planning, and had to participate in their own reconstruction (cf. Oranje 1997:164,165, 181).

In the Tshwane City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2004) and the Tshwane Integrated Development Plan (City of Tshwane 2002), much is made of the notion of participation. The City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2004:9), advocated by the South African Cities Network, stresses the importance of involving the poor as partners

in developing city-wide pro-poor strategies. This is again very positive, theoretically at least, but mechanisms to ensure such city-wide participation often fail the poor.

The more recent Tshwane Vision 2055 (City of Tshwane 2013), which evolved out of the 2004 Tshwane City Strategy, is even more pronounced in its articulation of a participatory approach, both in the formation of the Vision but also for its implementation. It describes the preparatory process of the vision in detail on pp.29-31 but also envisions the implementation as a series of multiple strategic partnerships. In the Executive Mayor’s Message (City of Tshwane 2013:7) introducing the Tshwane Vision 2055, he states that the Tshwane Vision 2055 “provides us

with a platform to **establish strategic partnerships** with communities and stakeholders to **imagine, transform, remake, and build a cohesive and adaptable society**".

Likewise, in policies guiding the development and implementation of so-called Integrated Development Plans (IDP), a mechanism for local developmental government in the South African context, a strong case is made for the importance of participation as an integral part of successful IDP implementation. At a local community level, however, there are serious constraints that hinder constructive participation in IDP-processes.

Participation seems to be only as strong as the local Ward Committee and more specifically the local Ward Councillor (the elected politician). These often defunct mechanisms become the official forum through which concerns and proposals are channelled to the local authority. It is usually Ward Committees that consolidate the inputs of local communities to be carried into IDP-processes. If the Ward Committee is not functioning effectively, this reduces the possibility of local communities making informed inputs into local political or developmental processes. The Ward Councillor can simply veto inputs from the community that does not appeal to him or her.

In Berea-Burgers Park it would happen, for example, that none of the projects put forward by

community groups in the Ward were included in the Integrated Development Plan. Many projects would appear on the inner city priority list, but they are generated within the Municipal Manager's office, and do not emerge from local neighbourhoods.

And yet, at least four of the six values guiding the IDP-process, as articulated in the 2002 Tshwane IDP (City of Tshwane 2002), stress the importance of real community participation and honest and transparent accountability to local communities and stakeholders.

1. (P)roviding and delivering sustainable services and activities for the whole community based on their specific needs as **determined by their active participation,**
2. (B)eing open about everything it does by **inviting and encouraging the public** to share in and democratically participate in its activities,
3. focusing on the municipality's core activities consistently and being bound by the urge to **remain true to the community,** and
4. **(R)eporting regularly to all stakeholders** regarding the municipality's performance.

The IDP itself has an institutionalised monitoring and performance management system, using a Balanced Scorecard Model with a twofold purpose (Tshwane IDP

18. In an article entitled "Integrated Development Plans and Third Way Politics", Philip Harrison (2006) assesses the impact and outcomes of IDPs in postapartheid South African cities and towns, offering a rather ambiguous reading of its successes and failures



Fig. 143. Nel, 2017. Participation.

2002:34): to measure the performance of municipal officials against municipal duties to the community, and to ensure that the organisation as a whole pursues performance excellence. I cannot recall one space in which the local community was offered an opportunity to participate in such an assessment process. It is up to citizens and citizens' groups themselves to develop the skills, agency, capacity and confidence, to keep the city accountable to both legislative and ethical requirements for intensive participatory processes.

It is interesting that none of this "participatory jargon" is contained in the 2011 Tshwane IDP (City of Tshwane 2011). In the IDP spanning 2011-2016, the authors of the document get straight to the point and outline the various activities to be undertaken as part of the IDP. Its language and processes it virtually excludes inner city residents, the non-profit sector, and community- and faith-based groups from participation.

At a time when the private sector largely withdrew from the inner city between 1990 and 2000, it was often communities and community-based organisations that bravely resisted the ebb and flow of decay. Somehow the asset that local community-based organisations and citizens represent needs to be valued and the resources available in this sector galvanised and integrated into a sustainable inner city strategy. The whole process of developing the

Tshwane Inner City Strategy once again showed that participation is often only a trendy word, practiced in ways that satisfy legislative requirements but leaving the larger part of civil society out in the cold.

2.1.2 Children's participation

Children perhaps most clearly present the challenge of radical participation (cf. Riggio 2002:45-58; Grant 2006:25). When the concept of child participation was introduced to a local Ward Councillor in 2006, his sense was that children could not think for themselves and therefore should not be consulted in the planning process for local communities. In the Tshwane Inner City Strategy, emphasis is placed on children and healthy spaces for children, which should be welcomed and encouraged wholeheartedly. Yet, again, the participation of children and even of those organisations representing children's concerns has never occurred in a deliberate and systematic manner.

There are specific concerns regarding children in the current inner city environment that are not addressed by this strategy. From the perspective of Berea-Burgers Park some of the concerns include the quality of existing children's play areas, road safety considerations especially surrounding Burgers Park, and the restricted access to the Park. Rerouting trucks from Lillian Ngoyi and Thabo Sehume Streets to Schubart and Kgosi Mampuru Streets,

and Nelson Mandela Drive, away from the main residential nodes and pedestrian routes currently used by children (and other vulnerable users), would do much to enhance a safe and healthy environment. Often these concerns can only be heard in forums facilitating authentic participation of those walking the streets, using the parks and facing the environmental abuse, including the voices of children speaking for themselves and from their own experiences.

True participation will go beyond theoretically including children into plans and strategies, but will also develop a coherent vision for *child-friendly cities*, a term coined by UNICEF (2004). A child-friendly city is a city, or any local system of governance, committed to fulfilling children's rights. It is a city where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. It is, as a result, a city that is fit for all.

The Tshwane Vision 2055, unlike the Tshwane Inner City Strategy, actually affirms the concept and vision of a child-friendly city. In 2011, a staggering 677,110 people in the city were below the age of 14 and another 1,185,605 people were between the ages of 15 and 34 years of age. 64% of the population of the city was therefore younger than 34 (cf. City of Tshwane 2013:55). Acknowledging this reality, the city then envisions "communities where families, children and youth can thrive

and actively contribute to the development of their communities" (City of Tshwane 2013:216). The Tshwane Vision 2055 outlines some criteria for a child and youth friendly city and also identifies a number of strategic actions to be taken in partnership with other stakeholders, in order to advance this agenda (City of Tshwane 2013:216-217).

Obviously participatory planning involving children and youth would challenge conventional planning and planners. For planners, working with young people means diversifying the types of community consultation processes they employ.

Young people like to be pragmatic, mobile and stimulated by their involvement. Chasing behind a group of young people on bicycles during a neighbourhood tour while trying to write notes and take photographs has probably been the most successful research method we have used. In contrast, community meetings often lead to disinterest and silencing of young people (Malone 1999:23)

If a high emphasis is placed on children as a yard stick for a healthy community, ways need to be sought to integrate their concerns in all the different building blocks and to ensure that these will complement each other towards creating a child-friendly environment. If children are valued, it will help create an environment that values all its users. If children are valued, they too should be included in participatory processes, together with all others who often have no voice.

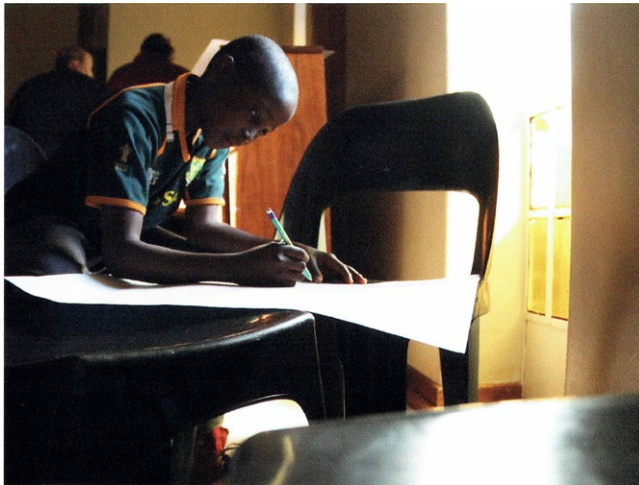


Fig. 144. Playing, by Siya, aged 10 (lun)Shackled)
Fig. 145. Tree of life + Photo Workshops.

It is one thing to articulate a vision for a child and youth friendly city, but an entirely different challenge to translate the vision into concrete, appropriate, and effective actions, including equipped planners and practitioners as well as empowered and confident children, participating and contributing collectively to imagine a different future.

2.1.3 Pitfalls in participatory approaches

New urbanism is perceived to be focusing on radical participation. Critics of it suggest, however, that participatory methods in new urbanism often “co-opt participants and manipulate consensus-building to suit the interests of a small segment of society” (Fainstein 2000; Grant 2006:76). There is also the risk of designers manipulating the process (Grant 2006:76). Their specialised knowledge and expertise provide power to manipulate processes.

Luckin and Sharp (2004:1488) caution against potential conflicts between the self-interest of civic organisations and the broader interests of the locality in which they operate. There could be a subtle blur between advancing own interest or really advancing the interest of the community on whose behalf one purportedly speaks. Not only politicians, officials or planners might advance own agendas at the expense of local communities, but civic organisations and community activists can fall in the same trap, deliberately or unconsciously.

Cento Bull and Jones (2006) suggest that participatory approaches sometimes surface power struggles and conflicts within communities, for example tensions between more dominant and more marginal groups. They suggest that participation does not necessarily achieve “local

social solidarity, social inclusion, and democratic decision-making” (Cento Bull & Jones 2006:768).

Within communities there are different role players not always seeing eye to eye. In the previous chapter, I referred to the closure of some of the gates of Burgers Park. This was supported and advocated by a local commercial landlord whilst local residents and community organisations did not necessarily agree. It is also true that civil society is definitely not a “homogeneous unit” (cf. Gerometta, et al 2005:2018; Oranje 1997:273), but very pluralistic in outlook, vision and interest. This leads to questions of who determines the agenda, the common values or the vision, also taking into account that there are gaps in resources, knowledge and frames of reference between different sectors of civil society.

Sometimes there might even be subordination of certain civil society groups in the process (cf. Cento Bull & Jones 2006:768, 770), specifically referring to the voluntary and faith-based sectors (cf. Peck & Tickell 2002:390). Private developers as protagonists serving the interest of neo-liberal policies and profitability, will speak the language of participation and empowerment, but behind the façade of participation will be the subordination and cooption of those with fewer resources.

Gerometta, et al (2005), refer to it as the colonisation of civil

society to meet neo-liberal, higher-scale interests that in the end run counter to the local interests. Participation is then only used as a smokescreen for goals that in effect might exclude certain sectors of the community, and especially those who are particularly vulnerable. This battle for the soul of the city, and – at a smaller scale – the integrity of every city-making process – has been so evident in so many processes determining the inner city since 1993. The smallest meeting could be a contesting space of resisting being colonised into neo-liberal co-option, just because one is poor, or representing civil society, or coming from the faith-based sector.

2.2 ARE PARTNERSHIPS FOR URBAN REVITALISATION REAL PARTNERSHIPS?

In recent times, “partnerships have emerged as an important trend in urban regeneration literature” (Hemphill, et al 2006:60; cf. also Mackintosh 1992; Bailey, et al 1994; Hutchinson 1994; Purdue 2001). In the United Kingdom it has become “conventional wisdom’ to tackle regeneration through a ‘multisectoral partnership approach’” (Hemphill, et al 2006: 60).

Partnerships have become popular also because they were perceived by many to facilitate a more effective and socially acceptable tool for delivery (Hemphill, et al 2006:60).

And yet, in the Tshwane

experience, there are often “primary” partners and “secondary” partners. This relates to what Gerometta and others warn about. Everyone gets co-opted in the name of partnership but some are “more equal” than others. Our experience in participatory processes in Tshwane is that community-based organisations will often be the most committed to the process because their future is closely connected to that of their neighbourhood, being fully immersed, whilst private sector players can more easily invest elsewhere (and often do so as the movement of capital in the 1990s clearly demonstrated).

There is often subtle and not so subtle exclusion of community stakeholders in partnerships. The tendency is to foster public-private partnerships, with all their shortcomings and strengths, but often at the exclusion of the so-called third sector. In recent years there have been shifts and in a place like Ireland with relatively weak local government the community-based sector has become a much more integral partner in local development processes (cf. Cameron, Odendaal & Todes 2004:321).

The Landsdowne-Wetton Corridor Project in Cape Town, and the Cato Manor and Warwick Junction projects in Durban are good examples of broad-based integrated development initiatives that worked (Cameron, et al 2004: 323-328). Perhaps these were examples where power

relationships were managed well. Power relationships exist between different spheres of government; between government, private sector, and community groups; but also among community groups as they seek to assert themselves (cf. Hemphill, et al 2006:62; Hastings 1999). In this regard Hemphill, et al (2006:73), suggest the importance of balancing power in the make-up of partnerships, ensuring that one organisation or individual will not over-dominate the partnership. They refer to the example of the Belfast GEMS (Gasworks Employment Matching Service), a successful regeneration partnership, that carried out a stakeholder analysis to clarify the roles and contributions of the different partners (Hemphill, et al 2006:67; 73). This helped to steer the partnership in the right direction.

The authenticity of partnerships becomes even more tested when particularly vulnerable or excluded groups themselves become partners. The case of informal traders in Tshwane is an example. In the Tshwane Inner City Strategy, Building Block 13 refers to informal trade in a rather embracing way that is encouraging. Proper strategies to support and monitor informal trade development could only enhance local community life, and economic development. Yet, although this is a major step forward, it still falls short of authentic mutual partnership, as is evident from the following phrase: “Actively police hawkers in accordance with the action plan”.

It lacks integrity to speak of partnership yet one of the partners gets “actively policed”. Since the adoption of this strategy, which has mostly not been implemented, different clean-up operations have not embraced nor empowered, but physically displaced and emotionally humiliated informal traders in the inner city of Tshwane.

This is also in contradiction to the language of the Tshwane Vision 2055 (City of Tshwane 2015:83) which

positions the City as a place where all residents' ability to access, occupy, use urban spaces and produce goods, and trade with others will in turn make it possible to cultivate societal values that promote social cohesion, inclusion and participation in decision making.

Overcoming such fragmentation should start with local people themselves, affirming their interdependence and resisting forces that want to fragment them. To overcome the fragmentation of local people, local people themselves should assert their ownership of local conditions and futures, refusing to become merely the victims of others' decisions and dictates. Once they have affirmed their interdependence in ways that go beyond political, racial, economic or religious difference, they can make work of fostering truly inclusive models of dialogue and cooperation.

Locally rooted partnerships that already exist in different places should become more self-assertive

about how they view their own future and how they plan to story their imagined future. The next step will be when such local partnerships engage beyond themselves, to collaborate with broad-based coalitions or other social movements, until they cannot easily be dismissed.

The Tshwane Vision 2055 is very articulate in its desire for such authentic partnerships.

Importantly, the City will not see its residents as passively recipient of what it means to live in the capital City; rather, the call will be for creating enduring partnerships that will lead to a tangible better life for the people that live in the capital city. This means moving beyond service delivery to a passive citizenry and the regulation of the physical environment to the creation of conditions in which all citizens can develop to their full potential by leading productive and fulfilling lives. Thus, to effectively do this, a concerted effort is required from national government and political parties, as well as from local municipalities to restore popular trust and credibility in local government.

Is this a well-written document by a visionary and somewhat critical consultant? Was it drafted by an insightful official? Can it be trusted for its intention to be authentic? Or is it simply not worth the paper it is written on?

Whichever it is, the Tshwane 2055 Vision has been adopted with clear language of partnership, and it is now up to citizens themselves to hold local government accountable for what it spells out as its intention.

3. WHERE ARE THE POOR?



Fig. 146. De Verediciis. 2015.
Homeless in Pretoria inner city.

3.1 THE URBAN POOR AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

If people in general are excluded from planning processes, what about the poor or those who are particularly vulnerable?

Perhaps we should start by asking: who are the poor? I use the term in this study in a rather generic way to include all those who are vulnerable in urban communities in terms of lacking access to sources of livelihood, including shelter, employment, education, and social networks. This might include homeless and landless people, women and children at risk, the aged, senior citizens, commercial sex workers, people with disabilities, refugees, informal traders, the unemployed and underemployed. In South Africa the most vulnerable remains (particularly but not exclusively) black women and children, often living in rural areas, or informal settlements, but also those seeking access to resources by migrating to urban areas (cf. Oranje 1997:203; Goodlad 1996:1633). They are generally excluded from spatial planning processes and even public participation processes.

263 |

In line with global trends, the urbanisation of poverty is also a South African phenomenon (Pillay 2004: 349). In South Africa urban poverty was centralised in black townships before the end of apartheid, with tremendous migration of the poor into ever-sprawling townships but, since 1994, such

migration also reached the inner city and other transitional urban neighbourhoods (Mabin 1991:33-47; Cloete 1991: 91-107).

Shatkin (2004:2470) suggests that most informal settlements are actually not out of sight. The so-called vertical *favelas* (cf.

Berryman 1996:15) of Sao Paulo in Brazil, or the vast favelas of Rio de Janeiro are often deliberately established by the poor in order to push themselves into sight. Shatkin 2004:2470 writes: “In many places, they spill over into public view and popular consciousness, clustered underneath an overpass, on an undeveloped lot on a residential street or propped on stilts above a canal”.

On undeveloped lots all over the east of Tshwane, or along the Moreleta Spruit or Apies River, there are hundreds of homeless people claiming space to live their lives, and yet, their invisibility in government plans and policies is remarkable (Shatkin 2004:2470). This is currently being addressed through a broad-based collaborative, crafting a policy and strategy on street homelessness in the City of Tshwane (cf. De Beer & Vally 2015:3). This research has surfaced the curious reality of the suburbanisation of street homelessness, increasingly concentrated in “areas of economic opportunity”, in formerly white suburbs. The official 2011 Census indicated that there are 6,244 street homeless people in Tshwane of which 2,497 were situated in suburban areas (cf. Statistics South Africa 2011). Although this is a growing reality, only R 650,000 has been budgeted to address street homelessness in the city in 2015, from a total budget of R 248 billion.

The faith tradition that I come from creates mental pictures of a



Fig. 147. De Veredicis. 2015. Homelessness.

restored city in which streets will be rebuilt with housing in them, children will no longer die young, and people will work and share in the fruits of their labour. It is important to note how the restoration of urban places in Hebrew Scriptures is always evaluated from the perspective of the poor. To what extent has the poor or poverty been addressed through regeneration projects in Johannesburg, Cape Town or Tshwane? *That* should become the defining question.

Using the poor as a yardstick to measure how well the city does, is introducing the theme of social inclusion, but also of socio-spatial justice. The question: Where are the poor?, raises the question of how inclusive of all its people the city is, how accessible to city resources, and how participatory in city-making processes? Or is the city governed by policies and plans that exclude some in visible or subtler ways? The Tshwane Vision 2055 (City of Tshwane 2013:83) states that it is “about making conscious development decisions that meet the basic needs of the present generation, especially the poor, as

well as for the future generation to meet their own needs”.

It goes even further in framing its intention in “rights to the city” language, speaking of a city where participation is not limited to joint decision-making but inclusivity will also entail access to housing, facilities, public goods, environment, political participation, economic development opportunities, and so forth (City of Tshwane 2013:249-251). The clarity of this vision provides an instrument for keeping the city accountable to what it outlines as vision. The depth of our commitment to the real inclusion of the urban poor, will become evident in the depth of our investment in good social infrastructure, access to the city’s resources, and participating in city-making processes.

An honest entry into the city through the eyes of a child, led by

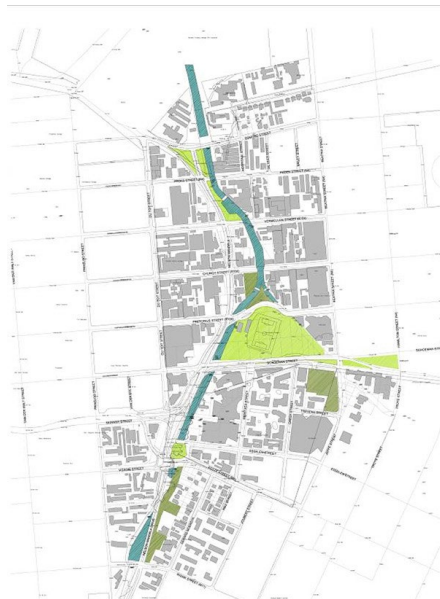
the experiences of the poor, will not only lead to a radical re-assessment of the status quo, and an alternative political imagination, but might become the city’s only chance for deep and mutual liberation. According to Freire (1992:82), it is only the poor, or those being oppressed, who can liberate the city, and those who are rich or apathetic, from its dehumanising conditions. Without the voice, initiative and consciousness of the poor, we will all remain lesser humans.

3.2 CONSIDERING THE MANDELA DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR: a local flagship project

In Sunnyside, Pretoria, the impressive campus for the Department of Trade and Industry was developed as a flagship urban regeneration project. It was the first of its kind to be developed as a headquarters for a national government department. It led the way for what is now rolled out repeatedly. This project formed part of the bigger Mandela Development Corridor (MDC), outlined as Building Block 4 of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (cf. Franz 2001).

The Mandela Development Corridor encompasses 20 hectares of land (Venter 2002), running along the Apies River. It includes the upgrade and development of the Apies River Promenade. The Mandela Development Corridor was established as a dedicated unit to manage the selling and

Fig. 148. GAPP Architects, 2009. Mandela Development Corridor (MDC) proposal.



development of portions of land within this precinct, on behalf of the city council, and within a broad spatial development framework for the area. It was meant to be one of the major triggers for the regeneration of that part of the inner city.

The MDC and the Apies River Promenade border on both the Sunnyside-Arcadia neighbourhoods, the CBD as well as Berea-Burgers Park. It seems as if most of the interface between the MDC / Apies River Promenade was with the community of Sunnyside, if there was any, but there was little or no discussion about the impact on Berea-Burgers Park, a residential area of 20,000 people, impacted greatly by the MDC and Apies River Promenade.

Almost 500 low-cost residential units (and the only public swimming pool near the CBD) were demolished for the flagship project of the MDC – the DTI-campus development – without these housing units being replaced by the City. This is an untold story that was never debated or questioned. The social cost of this loss needs to be considered.

The MDC lacked a strong social development vision and strategy. On the one hand there was a scorecard that could monitor black empowerment, but at another level the social impact of the project, both in terms of cost and benefit, was not properly registered or monitored. There was no plan for



Fig. 149. De Veredicis, 2015. Steenhoven Spruit, Marbastad, Pretoria.

how vulnerable people in this precinct would be integrated into the Corridor, and it showed limited insight into the effect of its development on those families who had to vacate their low-income apartments.

The land available for development in the Corridor could have facilitated very healthy mixed-use, mixed-income communities, ranging from up-market loft apartments and hi-tech office spaces, to exuberant spaces for cultural expression, and social projects (both housing and services), integrating vulnerable people into the good news of the city.

The reality is even worse than what I outline above: because 13 years since inception nothing

else has happened in the Corridor, apart from the initial project known as the DTI campus, and a small public art project along the Corridor. The Apies River Promenade stayed virtually untouched, instead of undergoing the extensive upgrade that was proposed.

3.3 PLANNING, POLICY & POVERTY: THE INVISIBLE ONES

Spatial development and urban design frameworks often exclude the poor and their concerns, and place little emphasis on social infrastructure.

There is no coherent policy for homelessness in any sphere of government. The Department of Human Settlements deals with homelessness as a housing problem. The Departments of Social Development and Health refer homeless issues to the Department of Human Settlements, negating its social and health dimensions, and the problem of economic exclusion, which is the biggest single cause of homelessness in the Tshwane context, is not dealt with by anybody. What should be an inter-departmental priority is thrown around between departments and nobody takes ownership.

I already referred to postponed attempts to adopt and implement a policy on homelessness for the City of Tshwane. Similarly issues of refugees, the aged, people with disabilities and the need for social housing, are frequently excluded

from local urban policies and plans. Although there is a special office on disability in the Office of the President, and a new national Social Housing Bill, this does not always translate effectively into local policies and plans.

A few years ago the Pretoria Inner City Partnership made an honest attempt to facilitate public-private-community partnerships for regeneration. Although I was very involved, even as a Board member, I often felt, even right to the end, that it remained a partnership of competing visions and interests, where the reality of homelessness and other challenges was perceived as the hobby horse of some individuals, without recognising that it was a reality that we had to deal with, and that a healthy regeneration process would always require giving special attention to vulnerable people.

The work done by the Pretoria Inner City Partnership (PICP) is now largely replaced by the Tshwane Inner City Strategy that integrated some of the insights of work done by the PICP. One of the clear admissions of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy is its lack of a coherent social development strategy. An inner city strategy lacking a strong social development component, even when there are strong social development agencies operating in the local context, fails to regard the poor as a priority and the inner city as a suitable context in which to address their concerns.



Fig. 150. De Veredicis, 2015.
Homeless in Marabastad.

I will interact with this strategy again in the next sections. Here I just refer to two statements contained in the strategy. Firstly, there is not complete apathy concerning the vulnerable sectors of the inner city community, as it outlines an action step that should “investigate the need for and develop alternative typologies for non-family housing, such as orphanages, homeless and street children shelters, overnight facilities for vendors, ‘shopping tourists’, etc” (City of Tshwane 2005:37).

Secondly, it states: “The inner city should not be a place where people become destitute, disenfranchised and disenfranchised, but rather a place where real urban communities can thrive” (City of Tshwane 2005:24).

A more suspicious view could interpret this as saying that the image of an international and African capital city cannot afford disenchanted, disenfranchised and destitute people, and that measures and mechanisms should be taken to prevent such conditions from existing in the city. It is then a case of *image over people*. An even harsher interpretation could be of a sub-text that regards these groups as “unwanted elements” who need to be relocated.

From the perspective of this study, I can only hope that it will mean something different, namely an intention to come alongside disenfranchised people in the inner city, with the kind of support that will facilitate their inclusion into “real (thriving) urban communities”.

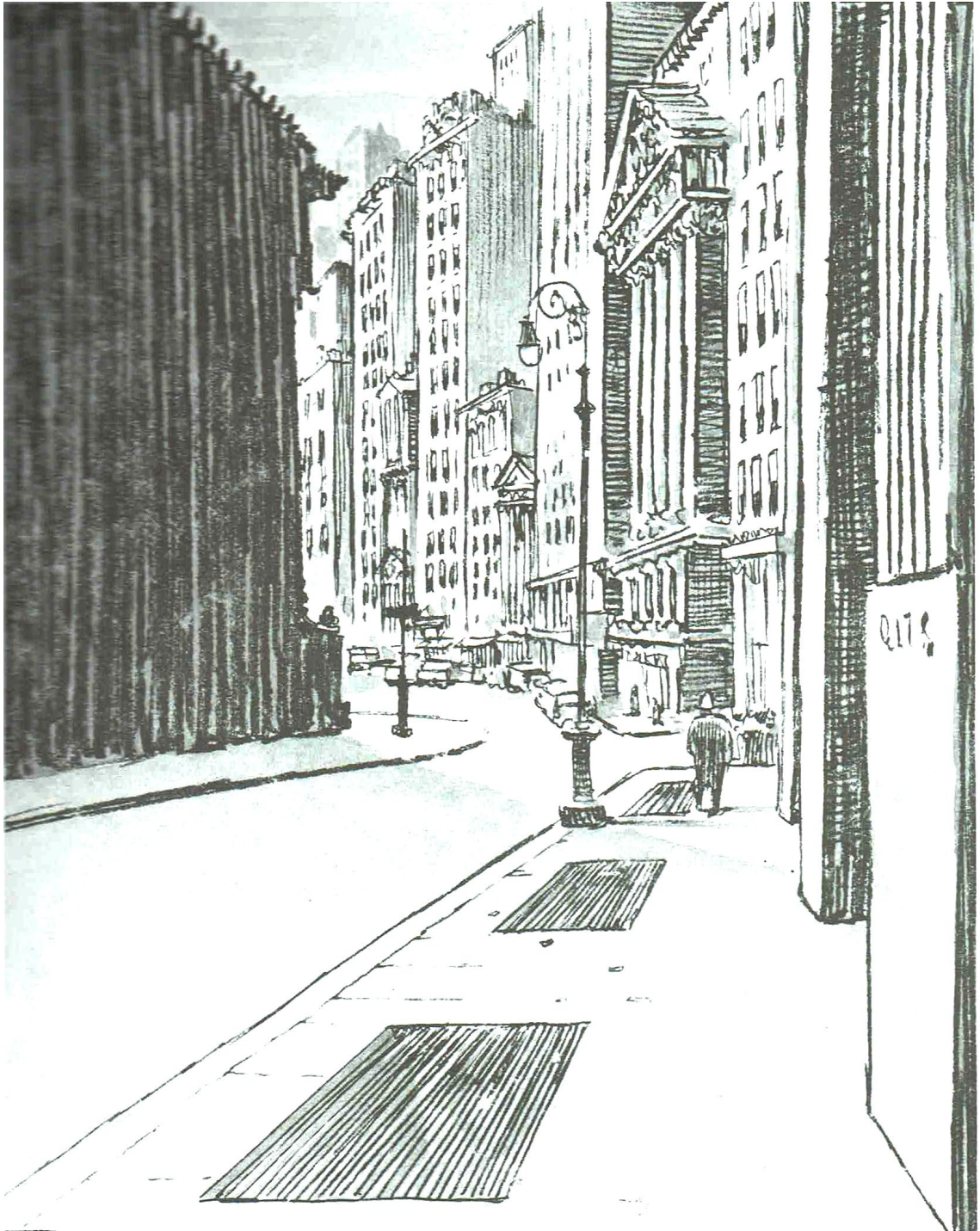


Fig. 151. Eisner, 1986. Streets.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF CITY MAKING?

Between fallacy, deficiency, commodity and conspiracy

1. HOW INTEGRATED IS INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING?

Integration was “at the heart of the *Urban Development Framework* (UDF) that was launched in 1997 as the government’s policy approach to urban development and reconstruction” (Pieterse 2004:1). This has been further developed in the *Integrated Urban Development Framework* of 2014.

In my mind integration should be assessed in terms of functional integration (physical, economic, social and institutional aspects); *integration of different sectors* (government, community, private sector, non-profit sector); *social integration* (meaningful inclusion of diverse populations with fair access to sources of livelihood); and *integration of vision, policy, and plans*. The focus of this study is on spatial expressions: one of the cruellest legacies left by apartheid planning is the fractured South African city. Integration also needs to be assessed in terms of how far *spatial integration* is achieved between people of different racial and class backgrounds.

The Tshwane Vision 2055 (City of Tshwane 2013:87) outlines a very bold vision statement for spatial reform.

The remaking of the capital city is also about intervening decisively in the transformation of human settlements, space economy as well as the creation of functioning nodes. In reference to the call made in the RDP for the eradication of apartheid geography, the remaking of Tshwane will be premised on achieving the principles of spatial justice, spatial sustainability, spatial resilience, spatial quality, and spatial efficiency... It is therefore unimaginable that this spatial urban divide should continue. Therefore, Tshwane Vision 2055 is a call for all of us to ensure that all of us are afforded equal rights and the benefits that our beautiful capital city potentially provides. This calls for spatial reform.

This is accentuated also in the National Development Plan, particularly in chapter 8, dealing with the transformation of human settlements, but then very specifically worked out in the Integrated Urban Development Framework (DCOGTA 2014:9).

One of the best examples of integrated area planning was the Model Cities programme in the United States, implemented through integrated social, economic and physical development projects, containing new and imaginative proposals to rebuild or revitalise large slums and blighted areas; to expand housing; job and income opportunities; to reduce dependence on welfare payment; to improve educational facilities and programs; to combat disease and ill health” (Friedmann 1971:316; Warren

1969; Kaplan 1969)

The programme was criticised for being top-down and narrowly focused but still remains a very ambitious attempt at positive urban intervention (Cameron, Odendaal & Todes 2004: 311; cf. Modarres 2001).

Integrated development planning (IDP) in South Africa was institutionalised in terms of Section 34 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (Cameron, Odendaal & Todes 2004; cf. also Wilkinson 2004:216-217). In terms of this Act the national government requires an IDP as a strategy document to ensure “that words are indeed turned into action” and that development forms part of the municipal budget and activities over a 5 year period.

The goal and promise of integrated development projects for local areas is that they offer the opportunity for innovative and sustainable planning closely linked to implementation with specific time-frames (cf. Gerometta, et al 2005:2015). Different institutional forms are used for implementation, ranging from the creation of special-purpose vehicles, to several departments and agencies being involved in complementary ways (Cameron, Odendaal & Todes 2004:311)

And yet, reading Integrated Development Plans, simply from the perspective of our own inner city neighbourhoods, reveals a lack of

real integration: functionally, sectorally, socially, spatially, and even in terms of vision, policy, and plans being coherently integrated.

1.1 FUNCTIONAL & SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The IDP for the inner city is extremely weak on the side of social infrastructure. Challenges of homelessness, affordable housing or the most essential social services are often not included as part of the city's IDP's. The Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:32-37) endeavoured to address these in its Action Plan. And yet, issues of poverty, for example, are not addressed in an integrated, coherent manner in the strategy, but rather piecemeal; and a reading of this strategy, probably sincere in its intentions, seems to be too generic to be realistic, not really emerging from within the felt experiences of its residents.

Although Cameron, Odendaal and Todes (2004:331) remind us that there are no easy or universal formulas for good social and economic outcomes, they stress the importance of formulating objectives in a way that are "tailored for local conditions". Those most vulnerable in the community were not engaged at all in the formulation of this strategy. This should not be the case at a time when there has been a shift internationally, especially in the developing world. Integrated development planning and implementation

increasingly involves a greater diversity of interest groups (with a marked emphasis on vulnerable women) (cf. Cameron, et al 2004:317-318).

Two specific issues – health and recreational infrastructure – can serve as examples.

In the South African context integrated planning needs to also include a focus on HIV and AIDS, and on health issues in general, including the reality of people living with chronic mental illness on city streets and the growing challenge of substance use in urban neighbourhoods (cf. Isandla Institute n.d. & the SACN 2007). How can we speak of an integrated, regenerated, or renewed city, when homeless people die on the city streets because of lack of access to medication or appropriate housing? Such issues are not adequately addressed by current policies and plans guiding inner city development.

The Berea-Burgers Park community accommodates approximately 20,000 residents, and 68% of residents are under the age of 30 (Wazimap n.d.). The population of neighbouring Sunnyside is equally young and even larger, with serious recreational needs, and little recreational infrastructure.

One of the only green open spaces in this neighbourhood is the site of what used to be the Berea Park Sport Facility. Current plans are for the Department of Land

Affairs to occupy this space, redeveloping it into an office park for their purposes. It would be depleting Berea-Burgers Park of a rare opportunity to create a multipurpose sport and recreational facility for the local community. These plans were made without any consultation with local community role players – land owners, tenants, NGO's, or CBO's. National government's priorities often overrule local government plans and, even more disrespectfully, the presence of thousands of people in local communities.

The social cost of limited recreational opportunity is not adequately addressed by the inner city strategy, and proposed recreational developments, such as the Tshwane Crossing (City of Tshwane 2005:14-15) and Tshwane Park (City of Tshwane 2005:15-16), exciting a dreams as they are, are not really emerging from within the community or building upon local assets.

1.2 INTEGRATION OF AND CONGRUENCE BETWEEN VISION, POLICY & PLANS

There is an equal lack of integration between vision, policy and plans. An example is the Tshwane local government's vision and policy for inner city densification. Different role players, mostly independent of local authority, created housing interventions and facilitated moderate forms of densification, which aligns to the Tshwane vision. Because of a lack

of integration between such interventions, and the visions, policies and plans of the city, no supportive policy or plans for additional schools, parks or day-care facilities, were developed, and new housing was frowned upon by the very same people advancing the goal of densification. The additional burden on current social infrastructure became a legitimate concern because of the lack of alignments between vision and policy on the one hand and plans and practices on the other.

One of the Tshwane IDP priorities (City of Tshwane 2002:18-19) is to build "sustainable and integrated communities". It speaks of two kinds of communities: one marked by poverty, social exclusion and conflict; and the other marked by inclusivity, equity and sustainable growth. The IDP, through its priorities and budget allocations, is supposed to help bridge the gap in order to facilitate such new communities. It mentions the example of housing: "...merely building houses does not ensure strong and healthy communities. People also need a sense of community to experience the quality of life that an urban environment can offer" (City of Tshwane 2002:18).

In order to create such sustainable and integrated communities the Tshwane IDP (City of Tshwane 2002:19) then adopts a threefold approach:

Firstly, it plans to promote the process of empowering and

“developing communities to take full ownership of opportunities”.

Secondly, it wants to foster social and cultural integration. Inheriting stark spatial divisions based on race and income, Tshwane hopes to facilitate a situation in which different communities will learn from each other “to create a successful, just and undivided society”.

Thirdly, it wants to improve the coordination of community development. It “supports working in a coordinated way with other government departments and community-based organisations”. The document says “the IDP encourages a way of working that will unleash more creative energy in community development”.

Once again the progressive, inclusive and participatory language and vision of this document, is impressive and needs to be supported as a vision statement. Once again, the city’s inability to translate vision into concrete actions, aligned to its vision, is stark. It would be helpful to know of examples where the above approach is implemented.

It seems as if the greatest break-down in local government is between well-articulated policy documents, representing progressive and inclusive visions, and how those are operationalised. It is in this regard that this study is exploring a community-based urban praxis that could greatly assist in ensuring local transformational development.

1.3 SECTORAL INTEGRATION

One of the underlying principles of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (2005) is that “an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach must be followed in addressing the complex issues of the inner city”. In explaining this it only refers to the integration of social, economic, physical and institutional elements in the strategy’s implementation. It does not adequately address the way in which different sectors, institutions, disciplines and communities should be integrated as partners to provide joint leadership for different parts of the planning and implementation.

With regard to the IDP, delivery of projects is in all cases the responsibility of local government, although certain functions might be better fulfilled by the private or non-profit sectors. This is probably one of the greatest weaknesses of the IDPs as local governments lack the capacity to implement all the identified priorities, and often simply is not the best possible implementing agency.

An important introductory piece to the Tshwane City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2004:11) is a question, asking “What makes cities successful?”. The authors of the strategy mention two common factors traced in all successful cities. Firstly, the notion of strategic thinking that is translated into a coherent strategy; and secondly, the importance of strong leadership. Charles Landry (2000:3)

highlights the importance of strong leadership: “Successful cities seem to have some things in common - visionary individuals, creative organisations and a political culture sharing clarity of purpose”.

He does not speak only of political leadership but of widespread leadership, “permeating public, private, and civic organisations”.

In terms of both the IDPs and the Tshwane Inner City Strategy this seems to be a weakness: the inability to mobilise diverse local leadership into ownership for specific tasks or areas of local development. This could build broad-based ownership, broaden the resource base,

and diversify and broaden the leadership base.

This is a **vital question** if we are serious about participatory democracy. To own and implement a strategy of this magnitude would require mobilisation of all resources, not only governmental but also private sector and civil society resources. The strategies and mechanisms for this to happen are still rather vague. In the Tshwane Vision 2055 strategy it is articulated more concretely in terms of the development of strategic partnerships and joint funding models for ensuring implementation of projects.

2. ASSET-BASED OR DEFICIENCY-BASED PLANNING MODELS

Inner cities are often not approached from an asset-based perspective (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993; De Gruchy 2003), but rather pathologically as if the people and institutions of the city are all inadequate. However, this approach is mostly applied in reference to residential communities, and seldom to private sector or government institutions.

2.1 ENGAGING TSHWANE'S POLICY AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS

I would like to interact with the official municipal vision and strategies for our inner city, considering whether it is a predominantly asset-based or deficiency-based planning model that was adopted. An asset-based model affirms and celebrates the strengths that are present and promotes regeneration from the inside out (although in partnership with external partners and investors). A deficiency-based

model often fails to recognise local assets, defining communities mainly in terms of what they do not have, and promoting regeneration from the outside, with consultants, professionals, service providers and external investors being lured or “imported” to “fix” local communities.

One of the key strategic areas of the Tshwane City Strategy (City of

Tshwane 2004) is to celebrate the city as the Capital focusing on the inner city as the host of government. This is a clear affirmation of the status and identity of the inner city.

The Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005) similarly speaks of the inner city as a capital precinct and seeks “to ensure the centralised presence of government departments and NGO’s, and retention and upgrading of government facilities”. It seeks to utilise an obvious asset optimally.

It is curious that the central presence of NGOs is included in this strategy. To actualise this potential fully, the city could exploring possible incentives for NGOs, similar to those offered to the private sector, for investing and remaining in, or locating to, the inner city.

The Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:7) “does not propose to artificially design a new role and character for the inner city, but rather to identify and capitalise on the area’s inherent comparative advantages, characteristics and development potential”. This is an extremely important assertion as it affirms the inner city’s assets, both current and latent.

It stresses the confluent nature of the inner city as a place of meeting, mostly expressed in its contrasts: it is a meeting place of nature and city (towards the south), of poor and rich, of black and white. It

connects the city’s east and west, and north and south. “It is in this juxtaposition that harmony and balance exist, creating a unique tapestry of opportunities within the inner city (City of Tshwane 2005:7)”. Again, the language is generally positive and affirming.

The language adopted is not just romantic though, as if the inner city is without challenge. The Inner City Strategy (2005:9) also identifies critical gaps or urgent needs, to complement the assets and potentials already present. These include the need for a more diversified range of housing opportunities; tourism, recreational and entertainment opportunities to be created for visitors and residents; the need for a more pedestrian-friendly inner city; the need for sufficient public spaces; and the necessity of a dedicated (and responsive) management structure for the inner city.

2.2 SELECTIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ASSETS

The way in which assets are recognised and integrated into frameworks, policies and strategies that guide inner city development – consciously or perhaps unconsciously – seems to perpetuate a tale of two or more cities.

Although the public assets of capital city status, national museums and the National State Theatre are acknowledged, community assets that include local

institutions, grass-root arts initiatives or community festivals are usually ignored. It seems to be rather selective in its recognition of certain assets and this could result in selective mobilisation and therefore the exclusion of other assets (and therefore, certain people, neighbourhoods and sectors).

Building block 2 of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:11) proposes “(C)reating a cultural circle”. Initially it strikes me as an asset-based strategy, proposing to strengthen existing heritage and cultural assets, and to develop new assets stimulating the creative spark the inner city currently lacks. The emphasis on the arts is important and the recognition of local assets as raw material to build upon, a step in the right direction. Although the strategy takes note of the obvious assets – the bigger museums and theatres – it fails to recognise, consider and include other existing community assets, visions and initiatives that could root the cultural circle in the people of the city. Failing to do so might strengthen the more visible and well-resourced assets, and weaken or ignore the grass-root assets that are developed and celebrated by the people.

Another example is the proposal of a new park – the Tshwane Urban Park – at the western entry point into the city which is important from a number of perspectives: the planned growth of the western part of the inner city with new

densities, the linkages between the inner city and western suburbs and townships, and the lack of an identifiable entry point into the inner city from the west. Moreover, it affirms the need for green spaces, it contributes to liveability, and it adds another possible soul space.

What is of concern is the complete absence from the strategy of existing green spaces: the award-winning and well-utilised Burgers Park as well as other parks in Sunnyside and Arcadia, which are current assets upon which to build. Strategies need to be employed that will creatively combine the strengthening of existing assets, with the creation of new and complementary assets to form a coherent whole.

Even what is perceived by some as an urban problem, such as informal trading, should be regarded as potential “urban social capital” (Lyons & Snoxell 2005), contributing to the asset base of the city from the bottom up.

2.3 AN ASSET REGISTER

An important exercise that, to my knowledge, has never been done, is the development of a comprehensive inner city asset register, to ascertain assets, resources and services currently available (physical, economic, human, social, spiritual, educational, institutional). It is not always necessary to create new infrastructure, but significant impact can be facilitated through strengthening and/or expanding existing infrastructure, or through

facilitating strategic synergies. Where there are serious shortcomings new infrastructure needs to be created. An example in Tshwane is access to child care for children of refugee families, or special needs housing for elderly homeless people.

animation is not well developed in Tshwane. Partly it could be because existing assets are not recognised and celebrated.

The question of local identity is important and the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:9) states as one of its key concerns that the inner city “needs a clear and unique identity. Building upon the hidden and transparent assets of existing inner city zones, will go a long way in defining such identity. Marabastad is very different from the CBD which, in turn, differs from Sunnyside, and from the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood. Carefully woven together, the inner city might emerge as a beautiful tapestry of diversity, celebrating existing assets, as it considers the new.

Instead of having the city conform to a “conventional repertoire of manifestations”, Barac (2013:44-45) argues that one should allow the city to “be what it is”, instead of beating “its idiosyncrasies into the tidy form of theory” or perceived order. Such a city, he argues, “would... be able to flourish, drawing on the restorative, ethical and seductive power of place” (cf. also Rykwert 2000). This would be to affirm the inherent spirit of a place and through the right processes animate its potential to flourish. The art of urban

3. THE FALLACY OF URBAN RENEWAL: DISPLACEMENT VERSUS PLACE-MAKING



Fig. 152. De Veredicis, 2015.
Waste pickers in Marabastad.

3.1 URBAN RENEWAL: REVISITED “FROM BELOW”

Urban renewal is a rather ambiguous term, suggesting improvement or regeneration of depressed urban neighbourhoods, but without consensus in definition as to the goals, objectives and beneficiaries of the so-called renewal processes (cf. De Beer 1998:172).

Different theorists focus on different aspects of renewal, such as increased economic opportunity and growth, increased neighbourhood stability, upgraded physical infrastructure, slum clearance, diversified housing options, and re-investment by banks and private sector place (cf. Reed 2005). From another perspective urban renewal is often accompanied by the displacement of people and even the displacement of the soul of a place (cf. Reed 2005). Technocratic order might replace the perceived chaos, which was locally understood not as chaos, but as vibrancy, creativity, and lived hope.

It is important to ask “what the costs and benefits of revitalisation or renewal are for the different interest groups” (De Beer 1998:172), particularly the urban poor. The question is whether urban renewal could creatively combine physical upgrading and socio-economic reinvestment, with social inclusion and high levels of social integration, maintaining the soul of a place without displacing more vulnerable people.

The City Improvement District in Times Square, New York City, made a major difference alongside other big investments, and Times Square has become one of

the most exciting and impressive urban regeneration projects in the world. At the same time, long time residents of single room hotels in Times Square are now saying that they cannot even afford coffee anymore in their own neighbourhood.

...the process of neighbourhood revitalisation could result in a variety of different outcomes or scenarios. On the one hand, neighbourhood revitalisation could yield healthy, diverse communities with a mix of race, age and income. It could help cities to achieve many longstanding goals, such as improving the housing stock, increasing the tax base, keeping or attracting middle- and upper-income households to the city, bringing back business, and improving the quality of services delivered. At the same time, revitalisation could be accompanied by significant social costs. Revitalisation of central city neighbourhoods by upper-social-status newcomers could merely work to shift intractable problems of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate housing, to other parts of a metropolitan area through the wholesale displacement of the old, the poor, and minority residents (Cicin-Sain 1980:50)

There are countless untold stories, the stories “from below” (cf. De Beer 1998:172-173), introducing and weighing the outcomes of urban renewal from the perspective of poor or vulnerable urban people. In the past 20 years in the inner city of Pretoria, at least 1,500 units of low-cost housing were demolished due to new road developments (e.g. Nana Sita [formerly Skinner] Street and Nelson Mandela Drive), as well as the more recent development of the Department of Trade and Industry

Campus. These units were not replaced. Nobody told this story.

The inner city revival of Cape Town is widely reported in the media. But seldom is it asked: Where did the children who lived on the streets or the homeless people move to? Have they all been placed in adequate housing as a result of the renewal? Or have they simply been displaced (cf. Cape Town Partnership n.d.). Narratives from the Bo-Kaap, Woodstock, and other similar inner city neighbourhoods, not only in Cape Town but also elsewhere in South Africa, are vivid examples of the contests for space as urban neighbourhoods are being “renewed”, property values increased, and local people are faced with new forms of displacement.

Kotze and Van der Merwe (2000:46) discuss urban renewal processes in the Cape Town neighbourhoods of Woodstock, Salt River, Walmer Estate, Waterkant and Bokaap (cf. also Garside 1993; Wilkinson & Kragolsen-Kille 2006).

In cities all over the world urban change is accompanied by urban renewal. The challenge remains a question of the results of such renewal on people being displaced in Cape Town, Johannesburg or Pretoria, as well as other cities of the world. How can this be called renewal if poor people are displaced in the process? (Kotze & Van der Merwe 2002:46)

Woodstock in Cape Town became the latest “victim” of such trendiness, forcing low-income people

to consider relocating as they can no longer afford rentals in Woodstock (Joseph 2014). In an article on Woodstock's gentrification Raymond Joseph paints a violent picture of the wealthy's apathy at the destructive effects their investments have on the lives of poor, long-term residents of that neighbourhood.

Reza Doutie commands a stunning view of some of Africa's most expensive real estate. His two plots in Cape Town's traditionally Muslim quarter of Bo Kaap offer a panoramic view of Table Bay, the city centre and Table Mountain, on whose steep slopes they perch.

Mr. Doutie wants to profit from South Africa's property boom by subdividing the land - in his family for six generations - to build six houses. But Cape Town's Muslim Judicial Council has thwarted his plan by issuing a fatwa, or Islamic decree, prohibiting development in the area. The dispute has divided one of Cape Town's oldest neighbourhoods and shed light on the friction caused by rocketing property prices. It comes as a growing number of economists and policy-makers warn of a global housing bubble (Reed 2005)

This anecdote illustrates the pressures on local urban communities, and different responses by people from the same community and the same religious persuasion. In this instance a religious decree is employed to preserve spatial integrity as it is perceived by the Muslim Judicial Council.

Already in 2004, Murphy Morobe, chairperson of the Johannesburg Housing Company, Andrew Boraine, chief executive of the Cape Town Partnership, and other leading urban actors, expressed

concern about the effects of urban renewal on the poor (cf. Garson (2004). This question remains critical, yet it is often shelved as the market literally bulldozes its way across urban landscapes to wipe out existing neighbourhoods in the interest of more lucrative development.

3.2 URBAN RENEWAL, GENTRIFICATION & DISPLACEMENT

So-called urban renewal is often not good news for the poor, as it has become a different word for displacement. The real impact of renewal on vulnerable people in communities is often not assessed, either before, during or after the process has been implemented.

Urban renewal is often accompanied by gentrification, which, according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, is the "restoration of deteriorated urban property especially in working-class neighbourhoods by the middle and upper classes" (Morris 1982). Gentrification is the process whereby middle-income people move into depressed urban neighbourhoods, upgrade housing stock, contribute to increased property values and cause the gradual displacement of poorer families who can no longer afford rent increases, or even consider the possibility of purchasing in these 'new' neighbourhoods.

Smith and Williams (1986:45-46) describe the extent of gentrification's impact: "Whereas initial

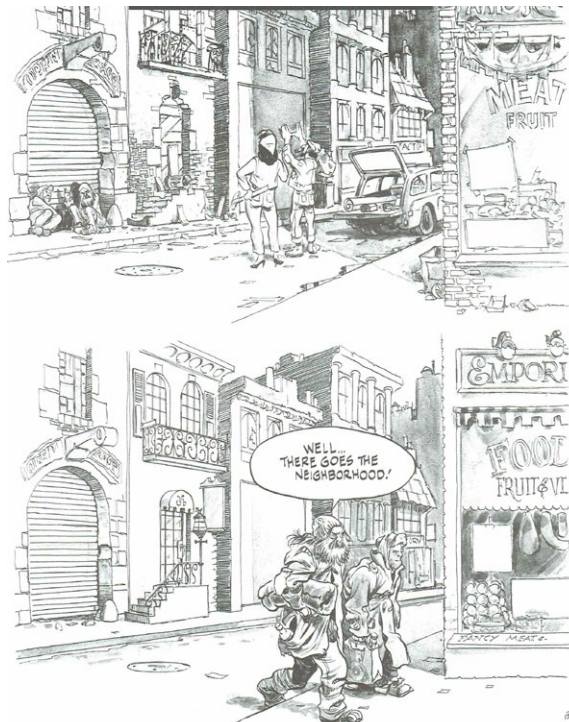


Fig. 153. Eisner, 1986. Gentrification.

observers only viewed gentrification as residential rehabilitation, it became increasingly clear that gentrification was the medium used for comprehensive economic, social and spatial restructuring of society”. Or Ellin (1996:83): “Gentrification usually results in the displacement of people and businesses because it increases land values and rents even when occurring in abandoned sections of town”.

Gentrification dates back as far as the period after World War II in Paris when the city centre displaced the poor in favour of middle and upper income people, and new public housing was erected on the urban periphery for the poor (cf. Ellin 1996:45-46). Workers, artists and artisans were replaced by upcoming professionals, upmarket housing and office buildings, and

with these shifts a corresponding political conservatism. The poor now have to compete with professional classes for limited residential and commercial spaces close to the city centre (Shatkin 2004:2471; Grant 2006:70).

Shatkin (2004:2472) refers to statistics from Seoul where during the 1980s 3 million people were displaced by urban development projects, and in a short period between 1984 and 1988 100,000 people were displaced in Bangkok by high-rise developments they could not access, within a 15 km radius of the centre of Bangkok. In the long run, not only the local community or displaced families but the city itself will be affected detrimentally if poorer households are not meaningfully integrated through realistic access to affordable housing options.

Others, like Duany (2000), holds a different view. Arguing from the perspective of profitability, he suggests a lack of viability if more than 10% of housing units would be at the lower ends of affordability (Duany 2000; cf. also Grant 2006:70). Duany suggests gentrification as a natural part of urban evolution that should not be resisted since the increasing property values it facilitates ensures neighbourhood stability. He speaks of neighbourhood stability at the expense of the poor who have been seriously and fundamentally disrupted, not just physically and spatially but to the core of their dignity.

In the South African context the role of sport in urban regeneration has become increasingly relevant over the past 20 years. With the 2010 World Cup Soccer in mind, cities were gearing themselves, expecting infrastructural development and economic investment that could be of great benefit even after 2010 (Pillay & Bass 2008; HSRC Review 2006). Gratton, Shibli and Coleman (2005), in their article entitled “Sport and Economic Regeneration in Cities”, concluded, with reference to Sheffield and Manchester, that sporting infrastructure held benefits such as growing tourism, economic investment, boosting a city’s image, and gaining international reputation. It failed however to mediate direct benefits for local communities (cf. Gratton, et al 2005:987; Kasimati 2003).

Gentrification, and other forms of urban regeneration, are built upon value being assigned to land or property that either over-valorise or de-valorise the land. The assigned value is usually not appropriate to the actual value but determined by perception, prejudice, preference, race, class, or other such factors (cf. Saskia Sassen 2000:31-33; 72-82; 106-108;113; 125). Smith and Williams (1986: 2-4; 2006) argue that capital, class and race are threads running through all studies done on gentrification, reinforcing social and class differentiation. White newcomers move into inner city neighbourhoods in Cape Town or Chicago, often replacing poorer

people from other racial groups. One of the most disturbing critiques of gentrification is how it turns urban life into “a commodity, removed from the sense of ‘community’ which it once meant to its people” (Williams 1977:11-20; cf. also Beauregard 1996: 36; De Beer 1998:179).

At an even deeper level, the contention of this study is with how displacement is not just a dislocation from one place to the other, but often affects the soul of a place and the soul of a people.

Displacement is affecting whole sets of rituals, life patterns, and social relationships. It is indeed placing whole communities at risk. At the heart of the issues of displacement and community destruction, is the notion of housing as a mere commodity, and the capitalist process of socio-economic polarisation (De Beer 1998:183).

Friedmann (1992:40) reflects critically on this saying

We are interested in territoriality not because of some obscure special metaphysics but because people inhabit these spaces, and it is these flesh and blood people who suffer the booms and busts of the economy. People are not an abstract category of labour that move mechanically at the right time and in just the right proportions to wherever economic opportunities arise. They are social, connected beings who live in families, households, and communities who interact with neighbours, kinfolk, friends and families. Over time, people inhabiting particular places evolve typical patterns of speech, ritual practices, and social practices with which they are comfortable and feel ‘at home’.

The description of Friedmann suggests that displacement of some of the people who had been living with others in a shared place, includes not only physical dislocation, but also a dislocation from self and others. Displacement, in this sense, disturbs the soul of the city. In response, we need to foster a spirituality of space that will resist unnecessary displacement and instead concentrate on creative and inclusive place-making.

3.3 URBAN RENEWAL: RADICALLY RE-IMAGINED

The above examples raise questions as to how fundamental the change is that renewal brings to areas. Too often renewal processes are externally orchestrated at the expense of local communities. Too often they are face-lifts, transferring the challenges of problems artificially to next-door neighbourhoods. Of course, as communities have enough examples from around the world about the good and bad aspects of urban renewal, they also need to educate and empower themselves, to participate constructively in another kind of urban regeneration process.

The challenge is how to foster partnerships for renewal that will combine local interests and concerns with external actors such as local, provincial and national government, as well as external capital. Differently said, how can local communities move from being spectators to being resisters, and co-narrators of new local stories?

Decaying communities hardly facilitate the well-being of its residents. Neither does renewal that displaces people. We desperately need to discover and work for the kind of local change that will facilitate economic recovery and reinvestment, alongside the radical inclusion of the most vulnerable. It should not be an either-or, but this is where many private developers and community activists both fail: private developers are not prepared to consider the inclusion of the most vulnerable as another priority, and community activists are not prepared to consider the importance of good neighbourhood investment as another priority. As long as common ground is not achieved between these opposing interests, we will continue to see renewal that is destructive to the city's soul. It is at its deepest about socially inclusive, just and self-reliant local communities.

If Building Block 10 of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:23), speaks of Development Facilitation, I would want it re-interpreted from its current meaning – “attracting development” from outside – to what has become known as “developmental local government”: with an emphasis on development as human and social capital enhancement, community empowerment and integral liberation, versus development as growth and expansion. Instead of the type of development that negates local agency and assets, emphasising private sector-driven economic or

commercial development, I would argue for a developmental vision that has at its core local community development, local economic development, local social development, as part of an integrated developmental vision for local government.

Once local assets were retrieved and galvanised, such as small- or medium-scale local community development and economic development initiatives, these could now be matched with external investments. Such strategies could help reverse the negative effects of urban renewal.

A strong development facilitating mechanism for urban neighbourhoods, either centrally run and/or preferably decentralised with local community participation or even management thereof, could help to strike a good balance between outside investment and local asset development, and between social, local economic or human development.

The Tshwane Inner City Strategy says very little about acknowledging the negative consequences that urban regeneration or urban renewal might hold for the poor, in terms of escalating land and property costs, displacement through refurbishments or conversion of current uses into new uses that exclude housing. There seems to be a necessity for specific interventions, especially with regard to public land and property, to be facilitated, if, for example,

a healthy housing mix is to be created, especially in relation to making social housing or special needs housing economically viable. A dedicated institutional mechanism for urban regeneration might assist in this.

Hemphill and others (2004:725) indicates an increased adoption of key performance indicators to provide clear measures for assessing urban renewal outcomes (Audit Commission 2002). It is vital that “these measures... be matched to the needs of the area concerned and focused on a coherent vision of holistic regeneration” (Hemphill 2004:725). The process from inception is important, as well as the way in which local community members and institutions are participants in verbalising local needs, clarifying a coherent vision, and envisaging the kind of regeneration to take place (cf. Hemphill, et al 2004).

3.4 URBAN RENEWAL: BRANDING, IDENTITY & PLACE- MAKING

The Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:23), in its focus on regeneration, places much focus on identity and branding. It seeks to announce the inner city as a distinguishable and strategic destination and place of choice through clearly identifiable entry points into the “inner city” from all directions.

Strategic branding cannot be underestimated as an urban

regeneration strategy. The Newtown Cultural Precinct in Johannesburg is a case in point (Johannesburg Development Agency n.d.; Newtown Improvement District 2015). It is clearly branded as the cultural capital of Africa, and the fruit of this intentionality is evident in new cultural, residential and commercial investments made into this area.

Branding is about attaching identity to or making a place. Of course one could regard branding as a neo-liberal concept employed in the service of the neocolonial city. Who determines what the identity of a place should be? Who makes the city and for whom? One can also ask however if branding strategies can be employed by those working for just and inclusive cities, subverting the exclusivist ideals of neoliberal capital projects to include everyone?

These questions arise when reflecting upon the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (2005:24). It speaks, for example, of diverse housing options, appropriate to the needs of inner city residents. It then qualifies this by saying that “(t)hese housing facilities must positively contribute to the Capital Image of the city, and not detract from it”. Statements like these are often utilised, even if not so intended, to exclude those who cannot contribute to a certain exclusivist image.

The emphasis of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy on being the African Capital builds on its status

as a centre of political and diplomatic activity, but also as an intellectual, educational or research hub. “Capital City”, by itself though, could easily be conceived as cold and bureaucratic, lacking imagination. It could also evoke images of the city as a “neo-coloniser”, seeing itself as the Capital of Africa.

Aligned to the spirit of this study, I would prefer a vision that would imagine the city clearly as a “people’s place”, both aligned to our most recent political struggle, but also as a correction to the exclusivist apartheid Capital City of the past. Places like Berea-Burgers Park are conducive to a vision of being a “people’s place”.

And yet, having argued the above, perhaps the current vision statement is a more honest reflection of the current status and practices of the city, which in many ways pay lip service to participatory democracy and developmental local government, doing just enough to keep people satisfied and dependent – so that “people’s place” would not be fitting right now.

4. URBAN SPACE: COMMODITY, GIFT OR THREAT?

4.1 URBAN SPACE: ASSIGNED MEANING

How should we understand urban space, as expressed in urban land?

On the one hand it is something in *demand*, both from the poor who invade empty buildings, and the rich, who invade the best land. Politicians also demand land to build monuments in honour of themselves or those who paved the way for them.

It can be a *threat*, either to the image of your street when there is an illegal land invasion or to the survival of a homeless person when there is no access to land, or when there is displacement from land, either legally, illegally or through processes of gentrification.

In a capitalist society urban space becomes a *commodity* (cf. Williams 1977:11-20; Beauregard 1986:36). If you cannot buy it, you are literally 'spaced' out of an existence. The prophet Isaiah condemned practices that turned land and housing into commodities, inaccessible to some, and monopolised by others, when he exclaimed: "Woe to you who add house to house and add field to field, until it is only you in the land".

dimension of our society today has been penetrated by *commodification*.

A spirituality of space that seeks to foster all humanity in community, would affirm and recover urban space, and land more generally, as a gift to be managed fairly and distributed equitably (cf. Brueggemann 1977). Once a gift bestowed on all people, it becomes the right of all to share in this gift. We can therefore not just allow market forces to dictate what happens to urban space. We need to intervene in order to facilitate socio-economic justice and fair access for all.

Takatso Mofokeng (1991:67) seems convinced that the market economy is questioning the fundamental values that sustained the poor throughout the ages, namely sanctity of life, the essence of community, and solidarity as a basic way of interaction between human beings. He says that every

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL (BERRYMAN 1996:9-101)

In Sao Paulo, Brazil, the margins have come to the centre. Not only are there favelas on the urban fringe, but so-called vertical *favelas* have mushroomed in the inner city, where the poor have invaded empty buildings with little or no services, forcing policy-makers to remember that they are a part of the city. This trend emerged as a combination of spontaneous influx into abandoned city buildings, but also well-organised land and property invasions, backed by legal and town planning support to formalise the new living arrangements.

Demand, threat and gift come together in the Sao Paulo narrative, resisting notions of housing in central parts of the city as a commodity only for those who can afford it.

MARABASTAD, CITY OF TSHWANE

(Van der Waal 1988; News24 2002)

Marabastad is the oldest black township in the old Pretoria, founded in 1888. It was deeply affected by the apartheid policy of forced removals, and between 1940 and 1976 black, coloured and Indian residents of Marabastad were removed to Atteridgeville, Eersterust, Claudius and Laudium. This was done in the name of slum clearance. The majority of houses were demolished, but although it ceased to be a residential neighbourhood, the Asiatic Bazaar remained, now restricted to commercial activity.

Since the early 1990s very vulnerable people moved back into Marabastad, this time living on pavements, in backyards of shops, and in self-made informal housing. By 2002 there were about 2,000 people living informally in Marabastad in very unhealthy conditions. However, living here provided closer access and more options in terms of economic opportunity, urban services and schooling for children.

289 |

The removal of the informal residents from Marabastad was contemplated for a long time, but resisted even by the business community as they remembered with emotion their own removal previously. Various proposals were tabled, also one by the church-based partnership that worked in Marabastad, to address the challenge of the informal residents through a multiple approach, of which removal was only one small option. This proposal was never investigated officially as an option. The local ward councillor and the

city council decided in 2002 to move the residents to Mamelodi x6, in the name of "a better life for all".

They maintained that living conditions in Marabastad were not conducive to healthy living for the people, that the city would provide better alternatives, and that church-based groups resisting the removal in conjunction with the residents of Marabastad only did so because they received foreign donor funds to work in Marabastad.

Even though the living conditions were not conducive for human habitation, most people opted for living there, seeking the increased access to other services and opportunities. The church-based partners did not blankly resist removals, but advocated and argued for a more comprehensive approach, including infrastructure for informal trade which was what prompted many to stay in Marabastad, access to social housing in the proximity for those who qualified, and access to alternative land closer to Marabastad instead of the proposed land, in order to enable people to continue trading. None of these proposals were considered.

People eventually moved voluntarily based on promises to create infrastructure for informal traders, enabling people to store their stock overnight in Marabastad, and the creation of proper ablution facilities at the new site prior to people moving there. None of these promises were kept by the municipality. Indeed, a better life for all!



Fig. 154. Nel, 2015. View towards Boom st. Marabastad, from the White mosque.

4.2 URBAN SPACE, ACCESS TO HOUSING & TSHWANE INNER CITY STRATEGY

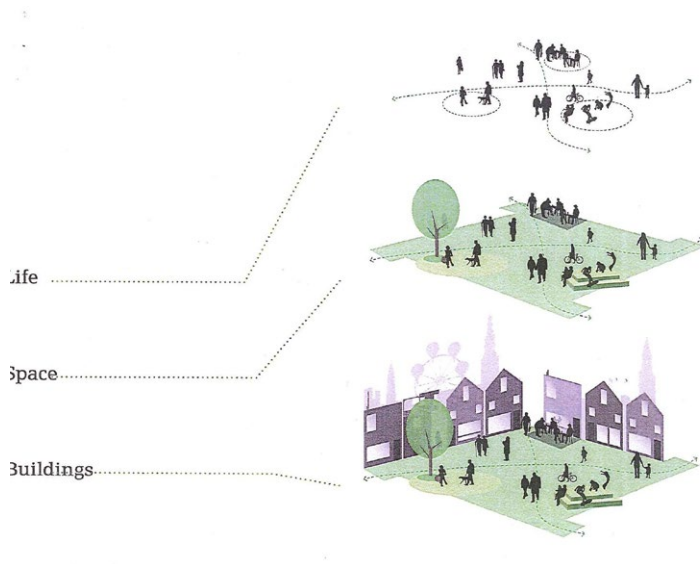


Fig. 155. Gehl Architects, Urban Design Strategy.

If urban space is only regarded as a commodity, those without adequate resources will never be able to access land or housing. The Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:16) affirms that healthy inner city communities will have well-balanced housing stock that provides access to diverse housing options, both in terms of income levels, housing types, and housing tenure. This is hopeful as it affirms that urban space needs to embrace the diversity of the urban population in creative ways.

However, the development of such diverse, accessible and user-friendly housing options needs to be supported and/or facilitated by good housing policies and strategies, and clear interventions, if the vision behind it is to be translated into reality. Enabling policies and

strategies are currently still absent in Tshwane although a process to draft the Tshwane Inner City Housing Strategy has been underway for a long time.

The language employed in strategic documents also indicates, or at least arouses suspicion, regarding the ambiguity of the local authority's commitment to the poor. The Tshwane Inner City Strategy suggests that the diverse housing options they speak of should be "appropriately designed" and in "appropriate locations".

The meaning of "appropriate" is uncertain, however, since the document does not elaborate further on what it means. Words derive meaning from the contexts within which they are used. In whose definition or according to which / whose standards is the word "appropriate" being used? I do not disagree with the need to be appropriate in how we allocate land or property for certain uses. My suspicion is that exclusionary practices are too often hidden in carefully selected words or in what has not been said.

The strategy document (City of Tshwane 2005:24) mentions that

the amount of residential units to be provided in the inner city should correspond with the availability of social and recreational facilities, such as day-care, schools, parks, sport grounds, etc. The focus should especially be on facilities where creative and healthy environments can be created for children who reside in the inner city.

The changed demographic profile of the inner city since the early 1990's, together with new residential developments, had already brought about enormous challenges in terms of available schools, day care centres, and facilities for sport and recreation. An appropriate inner city strategy would have an aggressive housing component accommodating the diversity of housing needs and requirements, but it would simultaneously ensure investment in related social, recreational and educational infrastructure, to ensure healthy and integrated local environments.

There is one glimmer of hope. In the Tshwane Inner City Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:37) it suggests the need to

draft and implement a policy on the location, integration and extent of housing into the urban fabric of the inner city (e.g. most appropriate locations, accessibility to social support facilities, etc);

conduct a detailed study into what a responsive healthy social environment means within the inner city context, and what actions are necessary in order to achieve such an environment;

investigate the need for social support facilities such as schools, day-care, libraries, clinics, etc in the inner city in order to support both the employment sector as

well as the growing residential sector in the inner city...

(e) enforce bye-laws with regard to overcrowding of residential units and the appearance of residential units (e.g. washing);

investigate the need for and develop alternative typologies for nonfamily housing, such as orphanages, homeless and street children shelters, overnight facilities for vendors, 'shopping tourists', etc.

The strategy does not spell out processes and mechanisms for how any of the above should happen, and indeed, twelve years after these noble intentions have been spelled out in the strategy, none of the recommendations articulated in the previous paragraph have been attended to by the city's implementers.

At a theoretical level this plan has moved planning beyond a sterile technocratic exercise, but in terms of strategy and implementation it has still failed to create a people-centred plan. For the city to be a people's place, the plan should be people-centred, with optimum involvement by the people, as a requirement. Otherwise the gift of urban space will remain the domain of some, whilst most people will remain on the outside, looking in.

| 292

5. CONSPIRACIES OF SILENCE: WHAT PLANNERS DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT

5.1 PLANNING WITHOUT VALUES; A CITY WITHOUT A SOUL

Planners, officials and housing executives are well trained in using technical jargon and in maintaining a professional distance from their object of study.

The kind of regeneration that will be truly inclusive and hopeful requires a new generation of urban professionals, embarking on new journeys, that combine technical expertise with a value-language and value commitments. We need to recover a language and commitment that will include concepts such as sacrifice, vocation, communal living, the ethics of space, justice, compassion, and human dignity, if we are to build cities that will not continue to perpetuate evil disparities. When some people are perpetually and systematically condemned to the margins whilst others monopolise spaces, it is evil.

A recovery of value language and commitments requires firstly to break the silence: a silence that refuses to speak of values, a silence that relegates soul to a minor position as if technique is god, a silence that takes the exclusion of some and the inability to include all as a sad given, and a silence that is unable to re-imagine something radically new.

I would like to use the example of social housing. Social housing institutions are increasingly struggling to serve the poorest in the city, not being able to make its unit prices affordable for those earning between R 1,500 and R 3,500 per month (which include low-earning workers, disability pensioners and the elderly). The combined costs of land, construction, finance, professionals and social housing institutions themselves, work against

housing the poor.

Social housing institutions themselves have advocated for a policy that will lift the income bracket of people eligible for social housing from R 3,500 per month to R 7,500 per month. This will help the institution to offer housing to higher income groups, to earn a higher income and to be more sustainable as institution, but implicitly there is the danger that it will move the goal posts even further away for those needing affordable housing the most.

Many social housing providers now shift their focus to concentrate only on the upper income levels of the subsidy band. If social housing institutions insist on paying their staff market-related salaries, the ability to close the widening gap between rich and poor through appropriate housing products, is reduced substantially. Social housing institutions are largely silent about the exclusion of certain low-income groups, mostly because they too benefit from the increased exclusion: it is their own job security and salary package that are at stake.

It is in such contexts that we need to embrace the value-language of sacrifice, calling or vocation, if we are too get any closer to an institutionalisation and urbanisation of the values of justice, human dignity and equality for all. Bridging the housing gap will not merely happen through growth models or current social housing

policies and plans.

Housing providers, professionals, private and public landlords, commercial banks, and all other role players, need to understand that housing the poor will require sacrifice - both personally, institutionally and corporately. Sustaining commitment to housing the poor will require a sense of vocation. Sustaining such commitment will require not just professional lip service but internalised, ethical commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity.

For urban professionals it is, among other things, about overcoming the dichotomy between our outer lives as professionals and our inner commitments as human or even spiritual beings (cf. Palmer 2004)¹⁹. Instead of comfortably living with unsustainable dichotomies (private vs. public; spiritual vs. physical), we should seek to live constructively in a creative tension between the possibilities and constraints of our profession (public and physical), and the inner voice of conscience (private and spiritual) moving us to stretch beyond traditional confines, and to imagine new urban and planning possibilities, not yet conceived.

This could probably only happen if planners live closer to the people they plan for, not only physically but also relationally. This could happen when there is a shift from planning for people to planning with people. This could happen when we embrace a

community-based planning praxis that dissolves the dichotomy and takes up the creative tension in the new life lived together.

5.2 FOSTERING A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

Steve Biko (1978:29) spoke of black people's "complicity in the crime of allowing himself (sic) to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth."

In a similar way Paolo Freire (1992:11) reflects on what he calls the "connivance" of the oppressed with the oppressors", and their seeming "fear of freedom" expressed in subservience to their employers or "owners".

Biko suggested as the first step in black liberation an inward process of allowing the liberation of the black mind, the developing of a liberated consciousness. Biko said: "The first step thereof is to make the black man (sic) come to himself; to put back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity". He spoke of this as an "inward-looking process" (Biko 1978:29; cf. also Halisi 1991:109-110), that would enable him to engage and overcome external forces.

In order to name bad power, to break the silence, we need to engage the captivity of our minds, our loss of imagination, our compliance as a measure to sustain self-interest. At the same time,

19. Parker Palmer (2004), in *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*, explores the journey towards "an undivided life" in which our inner truth finds expression and value in our outer life.

local communities and those who are particularly marginalised from urban spatial processes, should be supported through inward-looking processes, to come to themselves: to embrace pride and dignity, to discover and assert their right to participate, to inform and to shape their own living environments.

Two essential elements in such a process are for the victims of socio-spatial exclusion “to locate the oppressor ‘outside’ themselves” (Freire 1992:39), overcoming the internalisation of being oppressed, and, secondly, for victims of socio-spatial exclusion to be helped to acknowledge, articulate and share what they already know.

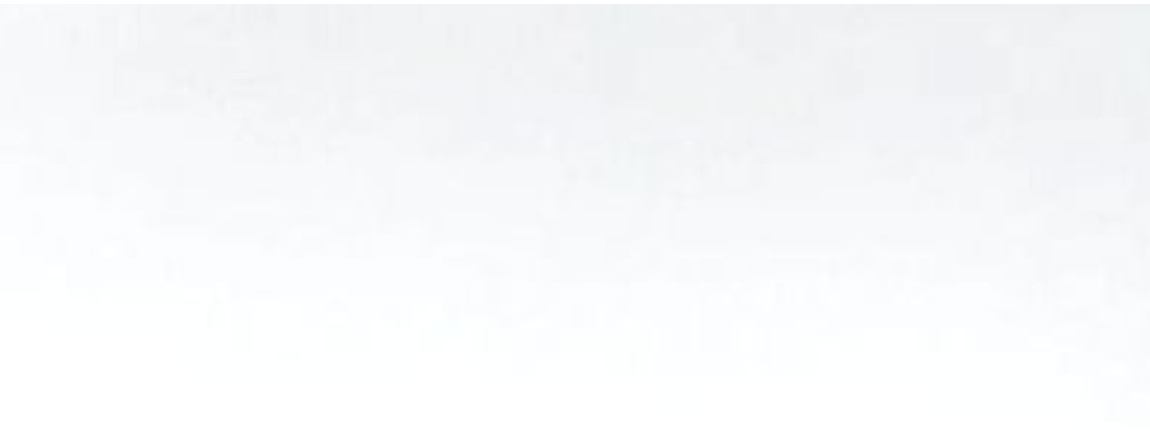
It is about a conversion of the mind; conscientisation; the eyes to see: if we dare to dream of a radically different and inclusive city, we need to call forth the voices that can help us discern and name the negative forces at work; we need to evoke and nurture new movements of activism that will resist such forces; and we have to discover a more – to use religious language – prophetic urban praxis, or prophetic planning praxis, naming that which is against people, breaking the silence, and helping everyone to imagine something new.

Part of the legacy of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement was their ability to break the silence and to articulate that which had to be overcome. Black Consciousness broke the silence

through creating spaces for dialogue and collective decision-making that was not restricted to a few core leaders, but that nurtured a broad-based generation of future independent thinkers and leaders for the country (Wilson 1991:74). Forty years later, there is a revival of Black Consciousness discourse sweeping through universities and grass-root movements, urgently imagining more radical change: the completion of the pseudo-revolution of 1994. We would do well to incorporate Biko, Freire and others as we imagine an alternative urban consciousness, both for the content of their discourse but also for the epistemological and methodological liberations they embody.

The reflections contained in this study hope to make a small contribution towards breaking the silence, refusing to comply with urban spatial practices that exclude the poor, perpetuate discriminatory spatial patterns, and subdue communities through technocratic, soulless, and top-down planning interventions.





MOMENT 3

Imagining urban space:



Fig. 156. (previous) 2012.
Re-Branding Homelessness
campaign shoot.
Fig. 157. Photo walk during
the (un)shackled workshop in
Pretoria CBD 2014.

Chapter 06

DISCOVERING AN ALTERNATIVE IMAGINATION:

Towards a spirituality of urban space

Based on the narratives that emerged from Berea-Burgers Park and other urban communities, and a critical reading of urban space and the practices shaping it, this chapter re-imagines urban space celebrating people in their diversity; nurturing the vulnerable; expressing high levels of justice, equality and human dignity; offering multiple spaces for social exchange, creative expression, and people's participation; and demonstrating healthy living environments integrating spaces for work, living, worship, play, self- and collective expression.

Such a vocabulary becomes a language of the soul; and the visions contained in it require inner resources for it to be sustained. I speak of it here as a spirituality of space. It is by definition a critical spirituality that combines intimacy (personal experiences and expressions) with solidarity (public experiences and expressions) (Beumer 1989:7), moving beyond the false dualisms that we often maintain.

Nan Ellin (1996:2-3) suggests that in postmodern urbanism there was a return to slowness, sincerity, simplicity and spirituality. The modernist metaphor of machine was changed to text and collage, now suggesting not singular

technocratic interventions or solutions, but a multiplicity of diverse yet inclusive elements to contribute to healthy urban ecologies. And yet, however much theory has shifted in the direction of "slowness, sincerity, simplicity and spirituality", the city itself evolves at a different pace and with other forces at work, often leaving little space for the soul.

In this chapter I explore the outline of a spirituality of space, expressed in different images, each representing a vision of a city in which alternative spatial arrangements facilitate a much greater level of social inclusion.

In speaking of spirituality and mysticism we are pointing toward overall visions that provide the basis for powerful convictions that give us the energy and inner enthusiasm to define a meaning for life and find a significance for the whole universe. Only a mystique and a spirituality can sustain hope beyond any crisis and even in the face of a possible collapse of the Earth-system (Boff 1997:136)

At the heart of such a spirituality of space is nurturing an alternative imagination, a term extensively used and developed by Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann (1978; 1986). Fox (2000:261) speaks of it as “imagination that steers the sparks of anger in the direction of transformation and new creation”.

Brueggemann speaks of the *alternative* imagination as a hopeful or prophetic imagination or consciousness. He contrasts it with the so-called dominant or royal imagination or consciousness, where the city and society are shaped by the “king” in accordance to his interests, and where politics of oppression, economics of affluence, and a religion of dominant triumphalism (cf. Brueggemann 1978:41; 1993:77; Linthicum 1991:47; Birch 1991:221-227) often exist at the expense of the excluded and the vulnerable. An alternative consciousness would critique urban society from the perspective of those who are excluded, and would offer hopeful alternative scenarios of what cities could look like if they were to be nurturing and wholesome places for all its residents.

Makeka (2013:445) reckons there is always an “urban real” and an “urban imagined” and that we find ourselves in this liminal space, always drawn to the possibilities offered by alternative urban imaginations. Such an alternative imagination requires a rootedness in a spirituality that will continuously inform and sustain it, preventing it from empty utopianism, and rooting it in concrete actions. And yet, we have often completely lost our ability to imagine.

A paternalistic culture is dangerous because it takes itself so seriously and in the process aborts all imagination and ways out of our folly and manmade problems. Eckart recognises this essential relationship between the abortion of imagination and the lack of the child among us when he observed that ‘Some people do not bear fruit because they are so busy lining to their egotistical attachments and so afraid of letting go and letting be that they have no trust either in God or in themselves’. The child is not afraid of letting go: in fact children go out of their way to experience ecstatic highs, whether by hanging upside down, by running about in circles until they drop, or by holding their breath (Fox 2000:227).

Boff (1997 136-137) indicates how the relationship between humankind and nature was “based on false ethical premises and a spiritual vacuum” for hundreds of years. As a result human beings were placed at the centre of all creation at the expense of the rest of creation, disregarding the Earth and its resources, the neighbours on this planet, and the “spiritual depth of the universe” (Boff 1997:137). The same can be said of the relationship between

humankind and the city.

The outer ecology (structure) of the Earth is at risk because the inner ecology, (“forms of solidarity and structures of connectedness together with the will to power and domination, aggressive instincts, and structures of exclusion that lead to plunder of nature and mistreatment of persons, animals, and plants”) has been faulty (Boff 1997:136-137).

The political and social structures, including the ways in which we plan, design, build and shape our cities, too often reflect an ethic of desire, domination and consumption, lacking solidarity and communion. Overcoming such a soul-destructive ethic and praxis, needs nothing less than a spiritual revolution of values. As Boff (1997:139) said it: “Without a spiritual revolution, it will be impossible to launch a new paradigm of connectedness”.

Einstein expressed it in these words:

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed. It was the experience of mystery - even if mixed with fear - that engendered religion.... (I)n this sense and in this alone, I am a deeply religious man (cf. Frank 1947:284; Boff 1977:140)

In the environment of city-building we often develop a professional

life without spiritual connection, a professional soberness without the ability to still be in awe, to marvel, to invite a sense of wonder. And such professionalism is potentially deadening. Could those tasked with designing and building urban spaces be drawn into visions of cities that are radically different from our current urban spaces, in how they include and affirm, in how they invite mystery and cast out fear, and in how they embrace the task of city-building enthusiastically, as vocation and not merely a job?

When I speak of spirituality here, I speak of it in a much broader sense than a more narrow religious sense, or even a faith commitment. I speak of it in the sense of holding certain values that informs our ethic and define our praxis in ways that affirm life and redeem the soul of a place. Dorothee Soelle (1989:154) holds that “even those who profess not to believe, do then believe in the discourses that shape our reality: global capital, militarisation, consumerism”. She says: “We replace one God for other gods”.

Matthew Fox (2000:264) speaks in beautiful language of “the spiralling journey of creation-centred spirituality” and how such a journey helps to foster people who live fulfilled and prophetic lives expressed in work as a creative vocation. Fox (2000:26\$) says: “The spiralling journey of creation-centred spirituality finds its fulfilment in persons responding

to their prophetic vocations”.

There are clear parallels between “the spiralling journey” of Fox and the four moments of the praxis cycle that I have proposed in this text. Fox speaks of it as the four ways.

The **first way** is that of the prophet falling “in love with creation and especially with the little ones... of creation” (Moment 1: Entering the City).

The **second way** is her experience of “the bottomless depths of pain that wrench at the beauty and dignity of have and have-nots alike” (Moment 2: Reading the City).

The **third way** is when, from the experience of the depths of pain, and “working from the best that both left brain and right brain can offer” (Moment 3: Imagining / the City”), she births the possibility of a new creation.

The **fourth way** is when she yearns for a New Creation, launching “her creativity in the direction of healing by way of compassion, celebration, and social justice (Moment 4: Designing for Action).

In this manner she interferes with pessimism, cynicism, and despair, and channels moral outrage into rebirth (Fox 2000:264)

A spirituality of space discovers the promise

that the Creator, who is not yet done with her work, desires additional delight still for the cosmos (and the city - [my insertion]). And we, artists all, are to be instruments of that delight, which is the delight both of wisdom and compassion (Fox 2000: 228)

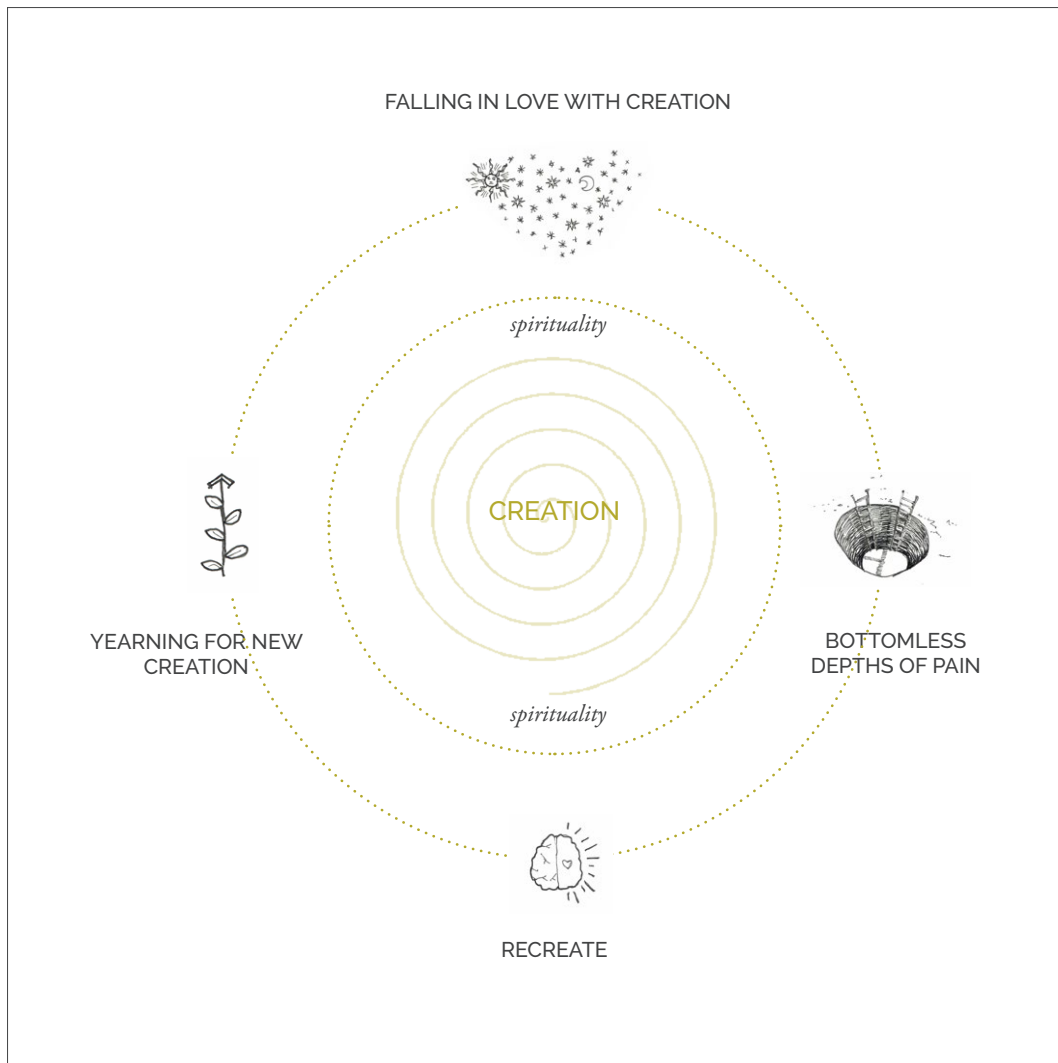
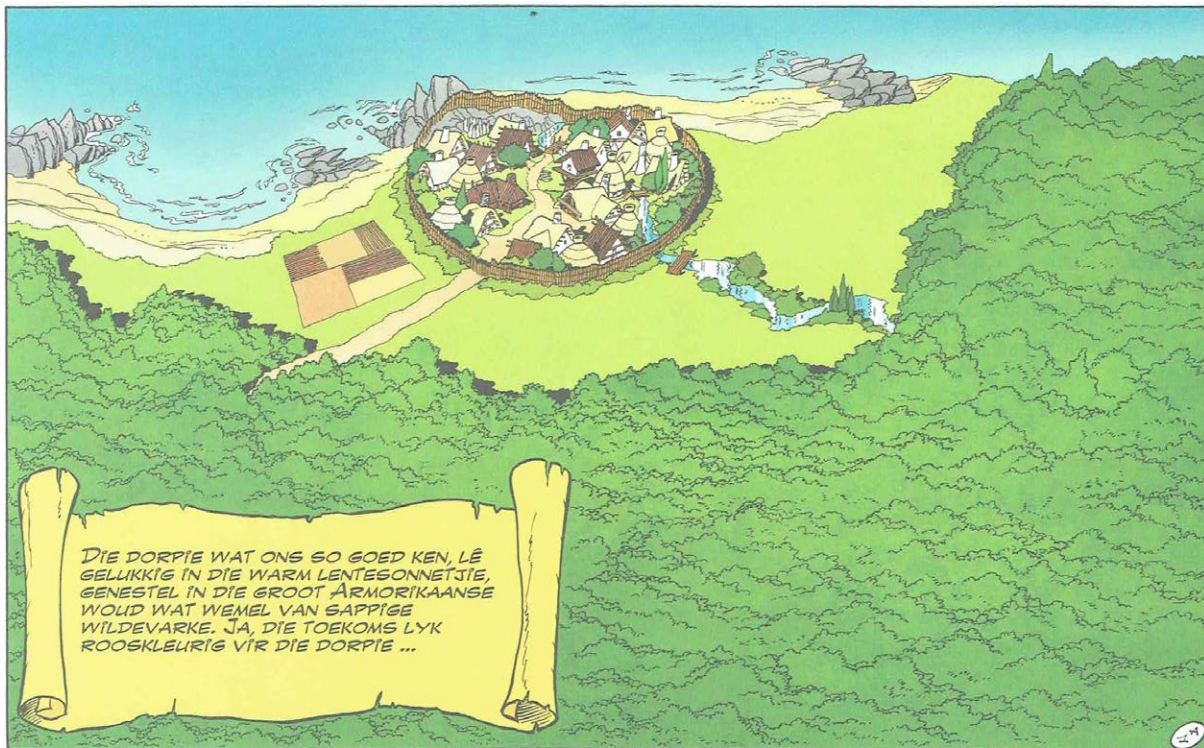


Fig. 158. Nel, 2017. The spiralling journey.



REBIRTH



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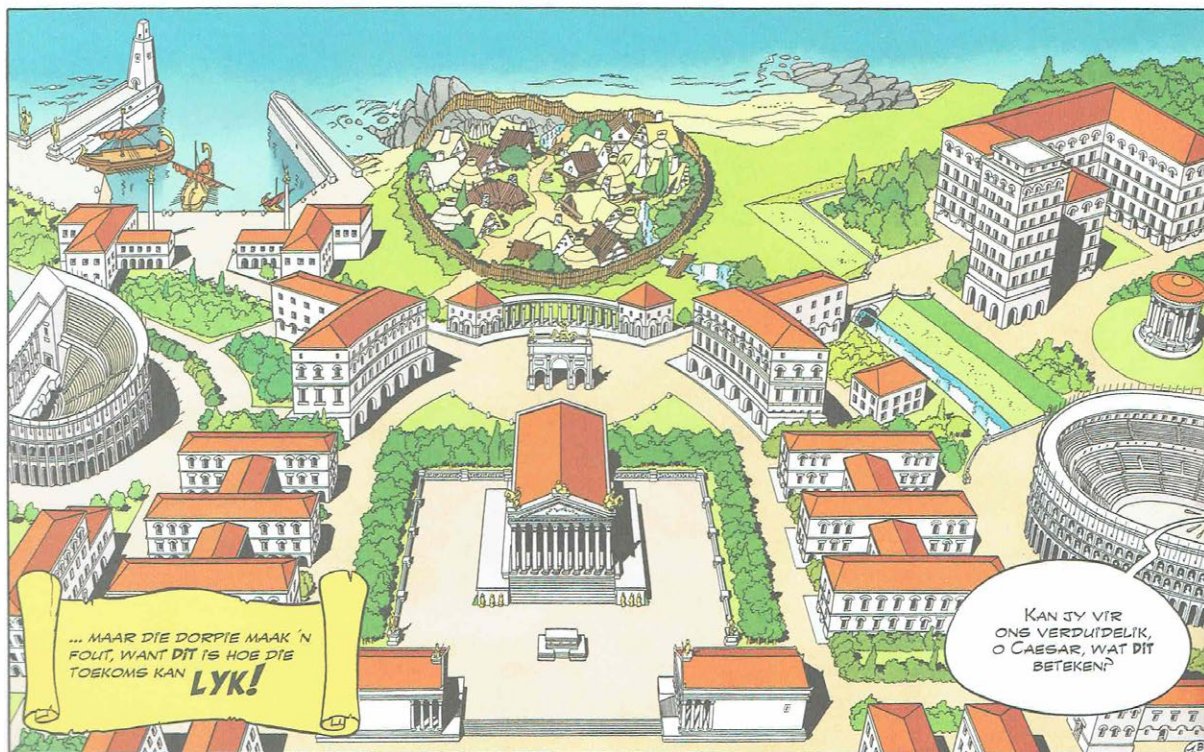


Fig. 159. Uderzo, 1971. Town vs City

1. CITY AS WOMB: BEYOND SKYSCRAPER AND BATTERED WOMAN

1.1 CITY AS SKYSCRAPER

The *skyscraper* is an urban image. It represents power and wealth, growth and urban explosion. Some sceptically refer to the skyscraper as a phallic symbol, capturing male pride and domination, and the exclusion of the poor and the weak, of women and children. A more optimistic view would be of the skyscraper as a monument to human possibility and achievement, an outcome of unrestricted imagination, an ode to technological advancement.

From one angle we can view the city as skyscraper: place of economic and political power, of capital growth and expansion. In the shadow of the skyscraper, at least in the inner city of Tshwane, homeless people find their refuge at night behind cardboard boxes. The same is true of Bangkok, New York City, London, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg and Cape Town. The skyscraper is an elusive and ambiguous symbol, in its collective glitter suggesting urban beauty, but in its exclusive nature, a mediator of oppression and domination.

The skyscraper-mentality already goes back to Caesar Nero in the first century after Christ. Historian and theologian Dieter Georgi (2005:159-160) speaks of Nero who “prided himself to be a benefactor, not only of the empire at large but also of its capital Rome” and yet he “had large parts of the city destroyed”:

The lives of his subjects, their properties and their futures meant less to him than his own fame. The city for him was less a place for people

to live in than an opportunity for the powerful to make themselves immortal. The stones counted more than humans, especially more than the non-wealthy ones.

It reminds one of the way in which the inner city of Tshwane currently unfolds with a clear bias towards monumental headquarters of government departments, often at the expense of play spaces, affordable housing, or liveable neighbourhoods. Stones count more than humans, especially those who are not wealthy or influential members of society. And the powerful seek for ways to immortalise themselves in edifices to their own glory.

Already in the person of the Caesar, we find traces of the empire that became

motor and protector of the growing world market and the cities and towns representing it. (Georgi 2005:xxiii)

There is a sense in which most people aspire to the skyscraper: that is the symbol of ultimate achievement in a society where the strongest alone survives. It is literally a journey towards the top.

It is often a symbol of oppressive power. And yet, there are also those stories of participants of the skyscraper who have used their power and wealth to broker alternatives and inclusion for those who merely survive in its shadows. It would only be fair to also retrieve those stories.

1.2 CITY AS BATTERED WOMAN

Understanding the city as battered woman is suggested by feminist theologian and long-time resident of New York City, Letty Russell (1988). This is the opposite, and sometimes the effect of the skyscraper; skyscraper and battered woman often co-exist in a relationship of unhealthy co-dependency. Once beautiful and vibrant neighbourhoods were used by upwardly mobile residents and emerging businesses to carve out positive futures, characterised by cathedrals, until the lure of suburban malls and security villages drew people away. Now shops closed their doors, banks redlined these areas, the media condemned them, and the beautiful neighbourhoods became victims of abuse: battered, broken, and left to fend for themselves.

After spending a day in downtown Chicago experiencing the visual glamour of the lake and the city, we drove through one of the south side Chicago neighbourhoods, where open spaces were overgrown, with signs of neglect evident everywhere. One could wonder for a moment, and ask

whether this neighbourhood was still under the authority of the City of Chicago, because the battered city stood in such sharp contrast to the city of the skyscraper.

And yet, battering is not always as visible as in this example. Behind the walls of suburban gated communities or luxury mansions, where the custodians of the skyscraper often live, the skyscraper often continues its reign of terror, conquest and submission. Too often it is expressed in gender violence or child abuse. The public and private expressions of power overlap momentarily.

1.3 CITY AS WOMB

An alternative image could be of the city as womb, a place of nurture, safety and shelter, of interdependence between the mother and her children, of deep belonging, confirmed by the umbilical cord.

The cosmos can and needs to be imagined as a cosmic womb, a cosmic soup, in which all creatures swim. The cosmos is God's womb, the divine womb. The Jewish word for compassion is derived from the word for womb - compassionate consciousness and womb consciousness go together in all religions' imaging of compassion, both East and West (Fox 2000:284).

Could we imagine the city as womb, where a compassionate consciousness is practiced in urban planning and policy, fostering a great sense of social inclusion, nurturing soul places, and facilitating just interconnectedness between

20. In Afrikaans the word "geborgenheid" refers to a sense of being safe, sheltered or cared for; cherished or hidden (in the sense of protection); or, in Hebrew Scriptures, finding safe shelter under the wings of God (cf. Oosthuisen, I., 2013, 'Die positivering van geborgenheid met die oog op 'n meer gedissiplineerde onderrig-leeromgewing', *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 78(3), Art. #446, 7 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/koers.v78i3.446>

people and the city they are in?

Many find in the city not just skyscraper or battering, but also a strange sense of safety and security ("geborgenheid")²⁰, like a child in the womb. People would question my living in the inner city, and find my sense of being held safe in the city's arms, an oddity.

One of the leaders of the displaced homeless community of Marabastad wrote about it like this:

*Oh shine lovely day shine
Let all the window of the shop shine
Let every person feel free and safe
Oh Marabastad you are my home
If I had wing I will only fly up and
Still land on your lovely home
Marabastad wake-up people wake-up
The sun has risen every bird is sing
All the car hoot louder every hawker
Sell what they can sell*

*Lilian Shongwane;
(published in Van der Waal 1998:22)*

Amidst the squalor and struggle of this inner city neighbourhood, some like Lilian found a home, too strange for many to comprehend, but such is the umbilical cord that binds mother to child. In Ndwalane's colourful pictorial book *Shacks, Shelters and Shanty Towns* (2007:3), another dimension to life on the urban fringes is depicted, uncovering the hidden assets and beauties, affirming and celebrating the displays of resilience against all odds: "Regardless of their circumstances, residents display a hopefulness that this Rainbow Nation will evolve to meet their needs, and those of all her people".

Even in the midst of perceived battering, residents embrace the hope and promise of the womb, of life growing until it is ready to be born.

Unfortunately circumstances often pluck people from the mother, and now increasingly also from the womb. Or the condition of the womb, although providing safety to the child, cannot provide all the nurture it would need to grow completely. Similarly, there are less and less communities providing safe and nurturing ("geborge") spaces to vulnerable urban people, spaces of which Lilian and others could say boldly, "you are our home".

Even the earth itself has been subjected to human actions and interventions that robbed it of its sustenance and long-term nurture, raising questions as to the ability of the mother to hold her children for many generations to come.

A beautiful world is being lost, and the drumbeat is really about ourselves. We are enemies, structured enemies, massively structured enemies of much of the rest of life. Biodiversity is the name science gives a fierce ontology of communion", and an intimacy of all life. But human and other-than-human life, invariably together, is at enmity, an enmity at the hands of those who, without wincing, still dare to name themselves creation's stewards (Rasmussen 2001:5-6).

Holding this image of the city as womb, invites both agent and victim of skyscraper and battered city, to find and create new spaces of creative, constructive and

lifegiving co-habitation. It affirms our interdependence, but not in the destructive sense of co-dependency, but in the liberating sense of mutuality.

In the context of our cities, urban spaces and entire cosmos, being under threat of losing its womb-like qualities, there is a profound need to revisit our urban policies and praxes.

But now threats to the whole community of life - global inequalities; climate change; loss of species and biodiversity as well as topsoil, safe water and wetlands; urban growth and pollution; resource depletion; and numerous inter-necine wars - mean the ascendancy of ethics and a review of the moral systems we live and die by. Threats to planetary life systems in fact compel community spiritual-moral formation of a different sort than is written in the hearts and heads of most of us as "moderns" (Rasmussen 2001: 1-2).

Could all our spatial expressions consider in how far they allow for the womb-like qualities of the city to be uncovered, in ways that will embrace, affirm and foster life for all who are living in its sphere? It will require radically new spatial politics and spatial praxes, highly critical of the city as skyscraper only, highly disturbed by the battered city, imagining, hoping, living and acting into being new expressions of wholesome spaces. It will combine "the rage and love" of which Freire (1992:5) speaks, "without which there is no hope".

Human beings in the city are called to participate more consciously in the birthing process of more delightful, more nurturing and more soul-ful cities.

The cosmos is still birthing, still expanding, still calling us to birth and expansion. The human race, the most recent and most surprising child of the cosmos, is called to take a conscious role in this birthing process. That is what recovering the motherhood of God and the mother of god role for all people is about (Fox 2000:228).

2. CITY AS CATHEDRAL OF THE SOUL

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE CATHEDRAL

Cathedrals are like beacons, not only of spiritual connectedness but also of locating yourself in a new city or town. Cathedrals have a way of connecting people to history, both past and future, connecting between heaven and earth, between people and God.

Boyd Whyte (2003:12) says that the cathedral, for Rainer Maria Rilke (1961:37), “symbolised a God that does not yet exist, but who will be brought into existence by the work of the artist: ‘those who are solitary creators and make works of arts are building Him’”.

Boyd Whyte (2003:12) carries on saying that the cathedral was for anarchist, Pjotr Kropotkin, “a lasting moment to mutual aid, social harmony and cooperative achievement”.

Both of them spoke of it in terms of human creativity and construction, giving expression to something beautiful, spiritual or sacred.

To imagine the city as cathedral of the soul is to assign to the city the possibility of being a soul space, connecting, locating, orientating; a place not of estrangement but of attachment: to the self, others, the Other, and place. It is to foster the hope, rather resiliently and at times apparently foolishly, that the city could indeed be place of belonging, mediating to its inhabitants that they are truly loved (“the beloved”).

2.2 COLLAPSING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, SACRED AND PROFANE

Imagining the city as cathedral is to “collapse the distinction between public and private, sacred and profane” (cf. Harries 1968: 6-7; Harries 1997, *The Ethical Function of Architecture*), drawing an analogy between cathedral (sacred) and city (profane).

Boyd Whyte (2003:12), in retrieving the thoughts of Worringer (1964:106) in this regard, says: “...spiritual and spatial experiences were analogous, in that they were fed by the senses and resistant to abstraction and intellectualisation”.

The city as cathedral of the soul should not be seen as an abstract, intellectual, esoteric or other-worldly notion, but as a sensual concept of experiencing something of the sacred in the city, where the solitary confinement of Creator and co-creators are replaced by a community of creativity (cf. Fox 1983; Soelle 2001). Worringer (1964:106) says: “(T)o dematerialise stone is to spiritualise it”.

At the 2008 inner city festival, Feast of the Clowns, one of the workshops was hosted by artist-activist Jennifer Ferguson on the topic “Taking back our spaces”. The bigger part of her workshop centred on the repetitive singing of two different songs, with participants dancing in a circle, almost chanting these songs repetitively, to themselves and to each other. I struggled for some time to understand how the lyrics of these songs connected to the theme of reclaimed spaces.

One song simply said:

*All I ask of you is forever to
remember Me
As loving you*

And the refrain repeated the Hindi words, “Ishkara mabudli la, ishkara mabudli la”, which speaks of God as lover and God as beloved.

These are words God / the Other speaks to us and we speak back to God. Finding a place deep within where we can know that we are the beloved, deeply and truly embraced without prejudice, affirmed and celebrated by the Lover. But we sang the song in the context of reclaiming our spaces.

It raised the question of whether we could imagine a relationship with our city in which we could hear this refrain as we walk its streets, even if they are muddy and crowded:

*All I ask of you is forever to
remember me as loving you*

Or hear ourselves repeating this refrain as we reflect on our city, because I discovered that she is not an abstract place of cold concrete, but also a place that invites me warmly to be me, and that holds me safely as the beloved, whilst I am holding her.

It could be the particular gift of urban faith communities to relate to people that they are indeed the beloved of the Lover. But being the beloved should not be framed in other-wordly terms only, but also be expressed in the spaces surrounding people, and in how such spaces mediate life, wholeness, dignity, and justice.

2.3 DISCOVERING BEAUTY AGAINST THE ODDS

Jennifer’s second song embraced beauty. It is an old Native American song, simply saying

*I walk the beauty way
I walk with beauty before me
I walk with beauty behind me
I walk with beauty all around me
I walk the beauty way*

Neels Jackson (2007:13) wrote about us singing this song in a grey old building in the inner city, and as it was sung we recreated this grey environment into something as beautiful as the singer’s voice. The city becomes a soul place when we learn to see with new eyes, and to walk in ways that will recognise or recreate beauty, even in parts of the city that have become grey or cold.

Such is also the ode to Marabastad, captured in the poem of long-time resident Lilian Shongwane (1997), written before the community's post-apartheid removal to Mamelodi x6, discovering amidst the decay and despair of Marabastad safe arms ready to embrace, hospitable backyards ready to provide a home.

*Oh, Marabastad you are Alpha and Omega You
are worthy to be praised
You are a shiny city a home for helpless People
you are Gold to those who can
Work by selling what ever they can
Sell from empty bottles to cardboardes
You make us proud by keeping us
Alive and being next to our bread
'Oh' lord see us through raining days
And keep our burning shacks safe*

It is often the custodians of the city, the very ones that give shape and determine with their political and economic muscle the outcomes of the city's spaces, who find it hard to regard the city as a place of the soul. They do have the luxury to go and find their soul elsewhere, sometimes after they have cruelly displaced the city's soul. We are sometimes the very creators of our own estrangements.

Even the cathedral itself could become like the skyscraper, a place of cold estrangement. St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town has been the site of many a struggle, for liberation from apartheid, for HIV and AIDS activists demanding urgency in government interventions, a place of connection, affirmation and human liberation. And yet, the Anglican Cathedral in Harare has become the watchdog of oppression, sanctioning the

destruction of the city's soul.

The city as cathedral of the soul, is a vision to be fostered. It should never be taken for granted. It is often not in the impressive cathedrals, but in the obscure shanty-town churches, or in the backyard shebeens, that people find connection, home-coming, soul places.

Again, it is where people's options are few, where they have nowhere else to go to rekindle the soul or to find themselves, that there sometimes emerges the strange but creative congruence of despair and hope, of estrangement and home-coming, of homelessness and belonging. In Shacks, Shelters & Shanty-towns (Ndwane 2007:55), this strange ambiguity is noticed, referring to the conditions of dwellings people have to live in:

*On the surface, these dwellings
certainly have no remarkable
architectural value, but beyond
that, they are spiritual abodes,
places of refuge, conversation, the
warmth of kindred spirits.*

The cathedral of the soul could be found in places surprisingly dissimilar to the cathedral in architecture and grandeur, but rather similar in how it connects, locates, nurtures and roots.

The soul plays an important role in African literature, religious and otherwise as described by Shorter.

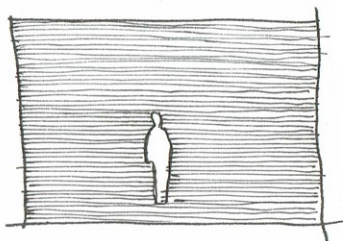
*...all created things have a symbolic
quality and everything
speaks, as Camara Laye put it, of
"the mystery and union between*

heaven and earth". The African soul cries out for prodigies, refuses to believe that life consists merely in what can be seen at a glance. The human being realises that he (sic) is not alone in the world. Air, earth, water, savannah, forest, mountains, are truly inhabited by genii", as Laye calls them (Shorter 1978:12)

Shorter (1978:12) refers to the writings of Camara Laye, who suggests that

the human soul is characterised by a strong desire for freedom and by the ability to appreciate beauty, particularly in art.

And yet, the soul has often "been dulled and deadened by the mechanical aids of technological life", leading to what Laye would call the "spiritless soul". What it yearns for instead is for life that is "full and abundant" (Shorter 1978:12). Most African writers speak of the soul, not in terms of power or force (skyscraper), but in terms of community and a network of relationships (womb), from which energy and power might emanate. But life is the priority, the most important, and the soul is the seat of life (cf. Shorter 1978:12).



2.4 BEFRIENDING DARKNESS
Nurturing the soul would at the same time require a confrontation with death (Shorter 1978:12), an

engagement with darkness (Moore 2004), befriending our darkness even (Fox 1983:132-177). Instead of the conspiracy of silence about death, which Shorter identifies as upfront in the Western mind, "and everything is done to put it out of sight and mind", the African worldview traditionally understood death differently. It is always mysterious and violent, and yet always "somehow a new beginning" (Shorter 1978:13).

One of the inner city churches in our own community faced death. And they had to engage this reality, choosing to die with dignity, or choosing to live, but that would have required a new beginning altogether. They had to die to old forms of being and expression, to usher in the new beginning. Similarly, urban neighbourhoods at the brink of death could be the locale for creative work to be done by people in community, to create signs of newness and life.

In the works of prolific African authors such as Senghor, Kayoya and others, they argue against "a denial of love" (cf. Shorter 1978:14). It is in a denial of love that the forces of death and dehumanisation reign supreme.

Love personalises, brute force and violence depersonalises those who employ such methods. Love, according to Camara Laye, means listening, nearness and sympathy... that is why a community or a nation that is built without love... is a dehumanised community. (Shorter 1978:14)

Some might argue that the

Fig. 160. Nel, 2017. Befriending darkness.

introduction of love is mushy in the context of something as scientific and concrete as planning. Yet, planning without love might result in the kinds of cities that dehumanise and exclude, because it practices planning without face-to-face relationships with the people who are planned for; it places technique over soul; it avoids the practices of “listening, nearness and sympathy”, it avoids a confrontation with the death that is reigning in our communities.

2.5 SOUL SPACES ARE NOT SANITISED SPACES

Le Corbusier (1967:91; cf. Boyd Whyte 2003:148) speaks in almost religious terms when he speaks of the city as a dehumanising place cursed with filth, suffocating gases, perpetual gloom and human despair.

He contrasts this city with the city of his vision worked out in *Radiant City* (Le Corbusier 1967), of a redeemed society or city full of light, air and joy. In much of his writing and design he made use of glass, light and crystal to give expression to his vision. Le Corbusier and others think of city-building as purification from “filth”, including in this category both debris and unwanted human beings, and suggest interventions that could have a sanitising or salvific effect.

In and around Burgers Park young men with substance abuse problems sometimes work as

commercial sex workers, mainly to sustain their addiction. A local hotel owner, together with the South African Police Services, formed an alliance to sanitise or purify the area from the “filth” that contaminated it, even though local residents were never heard to complain about any disturbances caused by these individuals.

Although there is still a prevalence of drugs and commercial sex work in the area, it is not as concentrated as before. It raises the question of whether the soul of our neighbourhood is being redeemed because it is being sanitised, or whether we are increasingly at risk of losing our soul, because of how we treat those among us, those who are part of us, who are most vulnerable.

Are those “sanitised” from our streets not merely the battered woman, victims of the skyscraper and its agents?

In 20th century architectural discourse the image of the new Jerusalem is often prevalent, including the notion of urban reform that will incorporate “moral and ethical improvement” (Boyd Whyte 2003:179). If that means ostracising, exorcising or sanitising the city from certain people that do not fit our perceived notions of what “good urban, moral or ethical people” should look like I question the morality or ethic of such developments.

Evangelical reformers of the 1830’s

and 1840's sought to rid England from the "great social evil" of prostitution (cf. Watson & Gibson 1995: 60; Walkowitz 1980), being both a social threat and a sign of disorder and reversal of the natural institutions and hierarchies of society. The phenomenon of prostitution was responded to through acts of rescue, rehabilitation, reform and legislation. Regulating the industry was suggested by some, such as French bureaucrat Alexandre Parent-Duchetelet (cf. Watson & Gibson 1995:60), who suggested that every prostitute should have a dossier and information on her file, enabling much better surveillance.

The problem of 19th century urban life was going even much further in that every woman became a "public woman" in the new and disordered world of the city - in the public sphere of pavements, streets, cafés and theatres, women were now for the first time visibly unattended, public and therefore equated to prostitutes (Watson and Gibson 1995:61). The very presence of unattended and "unowned" women constituted a threat to male power and male frailty, therefore calling forth increased measures of urban surveillance and domination.

Sanitised spaces are spoken of by Ellin (1996:169), referring to the example of the Universal Studios Theme Park where there is a sign posted with 14 different transgressions, warning visitors of the implications of noise, singing,

playing musical instruments, sitting down on the ground for more than 5 minutes, and so on. Ellin (1996:171) suggests this as one example of a sanitised space going insane: "The distortions within such a regulated, analysed, controlled and watched-over-life-world are certainly more subtle than the obvious forms of material exploitation and impoverishment; but [they] are no less destructive for all that".

Ellin (1996: 171) speaks of the great fallacy being created by the media and global power brokers of a world that is becoming more equal when in fact the opposite is true.

As the exercise of power grows more disguised and anonymous, agency becomes confused and people - unwittingly - become terrorist as well as terrorised. In the end, a growing perception of greater equality among people both nationwide and worldwide, plied largely by the various mass media, accompanies and legitimises growing inequalities.

We run the risk of sanitising the soul from our spaces.

It is often in the perceived chaos of diversity, excitement, and the tapestry of human expression and behaviour, that humanity and the urban soul are found. Attractive and successful cities are marked by both considerable physical qualities but also by the variety of mix and activity (Tibbalds 1992:23). It is the presence of people on the streets, whether the shoemaker working informally on the streets

of Pretoria or Beijing, or the tourists in Amsterdam or Bangkok, who continue to make cities lively and interesting places (cf. Tibbalds 1992:28). On the other hand, “new environments are often characterised by spread out and mediocre buildings, and uncomfortable arrangements for pedestrians, designed more for the benefit of vehicles and devastating effects on the humanity of the city” (Tibbalds 1992:39).

2.6 SOUL-LESS SIMULATIONS

Besides the project of the sanitised city, or often as an expression of it, is the creation of the simulated city. People stream to Monte Casino, a centre offering a shopping experience, entertainment and a casino, as well as a hotel and conferencing venue, situated in the north of Johannesburg, and designed to simulate an old Italian walled city (Steinglass 2002).

Inside the city, wanderers enjoy the colourful washing hanging between buildings, and the experience of chaos and vibrancy. And yet, it is only bearable because it is a simulation. In the real city, washing on lines between buildings is a sign of decay, of a negative community, in desperate need of intervention or renewal. It is a place where the middle class prefer to stay away, unlike the ‘streets’ of Monte Casino.

And yet, once again, simulation as an expression of sanitisation tends to go insane. Ellin (1996:161)

writes: “One entertainment executive explained that his company uses fibreglass rather than granite or rock because you get a very artificial experience with real rock”.

Designers have looked to the entertainment industry as masters of “imagineering” (cf. Ellin 1996:161). Since “image-making” has become such an important focus of urban design, there has been a growing embrace of the entertainment industry as catalysts of urban change. Theme parks, hotels, casinos, and sport stadiums have all been successfully employed to facilitate large-scale urban change and economic development. The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town, the Baltimore Harbour, Monte Casino in Johannesburg, and the stadiums built for World Cup Soccer events or the Olympic Games, are all examples of such interventions.

Some of these developments have facilitated soul-spaces, stimulated local economic development and actually assisted in the empowerment of local communities and economies to become more self-reliant. And yet, employing “imagineering” in the sense of building a simulated city, has often contributed to perpetuate disparity, isolation and apathy, keeping people apart and yet, suggesting that all is well in the city of our making. But these urban fabrications are often not the city in which the other half lives. How can “Imagineering” be employed to build real, inclusive, soul cities?

3. CLOWN CITY: A PLACE OF FANTASY AND FESTIVITY



Fig. 161. 2012. Re-Branding Homelessness campaign shoot.

3.1 THE LOST ART OF FANTASY AND FESTIVITY

A city without festivals is a city without soul. And a city without clowns will let the king think everything is sound. Cities have always been able to capture the imagination, to give wings to the fantasies of creative people. Cities have always been home to festivals that galvanised the mood of the people, creating space for celebration.

3.1 THE LOST ART OF FANTASY AND FESTIVITY

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Harvey Cox (1969), in his book *Feast of the Fools*, suggests that theology has lost the ability for

fantasy and festivity; it has lost its artful imagination and its playful celebration. Sometimes, in some cities and neighbourhoods, a sense of fantasy and festivity has also been lost. People have lost the capacity to imagine alternatives to their current reality. Planning and political interventions are unimaginative, perpetuating hopeless realities and generational dependencies. The clown, or the holy fool, symbolises both fantasy and festivity, the ability to imagine and the capacity to celebrate.

It is sometimes in surprising places that traces of it still exist. In very

poor urban neighbourhoods where all hope is supposed to be lost, one is disarmed by the spontaneous outbursts of celebration, and the imaginative displays of creativity. In the slums of Rio de Janeiro thousands join the frenetic annual activity to prepare and participate in the Great Carnival (cf. Soelle 1993).

In *Shacks, Shelters & Shanty-towns*, Ndwalane (2007:15) discovers soulfulness in places conventionally regarded as hopeless:

The spirit in these humble surrounds is overwhelmingly joyous and welcoming. An exuberant throng of children eagerly awaits their turn on a round-a-bout in the village. Growing up with few material assets, it is more often the children's playful imaginations that will keep them occupied until their parents call them in for the evening meal.

Hope is often born in the midst of the deepest despair: where there is nothing more to lose or nothing left but hope, that the tenacity of hope becomes disarming.

In contrast then, I dare to suggest that my own city has often lost its ability to be imaginative and its capacity for spontaneous and creative celebration. It masquerades monumental projects – new government headquarters (rekgabisathswane n.d.) and the Freedom Park (2015) – as works of imagination and spaces for celebration. And yet, these constructs are too often mere counterfeits, not really emerging from the people, and a reading from below would

consider these masquerades of power with suspicion.

In the design and constructs of the city there is too often little space left for local people, and even less for those who are particularly little or vulnerable.

In many quarters there is a new appreciation of the potential of the arts to support urban regeneration.

The arts are crowd-pullers. People find themselves drawn to places which are vibrant and alive. (Arts Council 1989; cf. Miles 2005:896)

The arts also contribute to regeneration through the symbolic potential they carry, expressing heritage, identity or local culture, and reaching parts of the city or pockets of people that other regeneration activities cannot reach (Evans 2005:966).

An obvious danger is what Miles (2005:896) speaks of as the “marketisation” of the arts, being co-opted into a market agenda and running the risk of losing its critical or radical agenda (Miles 2005:890-891). If not that, it is often only Culture with a capital letter – the traditional high arts – that are employed and resourced to contribute to regeneration (Zukin 1995:12-13; cf. Miles 2005:892). Emerging cultural expression surfacing from below is not necessarily embraced in the same way. Landry (2000) warns that such a narrow representation of culture “mirrors the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of both

cultural and other public policy realms and decision-making structures” (cf. also Evans 2001:277).

There is then, a resultant growth in ‘mainstream’ cultural infrastructure but not equal growth in the way in which “ordinary” people support emerging artists and art forms.

In places like Newtown it is probably different, making space for a fresh and vibrant display of diverse cultural expressions, and reclaiming space for fantasy, festivity and artistic expression. Apart from the theatres and other venues in the Newtown Precinct requiring market-related entrance fees, the Mary Fitzgerald Square offers diverse opportunities to access the arts, and many community arts programmes are offered in the Precinct, either in the form of dance, photography, visual arts or commercial theatre (cf. Ferreira 2004; Johannesburg Development Agency n.d.). Similar initiatives exist in Tshwane but often in a much more ad hoc and dispersed fashion.

3.2 ART AND PLAY AS EXPRESSIONS OF A COMPASSIONATE CITY

Fox (2000:284) speaks about compassion as “celebration because it is about what people and other creatures do or ought to do with one another when they find themselves together”. Cities are compassionate cities in as far as they are able to facilitate celebration



Fig. 162. Feast of the clowns march, 2002.

and imagination, embracing both the dreams and struggles of all its people and creating spaces in which to express these.

Leonardo Boff (1997:126) stresses the importance of celebration and dance in the way original peoples expressed themselves. Through celebration and dance, they create the conditions for experiencing the divinity. It gives, according to Boff (1997:126) “bodily substance to humankind’s original vocation...

In responding to what is deepest within us we become humanised, integrated and happy”.

Their celebration and dance flowed from a deep connectedness with the land and space they inhabited, and energised them to sustain themselves and their land. Being landless and homeless would inhibit the ability to dance and celebrate, without having clear roots. But then we consider St. Francis of Assisi. Although he lived an extremely simple life, sacrificing all material possessions and power, he lived in perpetual joy. His life marked a departure of a certain brand of Christian living, which Leonardo Boff (1997:208-209) captured so well.

Francis was the ever-joyful brother, as he was called by his fellow friars. This marks a departure from a harsh Christianity of penitents, the hieratic and formal Christianity of papal palaces and clerical curias, and the structured Christianity of bookish theological culture. What emerges is a Christianity of blood and song, passion and dance, heart and poetry. Francis shows the same affection toward the Sultan Kamil, who he embraces in Damietta on the Nile Delta, as to the leper shouting by the steps in Spoleto, or to the wolf threatening the inhabitants of the city of Gubbio.

In our technocratic urban praxes we fail to embrace celebration, dance and the arts, as tools for reading or interpreting the city, spaces for public expression on urban issues, and ways of mobilising people’s action in and on behalf of the city.

We need to explore ways to embrace art in nurturing a spirituality of urban space. Matthew Fox (2000:15) laments the way in which we have succumbed to a dualistic worldview that juxtaposes body and soul. Fox (2000:15) suggests rather a Trinitarian approach that will bring together art, spirituality and social justice in the process of imagining transformed and socially inclusive cities: “When we play again at this trinity we will have regained the power and passion and imagination that social transformation requires”.

Fox (2000:215) continues to say that our integration of work, art and play is “essential to human expression and to the ongoing growth of the cosmos and of human society”. Fostering this interplay is to affirm human dignity in the image of God “who works and creates and plays” (cf. also Peterson 2005).

Fox (2000:284) emphasises the importance of play.

Playfulness is itself a way of resolving deep pain and division... Play is meant to be a way out of aggression But our culture, which does not value playfulness or Eros, has forgotten that, and so we lock ourselves into trillion-dollar military budgets, and imagine we can buy security.

Eskimo tribes, when war is brewing between them, select the best poets from each tribe to hold a poetry contest. The jury consists of an equal number of members from both tribes. Fox (2000:284) says: “The winning poet wins the

war for both sides. Here is an instance of art as healing”.

Fox (2000: 284) suggests all of the above because of his basic notion that all creatures “are swimming in one divine womb” and asks “then what ought we do with one another?”. Fox (2000:284) answers his own question, saying: “I suggest that we are to relate erotically. That is, celebrate. Play is circular, curved, Sarah-circle-like among children, and wherever adult ritual has not lost its celebrative and erotic energy”.

Art, as a form of play, is another way of expressing a compassionate, caring, city. For Nietzsche the artist is the one who goes where no one dares, creating that which used to be inaccessible (cf. Boyd Whyte 2003:10). Public art creates space for the artist, as jester, to express that which no one dares. It is aimed at creating spaces – material, virtual or imagined – within which people can engage creatively, giving expression to communal self-reflection, enquiry, struggle or aspiration (cf. Sharp, Pollock & Paddison 2005:1003-1004).

Malcolm Miles (2005) speaks of public art as “(i)maginative interventions” (cf. Greed & Roberts 1998:116) which take different expressions. It could be art placed outdoors, such as monuments or figures; it could be works normally displayed in galleries and now displayed on the street; it could be the way in which urban design

integrates art and craft through landscaping, building design or the use of street furniture, or it could be the way in which artists intervene in public issues.

A good example of artistic intervention is the one-line aphorisms of Jenny Holzer, printed as commercial fliers and distributed in Manhattan in 1976, with phrases such as “Housing is a human right” (Greed and Roberts 1998:116).

Sharp, et al (2005), in their article *Just Art for a Just City*, explore the ways in which public art either contributed to social inclusion and a greater sense of justice, or to a perception of cultural domination, exclusion and therefore an instrument of oppression.

The debate around public art is often complicated by the erosion of public space, the privatisation of space, as well as the emergence of multiple publics, sometimes conflicting, instead of one unanimous public or community (cf. Greed & Roberts 1998:121).

Graffiti as a form of public art is one example (Spocter 2004; Sharpe, et al 2005:1015). Graffiti artists are often young people influenced by hip-hop culture, seeking a platform for self-expression and a space to be heard: “Graffiti artists view graffiti as giving them a voice in an anonymous urban space” (Spocter 2004:292).

Embraced by some, co-opted by

others, and downright rejected by still others, it is an example that probably elicits the harshest of responses. In Cape Town by-laws were introduced to outlaw graffiti as a criminal offence (Spocter 2004:292), “environmentally offensive” and a “public nuisance”. It is treated with disdain and ignorance by most viewers (Spocter 2004:294).

But failing to interpret the voices of these artists is a serious failure to read local culture and to shape spaces appropriately in order to affirm identity, celebrate dignity and allow for diverse or different voices to be heard. A postmodern approach “can accommodate graffiti as an urban phenomenon that can be analysed and used to explain the dynamism of the use of urban space” (Spocter 2004:292). In a paper entitled *Reading of the Urban / Text: Challenges and Possibilities of Diversity for Pastoral Care*, Michael Mata (2000) stresses the importance of reading urban neighbourhoods well for responsible, responsive and appropriate pastoral care to be offered. He specifically refers to urban graffiti as it gives clues for reading urban sub-cultures, gang-related activity, and so forth.

The power of this medium is described by Jane Golden who directs a mural arts programme in Philadelphia. Golden (2012:xii-xiii) writes

As local leaders began to see the power of murals to represent their values and hopes – to capture

memory, to mine the rich social imagery that lies beneath the surface, and to spur social action to reclaim communities – murals became emblematic of a new-found agency.

And Maureen O’Connell (2012:12), in her beautiful book *If these walls could talk*, reflect on murals as “sites where we discover the practices that sustain life in community and faith in the midst of poverty”. O’Connell (2012:11) views murals as “theological sites” expressing ways in which communities wrestle with life and death.

Patsy Philips (in Greed & Roberts 1998:122) describes the role and function of public art in this way:

Public art is about the free field, the play of creative vision. The point is not just to produce another thing for people to admire, but to create opportunities, situations, that enable viewers to look back at the world with unique perspectives and angles of vision. This image embraces the instrumentality, intimacy and criticality of public art. Public life cannot be decreed, but has to be constantly reinvented.

Public art participates in the invention and reinvention of public life, contributes to public discourse, and resists and reconstructs through its imaginative interventions.



Fig. 163. Feast of the clowns march, 2009

3.3 FESTIVALS IN THE CITY

I suggest that festivals are a helpful space in which to combine celebration, imagination, art and play. They can help foster a sense of fantasy and festivity, moving cities beyond sterile technocracy to artful imagination, and beyond rigid bureaucracy to playful celebration. Perhaps part of the struggle of Tshwane is its very preoccupation with the notion of being Africa's capital city, thereby steering it away from spontaneous people's celebration and shaping it into a sterile and clinical technocracy.

Bernadette Quinn (2005), in her article "Art Festivals and the City", describes the meaning of festivals historically. She (2005:928) refers to Turner (1982:11) stating that all people in all cultures "recognise the need to set aside certain times and spaces for communal creativity and celebration, and festivals

have long constituted a vehicle for expressing the close relationship between identity and place".

Historically festivals were also places of community, emerging from the soil of local community, contributing to build an increased sense of community, "rooted in society, in real life (Isar, 1976, p.126)" (in Quinn 2005: 935), as "mechanisms through which place-based communities express identities, celebrate communally held values and strengthen communal bonds" (Quinn 2005:935). Cultural planning, argues Quinn (2005:935), is not primarily a mechanism for urban regeneration but also a concrete way of engaging the people living in the city. The emphasis in such an approach will be on human development through cultural expression rather than on urban regeneration through economic growth.

How effectively are cities facilitating festivals to help redeem the soul of the city for all the city's people?

Quinn (2005:931) says: "(S)everal cities have invested heavily in festivals as part of their urban regeneration and city marketing strategies".

Festivals are then used to lure investment and have in some cases represented the main tourism opportunity for the city. A critical question, raised by Quinn (2005:931), is in how far this has contributed to the city and its people: "What role has the arts festival played in advancing urban policy, contributing to urban life, and facilitating the expression or cultural identities?"

Quinn stresses the importance for cities to discover the social and cultural potential of festivals for the people of the local communities in which the festival takes place, instead of merely hoping for it as a tool to regenerate urban areas. Once that is discovered the substantial investments put into festivals will probably start to yield optimum results. Miles and Paddison (2005:42) speak of the way in which culture-led urban regeneration, including local festivals, has become an important form of new urban entrepreneurialism.

However, as festivals grow and develop, their position as a place for local participation and social critique tends to be compromised.

It tends to become "increasingly exclusive and inaccessible" (Quinn 2005:934). Festivals offer possibilities for "challenging social conventions, social order and authority, and inventing society's cultural norms" (Quinn 2005:934). Yet, these possibilities "of involvement and participation, and the potential to challenge, re-order, subvert and disrupt, that social scientists have held to be inherent in the concept of festivity" (Quinn 2005:934), become less likely when festivals are commercialised.

Festivals also seek to mainstream arts and culture on the city's agenda. Again, too often economic considerations outweigh artistic, cultural or local community considerations. Charles Landry and others express concern that when the main audience becomes external, there often seems to be a tendency "to limit the ability of artists to question, challenge and criticise" (Quinn 2005:934). Artistic integrity and autonomy might then be compromised.

Festivals offer many gifts to the city: they tend to capture local cultural identity and modes of expression, surfacing trends and serving as indicators for what could work and what not. In the annual Feast of the Clowns in the inner city of Tshwane (cf. Chapter 9 for a full description), we discovered the power and lure of oral poetry, and sense that it is still an important tool of expression for local young people. More conscious engagement with festivals could help to

inform urban praxis and enhance urban life much more intentionally.

Festivals tend to challenge prejudice and stereotypes, as they show a way beyond to new spaces in which we can play, create, dance and imagine together. In doing so they offer a dangerous critique of the exclusive city that perpetuates barriers. For a couple of years, participants in the Feast of the Clowns were banned from wearing clown faces in the March. It was considered as breaching the by-laws of the city. There was a fear that if a riot broke out, the culprits could not be identified, had they worn clown faces. The clown, in many acts of unmasking, poses a threat to the carefully constructed masks of the city.

Pather (2013:434-435) speaks of such embodied events as “site-specific performance and ritual”, functioning for thousands of years as “repositories of meaning and knowledge systems”, possessing “transformative agency that occurred within actual sites”.

3.4 CLOWNING IN THE CITY

The city needs the clown to remind her of her frailty; that she is at best a human construction bound to fail at times; and that we should never take ourselves too seriously as leaders, planners or citizens of the city.

The vocation of the clown is to put a mirror before us to make



us laugh at ourselves. Cities that cannot laugh at themselves tend to cling to false images of what they are not. They are often dishonest about the real challenges and failures they are facing, and therefore unable to deal with them creatively in order to become excellent cities. Behind the silly jokes of the clown often hides the truth the city and those in power need to hear about themselves (cf. Nouwen 1979). When you leave the city at Church Street, passers-by are currently distracted when they are surprised by

Fig. 164. Feast of the clowns march, 2009
Fig. 165. Feast of the clowns march, 2009
Fig. 166. Feast of the clowns march, 2009

the sight of elephants along the side of the road. The clown often comes to town with the rest of the circus. And the circus causes a distraction from the normal activity of the city, as the elephant cannot help demanding a great deal of attention.

Cities need to attend to their distractions: the sudden influx of refugees, on-going power failures, growing annoyance with crime or incorrect billing of municipal accounts, or yet another march of disgruntled workers through the streets. In the distractions lie the potential of becoming good cities, responsive cities, cities that take the citizens extremely seriously: every distraction reveals a symptom of a greater societal challenge and those with ears should listen and hear.

The city of Bogotá in Colombia had such a mayor, Antanas Mockus, serving the city for two terms, from 1995-1997 and again from 2000-2003 (cf. McGuirk 2015:207-230). He understood something about “politics as performance” (McGuirk 2015:219-222).

As head of the Universidad Nacional he was derided as the “Clown Rector”. As a politician he was the “clown mayor”. This is the man who dressed up as a caped crusader called Supercitizen... the holy fool, who made a point of always telling the truth and who dared to believe in his fellow citizens’ potential for good. By the end of his two terms the homicide rate fell by 70 per cent, traffic fatalities dropped by 30 per cent, water usage was down 40 per cent, tax

revenues had tripled and the city’s finances were coming into the black (McGuirk 2015:2009).

He sought to embody in himself, and the practices he embraced, what he saw for Bogotá:

Once, his security team forced him to wear a bulletproof vest. In protest, Mockus took some scissors and cut a heart-shaped hole in it right over his heart. With that act, he transformed a piece of armour into a symbol of compassion (McGuirk 2015:222).

The clown stumbling in between the big scenes of lion-tamer and trapeze artist, the elephant causing a stir amongst tired commuters who just wanted to rush back home, marchers stopping the traffic for hours, even the beggar by the side of the road who is outdoing all other beggars with a hilarious poster describing why he needs the public’s assistance, all remind us that the city is a place



Fig. 167. Bogotá mayor, Antanas Mockus with his ‘bullet-proof’ vest

“A level of insanity, disruption, playfulness and irresponsibility combines with the control and discipline of performance and meets heady cultural discourse to produce a liminal state of possibility. This possibility may be simply of playing, but the potential for a playfulness that ushers in symbolism, deeper meanings, recognition and connectivity and coherence is very present. This is so also because the audience is taken by surprise, caught off guard or even uninformed or unrestricted by correct theatrical behaviour and so the interaction is direct and immediate”

(Pather 2013:435)

of competing human interests, aspirations and struggles. It is in recognising each other, and being disarmed once in a while, that we will find the resources and ability to build good cities.

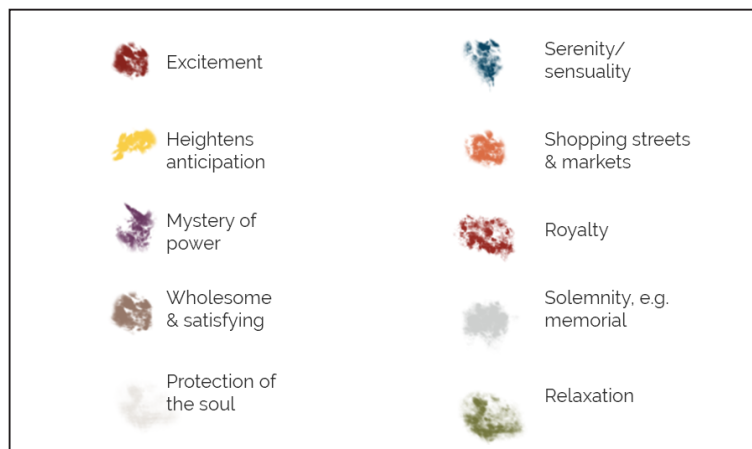
Rome is a good city in which to become aware of the need for clowns. This large, busy, entertaining, and distractive city keeps calling us to join the lion tamers and trapeze artists who get most of the attention. But whenever the clowns appear we are reminded that what really counts is something other than the spectacular and the sensational. Clowns remind us of what happens between the scenes. The clowns show us by their "useless" behaviour not simply that many of our preoccupations, worries, tensions, and anxieties need a smile, but that we too have white on our faces and that we too are called to clown a little (Nouwen 1979:108-109)

All our cities are full of clowns: stumbling people, very fragile, pretending to be what we really are not, laughing at our own oddities,

crying at our own sadness, stumbling into life and stumbling out, but in the interim we have to find meaningful ways of living with our fellow clowns, in this circus of life.

3.5 HARLEQUIN SPACES FOR HARLEQUIN PEOPLE

Turner (1996: 189-198) suggests that we need "harlequin plans for harlequin spaces, to suit our harlequin lives". Good cities will creatively integrate diverse spaces to give expression to the diversity of human emotions and activities: "By turn, we feel solitary, gregarious, adventurous, amorous, aggressive, bored and excited. These, and all the other moods, some of which can be symbolised by colours, deserve accommodation in the public realm of a town".



SPACES AND THE COLOURS THEY EXPRESS (cf. Turner 1996: 189-198)

Fig. 168. Nel, 2017. Spaces and the colours they express, (cf. Turner 1996: 189-198)



A good example is the Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam.

Amidst a fascinating light show an Italian tightrope walker balanced above the heads of his audience below him, an illuminated stage on which mystical African stilt-walkers slowly stride forwards to the sound of a Cuban drum band. It is party time in the multicultural metropolis of Rotterdam (A1 Rotterdam 1997:27).

This square was designed by landscape architect Adriaan Geuze and officially handed over to the city on 21 June 1997: “Walking over the square... you feel both actor and audience at the same time. Geuze has given the people of Rotterdam a true city stage” (A1 Rotterdam 1997:27).

Cities need stages where life can be displayed in all its diverse expressions, agony and beauty. The

Schouwburgplein provides such a space.

In Johannesburg the Maboneng Precinct probably lures people through its harlequin-like tapestry of unique, colourful and sometimes quirky spaces, uniting rastas, hipsters, arty types and suburbanites. The occasional interruption from surrounding residents of Jeppe, often extremely precarious in their living conditions, remains a reminder though of Maboneng as an illusionary island not yet able to fully integrate socially vulnerable citizens living in its vicinity.

Fig. 169. Huffenreuter, 2015. Schouwburgplein.

4. CITY AS COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

4.1 WARM, INVITING PLACES

Maybe a clown city – that makes space for laughter, fantasy, festivity, distraction and the possibility of being disarmed – will be better able to facilitate a city of close community. Cities are often perceived as cold concrete constructs, turning people into anonymous and tragic objects, and strangers to themselves, their neighbours and the city itself. And yet, for many the city is indeed a place of community and belonging, a warm and inviting place they would hardly exchange for anything in the world.

Some perpetuate the myth that a person in the city is a number only, always an anonymous stranger. Harvey Conn (1987:37-64) sought to deconstruct myths about the city, among them the myth of faceless numbers. He suggests rather that people in the city create new networks of relationships and communion, often not in the immediate neighbourhoods as would be traditionally expected, but in their work places, sport clubs, and other places of meeting and social exchange.

The challenge is to locate these new networks and to shape cities and spaces for social exchange around these, thereby reinforcing the sense of community that people do find. In the changing inner city of Pretoria, there are also new expressions of community and social exchange right in the neighbourhood, at the corner stalls of informal traders selling vegetables, at the 24-hour petrol stations, at the local Taverners' Village.

The *flâneur* often expresses an ambiguity about the cities in

which s/he wanders. As Stef Bos (1992) expresses it in the lyrics of his song, *Mijn Stad* (My city), in which he speaks of his love for his city - a welcome haven for some; but he also expresses his hatred for a city that sometimes cruelly and arrogantly exclude those who are strangers and outsiders.

Refugees and asylum-seekers often find the city a cold and hostile place, and yet, in the midst of their estrangement they sometimes find surprising signs of warmth and embrace: the Scots International Church Rotterdam (2015) or the Paulus Kerk Rotterdam (n.d.), the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg (Kuljian 201; Hankela 2014), the Ethiopian restaurant in Sunnyside, Pretoria or Greenmarket Square in Cape Town, are examples of places where asylum-seekers or foreigners find connection and acceptance, despite their current social status.

The Paulus Kerk offers hospitality in different ways: to homeless people and drug addicts; through support groups for LGBTIQ

MIJN STAD

Stef Bos

Mijn stad heeft gouden torens
Mijn stad heeft grijze straten
Mijn stad ligt langs de Schelde
's Nachts te slapen
Mijn stad heeft rode lippen
En een hart van diamant
Ze uren naar me kijken
Ze kan me schaamteloos verleiden, want...

...Mijn stad heeft mooie benen
Mijn stad heeft felle ogen
Mijn stad kan weinig geven
Maar ze kan zoveel beloven
Mijn stad heeft een verleden
Waar ze nooit iets van vertelt
Ze is betoverd door de liefde
En verloederd door het geld

Maar ik hou van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Mijn stad, mijn stad, mijn hart

Mijn stad verstopt de mensen
Zonder geld, zonder bezit
In de godvergeten krotten
In de kamer zonder licht
Daar wonen oude mensen
Uitgeleefd en afgedaan
Ze hebben zoveel te vertellen
Maar geen mens wil ze verstaan

En in mijn buurt lopen de hoeren
Langs het grote Astridplein
Ze zijn dicht bij het station
Maar ze nemen nooit de trein
In elke straat ben ik geboren
Ik ken de weg naar elke kroeg
Want ik heb mezelf gezocht hier
Van 's avonds laat tot 's morgensvroeg
En ik hou van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Mijn stad, mijn stad, mijn hart

Mijn stad, mijn stad is zacht
Zo zacht als helder water
Ze is teder voor een dromer
Ze heeft een haven voor piraten
En mijn stad, mijn stad is hard
En onuitstaanbaar arrogant
Want ze haat, ze haat een vreemde
Uit een ver en arm land

Maar ik hou van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Ik haat, ik hou van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Ik haat van mijn stad
Ik hou van mijn stad
Mijn hart

In the lyrics of this song, "Mijn Stad", Stef Bos sings of his ambiguous relationship with his city, Antwerp. On the one hand it is an ode to the city: its seductions and promises, its tenderness for dreamers, as soft as clear water; on the other hand it is a lament of the city: promising that which she cannot give, hiding the poor and harsh towards foreigners. The song reaches its climax in the crescendo:

"I love my city
I hate, I love my city
I love my city
I hate my city
I love my city
My heart"

people; through journeying with those who sometimes struggle with the dark sides of sexual behaviour therefore being ostracised by society. At the Paulus Kerk they are offered a safe space in which to tell their stories, share their hopes and fears, and find companionship as they seek to journey in and with the paradoxes of life.

4.2 THE GIFT COMMUNITY: a place of mutual exchange

Mike Greenberg (1995:40-41) speaks of the importance of exchange in building community, but also of community as locus of exchange.

If there is not exchange to establish mutual bonds of relatedness and interdependence, there is not community. But if there is not community to transmit culture richly and differentially to individuals, there is no new value to exchange.

Exchange helps to foster what Greenberg (1995:40) calls the “gift community”:

The gift community exists to the extent that people recombine what their culture has differently transmitted to them, create new value from these recombinations, and make that new value available to each other through exchange - irrespective of money that might or might not always change hands in the process, and even if the new value is only seen in a shop window and not purchased and possessed.

Certain neighbourhoods have greater potential to facilitate such gift communities: “to create a community fostering such exchange and sharing one will build a place

with close interaction, many people living and working in close proximity, diversity of thought and custom, encouragement for recombinations of diverse patterns” (Greenberg 1995:53-54).

In reference to the modern American city and planning discourse, and yet this also speaks of South African urban patterns, Greenberg (1995:54) continues to say:

But proximity, diversity, and connectedness are the very qualities that modern planning policies and real estate development practices increasingly, fanatically, sought to eliminate from American cities in the decades after World War II. Urban and suburban areas grew up after that war that don't behave like cities, don't look like cities, don't work like cities - aren't cities. The name is the same but the phenomenon is different.

In a quest to return to the authenticity of the city as community and place of exchange, Greenberg almost identifies the pseudo-city, which has exorcised from its soul the essence of what defines it. Such community will not happen accidentally but needs to be intentionally shaped and planned for. As Greenberg (1995:118) says: “...we have neglected to build or maintain neighbourhood structures that encourage us to participate and engage near our homes”.

In a place like Berea-Burgers Park, the priority of vehicle over people has caused planners and engineers to create major thoroughfares into the city and out of the city, ripping through the heart of residential areas, challenging the possibility of

neighbourhood and exchange.

...because the neighbourhood is the part of town that is geographically closest, perceptually most familiar, and (in the ideal) psychologically most comfortable to the people who live or work there, the neighbourhood is potentially the most efficient nexus of social, cultural, and economic exchange. But in order to realise this potential, the opportunities for exchange must exist within the neighbourhood and these opportunities must be laid out geographically in relation to each other and to the neighbourhoods residential areas in such a way as to yield economies of form. (Greenberg 1995: 150)

This requires a different conceptual framework, shifting from major thoroughfares linking residential areas, to “an array of neighbourhoods, each with its own centre” (Greenberg 1995:151).

There is a certain transformation and intentionality required in shaping local urban spaces and their connections to each other. There is also a certain resistance required, to prevent the kind of planning or development that will harm the soul of a neighbourhood.

4.3 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY; VIRTUAL CITIES

Through virtual technologies the world has become much smaller. In the new world we live in, many people find their community, their closest social exchange and most intimate personal sharing, not in the face-to-face and physical interaction with others, but in the virtual city of chat rooms – *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram* and

others. Licoppe (2004:135) speaks of the way in which “absent ones make themselves present” and how such “absent presence” has grown rapidly with the advent of the “information society”. Today there is a new pattern of social relationships, often expressed in a multiplicity of communities marked by *absent connectedness* and being managed through the use of sophisticated communication technologies. Of course this creates questions, not necessarily only about the city, but also about the quality of human relationships generally, and the changing nature of human intimacy.

Jones (1997), in distinguishing between “virtual settlements” and “virtual communities”, suggests that “the presence of affective bonds” was the distinctive factor. Sometimes social networks or virtual relationships can remain entirely virtual, but migrate from being a “virtual settlement” to being a “virtual community” if an affective bond is established. And sometimes virtual networks translate into physical interaction.

One needs to recognise, however, the very diverse embodiments that virtual communities take within the city. Mediating friendships, relationships and social networks as implied above is only one such an embodiment.

Others use virtual tools of communication and networking as the most effective and convenient way to organise or facilitate meetings,

conferences or courses. Can it be regarded as a potent tool to increase access for those who were traditionally excluded, socio-economically, but also as a liberating source for popular education and conscientisation? Or is it a source of increased exclusion and marginalisation?

In places like Kenya, Ghana and Somalia, virtual technologies enable poor slum dwellers to access financial and other services previously unthinkable (Onyulo 2016; The Economist Newspaper 2017). It clearly becomes a tool of greater inclusion, and increasingly used on the terms of the poor themselves.

Interest groups or advocacy campaigns working for social change or advancing justice are managed and expanded on-line, from small-scale local initiatives, to larger national movements such as the *#RhodesMustFall*, *#FeesMustFall* or *#OutsourcingMustFall* campaigns on campuses around South Africa (cf. Thomas 2015), to the overthrow of governments during the Arab Spring (Stepanova 2011; Harlow 2013).

Scholarly engagements and the organising, sharing and more democratic dissemination of large volumes of research and knowledge resources, are facilitated by virtual platforms growing in sophistication. A good example of a virtual community in scholarly circles, is the *Virtual Cities Project* (IAO 2011). It “is designed to provide a scholarly digital space

for the study of cities, both past and present, and make resources as well as new research accessible to the scholarly community, students, and the general public” (IAO 2011).

This project emphasises *spatial histories* and different scholars are sharing the effective use of tools such as GIS for research purposes. Secondly, the project emphasises *visuality*, asking how spatial histories can be represented through images, but, also, engaging the ways in which images – photography, film, and so on – shape history (cf. 2011 IAO). Cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Saigon are already documented and represented in this way.

Virtual tools are not just used to enable social networking and virtual communities but a study of this phenomenon has also become common place. The *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking* (IJVCSN) (IGI-Global 1988-2017) is one example of a scholarly endeavour entirely devoted to an interrogation and critical understanding of virtual communities.

A profound effect of virtual technology facilitating interactive global communities, is the popularity of virtual games, or, “virtual worlds”. An extensive body of research pays keen attention to this global reality, as is evident in a fairly recent research report, entitled “(t)he future of research in computer games and virtual

worlds” (Scacchi [ed] 2012). Dedicated journals such as the *Journal of Virtual Worlds Research* or the *Journal for Computer Game Culture* (Yale 2015), engage such expressions (explosions) of popular culture that most city planners, urbanists, theologians or ethicists have not even started to comprehend. Spanning all continents and erasing geographical and other boundaries, this is giving rise to an expression of popular culture that is profoundly real (virtual = real); significant (size, novelty, meaning-making) and specific (Boellstorff 2015:4):

They are prime examples of place-making online... They are fertile contexts for exploring questions of embodiment, and often for questions of building, crafting, and making. Many of these features of virtual worlds overlap with other online social phenomena, and gaining a better understanding of virtual worlds will thus continue to have comparative value for theorising the range of digital cultures. The future of virtual worlds is specific.

Of particular importance in this regard is a whole genre of its own, known as virtual cities (Jaffe 2014; Guardian News and Media Limited 2017) which consist of both virtual software to represent actual and imagined cityscapes, as well as city-building games. Klaus Philipsen (2013) argues that virtual cities present us with imaginative resources that can help animate better actual urban spaces. Bereitschaft (2015) suggests “city building games” as an introduction to how urban systems work, ideological biases and all.

He suggests that such games are designed with prior biases that are rather unchangeable, considering them “the Gods of the city”. Yet, global city building communities exist, probably replicating the actual ‘lived’ cities of the world. Can alternative virtual worlds or city building games be imagined, that could help birth both radically different virtual and actual urban spaces?

Ellin (1996:8) says that although all places could today be connected electronically, and this is indeed increasingly happening, there is the “simultaneous uprising of local cultures and expressions of place”.

In many cases virtual tools enable both virtual communities and very specific local place-making in a very complementary way. The Maboneng Precinct in Johannesburg is an example of that.

Instead of virtual connectedness therefore diminishing local cultures and expressions of place, a deeper longing to belong and to assign meaning, not only resists possible dehumanising effects virtuality can have, but instead employs the virtual as complementary tools for broadcasting local uprisings and celebrating local places. Those committed to radically different cities would do well to incarnate themselves virtually in order to do the work of fostering an alternative consciousness.

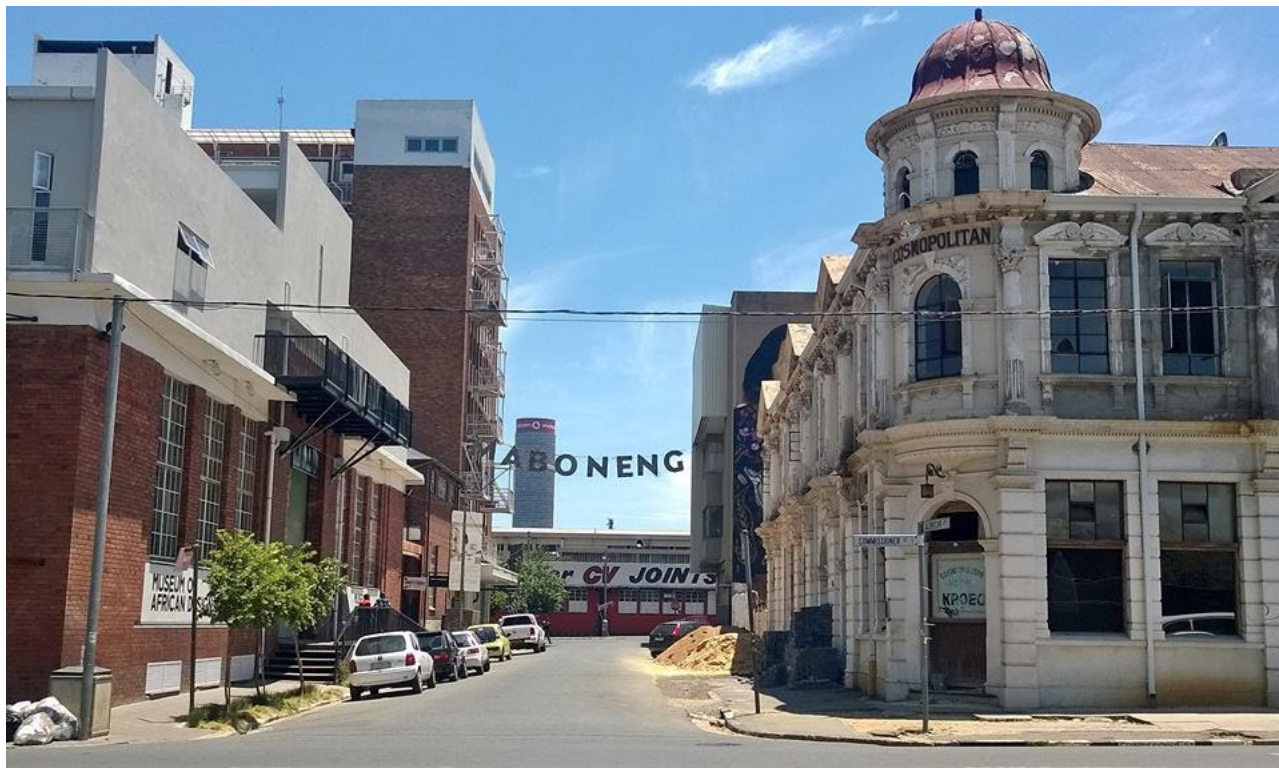


Fig. 170. Maboneng (Source: AboutJane)

4.4 THE CITY AS MULTIPLE, MULTI-LAYERED, OVERLAPPING COMMUNITIES

We probably need to consider the city as a community of multiple, multi-layered and overlapping communities. I use community in the sense of home-coming, belonging, shared identities, shared rituals, shared values, solidarity, communion, interconnectedness, family. This might even include the reality of the virtual city, as one such an overlapping community.

I do not suggest community in an exclusivist sense, in the sense of defining myself as a member of a certain community in contrast or opposition to being a member of another community. I do not suggest community based on

narrow definitions of self-identity, but rather in terms of plural or ever-dynamic identity in relation to others who are often very different in terms of how they would define their own identity (cf. Sen 2006:18-39). When I speak of shared rituals and values, I mean it both in the narrower sense of religious or faith communities, but also in a much broader sense of finding consensus on shared values and rituals, inherited or communally constructed, that go beyond our religious or cultural affiliations, and that are creative in how they foster a strong sense of common humanity despite wide-ranging difference.

I could simultaneously participate in many different communities of which I might be the only

commonality: a group of cyclists that I spend hours on the road with; a home church gathering once a week; my work community, both immediate as well as the extended professional networks I belong to; a study group I participate in as part of a postgraduate degree programme; my immediate family and extended family; and different circles of friends. At the same time I might belong to different Whatsapp groups or virtual communities exchanging ideas on different topics ranging from photography to cycling to city planning.

4.5 BETWEEN INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMUNITY



Georgi (2005:93) describes how cities in the Greco-Roman world became the locale for “the formation of the human, as individual person and as social being”. Cities became “the training centres” for such a transformed humanity. And yet, this gave rise to an individualised concept of being human which had as its antithesis dehumanised tendencies, because being human in community became of lesser importance than the achievement of the individual (cf. Georgi 2005:93).

The cause of it in Paul's eyes was the association of the idea of personhood with competitiveness and achievement-orientation. Paul shows that this individualism threatened the communal dimension, allegedly a major element of Greco-Roman urban life as well. (Georgi 2005:93)

The seeds of such an individualised humanity, originating in the Greco-Roman urban world, spilled over to city-building practices and are shaping it until this day. The way in which individual vehicles count for more in shaping urban spaces than the mobility of pedestrians, is one expression of that.

And yet, there are cities that demonstrate bold alternative visions. The City of Vancouver (2017) expresses its vision in the following way: “The City of Vancouver’s mission is to create a great city of communities which cares about our people, our environment and our opportunities to live, work and prosper”.

It is a city made up of 23 distinct communities. On the city’s formal website each community has its own community profiles webpage that includes information on history, heritage, planning, zoning, local services & resources (such as community centres, libraries, schools, fire halls, community organisations), future plans, local community events and more.

The City of Vancouver (2017) prides itself in envisioning a city marked by “liveability, innovation, sustainability and diversity /

Fig. 171. Nel, 2017. Individualism and community.

inclusion”. They have won numerous awards for their ability to weave diverse populations together into coherent neighbourhoods, held together by multicultural social planners, appointed by the local authority for this purpose.

One of the symptoms of harsh individualism is what Glancey (1996) calls “the politics of selfishness” in which individual choice outweighs communal consideration.

Today, those of us with money and a degree of health and security are offered an ever increasing choice, not only of things, but of ideas and ways of ordering our lives. The free market enables those who live in cities to satisfy our apparently insatiable and urgent demand for whatever we want - a quarter-pounder with cheese, London buses the colour of a packet of Refreshers, 15 pounds' worth of unprotected sex, sushi and Thai noodles at four in the morning, the occasion to play the good Samaritan dropping the odd coin into the lap of the homeless on London's Hungerford Bridge, and the rich, and ultimately indigestible, recipe of fashionable bars, cafés and shops that those lucky enough to be in work can afford.

Glancey (1996) suggests that a continuation of a politics of selfishness will leave our cities to disintegrate into ever smaller splinters, unable to nurture the kind of communities and connectedness that could sustain society. Community can happen in spaces that are perceived to be warm, inviting and inclusive, whilst at the same time curbing the freedom of individual choice at the expense of collective well-being. Redeeming the soul of the city would include investing

time, creativity and resources in shaping spaces that would exorcise perceptions or realities of the city as a cold, discriminatory, selfish or exclusive place.

4.6 WHAT ONLY COMMUNITIES CAN DO...

Donna Shaper (1989:120), in *A Book of Common Power*, speaks of the power of community.

Only communities can shut poverty off at its tap in greed. Only communities can stop war. Only communities can restore streets to dwell in and land to grow in and schools to learn in. They can do these things because they understand what's really important, which is their life together.

They understand better than big systems or institutions do, as the clown reminds us, that life is about the common place that happens between the big events. We should not idolise community, she warns (Shaper 1989:120), as it always carries its own shadow of illusion, failure, selfishness, and incompetence, with it. And yet, something new is possible in cities, where people come together in community, sharing their lives as citizens.

Shaper (1989:120) asserts: “The streets will be restored when communities take back the powers they have given away. On that day the big systems won't have a prayer, and the communities will not need so many”.

5. SUSTAINABLE CITIES, COMMUNAL ECONOMIES

*Who knows the patterns of our lives before our days are spun?
Who knows the reason why, and how, before it's all begun?
The One whose hand weaves all with love and mystery and care;
the One whose thread and warp and weft are flesh and earth and air!*

(Messenger 2001:183)

Visions of sustainable cities could never be realistic if they are not preceded by the dream of a city as deeply interconnected communities. It is precisely at the point of our fragmentation, denial of the other, and refusal to recognise that we are a part of a bigger whole, and that what we do affects others, that we develop lifestyles, practices and policies, that threaten the future existence not only of our cities, but of our entire planet, because of our exclusivist, exploitative and ego-centred nature.

There is no mainstream development agency today, from the United Nations Development Programme to the World Bank, that does not have sustainable urban development as a very clear objective (Pieterse 2004:8). Sustainability speaks of the way in which resources are managed and shared within the household of humanity (*oikonomos* = economy), but it also speaks of how the structure of the household is managed and maintained in the process of developing and utilising resources (*oikologos* = ecology). Sustainability is not just about the environment but also includes issues relating to economics, land use, and institutional well-being (cf. Pieterse 2004:13). Oranje refers to Welbank's (1994) simple definition for sustainable development as "...the maintenance of environmental capacity over time".

One of the greatest challenges of cities today, especially in the

developing south as they continue to explode in all directions, is the question of economic, ecological and human sustainability. In response to continuous urban sprawl and decentralisation, theories of compact cities and densification seek to address issues of greater sustainability (cf. Jenks & Burgess 2000; Oranje 1997:246-247).

Dewar (2000:2017) speaks particularly about the way in which South African urban policies and practices are challenged in this regard:

[The current sprawling, fragmented and separated urban form of South African towns and cities is entirely unsustainable. Greater compaction is essential. There is an increasing national awareness of the need for this and of how it might be achieved technically, but there are a number of entrenched policies and practices which need to be changed if rapid improvement is to happen. The critical variable is political will] [...and a spirituality of the earth - my insertion]

And Todes (2007) is quite clear about sustainability not being properly integrated into South African planning practices.

Nan Ellin (1996: 67) refers to Moshe Safdie (1970), Rachel Carson (1962), E.F.Schumacher (1973), and others, who fostered an interest in ecological planning, proposing a "return to self-sufficient small communities". Such authors paved the way for environmentalism and sustainability planning in the 1980s, promoting communal living, imagining radical alternatives such as the arcologies of Paolo Soleri (1969), and proposing an "own vernacular" that is "an expression of our life and technologies" (Ellin 1996: 73; in reference to Moshe Safdie's critique of large institutions and plea for sustainable local models.

5.1 SUSTAINING THE EARTH

An ethical or spiritual prerequisite to foster sustainability is the assertion that human beings belong to each other and to the land, and that the land is part of the community of which we are a part. In the city in general, but particularly concerning religious communities, there is the problem of narrow individualism that shuts out concerns for others or the earth (cf. Jung 1993:3).

Aldo Leopold writes about "the interconnection of all life in community" (Jung 1993:46). It is in the recognition of this interconnected community in which all created life has to share creatively with each other, that we will start to contribute to "restrain competitive human instincts and ultimately promote survival" (Jung 1993:47). Leopold asserts that

"(A) thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Jung 1993:47).

Shannon Jung (1993:36-37) suggests five factors that challenge the sustainability of life and creation. She mentions

- Individualism and powerlessness
- Economic systems and our lifestyles
- A view that human beings are not part of nature
- Unqualified faith in the ability of science and technology to fix things
- Religious devaluation of the earth or creation as a central category for God or for people of faith

How would a spirituality of urban space help carve out lifestyles and practices that go beyond the above, becoming communal, life-affirming, and creation-centred?

In Schumacher's work (1973), *Small is Beautiful*, he offers a vision of a world where land and human creativity are both respected and affirmed. Similarly, Jung (1993:3) says it beautifully: "Caring for the earth and its future will emerge from out of a sense of nature as a sacrament".

Too often humankind is not seen as part of the environment (Jung 1993:28). The challenge of our

cities is to be sustainable both socially, for the people who inhabit them, but also environmentally. Cities do not only dehumanise people, but also elevate the hand-works of people, as if human achievement is superior to the concerns of the environment. A creation-centred spirituality will find ways to creatively interweave an appreciation and celebration of all of life, as it excels, empowers and sustains the other, instead of over-coming and exploiting the other.

Jung (1993:30) says: “Both our cultural and theological assumptions have placed humanity at the centre of purpose and meaning in the universe”. We are called upon to move beyond a human-centred approach to the city, not only building cities as if people matter, but also as if the earth matters, and in a way that will still enable the city and the earth together to nurture future generations of human life.

5.2 SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PEACE-BUILDING

Rasmussen pushes us to the



boundary suggesting that our ethic of sustainable community should include the way we speak of, think about and include the “enemy”.

In all of life there are socially constructed hostilities and historically clashing interests. No soul is immune from harm, no life is without some violation, no community remains at peace indefinitely, no paradise is unspoiled. Indeed, “to be human is to be in conflict, to offend and to be offended”. So the question for viable, sustainable community, finally, is whether there is a gospel and ethic for enemies. (Rasmussen 2001:4)

Rasmussen seems to be saying that it is at the point where we embrace creative, life-affirming and reconciling approaches towards “the enemy” that we will also start to overcome the historic and socially constructed animosities that often destroy humanity and the resources of the earth alike. The land issue in South Africa or Zimbabwe, in Brazil or other Latin American countries, between Israel and Palestine, calls for a radically redefined ethic of unparalleled inclusion, if we are to build a sustainable global community.

5.3 SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COMMUNAL ECONOMIES

Many authors have concluded that all the big economic systems have failed us. In the context of a vision for sustainable cities, I would argue for a bolder search for innovative models of communal economies (Cobb 1992:72-77; Wallis 1994:179-185). One of the great fallacies is that the benefits

Fig. 172. Nel, 2017. Sustainability and peace.

of economic growth necessarily trickle down to the poorest people and neighbourhoods.

Both John Cobb and Jim Wallis challenge the way in which economic growth theories lead to the destruction of traditional communities in the developing world and the exclusion of the majority of urban dwellers. Wallis (1994:179-185; in De Beer 1999: 362) is questioning policies and practices on land reform, real estate speculation and property development, indicating how human manipulation of the market favours only some. Suburban shopping malls are an important example of how the Market dictates spatial configurations, robs people of land, and also displaces “real” communities (Oranje 1997:182). Instead of disillusionment Wallis (1994:179-185) offers alternative visions of how land and wealth could be redistributed, how cooperative or community ventures could replace individualised property ownership, and how community-owned enterprise development could shift the patterns of distributing profit.

Communal economies or an economics of community will not necessarily discard visions of private ownership or profitability. In fact, they will find very creative ways to generate profit. The real difference is how the profit is distributed and who is included in the ownership or benefits from the profit. The next table offers examples of well-managed social enterprises that do not concentrate profit with a few shareholders but distribute it widely.

TRINITY REAL ESTATE, NEW YORK CITY, USA

(Trinity Wall Street n.d.)

Trinity Real Estate is a professional real estate company created by the Trinity Episcopal Church in Manhattan, New York City. In 1705 Queen Anne of England donated 215 acres of “church farm” to the church. Many churches received parts of the original 215 acres of land. Today Trinity Real Estate is managing the remainder, still being one of the largest landlords in Manhattan, owning and managing 18 of the most lucrative properties in and around Hudson Square. The profit generated from this company is sustaining the mission of the local parish, but also supporting churches throughout New York City and in the rest of the world, particularly in areas related to hunger, HIV/AIDS, peace-building and democratisation, theological education by extension, and leadership development. It could be argued that this land was originally obtained as a result of colonialist expansion – which raises deep debates. However, it is currently put to redemptive use in countries across the world.

THE POPULATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (PDA), THAILAND

(n.d.; www.pda.org.th/eng; visiting the PDA offices in October 2006)

PDA is well-known world-wide for its innovative approach to health care, sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention. At a time when people in Thailand refused to speak of condoms, PDA created humorous campaigns to promote safer sex through condom use. They have had a huge impact in educating rural communities on family planning, in helping rural women access contraceptives, and in getting people to speak on issues related to health, sex and HIV/AIDS. Their approach and work had an impact on policy, not only in Thailand but also abroad.

| 342

To sustain all their work, PDA also developed innovative economic enterprises. *Condoms and Cabbages* is a restaurant franchise that rates amongst the best in Thailand and now also has branches in Japan. Birds and Bees are exotic beach resorts owned, developed and managed by PDA. The restaurants and resorts are amongst some of the more than 20 highly profitable businesses developed by PDA. The profits are reinvested in rural and urban health programmes, agricultural projects, and small enterprise development. It is an example of a communal economic model, redistributing generated resources as widely as possible.

21. A Swahili word meaning "familyhood" or extended "family". President Julius Nyerere adopted the concept politically for his national development project, exploring the implementation of African Socialism (cf. Nyerere 1968). Ujamaa villages were created all over rural Tanzania as an expression of Nyerere's vision (cf. Huiser 1971).

Another important aspect of communal economics is how a fairer distribution of resources better serves the well-being of all citizens, poor *and* rich, in the long run. Cobb (1992: 77) suggests that a fairer distribution would also "reduce the costs of welfare to the nation", since people with better access to their own sources of livelihood would not become dependent on the welfare of government or hand-outs of other citizens.

An economy of community should attempt to include as many people as possible in productive activities for the generation of their own income, whilst acknowledging that not all people can be productive based on ability or disability, age or health (De Beer 1998:363).

5.4 SELF-RELIANCE IN COMMUNAL ECONOMIES

One of the key concepts in building sustainable cities with a greater degree of a communal economy is the concept of self-reliance (cf. Friedmann 1992-vii). Poorer communities are often completely dependent on products and political decisions from outside. Self-reliant economies require local communities to identify products they need, and to find ways for local production, that will not only employ local people, but also recycle local resources locally, instead of allowing profit to leave the community every day at closing time.

When communal economics, self-reliance, or the concept of *ujamaa*²¹ is raised, it is often accompanied by a call to return to African values where communal economic practices were traditionally more common. Mofokeng (1991:64-70) doubts whether it is as simple as calling for a return to African values, however, since much of what used to be known as African has also been affected by the "distorting and perverting power of the market". He does hold, however, that the vision of communality and solidarity remains key concepts in guiding and developing local communities and economies that will display a greater degree of self-reliance.

Once again, sustainable cities require the retrieval of known models of communal economies and innovative experimentation with new models. Such economies are only possible when there is a greater sense of communal solidarity. Communal economies, based on an affirmation of our collective interdependence and anchored in communal solidarity, should be explored and fostered in order to build local self-reliance.

5.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDING(S)

In line with Cobb (1992) and Wallis (1994), we cannot contemplate sustainable cities without reflecting critically on the use, distribution and development of land, but also the innovative use, development and recycling of existing buildings, as well as sustainable building of new projects. Sustainable land use and sustainable building should incorporate concerns for a sustainable ecology and economy.

Do we exploit the land in ways that will make the city unsustainable for future generations, or do we maintain healthy open spaces, spaces for recreation and social exchange, and spaces fertile for sustainable food production?

Do we continue to practice uncontrolled decentralisation, or do we foster innovative visions of denser cities, which preserve natural spaces, contain traffic demands in smaller areas, and utilise smaller areas more optimally?

- Does the private sector monopolise land for individual accumulation of wealth, or does government build monuments for current political leaders, at the expense of those who lack the power or capital to access land fairly for their own sustenance?
- Do we recycle old buildings in ways that model ecological

and economic sustainability through sensitive, responsible, ethical, and inclusive practices and uses, radically subverting dominant paradigms of exploitation and exclusion?

Although plans such as the National Development Plan, the Integrated Urban Development Framework and the Tshwane 2055 Strategy use inclusive language that seeks to address land and spatial segregation, higher density developments that foster mixed-use and mixed-income living, overcoming some of the historic divides in our cities, are still overshadowed by the development of North American style shopping centres, utilising vast amounts of land, designed around private mobility, and often separating work, residence and social life.

A project such as Menlyn Maine (n.d.) in the east of Pretoria seeks to integrate work, living and social spaces with a strong green component. It strives to be the first green city in Africa. Its website (Menlyn Maine n.d.) welcomes one to an integrated city:



WELCOME ...to a City developed on the principle that everything is integrated. Here we can live full, balanced and responsible lives.

Menlyn Maine is designed according to New Urbanism Principles. Here, everything you need is on your doorstep. Shops, offices, a gym, restaurants, a hotel, medical facilities and a day-spa are all within walking distance from your apartment.

Fig. 173. Menlyn Maine, 2016
(source: businesstech)

Everything is integrated, except the poor. It remains economically exclusive and fails to contribute to the spatial restructuring of the city in a way that will constitute spatial justice.

One can only access the “accessible” facilities and services if one has a moderate to high income. The lower-paid workers in Menlyn

Maine, and the surrounding Menlyn Park shopping centre – security guards, cleaners or maintenance workers – would not be able to access housing, either in this project or in surrounding neighbourhoods. The nearest affordable housing for workers would be at least 15-20 kms away.

5.6. SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS

Sustainable cities require sustainable institutions. Without visionary people, communities, movements and institutions that stay committed to the dream of a sustainable city over a long period of time, sustainable cities will remain a pipe-dream. Sustainable institutions are places where there is a high degree of shared vision, democratically owned and shaped by all those involved, and transferred from one generation to the next. A sustainable institution introduces policies and procedures that will support and complement the vision, and manage limited resource creatively and responsibly. Sustainable institutions find innovative ways to generate and complement resource, not only for maintaining what is, but also for investing in preferred future realities.

Local government departments, citizens' organisations, non-profit organisations, businesses, churches and mosques, all need to work at being sustainable institutions caring for and investing in the city, with their intellectual, social, human and financial capital. Sustainable cities and communities could become a feasible vision if the institutions and communities operating in the city start to foster visions of self-sustainability, which they can subsequently model and share with their neighbours and the city as a whole.

A spirituality of urban space cannot but embrace a vision of a sustainable urban environment, ecology, and institutional life. It is the mother bird that hovers over urban space that seeks to sustain and hold together, even when human practices exploit and tear apart.

Messenger (2001:183) says it beautifully:

*“The One whose hand weaves with
love and mystery and care,
The One whose thread and warp
and weft are flesh and earth and
air”*

6. ETHICAL CITIES

Leonardo Boff (1997:136) states the following: “Politics and technology are subject to ethics, and ethics in turn requires a spirituality and a mystique. Otherwise ethics becomes a morality of the order thus far achieved and established, and easily slips into moralism”.

I started this chapter with an outline of a spirituality of space. Emanating from such spirituality, and rooted therein, I will seek to propose a number of actions / practices in the next chapter that might assist in exploring a responsible and compassionate ethic of urban space (cf. Boff 1997:135). Boff asserts: “What we need today is not a new morality but a new ethics” (Boff 1997:135).

The urban context we are in, not just in South Africa but also globally, demands of us to embrace and develop such an ethic.

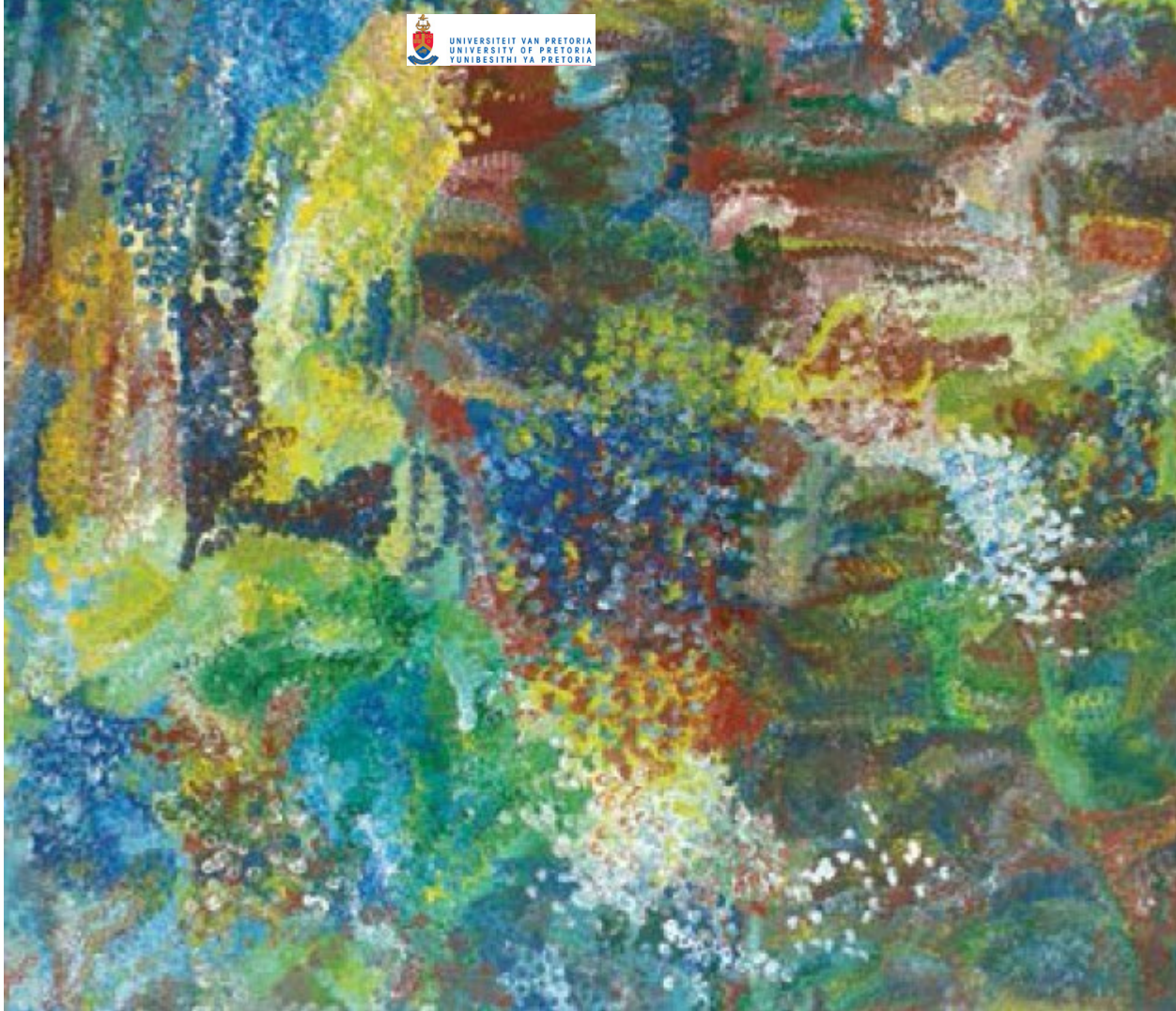
The huge reconstruction and development needs of the masses of our people, forgotten, down-trodden and disempowered by decades of colonial and Apartheid rule... dictate against us taking on a situation-specific, relativist, anything goes-position towards what is our and every other development-related language game's moral task: reconstruction and development. Being a moral task, there must be a definite base and unequivocal normative guiding lights / pointers based on what is right and wrong and what should / ought to be (Oranje 1997:266)

What Boff suggests requires a new way of being and living, that will be attentive to change, able to adapt personal lifestyles, practices and policies, and protecting and promoting all of life (cf. Boff 1997:135), “starting with those that are most threatened”. It deals with the question Oranje (1997:12) poses in reflecting on Gauguin’s painting and 3-pronged metaphysical question of 1897: Where do we come from? What

are we? Where are we going? Oranje asks a further question: Where sh/could we be going? Or: What would be the ethical path for us?

In his book, *The poetics of cities*, Mike Greenberg (1995:8) speaks about ethical cities in relation to the rationale for his book, in this way:

The poetics of cities is also the ethics of cities. One concern of this book is to consider how we can treat our neighbours ethically by crafting the physical city in such a way that it can be easily used by all its people - so that not only able-bodied, well-off adults with cars but also children the elderly, the poor, the blind and the lame can have freedom of movement and convenient access to all the good things that cities offer. We can strive for no less if we imagine ourselves to be a just and ethical society Political and economic freedom in the abstract means little without practical freedom of movement and action.



6.1 AN ETHIC OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMPASSION

| 348

Boff (1997:135) suggests that such an ethic should contain the twofold principle of responsibility and compassion. All the great spiritual traditions have emphasised this twofold ethic, including exemplary figures such as Albert Schweitzer, Ghandi, the Buddha, St. Francis of Assisi, chief Seattle, and Jesus Christ.

The guiding principle for compassion is "Good is whatever preserves

and promotes all beings in their dynamic equilibrium, especially living things, and among living things, the weakest and most threatened evil is whatever harms and does away with beings or destroys the conditions for their reproduction and development." Or, as Albert Schweitzer put it concisely, this means unlimited responsibility for everything existing and alive" (Boff 1997:136)

It is important for human beings to find the correct balance between compassion and consumption, passion and possession.

Human beings are not simply beings of desire... They are also and fundamentally beings of

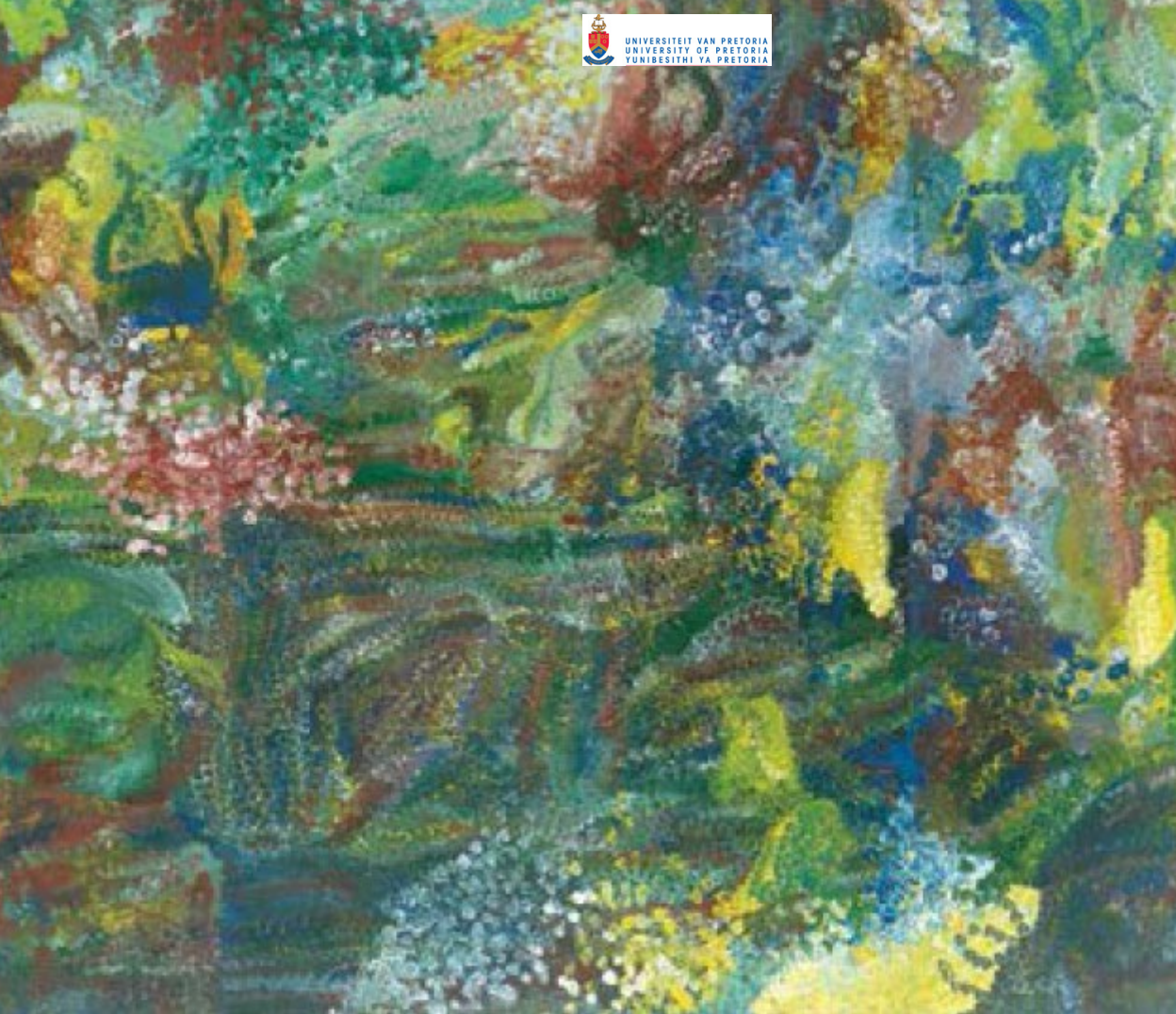


Fig. 174. Kngwarreye, 1994, Earth's Creation.

solidarity and communion. When they become more so, they enter into harmony with the universal dynamism and carry out their cosmic mission as custodian, troubadour, and guardian angel for everything created, thereby realising their ethical dimension (Boff 1997:136)

Cities of desire are cities consuming more than what they can afford, often giving birth to the skyscraper at the expense of the little ones. Yet, we are helped by St. Francis not just to view desire in a negative sense (although he himself sometimes struggled with it). Of St. Francis it was said that

he was a creature of desire (Boff 1997:209): “Desire led him to identify himself with the poor, with the crucified Christ, and with all beings in nature”.

It was desire that moved him away from himself into deep solidarity and communion with the poor, Christ and all of creation. It was a desire that did not accumulate personal possessions, but expressed itself in a deep passion for sacrificial living. Boff (1997:209) suggests that the life of St. Francis holds great importance for the ecological and economic challenges of

our time, and I would add, for the way we conceive our cities. Instead of the way we live in our time, “which is lacking in any magical, shamanic, or unifying spirit”, St. Francis lived his life “with great passion, commitment, awe, wonder, gentleness, forever seeking to connect in communion” (Boff 1997:209).

Why could such figures not become the “patron saints” of planning or city-building professions, since they capture a vision of life and creation that is wholesome, coherent, life-affirming and sustainable, often in stark contrast to that which is practiced today?

Matthew Fox (2000:247) suggests that our creativity should always be put at the service of compassion.

When it is not, the racism and sexism, militarism and giant capitalism will co-opt the image of God in people and use creativity not to return blessing for blessing but to curse and destroy. Much creativity, after all, went into Hitler's ovens for efficient human extermination at Auschwitz, and an immense amount of creativity and skill goes into planning and building a Trident submarine today. This is creativity, but it is not new creation. It is, potentially, the end of all creation as humanity knows it and shares it.

An ethics of responsibility and compassion will grow from a spirituality of solidarity and communion. Ethical cities will be places in which people will take responsibility for each other and the earth, as expressions of deep interconnected solidarity, and

places where compassion will be practiced in relationships and policy, as an expression of a deep sense of communion.

It is a question of how residents, developers, planners and politicians can work in partnership to give birth to ethical cities, to curb their desires, and to facilitate responsible and compassionate practices and spaces.

Differently said, how do we work together to facilitate urban spaces that mediate abundant life for all of their citizens, instead of some robbing from others?

6.2 AN ETHIC OF CRUMBS OR AN ETHIC OF BREAKING BREAD

In cities of vast disparity the notion of ethical cities should also be framed in economic terms. It is Ghandi who said “for the poor the economic is the spiritual and God appears only as bread and butter” (Fox 2000: 269-270). We can fool ourselves with being ethical cities because we practice political correctness and embrace progressive human rights charters, without any of these necessarily translating into bread and butter for the poor.

An ethical city will confront and resist a wide-spread ethic of crumbs, masqueraded behind noble talk of economic growth, trickle-down effect, corporate social investment, philanthropy, and the like. In most of these notions, the vicious cycle of

crumbs being carefully invested into places of great despair and dependency without necessarily breaking this cycle, are still present.

Poor communities remain poor and dependent, as do poor individuals and families. Both non-profit institutions and faith-based organisations, as well as private sector and government, perpetuate such an ethic by applauding crumbs and failing to award innovative attempts by communities, the poor and the non-profit sector to escape their dependency and to create their own resource bases. I suggest an ethic of breaking bread instead of an ethic of crumbs, taking my cue from African-American theologian, Theodore Walker (1991:35-36).

Breaking bread is a metaphor I borrow from the life and practice of Jesus who often engaged people around meals. Jesus introduced the communion meal, which comprised of breaking bread together and sharing from one cup. This is still practiced today by his followers, even though way too often it has become a very formalised and institutionalised practice. The symbolism in breaking bread is simple but rich: it is speaking of intimacy; close communion; belonging together; standing, living and sharing in solidarity. An ethic of breaking bread will always look out for one another, finding new ways of sharing resources that place a high premium on equity and justice, on community and

interdependence.

An ethic of responsibility and compassion will translate into an ethic of breaking bread. A city with these simple disciplines multiplied a thousand times every day all over the city, from the streets to the board rooms, to the religious gatherings, to the places of governance, will be an ethical city, mediating life to the most vulnerable of its citizens, redeeming life for those who are perceived to be most powerful, and creating new spaces where some will not wait for the crumbs from others' tables, but where all will partake of the bread together.

6.3 EXPLORING AN ETHIC OF URBAN SPACE: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY TASK

Imagining the ethical city, would require intensive prior work of analysis and reflection that would help in formulating proposals that present alternatives to current urban practices. This work of considering the ethical city should best be done as transdisciplinary work where those from the built environment and planning disciplines need to work in close partnership with those from the humanities and social sciences, and those who toil away in communities as residents, mothers, informal traders, street cleaners and activists.

Georgi (2005:356) speaks of the need for *theology, planning and architecture to be companions in imagining cities*. It is such (for some

“...for the poor the economic is the
spiritual and God appears only as bread
and butter...”

(Fox 2000: 269-270)

almost unlikely) companionships that will help shape ethical cities, as we help each other read, interpret and imagine the city afresh, through different and sometimes differing eyes. Part of the task of imagining the ethical city would be to critique death-dealing ideologies, to deconstruct destructive constructs, and to demythologise illusionary myths. Georgi says it like this: “Since olden times theology had to deal with symbols and myths. It has had and still has experience with demythologising efforts and with the critiques of ideologies” (Georgi 2005:356).

Georgi (2005:357) raises the challenge for theology, and I would suggest for planning practitioners as well, that these different disciplines in partnership, should seek “to deal with the symbolisms and ideologies of our modern cities and metropolises, not only with the expressed but also with the hidden ones”.

Ethical cities will constantly read and re-read the city from the perspective of its mediation of either life or death. In doing so it needs to uncover the text and meaning behind symbolism and ideology, both that of formal documents and policies, as well as the hidden texts on graffiti walls and in the popular culture that roams the streets of the city.



Fig. 175. Nel, 2017. Nurturing an alternative imagination.

Chapter 07

EMBODYING AN ALTERNATIVE IMAGINATION:

Practising an ethic of urban space

A spirituality of urban space needs to be embodied through practising an ethic of urban space. Living such an ethic implies certain visions, practices, disciplines, processes and/or moments, being intentionally embodied.

1. AN EMBODIED PRESENCE

1.1 CREATING AN EMBODIED, INCARNATE PRESENCE IN SMALL, LOCAL PLACES

1.1.1 Creating an embodied presence

Incarnation is the embodied presence of a godhead (in Christianity) or a master or teacher (Buddhism), entering this realm as a human being among fellow human beings (cf. Portier 1994; Michael 1982). The concept of incarnation is also known in Hinduism and Rastafarianism.

355 |

When I speak of an embodied, incarnate presence here, it speaks of more than attending planning meetings of the local neighbourhood forum. It is born in a view of life, creation, the city, others and the Other, that implies both humility and awe. Dorothee Soelle (1984:73) speaks of the “dust factor” in describing an embodied praxis: the idea that human beings were made from the dust of the ground (humility), that the earth does not belong to humans but humans to the earth (humility and awe), and that the earth is God’s and not the possession of humans or of some humans (humility and awe).

An embodied, incarnate presence requires an intentional, embodied shift from one place to the other, creating a physical presence, choosing to inhabit a new space, being affected by the environment I choose to inhabit, putting my body on the line, journeying with my fellow neighbours, moving beyond the objectivity of an “expert outsider” to the embodied experiences of the “sojourning insider”.

In a previous chapter I criticised planning being done for vulnerable urban areas, mostly being done by people who are not from these communities, and therefore having little or no understanding of, history with, or emotional attachment to the area. An embodied planning presence would allow for the emotions, struggles, aspirations and stories of local people and institutions to surface in the planning process. If I am deeply influenced by what happens in my neighbourhood, the way in which I will participate in discussing or shaping its future will be markedly different from that of the “neutral” external planner. That, at least, is my assertion.

An incarnate presence should not be seen as a method only, but as a way of life, transforming radically the praxis of planning. As Guider (1995:163) says: “The way of incarnate presence is not a means to a greater good: it is in itself the beginning, the end, and the greatest good”.

1.1.2 Asserting that small and local is beautiful

An embodied, incarnate presence in local urban places, announces the importance and validity of such places to become the locales from where systematic urban transformation can start.

The big systems have so accentuated the large against the small, the many against the few, the much over the little, that they have practically convinced us that we are useless. And thus, under the cover of mass society, we all disappear into ever-growing powerlessness. As though our smallness could never matter against its bigness (Shaper 1989:152).

And yet, strangely, those who are supposedly better geared to bring about change because of their power or position, are often those with “the most reason to oppose change” (Shaper 1989:152), because of vested interests.

Nobody on the top of the heap is motivated to jump down. Only those muddling around in what the system leads us to think of as the heap - which is actually our life in community - are likely to produce change in the ethos of the system. Only they who are small and insignificant (from the top view) can be trusted to turn the tables. (Shaper 1989:153).

Jaime Lerner (2000:18), ex-mayor and ground-breaking planner-architect of Curitiba, Brazil, said it like this:

At the root of major transformations lie a small transformation, that is, a small change may be the beginning of a major one. That is why we need an urban policy able to generate change now, without having to wait 20 years for it to

happen. The important thing is to make it happen now and then take time to improve on it...

It means for example having the bus as the embryo of the subway. Having the handrail of the stair up the hill as the basis for the infrastructure in a slum. Having a backyard shop as the basis for economic change.

Small beginnings are never to be despised, since they have the potential to become the good practices that will inform new policy and new practice in time to come. Small beginnings tend to be the seeds of urban transformation.

Urban degeneration often takes place because everybody waits for the master plans and comprehensive policies, or for a charismatic leader or new politician to save us from ourselves. We dare not do anything innovative to reshape our cities, if it lacks formal consent or formal plans or policies. Lerner (2000) would resist such tendencies, setting out to do something first – which helps to test innovative ideas, see what works and what not, and becomes important learning in the bank of urban knowledge – and then taking the next twenty years to perfect it through improved plans and more appropriate policies. Lerner's approach works from practice-experience to plan-policy, whilst most modernist planning approaches works from plan-policy to practice-experience.

Having said that though, in many ways Lerner himself became that charismatic leader or new politician or urban saviour, and

a post-Lerner administration could not necessarily hold things together in Curitiba (2012)²².

Massive regeneration programmes often start with small local interventions, strategically connected until many small trickles become a mighty flood. Examples would be Harlem and Times Square in New York City, although they would not be without critique; or parts of the inner city of Johannesburg slowly experiencing tremendous change and a new excitement. In Johannesburg a multiplicity of small initiatives, combined into a more comprehensive strategy, is unfolding as a movement of change, slowly working its way through the debris of the old city to carve out the new.

But we can also understand “small” in the sense of city-size. George Clancey (2004) makes a case for the fact that small cities – those of less than 500,000 people – are dispersed all over the globe, constituting more than half of all urban dwellers, according to UN statistics (Clancey 2004:2337). And yet, these cities are “both undernoticed and undertheorised” (Clancey 2004:2337; cf. Markusen, et al 1999), forgotten really (Clancey 200:2338; cf. Markusen 2004), whilst they should provide important locales for reflection, and are ideally positioned as smaller cities to develop viable models of innovation for replication (cf. *Cities for a small country*; Rogers & Power 2000).

22. There are also the critics of Lerner's approaches, suggesting it could only happen within the political climate back then, the military regime having put Lerner in power, or speaking of his as a “technocratic approach without participation” (cf. Adler (2016). Halais (2012) speaks of Lerner's intolerance of the landless movement

The challenge is to appreciate the small and the local. But also to allow for the signs of hope that emerge from here to be multiplied in many different ways and places, all the time and all over the globe. Strategically, if we can connect different signs of hope, different partners and different initiatives in our cities and local communities, until a critical mass emerges, hopeful agency will be galvanised and mobilised until it can outweigh and outwit the agents of despair.

Shaper (1989:154) speaks about a reevaluation of the small:

What we have learnt is despair and powerlessness at being small. It is society's way of telling us who's who and what's what.

Empowerment happens when the small stop taking orders and decide to have value as small, not to have value once big. To blow up the deflated places will require a reevaluation of small. Small will have to come into its own as small.

It requires conscious and repeated decisions to stay rooted in local places, to call forth the local gifts and assets, to broadcast the hope that is at work locally, to find more creative ways to invest in and replicate boldly what is happening in the local, until the seeds will become trees.

1.1.3 Solidarity with the poor, the small, the other

An embodied presence will come close to the experiences of those marginalised individuals and communities, whose marginalisation is often marked by their physical

appearance, either the clothes they wear, loitering on street corners, selling their stock, or soliciting their bodies.

It seems as if anonymity might be a greater possibility and choice for those at the centre. Ironically those of the skyscraper can choose to become “invisible”, whilst those often made “invisible” by society are the very ones that are actually most visible on a daily basis. We don't see the chairperson of the Board on the street corner, but we do see the trader selling sweets or vegetables, or the one begging by the street corner. The mansions of the rich are hidden behind great walls and electric fences. But the sprawling squalor of informal housing even threatens to invade busy highways in their glaring presence.

An embodied presence is a presence incarnating itself in the embodied marginality of the poor, the small and the other. It will foster a planning praxis of solidarity, embodying radically new inclusions and participations, both in product and process. Pieterse (2004:4-5) speaks of a new planning paradigm that will borrow from pro-poor planning approaches (Pieterse 2004:4-5) everywhere, bearing distinctive new features.

There will be a recognition and understanding by planners of the livelihood systems the poor rely on: the possibility of displacement will be reconsidered or creative



Fig. 176. Miller, 2016. Unequal Scenes - KyaSands.

alternatives integrated into development plans, if the livelihood systems of the poor are better grasped. Planners will gain an understanding of how rigid zoning practices and master planning can undermine the livelihoods of poor communities: inclusionary policy will also entail zoning practices and other mechanisms that make space for the poor.

Pro-poor planning praxis will promote participatory planning processes that go beyond rhetoric and allow for spaces in which mutual convers(at)ion can be practiced with radical implications for actual planning outcomes. Solidarity expressed in truly dialogical planning, requires a form of “professional suicide” in which the “expertise” of the planner and the local knowledge of community participants are equally valued (Pieterse 2004:4-5; Turner 1996; Chambers 1997).

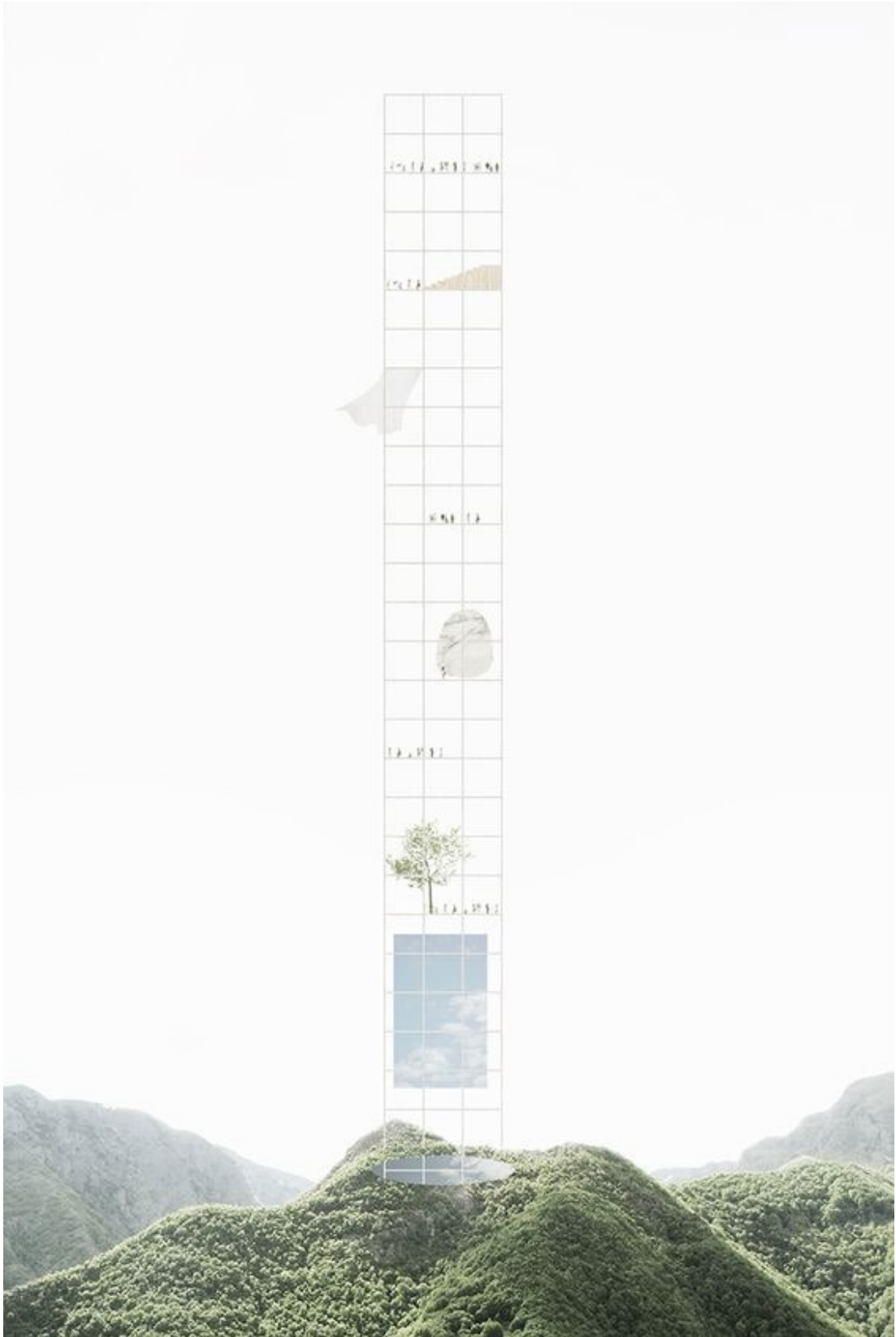
The relative power of the marginalised will be strengthened “in urban politics through a deliberate strategy to strengthen the associations and social movements of the poor” (Pieterse 2004:4; Friedmann 1992; Abers 2000). A central objective of those concerned with inclusive cities should be this: to facilitate or allow the political capacity of poor communities to help transform the reality we all share.

1.2 REDEEMING THE SPIRIT OF PLACE: SPACE & SPIRITUALITY

I suggest as a second discipline the practice of redeeming the spirit of place: i.e. recognising, opening up to, discerning together, who or what is working behind the scenes.

1.2.1 The category of (S)pirit

The category of spirit emerges in all human, cultural traditions (cf.



Boff 1997: 158):

Spiritus to Romans, Pneuma to Greeks, Ruach to Hebrews, Mana to Melanesians, Axée to Nagôes and Yorubas in Africa and their descendants in the Americas, Wakan to Dakota Indians, Ki to the peoples of North-East Asia, Shi to the Chinese.

Writings about space and the city, often also honour the genius loci, or the spirit of place, affirming the connection between the physical and visible space and a deeper spirituality.

The concept of *genius* in ancient Roman terms suggested that human beings were accompanied throughout their lives by their own spirit (*genius*), in the same way as *genii* existed for families, professional groups, theatres, streets and cities (cf. Norberg-Schulz 1980:38).

Norberg-Schulz (1980:38) spoke of the *genius loci* in reference to the qualitative character of place, or the “connection between sky and earth”.

Some authors on space would then suggest that every city, town, village or neighbourhood, needs to have its own core, heart, *agora*: a place providing the “physical setting for the expression of collective emotion”. Such a place could be the cathedral, the church, the market place, the town square or the crossroads. This would serve to make “visible the spirit of the city, the *genius loci*, in a space for the spirit, a *locus genii*”

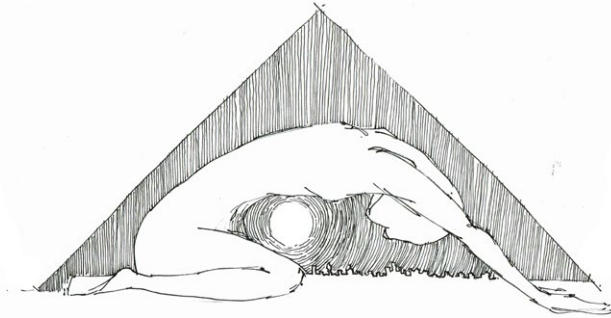
(Norberg-Schulz 1980:36).

A city might have multiple *loci genii*: places of the spirit with the capacity to order, enthuse, heal and make whole.

...from the very moment architects began to ponder solutions to the problems of the modern city, the creation of a locus genii was considered to be a potentially beneficial urban intervention with the power to order an entire city (Norberg-Schulz 1980:40).

It is the presence of the Spirit in history and the cosmos, or the discovery and retrieval of *genius loci*, that creates the possibility of an emergent, surprising and renewed reality, also in the fragmentation of our cities.

...no matter what the names may be, we are always dealing with life, with the universe as an organism too vast to measure... with reality that is emerging, fluctuating, and open to surprise and novelty. The world is filled with the Spirit, which emerges in the spirit found in springs, mountains, trees, winds, persons, houses, cities, heaven, and Earth (Boff 1997:158).



1.2.2 The mother bird: hovering over our urban spaces

The Hebrew word for Spirit is the feminine *ruach* (Boff 1997:160), which is the life-giving, life-permeating cosmic power hovering over the earth to create and recreate, to watch over and nurture, until life breaks forth.

The Hebrew expression of the movement of the spirit over the waters (merahephet, "hovered over the waters") refers to the way the water birds circle over the waters or break the egg - here the cosmic egg - from which all proceeds. In matriarchal cultures the presence of the bird or dove indicated the activity of the Great Mother generating life. Interestingly, since ruach is feminine in Hebrew, it preserves a hint of a maternal function.

A spirituality of space will seek to connect to the presence of the spirit hovering over urban spaces, waiting like a mother bird to give birth to new life, protecting that which is not yet born, and protecting especially those who are the smallest, most vulnerable, most fragile, and most at-risk.

Boff (1997:162-163) highlights five experiences which help us to trace the spirit in our midst: "In human terms a number of experiences point to the presence of the spirit in our midst". He mentions the experiences of ecstasy, enthusiasm, inspiration, communication and responsibility and order.

Ecstasy refers to an extraordinary kind of presence, the singularity of life, the possibility of something fundamentally new or different. Many urban spaces evoke such an experience of ecstasy, pulling people back to these spaces repeatedly. *Enthusiasm* is to be impressed or possessed by an extraordinary energy or vision to achieve something. Enthusiasm in a literal etymological sense means "having god within" (en-theós-mos). Such experiences can be located with certain urban movements, organisations, initiatives, people or events. Boff (1997:162) holds that "(N)othing great and truly creative is ever achieved without the powerful influence of enthusiasm".

Fig. 178. Nel, 2017. Motherbird

Experiencing *inspiration* is to be in the presence of something greater than yourself that is influencing your thinking, writing, speaking, design, planning, conceptualising. In a number of religious traditions, such as the Judaeo-Christian tradition, their “sacred” writings have been considered to be inspired by the Spirit (1997:163). Could we contemplate *inspired* spaces?

Communication is a fourth experience mentioned by Boff (1997:163): “To communicate means to go out from ourselves to break the closed circle of our own identity, and to surrender to the other. Communication is a process of self-transcendence”.

In our diverse and polarised cities, the kind of communication that creates spaces for fresh and liberating relationships, and unexpected consensus, could definitely be regarded as a sign of the unifying, life-giving spirit in our midst.

Lastly, Boff mentions responsibility and order. The possibility to create order and beauty from chaos, to reshape raw materials perceived as negative in ways that display splendour, and to achieve high levels of integration, community and integrity of life, in situations that would normally be marked by wounded relationships, scarred community, and deep isolation, is another sign of the spirit birthing something new.

1.2.3 Creation-centred spirituality: finding the spirit in all of life

A creation-centred spirituality, as developed by Matthew Fox (2000:40), challenges the human-centredness of many religions and suggests a more inclusive embracing spirituality that celebrates the interconnectedness of all living things.

In our planning and city-building practices we have often not even arrived at being human-centred (cf. Short 1989; Oranje 1997:236). Our practices are often technocratic, bureaucratic, capital-centred, or centred on “just some humans”. A shift towards human-centred planning would already be a dramatic shift towards a new paradigm, and yet Fox steers us beyond that even to suggest a creation-centred approach that would include human-centredness but not at the expense of the rest of life and creation. To that affect Fox (2000:40) says: “...creation-centred spiritual person is sensitive and aware, alive and awake to the everflowing, ever-green, unfolding of the divine Dhabar. For such a person, creation itself constitutes the primary sacrament”.

Fox (2000: 38-41) translates “*dhabar*” – the Hebrew word used for “the word of God” – in reference to scholar Gerhard von Rad, with “divine energy”. Fox suggests sensitivity for the divine energy that seeks to surprise us as

we engage creation. This word – *dhavar* – contains not only left-brain substance (verbal, truth-oriented, cognitive, technical) but also right-brain substance (affection, play, love, art, grace).

Saying it differently would be to develop a new consciousness; a fresh openness; to be surprised in the present, in the realm of our urban spaces; to engage with urban spaces in a way that will transform physical space into a sacred space of expectation, of profound meaning and of wholeness being mediated.

The environment and its degradation and visions for intergenerational, environmental and inter-species justice have become vital, not only globally but also in South Africa (Oranje 1997:236; 275). Fox (2000:104) speaks of it as a new awareness and experience of the “panentheistic divine energy and grace bathing us everywhere”; it is “God among us”.

Or as Boff (1997:115) says it:

Beginning a new covenant with the Earth absolutely requires a reclaiming of the dimension of the sacred. Without the sacred, affirming the dignity of earth and the need to set limits to our desire to exploit, its potentialities remain empty rhetoric.

The one fact on which there is consensus among scholars of the sacred is that the sacred always has an essential connection to the cosmos - that is where it is born. The universe becomes a sacrament, a space and time where the energy permeating all things is made manifest, the opportunity for the revelation of the mystery

dwelling in the totality of all things.

1.2.4 Planning: a collective act of discerning and calling forth, together

Instead of denying the spirit of place in our spatial practices, there is a need to discern together all the latent promise and possibility of a place, calling forth the life-giving spirit of place from behind the cobwebs of abuse and technocracy that has often stifled creativity and life often for generations. These cobwebs represent the other “spirits” that were not interested in giving life, but in taking it; not in building community but in breaking it down.

At the same time such a process of discernment will also foster a new consciousness, recognising “...how absent divine beauty and divine justice seem to be, how the innocent still suffer, how the wicked prosper still” (Boff 1997:115).

It will seek to call forth the hidden beauty, and facilitate bringing together that which was torn apart, giving expression to the voices of the suffering, and neutralising the evil power of the wicked that plan and build cities as if only they matter. It is not otherworldly spirituality that is advocated here, but a very material and concrete spirituality that defines innocence and wickedness in the concrete spatial expressions of our cities, that either include or exclude, either affirm or deny.



Fig. 179. Ahug, 2012. Lots of flowers.

Shannon Jung (1993:2) asserts that the holy dwells in the commonplace, referring to Hildevert of Lavardin, Archbishop of Tours in the 11th century, who wrote: “God is over all things, under all things, outside all things, within, but not enclosed, without, but not excluded... wholly without, embracing, wholly within, filling”.

I am reminded of this very graphically by an experience I had on the south side of Chicago in 1993. These inner city neighbourhoods were often neglected by local authorities with many abandoned buildings and vacant open spaces, strewn with litter, used condoms and weeds. I was walking daily on the streets of this community deeply touched by the visible disparities between downtown Chicago, which was merely a ten-minute drive away from the Grand Boulevard precinct where I lived and worked for six months.

Then one morning, sometime in April or May, spring time in Chicago, I walked past one of these littered vacant lots that I had to pass every day, when I was suddenly greeted by a carpet of

yellow flowers that appeared overnight. These flowers, in the midst of a highly challenged neighbourhood, surrounded by broken glass and an overgrown and abandoned piece of land, suddenly became a little sign of hope. For me it represented resilience to cling to life amidst despair, a sense of the sacred bursting through the scars of urban life. Or, as Hildevert of Lavardin, would suggest: “God... within”; and now God bursting forth, calling for us to see the possibility of an alternative.

Planning that is open to the surprise of the yellow flower will not succumb to the myth of neutrality, but be transformed by the (S)pirit, to see new possibilities, to facilitate new connections, to await the bursting forth of life from spaces that were pronounced dead.

Influential urbanist Patrick Geddes (1915:40) agreed with the concept of the *genius loci*, or the spirit of place, but questioned whether we can construct the locus or create the *genius*. Geddes (1915:40) suggested that the best strategy was a rather passive position of doing nearly nothing, “wait(ing)

in reverence for the genius of the place to work its miracle in its own way”. A friend of Geddes, Charles Robert Ashbee (1917), said it differently, suggesting the need “to implant groups of artists and craftsmen into the “empty shells” of existing cities”, arguing that “unless in every city there are men (sic) inventing, dreaming, *finding*

in the city its soul, every attempt to reform life in cities would be in vain”.

Ashbee also considers the soul of the city, but says that it needs creative people to help discern, find, and give expression to the soul, which is often hidden away.

2. INTERCONNECTED COMMUNITY

2.1 SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD

Good planning for good cities will have the common good – the wellbeing of all citizens – in mind. Stubben’s Stadtebau (1890; quoted in Frisby 2001:67) speaks of city planning as more than the construction of individual dwellings, transport systems and neighbourhood design, but as laying the foundation for the “(p)hysical and mental welfare of the citizenry... it is the fundamental, practical, public hygiene; it is the cradle, the clothing, the adornment of the city”.

City planning should be as much for the poor as the rich, as it facilitates justice, removes social grievances, and influences cooperation in social welfare objectives. Gerometta, et al (2005:2014) argue that the most important role of civil society in such planning processes is to help ensure that the general welfare, the common good, is achieved, rather than individual interests only.

For hierarchy is not an inevitable part of social organisation. We live in a society in which the prosperity of the one is often based on the poverty of the other. That need not be so; we have today the resources, the skills, the room, to be able to combine justice with prosperity, mutual respect with efficient organisations. Physical rearrangements, restructuring can help achieve such a society, attacking walls of domination, walls of confinement, will help. But they need to be part of a broader fort to build a better society, physically, economically, socially, politically.

Planning processes could either contribute to erect hierarchical or exclusive walls, or it could help to deconstruct walls and facilitate new arrangements that will democratise the experience of what is good in the hands of many. As said by Soja (1995:251):

Soja continues to lament the city that is and imagines a city that could very well be. We need cities that will be conditions of life, of full and free and un-fragmented lives, not cities of direction and domination. We need walls that welcome and shelter, not walls that

exclude and oppress.

2.1.1 Recognising our interconnectedness: what we do affects others

Everybody in the city is somehow connected as part of our common household of humanity. As the skyscraper and battered woman often live in a relationship of codependency, we need to understand that what we do affects others. The developments we conceive, support and/or implement, the apathy we show in the face of certain political, social or economic struggles, the way we envision land use, the by-laws we create and how they impact on people, all affect the broader urban household.

If we are all interconnected, then we need to be intentional about urban practices and policies that will seek and foster, in very practical ways, the common good. Some are excluded from participating in the resources of the city, and affirmative measures need to be taken to include them rather intentionally. Seeking the common good is about moving beyond our own self-interest, as politicians, planners, churches, organisations, and citizens, and recognising that the city is made up of highly diverse interests that need to be carefully negotiated and crafted together into a tapestry of creative co-habitation.

In different religious traditions the notion of interrelatedness of

all of life is stressed. The Bhagavad Gita in the Hindu tradition teaches how a spiritually wise person “rejoices in the welfare of all beings” (cf. Pedersen 2001:36). In the Theravada tradition Buddhist monks chant the Metta Sutta three times a day, starting with a prayer that says:

*May all beings be at ease, secure;
may they be happy in heart
...medium-sized or small,
seen or unseen,
living far or near,
born or awaiting birth
(Pedersen 2001:35).*

2.1.2 From scarcity to abundance

Steven Covey (1991:45; 61-62;157-162) writes about the difference between a scarcity mentality and an abundance mentality.

The abundance mentality flows out of a deep sense of personal worth and security. It results in sharing recognition, profits and responsibility. It opens up creative new options and alternatives. It turns personal joy and fulfilment outward. It recognises unlimited possibilities for positive interaction, growth, and development.

Most people are deeply scripted in the scarcity mentality. They see life as a finite pie if someone gets a piece of the pie, it means less for everybody else. It's the zero-sum paradigm of life. People with a scarcity mentality have a hard time sharing recognition, credit, power, or profit.

People and institutions with a scarcity mentality will build cities in ways that will concentrate the “scarce” resources with certain people and in certain neighbourhoods. An abundance mentality

will affirm that there is enough for all, if fairly distributed and managed, and people and institutions embracing an abundance mentality will build cities in ways that will share the abundance fairly, mediate the good city (cf. De Beer 2014b).

This aligns to my earlier argument for an economy of community (cf. Chapter 6: 1.5). Such an economy affirms the abundance of life and resources, and therefore finds it possible to share, instead of an economic approach that concentrates on individual wealth-generation, whereby individuals frantically ensure that they access a good deal of the scarce resources of the earth, even if it is at the expense of others.

Jim Wallis (1994:185) suggests that it is fundamentally about values:

The key question is one of values. Important questions of scale, forms of technology, and patterns of ownership and decision-making will need creative thought and experimentation. But the critical issue is a change in our ethics and assumptions regarding economic activity. And the key shift is the movement toward community - the idea of the common good - as the criterion by which we evaluate our economic structures and practices. Community is a sign of transformation.

2.2 FEMINISING THE CITY: PRACTISING SOLIDARITY WITH ALL OPPRESSED

2.2.1 Whose city is it?

Traditionally cities were planned by men for men. City-building tended to be dominated by left brain activity (technique versus artistry, rational versus emotional), with an emphasis on hardware infrastructure (roads and skyscrapers) and a denial of software infrastructure (dialogical spaces, creativity). And yet, the soft city is real and vital for nurturing the soul of the city. As Raban (1974:10) says it: “The city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture”.

Schoonraad (2004:65-69), in asking whether we are building cities for women, suggests that we need to broaden this question to include all those who are vulnerable or marginal in the process of city-building. Feminising the city will not just facilitate liberating spaces for women, but also for all vulnerable or marginal groups, as well as for those who need to be liberated from being perpetrators of exclusions or oppressions. It would mean creating spaces of dialogue and friendship for all who are experiencing urban space as oppressive, or perpetuating oppressive urban space.

In the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood places of social exchange are often dominated by men. The Taverners' Village and the local *shebeens* are male dominated and hardly any other social venues exist in this neighbourhood, apart from the churches. Planners, private sector, entrepreneurs and citizens themselves, all fail to create spaces that embrace women, families and vulnerable people.

It is still men that dominate open spaces in this neighbourhood, and the postmodern feminist critique of the *flâneur* as representing the male gaze, taking visual possession not only of the city but also of women (Watson & Gibson 1995:65), is as valid as before. The freedom of men to wander about the city without experiencing the same threats as women is a “masculine freedom”, an unequal freedom afforded only to some. Women were denied such freedom of mobility in public spaces in the earlier part of the 19th century and the effects of violence and sexual harassment still deny women freedom of mobility in many cities or neighbourhoods today.

Turner (1996:132) suggests that most design schools still follow a masculine design approach, even where headed by women. Experts develop specialised discourses comprising words, metaphors, narratives, work practices, visual images, artefacts, and where possible laws, representing specialised discourse which becomes a means to power, including and excluding

others, just as male-centred discourse was a means to male dominance in past millennia.

Scholars such as Beall and Todes (2011) advocate gender sensitive policy and planning when considering housing and settlement development plans, or when facilitating integrated development plans. This does not refer only to issues of women or men, but to the much more complex gender realities playing themselves out in our cities today, including the issues faced by the LGBTIQ-community in relation to acceptance, safety and inclusion in local urban neighbourhoods (cf. Nomadlist n.d.; Khalo 2012).

2.2.2 From *flâneur* to *flâneuse*

With the creation of the department store in the late 19th century women started to become co-participants in the act of being *flâneur* (Watson & Gibson 1995:68). Female journalists, writers and prostitutes could all be regarded as the *flâneuses* of the 19th century (Watson & Gibson 1995:71).

Freedom in our urban spaces will be expressed in the way women – and all excluded people – can now experience freedom of mobility, being safely present in public spaces, and being allowed as *flâneuse*, both working and wandering, both insiders and outsiders, both near and far, and yet, able to determine for themselves the boundaries by which they want to wander. The *flâneuse* now

“...(p)ower creates form.”

(Turner 1996:121)

Flâneur / *flâneuse* carry within them a challenge to patriarchal thought: “Ultimately more truthful than the zeal of the reformer was the disturbed glance of the *flâneur*, recording with stoicism the challenge to patriarchal thought and existence made by the presence of women in cities” (Watson & Gibson 1995:76).

And yet, Watson and Gibson would assert, we should not fall in the trap of romanticising the *flâneuse*, or prematurely misinterpreting her presence in the streets as an expression of freedom, since we need to recognise the distinct difference between the way in which men and women still occupy the streets. For both Benjamin and Baudelaire the prostitute as *flâneuse* remained “the other”, and spaces still need to be created that will challenge our unilateral constructions of “the other” (cf. also Guider 1995:165-173: with specific reference to prostitution: Sanchez 2004:861-883) by allowing “the other” to speak for herself (cf. Watson & Gibson 1995:72). “The other” could be anyone who experiences herself as “the other”, excluded from, or marginal in the city.

The *flâneur* as wanderer observed, imagined, created and constructed, often from a position of marginality, being “the other” himself/herself. From such a position the *flâneur* was able to read the society as a whole (Watson & Gibson 1995:73). *Flâneur* / *flâneuse* is therefore an ambivalent concept,

both working and wandering, insider and outsider, observer and participant, central and marginal. The allegory of *flâneur* / *flâneuse* would strike a chord with many who live in the city, love the city, yet feel strangely at odds with the city at times. Benjamin speaks of such ambivalence in the *flâneur’s* experience of the city, being seduced by the urban spectacle on the one hand, but at the same time experiencing a “sorrowful engagement with the melancholy of cities” (Watson & Gibson 1995:73).

Despite their ambivalence, their marginality, the heroism of the *flâneur* and *flâneuse* lies in

surviving the disorientating space, both labyrinthine and agoraphobic, of the metropolis. It lies in the ability to discern, making the massed ranks of the anonymity the outline of beauty and individuality appropriate to urban life. The act of creating meaning, seemingly so arbitrary, becomes heroic in itself (Watson & Gibson 1995:75).

2.2.3 Discovering an eco-feminist spirituality of space

Both the spirit (in Hebrew) and wisdom (in Hebrew and in the early church) were regarded as female: protector of life, wife and mother (cf. Boff 1997:169). In exploring a spirituality of space, I suggest that we borrow from the rich contributions of eco-feminism.

There exists a close correlation between eco-spirituality, eco-feminism and deep ecology (cf. Jung

1993:49, et al; Van Schalkwyk 1999).

Deep ecology can be virtually a religion in its own right. The motivation of that movement includes the sources we have already described: relatedness, transcendence, community, and powerful emotions. The movement includes other religious elements as well - the association of believers with each other, for example. Community is especially important. Deep ecology is grounded in the religious vision arising from the experience and appreciation of community with other living things (Jung 1993:49).

In eco-feminism a similar emphasis is placed on the interrelatedness of human community with the broader earth community. Susan Griffin writes about this, stressing the close relationship between her physical self and nature (Jung 1993:50). Eco-feminism understands the oppression of both women and the earth, and shows a “commitment to relational holism” (Jung 1993:50), but then includes all of creation. The city as skyscraper has equally exploitative, oppressive and exclusive consequences for women and the earth alike, both tending to become victims of its battering.

Karen Warren (1990:125-145) suggests that both sexism and humano-centrism are based on social domination: women by men, and the environment by humankind. Issues of race and class could be further added, as other expressions of social domination. An eco-feminist ethic would “share a preference for moral choices that are inclusive of the

perspectives of oppressed people and the land” (Jung 1993:51-52). In both an environmental ethics and feminism, emphasis is placed on “the values of community, of care, of friendship, and on appropriate mutuality”.

This leads Jung (1993:52) to conclude that “any environmental ethic which permits discrimination against woman to continue, and any feminist ethic which permits discrimination against nature to continue, is quite simply inadequate”.

Eco-feminism also reformulates the relationship of God to the environment (Jung 1993:51; also Ruether 1994, 1998; Fox 1983:18; Soelle 1984; Diamond & Orenstein 1990). It is well captured by Alice Walker in *The Color Purple*, reflecting a different vision of God:

My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laughed and I cried and I run all round the house. I knew just what it was. In fact, when it happen, you can't miss it... I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field and don't notice it.. Everything want to be loved. Us sing and dance, make faces an give flower bouquets, trying to be loved You ever notice that trees do everything to git attention we do, except walk? (Walker 1982:178-179, in Christ 1989: 314; Jung 1993: 51)

An eco-feminist spirituality of space will emphasise people in relation to nature; a sense of the transcendence in the presence of

nature; an awareness of the biosphere as community; powerful human emotions in the face of nature: fear, friendship, beauty, power, trustworthiness; an association with a broad base of religious, ethical or spiritual commitments, of which deep ecology, feminism and liberation theology are a part (cf. Jung 1993:52-53).

Building upon eco-feminist's suggestion that the oppression of women and the earth are both expressions of social domination, I suggest that an ethics of space should include a conscious decision to practice solidarity with all who are oppressed. This would include not only women, children, the poor, or people from certain excluded groups, based on race, class or ethnicity, but it would include all of creation, the entire cosmos: "Kinship is more than human: it is cosmic" (Boff 1997:211).

Translating this into planning discourse would include a strong focus on environmental rights and justice (Oranje 1997:250; Van Wyk & Oranje 2013), deducing, among other resources, from the South African Constitution, Section 24(a), where it states that every person has the right to "an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being" (Republic of South Africa 1996:10). In Section 24(b) environmental protection is further promoted by providing for legislative and other measures that will "(i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation,

(ii) promote conservation; (and) (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development" (Republic of South Africa 1996:10).

I conclude this section by moving back from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to Latin American liberation theologian Leonardo Boff (1997:211), who describes the life of St. Francis as

another way of being in the world, one quite different from that of the modernity that we have criticised. The latter stands above things in order to possess and dominate them, whereas that of St Francis is together with them, to love them and live with them as brothers and sisters at home.

The life of St. Francis showed solidarity with all of creation, and particularly with oppressed sisters and brothers; a kinship that was more than human, including all of life, and all of creation.

2.3 CREATING & FOSTERING A MULTIPLICITY OF WARM, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

2.3.1 Creating community

Once we have embraced the broader principle of belonging to one urban household we need to give practical expression to this notion, by supporting and creating a multiplicity of warm, inclusive communities in which *just* (fair) hospitality can be practiced. When I use community in this section I do not refer only to the

accidental expressions of community – common purpose, sense of belonging, intimacy, inclusion – that are often found, although they are equally important and should be strengthened where they are found. What I refer to rather is the intentional creation of inclusive communities, facilitating welcoming spaces, a sense of belonging, prophetic ways of sharing, liberating dialogue, development of life-affirming ritual, the celebration of diversity, and discovery of self in relation to others.

I also speak of community in contrast to harsh individualism (self as god), exclusive isolationism (self as an island), or soul-destroying materialism (accumulating goods versus caring relationships).

Community could provide the spaces in which an alternative imagination is nurtured and practiced, in the way it invites the excluded, gives voices to the voiceless and secures access to all sources of livelihood.

2.3.2 Just hospitality

In the United States the so-called *asylum churches* gave refuge to those who fled Latin American countries who were at war, often under military dictatorships sponsored by the US government itself. When nobody else was willing to embrace these very vulnerable refugee communities, there were churches that offered *just hospitality*, welcoming people into their congregations whilst

at the same time questioning the legitimacy of these Latin American governments, as well as US foreign policy and the stance the US government took in relation to such governments. Gzech (2006) writes: “Unprecedented numbers of Americans became involved through their churches and synagogues, which proclaimed themselves “sanctuaries,” as well as in bar association efforts to provide pro bono representation to Salvadorans and Guatemalans”.

The *Central Methodist Church* in *Johannesburg*, at a time when the Department of Home Affairs denied the huge influx of Zimbabweans across South African borders due to the situation in Zimbabwe, and the city did not have any alternative space to welcome these people, offered accommodation in the liturgical space of the church itself to more than 1,000 people every night of the week.

Usually churches, when they do commit their space to homeless people or refugees, will offer the church hall, or the church basement if it was in the United States or Europe. But Bishop Paul Verryon offered the “most sacred space” of the church building as the sanctuary. Obviously he defied all building regulations in the process. He would probably argue that it is more unethical to close our eyes to the despair of these people than to offer them hospitality and in the process break the rules. In offering hospitality this church offered a

profound critique of government's response to Zimbabwean refugees, but also of the way in which the city was not dealing with the issue at all.

The *Paulus Kerk* in *Rotterdam* (n.d.) offers a private space in their building to homeless people who are substance users, to be able to inject themselves with clean needles in a safe and controlled environment. They started this project, facing huge criticism, in order to offer a space to substance

users that will prevent HIV-infection, overdosing, and other disastrous effects. Through their openness they built trust relationships and substance users now have an opportunity to deal with their addictions as well in a safe environment. However controversial this might be, it provides an alternative image of how the city could offer space to very vulnerable people who are often regarded as dispensable.

One morning I stopped at the Fountains Circle, the entrance to the city, when I was approached at the traffic light by a young homeless person I have known for some time. He told me that he was scared because he was going for his HIV-test results that day, and he knew he was at risk because he used dirty needles when he shot himself with heroine.

This moment of informal exchange helped me to understand the simple hospitality offered by the Paulus Kerk. Perhaps this young man could come off drugs one day and be HIV-free. Perhaps he could be prevented from a drug overdose. Perhaps he could find the courage in a safe space to start to deal with his addiction and the causes that led to it. Perhaps one day he will be able to once again embrace life that is more on his side.

At the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Schoeman Street, Pretoria, just hospitality has been a theme for many decades. At a time when black and white South Africans could not share restaurants in the city, they opened the Five Loaves Restaurant on their premises, becoming a prophetic space that not only welcomed all people to experience hospitality, but also spoke of a just alternative to the exclusivist spaces of South African

cities at that time.

The same church later hosted the Akanani Street Centre (Tshwane Leadership Foundation 2015), a drop-in centre for homeless people in the inner city. In interviews done by a postgraduate student, he asked visitors to the Centre what the most important contribution of the Centre was. Their consensus was that it offered them a safe space. For homeless people in the city a friendly and safe space is a

rare commodity. Here they were offered hospitality and this space also became a prophetic space speaking of the exclusion and injustices experienced by homeless people daily. Sadly, in 2009, the church decided to cancel the agreement with the service provider, and alternative accommodation had to be found. Sometimes sanity and sterility become more important for churches than safe sanctuary for those who are deeply vulnerable.

Common Ground (2011-2015), a housing company based in New York City, has developed innovative housing solutions, demonstrating very effectively that investing in homelessness is not just an expression of an ethic of responsibility and compassion, or an ethic of breaking bread, but also makes business and financial sense, as they demonstrate how their approach is at the same time more cost-effective than anything the city or the state is doing, and yet with lasting impact on facilitating people's reintegration into communities. Their bold hospitality over years, expressed in impressive housing development with the homeless, is now translated into policy work, to ensure that the proven practice they developed will be institutionalised as part of the mechanisms of a more just society.

Sanchez (2004:864) argues the sex worker's position as a subject of not only exclusion but also of erasure: "She begins and must remain a

figure of exclusion to mark the outer limit of society, the subject to which homo sacer is approximated" (Sanchez 2004:862). S/he is called the marginalised of the marginalised (Guider 1995).

In reference to the prostitution-free zones of Portland, Oregon, Sanchez (2004:868-873) shows how prostitutes are not simply displaced but banned, in the interest of "quality of life" and "neighbourhood liveability". It is legislation drawing boundaries between "the life spaces of privileged, propertied residents and the body of the prostitute" (Sanchez 2004:872). What would *just hospitality*, mediated through embodied presence, look like in this context?

What has this got to do with planning?

The communities quoted above are prophetic in exposing the fractures of the city, highlighting the exclusivities, the exclusions, and oppressions. In doing so, they offer, often unintentionally, a harsh critique of urban society and the neglect of urban planning.

They are prophetic also in demonstrating alternative uses of space and resource sharing, indicating that it is indeed possible to develop more inclusive models of neighbourhood and housing, as well as different models of resource distribution (cf. Burgers Park Village in chapter 8). And sometimes, if they have remained faithful to their practices, they could indeed start



Fig. 180. Kipsi, 2016. Soko-ni Kariakoo.

to lead the way in terms of informing and changing urban policy. Such communities are also constructively prophetic in how they reshape entire neighbourhoods over time. Bethel New Life in Chicago is one such an example, the Tapestry Community in Atlanta another, or Integrated Holistic Approach / Urban Development Project (IHA/UDP) in Addis Ababa, a third.

2.3.3 Mutuality in Conversation

The Swahili term, *sokoni*, refers to the traditional African market, which is not only a place for the exchange of goods, but also for lively communication and the exchange of information and ideas (Robra, Manchala & Anderson-Rajamigam 2001:94).

Too often local processes are shaped by dominant discourses coming from outside the neighbourhood, disregarding the local people, their stories and visions, and their hopeful alternatives

rooted in living in and with the context, often for many years (cf. Robra, et al 2001:94-95).

Sokoni symbolises an open circle, to which all are invited, a moral community in which all can participate clearly, visibly and equally, their voices being heard. Robra, et al (2001:95) suggest that the *Sokoni* presents to the church as community a tremendous challenge of an alternative vision.

A church, they suggest, and I include a city or urban communities, will not be a moral community

if they are not a true community of women and men; if the poor are not at its centre; if we cannot speak about the essentials of life; if children and youth are silenced; if violence occurs even within churches (mosques, synagogues, temples) and Christian (and other religious) communities (my italics).

In creating community there should be the intention to create dialogical spaces - i.e. open,

inviting, circles of equality - that foster true dialogue, in which alternative or silent voices are also invited to participate. Good dialogical spaces are spaces that facilitate mutuality in the conversation ensuring that all conversation partners - also the poor, women, children, the youth, all those who are violated - are equally participating, contributing and transformed (cf. Cowan & Lee 1997). In such spaces “conversion” or “transformation” is not mediated by some for others, but there is mutuality in the giving and receiving. This requires a “letting go” by some in coming into the conversation, and a “taking up” by others.

Boff (1997:215) reflects on the way in which “(P)ossession creates obstacles to communication between persons and with nature, for by possession we are saying “This is mine”, and “That is yours,” and so we are divided (Boff 1997:215). What is required is conversation that is rooted in an embrace of our common humanity - that we indeed belong together; and affirm abundance - that in our sharing there is indeed enough.

The communities introduced above, which are practising a high degree of just hospitality, are usually flowing from such dialogical spaces, in which both those creating the spaces as well as those invited to enter, are undergoing a “conversion” experience.

2.3.4 Planning in community

The challenge facing those involved in planning or shaping urban spaces, is whether we are able to foster new planning practices that truly seek community as the locale for planning to happen. In other words, how do we create communities, or how do we become present in communities which practice hospitality, so that our experiences within the community profoundly shape our theories, practices, plans and policies? Would a planner who spends just one a day a week at a homeless shelter in mutual conversation with homeless persons, envisage the local neighbourhood where homeless people live in the same way as she would have done, had she not engaged with people in such an equal manner?

One has a sense that planning is often done on behalf of or for the faceless masses. And some are deliberately planned out of the local neighbourhood. *Planning in community* – or planning as friends – would transform such planning practices because it would include conversations that change the way we see and think, it would connect us to each other in new solidarities that also speak of compassion and justice, and it would keep us accountable as it is now our friends that we are planning for and with, the ones we have to face again tomorrow, and not simply faceless numbers.

2.4 CREATING VISIONS OF INCLUSIVE, INTEGRATED CITIES

A next thrust is to be deliberate in creating new visions of more inclusive and integrated cities. As a measure for how effective our cities are, or how effective urban democracies work, we need to consider the level of social inclusion.

When we understand ourselves as community, and the weakest member of society as belonging to our human family, then we will argue for cities that display a far greater sense of inclusion and integration. Because then it is my sister or brother who is included, or excluded, not just a distant stranger.

And yet:

(P)resent threats to the whole community of life, human and more-than-human, require different boundaries for our spiritual-moral universes. Moral exclusion of other persons is sometimes the culprit. Despite Jesus' example and command, we don't habitually place the well-being of others in the same framework as our own. Moral privilege thus treats insiders at the expense of outsiders. The result is society's perennial plague of "us" versus "them" (Rasmussen 2001:1).

Susan Opatow (1990:1) says:

Moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules and considerations of fairness apply. Those who are morally excluded are perceived as nonentities, expendable, or undeserving; consequently harming them appears

acceptable, appropriate, or just.

Most people draw tight boundaries around what they consider to be moral community. Some are then excluded and some are included (Pedersen 2001:39). In urban literature the same terminology of moral community is not necessarily used explicitly, but exclusion is practiced on the same grounds.

In the context of globalisation, Robra, Manchala & Anderson-Rajarigam (2001:83) consider the disregard and exclusion of many:

...people in South and North, East and West know that fragmentation and destruction of the social fabric of societies characterise the reverse side of increasing richness for the "chosen few" and the growing power of corporate business. Those who are made dispensable, the "surplus people", are excluded, but they do not vanish. Street children, homeless people, youth gangs in the ghettos are visible even in the United States of America, the most powerful and richest country in the world.

And Dieter Georgi (2005:358) likens the tremendous challenge of garbage and waste management in modern cities, to ways in which people are also classified in terms of being dispensable or indispensable.

The problem of trash does not start with garbage removal; even less does it end here. Isolating persons in sanatoriums, reformatories, and prisons can pertain to it as well. This relates to the difficult issue of the distinction between the dispensable and the indispensable, which has many different faces. The medical profession knows this. The problem of "triage", the selection of those considered worth

saving, is not limited to epidemics and other catastrophes. It is more common, and other professions are involved in such decisions, too. How are they made? Who defines the values operative in them?

Or,

...it's possible - to now take a relaxing walk along the Mumbai coastline at Girgaum Chowpatty. Finally, the sand feels like sand... the city's most famed beach is free of muck, debris, urchins, beggars, lepers and hutmens, thanks to state culture Minister Pramod Navalkar (Fernandes 2004: 2421).

Even cemeteries become evidence of such exclusivist clearance practices, not only clearing the city of waste and “dispensable” people, but even of “a memory of the city’s former citizens” (Georgi 2005:358).

In what Pedersen (2001: 41) calls “ecothology”, a central tenet is the expansion of our moral community to be all-inclusive. In striving for inclusive cities, with high levels of integration, and ecological and economic sustainability, such an expansion and redefinition of boundaries become important. A very rigid, narrow definition of moral community will in itself not be sustainable. Similarly, planning theory and practice need to nurture visions of inclusive and integrated cities or urban communities.

Visions of inclusive cities should affirm that nobody is dispensable, assigning worth to “the least of these”, and embracing those who are alive, those still to be born,

and those who have gone from this life already. The case of Mumbai above, where the beach clearance was carefully guarded by permanent police officers and a 120 feet-high watchtower (Fernandes 2004:2422), illustrates how exclusionary models of community can be practiced by the state based on “narrow definitions of liveability that actively exclude marginalised social groups”.

Black Africans in South African towns and cities were excluded from the rights of ownership from the outset (Frescura 1992:9; in Oranje 1997:35). Government’s official stand was expressed by the Stallard Commission (1921) “... that urban areas were the white man’s creation and that Africans had a right to be there only in as far as they were administering to the white man’s need” (Davenport 1989:548).

To what extent should our vision of an inclusive city also include those who are often viewed with moral outrage? In recent times measures have been taken to displace or criminalise prostitution in the cities of London and Paris, with increasing accounts of police harassment and police violence against women engaged in street sex work (Hubbard 2004:1687-1702). Although framed in the interest of national morality and values, Hubbard (2004:1696) expresses the cynical view that there is a “conflation of sexual immorality and racial Otherness”, most prostitutes being from

Eastern Europe or West Africa and seeking to keep more affluent, white areas pure.

Beyond the racial discourse, the then Minister of the Interior (and later French President), Nicholas Sarkozy, implemented legislation that was interpreted as “criminalising certain groups, bracketing together prostitutes, aggressive beggars and squatters in an Act ostensibly designed to tackle broad issues of national insecurity” (Hubbard 2004:1692). The difference, diversity and controversy of urban public life are sanitised in ways that communicate to certain marginal groups that “they simply have no right to the city” (Mitchell 2001:71, in Hubbard 2004:1697).

Hubbard (2004:1700), in reference to commercial sex workers and sanitising urban spaces, asserts that it is the responsibility of urban researchers (and I would like to add urban planners) to explore the issues faced by those who are marginalised, and “to expose the processes that result in their marginalisation”.

In the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood male sex workers were harassed endlessly by the police on the insistence of one commercial landlord. He manipulated participatory processes in his narrow self-interest, whilst the apathy or disinterest of the larger community, or the activist community’s outrage against the harassment were simply ignored.

Consistent with a creation-centred spirituality and emanating from it, visions of inclusive cities will also consider those living beings that are not human. The SOCHA Housing Association in Durban is required to demonstrate a clear strategy in their plans for developing new housing projects, for how they will ensure the protection of chameleons in their development. This is a beautiful expression of city-building that affirms the life of creation to the smallest of creatures.

An important task of communities is to foster such visions of inclusion through policy, practice, ritual, and creative expression.

Some examples would be the policy of housing companies that specifically make space for refugees and asylum-seekers; liberated zoning practices that foster diversity and social inclusion without overseeing the unravelling of neighbourhoods (zoning, by definition, tends to be exclusionary; cf. Oranje 1997:257; Cullingworth 1993.63-75; Freidheim 1981); religious rituals that are explicit in their use of language that invites and includes, and resist any forms of exclusion, also modelling such discourse in how these rituals are practiced (cf. Hessel 1992); the practice of a theatre company in which professional dancers of different physical (dis-)abilities perform together, in a powerful critique of society’s exclusion of those perceived to be disabled (Matshikisa 2006); and public

art displaying powerful images of social inclusion, questioning the exclusion of some (cf. Sharp, et al 2005).

An example in the article of Sharp, Pollock & Paddison (2005:1015) refers to the redevelopment of the London Docklands in the 1980's in which local people felt "written out of the new landscape" and dispossessed through the highly privatised approach of the developers. Besides resistance in the form of vandalism and graffiti art, generally by those feeling so marginal that they would never be listened to in formal forums, an attempt to *include*, and

to rewrite silenced community back into landscape was through the Docklands Community Poster Project which visualised narratives of community presence

back into the redeveloped landscape through billboards showing aspects of local history and identity, and expressing people's opinions of the development (Dunn & Leeson 1993; Bird 1993).

The ability of public art on its own to foster inclusion "is at best partial" (Sharp, et al 2005:1021), but it could be very powerful at a symbolic level. I suggest that it will be in multiple small and big attempts to embody inclusion - through policy, practice, ritual and creative expression - that new discourses will take shape, new life-styles be embraced, new forms of community be modelled, and new cities will emerge.

3. THE POWER OF PEOPLE

3.1 PEOPLE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: fostering radical participation

The viability of poorer urban areas will be strengthened by planning processes that are radically participatory. Participation invites local assets and insights, nurtures local ownership and investment, and facilitates local partnership and social contracts that could form the foundation for viable and sustainable regeneration that is at the same time very inclusive. Where there is a short-fall in the budget, it is often the commitment and passion of local people, of faith and otherwise, that can sustain initiatives. This needs to be recognised and built upon by formal processes.

Such participatory approaches could help foster strong local democracies, transparency, an appreciation of diversity, minimising alienation and apathy, local civic ownership, and the spiritual progress of participants in terms

of mediating respect, dignity and the right to participate in processes shaping their own futures (cf. Oranje 1997:273).

There is the danger of apathy in the cities of Africa. Nyerere even

warns against the way in which religion in Africa tends to become an evasion of responsibility (cf. Shorter 1978:13). Instead, he argues, “(h)uman beings must take control of their own lives, and make their own choices”. Faith communities in particular have a tremendous responsibility to steer the faith of a people into public engagement and action, helping them understand that faith which is not translated into an ethic of solidarity and community, is *no faith at all*, or poor or *irrelevant faith* at best.

German philosopher Hegel suggested that collective activity for a common purpose undertaken by civil society “produces new forms of solidarity and egalitarian participation, membership and *Sittlichkeit* [ethical life]” (Gerometta, et al 2005:2016). It is the collective ethical life in community that will help to produce good, humane and just cities.

With radical participation I mean a discipline with much greater integrity than so-called consultation processes in which citizens are expected to rubber stamp plans by officials that have already been conceptualised and are ready to be implemented. Radical participation would include citizens and their organisations in conceptualisation, design, strategic planning, implementation and evaluation. What is required is the development of “(a) political culture, a sense of community... beyond the traditional institutional

framework” (cf. Gerometta, et al 2005:2013; Klein 2002).

It requires a shift from government to governance, and an assertive and sophisticated citizenry able to participate radically, both in terms of process – from conception to implementation and evaluation; but also in terms of product – not being co-opted into pre-determined outcomes but able to effect change that facilitates restructured social, economic and spatial patterns benefiting the most vulnerable members of society, thereby fostering radical expressions of social inclusion.

3.2 THE POWER OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Traditionally, development processes often relied on private developers whilst the rest of us were passive onlookers or spectators (Cowan 1997: 193). Cowan describes some shifts taking place in the UK in terms of a growing understanding of city-building as a collaborative event in which citizens had an enormously important role to play.

Who shapes cities? Politicians in central government and on local councils; civil servants; business people, accountants, engineers; institutional investors; arts organisers; creators of public art, and those who commissioned it, health service administrators; and the members and managers of NGO's statutory organisations, community groups and economic development agencies. Also, of course, in their own small way, planners, urban designers and architects. All these people, in their everyday jobs, play a part in creating the

physical setting for the life of the city (Cowan 1997:193).

The New Labour government under Blair also embraced themes such as “active citizenship” and “civic engagement” in their policy programmes and funding initiatives (Luckin & Sharp 2004:1487). They have set themselves targets to increase community participation in local development through so-called Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP’s) (DETR 2001).

A city has a soul when the people of the city participate in shaping the city. The city is alive: “Citizens need to be assured that the city lives, and it cannot live without the active participation of the citizens” (Georgi 2005:364).

In an old classic written by Henry Drummond in 1890, *A City without a Church*, he suggests that citizenship is a spiritual act. A healthy spirituality of space would therefore promote and develop a strong sense of citizenship, and mobilise the citizenry to participate in city-building, in terms of visioning and constructing, but also in terms of monitoring and accountability.

Practices like community organising become important in mobilising citizens for collective and effective action. And yet, the challenge is to secure sustainable action and to build long-term movements that will not only respond to specific threats in an ad hoc-manner, but will contribute to long-term

design and policy frameworks that will transform local urban space. And yet, this remains difficult. As Greenberg (1995:45) says: “... it is hard to assemble a political constituency for urban design policies - as opposed to specific local projects”.

The Gautrain-development (Gautrain 2015), linking the Oliver Tambo International Airport, central Johannesburg and central Tshwane, through a speed train, placed a number of inner city apartment buildings and residential houses in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood at risk. The public meeting to address the concerns about the Gautrain brought together the largest group of citizens and residents since the formation of the Berea Community Forum. The moment that the trajectory of the train changed to avoid running through these buildings, the crisis was over, and the Forum was left with a handful of die-hard supporters only. Greenberg (1995:254-255) speaks of citizens’ action as both promise and problem.

It is possible, with sustained, coordinated, and informed action, for citizen groups to sway city hall, but that possibility is both a promise and a problem. Persistence is most often seen only in reaction to narrow, specific circumstances that are perceived as immediate threats... Only rarely do interest groups... place their narrow, immediate concerns in a larger context.

Ebenezer Howard (1902) envisioned a radically different city, expressed as “a new civilisation

based on service to the community and not self-interest”.

His vision included radical participation of the citizenry in building a community for the common good. But it is rarely the heroism of individuals alone that sparks broad-based change. It is when heroic individuals manage to mobilise a community that change occurs.

There is power when a gathering of citizens become organised into movements. Collectively they could create innovative urban form unlike anything we have known before. In so-called “neo-communitarianism” (cf. Gerometta, et al 2005), there is a strong focus on the third sector, or citizens sector, to mobilise grass-root communities for economic development linked to social cohesion. In citizens’ approaches to economic development or urban regeneration “against the logic of a globalising capitalism, the social economy prioritises social use-value” (Jessop 2002:464; cf. Gerometta, et al 2005).

At the same time Gerometta, et al (2005:2009) recognises that successful third sector interventions often occur in “less economic competitive spaces” – inner cities, de-industrialised cities or cities at the lower end of urban hierarchies. It seems as if the “forgotten” places (Markusen 2004) often stand a better chance of modelling social innovation and inclusion, although the odds of attracting

investment, ensuring economic access and retaining leadership are more difficult.

Ironically, once “remembered” (cf. Markusen 2004), communities run the risk of being valorised economically, sometimes resulting in social vulnerability and exclusion of poorer citizens. In most cities financial profitability outweighs social use-value. Included in the citizenry are children, often forgotten, silenced or discarded. Pollowy (1977:viii) suggests the importance of changed planning practice that would recognise “(t)hat children are the most intense users of our housing environment”.

As argued earlier, the process of planning should also be revisited to ensure the participation of children in designing their own spaces. A good example is the Crown Street Regeneration Project in Glasgow (cf. Tibbalds 1992:92-94) where primary school children were encouraged to participate in processes to design their own areas.

3.3 MOBILISING FAITH-BASED RESOURCES

Dieter Georgi (2005:364) suggests that an urban theology, and I include people of faith and faith-based institutions, need to understand itself as part of civil society that needs to engage the city and urban development.

An active interest in democratic structures and procedures, indeed institutional and personal participation in the democratic process.

are essential... A closer interconnection between university and city and between school of theology and municipality is necessary to provide a platform for intensive exchange with the urban/metropolitan society. The churches and other religious entities in the municipality and its surroundings need to be included in this.

Americans make black religious institutions potentially a very powerful force in the neighbourhood revitalisation process.

Concurrently, white religious institutions possess resources and expertise that the black community needs.

The assets or capital of local faith communities are often an untapped resource for urban regeneration, but then specifically for a kind of regeneration that would be radically inclusive.

Exploring regeneration in the inner city neighbourhood of Hillbrow, Johannesburg, urban planner Tanja Winkler (2006; 2006b) was profoundly challenged by discovering that it was faith-based communities that offered the most consistent sense of community to local residents, as well as possible new forms of regeneration and human flourishing.

Henry Louis Taylor (1994:6/6), in reference to urban areas of the United States, makes a powerful case for the potential role of religious institutions in revitalising neighbourhoods.

Black religious institutions form the social glue that holds together the African American community. Scattered throughout the neighbourhood, these institutions form a scaffold and foundation upon which to build a new community. Currently, these institutions provide a range of social services for their own members and neighbourhood residents. Most are also big landowners, and their ministers are an important segment of the black leadership structure. This combined with the strong religious tradition among African

What would be required, however, is an expansion of their mission from delivery of social services to more comprehensive economic and community development objectives (Taylor 1994:6/6).

Churches and religious groups have assets or capital: they can offer physical (buildings and land), human (volunteers and skills), social (networks and local institutions), financial (gifts and loans), intellectual (technical resources and expertise), and spiritual or moral capital (vocation, service and sacrifice). The church's core identity is to regenerate that which is in decay, to bring good news where it has become bad, and to restore what is broken.

Andrew Davey (2001:62) goes so far as to say that planning has borrowed its language of regeneration from theology, and that people of faith should reclaim the language of regeneration and then populate it with new content. This is powerfully echoed by Mark Oranje (2014), in an article entitled *Back to where it all began ...? Reflections on injecting the (spiritual) ethos of the Early Town Planning Movement into Planning, Planners and Plans in post-1994 South Africa.*

In his article, Oranje (2014) laments the “current bureaucratized state of planning, the inability of planning to inspire those it touches and is supposed to serve, and the lack of passion in the planning profession”. In response, he considers “(t)he possibility and prospect for reforming the profession”.

This is the language and these are the resources of faith that I argue should be re-appropriated for socially inclusive urban transformation. This presents the church, in its urban servant posture, as a logical partner if the objective is true urban regeneration.

Two examples, both quoted before, would suffice here.

INTEGRATED HOLISTIC APPROACH/ URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(IHA/UDP), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (IHA-UDP n.d.)

IHA/UDP is facilitating interventions in the vast slums of Addis Ababa, as impressive as their name is long. They identify the poorest slum in the city, based on United Nations criteria, and then establish a presence in that slum. Over time they facilitate broad-based citizens' participation processes in which slum dwellers themselves identify and prioritise their needs.

IHA/UDP serves as a broker between communities and resources, facilitating projects in close partnership with local communities to address those identified needs. Not only do local people participate in needs identification but they also become implementing agents in building or maintaining their own housing, sewerage systems, community taps, youth centres, health clinics, community libraries, and food gardens.

After some years IHA/UDP then transfers the project to the local community for ownership and management, at which time the project is often sustainable locally. They will then identify the next poorest slum and relocate there.

Because of Ethiopian legislation, IHA/UDP does not operate as a faith-based organisation, but their founder and most of the core staff are motivated by faith as they mobilise a movement of local citizens to do urban redevelopment and slum upgrading their own neighbourhoods.

ABYSSINIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

(n.d.), Harlem, New York City

The historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem discovered that they had a role to play, both as citizens and people of faith, in regenerating Harlem in ways that empowered local people and overcame poverty.

They galvanised their spiritual energy into a socio-political-economic force when they created the Abyssinian Community Development Corporation. This Corporation, rooted in the faith resources of the church, embarked upon an impressive journey to reshape their local urban neighbourhoods.

They took over abandoned buildings and vacant plots to create decent, affordable housing in partnership with low-income people. They attracted banks and franchises into parts of Harlem plagued for decades by disinvestment. They themselves created the first supermarket in their neighbourhood, owned locally and providing employment to local unemployed people. Profits are re-invested into the common good through social services and replicating economic opportunity.

Faith-based resources, once mobilised appropriately and wisely, cannot be contained in religious buildings, but have the potential to transform communities and how they are shaped.

Many other examples exist of local regeneration that can be traced back to the link made between faith and action, spirituality and spatial intervention, the human soul and the soul of a place.

Other examples are the work of Bethel New Life (2015) and the Lawndale Christian Development

Corporation (2014), both in Chicago; Urban Ventures (2015) in Minneapolis, or the work of MES (Mould, Empower, Serve) (2010) in inner city Johannesburg. It is worth exploring their interventions to get a glimpse of what is possible when faith-based resources are translated into urban action.

4. BUILDING ON LOCAL ASSETS AND AGENCY: THE ART OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The above examples are of unutilised assets that are recognised and mobilised afresh. The people in a local place are its greatest assets. Combined with the spiritual resources of faith, hope, compassion and justice, they have the agency to make almost anything possible.

In recent years an approach to communities known as Asset-Based Community Development (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993) has started to revolutionise not only community development practice but also the work of social services generally. Asset-based community development defines communities not only in terms of needs or deficiencies, but primarily in terms of assets, resources, capital, and gifts. It vehemently critiques social service provision that perpetuates dependency and the need for social service providers, often at the expense of beneficiary communities' own agency or an appreciation of the assets they have.

In Harlem, some years ago, one could stare yourself blind against gangsters or drug traders on corner pavements, derelict buildings, boarded-up housing, and

the reality of crime and violence. Or one could recognise the potential of its people, the creativity of its artists, the vibrancy of its churches, the social networks that spanned generations, the possibility offered by vacant land or run-down buildings.

Jember Teferra in Addis Ababa could have been overwhelmed by slum upon slum. But she was able to see the people of the slums as agents of their own change and renewal: people in their old age made bricks from mud to build their own houses securing tenure; young people living on the streets built their own multi-storey youth centre where they could empower themselves; all because Jember identified assets and gifts where others only saw despair and decay (cf. IHA-UDP n.d.).

In the Berea-Burgers Park

Regeneration Initiative (BBPCDC 2005), twenty inner city leaders from all sectors gathered to analyse and put together an action plan for this community. Early on in the process the needs and assets of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhoods were identified. And contrary to the expectations of the group, the media discourse at the time, and the redlining by banks, the assets recognised and listed far outweighed the needs. The group realised that regeneration of this area was a matter of recognising the existing assets, mobilising them creatively, reconnecting assets to each other, and ensuring that assets and needs were matched.

The key to local self-reliance (cf. De Gruchy 2003) should be found in the discovery of local agency and assets. The notion of sustainable cities will never be achievable without working for local self-reliant communities. And local self-reliance will never be possible without a local appreciation of assets and agency by the people and organisation in a local neighbourhood themselves.

In the UK this has been promoted through encouraging social enterprises. Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State and Industry, argued that “(s)ocial enterprises offer ways of involving excluded groups - including residents in low-income areas and people with disabilities - in designing and delivering their own services” (Hewitt 2001; cf. Luckin & Sharp 2004:1487).

Instead of viewing low-income and disabled people as liabilities they are regarded in Hewitt’s statement as people with assets and the agency to develop and manage their own local services, if offered the space.

It is in the proliferation and multiplication of local self-reliance that the city will eventually reach high levels of sustainability. The *ujamaa* principle is helpful in this regard, as it encourages people to take “control of their own lives” (Shorter 1978:28). Practically speaking this policy or vision encouraged decentralisation where people would live and work together in local neighbourhoods “in a real family spirit of cooperation, sharing and trust”, developing own local resources and building upon own assets. It is not a form of villagisation which encourages individual settlers to become richer than their fellows. Rather, inequalities must be strongly discouraged, so that the whole community develops together at the same pace (Shorter 1978:28).

The assets that local communities have are not only financial or land, but also social, intellectual, spiritual, and technical. In a sense true empowerment of local communities should be measured in terms of whether they have discovered their own agency and assets, in how far they have mobilised and strengthened these, leveraged other investments as a result, and played a central role in shaping their own futures proactively instead of it

being entirely shaped for them by external forces.

Justin McGuirk (2015) surfaces examples of local agency facilitating radical local transformations, or city-making from below, in his book, *Radical Cities*. Torre David was a derelict skyscraper, standing vacant in downtown Caracas for more than 10 years, until it got occupied by 3,000 homeless people. Initially they simply started to live there but as time went by they created self-styled apartments, they became increasingly self-organised, and they developed a communal vision embodied in community meetings and consensus-based practices (cf. McGuirk 2015:175-206).

In San Salvador, McGuirk (2015:50-66) describes Túpac Amaru, an urban social movement led by a woman named Milagro Sala. Abandoned as a baby, later dropping out of school to work as a street hawker, and then in prison for petty theft, Milagro emerged as a grass-root leader and activist organising what was to become this powerful grass-root movement known as Túpac Amaru. This movement was organised as a cooperative and consisted of thousands of members, all with equal power, building their own communities around giant swimming pools, housing thousands of people, and creating their own schools and hospitals. Their commitment is to the poorest of the poor in San Salvador, they prioritise employment and believe in

self-organising. They build their own houses and created their own factories to manufacture the building material. The best example of what they created is a community known as Alto Comedero.

These people own their houses, but did not buy them. Nor was there a developer earning profit out of this enterprise. Instead, government funds are made to work hard, with the benefits distributed to the community – and any profits converted into playgrounds and other social amenities. Effectively, what we have here is a socialist system in microcosm, with workers contributing to a productive system and sharing the rewards equally. Alto Comedero is an increasingly rare zone of exception where social mobility is not dependent on rising property values and speculation (McGuirk 2015:66).

MICHEL KAYOYA (1978:89), A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST AND ACTIVIST FROM BURUNDI, WROTE THIS POEM, PROPOSING A RECOVERY OF INDIGENOUS ASSETS AS THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO BUILD A NEW AFRICA.

It is not by raising Africa to the level of the West that we Africans can answer the world's invitation.

It is not by endowing Africa with every material good that we shall grow.

It is not by integrating Africa into world commerce that we shall hand over to the world what Destiny asks of us.

Certainly Africa must be modernised, and as quickly as possible Africa must be enriched. We must work for that with all our strength, not with any ambition to equal or compete with the West, but so that these goods may be a cloak to cover us as we go forward to build up a renewed humanism.

This cloak must cover our own hearts

Our conception of *ubuntu* (human qualities)

Our love of *ubuvyeyi* (parental dignity)

Our practice of *ubufasoni* (nobility of origin)

Our sense of *ubutungane* (integrity)

The respect for *Imana* (God) - our father's legacy to us



3.5 RE-MEMBERING PARTNERSHIPS

Good cities will be built when people representing different and sometimes competing interests, discover their need for each other as citizens sharing the same city and “competing” for the same resource base. In partnership people tend to discover that the resources are adequate if they find ways of sharing them more equitably.

Solid, sustainable partnerships could be a tremendous asset in a local community, as different strengths are pooled to facilitate change. Homeless activists and big business, children and city planners, community leaders and the mayor’s office, informal traders and local residents, might seem worlds apart on the best of days. And yet, they all share the same city, all have their own struggles and aspirations, sometimes contesting the same spaces, competing for the same slice of the budget. Planners and community leaders would do well to facilitate spaces where dialogue could happen between such diverse groups, brokering partnerships that were unimaginable before.

For almost five years the community of Marabastad struggled to create a broad-based community development forum. But towards 1999, the impossible was achieved when formal business, informal traders, people living in shacks, religious groups, NGOs,

the municipality and the police, all worked together in a forum, debating future developments, negotiating the situation of the informal housing, discussing land restitution for those forcibly removed in the 1960s and 1970s, and evaluating development plans for the area. This Forum laid the foundation for an incredible process of consensus planning and development. And yet, with the transition from one Executive Mayor and Ward Councillor to the next, in 1999, some inner city processes, such as this one in Marabastad, were discredited and the Forum dissolved.

Some benefits of partnerships could potentially be better service provision, better buildings, more jobs, a greater sense of community, better marketing and greater local synergy (Cowan 1997:194).

a large number of urban regeneration projects today are based on partnership, with the public, private and voluntary sector working together. But many of those partnerships, though set up with the best of intentions, are confused as to who controls them, what the roles of the respective partners are, how they should operate, and how they can measure their success. What they lack is support and guidance in learning the art of collaboration.

Partnership or collaboration does not happen naturally. For it to produce the optimum results, Cowan (1997:194) lists several necessary requirements, such as a good flow of information, knowledge of its relation to the whole city and regional context, inspiration from experiences elsewhere,

access to skills and professionals, and frequent contact between the partners.

Collaboration goes beyond public participation as it assumes shared responsibility in the decision-making and implementation processes and even shared investment (cf. Cowan 1997:194). It represents a bottom-up versus a top-down approach, maximising participation instead of fostering paternalistic approaches to planning and design, promoting people-centred city-building processes as opposed to city-building processes that seem people-less (Cowan 1997:2001).

Greenberg (1995:57) speaks of the notion of partnership in building good cities in a much broader sense even, speaking of it as an inter-generational enterprise, stretching over centuries.

If a city is a collaborative artwork, as it has been called, it is a very strange kind of collaboration. A partnership between people who may never know each other, who may live centuries apart, who may practice different architectural styles and building technologies, who may begin with very different assumptions about how people go about their daily tasks, who may act on behalf of widely varying kinds of public and private institutions, yet despite the diversity of its creators, in certain places the built environment looks and behaves like a unified assemblage, a collaboration.

Recognising that what we have is a combination of sensitive planning done by our predecessors 200 or more years ago to give us a city that we can call home, and sometimes also the negative legacy of our predecessors that built an urban home as if creation, people or at least some people, did not matter, might foster greater sensitivity with us for how we will build a city for future generations.

Father Maximous (2006) lives in Egypt in the oldest monastery in the world. His life and work stands as a sign of inter-generational city-building. On the one hand Maximous is seeking to rehabilitate the archaeological heritage of this old monastery city, dating back to the 3d century after Christ. At the same time he is committed to help the “city of the monastery” arrive in the 21st century with its technological advancement and completely different way of life. Maximous’ work spans 1,700 years of life, witness, struggle and hope.

At a deeper level, a philosophy and practice of partnership will not just connect and reconnect us to each other, but it will give glimpses of a dismembered and fractured city, slowly over time being remembered, being made whole.



PUBLIC SPACES NEED TO FUNCTION FOR MANY DIFFERENT USES AND USERS

COMMUNITIES AND MOVEMENTS OF HOPE:

Between resistance and reconstruction

1. COMMUNITIES AND MOVEMENTS AS THE CARRIERS OF HOPE

Resonate with Donna Shaper's (1989:120) insistence that small communities hold the key to radical change. Ending poverty, reclaiming schools, or building housing for so-called "un-houseables" can be done by communities, once they "take back the powers they have given away", because they understand that it is in the interest of their life together to do so. Small narratives of local communities need to be supported, strengthened and broadcasted, in order for the seeds of transformation that become apparent to spread.

397 |

At some point though small communities have to connect to other small communities; different geographical areas needs to organise themselves into city-wide alliances; intersectional urban issues need to find synergy in their similar and collective struggle for urban justice. That is when communities do not seize to exist but, whilst

acting very locally as prophetic embodiments of that which they imagine, they also participate in broader-based urban movements for change.

I echo the appreciation therefore with which David Harvey (2012:xii) reflects on "right to the city movements... active in

dozens of cities around the world”. Harvey (2012:xiii) suggests that these movements rise up, not primarily as intellectual responses to urban challenge, but “from the streets, out of the neighbourhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed people in desperate times”. Such movements hold the potential to usher in viable and radical urban alternatives. They concentrate not only on access to services but on root causes that prevent or eliminate such access.

What seems to be necessary, is for a continuum of resistance and reconstruction to be animated: from small communities to movements of communities to city-wide, intersectional urban movements for change.

Urban social movements, significant as they might be, often remain active only within the narrow base of their singular issues or local geographical areas. That is not wrong in itself, but without participation in broader movements, the breadth and depth of change urgently required would not occur. One would see only piece-meal and ad hoc local transformations without gaining the kind of momentum that can offer adequate resistance to dominant discourses and practices of a neoliberal capitalist city. Harvey (2012:xviii) puts it very clearly: “the ultimate task is to overthrow those practices through a much broader revolutionary movement”.

Harvey (2012:25) speaks of the

“multitude of diverse urban struggles and urban social movements already in existence”, innovative in addressing issues ranging from environmental sustainability to the integration of migrants and the urban design for public or social housing. Harvey (2012:25) holds, however, that we are “yet to see a coherent oppositional movement” that will “converge on the singular aim of gaining greater control over the uses of the surplus (let alone over the conditions of its production)”. In Harvey’s analysis that is where the real challenge lies, irrespective of the nature of urban vulnerability: “control over the uses of the surplus”.

Harvey (2012:25) argues the interconnectedness between an economy of wealth accumulation and an economy of dispossession. Wealth accumulation is a form of violence that requires the dispossession of some. He (2012:xviii) says: “The whole capitalist system of perpetual accumulation, along with its structures of exploitative and class power, has to be overthrown and replaced”.

This is not an overnight project. It is at the point of dispossession that the dispossessed need not only be reminded of their humanity and therefore right to the city, but also need to be supported as they rise up to resist exclusion and “to reinvent the city more after their hearts’ desire” (Harvey 2012:25).

Chapter 6 speaks of discovering an alternative imagination,

rooted in a spirituality of urban space. Chapter 7 seeks to go a step further, exploring the embodiment of such an alternative imagination in practising an ethic of urban space. Chapter 8 is now seeking to locate the carriers or vehicles in and through which such alternative imaginations will be discovered, nurtured, practiced, deepened and grown.

It proposes communities and movements – small and local but also interconnected and global – as mediators of hopeful new cities, at the same time resisting death-dealing discourses and practices, whilst experimenting boldly and bravely with urban reconstructions and transformations that will allow the smallest child, the most vulnerable adult, the most threatened chameleon, to be co-inhabitants of the urban household.

2. FANTASY, CELEBRATION & BEAUTY: HIDDEN RESOURCES FOR RESISTANCE AND RECONSTRUCTION

One of the most untapped resources for resistance and reconstruction is that of fantasy, celebration and beauty. Communities and movements would do well to invite such resources into their midst, both as a way of self-sustenance, but also to communicate more effectively and sometimes more constructively in a harsh urban environment. The city itself, in contemplating its urban space, should invite such resources as ways of overcoming fragmentation, practising hospitality and building cohesion.

2.1 FANTASY & CELEBRATION

In planning the city, we need to create places for fantasy, festivity and imagination, all over the city. We often lose opportunities to create “magical spaces” by succumbing to the pressures of technocracy or capital.

of downtown activity. The power of this space is in how it manages to transcend ethnic barriers, displaying the vast diversity of people inhabiting this great city. Besides incorporating the surrounding architecture and existing features of downtown Chicago it also added new features.

The Millennium Park (City of Chicago 2012-2015) in Downtown Chicago is an example of an amazing space, drawing thousands of people from all over the Greater Chicago and elsewhere, making play and laughter a central feature

An example is the Jay Pritzker Pavilion, one of the features of the Millennium Park and the most sophisticated outdoor concert venue of its kind in the United States. The Crown Fountain is another feature incorporated



Fig. 183. Anish Kapoor, 2004.
Cloud Gate.

into the Park. It comprises two 50 foot high fountains flanking a small reflecting pool. The two fountain-towers seek to personify the diversity of Chicago's people as they project changing facial images to accompany its water features. Water flows from the faces, symbolising life. The pool itself is highly accessible and gathers young and old from all ethnic groups in a display of exuberance and joy amidst one of the most complex urban conglomerates of the United States. The water feature is running from mid-spring to mid-autumn as the weather permits.

The Cloud Gate is also a very popular attraction in Millennium Park (2008). British artist and designer of the Cloud Gate, Anish Kapoor says the following about his design:

What I wanted to do in Millennium Park is make something that would engage, the Chicago skyline... so that one will see the clouds kind of floating in, with those very tall buildings reflected in the work. And then, since it is in the form of a gate, the participant, the viewer, will be able to enter into this very deep chamber that does in a way the same thing to one's reflection as the exterior of the piece is doing to the reflection of the city around.

The Millennium Park provides accessible spaces for diverse people to express themselves. It creates opportunities for festivity and fantasy. Obviously Chicago has budgets with which cities in the developing world cannot compete. How could we design innovative, attractive, highly exciting and cost-effective local spaces, contextualised for our local environment that could do what the Millennium Park is doing?

A place like Newtown in



Fig. 184. Plensa, 2004. Crown Fountain, Millennium Park, Chicago.

Johannesburg could move in such a direction, although it offers relatively little in the form of self-expression for children. And yet, it provides accessible opportunities to the arts for both those who can afford and those who cannot (Market Theatre & Mary Fitzgerald Square). The Green Point Park in Cape Town provides a natural, accessible and free environment for urban recreation (Green Point Ratepayers' and Residents' Association 2012-2015), and is popular with all age groups.

On the other side of the spectrum beautiful and inviting spaces such as the Tidal Pool in Kalk Bay, Cape Town, frequented by the poor from the Cape Flats during the Christmas Holiday Period, is restricted from access, gates being locked and surveillance being heightened, doing the opposite of what public open spaces are meant

for (News24:2017).

How can we open up spaces for creative interaction and social exchange, in ways that recover fantasy and allow for boisterous celebration? Can we imagine existing spaces being converted into more imaginative spaces? How do we allow parks, public open spaces, run-down or under-utilised buildings, pavements, rooftops and river banks, as spaces for fantasy and celebration?

It does not have to be the prerogative of the global North either to experiment with spaces like the Millennium Park in Chicago. In Medellin, Colombia, Parque de los Pies Descalzos was created as an urban park right in the city centre of Medellin by Felipe Uribe. Completed in 2000 it is rich with fountains, waterfalls and sandboxes, and it became "an absolute fantasy

“The only way to make a city whole again is by reconnecting its segregated pieces.”

(McGuirk 2014:241)

zone for children” (McGuirk 2014:236).

2.2 AESTHETICS OR ETHICS? THE HEALING POWER OF BEAUTY

2.2.1 Integrating ethical and aesthetical concerns into city planning

Stubben (1890) and Sitte (1889), early German planning pioneers, moved planning beyond mere technical or bureaucratic concerns, integrating ethical (Stubben) and aesthetical (Sitte) concerns into their vision for city planning. They are concerned with both utility and beauty and this concern ranges from drainage and lighting to signposting and public toilets, trees and plants, and street furniture. Good cities will combine utility, beauty and ethics in the way it is conceptualised, designed and built.

Medellin in Colombia has become exemplary at integrating ethical and aesthetical concerns in urban space-making through their approach of *social urbanism* (cf. McGuirk 2014:231-257). First coined by Karl Brunner in the 1930s already, social urbanism referred to Brunner’s rejection of modernist utopian urban design and city-building from scratch, rather placing emphasis on recognising what is already there (cf. McGuirk 2014:243-244).

In Medellin an approach was followed that built on existing

community assets; made visible informal and “notorious” neighbourhoods through creative investments in parks, schools, libraries and other urban infrastructure; connected fragmented parts of the city through transport infrastructure and the strategic positioning of public infrastructure; and built strong community movements that emphasised participation in the city-building process.

Not only were they successful with integrating the ethical with the aesthetical, but they actually achieved clear socio-political (ethical) goals through aesthetics (methods). Through the creation of beautiful and interactive parks, inclusive to the diverse people of that society, through innovative architectural interventions, and through new infrastructure deliberately reconnecting fragmented neighbourhoods, they have modelled that the impossible is indeed possible.

They concentrated the budget of the city in the poorest parts of the city, which is where the bulk of design interventions took place. This was an expression of political will that became beautifully embodied in the urban design strategy. Santo Domingo, for example, was previously one of the city’s most dangerous and notorious neighbourhoods. As a result of social urbanism it became one of the city’s most prominent and attractive neighbourhoods, hosting the state-of-the-art and highly visible public library, and symbolising the best of Medellin’s

regeneration programme.

What Medellín got right, McGuirk (2014:241) suggests, is to overcome disintegration through deliberate integration: “The only way to make a city whole again is by reconnecting its segregated pieces”.

The result was a city radically transformed. Between 1990 and 1993 Medellín was still known as the murder capital of the world, and corrupt governance and growing inequality at the order of the day. By 2008 the homicide rate fell by 90% and urbanists started to flock to Medellín to learn from its achievements (McGuirk 2014:231).

2.2.2 Creating and/or discovering beauty: an ethical imperative

Creating beauty, especially in vulnerable places, is an ethical act. What is occurring in Medellín is not only the result of clever political or design interventions but an ethical act of *doing the city together*, differently. Often, in social housing projects for example, when budgets get tight, the first items to be deleted are those that will enhance the aesthetics of a place. And yet, from a long-term position this is probably very short-sighted as it affects the total quality of the living environment created, the way people will *feel* about their spaces and respond to it, as well as the ways in which other people respond to living spaces that are not aesthetically

pleasing.

Creating beauty is an ethical act also from the perspective of the potential healing, dignity and self-worth it communicates or mediates. When the National Consultation on Urban Ministry, hosted in Pretoria in 2006, chose as its theme “Celebrating Beauty in the City”, certain poor communities felt as if they were excluded. Where was the beauty that they could celebrate? The lack of investment in poor neighbourhoods indeed often deprives such neighbourhoods of beautiful public open spaces and interactive parks, and state-of-the-art libraries. It is when communities internalise the conviction that they are not entitled to beautiful spaces that interventions should be deliberate about creating beauty!

Even in the minds of non-profit organisations and donor agencies there often exists a tension between ethics and aesthetics. When community organisations or poor communities want to embark on art programmes or neighbourhood beautification projects, it often meets with doubt and rejection as if it is a luxury meant for the elite only. To the contrary, I would like to argue that the beautification of local communities should be a central part of a conscientisation programme to relearn our inherent value and dignity as human beings, and to re-assert the dignity of the places in which we live. I concur with Roque Dalton (2011): “I believe that the world is beautiful, and that poetry, like

bread, is for everyone”.

At the same time, ethical people will not only create beauty, but will *discover beauty*, even where the dominant constructs of beauty are not visible. We are normally blinded by constructs of beauty that are narrowly defined from certain cultural, class, elitist or ideological positions. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

On the one hand, therefore, an ethical approach to city-building will not minimise aesthetical considerations in terms of design and investments. On the other hand, an ethical approach will also deliberately look for signs of beauty that might come to us from surprising places, sometimes hidden or *unsung*.

Endell (1908), in *Die Schönheit der Grossen Stadt*, pleads for an awareness of “beauty that is not always immediately apparent” (cf. Frisby 2001:88). He refers to Berlin and speaks of “miraculous sights” to be found despite the “loathsome qualities” of that city.

Endell (1908:89) says: “And where ugliness is the norm, proper perception is the first step to a more beautiful, better world”.

How we do not lack the gift of proper perception! A spirituality of space will not only enervise us towards imagining and creating new, inclusive and beautiful spaces, but will also help us see unapparent beauty that already

exists. It will go about its task of stripping layers of prejudice and neglect, until the soul of the city shines through magnificently. It is not always the object itself that is beautiful, “but the feeling, the emotion it induces” (Endell 1908:89).

Places like Bangkok, Addis Ababa, or Sao Paulo, are exploding cities of multiple needs and challenges, traffic congestion and sprawling slums, economic disparities and growing polarisation. Yet, at the same time these are cities inviting certain emotions, inducing affection that almost catches one by surprise, because they possess both hidden and apparent beauty, the *genius loci*, an energy, inspiration and resilience.

Seeing afresh is indeed a spiritual-ethical activity: uncovering the beauty behind the scars of generations of being battered, forgotten, and exploited. Endell (1908:92) envisions new possibilities saying “that every individual could heighten his/her own existence by means of pure seeing and experiencing his/her surroundings anew”.

2.2.3 The monopolisation, “marketisation” or “commercialisation” of beauty and art

One danger is that beauty is monopolised by the wealthy or “cultured”, either blind for the beauty sometimes visible and sometimes hidden in vulnerable

“I believe that the world is beautiful, and
that poetry, like bread, is for everyone”

(Roque Dalton 2011)

places, or simply excluding the spontaneous and vibrant expressions of beauty at work in such places.

Another danger is the marketisation, commercialisation or commodification of beauty and art, now only available for sale to the highest bidder. The ethics of aesthetics questions the “marketisation” of art (Miles 2005:896). Miles (2005:903) introduces the work of those artists “working against the grain of cultural universalism” or “marketisation”, in order to make sure they retained their critical edge. The work of these artists, instead of seeking a mass public or allowing their work to be commodified, seek “to engage specific publics for whom imaginative possibilities are opened” (Miles 2005:903).

Their work is as much about artistic expression as it is about conscientisation and the opening up of possibilities for re-imagination. One example is a very simple white billboard with black letters stating: “The economic function of public art is to increase the value of private property” (freee 2008). This billboard was an attempt

to create critical dialogue, actually questioning the way in which public art is co-opted by forces of urban regeneration, by stating the reality of what was happening.

Beauty often gets confused with a sanitised city. Authentic local expressions, such as graffiti art, are then removed in a bid to “clean” the city. Spontaneous local expression is replaced by more sanitised external constructs that do not necessarily communicate to local people. City authorities sometimes spend more resources on sanitising the city from “unwanted” local expressions and local people, than on providing sanitation to those with no access to it. All of this gets done in the interest of the “marketisation” and commodification of local areas earmarked for urban regeneration. It flows from a monopolised sense of what beauty is.

2.2.4 Reclaiming beauty: beyond the visual; beyond the professional

Beauty needs to be wrestled back from those who gave themselves the right of monopolisation. Local communities need to both reclaim beauty but also expand an appreciation of what it is that constitutes beauty or art.

Massey (1994:232) argues that an emphasis on the aesthetics in shaping urban spaces, often narrowly emphasises the visual experience as being more privileged than the other senses. When we think of

Fig. 185. Dave Beech, Andy Hewitt and Mel Jordan, 'The economic function of public art is to increase the value of private property'



urban regeneration we only think in terms of the visual and not necessarily in terms of “smells, textures, sounds” (Miles 2005:897). Massey (1994:232) speaks of this as “a way of seeing from the point of view of an authoritative, privileged, and male position”.

Miles (2005:897-898) considers this to be an imposition of the dominant, masculine viewpoint of the conventional city plan, which uses the ability to see-over (or oversee) as a metaphor for having power over. This became the way of mapping a city used by cartographers, although Miles, Massey and others suggest that this is by no means the only way. We can, for example, consider exciting multi-sensory maps or guides to experiencing the city.

In Zurich a restaurant opened called *Blindekuh* (cf. Jetzer 2000:30-32). The name refers to a children’s game in which the players are blindfolded and then have to catch each other. In this restaurant patrons are temporarily blindfolded, losing visual control during their meal and in unfamiliar surroundings. This creates a heightened awareness of all senses, according to Jetzer (2000:322): “You discover “seeing” in the dark with your ears, nose, palates and hands, like a culture of slowness”.

The waiters being employed are either blind or partially sighted and they become the hosts and hostesses, guiding others into this brave new world. There is an

inversion of roles and a deliberate integration into society of people who are often marginalised.

In the 1980s the arts advocacy movement argued for the inclusion of art in the built environment through street furniture, building design, and so on (Miles 2005:898). This movement, however, also “retained a profession-based model of urban change”. It did not always allow for spontaneous local expressions of art that could help transform local spaces. Reclaiming beauty would include the participation of diverse community members in shaping the aesthetics of local spaces, going beyond “professional” interventions only.

This could range from participatory design processes including the voices and sense of many different community people, to actual interventions being made by community people themselves. In Medellin children participated in monthly imagination workshops, helping to create ideas for making an urban park. The importance was to ensure that the ideas and aspirations generated in these workshops were actually implemented (cf. McGuirk 2014: 245). People’s own interventions could include graffiti or mural art, installations, art exhibitions, poetry readings, jazz events, dance competitions, or whatever else it might be that is alive and brewing in the local community, yet not invited to be publicly expressed.

At the 2005 Feast of the Clowns in the inner city of Tshwane, German Recycling artist, Kwaku (Eugen Schutz), spent one month in the inner city as artist-in-residence. He created a space in which homeless individuals and young women at-risk worked with him, creating art works from waste material. In this project the participation of homeless people was combined with creative expression.

The work of Brian Bakke and the mural art done at the Bethel New Life Community, both in Chicago, are good examples. In both cases professional artists helped design and accompany processes in which children, teenagers, and women from a church-based shelter, co-created the art, becoming powerful installations conveying strong messages about and to the local community.

Miles (1996; in Tibbalds 1996:116) spoke of public art as “imaginative interventions” taking place in local urban spaces. Such *interventions* have the potential to beautify, stir dialogue, or even tear apart dominant discourses. They should be seen as critical-prophetic interventions that seek to challenge the status quo and represent the alternative imagination. They have the ability to help re-imagine one’s neighbourhood but also oneself.

2.2.5 Aesthetics, civility and the good city

Miles (2005:897) refers to a booklet prepared by the city of Bristol for its campaign to be a Capital of Culture.

Think of great cities and what makes them so distinctive, impressive and attractive. Without exception, the experience of the public realm – the quality of public spaces and the aesthetics of buildings and design – plays a huge part in shaping positive perceptions of the city..

New urbanists “believe that an attractive and meaningful built environment can create conditions to enhance civility amongst citizens” (Grant 2006:22). If the spaces we live in communicate to and about us that we are worthy, we will respond to that worthily. But if our spaces communicate to us that we are inferior, forgotten or dirty, that too will shape us. There is a close connection between aesthetics and civility. We cannot consider a city to be a good city if its spaces deny people dignity or worth.

Common Ground in New York City strongly argues that the quality of living environments contributes to the well-being of people, so that good urban spaces – housing, parks, meeting places – could be healing spaces, facilitating the healing of both people and places.

Where we integrate ethics and aesthetics; where we discover and

create beauty; and where we resist the monopolisation and commodification of beauty by only a few, reclaiming it in local communities and places, we unlock the potential of aesthetics to contribute to a city that will indeed be civil – good, honest, respectful, dignified, sharing, and interconnected.

2.3 CELEBRATING RESISTANCE

Our festivals and diverse expressions of beauty are not just reconstructing the city, but could also offer moments for resistance. Much of artistic expression offers social critique, and if it is aesthetically beautiful, the critique it offers is often even more powerful. Dorthee Soelle (1993), in her book entitled *Celebrating Resistance*, speaks of the hope of vulnerable people in Latin America, defying the odds, often employing ritual or festivals to resist the forces that want to rob their souls.

The Simple Way (n.d.) lives in close solidarity with homeless and low-income people in an inner city neighbourhood of west Philadelphia in the United States. They often offer resistance to the oppressive ways of the *empire* through creative public celebrations.

When the city of Philadelphia instituted legislation against being

homeless on the streets and also against feeding homeless people on the streets, Shane Claiborne and his friends from Simple Way gathered many who were in solidarity with homeless people to create a huge public street party in one of the parks where most homeless people gathered. They continued to camp out with the homeless people until they were arrested. The judge ruled that the new bye-laws were unconstitutional and needed to be revisited. They created a celebration of resistance leading to resistance being celebrated: a victory for open, democratic and inclusive spaces even for the most vulnerable people of the city (Claiborne 2006:232-236)

Every time we intervene in the Market, creating accessible or alternative options to what the Market has to offer (or not), we celebrate resistance to one of the most demanding, exclusivist and cruel modern-day urban gods. We demonstrate the possibility of alternatives and of options where others saw none.

Attention, attention! Beggars, unemployed, prostitutes, street children, prophets, and all who are hungry, come and take for yourselves the remnants of glamour and luxury. Take it from the big garbage ditch which this country is, and make your costumes from the trash. Use your fantasies...

With this song of the Samba school “Beija Flor” (Kiss the Flower), fools ran through the carnival streets in Rio, homeless people, and youths from the slums, intellectuals, artists, middle-class people. They were disguised and had dressed up in worn-out, filthy things decorated with trash. There was also a statue of a filthy Christ, likewise dressed in rags in the same manner as the crowd. But this went too far for the Catholic hierarchy, who thought it was perhaps too subversive or too seditious. And so the Christ was banned and forbidden.

The people of the Samba school persisted and thought up something else, because they wanted to show that one can meet Christ even in what is left over, in the trash. So they covered the statue that was set up with a black mourning cloth and hung a sign on it: Even if it is forbidden, Christ, look down on us with mercy!
(Soelle1993:73)

3. COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

The city is a community of communities although not necessarily intentionally articulated in such a way. Fragmentation, fear and individualism have often eroded a sense of community almost altogether. It is probably most realistic, feasible and tangible to imagine and shape alternative urban spaces in the local neighbourhood and through local communities. Over time various communities across the city could then join hands to have the necessary ripple effect of transformation from below.

Hopeful communities are ethical communities. As Greenberg (1995:14) says: “Ethics cannot be sustained outside of an ethical community: an actual, not an abstract community in which individuals learn ethical discernment and practical wisdom by direct example, practice, conversation and interaction”.

Such communities, in which citizens participate in the life of the city ethically and constructively, become communities of hope, or “a generative, creative force” (Greenberg 1995:41).

Every city seems to have such communities, and often there is remarkable vision and energy alive in these places. City builders and planners would do well to find these communities and to relate to them as participants and observers.

Such communities could be faith communities gathering certain days of the week and wrestling to translate their faith into action that will influence the public domain positively. It could be local organisations with management, staff and administrative

capacity, that seek to be more than bureaucracies and honest in their attempts to invest their institutional infrastructure in contributing to hopeful places. It could be citizens’ movements – small and fragile, or large and robust, informal or formal, organised or poorly organised – that seek to contribute to inclusive, hopeful cities.

Hopeful communities are intentional spaces that practice both resistance and reconstruction. To be intentional about the impact it would hope for, such communities (would have to) foster, slowly over time, certain character traits for engaging the city effectively. This might include some of the following:

- Coming together with a common purpose and commitment to each other and the city
- Intentionally seeking for the common good, thinking and acting beyond own self-interest
- Finding common ground between diverse community members in spite of differences
- Placing themselves in solidarity

with those who are vulnerable or excluded

- Reflecting on current urban discourses and practices and how they affect the local community
- Participating wisely and critically-constructively in public processes, informing policy, plans, projects and budgets
- Making spaces – using interactive methods, the arts and cultural expression – in which to re-imagine the city and one’s local community from the perspective of mediating wholeness and justice for all community members
- Learning the art and discipline of creative and robust resistance to those forces or practices that might be detrimental to the well-being of a local community
- Embarking on collective action – advocacy, programmes or interventions – that model clear alternatives
- Acknowledging own and local assets, knowledge and experience as sources of power and liberation
- Investing own skills and resources, and brokering investment, for the common good of the local community
- Recognising the ways in which one’s local community belongs to the wider city community, connecting strategically and practising interdependence

Hopeful communities, seeking to act ethically together, do so with the view of contributing to a hopeful city in which all people will have access to sources of sustainable livelihood, and in which no one will be excluded from the urban household.

Where such communities are to be found, they need all the support they can get, because they are indeed urban treasures. Such communities are usually limited in their impact because of size, capacity, resources or locality. The challenge then becomes to discern where such communities exist all across the city and for like-minded communities, committed to a hopeful city, to find each other and be connected, until a movement of hope is born.

“...the local neighbourhood is increasingly becoming the site of political resistance.”

(Watson & Gibson 1995:260).

4. MOVEMENTS OF INTERCONNECTED COMMUNITIES

I started this chapter with reference to Harvey's concern that urban social movements lack coherence and unity. James Cone (2001:24) echoes this: "Justice fighters for blacks and the defenders of the earth have tended to ignore each other in their public discourse and practice. Their separation from each other is unfortunate because they fight the same enemy - human beings' domination of each other and nature".

Add to this the strong assertion by Shannon Jung (1993) that those who advocate the environment without concern about the oppression of women, and those who advocate issues of women's oppression without being concerned about the environment, are both practising an inadequate ethic.

James Cone (2001: 27) demonstrates, with reference to a 1989 report of the United Church of Christ entitled "Report on Race and Toxic Waste in the United States", that race was an important indicator of where hazardous waste facilities could be found in the United States: "Forty percent of the nation's commercial hazardous-waste landfill capacity was in three predominantly African-American and Hispanic communities".

The intersectionality of justice concerns becomes clearer by the day.

It seems that those working for justice in different spheres – race, gender, environment, land, poverty – often work in isolation from each other, and yet share the common denominator of social oppression by the strong against

the weak. Jung, Cone, Harvey and others, would all argue for new collaborations where the different communities seeking justice and hope would be interconnected into larger, stronger and more effective movements of change.

In the 1990s, Watson and Gibson (1995:260) spoke of the shift from class politics to identity politics whereby people organise themselves in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality and other such categories. The danger of such organising is that it tends to create new homogeneities, excluding some and disallowing diversity and difference. What is rather required today is movements that bring together diverse interests in solidarity with each other, building alliances beyond narrow self-interest for the sake of the common good: "A postmodern politics implies a more textured and complex understanding of power and difference" (Watson and Gibson 1995:260).

It is a call for a new politics of alliances, partnerships and collaborations that go beyond traditional divides or binary oppositions (Watson & Gibson 1995:262).

Instead of assuming single subject positions it is now commonplace

to recognise that people represent several groups at once and occupy multiple subject positions and identities which shift and change all the time.

Postmodern politics allows for optimism and possibility since it celebrates struggles and new possibilities at many sites - both marginal and mainstream...

(Watson & Gibson 1995:262)

David Korten (1990) wrote extensively about the need for those working in the fields of development to move beyond what he calls the first, second and third generations of development work (which includes relief work, community-based development, and even policy work at national level), suggesting that we now need to connect trans-nationally through global social movements if we seek to bring about fundamental and lasting change (cf. also Swart 2006 with reference to the church and the development debate in the South African context).

Although the urgency for city-wide (and at times national and global) coherence and unity of purpose is clear – the necessity for interconnected, intersectional movements – the importance of the local is as clear. As global dynamics erased national boundaries, the local neighbourhood is increasingly becoming the site of political resistance (Watson & Gibson 1995:260).

If resistance can be practiced with effect in local neighbourhoods and radical transformations be demonstrated, these could indeed

shape the city-wide movements in terms of strategy and tactics, alternative imaginaries and hopeful models of what have become possible. The old slogan – think globally, act locally – still applies. Our cities today need local communities of hope acting ethically, whilst fostering movements of interconnected communities and intersectional themes, standing together for justice.

Local and global movements of interconnected communities will refuse to become stuck in intellectual debates only. They will become movements of hope in as far as they engage in the actual sites and places of resistance, generating knowledge whilst being immersed, and learning from each other's concerns and aspirations. Their very acts of solidarity and resistance, if not selfish acts but genuinely seeking for the common good and the city's wholeness, will already help to (re)construct radically cities marked by participatory democracy (Watson & Gibson 1995:257). Spaces in such cities will be "less privatised so that individuals can interact in the open, expressing both their differences and their commonalities. These are spaces which are not bound by walls of exclusion or inclusion - they are spaces without walls" (Watson & Gibson 1995:261).

If movements of interconnected communities cannot model such spaces through their own life together, their own inclusionary practices, they have little to offer.

5. ON RESISTANCE

5.1 RHETORIC, RESPECTABILITY OR RESISTANCE

In post-apartheid South Africa there was often an allergic reaction towards resistance, quickly labelling those resisting the lack of good governance, neoliberal capitalism and other forces that came with our freedom, as counter-revolutionaries. It was almost suggested that we are now in a democratic era in South Africa and, even if we saw deep fault lines and new power configurations exploiting the poor, all we had to do was to be respectably constructing the new. The rhetoric of liberation-transformation-revolution crept into public policy documents, parliamentary and party political discourse, and informal conversations on the street, but the complete disconnect between rhetoric and actuality was often nauseating, seeing how the gaps of inequality have widened whilst the rhetoric flourished.

Swyngedouw (2002:153), in a paper on the Situationist City, reflects critically on what he calls the “respectability” of what used to be radical movements of transformation. In a rather cynical fashion Swyngedouw (2002:154) suggests that it is “the fate of any revolutionary political or urban-utopian movement and moment to become celebrated when the political and social threat emanating from it seems to have run out of steam”.

It is possible for movements of revolution to be co-opted by other powers once they achieved the initial victory, or the initial socio-political threat has been overcome. Now heralded as the heroes of revolution, they often resort to greed in complacency, in complete oblivious self-adulation. When such movements lost their soul, they either need to redeem themselves from within, or other movements will take their space.

Swyngedouw (2002:154) reminds us that real transformation is never merely academic discourse or acts of respectable rhetoric acted out in classrooms or in parliament buildings. “Revolution is acted out in the streets” (Swyngedouw 2002:154) and as such a “decidedly geographical”, spatial and primarily urban affair.

In recent times we have seen the emergence of robust activist movements – in parliament, on university campuses, in cities and towns, in local communities – disregarding the “respectability” of power, resisting the monopolising of space by some at the expense of the majority, reclaiming public and political spaces, becoming a massive voice that cannot be missed. In the South African contexts movements emerged in response to issues of health and HIV and AIDS; gender and LGBTQI-concerns; equal education; decolonising education;

access to information; a right to the city; water and sanitation; service delivery; electricity; electronic toll roads; and so forth.

Many of these movements have become rather sophisticated in their practices and achieved visible results.

For as long as some are excluded from economic and social access, and not allowed to participate fully in the processes of reconstruction, creative and constructive resistance remains a valid and required response. Planners and urban practitioners, as well as “innocent” communities of hope, would do well to learn from the engagements and practices of more robust social movements in terms of organising, strategy and tactics for making change. Such learning could happen through creating reflective spaces, communities of practice, or deliberate collaborations.

Global and local social movements are as much movements of resistance to that which threaten to kill the soul of nations, cities and communities, as they are seeking for constructive alternatives in their respective fields. They should not be disregarded but attentively considered.

5.2 MARGINALITY AS “SITE OF RESISTANCE”

How can anyone be told not to resist when their livelihoods are under threat? As local communities,

citizens’ organisations, planners and others concerned with the well-being of our cities, immerse ourselves in various neighbourhoods, we are often confronted with marginality. On close inspection we grasp that people and neighbourhoods are usually not marginalised by choice but as a result of systemic exclusions, external to themselves.

Watson and Gibson (1995:257-261) show how deviation from the cultural norm or dominant narrative, coupled with a lack of economic or political power often leads to marginalisation, both in terms of access to physical location but also to resources for well-being.

bell hooks (1999:22) suggests marginality as “site of resistance, as a location of radical openness and possibility”.

Communities of hope often choose marginality, because they choose to be in solidarity with marginal people and places. Such a choice is simultaneously, sometimes unknowingly, a choice for resistance.

Once an individual planner or community practitioner or engaged researcher make such a choice, we ourselves will also experience personal or institutional marginality, either subtly or overtly. It will lead us into places of temptation, having to decide whether we will succumb to the dominant narrative or simply

retire into apathy, or whether we will live consciously, continuously, and sacrificially even, resisting the dominant narrative, in order to help usher in multiple small transformations in small, local places.

Even “innocent” community developers or city planners, if living with conscience and concerned with justice, when exposed to marginality, are faced with a choice.

5.3 PROPHETIC ANGER

Those who resist are often called prophets: the ones who name what is wrong and who help imagine creative alternatives. Hopeful communities are resistant communities, naming that which deals death, and imagining and calling forth that which announces life. Hope is found in the very resistance to that which steals hope. Prophets, Matthew Fox (2000:260) suggests, carry the creative energy of God “when it has been stymied or stifled by injustice or laziness or too much belief in the immortality of what already is”.

The task of the prophet in the face of injustice or a negative status quo is to interfere (cf. Heschel 1962:205): interfering with injustice, with spatial exclusion, with dehumanising market forces (cf. Fox 2000:261). Fox (2000:260) says of the prophet: “The prophet knows something about trusting anger, trusting one’s moral

outrage, trusting what is intolerable and moulding that anger and outrage into creative possibilities”.

In too many public participation processes, the emotions of people deeply affected by planning that excluded them are disregarded with responses like: “Let us not allow our emotions to overcome us” or “Let us keep our discussions constructive”.

Such facilitators of public participation processes have not yet learnt the creative power of anger, outrage and lament. By allowing, inviting even, such emotions into planning processes, it offers the possibility of creative and better alternatives because we hear and address the very concerns soliciting most anger. Our social and development plans will not be the same if we allow the collective psyche of the community to be expressed vocally and emotionally.

Resistance would include resisting cerebral and clinical planning processes that pretend to be neutral, that dehumanise people reducing them to robots, when people’s very livelihoods are at stake.

5.4 BEYOND THE MYTH OF A-POLITICAL URBAN SPATIAL PRAXIS

In a book edited by Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (1995:31) the question is raised: “Can we create an effective postmodernism of resistance that involves more than bovine immobility or sitting on fences like Humpty Dumpties playing with words?”.

Watson and Gibson (1995:33) then refer to the work of Foucault (1975) and Lefebvre (1991) on space, and the fact that both “problematized revolution spatially around the politics of the urban, the struggles of power over the governing of space and territory that are centred in cities but extend well beyond them into the urbanised countryside and peripheries”.

Lefebvre (1992) spoke of a “spatial praxis” that engaged the politics of spatial formation. An urban spatial praxis is never neutral but always political in how it affects the people. Justice does not happen without struggle. Grant (2006:22) explains it as follows:

Foucault believes that justice must involve a struggle to change power relations. For the most part, planning theorists have tended to agree with Foucault: hence radical planning advocates overturning power regimes that harm the interests of the poor and push them into alternative behaviours. Planning for justice would mean a radical form of practice as the moral option. Justice entails a programme of reform to improve living conditions for all, to enhance

social mobility, and to guarantee democratic participation. Thus we see that ideas of the good community as a just society reflect the premises of the political economy approach.

For some, planning shifted from being a neutral discipline to critical engagement that included advocacy and resistance to a status quo that excluded the interests of the most vulnerable. Regrettably this has not been the case for most.

5.5 PLANNING: A TOOL OF REPRESSION OR A TOOL OF INCLUSION

Planning can either be a progressive tool of inclusion and reconstruction or a tool of control and repression. Yiftachel (1995:218) writes, with reference to the situation of Israel-Palestine: “The very same planning tools usually introduced to assist social reform and improvement in people’s quality of life can be used as a means of controlling and repressing minority groups”.

There is a clear comparison between Israel-Palestine today and the socio-spatial oppressions faced by black South Africans in pre-1994 urban South Africa. Planners in such contested regions face great difficulty, since planning is often used to further oppression and marginalisation, making planners deeply complicit (cf. Allegra 1996).

Comparative notes should also be made in terms of the ways in

which planning policy and procedures impact on a very daily basis upon homeless communities, refugees, those living with disability, and the poor in general. Through planning policy, procedures and spatial praxes, planning can either facilitate negative control and domination or positive inclusion into urban space/s. Planners are either complicit in the marginalisation of vulnerable groups, or able to facilitate their inclusion.

In this regard Yiftachel (2009) speaks of resistance and the “mobilisation of the colonised” in situations where spatial production is oppressive. Oppressive spatial production is not only the extreme cases of apartheid South Africa or Israel-Palestine, but needs to be discerned daily in how ordinary people struggle to access the city and its resources. Planning, therefore, if not a tool of repression and control, should be regarded as a possible tool of resistance and mobilisation of those who become victims of neocolonial urban spatialities.

5.6 RESISTANCE STARTS WITH US

Resistance does not start out there; it starts in here where marginality and exclusion are experienced. It starts in communities of struggle and solidarity.

Resistance does not start out there; it starts with us and in us. Once we become aware of the forces that marginalise some, and how

we are often complicit, we cannot pretend to be ignorant or innocent any longer. Once we embark on a journey of solidarity we too have to be liberated-transformed in terms of our own identity, language, practices and postures.

Prophets are non-elitist in how they speak and act, representing a “street spirituality, one that the non-professional person can understand” (Fox 2000:263). This requires an artistry, calling “forth symbols of justice and injustice that are universally recognisable” (Fox 2000:263).

If planners, educators, theologians, lawyers, business people, scientists or artists can only be understood by professional people from their own disciplines, then Matthew Fox (2000:264) asks: “Whom are you serving?”.

If the language we use is inaccessible to those living on the streets and in the housing complexes of poor city neighbourhoods, then we are neither prophetic, nor wise (cf. Fox 2000:264), nor being “in the streets” with that which we do or say. Fox (2000:264) suggests therefore that the prophetic task of professionals should start within their own profession “...to start transforming that particular profession so that it serves the oppressed and ceases to legitimise the oppressor. Many professionals today will find their prophetic calling precisely in de-elitising their own profession”.

In terms of planning and the built environment, Nan Ellin (1996:71) spoke of the shift in planning praxis of the 1960's and 1970's towards more self-critical and reflective planning and architecture. Now these disciplines were less authoritarian, humbler in recognising themselves as one actor in the planning arena, and

more overtly political, with the goal of empowering people to improve their communities and their environment. Rather than simply designing and realising plans, these architects and planners would also engage in a critical examination of the status quo and in becoming advocates for unrepresented interests.

Resistance starts with us: in how we re-imagine ourselves, our own disciplines, our own futures.

6. ON RECONSTRUCTION

Krier (1984; in Grant 2006:26) proposes a charter for reconstructing the city: “a moral project that mirrors a political constitution”. So easily do we fall into discourses of reconstruction, renewal, transformation and participation that are without real substance, since they are seldom rooted in a clear ethical / moral framework that also provides clarity of vision. Krier's proposal indicates that reconstruction is never neutral: it implies a certain political and ethical position, consciously or unconsciously.

6.1 RECONSTRUCTION COULD BE RESISTANCE

In post-1994 democratic South Africa, the idea of reconstruction became central, both in planning theory and some theological discourse, as well as in dominant government policy documents and practices (cf. Oranje 1997:180; Villa-Vicencio 1992; Republic of South Africa 1994). This was accompanied by a new focus on housing, public participation, and a new sensitivity for the socio-political context within which planning was done. Oranje suggests that this passion faded away in planning circles as soon as the euphoria of post-apartheid South Africa passed.

Communities of hope should not just be resistant communities, but should always be seeking ways to *embody* the reconstruction of the city, both in terms of the physical, social, economic, natural and institutional infrastructure, but also in terms of public policy and procedures that could help shape the city and its futures.

Reconstructive actions in themselves could at the same time be actions of resistance, if they help overcome the “pessimism, cynicism, and despair” (Fox 2000:264) that sometimes take hold of us, our communities, or public discourse, choosing to “channel moral outrage into rebirth” (Fox 2000:264).

One example mentioned before in this study is the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings or empty spaces into dignified housing by Common Ground in New York City, accommodating former homeless people and integrating them fully into local social networks and the economy. Through their work they are slowly carving away at homeless statistics in New York City. Their model is not only providing sustainable tenure to formerly homeless people, reconstructing the local urban landscape, but also resisting the notion that homeless people cannot be reintegrated meaningfully, that they will affect surrounding market prices, and that it is more expensive to house homeless people decently than to displace them into institutional care models (prisons, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals).

Other examples include innovative and transformative slum upgrading projects in Rio de Janeiro or Addis Ababa; alternative justice models in Manhattan, New York City; creative approaches to deal with waste management in Curitiba, Brazil or Cairo, Egypt; or the reconstruction of a vacant site in Newtown to house the Brickfields Housing Project.

The approach known as equity planning is discussed at length in the book of Krumholz and Clavel (1994). They suggest equity planning as simultaneously resisting and reconstructing; resisting in its solidarity with those often

excluded and lacking access, but doing so constructively through specific interventions aimed at long-term and hopeful change: “Equity-based approaches to planning hold the promise of better policy and benefits for troubled neighbourhoods and at-risk populations within cities” (Krumholz & Clavel 1994:xiv).

Equity planners create, namely, “a set of political dilemmas and solutions” (Krumholz & Clavel 1994:2).

Conventional planners often allow their ends to be decided by politicians, planning boards and business, allowing political pressure based on the assumption that politicians “represent the people through the democratic process” (Krumholz & Clavel 1994:3).

Equity planners reject this technical definition of the role of planners. They maintain that planners who seek a better future for the cities and their people must be concerned with the ends as well as means. At the end what they should be concerned with first is helping the “truly disadvantaged”, because, equity planners assume, the existing democratic institutions are biased against the interests of those at the bottom of the social system. That is, equity planners seek downward redistribution, often put ahead of the initiatives of their bosses, the elected politicians (Krumholz & Clavel 1994:3).

6.2 REDISTRIBUTIVE RECONSTRUCTION: ON ABUNDANCE AND INCLUSION

The kind of reconstruction (renewal, revitalisation, regeneration) that displaces people, perpetuates disparities, and concentrates wealth or monopolises space in the hands of a few, is rejected in this study. The kind of reconstruction that is implicitly resistant will be a *redistributive reconstruction*.

It will work from the premise that there is an abundance of resources in the city instead of perpetuating the myth of scarcity (cf. Covey 1989). The question is not one of scarcity or adequacy, but one of distribution and access. The spatial question becomes vital since access or the lack thereof often lies in one's ability to access land or space that holds promise in terms of livelihood, services, production, networks and opportunities.

Equity planning makes “a conscious attempt to devise redistributive policies in favour of the least powerful and to enhance the avenues of participation” (Krumholz & Clavel 1994:1). Krumholz and Clavel (1994:1) define city policy as “providing choices to those who had few”.

Equity planners focus on participation with the aim of redistribution. They deal intentionally with issues of diversity, race and class, to respond well to the political and economic coalitions that estranged the poor from its institutions (cf.

Krumholz & Clavel 1994:3-4).

In the 1960's and 1970's there was a growing interest in the related approaches of advocacy planning, social planning, community planning or equity planning (cf. Krumholz & Clavel 1994:15). In cities of great disparity there will always be a need for planners who are intentional in positioning themselves with marginal people and places to help facilitate equitable-redistributive reconstruction. In South Africa today this does not seem to be where planners want to be. Perhaps the assertion of Krumholz and Clavel (1994:xiv) need to be considered: “a professionally oriented, politically engaged equity planning practice will not only survive in the crucible of the city but will prosper there”.

6.3 CENTRING TOWARDS WHOLENESS

The healing of South Africa's fragmented apartheid cities is also a theme addressed by Oranje (1997:247; Oranje 2012), suggesting that it should be one of the greatest priorities in our context. And yet, most developers still opt to focus their work in the wealthier areas of the city: “When we look at the most beautiful towns and cities of the past, we are always impressed by a feeling that they are somehow organised” (Alexander, et al 1987:2).

Alexander, et al (1987), refer to a sense of wholeness in cities and suggests that it is not just the form

but also the process that create a sense of wholeness. This could also be true of informal settlements, urban townships and inner cities: where people become involved as drivers of their own futures, high levels of self-organisation and local community ownership would be found. People want to participate in their own futures and be able to say “we have done it ourselves”.

THE JUBILEE CENTRE, BURGERS PARK LANE

The Jubilee Centre is the central office of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation. Its architectural design was preceded by consultative processes where all the staff of the Foundation – from cleaners to the CEO – was able to make their inputs collectively and individually. The women living in The Potter’s House, the transitional housing facility for women in this centre, were also able to make inputs into their living environment. All these inputs were considered in drafting a brief for the architects (Karen and Paul Munting). After their initial design, based on this detailed community brief, two more such consultative processes followed in which the community using this Centre was able to comment, critique, suggest amendments and finally approve.

There is wholeness not only in the final product but also in the process. The building is not without flaws. Finishes were not always done well and in trying to be cost-effective some shortcuts were taken that created problems over the long run. But the Centre creates a sense of welcome and wholeness, and since the weaknesses in the final product cannot be ascribed to the “experts” only, because everybody was part of the process, there is greater acceptance and ownership of both the beauty and the challenge.

“Every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city.”

(Alexander, et al 1987:22)



Fig. 186. Dee, 2001. Tree Canopies.

Alexander, et al (1987:5) suggest a “centring” process in urban planning and design, aimed at “wholeness in the city, almost spontaneously, by members of the community,... provided that every decision, at every instant, was guided by the centring process”.

They (1987:3) feel strongly that good processes will help facilitate wholeness and that the discipline of centring should play a significant role: “If we create a suitable process there is some hope that the city might become whole once again. If we do not change the process, there is no hope at all”.

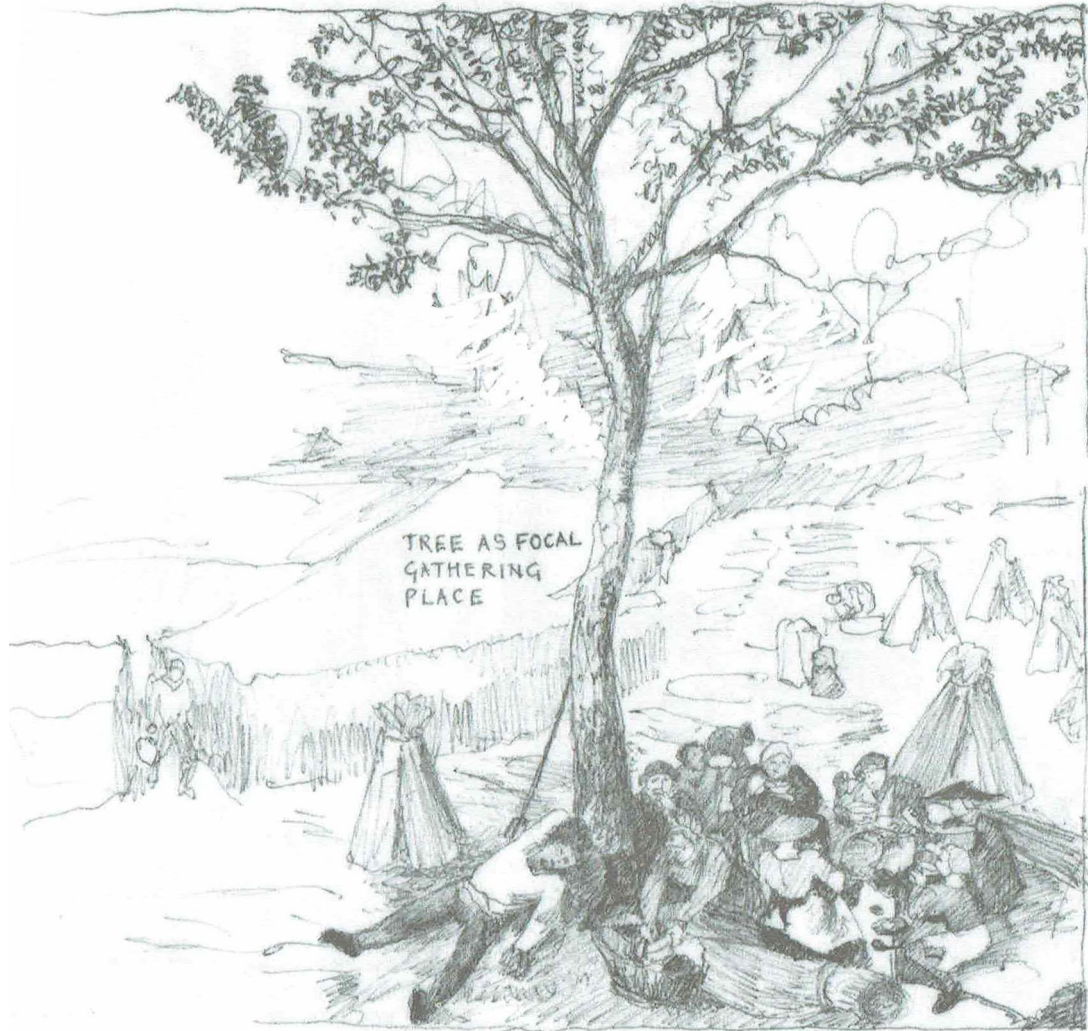
Design, planning, construction and management of the city should all be equally considered and at all times be aimed at healing and wholeness: to repair what is broken and to create “new wholes” (Alexander, et al 1987:14). This should be considered for every detail that goes into city-making: “Every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city” (Alexander, et al 1987:22).

Alexander, et al (1987:92) envisage a multiplicity of interconnected “wholes”/“centres” clustered together, which will collectively contribute to the city’s healing. “Every whole must be a centre itself, and must also produce a cluster of centres around it”.

Reconstruction (*as explored here*) can therefore be understood as the essentially spiritual goal of healing the city (its people, institutions and places) through

- resisting forces of death,
- erecting hopeful signs of life,
- facilitating equitable distribution, and
- embodying all of these in clustered centres all-over the city.

It is to redeem, retrieve or recover the soul of the city, as the life-giving womb providing shelter, nurture and sustenance to all who inhabit it at any given time. A city marked by wholeness will be full of feeling, touching us deeply, with “the power to move us, to bring us to tears, to make us happy” (Alexander, et al 1987:14).



| 428

DETAIL AFTER "THE HARVESTERS" PIETER BRUEGEL
1565 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART NEW YORK

Fig. 187. Dee, 2001. Detail after "The Harvester" Pieter Bruegel, 1956.

TOWARDS A COMMUNITY-
BASED URBAN PRAXIS

429 |

MOMENT 4

Co-constructing urban space:

Chapter 09

CO-CONSTRUCTING URBAN SPACE:

A small portfolio of engagements from the inner city of Tshwane, seeking the common good

The fourth moment of the proposed praxis-cycle is the moment of co-construction. Flowing from deeply immersed and collective readings of the city, in community, and from imagining possible alternatives to the exclusive city, the task then becomes to co-construct radically different socio-spatial realities than the ones we know.

In my research, and in preceding chapters, I sought to explore a paradigm for co-constructing urban communities, from below and from within: a way of achieving maximum participation in shaping urban spaces, resisting that which excludes, dehumanises or exploits either humans or creation at large, and constructing together in ways that will be ethical, just, humane, life-affirming, sustainable and beautiful.

431 |

In this chapter I now narrate a number of “urban engagements”, indicating how they seek to provide alternative stories with possible universal implication (“tall stories”). I present the narratives as reflections describing the “what” (product), “how” (process), “who” (participants) and “why” (values) of these different engagements.

What these engagements hold in common are that they are all community- and/or faith-based initiatives, and they are all deliberately seeking the well-being of the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood, or, at least started in this neighbourhood and now working its way beyond the boundaries of Berea-Burgers Park.

I present these narratives purposefully (i) as examples of co-constructing urban space from below and from within, and (ii) to consider the potential held by such local community-based engagements to contribute concretely in three very specific ways:

- firstly, to the inclusive and tangible transformation of local urban spaces in a socio-economic and spatial sense;
- secondly, to the ways we know together and the actual urban knowledge base; and
- thirdly, to informing and transforming dominant urban planning paradigms, offering alternative learning spaces that I think of as community-based urban praxes.

Mbembe and Nuttall (2004:348) argue that

the way in which societies compose and invent themselves in the present (the creativity of practice) is always ahead of the knowledge produced about them... these compositional acts always move in multiple and unforeseen directions... They have, thus, the capacity to continually produce something new and singular, as yet unthought, which cannot always be accommodated within established conceptual systems and languages.

My introduction of these engagements should be read in conjunction with previous chapters where some institutional approaches to urban regeneration were introduced with specific reference also to the institutional status of

Berea-Burgers Park. The engagements I describe here are largely absent from most of the formal policy and strategy documents on inner city regeneration, mentioned before, although they offer a wealth of knowledge in terms of how local socio-spatial processes are constructed and conducted, and what the outcomes are. It is at the peril of the city that such community-based engagements are not acknowledged and built upon.

Oranje (1997:9) mourns the fact that “(L)ittle or no room is left for a multiplicity of small narratives, or a multiplicity of alternative paradigms squirming / living side by side”. The “engagements” described here are offered as such possible narratives or paradigms living side by side with the formal spatial development frameworks and inner city strategies of local authority, the interventions by the private sector, and the many overlapping dynamics of human movement in, through and from the city.

These engagements, in my mind, represent a multiplicity of small “seeds” often sown against the reigning discourses. Sometimes the seeds find fertile ground and surprisingly grow into sustainable urban trees with shade and fruit for many. Some of these initiatives dwindled over time and became dormant or now completely defunct (cf. Chapter 10; 6: *a multiplicity of solidarities, reclamations and transformations*). They are mostly organic urban responses

of real urban people living in the same spaces in which they seek to create hopeful responses. They represent small, humble and exploratory responses to what they sense to be the hovering Spirit whispering visions, words and actions of response into their ears.

The ten engagements described here all contribute in smaller or bigger ways to shape urban space in the inner city of Tshwane. They all represent community-based engagements that I have been involved with most intimately over the past 20+ years. I will seek to present them in a way that celebrates their real and potential contributions, whilst at the end of the section highlighting some of their weaknesses and challenges.

The engagements presented here are offered as reflections of a participant observer, communally lived by those constructing these engagements, and continuously assessed – both internally and externally – through different tools designed for this purpose, but also, and even more importantly, through the assessment of community members benefiting from these engagements. This specific study did not venture to provide more detailed assessments as these are offered more as snapshots of a journey. In on-going studies additional methods might be used to either verify or contest these descriptions.

These engagements are often not marked by sophisticated

infrastructure or well-resourced finances and staff. They are, instead, characterised, with some exception, by small-scale interventions done through the faithful presence of some, usually with a very limited resource base to start with, standing close to those on the margins who are excluded from mainstream urban renewal processes, doggedly resisting external forces wanting to rob the city of its soul as they prevent the most vulnerable from having access to the city and its resources.

Watson (2002:43) suggests the limitations of local engagements, often failing to address the broader structural forces that cause inequality and exclusion. And yet, perhaps in a small way, the engagements “curated” here, to use the language of Edgar Pieterse (2013:15), represent what he describes as “rogue intensities”, erupting from below, sometimes against the flow of dominant discourse, other times creatively making space within the constraints and rigidities of conventional urban order, but, in this case at least, always seeking to open up new possibilities that are deeply humane, socially inclusive and hospitable, and radically just. Of course, one has to concede their limitations, as African theologian, Emmanuel Katongole (2011:59-62), describes his frustration with African politics and social ethics in its failure of imagining “other forms of social structure outside the nation-state” (2011:59). Instead of such self-defeatist “pre-occupation with fixing a broken

institution”, he argues for an imagination of “new experiments in social life in Africa”(2011:60). What is required, he says, is not firstly “experts and technical aides” but “story-tellers” showing a different possible reality. The engagements described here are stories of struggle to find a different way for vulnerable and excluded people. To use the language of Katongole (2011:62): “They involve an investment of bodies and are thus a unique political imagination”.

The engagements are presented here in a somewhat chronological way as they have developed organically over time. The last two engagements – the Tshwane Homelessness Forum and the Urban Studio – also have its roots in this neighbourhood but its potential impact is now going much further.

The following engagements are introduced:

- Tshwane Leadership Foundation
- Community Forums: Berea-Burgers Park and Salvokop
- Feast of the Clowns
- Yeast City Housing
- Centre for Urban Transformation, including the Institute for Urban Ministry
- Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative
- Burgers Park Village
- Local churches and church conversions

In addition, two new engagements, enriched by institutions of higher education entering the fray, will also be introduced:

- Tshwane Homelessness Forum
- Urban Studio

BRINGING TOGETHER...

...the citizens of the city: residents, children, vulnerable people, those with expertise, homeless people, people at different abilities, artists, activists, entrepreneurs, people of faith, people of little faith, business people, officials, politicians, planners, bureaucrats

MAKING SPACES...

...to participate, dream, imagine, plan, network, listen, speak, act, exchange, change, cry, laugh, resist, advocate, lobby, write, dance, pray, reconstruct; resource, rebuild, revive, celebrate

CREATING HOPE...

...through festivals, forums, discussion groups, housing companies, neighbourhood watches, social infrastructure, children's spaces, skateboard tracks, soccer fields, shelters, parks, clinics, housing projects, small business, local markets, art centres, community banks, cooperatives, worship spaces, street cafés, information centres, community theatres, murals, day-care centres, after-school programmes, skills programmes, internships, volunteer opportunities

CELEBRATING LIFE...

...our diversity, our assets, our gifts, our resilience, our inclusion, our democracy, our hope, our resistance, our reconstruction, abundance, equity, difference, justice, peace, healing, wholeness, the earth, nature, beauty, God, the Spirit, the city as our home...

CO-CONSTRUCTING URBAN SPACE

A SMALL PORTFOLIO OF ENGAGEMENTS FROM THE INNER CITY
OF TSHWANE

1. SOME LOCAL (COMMUNITY-BASED) ENGAGEMENTS

TSHWANE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

working with communities and churches for urban transformation that is socially inclusive.



Fig. 188. Tshwane Leadership Foundation.

The Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) (2015; Krige 2007) was established in 1993 with the support of 6 local inner city churches. TLF was created to establish a presence in solidarity with the inner city's most vulnerable people, to create communities of care and justice, to support the empowerment of local people and neighbourhoods, to work against slum formation, and to contribute to re-write the story of the inner city in a way that will be socially inclusive and undoing the apartheid city of the past.

Over the years 1000s of people have benefited from the various communities and institutions it gave birth to. TLF is a faith-based, non-profit community organisation, operating in a similar fashion to so-called community development corporations (CDCs). Its presence has facilitated psycho-social, spiritual, physical and economic infrastructure, providing access to services and resources, previously unavailable to the communities it serves, at least in the inner city. When it started out in 1993 it started however with no budget, no property and only 5 volunteer staff members. It had the support of 6 inner city churches who journeyed with TLF as a collective for the first 20 years of its existence.

TLF started out in 1993 as Pretoria Community Ministries (PCM). Since then it created a number of intentional communities with some of the city's most vulnerable people – women and girl children at risk, people living with chronic mental illness or disease, homeless communities, and low-income working people. In all these communities TLF's emphasis was on mutual journeying together in ways that would ensure people's fully integration as part of an inclusive community. To this day these communities probably remain one of TLF's most distinctive contributions to the inner city of Tshwane.

It soon realised however that it needed to move beyond services only as people got back on their feet but then lacked adequate access to affordable inner city housing. It also realised that services only addressed the symptoms of challenges vulnerable people faced and therefore TLF became active in playing an advocacy role to find just alternatives to the current status quo, particularly in relation to issues such as homelessness, girl children on the streets, human trafficking in Tshwane, and people living with chronic or terminal illness on the streets of Tshwane being excluded from sustainable health care options.

As a result, TLF not only diversified its own communities but also gave birth to institutions that are now independently making a contribution in the City of Tshwane. Through the various communities and institutions it started, TLF played a role to leverage resources into urban projects that now provide access to particularly vulnerable people often excluded from mainstream urban society.

It asserted the way in which civil society and the faith-based sector can contribute to local urban development and empowerment, from below and from within, not being dependent on local government, but potentially being a constructive and equal partner of local government.

Today TLF's programmes are still inner city-based, but it plays a much broader role in terms of support, modelling, capacity-building and resource brokering, both in the metropolitan area of Tshwane, but also with emerging Leadership Foundations in other cities in Africa.

HOLISTIC LOCAL IMPACT

TLF, through what was then still known as PCM, created vital **social infrastructure** in the inner city, often providing psycho-social and health services that did not exist before for particular groups in the city.

It hosted the first non-racial women's shelter in the city, The Potter's House, as part of a more holistic women's empowerment programme, supporting more than 2,000 women to be reintegrated into communities since 1993. In 1997 it created the first shelter for girl children in the city, drastically reducing the number of child sex workers, and supporting more than 1,000 girls to be reintegrated into communities since 1998.

Also in 1998 it created an multi-faceted programme for homeless people, including an outreach programme, the Akanani Street Centre that combines a drop-in centre, employment agency, counselling and referral services, and palliative care for terminally ill homeless people. In this way it affirms the presence of homeless people in local urban spaces and finds ways to integrate them more intentionally.

The Gilead Health Community started with palliative care for homeless people who were terminally ill, but since expanded to include HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes, as well as a programme supporting people living with chronic mental illness, both preventing homelessness and supporting their re-integration into local communities.

It created a multi-purpose community centre with a day-care facility for pre-school children in Salvokop, a community that previously lacked

any social infrastructure whatsoever. This is known as the Inkululeko Community Centre. This Centre also includes an after-school programme, toy library, children's rights programme, holiday programmes for children, and outreach work in the local community, particularly focusing on Baghdad, the informal settlement at the entrance to Salvokop.

For a while TLF hosted the Youth Leadership Academy, a vibrant programme combining the creative arts, sport and play, to empower vulnerable youth. Unfortunately this specific initiative is currently dormant.

As a result of the successful programmes in the different intentional communities, vulnerable people found themselves accessing employment and other opportunities and needed access to affordable and decent housing in the city. TLF, in 1997, gave birth to the city's first social housing company, and one of the first in the country. Today Yeast City Housing is an independent social housing company, registered with the Social Housing Registration Authority (SHRA) and known to be responsive to diverse social housing needs in the inner city of Tshwane. Through the work of Yeast City Housing essential **physical and housing infrastructure** is being created on a continuous basis.

TLF acknowledged the need for knowledge infrastructure and established the *Centre for Urban Transformation* that loosely held different creative initiatives (incorporating research, training and education, advocacy and policy, communication and publication, events and festivals). Both the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative and the Burgers Park Village will be highlighted below.

- TLF gave birth to the *Institute for Urban Ministry*, as part of the Centre, and the Institute pioneered urban theological education in South Africa. Since 1996 it hosts a biennial consultation on urban ministry to inform, inspire, and educate urban ministry workers. It created innovative educational programmes in conjunction with the University of South Africa and the University of Pretoria, with whom it still has formal partnership agreements. In this way, the inner city as classroom was offered as an educational space in which to be acquainted with a praxis-approach to urban engagement, which students, who were always urban practitioners, could then implement in their own contexts.
- In 2000 it started a small community festival – Feast of the Clowns – to celebrate the diversity of the inner city, to build a sense of community, to create access for vulnerable people to social, cultural and recreational infrastructure, and to create awareness for on-going social challenges. Starting small, this festival has grown into a week-long festivity with 20,000 people participating annually, making it the largest inner city

festival in the city, and optimising local open spaces such as the Burgers Park.

A more recent initiative was the established of a private for-profit company, known as Tshepo Urban Trading. Increasingly TLF recognises the pitfalls of being donor-dependent and is working towards becoming robustly self-sufficient. Tshepo Urban Trading was established to focus on the incubation and development of businesses that would create profit for the exclusive purpose of it being reinvested for social and community development objectives.

This is essential **economic infrastructure** that is required for local community engagements to also be locally resourced and empowered. Some of the smaller businesses Tshepo established struggled to become viable. Three of the businesses it created were handed over to the entrepreneurs starting, in all three cases women from the local community.

SPATIAL AND POLICY IMPACT

All the above initiatives impacted individuals and neighbourhoods in life-changing ways, asserting the right of people to the city but also to urban resources and urban participation.

At the same time however, it is important to note the important spatial and policy impact local community-based engagements can have. A number of its initiatives were pilot projects in terms of establishing new social housing and social development policies and strategies. Its work with homeless communities has deeply informed the newly adopted Tshwane Homelessness Policy and Strategy. It has trail-blazed alternatives to homelessness for people living with terminal illness or chronic mental illness on the streets of Tshwane. It has demonstrated the possibility to facilitate long-term alternatives for girl children found on the streets and in child prostitution.

| 440

In addition, through its presence and interventions it shaped urban spatial patterns in particular areas, initially in Burgers Park Lane but now also beyond. Yeast City Housing in particular is contributing to shape inner city spatiality for times to come.

TABLE OF ABUNDANCE

TLF and its different communities are sustained by a deep sense of vocation, a commitment to the city and a love for the city. Over the years they have developed a spirituality with distinct rhythms that continues to root and re-root them in their vocation, commitment and love. They struggle continuously to overcome false dichotomies between faith and the city, prayer and politics, spirituality and space, recognising how lives lived together and with integrity, resist such dichotomies in every moment of every day.

The vision and approach of TLF is kept grounded in the metaphor of a *table of abundance*. It suggests that there is enough in the world and in the City of Tshwane for everyone – there is abundance of resources adequate to match the challenges of the city. And yet, TLF recognises that many people, if not the majority, do not share in this abundance.

The work of TLF is therefore to open up tables, to create seats at the table, to create new tables, in order for vulnerable people and communities who lack access to the city's resources, to share in the table of abundance. TLF seeks to invite people to participate fully as dignified beneficiaries, sharing neighbours, and contributing citizens of the city in which they live.



Fig. 189. du Toit, 2009. Table of Abundance.

COMMUNITY FORUMS:

Berea-Burgers Park and Salvokop

The inner city of Tshwane, in the past a cluster of whites-only neighbourhoods with a high percentage of residents being government employees, lacked a civic tradition of participation and advocacy in local government matters. One could almost say that there was no need for it because these communities were looked after.

With urban change occurring, the nature of these neighbourhoods also changed, racially and socially, and a real need arose for a more organised and active civil society, participating in the debates over and construction of their own futures.

Two examples of civic responses are the formation of the Berea Community Forum and the Salvokop Development Forum.

The **Berea Community Forum** was created by individuals and organisations, present, living and/or working in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city. It focused its efforts on property issues, crime prevention, social development and municipal services.

It played an important role in advising new property owners and body corporates of sectional title complexes on their rights and responsibilities. In the process, the Forum advocated against the sequestration of 18 apartment blocks (affecting almost 900 families) by local authority due to bad debt, assisting these properties instead to understand the nature of their investment and to turn their bad buildings and financial status around.

The Forum informed decisions regarding rezoning applications, preventing land use that local residents perceived as a threat to their well-being. The Forum informed the Gautrain trajectory preventing the demolition of a number of residential buildings and houses accommodating about 500 families.

The Forum was also represented in the Ward Committee and local Community Policing Forum, serving as a liaison between the local community and both local authority and the South African Police Services. It identified crime hot spots and assisted the SAPS in measures to prevent crime.

It became very evident that an organised local community had power to resist what was not in its interest, to effect change that was on its side, and to speak with one voice when it really mattered.

The Forum has gone through different phases of influence, but its impact was sadly only seen when institutional stakeholders in the community played a more prominent lead role. When these stakeholders took a back seat, encouraging individual residents of the area to take greater ownership and leadership for the affairs of the Forum, the Forum struggled to maintain its momentum.

Since 2011 it has been largely defunct and needs to be resuscitated if it is to influence local plans and visions for the Berea-Burgers Park community, going into the future.

The **Salvokop Development Forum** was created to address the concerns of tenants living in the Salvokop neighbourhood of the inner city, but also to inform the future of this important inner city neighbourhood.

Salvokop is an old railway community that previously housed white railway workers. Until 2010 the land on which Salvokop is situated was owned by Propnet (the property subsidiary of Transnet, a public transport company). In 2010 the land was transferred from Propnet to the Department of Public Works, the property manager of national government assets. The land is now owned by this Department, with the exception of the Jopie Fourie Primary School and the Inkululeko Community Centre.

In June 2000 the Freedom Park was officially launched as a national heritage project and construction commenced. The Park is situated on 52 hectares of land that was previously undeveloped, on the southern hill overlooking Salvokop. The Salvokop neighbourhood remains the main access route for visitors to Freedom Park (cf. Freedom Park 2015).

Freedom Park was formally handed over to the Freedom Park Trust by then President Thabo Mbeki on 8 March 2004.

Freedom Park is a memorial to honour those who sacrificed their lives to win freedom. It also celebrates and explores the country's diverse peoples, and our common humanity (Freedom Park 2015)

443 |

In the context of these national stakeholders, the tenants of Salvokop and the non-profit organisations and primary school working in this area, all find themselves in a rather precarious situation. The neighbourhood of Salvokop is faced with a number of challenges. There is no clarity as to the future vision of its landlord, the Department of Public Works. There is therefore no clarity as to the future of the tenants occupying the houses in the area, the sub-tenants renting “illegally” from the formal tenants and the informal settlement at the western entrance to Salvokop.

The Freedom Park, being a national asset and tourism attraction,

obviously dislikes the current situation in Salvokop with dilapidated and overcrowded housing. At the same time however, it would be a disgrace for a monument celebrating national freedom to advocate the displacement of vulnerable people in its vicinity. Why the landlord, the Department of Public Works, is not managing their housing stock properly in terms of legal lease agreements signed by the tenants, is curious. Could it even be that government deliberately allows the deterioration of a community to the point of no return, then to send in bulldozers under the pretence of slum clearance or urban renewal (cf. the way David Harvey (2012:16) speaks of such processes as “creative destruction”)? This is not uncommon in cities worldwide.

It was against this backdrop that the Salvokop Development Forum was initially founded. In the meantime the odds against the local community seem to have become even much higher.

The main partners in the Forum are

- The Salvokop Resident Forum (representing residents of the area)
- The Inkululeko Community Centre (a project of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and Yeast City Housing)
- POPUP, a skills development and health programme
- Jopie Fourie Primary School

In recent times Freedom Park and even the Department of Public Works also participate in the work of the Forum from time to time, however they reveal little of their plans for the area. Towards the end of 2016 the new headquarters for Statistics South Africa was built in the north-eastern corner of Salvokop at a cost of almost R 2 billion. Statistics South Africa also participated in recent meetings of the Forum.

| 444

In 2002, before the land on which Salvokop is situated was transferred from Propnet (Transnet’s property arm) to the Department of Public Works, there was a call for proposals for the redevelopment of this land. The Salvokop Development Forum engaged city planners and collectively prepared and submitted an integrated development proposal for Salvokop. The proposal both incorporated the visions and aspirations of the diverse groups sharing the space in Salvokop, showing economic viability of an integrated neighbourhood, whilst at the same time demonstrating how it could be attractive to the then landlord of the area (Propnet). The landlord never provided feedback and nobody was awarded a tender for the redevelopment.

In 2011 a new process was embarked upon and new consultants were tasked to facilitate a vision and plan for Salvokop. Once again the Salvokop Development Forum was engaged in this process. Five years later progress remains slow.

The Forum previously managed to prevent illegal evictions of tenants in the area. It also advocates around issues of crime prevention and municipal services on an on-going basis, acting as liaison between the community and the city.

However, the Forum will have to consolidate its own vision for the area, strengthen its own capacity for critical engagement, and provide strategic inputs into the vision and plan for a future Salvokop, if it wants to ensure that its members continue to sit at the table of Salvokop in future. The Forum also needs to discern a way of balancing the protection of the rights of tenants, even those without signed lease agreements, and the lack of responsibility taken by the same community for the well-being of Salvokop.

The story of Salvokop and the possible impact of the Salvokop Development Forum going forward, are unknown. The verdict is still out as to what the future of Salvokop might look like, and whose interests would be served.

FEAST OF THE CLOWNS:

celebration - arts - justice

The Feast of the Clowns (Feast of the Clowns 2014; Tshwane Leadership Foundation 2015) was started against the background of a diversifying city, disinvestment from the city, negative discourses about the status and future of the inner city, and the lack of positive recreational or entertainment venues in the city.

Its focus is on urban justice issues, highlighted and celebrated through the arts. The first festival was hosted in 1995 and after a 5-year break the Feast re-launched itself in 2000 and to its own surprise sustained itself until today. It is hosted annually by the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and between 2007 and 2014 it was co-hosted in partnership with the City of Tshwane.

The Feast was sparked by Harvey Cox's book (1969), *Feast of the Fools*, which mourns the loss of fantasy (imagination) and festivity (celebration) in cities. The clown as metaphor brings laughter in a sad world but also cries about that which makes the world sad. The clown is the jester that reminds the emperor when he is naked. The Feast of the Clowns is a reminder that we are all frail human beings, and those in power like grass that grows today and withers tomorrow.

The Feast of the Clowns is different from other large city festivals in terms of its "bottom up" character, owned and driven by local community initiative. Being comparatively small it has contributed significant social and cultural infrastructure to the inner city over time. Unfortunately it was never able to develop proper indicators to measure the actual effects of the Feast, which is probably rather difficult considering its nature.

The Feast consists of a week of activity centring on an annual theme. In the past, themes included "Taking back our streets"; "It takes a community to raise a child!"; "It's up to us"; "We must rise!", often focusing on inviting and building local agency to take responsibility for issues affecting local communities.

The highlight of the week is on the Saturday in and around Burgers Park in the inner city. The main festival on the Saturday kicks off with a colourful March of the Clowns through the city streets. It takes the form of a playful protest, raising serious social justice issues through clowning, satire and play. Children and older people, black and white, and people from different communities across the city, join in to make this March an event. In and around Burgers Park live artists perform on 2 or 3 stages, including known artists and emerging community artists, interspersed with space



Fig. 190. Meylahn, 1995. Feast of the Clowns Logo.

being made for children and young people from the local community. The live performances are complemented with food and craft stalls, and exhibitions by local community organisations creating awareness for the themes embodied by their work. There is always an extensive children's play area.

The run-up to the Saturday includes social justice workshops bringing together community members, community practitioners, students, researchers, and others, to be educated and informed, or to plan and strategise around issues ranging from HIV/AIDS and human trafficking, to children's rights, refugees and xenophobia, homelessness and landlessness, and greening the city.

In the past the Feast was used a platform for launching the Tshwane Counter-Trafficking Coalition and for building the momentum of the Tshwane Homelessness Forum. Also during the week preceding the Saturday, creative art workshops take place in which people can explore some of the justice themes using different art mediums. In recent years a small side festival took place on the campus of the University of Pretoria during the same days, called "feast@UP". The purpose of this side festival was to foster citizenship for social justice, advancing the same theme the Feast is hosting during that year.

SOCIO-SPATIAL IMPACT

The Feast of the Clowns has been able to unlock local assets that are often underutilised, in the form of public and private properties, cultural skills, human energy, and local finances, reviving and celebrating the local spaces of the Burgers Park and its surroundings. It provides annual access to the arts through workshops, events and performances, including access to well-established artists. In the past local hotels such as Capital Protea and the Manhattan joined hands with the Feast organisers to make it a success. Various performances were put on stage at the National State Theatre as part of the Feast.

447 |

Something that was never envisaged by the Feast organisers but organically developed was the way in which emerging community artists use this space to showcase their talent in public, sometimes sharing the stage with bigger names, even getting access to possible contracts.

The festival provides a space for social exchange and contributes to community-building through positive interaction. There are residents in the neighbourhood who speak of waiting annually for the Saturday in August when the Feast would take place. Children know weeks ahead of time and come in their numbers. One of the most heartening features

of the Feast is the way in which it has developed from children coming largely unsupervised to a growing number of families seeing this as a family outing for the whole day.

Vulnerable people are intentionally included in all the week's activities. They participate in the social justice and creative art workshops; they attend the Saturday and participate in the March. Often they are organising or managing aspects on the day, and the security is predominantly provided by homeless individuals.

Apart from the social goals, the Feast represents a clear spatial intervention, reclaiming underutilised urban spaces and inner city streets for a community festival, celebrating local diversity and initiative, but also using local spaces to broadcast concerns and hopes creatively.

In 2007 the Feast was seen as Tshwane's official festival in preparation for the Gauteng Carnival two weeks later. In 2010 the Feast was seen as the official welcoming festival of the City of Tshwane for visitors to the FIFA World Cup. In 2013 the Executive Mayor of the City cited the Feast of the Clowns as an example of social cohesion.

The logo of the Feast of the Clowns depicts a city held by a clown-figure. It could either be understood as a question: Who is holding the city? Who will hold the city? Who is taking ownership for the city's care and well-being?; or it could be understood as an invitation or a vision for all of us to be co-responsible for holding and nurturing the city, in order for it to be(come) whole.

In the faith community that gave birth to this festival, the clown also symbolises a God who is deeply concerned with the city, crying for its fragmentation and scars, but also seeking to mend it with care and laughter.

YEAST CITY HOUSING:

a community- and faith-based social housing company



Fig. 191. Yeast City Housing Logo.

Yeast City Housing (n.d.) was created as a result of the work of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (2015; De Beer 1998: chapters 6 and 7). It was registered in 1998 as the first social housing company in the City of Tshwane and one of the first in the country.

It was prompted by the socio-political changes occurring in the city, the housing demand, the loss of affordable housing to new construction and road developments, absentee landlords, and the incentive of a provincial housing subsidy for social housing. It also emerged in recognition of the fact that the faith-based community had latent assets – human, intellectual, technical, finance, land and property - that could be mobilised to impact upon the housing environment.

Today Yeast City Housing manages 775 social housing units in the City of Tshwane, serving 1935 people per month, in different neighbourhoods spanning the inner city (Mofokeng 2017).

SOCIO-ECONOMIC-SPATIAL IMPACT

In 2000 it was recognised by the Institute for Housing (Gauteng) as housing developer of the year, for “its path-setting role in providing transitional, communal, institutional and special needs housing, and related social services to poor and at-risk people in the inner city” (Yeast City Housing 2014).

It models housing provision that is cost-effective, well-integrated into the local community, aesthetically pleasing, and affordable to the user. It also models housing provision addressing a continuum of housing needs, including those with special housing needs. Most of the tenants living in Yeast properties cannot access decent and affordable housing elsewhere in the inner city. It packages its housing projects through innovative partnerships and funding mechanisms. Three of its developments were pilot projects of the Gauteng Department of Housing, contributing to social housing policy.

It has impacted on local urban spaces through the redevelopment of urban land and property for inclusive use, at a time when few invested in the inner city. In a number of cases it has done so through modelling innovative use of church land by recreating existing church properties to offer affordable housing options and various other social services. In doing so it contributed to the improvement of the face of the city and to set the tone for these kind of developments as well as income groups that could be housed in inner city areas in a sustainable way.

At a deeper level, the housing offered by Yeast contributes to the socio-spatial transformation of the city, giving access to affordable housing in the most central neighbourhoods of the city and subverting the discourse that the poor should go elsewhere, particularly to the fringes. In a development completed in 2015, being awarded by the Gauteng Department of Housing as the social housing project of the year, 50% of the residents accessing this new high-rise development in Salvokop previously lived in backyard shacks in Salvokop. They had to pay R 600 for the right to erect a shack whereas they now had an opportunity to stay in a brand-new self-contained apartment for R 750 per month. At a fraction higher they were given a new lease on life, secure tenure and high-quality accommodation.

By the end of 2016 Yeast has created 775 transitional, communal and self-contained family housing units, as well as special needs housing for women and girls at-risk, and for homeless people with terminal illness. In addition it has created special needs housing for people with chronic mental illness as well as senior citizens. This has become a significant partnership with the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, Yeast being the property developer / manager, and TLF putting solid psycho-social programmes in place to ensure the software infrastructure facilitates the healing and liberation envisaged by the property development. By 2016, before developing the Thembelihle Village, it brokered approximately R 76,782,733 of housing finance into the inner city.

By the end of 2017 Yeast City Housing should have 1,267 units in its portfolio, providing decent, affordable and well-located housing to at least 3,411 people every night of the year. By the end of the same year Yeast would have brokered a total amount of approximately R 336,800,000 in housing finance into the inner city.

| 450

The important fact to be recognised is this: What started off with a small contribution of R 600 from six churches in 1998, was multiplied and translated into what could be an investment worth R 500 million by 2020. Therefore the small but brave steps taken by community- or faith-based actors in the city, however small, should not be despised. Because once the seeds sown by them take root, the effects might multiply continuously for generations to come.

However, in the bigger scheme of things, and against the backdrop of staggering housing shortages, this is a drop in the ocean. Its local transformative impact, in the lives of the residents and families, and the life of the neighbourhood cannot be denied. And yet, external political, institutional and structural constraints restrict fast-tracking multiplication of housing interventions all over the city.

CENTRE FOR URBAN TRANSFORMATION:

including the Institute for Urban Ministry

The Consortium for Urban Transformation (CUT) was created in 2000 by a number of civil society agencies committed to the inner city and to social inclusion. It had the fourfold objective of

- packaging strategic social development partnerships
- broker social investment into inner city regeneration
- being a voice for urban regeneration that is socially inclusive
- offering the inner city as a laboratory for urban dialogue, internships, scholarship and research

The purpose was to consolidate and strengthen civil society participation in local urban planning, management and development processes. The partners included the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, Yeast City Housing, The City Methodist Mission, the Berea Community Forum, IDASA, PEN and initially the Centre for Housing & Land Development of the University of Pretoria.

In 2007 the Consortium was changed into the Centre for Urban Transformation, managed as a division of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, but still in partnership with the same role players, as well as intentional about broader partnership with institutions committed to research, education, advocacy and lobbying, related to urban social concerns.

Today the Centre is more a concept than a project, being an umbrella for three distinct initiatives in the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, all three contributing to communicate visions for urban alternatives – models of urban regeneration that are simultaneously radically inclusive as well as economically and socially viable.

451 |

The three initiatives are the Institute for Urban Ministry, focusing on training and education of urban community and ministry practitioners; an Advocacy and Policy Unit, participating in local community forums, and seeking to inform policy in relation to homelessness, housing and human trafficking, specifically in the inner city but also beyond; and the Feast of the Clowns, an annual community festival focusing on community-building and awareness-raising for social justice concerns through arts and celebration.

In future the work of the Urban Studio (presented later in this chapter) and the Centre for Urban Transformation will probably be consolidated.

The first project of CUT was the Burgers Park Village (see below), a mixed-use development, modelling the recycling of an old inner city block for creative new uses, combining different housing types, income groups, social services, SMMEs, a conference centre, and worship spaces. It demonstrated urban regeneration that is socially inclusive. Much of what it set out to do was achieved but, as is the case so often with the community- and faith-based sector, an inherent resistance to branding (and self-branding) failed to give proper exposure to this intervention in terms of telling the story of what happened here. Perhaps this could still be addressed.

The second project was building on the success of the Burgers Park Village. It packaged a capacity-building and action planning process for inner city civil society, known as the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative (see below). This project culminated in a strategic action plan for the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood known as the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative. It proposed the formation of the Berea-Burgers Park Community Development Corporation as the institutional mechanism to drive implementation of the action plan. Unfortunately this plan was never implemented.

The Institute for Urban Ministry was established earlier as a separate non-profit tasked with the vocation of urban theological education. It was now incorporated into the over-all vision of the Centre to drive the research and education agenda of the Centre, equipping community- and faith-based urban practitioners with knowledge and skills for urban engagement. Similarly the Advocacy and Policy Unit of TLF was responsible to provide access to legal aid for vulnerable people and communities in the inner city, and ensured local community participation in community forums, relevant planning forums, and policy discussions on issues related to homelessness, social housing, and human trafficking.

| 452

The Centre's vision was to consolidate different strategic initiatives into one coherent strategy for deeper transformation – addressing root issues that could change the socio-spatial fabric of the inner city for generations to come. The Centre could not gain institutional momentum in the same way as some of the other engagements presented here. However, what is continuing today is the different initiatives that made up the Centre.

The Centre also became a precursor for what is now known as the Urban Studio (cf. pp461-462), facilitating the synergy and coordination that was initially envisaged, but now on a firmer institutional and collaborative footing than before.

BURGERS PARK VILLAGE

recycling an old inner city block for socially inclusive, multi-purpose use.



Fig. 192. Nel, Burgers Park Village (adapted from Google Earth 2017)

1. City Methodist Mission: community centre, social housing, health clinic, pre-school
2. Jubilee Centre: women's shelter, social housing, drop-in centres, housing offices
3. Feast of the Clowns
4. Kiosk & drop-in centre
5. International Study Centre
6. Social Housing

In 2001, what was then known as the Consortium for Urban Transformation put together a project called the Burgers Park Village (2001). It consolidated a number of loosely connected projects on one inner city block, into a coherent demonstration project modelling the recycling of an old inner city block. This was achieved through (re-)developing existing assets optimally.

Pretoria Community Ministries, Yeast City Housing, City Methodist Mission and the Berea Community Forum were the implementing partners.

The purpose of the project was to achieve greater impact through consolidating different project elements, and to leverage funds more strategically by designing such a comprehensive, integrated project.

The project demonstrated the possibility of upgrading an inner city block through redeveloping existing assets, leveraging additional external resources but on local terms, and doing this without excluding vulnerable people but through intentionally including them.

It facilitated the first new construction of apartments in the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood in 20 years, creating 45 new social housing units, and a 24-bed transitional housing project for women in crisis with their children. It upgraded 31 existing housing units of a communal housing project, becoming one of the first projects in the city to be deliberately racially diverse.

In addition it supported the creation of a HIV and AIDS healing centre and a 6-bed care centre for people with chronic illness. This health service complemented the small business hub, conference centre, day-care centre, refugee office, and worship facilities, already offered at the City Methodist Mission.

The Burgers Park Village also supported and strengthened the community organising efforts of the Berea Community Forum.

BEREA-BURGERS PARK REGENERATION INITIATIVE:

building capacity and facilitating civic participation for shaping and managing a local urban neighbourhood.

Built on the relative success of the Burgers Park Village, the Centre for Urban Transformation, then known as the Consortium for Urban Transformation (CUT), packaged a capacity-building and action planning programme for the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood of the inner city, which was prompted by 3 main factors.

Firstly, spatial development frameworks and strategic plans for the inner city are helpful but often too broad and generic for providing detailed guidelines for local neighbourhood development.

Secondly, civil society role players – local residents, churches, NGO's, business – often participate in local planning processes with vested interest and much passion. Their participation is not always as constructive as it could be for various reasons, one being a lack of knowledge of urban management and development principles, practices, visions, models and possibilities, locally and elsewhere in the world.

Thirdly, there is often a lack of continuity or inappropriate vehicles for implementation in local authority, resulting in impressive plans being shelved or discontinued.

With this in mind the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative was put together in 2005/2006 by CUT in conjunction with the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), an Institute associated with the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

This partnership included a tailor-made capacity-building and action planning programme for 20 inner city leaders. Participants included civil society leaders from NGO's, churches, the health sector, formal and informal business, youth, and local residents, as well as politicians and officials from local and provincial government, representing the inner city office, the Department of Economic Development and the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

This initiative had clear and important outcomes, but unfortunately the lack of political will in the City of Tshwane, and the inability of city officials to convince politicians of the desirability of this project, put the project on a shelf. Both politicians and officials benefited from the process, participated in the capacity-building programme in both Rotterdam and Pretoria, contributed to the development of the action plan, but were never made accountable for why they were not implementing the project.

Three of the distinctive features or strengths of the Regeneration Initiative were the following:

1. Broad-based participation: The participation of elected councillors (local politicians), government officials with specific portfolios, as well as community leaders covering a broad range of sectoral interests, was definitely one of the strengths of this process and programme.

2. Comprehensive plan: The action plan that emerged contributed to the provision of a comprehensive framework and guideline for local development projects and processes, including physical, social, economic and institutional aspects.

3. Focusing on a defined area: One of the greatest strengths of this process was its focus on a specific, defined local area, small and manageable enough to show real impact.

The lack of implementation meant wasting a major investment into the Berea-Burgers Park neighbourhood. Perhaps it is time for local citizens' organisations to revive the Plan and related conversations. Even though time has lapsed, some of the elements, principles and proposed institutional arrangements for implementation might be as valid today as when the Plan was first drafted.

LOCAL CHURCHES AND CHURCH CONVERSIONS:

transforming urban space through transforming church space

Local churches in the Berea-Burgers Park precinct had to consider their own position and response to rapid social change. In 1993 there were only four active churches in this neighbourhood. One of the church properties of the Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Church was sold to a congregation of the Apostolic Faith Mission. The Methodist Church has recommitted its property to the well-being and empowerment of the community, using it for various services and programmes on a daily basis. The Lutheran Church also transformed itself from an all white community to a predominantly black community. The Old Apostolic Church is not mingling at all with other churches.

Since 1993 new churches were planted in this area, worshipping in the Hamilton Primary School's hall, in museums and in the auditorium of the headquarters of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK). The headquarters of the NHK is located in an old historic building on Jeff Masemola Street and after giving consideration to selling its property, they have decided to remain in the city centre.

Yeast City Housing, in 3 different cases, formed partnerships with local churches to redevelop church properties in a way that would facilitate social housing and community facilities, complementing the worship, liturgical and other pastoral functions of the church.

This was on the one hand prompted by the lack of affordable and accessible inner city land for affordable housing development, and on the other hand by the desire of the specific churches to be more connected to the challenges presented by their local urban neighbourhoods and to offer their spaces (underutilised assets) in response to some of these challenges.

| 456

These projects facilitated transformed church space, utilising existing property optimally as a local community asset. They also overcome the dichotomy of "sacred" and "secular" space, church and community, transforming the urban landscape through the re-use of church properties as mixed-use properties different from their narrower traditional uses.

A 27-unit communal housing development was created at the City Methodist Mission. This project was written up by the Social Housing Foundation in conjunction with SHIFT (2005) as an example of good practice and informed provincial social housing policy. This housing development is embedded within a broader-based community centre and faith community.

Two similar conversions of church spaces, although not in Berea-Burgers

Park, but still in the inner city, were taking place at the Leyds Street Congregational Church and in Salvokop.

The Leyds Street Congregational Church property in Arcadia was redeveloped (2011) to accommodate 24 units of communal and institutional housing, serving as move-on housing for women coming from sheltered environments.

A church property in Salvokop has been re-utilised as a multi-purpose community centre, focusing particularly on child care, child development and children's rights. Construction was also completed to convert the old church house into a 82-unit apartment complex, with additional class rooms for the day-care centre. The existing community centre and children's play area still need to be upgraded and expanded.

In the case of City Methodist Mission and the Leyd Street Congregational Church, the elements were similar: a renewed commitment to serve the surrounding neighbourhood; an intentional journey exploring the use of church land theologically; a desire to use church property in service of healing urban fractures; making church land available at no cost; leveraging this gift / asset to secure government housing subsidies; and partnering with a community- and church-based social housing company in mutually respectful ways. In the case of City Methodist Mission, they were even able to sell a church house and also gifted a portion of the income for redeveloping the church site.

In the case of Salvokop, the original congregation who owned and built the church, relocated when the neighbourhood changed demographically. They were willing to sell the property to a church-based social housing company for a third of their original asking price. It illustrated a value-based commitment to the area, even though they themselves could not sustain a presence in Salvokop, ensuring the continuation of what they started.

TSHWANE HOMELESSNESS FORUM

The Tshwane Homelessness Forum has existed since 2000 but often only as a small reactive network of concerned individuals, without much concrete impact. In 2010, during the Feast of the Clowns, the Forum was re-launched with individuals representing community organisations, churches, homeless and former homeless people, and officials from the City of Tshwane. Still rather small, it now at least maintained continuity until May 2014.

In May of 2014 the City of Tshwane issued an eviction notice of 24 hours to about 600 homeless people living in the City's only formal overnight shelter (cf. Van Zuydam 2014). This was in the middle of winter without any alternatives provided, and it was established that a large percentage of the shelter dwellers were elderly people, people living with chronic mental illness, but also mothers with babies.

The reason for the eviction was that the City had a budget for renovating the shelter that transpired by the end of June, and after inaction of a whole year, they now wanted to force through the renovations and had to evict homeless people.

The resistance of the community living in the shelter as well as civil society partners had the City reverse this decision and the Executive Mayor issued a public apology. Individuals from the Tshwane Homelessness Forum and the University of Pretoria met with the Executive Mayor and officials tasked with social development and homelessness in the City of Tshwane. The purpose was to discuss the shelter, but in the end it led to a decision to revisit the City's Policy on homelessness, to draft a strategy, and to host the City's first ever Homeless Summit.

A summit around homelessness was contemplated for some time by some civil society actors working in the field. The hope was to create a space that would foster a consciousness and awareness around issues of homelessness, break down myths and stereotypes, and imagine real and lasting alternatives.

The Tshwane Homeless Summit was hosted on 25-26 May 2015. It gathered more than 400 people – community practitioners, NGO and faith-based leaders, city officials, politicians, and business people, but what was of particular significance was that more than 50% of the delegates were homeless or former homeless people themselves (De Beer & Vally 2015).

The Summit was preceded by an intensive research project entitled



Fig. 193. Participants at the Homeless Summit, 2015.

“Pathways out of homelessness” in which more than 40 researchers from the University of Pretoria and the University of South Africa participated (De Beer & Vally 2015). The research process consisted of four elements:

- A conceptual and theoretical framework
- Documenting narratives of (former) homeless people
- Documenting current practices seeking to address homelessness
- Doing a critical appraisal of the City’s existing policy on homelessness, in dialogue with related local, national and global policies and strategies

The purpose of the process was to inform the City’s Policy and Strategy on street homelessness by making specific recommendations in this regard. In November of 2016 the proposed Tshwane Homelessness Policy and Strategy was finally approved and role players are now waiting with bated breath to see whether there would be appropriate budget allocations made for implementing the Policy and Strategy.

The research report, “Pathways out of homelessness”, outlines 20 tangible outcomes coming from the Tshwane Homeless Summit, and the process it was embedded in (De Beer & Vally 2015). It speaks to the power of collaborative action, informed and enhanced by community-based knowledge and wisdom in conjunction with academic and other forms of knowledge.

The outcomes indicated in the report (De Beer & Vally 2015) both build on existing strengths and services that facilitate pathways out of homelessness, but also propose strategic and new interventions where required. One of the major findings of the research was that homelessness has suburbanised and dedicated services need to be offered in different regions of the city, to address the needs of 40% of street homeless people no longer to be found in the inner city. Currently the concentration of important services to street homeless people is mainly found in the inner city.

The strategy addresses psycho-social, housing, economic and institutional challenges and provides a very concrete action plan for addressing such. Specific actions include on-going collaboration in partnership and the continuation and strengthening of existing interventions; the reorganisation of existing infrastructure to address the increasing suburbanisation of street homelessness; the launch of a street medicine programme providing access to basic health care and health screening on the streets; creating a Sub-Forum to coordinate outreach programmes, drop-in centres and food programmes; expansion of social housing to include housing products addressing specific housing needs such as that of elderly homeless people; developing a recycling project that acknowledges the contribution made by current recyclers, integrating them more formally into the economy,

and working against their criminalisation; and facilitating scholarships at local universities for homeless individuals who qualify.

On 10 October 2015 the proposed Tshwane Homelessness Strategy and Policy were presented to the representative of the then-Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane, and a social contract was entered into between the Tshwane Homelessness Forum, the City of Tshwane, the University of Pretoria, and the University of South Africa,

In order to ensure proper implementation, three very specific institutional actions were proposed: to strengthen the Tshwane Homelessness Forum both in terms of its capacity and legal status; to create an inter-departmental forum on homelessness in the municipality to ensure proper coordination between departments; and to create a new non-profit institutional vehicle bringing together the various institutional partners – the city, the Tshwane Homelessness Forum, the universities and business, as a vehicle to ensure oversight and accountability in relation to implementation. Implementation is proposed to be done by different partners based on their proven competencies and track records.

What distinguished this engagement from others mentioned above was the way in which two universities have been institutionally bound into the process and partnership. Both the University of Pretoria and the University of South Africa were institutionally committed to this process, contributing research, documentation and writing capacities to the process.

Specific academic outputs were contributing to expand a local, and national, knowledge base on homelessness, broadly informed. Beyond the actual services or programmes outlined in the Action Plan, a comprehensive community education programme is developed to engage in rights' education with homeless people, outreach workers, city officials, and law enforcement officers. In addition the City of Tshwane now participates annually in World Homeless Day both to create awareness and to dispel myths regarding homelessness.

This collaborative showcased the beauty of shared knowledge to transform policy and strategy processes – bringing together the knowledge and experience of homeless and former homeless people, community practitioners, city officials, and researchers – all with one purpose which was to find sustainable pathways out of homelessness. The process is ongoing and the proof will be in the actualisation of actions articulated by the collaborative. Hopefully the joint ownership, and the initiative coming “from below”, in partnership with respectable higher education institutions, will sustain this to become a model project.

| 460

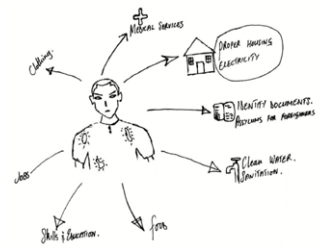


Fig. 194. Basic needs identified during the Homeless Summit Interactive Session, 2015.

URBAN STUDIO:

a transdisciplinary space advancing community-based urban praxis

A more recent and still emerging development – the Urban Studio – is a collaborative between the Tshwane Leadership Foundation and the Centre for Contextual Ministry at the University of Pretoria. In some ways the Urban Studio is a direct outcome, at least conceptually, of the research described in this study.

The purpose of the Urban Studio is to create and offer transdisciplinary spaces for “action, reflection, learning and research” and “for generating knowledge in close collaboration with local communities” (De Beer 2013b:2).

It is advancing a community-based urban praxis, arguing that there is much to be learnt by practitioners, scholars, researchers and students, from grass-root and experiential knowledge generated over many years in the face of dramatic urban change.

Different third sector organisations have created significant responses to the changing dynamics, being and/or representing locally embedded citizens' organisations, residents' groups, and particularly vulnerable populations. Faith-based organisations, NPOs, local community forums and residents' associations have over the years held their ground; sometimes in an ad hoc manner, and other times in more consistent, rigorous and sophisticated ways.

It is against this background that an urban studio was proposed, as a space in which the learning, experiences and experiments of the past and the present can be used for learning and reflection (De Beer 2013b:137)

The Urban Studio draws a virtual line around neighbourhoods described in this study, and considers these as “classrooms” or “transdisciplinary spaces” for the kinds of engagements envisaged above.

Typically this would include the unfolding and development of participation action research projects; urban seminars or modules being taught on site; service learning projects for tertiary students; conferences or consultations dealing with issues related to urban development, spatial justice, or social cohesion; and urban residency for students, interns or researchers. Institutionally it needs to be further discerned by the relevant community partners whether the Urban Studio is a continuation of the Centre for Urban Transformation, in another guise, or one expression of it.

Although this project is still in formation, different activities have already been undertaken as part of the unfolding vision of an Urban Studio.

feast@UP is a collaborative project between the annual community festival

of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation – the *Feast of the Clowns* – and students and academics at the University of Pretoria, committed to foster citizenship for social justice (cf. De Beer 2014a:138). In recent years students participate in semester modules and had to engage the inner city through their modules, in courses ranging from Community Law (law), Church and City (theology), Power and Wealth (anthropology) and Branding for Change (visual arts).

The Departments of Visual Arts and Social Work helped develop a day-seminar entitled “Design for Social Justice” in which homeless people and refugees, inner city children, community practitioners and students from those departments, worked together to identify social justice challenges and to collectively design alternative scenarios. Academic colloquiums and awareness-raising marches took place both on campus and in the inner city, as part of *feast@UP* activities.

The Tshwane Homeless Summit, described here above, was not a direct outcome of the Urban Studio project, but the two partners in the Urban Studio, played leading roles in helping to create the table for the Summit and to sustain action beyond the Summit.

Various training activities took place under the banner of the Urban Studio, including the teaching of existing university modules, service learning projects of the University, as well as various visits by foreign students and lecturers seeking to engage with issues of change and development in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Urban Studio offers the promise of an innovative learning environment where new knowledge can indeed be generated, and transformed, through the sharing of non-academic, academic and experiential knowledge. As I argued elsewhere: “(l)ocal urban communities would not only be hosts for the different possible engagements, but would also serve as research partners, teachers and collaborators in articulating local challenges, research questions and proposed solutions” (De Beer 2013b:2).

2. THE VALUE-BASED CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN ENGAGEMENTS

The above examples are of community-based engagements with local urban space. It is probably possible to deduce a number of value threads running through these engagements. Often the ways in which such values are faithfully nurtured in urban praxis, or urban praxis faithfully rooted in those values, distinguish such praxis quite clearly from those kinds of urban interventions that do not hold the same clear value base.

The impact of our actions needs to be carefully assessed prior, during and after implementation, to ensure that these actions contribute towards cities that are *humane and hospitable, inclusive and caring, just and equitable*. Such on-going and critical self-reflection is an essential discipline for those of us engaging the city as planners, community practitioners or activists, or urban residents; yet too often lacking or completely absent. Even community practitioners tend to fall in the trap of mechanically doing what they know to do best without critically reflecting on what they do. On-going, critical self-reflection, in community and with others, helps us discern whether there is actual congruence between what we say and what we do; between the internal values we express and the actual embodiments we erect.

TLF is shaped by a set of 18 values, rooted in the faith journey and faith community from which it emerges. Some of the words contained in these values include “compassion”, “justice”, “servant leadership”, “simple life-style”, “risk”, “brokenness”, “truth” and “confession” (Tshwane Leadership

Foundation 2015). Imagine an urban community where local institutions, churches and citizens, are committed to the city practising such values.

As a movement, TLF is continually seeking ways to translate its values, some more universal and others more overtly representing its own faith tradition, into the context in which it functions. It explores what justice and compassion will look like in the inner city today, it explores models of servant leadership that engage both urban vulnerability and power, and it takes risks in neighbourhoods or buildings characterised by abandonment or disinvestment, acting in the opposite spirit resisting dominant discourses and opting to discern the potential of rebirth. It roots and re-roots itself in these values through a series of communal rituals or disciplines, overtly built into their annual calendar.

In the interventions where churches are converted into more inclusive and multi-purpose community centres there are also intentional values at work. It can be seen in the notion of good stewardship acknowledging that

the church land or property given to them needed to be managed responsibly and developed optimally; acknowledging land and property as a gift to be shared, not a scarce commodity to be monopolised; embracing hospitality as a primary Christian value; and offering its vocation as church to engage itself as a servant of the city.

The Feast of the Clowns is drawing from values that include an affirmation and celebration of diversity; the power of celebration; a celebration of resistance against forces that exclude, dehumanise or oppress; the power of play to heal, build cohesion, and foster fresh and brave imagination.

The various community forums, the Burgers Park Village and the Tshwane Homeless Summit all draw from values that include the importance of citizenship and citizens' participation; respecting the inherent dignity and hidden knowledge of every single participation; the notion of self-interest as lever for positive local change; the importance of participatory democracy and participatory development; and local ownership ensuring greater long-term sustainability

In the Burgers Park Village the value of local assets and optimally mobilising and utilising them was appreciated and built upon. When such values are not merely political rhetoric but internalised, shared and practiced daily in communities of accountability, urban

practices and interventions will be deeply transformed and radically transformative.

Over time the long-term impact of a value-based urban praxis will become distinguishable in aspects such as

- the levels of social inclusion,
- the responsiveness of communities to address their own local issues,
- the clarity of vision translated into real and sustainable action,
- the availability of and access to multiple services addressing the real felt needs of local communities and people,
- the depth of community participation and ownership,
- the real impact on individuals, families and neighbourhoods as opposed to transformational rhetoric,
- the development and nurture of local community leadership
- the way in which local assets are optimally utilised and recycled locally,
- the long-term sustainability and self-reliance of local communities,
- the depth and sustainability of broad-based partnerships

3. PROMISE OR WEAKNESSES OF COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN ENGAGEMENTS

The local urban engagements I introduced mostly refer to community- and faith-based initiatives with the exception of the last two engagements that have more pronounced university and/or local government collaboration. These engagements all have considerable strengths that offer potential if leveraged, utilised and/or capacitated more intentionally in the processes of city-building.

They also have considerable challenges and weaknesses, which, once the promise or potential is appreciated, should be addressed by appropriate and adequate investment and utilisation of these mechanisms.

The reflections offered here are retrieved from the engagements I presented, each representing a small narrative. However, these 10 narratives probably surface generic potentials held by ensuring the affirmation and assertion of community-based urban action and it would be wise to consider and integrate these potentials wholeheartedly and deliberately in city-making processes: inception, planning, funding, collaboration, implementation and evaluation.

Similarly, the challenges specific to community-based engagements are probably also rather generic in communities around the globe, but could be addressed if such community-based engagements are truly valued for the distinctive gifts only they can bring, and therefore “wholeheartedly and deliberately integrated in city-making processes”.

This section is mostly presented as my personal reflections on the promise and weaknesses of the community-based engagements I presented above.

3.1 PROMISE OF COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN ENGAGEMENTS

Learning from the ten small narratives presented I organise the promise or potential I discern under five headings. These engagements should not be understood in isolation. Urban students, practitioners and activists from different cities in (South) Africa and beyond are engaging with what is presented here. These engagements form part of on-going conversations, collaborations and knowledge and practical exchanges with peers on different continents, sharing experiences and exploring similar praxis-based approaches to local city-making processes.

Local knowledge, experience and credibility

Many of the mechanisms introduced here, are coming from within local communities, with credibility earned over many years. They represent local knowledge

that needs to complement the limitations of academic knowledge (cf. De Beer 2014). They are often participating in national, continental and even global networks, sharing and exchanging good practices, and in tune with the most recent global trends. Instead of viewing them as small local players, as they are often viewed by government, private sector or people with suburban mind-sets, they need to be appreciated as role players who are deeply immersed locally, and often deeply connected globally.

They have developed rich experience in terms of managing change, starting and sustaining innovative urban projects in relation to urban vulnerability, and building creative financial models to do so. Their experience should count for much in the broader urban discourse on the future of cities in South Africa.

They have often resisted developments that might be negative for the well-being of the community as a whole, harmful to vulnerable groups, or serving the narrow interests of profit at the expense of local neighbourhoods. They are also able to negotiate interventions that will balance the competing interests and visions of different stakeholders because of being credible.

Participatory & inclusionary

These engagements contribute to a better chance for the city to become truly people-centred. They offer the possibility of real

and authentic public participation, involving local stakeholders in planning and even execution of plans, ensuring much deeper levels and broader bases of ownership for the city-building process.

They are often able to represent, or gather, the scattered voices of many groups and constituencies in the city, in a consolidated manner, liaising with local authorities from a broad platform and facilitating positive partnerships between communities, government and private sector.

They demonstrate the possibility of meaningful integration and participation of some of the city's most vulnerable people, with the necessary emotional and spiritual support. They do so in a way that respectfully affirms not only the dignity but also the knowledge and experience of vulnerable communities and people, which, if not shared, will leave the city poorer.

The contribution of community-based engagements in raising social awareness, and fostering social cohesion, and in mobilising civil society for action and participation, should be valued and employed in the interest of building good cities. Too often local governments feel threatened by a strong civil society that holds them accountable in bold and clear ways.

In the narratives presented it is clear that community-based engagements are often well-versed

in the creation and sustenance of healthy partnership, because in many instances that is what sustains them. They are often locally, nationally and globally connected, with the ability to leverage considerable resources into the city and local communities.

Different asset base

Too often what is small is despised, and small narratives of hope, offering viable and tangible alternatives to the status quo, are not invited but shunned, again to the city's own peril.

The community-based engagements presented here offer specialist capacity, although often limited due to financial constraints, but often overlooked in the city-building process. The sensitive work of engaging the diverse faces of homelessness, those with chronic mental illness, girl children on the streets, cultural diversity in city buildings and neighbourhoods, and complicated partnerships between diverse stakeholders, presents a distinguishable skill set not to be frowned upon.

Add to that the unique ability to function rather effectively in rapidly changing environments, viewed by the untrained eye mostly as chaotic, offers potential not only to the inner city but to society at large. Many of the engagements I described earlier could be regarded as expressions of chaordic leadership or chaordic organisations, finding it possible to

choreograph its way meaningfully through perceived chaos in ways that build healthy community (cf. Hock 1999; Hock n.d; Hjalmarsson 2013; De Beer 2016b).

Community-based engagements are often able to unlock and leverage local resources and assets (human, financial, land and property) that would ordinarily be out of reach for both local authority and the private sector. They can access the good will of civil society, the land and property of the faith-based sector, donor agencies specifically geared towards supporting local communities or the non-profit sector, or people of good will sharing similar values and visions who do not always trust government or private sector to produce the same.

A very specific strength of community-based engagements such as the ones I narrated, is that they often function from a strong value base, and retrieve and translate spiritual resources in the interest of building a good city. They are able to overcome the false dichotomies that distinguish between prayer and politics, instead employing prayer to help transform the polis.

Solution-based

Community-based engagements offer local studios for action, reflection, dialogue and research that could contribute to our reflective practice being much more rooted and rigorous, if optimally utilised. The problem is that too

often such engagements are not regarded with the respect and seriousness they deserve, restricting the possible learning and replication that might come from these spaces.

In carefully developing responses to specific urban challenges, they offer small models of urban inclusion and transformation that could be replicated and scaled to other parts of the city. Often their practices, once tested and refined, offer real solutions, ranging from addressing real housing problems of people with special needs, to breaking the cycle of human trafficking through simple but wise interventions.

In drafting urban policy, community-based engagements should be considered much more intentionally as partners in policy formation. They could help ensure that policy is informed from below, by the very knowledges generated from a local base, and the difficult experiences of success and failure gained over time. This could help prevent the construction of policy that is not aligned to the most recent local knowledge, and help steer policy in the direction of proven good practices.

Potential to deliver appropriately

In Tshwane, for example, some of the community-based engagements presented hold the potential to translate the social objectives of the Tshwane Inner City Strategy

into feasible action plans with real impact for local communities.

Their ability to utilise local urban spaces for change, healing and justice projects is considerable and well-proven. They offer the potential to replicate small but viable housing models hundred-fold across the city, to contribute to inclusionary communities, and to the reversal of our fragmented city fabric.

They are often able to facilitate interventions, projects, programmes, festivals and events, in cost-effective ways, because they had to learn the art of miracle-making: making transformational interventions with little resources.

They contribute considerably to local social, cultural, and even economic and physical infrastructure which is not properly acknowledged by city planners, politicians and policy-makers at all.

3.2 WEAKNESSES OF COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN ENGAGEMENTS

The community-based urban engagements described above do not only offer potential and promise. There are also certain challenges and weaknesses that could be addressed once they are regarded with proper respect and bestowed with the value they deserve. I organise the weaknesses or challenges surfacing from the narratives presented above using

six headings.

External undervaluation:
limiting potential impact

The potential role of some urban engagements is often grossly undervalued by local government, private sector, academia and the planning community. Such undervaluation restricts the potential impact and scaling of good practices and real solutions, generated from within these sectors.

As a result of such undervaluation real partnerships with and between diverse sectors are often not achieved. Instead of drawing from a pool of resources to achieve maximum impact and creative synergy, private and public sector still display disregard for civic responses to local urban challenges, however successful they might be.

Many of the mechanisms above found it difficult to create vibrant, sustained partnership with local authority. Incompatible organisational cultures, bureaucratic obstacles, lack of political will or party-political interference, technocratic planners, limited capacity in local authority, and the lack of access to public land, all disable strong, vibrant and sustainable partnership between community-based engagements in local government.

A good example is securing local government ownership for the Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration

Plan. The intention was for the proposed plan to be accepted by local government as a statutory document. The overwhelming response of the officials that participated in the process from inception was overly positive. No Departments raised serious objections. However, the inner city office and relevant politicians have failed, now 11 years since finalising the plan, to submit the plan for approval by the city. No proper explanations were ever given for this failure or lack of support.

Own undervaluation:
narrow vision, narrow self-understanding & limited assertion of their own contribution and knowledge base

Community-based urban organisations need to appreciate their own contribution and potential in shaping the city more, if they want it to be appreciated by the city. Often community-based organisations do not value their unique positionality, asset- or knowledge base, and then they become unable to optimise it to its full effect.

Donna Shaper (1989:154) holds that communities have often learnt and internalised powerlessness. Local communities and narratives should unlearn that, learning instead to (re)value themselves whilst small.

What we have learnt is despair and powerlessness at being small. It is society's way of telling us who's who and what's what.

Empowerment happens when the small stop taking orders and decide to have value as small, not to have value once big. To blow up the deflated places will require a reevaluation of small. Small will have to come into its own as small (Shaper 1989:154)

An example is how faith-based communities, in spite of some “tall stories” to the contrary, still lack a clear vision of how their land and property could contribute to address local urban spatial, housing and other developmental challenges.

If community-based approaches can find innovative ways not only to register, articulate, capture and document, their learning, but also to share and communicate such learning, it could contribute immensely in various ways. It could enhance their own institutional capacity development, expand possibilities to attract resources and funds, contribute towards awareness-raising and advocacy that help change the discourse about the city and urban vulnerability, and help shape educational and capacity-building processes for city planning and city-making.

Self-defeating organisational culture

Too often the organisational culture prevalent in community-based approaches to city-making is less robust than in profit-driven institutions, less focused on excellence, and more gracious

of failure and under-performance. The reliance on external resources and the general transitional nature of the contexts they work in, sometimes make them prone to defeatist mentalities.

Some engagements narrated here are seeking to make the shift towards becoming social enterprises, recognising the need for self-reliance if they are to engage sustainably into the future. The shifts required organisationally in terms of paradigms, practices and rigour are often much steeper than appreciated by the organisations.

Community-based approaches need therefore to be committed to on-going learning and more robust and intentional capacity-building of organisations and their staff, in order to build on the solid track records of change making they have facilitated already. They need to embrace more innovative (self-) financing models and secure different levels of investment. They also need to consider how they could broaden their partner bases without losing the soul of what they are about.

The organisational culture of local government, private sector or certain donor agencies, sometimes undermine community-based organisations and the ways in which they work. It requires much self-assertion on the part of communities not to be prescribed to, co-opted or transacting their souls in seeking to extend their partner base. It requires of communities to

combine an assertion of their own values with a shrewdness in how they engage external partners on their own terms, and on terms that will serve the well-being of their own communities and constituencies.

Between apathy and self-indulgence

In some cases there is a lack of participation and general apathy in local communities, not believing they can make change, struggling with a low sense of themselves, and perpetually waiting for external agents to bring change. This is evident in many of the service delivery protests around South Africa.

In the case of community forums, agendas are often dictated by narrow self-interest, as opposed to broad self-interest, working against fostering a broadly owned, long-term vision but only seeing what is in it for me. Leadership in places like Salvokop has often been competitive instead of collaborative, based on personal self-interest rather than being value-based and concerned with the interests of the community at large. When big development projects such as the construction of Statistics South Africa came to Salvokop, local community leaders fought over access to tenders and jobs instead of being brokers on behalf of the local community.

There is also a danger with community-based engagements that,

over time, they might become less intentional about listening and learning, assuming they “understand” and then confusing their own agenda with the community’s agenda.

At other times community-based engagements can become rather self-indulgent, failing to connect beyond their own reality, to learn from others, and to bring to bear on their own communities fresh and new insights from elsewhere. Such self-indulgent behaviour is costly to local communities.

Limited financial capacity

Traditionally some of these mechanisms have a weak capital base, relying too much on external grants. More innovative financing models could facilitate the scaling of many important urban interventions to levels that could reach greater numbers of the population, and could replicate successful models elsewhere in the city.

Funding constraints result in the lack of full-time staff or efficient infrastructure to facilitate and replicate good interventions.

Often local urban engagements fail to capitalise on their successes. In the case of the Burgers Park Village the commercial, crime prevention, cleaning, and city image components never materialised, as it failed to leverage further funding based on the initial success of the project.

Limited financial capacity often compromises important project elements. An example is community-based housing efforts and how strong environmental aspects are, for example, watered down due to financial short-falls.

Start-up capital or equity is often the Achilles heel of community-based urban engagement, as they simply struggle to translate visions into practice, or take considerably longer with implementation, minimising the impact instead of optimising and replicating it.

It would have served the city well had the city been able to identify excellent practices that needed to be replicated to neighbourhoods across the city, to be resourced by the city for the purposes of such replication. Unfortunately that is not happening.

Chapter 10

CO-CONSTRUCTING URBAN SPACE:

Towards an integrated community-based urban praxis

I propose a community-based urban praxis

combining 4 distinct moments

- entering
- reading
- imagining
- co-constructing

centring around / engaging from within a deep connectedness to the “genius” or S(s)pirit of space (mother bird)

being rooted within and discerning together as community / communities of solidarity (local community people, those who are particularly vulnerable, professionals, and others), both resisting death and reconstructing life

473 |

working towards

- overcoming local challenges through retrieving and building new local assets
- expanding the tables of the city (radical inclusion) so that all can be seated, through finding and fostering creative synergies
- facilitating a multiplicity of small, local solidarities, reclamations and transformations (social, economic and physical)
- co-constructing hospitable, caring and just urban villages

1. MOMENTS IN THE JOURNEY OF A COMMUNITY-BASED URBAN PRACTICE

I plead in this thesis for an urban praxis that is community-based, living in closer community with those we plan for and with (as residents or professionals in the built environment), becoming participants in the planning of our local urban spaces, and evaluating the products of our praxis from below, from the perspective of those who are normally vulnerable or excluded. I explore the possibility to re-imagine the art of place-making or spatial design, not so much as a technocratic intervention of the “expert” but as a creative and relational journey of discovery, with others and the “other” (cf. also Harrison 2006).

In Part I; Chapter 3 I proposed four critical moments in this journey, not necessarily following each other in a rigid linear manner, but as an on-going dance of deepening our engagement, our analysis, our reflection, and our strategic solidarities/actions/interventions. As Fox (1983:14) says it: “We weave through these paths like a spiral danced, not a ladder climbed”.

I would like to understand it as an imaginative urban praxis that fosters an ongoing cycle of action-reflection rooted in spirituality and community. Or, in the language of Mallows (1968:15), referring to physical planning as a dynamic social process: “Have faith in human creativity and change: movement and change are life, and the only enemy, the only heresy, is finality”.

The proposed cycle with its four moments recognises that no process or project will be completely final. Movement and change are the only certainties.

And yet, at the same time it acknowledges the possibility of new creations and possibilities to surprise us beyond movement and change, if we resist the despair of our immediate chaos; if we dare to see with the eyes of a child.

What is important though is the intentionality of the journey.

First moment: entering urban space

The first moment requires intentionality about entering unknown urban spaces with the eyes of a child, open for discovery and surprise, ready to imagine and to find a new community of sojourners to journey with. The first moment is that of the prophet falling “in love with creation and especially with the little ones... of creation” (Fox 1983:264).

Second moment: reading urban spaces

The second moment requires, not only intentionality about reading

urban space, instead of pretending that we know, but also to be intentional about *where*, *how* and *with whom* we read: allowing the unknown narratives from the margins to penetrate our numbness, discovering unconventional wisdom as a guide to more hopeful urban futures, developing the skill of reading and interpreting symbolic language where we find it engraved on the walls of the city, in the classified advertisements of newspapers, or in the spontaneous interactions of every day with passers-by.

This moment, if it is an honest engagement, might also strip us of all preconceived and naive notions, as it will take us to “the bottomless depths of pain that wrench at the beauty and dignity of have and have-nots alike” (cf. Fox 1983:264).

Levitas (1993:265) suggests that the problem is not so much a lack of vision but a deeper, internal problem:

The solution however, is not to call for more and better utopias, more and better images and maps of possible futures. These will follow when we have better analyses of the present which identify possible points of intervention, paths and agents of change. The fault lies not in our stars, but in ourselves.

He suggests that our analyses are poor which then lead to poor interventions, and inappropriate paths or agents of change. Our analysis, therefore, should not pass us by. We too need to be deconstructed in the process of

engagement, to consider how our own beauty and dignity have been wrenched by the forces of the city.

Third moment: imagining urban spaces

In the third moment we are intentionally suspicious of the official discourse, and ready to listen and consider alternative possibilities, in partnership with communities that actively resist death-dealing practices and risk experimenting with bold alternatives. This is also the moment in which we discern/discover hope together through our critical reflection upon the city that we read.

It is the moment in which we re-imagine, working from the experience of the depths of pain, and “working from the best that both left brain and right brain can offer” (Fox 1983:264). This is where planning as both art and science are allowed to flow together creatively/constructively, to produce radically new imaginations.

The one definition which has been part of the game (of planning - my insertion) since its birth to this day, is that of town planning being an “art and a science”. What this art and science entailed, changed according to changes in the game and the context in which it was being played (Oranje 1997:193)

Every project must first be experienced, and then expressed, as a vision that can be seen in the inner eye (literally). It must have this quality so strongly that it can also be communicated to others, and

felt by others, as a vision (Alexander, Neis, Anninou & King 1987:51)

Imagining urban space entails a visioning process that must precede anything else (Alexander, et al 1987: 30; 51; 56). It is a vital part of the initial conception of the project / neighbourhood / city. Alexander, et al (1987:56), expressed a concern that contemporary developments are often “grey and colourless”; not human-scale, but generated by corporations with profit motives from a long distance; bureaucratic acts without clear, detailed vision.

The kinds of visions Alexander and friends speak of will often be community-driven, human-scale, and not merely theoretical. We need visions of urbanity that will practice the basic rule of positive urban spaces consistently, guide processes of building design and layout, and ensure the formation of interconnected centres, all in terms of the over-all vision.

Fourth moment: co-constructing urban spaces

We should resist being paralysed by our critical analysis, and get to a place where we can clearly move beyond analysis to joint actions that will *co-construct* the alternatives we imagined. This is the moment of designing for collective and decisive action. It requires bold strategies with clear objectives and outcomes, to prevent the whole process of stagnating visions

and dreams.

It is accompanied by the intention to *foster communities* (whether civil society, academia, activists, government officials, politicians, or a combination of people sharing similar values and dreams) that will live between resistance and reconstruction, refusing to succumb to the temptation of “the king” and insisting on the rights of the most vulnerable to be seated at the tables of the city, sharing in the abundance of its resources. It will be such communities that will insist on keeping the vision alive, and on seeing signs of its translation into practice, long after the next politician has fallen from grace, or the next official moved to the private sector.

The fourth moment is when we yearn for a New Creation, or, to use the language of Matthew Fox, when the prophet is launching “her creativity in the direction of healing by way of compassion, celebration, and social justice” (Fox 1983:264).

In this manner she interferes with pessimism, cynicism, and despair, and channels moral outrage into rebirth (Fox 2000:264).

“A spirituality of space will discover the promise that the Creator, who is not yet done with her work, desires additional delight still for the cosmos (and the city - [my Insertion]). And we, artists all, are to be instruments of that delight, which is the delight both of wisdom and compassion”

(Fox 2000: 228)

2. CENTRING AROUND THE “MOTHER BIRD HOVERING OVER URBAN SPACE”

At the heart of the cycle is the mother bird, the genius, the Spirit, hovering over urban space, desiring to give birth to new possibilities, resilient in resisting that which robs life of the little ones, ready to spread her wings to catch those who fall through the urban cracks. I propose to work with a community-based urban praxis that will be informed very deeply by openness for the Spirit in our midst, so that together we will discover and reach consensus on values of life, and together we will develop discernment, and subsequent resistance, against forces of death, however subtle they are in penetrating our neighbourhoods and our languages

The moments of the praxis cycle should be bathed in a rootedness / connectedness to the soul / spirit of the place, but also to our own soul(lessness), for it to be truly liberating / healing.

Our world and our cities, our neighbourhoods and our streets, cry for an urban praxis that will embrace the beauty of creation (eco-), be in solidarity with the vulnerable, and respond creatively and boldly to the promptings of a creative Spirit (spirituality) hovering over us, constantly, repeatedly, groaningly, responding to our

own groans, and the groans of our streets and people.

A spirituality of space will discover the promise that the Creator, who is not yet done with her work, desires additional delight still for the cosmos (and the city - lmy Insertion). And we, artists all, are to be instruments of that delight, which is the delight both of wisdom and compassion (Fox 2000: 228)

Indeed, our cities will continue to displace, discriminate and divide, if our urban praxis is not rooted in a clearly defined spirituality, and translated into a practical ethic of urban space.

3. FOSTERING COMMUNITY: BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND RECONSTRUCTION

In speaking of a spirituality of urban space, I do not refer to an individualistic, esoteric trip, but to a very earthly rooted connectedness with the city, creation and humanity of which we are a part. At the heart of our search to discern the groans of the (S)pirit seeking to heal and renew, should be life in community: discerning together, with others, through the eyes of the other. We journey through the moments of the praxis cycle, not alone, but with many others who also search for a better city.

With a community-based urban praxis I refer on the one hand to the geographical community in

which a bottom-up, incarnational and rooted praxis is developed. It implies solidarity with those of our

community (planners, residents, activists or service providers), either by way of a genuine sensitivity and listening-approach and/or, if and where possible, by physically even relocating into the space.

On the other hand I refer to a community of belonging in which people – who might be quite different in terms of geographical location, expertise, lifestyle, income, power, religion, etc. – discover and develop shared values and visions, learn together, imagine together, resist together and construct together. This requires a high degree of intentionality, a desire to express our interdependence creatively in how we shape local urban spaces.

I find the description of the work of the Urban Design Group in the United Kingdom attractive (Greed & Roberts 1998:8). Their work promotes high quality urban environments, and resists design that is bureaucratic, lacking both contextual sensitivity and interdisciplinary enquiry.

They create spaces for dialogue and collaboration between professionals, citizens and a variety of institutions. They have clearly formulated guiding principles of empowerment, equity, diversity, stewardship and contextual sensitivity. In their approach they identify common interests, foster collaboration, facilitate spaces for creative thinking, sharing of visions and collective learning. Their planning outcomes look markedly different,

shaped by broad-based participation and partnership. They seem to nurture an urban community.

The Centre for Urban Transformation in Berea-Burgers Park, or the Urban Studio, could become such spaces for collaboration and urban praxis in community.

BETWEEN RESISTANCE & RECONSTRUCTION

Flowing from a connectedness to the (S)pirit within both space and self, and living / working / discerning in communities of solidarity, a community-based urban praxis will work hard to foster a community that will constantly move between resistance and reconstruction (cf. Part II, Chapter 8). It will defend spaces from those wanting to grab them for narrow self-interest at the expense of local interest or the common good. It will build spaces to reflect ethical values and high degrees of compassion, responsibility, equity and social justice.

Martin Luther King (jr) (1963) once preached a sermon entitled “A tough mind and a tender heart”, reflecting on the words of Jesus that we have to live as gentle as the doves but as shrewd / wise as the serpents. In urban communities where space is contested we need to combine tender-hearted compassion with tough-minded analysis.

Our resistance should start with a resistance to being co-opted,

either into certain power positions, intellectual discourses or emotional responses of numbness, apathy or pessimism. Swyngedouw (2002:154) warns against the way in which

historic icons and images of revolutions are today co-opted, sanitised, and commercialised, becoming products of big business.

The recuperation of the imagery and icons of the time in the form of T-shirts, logoed mugs, and serialised postcards is almost completely removed from urban praxis and the everyday life from which they originally flowed and of which they were an integral part. It is as if their sting has been removed, as if they have been sapped of the life that once inspired a generation.

Che Guevara and Steve Biko have become familiar faces on the T-shirts of many urban dwellers on the streets of Tshwane, but engaging them about the life and thinking of Guevara, or even Biko, one might often receive blank looks and floundering answers. Urban communities of hope will re-appropriate these icons and images, drawing on them for the new contexts to be engaged with, in contemporary urban spaces.

Communities of resistance will not easily succumb to a romanticised notion of liberation, remembering that the liberator too often becomes the oppressor. It will retain a critical engagement with the city and its (new) powers, supporting them when their actions are in the interest of those at the bottom, but resisting them when the poor are crushed by the market

or political decisions that are not in their interests.

Resistance does not necessarily find its expression in “respectability” (Swyngedouw 2002:155) and sanity. It is precisely in the playful experimentations and creative re-inventions of the 1960s that fresh socio-spatial formations emerged. It is often our playful (yet serious), creative, robust, passionate and politically incorrect resistance of certain spatial expressions that will lead to the constructive birthing of new expressions.

At the same time, therefore, a community-based praxis will be rigorous in finding alternatives to urban poverty and exclusion, in developing good practices of how marginal people can be included in ways that are economically viable, and in holding up the hands of those in power by providing them with innovative solutions for challenging problems they struggle to address.

A community-based urban praxis does not get trapped in a mode of resistance but is always seeking for alternative signs. It does not oppose the very concept of “power”, because in its own work of organising and mobilising it recognises and celebrates the power of citizens and organised communities. But in its dealings with power it seeks to remember that power is always to be used in the interest of the powerless, not as power over others, but to empower others to live in accordance to their

own potential, to unlock their own resources, to fully develop their own latent assets (cf. Shaper 1989).

The Centre for Urban Transformation (cf. Chapter 9; 1) seeks to combine resistance and reconstruction in its fourfold objective of research, education, advocacy, and policy (REAP), both deconstructing and reconstructing urban discourse and vision.

Art is another way of combining resistance and reconstruction in a community-based urban praxis.

Public art contributes to beautify and enhance urban spaces, but at the same time it can convey a message, evoke emotion, or stimulate debate. In Salvokop, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation facilitated the creation of the Monument of the Unknown Child, a simple monument that addresses issues related to children's rights and resists their on-going abuse and exploitation. At the same time it constructs new visions for children whilst contributing to the local urban landscape.

4. BUILDING ON LOCAL ASSETS; OVERCOMING LOCAL CHALLENGES

Also hidden assets of local communities, affirming their potential to be agents of their own future hope, instead of maintaining a dependent reliance on the good-will of local government, private sector, or external foundations.

In most communities existing assets (capital) have not been identified fully or developed optimally. This should form the basis of any community-based urban praxis.

The work of the Asset-Based Community Development Movement (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993) needs to be explored more in terms of our planning and urban development theories, as it provides a positive and liberating framework, overcoming the fallacy of professionals and experts, and asserting the power of local communities and their citizens to effect change that is for their own well-being.

This approach is more sustainable as it starts with what communities already have, and uses these assets to leverage additional support or investment from elsewhere. Recognising and offering our own assets also gives us the confidence to be assertive about who we are, what we want, and where we are going, instead of having a helpless approach waiting upon outside saviours. In unlocking local assets, we might often find the ability to overcome local challenges spontaneously.

This could apply to local governments exploring large investments

from commercial banks or international funding institutions, but also to local civic organisations

seeking support for community-based interventions.

5. FINDING CREATIVE SYNERGIES, EXPANDING THE TABLES OF THE CITY

5.1 BRINGING OUR ASSETS INTO SYNERGY

Once we have identified our collective assets - institutional, physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, financial, cultural - the next important aspect would be to find, foster and manage creative synergies between them.

The vision of inclusion is implied throughout this study, and yet, more inclusive urban communities will require additional seats at the table, or even the creation of new and additional tables. The problem is not necessarily that there are not enough resources on the table/s, but these resources are not accessible in equitable or just ways.

More inclusive communities and far greater access is indeed possible, if we create greater synergy between the vast assets that are available to us. If we then specifically mobilise these synergised asset pools towards expanded tables, with more seats and fair access, it would help to eradicate exclusionary urban policies, practices and spaces.

There are examples of such synergised assets, ranging from an annual Christmas festival in Burgers Park to housing provision or access to ARV-treatment. These seemingly small interventions could provide the foundations for

more significant transformations.

A local community organisation in Burgers Park packaged a project whereby 50 homeless people were to be trained by a hospitality company in food management and hospitality services. As part of the process they accessed internships at local hotels and restaurants that are not only committed to being good businesses, but committed to the city and the empowerment of previously excluded people. This project was aimed at addressing homelessness in the inner city through finding synergy between homeless service providers, homeless people themselves, hospitality trainers and private sector hospitality providers.

In Tshwane almost 30,000 people that qualify for social housing, are on the city's waiting list. Local churches own land and property that are often underutilised. In partnership with housing NGOs, provincial government, and financial institutions, social housing

could be created on such properties, expanding the table of opportunity for formerly excluded people, whilst being more responsible stewards of the resources we own. If this could be replicated a hundred- and a thousand-fold in different parts of the city, we might start to see the systematic undoing of the city of our past.

At some point a very small percentage of people eligible to receive ARV-treatment in Tshwane, was able to access it. A local church had physical space that could be utilised to serve a vulnerable group with limited access to ARV-treatment. A health NGO with expertise in the management of ARV-centres could be engaged to run this service. An unutilised local asset was offered, technical / intellectual expertise leveraged, funding invested, and 300-500 more people can now access ARV-treatment on a monthly basis.

These are small examples but clear demonstrations of how extra seats can be created at the table of the city for / with those who are often excluded, when synergies are created between different assets. These are actual examples but often these small stories are seen as marginal and insignificant against the back-drop of human and urban need. The metaphor contained in these stories should be recognised for what it is – assets synergised – and it could be practiced in manifold ways in areas spanning housing, health care, child care, education, skills

development, economic opportunity, access to finance, access to sanitation, water and electricity, agricultural development, expression through the arts, and the list carries on.

5.2 LOCAL SYNERGISED ASSETS AND THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE CITY

An appreciation of local agency and assets often happens not in the chambers of business or the bureaucracies of local authorities, but in communities that long for hopeful stories: *enthused* by the hovering Mother Bird, local people and institutions recognise their latent assets, create synergies, overcome challenges, expand the tables, co-construct their own spaces, in ways that reflect greater equity, dignity and justice, than before they ventured together.

Somehow the inspiration from below needs to spill over into creative and liberating collaborations between “small” communities and “big” institutions (cf. Shaper 1989:120). Ways need to be found to connect the top-down approaches of City Strategies, Spatial Development Frameworks and Integrated Development Approaches and the bottom-up approaches of small community organisations, resident forums, local churches and sometimes more significant and sophisticated community development corporations. Both will always be with us and we need to find ways to

understand each other's languages. This should be done without the poor being co-opted for the interests of others, whilst at the same time being creative at subverting the interests of those who do not have the common good at heart. If the Tshwane Development Agency one day sees the light, which would probably not happen, it would be wise not to replace all previous mechanisms, but rather to provide the strategic direction and framework, to facilitate synergies across the board, and to integrate the contributions, assets, services and visions of all other relevant institutions / vehicles / communities, as part of an integrated strategy for regeneration.

Considering the inner city for example as a collection of distinct neighbourhoods, local community agency could be activated or inspired to become the implementing agency of local development plans. Implementation could happen as partnerships unfold between government departments NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, business, churches, tertiary institutions, associations, resident associations, voluntary associations, informal trade groups, community forums, and so forth.

At one point in Atlanta, The Atlanta Project (TAP) was conceptualised, ensuring that different vulnerable neighbourhoods were not only well-organised from within but connected to business and tertiary institutions to effect the local development objectives

of that neighbourhood. It was like spanning a net across the city and making sure that no neighbourhood will fall outside the net: that each neighbourhood will have sufficient local organisation, and be supported and resourced in partnership with local government, business and tertiary institutions.

In a city the size of Tshwane nothing prevents us from contemplating and conceptualising something similar.

The Berea-Burgers Park Regeneration Initiative described earlier, envisioned local ownership of the southern "gateway" to the city. It sought to flesh out the vision of *participatory local government* in practical terms through processes, plans, and proposed projects. Unfortunately local government itself seemed unlikely to honour or live such a participatory praxis.

In this model there is a place for everyone, and everyone – both individuals and institutions – are viewed as assets to be invited into co-constructing local urban places. The players in this model are very different though and might not find the languages to understand each other. To address that, new paradigms of collaboration would call for interpreters, facilitators, healers, bridge-builders, bilingual or multilingual people that are able to help foster partnerships and collaborations that have not been formed before.

Not only are the players different

but they are also unequal. Who will make the decisions, or control the funds; who will sit at which table? If all of these players are viewed as assets their diverse contributions should be welcomed and considered as part of a process of building consensus around a vision for local communities.

Good urban design has the potential to reposition a city or an area completely in terms of image and competitiveness, but does not have to do so in exclusionary ways, falling into the typical trap of most urban renewal models (cf. Libbalds 1992:92-93). The Crown Street Regeneration Project in Glasgow invited even primary school children to contribute their ideas for the regeneration of the area, because the “(i) involvement and ownership of the local community in the whole process was a priority” (Libbalds 1992:93-94).

Synergies were facilitated not only by way of creating broad-based partnerships but also through

a mixture of finance options (Libbalds 1992:94-95; Jacobs 1984,1992); stressing the importance of continuity; maintaining physical links to the past; increasing a sense of identity; and building the collective memory (cf. Libbalds 1992: 95). In addition Libbalds (1992:96-97) also stresses the importance of creativity and integration.

The models of local urban development that facilitate a higher degree of socio-spatial justice, public participation, and soul-ful spaces are there for us as examples. It boils down to the will of politicians, the adventurous artistry of planners, the conscience of profiteers, the faithful actions / activist faith of religious institutions, the selfless services of empowering others performed by service organisations, and the wise, strategic and assertive organising of local people. Without these ingredients the road is uphill, and many will be left out. And the despair will grow. And cities will explode.

6. A MULTIPLICITY OF SMALL, LOCAL SOLIDARITIES, RECLAMATIONS & TRANSFORMATIONS

485 |

The vision I present is one of a praxis that will combine a politics of resistance with constructive solidarities that will transform the everyday (cf Swyngedouw 2002:161-162). In the transformative praxis and vision of Debord (1967) and others, the new consciousness is allowed to become practice. And the new practice translated into projects and models of change need to be replicated manifold.

The recognition of assets and the synergising thereof are not goals in themselves, although achieving these will already be great

innovations. But this should be incorporated into our community-based urban praxis in order to create expanded tables in solidarity

with those urban dwellers that are currently excluded

The drive of the praxis cycle – of entering, reading and imagining; the sensitivity to the hovering (S) pirit in our midst, the collective discernment of challenge and possibility, the retrieval and development of assets, and the synergising thereof – should be aimed at translating our solidarity with local people and places into a multiplicity of reclamations and transformations. It is in solidarity that we ought to be seeking / finding a new way of constructing urban spaces.

Solidarity alone is not enough, if we fail to reclaim lost ground, monopolised spaces, and gentrified neighbourhoods. Reclamation will be visible in the allocation / securing of land for mixed use and specifically to include those who cannot otherwise access land or property in given areas; in exorcising from local spaces those uses, activities or processes that are hurting some or excluding many; in re-creating local spaces to address the diversity of cultures, generations and social needs.

Reclamation alone is not enough either, if we fail to transform that which was reclaimed into that which we see collectively for the common good. Debord envisioned “a different form of urbanism” (Swyngedouw 2002:162), residing in the proliferating number of active repossessions and conscious real and symbolic reconstructions

of everyday urban spaces and practices of the kind we have seen mushrooming lately in many parts of the world. Swyngedouw (2002:162-163) then refers to examples of spatial reclamations ranging from the closure of the busiest street in Oxford turning it into a beach party in response to the commercialisation of public spaces, to the successive occupations of city centre streets in places like Seattle, Davos, Nice and Genoa, by anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation groups.

It could also refer to the ways in which vacant buildings and land are reutilised for social uses, affordable housing or informal trade markets; or how the Market is not allowed to dictate spatial configurations, but is resisted and outwitted through more creative land uses that still prove to be economically viable, not in the interest of a few, but for the good of the community as a whole.

The wholeness of the city (Alexander, et al 1987:32) will not necessarily be the result of single interventions or grandiose master plans. It will rather be facilitated through multiple initiatives and the synergies created by such initiatives – both small and big, as well as bonding capital keeping local neighbourhoods together, and bridging capital connecting neighbourhoods to each other and beyond their own narrow self-interests.

Barcelona is cited as a good

example where regeneration or transformation occurred not from a general master plan for the particular sites, but rather from a series of local interventions to a coherent transformation (Buchanan1992). A good example was the Olympic sites that were spread throughout the city, identified in key areas for the city's revitalisation and at radical points around the city's periphery (Buchanan1992).

The environment must be created politically and otherwise, to encourage, facilitate and reward initiatives aimed at innovative local reclamation and transformation, especially where it can demonstrate high degrees of social inclusion and attempts at achieving a greater sense of socio-spatial justice.

7. CO-CONSTRUCTING HOSPITABLE, CARING AND JUST URBAN VILLAGES

7.1 A PROCESS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING...

Once centred around the cries and joy of the (S)pirit, prompting renewed commitment and action, breathing new life into old places, communities can journey through the distinct moments of entering, reading, and imagining their spaces critically and afresh. They will discover the visible assets that sustained them as well as latent assets not yet mobilised or developed. They will also leverage external assets into communities and develop and expand their asset base for a greater sense of local self-reliance. They will seek for synergies between different assets, to achieve the optimum impact. None of this happens as an end in itself, but out of deep solidarity with the city, its people and its most vulnerable in particular. Assets are synergised to expand the tables of the city, so that all will find a seat.

In solidarity with those who are excluded, and with those places at risk of death because of the levels of despair, disinvestment and exploitation, reclamations of spaces will be sought, and various processes, projects, programmes and actions will be launched to transform reclaimed spaces into the collective visions imagined and constructed together. Although larger frameworks are positive in directing processes, these will not be used to quench local initiative,

but rather to invite as many role players as possible to offer their strengths and visions into the whole.

This journey is one of re-imagining and eventually re-creating / co-constructing *urban villages* that are hospitable ("walking humbly"), caring ("loving tenderly"), and just ("acting justly"). I suggest these three aspects of a balanced spirituality as three pillars of a good city.

7.2 ...TOWARDS HOSPITABLE, CARING AND JUST URBAN VILLAGES

In new urbanism much emphasis is placed on the concept of urban villages. Although it is rather ambiguous to speak of an “urban village”, the vision lies in the very ambiguity thereof: a search for greater cohesion, community and coherence within complex urban environments, without necessarily being naive about the fact that humanity will never grasp complete utopia - it remains a journey of movement and change.

In the urban village – which I use metaphorically with close resemblance to a *neighbourhood approach* – the emphasis is on mixed use developments, mixed housing types and compact form, creating access to diverse resources within proximity, and stimulating the creation of new jobs (Grant 2006:60). When high-density multi-family properties are mixed with retail and other uses, such efforts frequently yield what is characterised as an urban village.

The urban village concept fosters greater sustainability due to compact design, well-integrated open spaces, and less insistence on private transport (Grant 2006:60). In the United Kingdom the government even committed itself to the urban village concept in the late 1990’s through its Millennium Villages project, showcasing “the most sustainable approaches to urban development” (Grant

2006:60).

In drawing from the concept of urban villages I do not refer to an exclusivist dream²³, but to communities that will display high levels of social inclusion and cohesion, enhanced by good urban design. Traditionally urban design was the preserve of those with greater wealth and power (cf. Oranje 1997:241). However, in facilitating the healing of fractured communities, and in understanding planning as also a spiritual act and a healing profession, urban design becomes important for deprived communities to unlock the beauty within, and to create the kinds of connections that would mediate healthy urban life. Whether urban design is accessible or not in vulnerable urban places then becomes a matter of spatial justice.

The urban villages I envisage will practice radical hospitality and warm humanity, humbly acknowledging ourselves as “dust” (cf. Soelle 2003); display creative and inclusive models of caring, and institutionalise fair, equal and unobstructed access to resources as an expression of justice.

23. These are not the “African urban fantasies” so aptly critiqued by Vanessa Watson, but communities arising from below, interconnected and affirming and including the most vulnerable. See Watson, V, African urban fantasies: dreams or nightmares, *Environment and Urbanisation*, Vol.26, Issue 1, 2014, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956247813513705>

A long time ago, an urban peasant coming to Jerusalem to find a sustainable livelihood, saw the injustice of that city, and became a prophetic voice of reason to the city leaders. Micah, using spiritual language, suggested that God wanted only three things from the leaders and citizens of that city: to walk humbly with God, to love tenderly, and to act justly...

Even then, it was already a call for a humble, humane and hospitable city; deeply caring and radically inclusive; demonstrating itself in on-going acts and structures of justice.

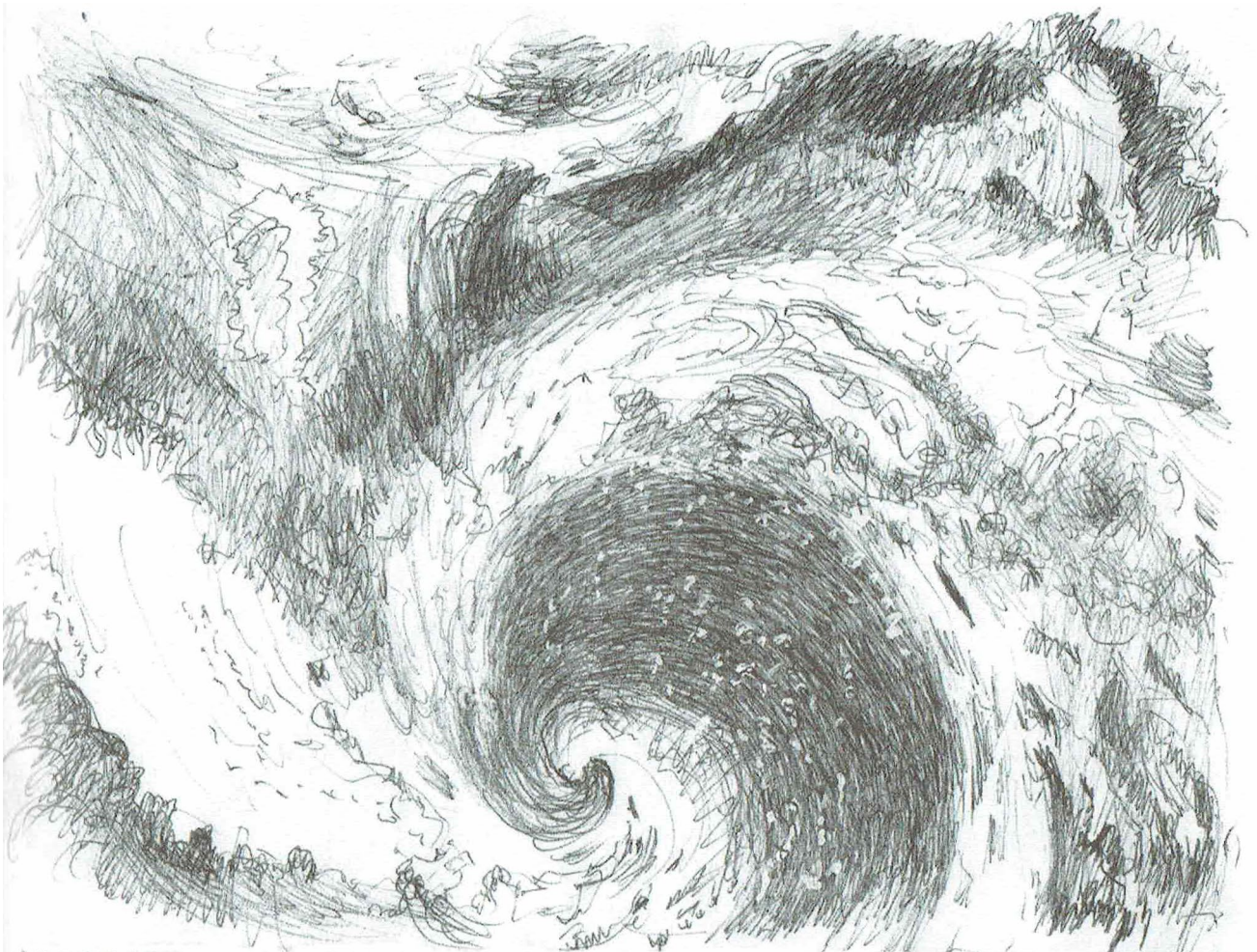


Fig. 195. Dee, 2001. Abstract drawing from remotely sensed photograph of weather system over Greenland.

CONCLUSION

Leading out faith-fully: when deep speaks to deep

What is written here will never become a reality if we are unable to affirm and build agency from below, and a new generation of leadership – civic, business, religious, planning or political.

If we are to build radically inclusive, sustainable and just cities, honouring the most vulnerable amongst us, what needs to be stressed is the importance of agency or leadership that goes beyond a list of technical skills or requirements (cf. Harrison 2006; Oranje 1997:272). It will embrace a certain ethic (values), drawing or flowing from a deep connectedness to the *(S)pirit within / hovering over our urban spaces*.

It will be deeply relational (Harrison 2006:319), immersed in and accountable to community, not just the community of like-minded professionals or “experts”, but primarily to the community of residents and the most vulnerable ones among us. It will seek to practice collective leadership, deliberately subverting hierarchies of knowledge, drawing together planners, city-builders, community members, researchers and vulnerable people (whoever they are), making space for all who have eyes to see, to describe, read, discern, imagine and construct together.

Such leadership will act and discern from within its own soul spaces, in order to lead people and places out from captivity to greater soulful-ness. *It is when “deep calls to deep” that the city will find its soul, and those who help shape the city will not lose theirs.*

At its core it is about a faith that resists the odds: a faith in planning and its liberatory potentials; a faith in communities and their agency; and faith in the possibility of a radically different city, generous in its embrace of big and small.

It is about planners once again believing in planning, “what it can attain and how it could facilitate a better reality than the current one” (Oranje 1997:280). It is a call for the recovery of planning’s deeper vocation (Oranje 1997:280; 2014): built on knowledge, hope, wisdom and love for our fellow human beings, as well as the non-human life forms who share this earth with us. The goal of planning, for now, Oranje (1997:288) proposes, should be the spiritual and material development of our people, and “the pursuit of justice – procedural, substantive, inter-generational and ecological”.

Such planning can be done by planners or by communities that embrace and practice their own agency (cf. South African SDI Alliance 2012). Such planning would be upside down, led by the pain and desire, the wounds and the dreams coming from within and from below, from the very people inhabiting the spaces we dare to make. If it is true that, indeed, all of humanity and creation carry sacred marks of grace, then those marks will carry the names and faces and aspirations of the people they are meant for.

I would caution, however, against an over-idealisation of planning in terms of how it could mediate wholeness and utopia in our world. Instead I would stress the call for urban leadership – city-builders of all shapes and sizes – that is immersed, rooting its urban praxis and planning engagement in a discovery of the Mother Bird hovering over urban spaces, longing, looking, to respond to urban cries, of humans and earth alike, in order to mend and make whole.

If our engagement with our urban communities fails to flow from within our own inner soul-spaces we would find it hard to facilitate soul-spaces in the cities we engage with. And if we fail to construct ethical frameworks and actions that are both responsible and compassionate, rooted in such inner soul-spaces and in nurturing communities, we will equally fail to foster cities that are wombs of life: caring, feeding, sustaining and sending forth into the world – people of dignity, living with wonder, playing-sharing fairly and co-creating with God.

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1 NEL, K., 2017, *Mapping S. de Beer's residence in Sunnyside and Berea Burgers Park* [Digital image] adapted from OpenStreetMaps. xxi
- Figure 2 NEL, K., 2017, *Sunnyside and the Church* [Drawing]. xxii
- Figure 3 EISNER, W., 1986, Man sitting on stairs. [Drawing] in *New York: The Big City*, 1986. DC Comics, New York. xxii
- Figure 4 NEL, K., 2017, *The church and the city* [Drawing]. xxv
- Figure 5 NEL, K., 2017, *Community* [Drawing]. xxvii
- Figure 6 NEL, K., 2017, *Curiosity* [Drawing]. xxxi
- Figure 7 NEL, K., 2017, *Locating the study* [Digital image] adapted from Google Earth, 2017. xxxii
- Figure 8 JORDAAN, G., 1989, Pretoria [Drawing] in Pretoria as “Urbs Quadrata” in *Architecture SA*, May/June 1989. P. 26-29. 01
- Figure 9 NEL, K., 2017, *Underlying argument* [Diagram]. 02
- Figure 10 NEL, K., 2017, *Dualisms* [Diagram]. 03
- Figure 11 NEL, K., 2017, *Part I Diagram* [Diagram]. 04
- Figure 12 NEL, K., 2017, *Part II Diagram* [Diagram]. 05
- Figure 13 NEL, K., 2017, *Child's Curiosity* [Drawing]. 07
- Figure 14 NEL, K., 2017, *City Streets* [Drawing]. 07
- Figure 15 NEL, K., 2017, *Reasons for the study* [Diagram]. 08
- Figure 16 NEL, K., 2017, *Genius Loci at God's Window, Mpumalanga*. [Digital Image]. 11
- Figure 17 NEL, K., 2017, *The four maps* [Digital image]. 13
- Figure 18 NEL, K., 2017, *Exploring* [Drawing]. 14
- Figure 19 DE BEER, S. 2017, *Urban Praxis Cycle* [Diagram]. 19
- Figure 20 NEL K., 2017, *The Flâneur* [Digital image]. 20
- Figure 21 NEL K., 2017, *The Reader* [Digital image]. 21
- Figure 22 NEL K., 2017, *The Dreamer* [Digital image]. 22
- Figure 23 NEL K., 2017, *The Makers* [Digital image]. 23
- Figure 24 CLARKE, J.F.C., 1970-1973. *Two children in the Cape Location, Marabastad* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/streets11.htm> [Accessed April 2017]. 33
- Figure 25 NEL, K., 2017, *Journey* [Drawing]. 38
- Figure 26 NEL, K., 2015, *Children of the Transkei* [Photograph cutout]. 39
- Figure 27 TAYLOR, G., 2014, *Give me a break I am trying to find myself* [Painting]. Private Collection. 43
- Figure 28 EISNER, W., 1986. Sad streets [Drawing] in *New York: The Big City*, 1986. DC Comics, New York. 43
- Figure 29 WESSELS, AFP, 2015, *A child plays in a corridor of a hospital turned into a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.news24.com/Multimedia/South-Africa/pics-take-a-look-inside-the-gang-owned-buildings-of-hillbrow-20151210> [Accessed April 2017]. 45
- Figure 30 WESSELS, AFP, 2015, *Three men share a room with seven others into a hospital turned in a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.news24.com/Multimedia/South-Africa/pics-take-a-look-inside-the-gang-owned-buildings-of-hillbrow-20151210> [Accessed April 2017]. 45

- Figure 31 WESSELS, AFP, 2015, *A child runs down a corridor of a hospital turned into a squat in Hillbrow, Johannesburg* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.news24.com/Multimedia/South-Africa/pics-take-a-look-inside-the-gang-owned-buildings-of-hillbrow-20151210> [Accessed April 2017]. 46
- Figure 32 HILBERSEIMER, L., 1924-1929, *Vertical City* [Drawing] Available at <https://archiobjects.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/HILBERSEIMER-CITY-MODERNISM.jpg> [Accessed April 2017]. 48
- Figure 33 MILLER, P., 2012, *Michenazi Housing Project* [Photograph] Available at: <https://mellerphotojournalism.wordpress.com/2012/01/11/michenzani-housing-project/> [Accessed April 2017]. 50
- Figure 34 ZANZIBAAR ARCHIVES, *1970s Michenazi Housing Project* [Photograph] in Folkers, A., 2010, *Modern Architecture in Africa*, SUN Architecture and Author, Amsterdam. 50
- Figure 35 NEL, K., 2017. *Tabula Rasa* [Drawing]. 51
- Figure 36 NEL, K., 2017. *Venturi's Mother's House* [Digital Image]. 52
- Figure 37 Miller, J., 2016. *Unequal Scenes: Kya Sands and Bloubostrand* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-23/unequal-scenes---kya-sands-and-bloubostrand-by-johnny-miller/7536818> [Accessed April 2017]. 54
- Figure 38 KRIER, L., c. 2000, *Public vs Private Imperialism* [Drawing] Available at <http://www.thepolisblog.org/2012/09/conversing-with-sketches-of-leon-krier.html> [Accessed April 2017]. 57
- Figure 39 SELEMA, 2014, *Unshackled* [Photograph] in [un]Shackled: a child's perspective on being free and restricted in the city (Through their eyes V) p. 94 [see www.throughtheireyesphotos.com]. 58
- Figure 40 NEL, K., 2017, *The narrative approach* [Diagram]. 65
- Figure 41 BOSHOFF, W., 1997. *The writing the fell off the wall* [Installation] Johannesburg Art Gallery Collection [see <https://www.willemboshoff.com/product-page/writing-that-fell-off-the-wall>]. 66
- Figure 42 BOSHOFF, W., 1990 - ongoing, *Blind Alphabet* [Installation] MTN ArtCollection [See <https://www.willemboshoff.com/product-page/blind-alphabet>]. 66
- Figure 43 KRIER, L., 1998. *Temporary Refusal of the Archetype* [Drawing] Available at <http://nickkahler.tumblr.com/image/30527716384> [Accessed April 2017]. 69
- Figure 44 KRIER, L., n.d., *Anti-Urbano & Urbano* [Drawing] Available at <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinning.com/736x/d1/63/f0/d163f083f2c0e7603b094196b8d3c5cf.jpg> [Accessed April 2017]. 70
- Figure 45 [UN]SHACKLED, 2014, *Collection of photographs found in [un]shackled: Through their eyes V* [see www.throughtheireyesphotos.com]. 73
- Figure 46 NEL, K., 2017. *Becoming like a child* [Digital image] adapted from stills from the film *Amelie*, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001. 74
- Figure 47 IOFAN, B. c. 1933. *Unbuild Palace of the Soviets* [Drawing] Available at: <http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/27862259@N02/6766876711/> [Accessed April 2017]. 77
- Figure 48 NEL, K., 2017, *Children 2* [Drawing]. 82
- Figure 49 NEL, K., 2017, *Alienating or inspiring* [Drawing] adapted from Dee, C. 2001, *Form and Fabric in Landscape Architecture: A visual journey*, Spon Press, London. 84
- Figure 50 NEL, K., 2017, *The changing role of a planner based on Oranje's text* [Diagram]. 92
- Figure 51 DE BEER, S., 2017. *Planning Curriculum* [Diagram]. 96
- Figure 52 NEL, K., 2015. *Marabastad 01* [Photograph]. 98
- Figure 53 NEL, K., 2017, *Moments* [Digital Image]. 101
- Figure 54 NEL, K., 2017, *Dreaming of identity* [Drawing]. 102
- Figure 55 NEL, K., 2017, *Ways of being* [Drawing]. 103

- Figure 56 NEL, K., 2017, *With the eyes of a child* [Drawing]. 104
- Figure 57 NEL, K., 2017, *Head in the clouds* [Drawing]. 106
- Figure 58 NEL, K., 2017, *Heart and mind* [Drawing]. 107
- Figure 59 NEL, K., 2017, *Exchange* [Drawing]. 108
- Figure 60 NEL, K., 2017, *Reading* [Drawing]. 112
- Figure 61 NEL, K., 2017, *Deconstruct* [Drawing]. 114
- Figure 62 EISNER, W., 1986, *Backdrop* [Drawing] in *New York: The Big City*, 1986. DC Comics, New York. 115
- Figure 63 NEL, K., 2017, *Non-verbal languages* [Drawing]. 116
- Figure 64 NEL, K., 2017, *Hermeneutic* [Drawing]. 118
- Figure 65 NEL, K., 2017, *Alternative consciousness* [Drawing]. 118
- Figure 66 NEL, K., 2017, *Communities* [Drawing]. 120
- Figure 67 NEL, K., 2017, *Co construct* [Drawing]. 123
- Figure 68 TAYLOR, G., 1992, *Remnant Voices* [Painting] Available at: <https://markhovdenstephenson.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/prophetic1.jpg?w=544&h=724> [Accessed April 2017]. 128
- Figure 69 NEL, K., 2017, *Tshwane - Berea-Burgers Park and Sunnyside*. [Digital image] adapted from Google Earth, 2017. 128
- Figure 70 UNKNOWN, n.d., *Burgers Park Pavilion* [Photograph] Available at: http://able.wiki.up.ac.za/index.php/Burgers_Park,_Pretoria,_City_of_Tshwane [Accessed April 2017]. 130
- Figure 71 MEIRING, H., 1988, *Burgers Park Pavilion* [Drawing] in Huisgids/Property Guide Newspaper Clipping, 5 November 1988. Available at <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/22166/vw00026.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>. 131
- Figure 72 NEL, K., 2017, *Berea Burgers Park Map* [Digital Image] adapted from Google Earth, 2017. 133
- Figure 73 NEL, K., 2015, *Marabastad* [Photograph]. 135
- Figure 74 CLARKE, J.F.C., 1970-1973, *The alley leading off 5th Street next to the tailor shop, between Grand Street and Bloed Street., Marabastad* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/vicinity06.htm> [Accessed April 2017]. 135
- Figure 75 NEL, K., 2017, *Neighbourhood map* [Digital image]. 136
- Figure 76 CLARKE, J.F.C., 1970-1973, *Marabastad* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/vicinity05.htm> [Accessed April 2017]. 137
- Figure 77 UNKNOWN, c. 1960, *Sunnyside in the 60s: south-eastern corner of Esselen and Greeff Streets*. [Photograph] submitted by Tom Andrews and feature in Pretoria Nuusbrief July 2012. Available at <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/19448/Pta%2012-07.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed April 2017]. 139
- Figure 78 UNKNOWN, c. 1960, *Sunnyside in the 60s* [Photograph] submitted by Tom Andrews and feature in Pretoria Nuusbrief July 2012. Available at <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/19448/Pta%2012-07.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed April 2017]. 140
- Figure 79 SUNDAY STAR, 1990, *Newspaper clipping about Elim Church Fire* [Newspaper clipping] March 22. 141
- Figure 80 UNKNOWN, 1990, *Newspaper clipping about Elim Church Fire* [Newspaper clipping]. 142
- Figure 81 NEL, K., 2017, *Zebra's new horns* [Drawing]. 145
- Figure 82 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *Tambotie building - Sunnyside Today 01* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 146

- Figure 83 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *Sunnyside Today 02* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 146
- Figure 84 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *Maroela building - Sunnyside Today 03* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 146
- Figure 85 NEL, K., 2015, *Marabastad and the skeletons of Schubart Park* [Photograph] Boikhutso, B., 2015, *NAP TIME: A homeless man is sleeping* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 149
- Figure 86 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *Nap Time: A homeless man is sleeping* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 154
- Figure 87 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *Dirty City: A Dirt-filled stream of water in Sunnyside is used by homeless people.* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 154
- Figure 88 BOIKHUTSO, B., 2015, *A stream of dirty runs down a river in Sunnyside, Pretoria* [Photograph] Available at: <https://boipeloboikhutso.wordpress.com/category/photography-portfolio-a/> [Accessed April 2017]. 154
- Figure 89 NEL, K., 2017. *Ward Summary infographic* [Digital Image] Statistics from Wazimap, icons adapted from NounProject.com. 157
- Figure 90 FIRTH, A., 2011, *Density map indicating annual household income in and around Pretoria CBD* [Digital image] Available at: <https://dotmap.adrianfrith.com> [Accessed April 2017]. 159
- Figure 91 FIRTH, A., 2011, *Density map indicating home language in and around Pretoria CBD* [Digital image] Available at: <https://dotmap.adrianfrith.com> [Accessed April 2017]. 161
- Figure 92 FIRTH, A., 2011, *Density map indicating racial demographic in and around Pretoria CBD* [Digital image] Available at: <https://dotmap.adrianfrith.com> [Accessed April 2017]. 163
- Figure 93 UNKNOWN, n.d. *Map indicating forced removals during 1953-1967 - Pretoria* [Map] Source: van der Waal Collection. Available at: <http://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/56895> [Accessed April 2017]. 169
- Figure 94 UNKNOWN, n.d. *Map indicating the distribution of the black population between 1951 and 195 Pretoria* [Map] Source: van der Waal Collection. Available at: <http://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/56895> [Accessed April 2017]. 169
- Figure 95 DE KLERK, M., 2015. *Kruger Park's basement, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 170
- Figure 96 DE KLERK, M., 2015. *Kruger Park, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 170
- Figure 97 DE KLERK, M., 2015. *Schubart Park 01, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 172
- Figure 98 DE KLERK, M., 2015. *Schubart Park 02, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 174
- Figure 99 NEL, K., 2017. *Map of shopping centre locations* [Digital Image]. 179
- Figure 100 NEL, K., 2017. *Infographic illustrating housing typologies and occupancy in study area* [Infographic]. 180
- Figure 101 EISNER, W., 2006. *The building* [Drawing] in *New York; Life In The Big City* by Will Eisner, W. W. Norton. 184
- Figure 102 CITY PROPERTY, n.d., *Reuben's Place 01* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.cityproperty.co.za/en/neighbourhoods/tshwane/tshwane-cbd/properties/reubens-place/> [Accessed April 2017]. 185
- Figure 103 CITY PROPERTY, n.d., *Reuben's Place 01* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.cityproperty.co.za/en/neighbourhoods/tshwane/tshwane-cbd/properties/reubens-place/> [Accessed April 2017]. 185
- Figure 104 YEAST HOUSING, n.d., *Sediba House* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.ych.org.za/wproducts.php> [Accessed April 2017]. 186
- Figure 105 YEAST HOUSING, n.d., *Litakoemi, Visagie Street* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.ych.org.za/wproducts.php> [Accessed April 2017]. 186

- Figure 106 YEAST HOUSING, n.d., *Jubilee Centre, Burgers Park Lane* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.ych.org.za/wproducts.php> [Accessed April 2017]. 186
- Figure 107 YEAST HOUSING, n.d., *Tau Village, Struben Street* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.ych.org.za/wproducts.php> [Accessed April 2017]. 186
- Figure 108 YEAST HOUSING, n.d., *Livingstones Community House* [Photograph] Available at: <http://www.ych.org.za/wproducts.php> [Accessed April 2017]. 186
- Figure 109 NEL, K., 2017, *Map of vacant land and buildings in Study Area* [Digital Image]. 187
- Figure 110 ZAR DPW., c. 1839, *Layout of Burgerspark titled "Rij en Wandelpark, Oude Botanische Tuin, Pretoria" between Andries, Visagie, Mare and Van der Walt streets.* [Drawing] Plan signed by "S.W. Wierda, Hoofd, Department van Publieke Werken, Z.A. Republiek", ZAR DPW (1887-1900) Drawing Collection 161. Available at: <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/40927/3-216.jpg?sequence=2&isAllowed=y> [Accessed April 2017]. 188
- Figure 111 CLARKE, JFC, 1970-1973, *The south side of Grand Street* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/vicinity02.htm> [Accessed April 2017]. 191
- Figure 112 AZIZ TAYOB ARCHITECTS, 1998, *Marabastad Urban Design Framework* [Drawing] Available at: <http://www.tayob.co.za/index.php/projects/urban/36-marabastad-urban-design-framework-2> [Accessed April 2017]. 194
- Figure 113 CLARKE, J.F.C., 1970-1973, *Nawab Miriammen Temple in Marabastad.* [Photograph] Available at <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/vicinity03.htm> [Accessed April 2017]. 195
- Figure 114 GLH Architects, 2016, *Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria* [Digital image] in A look at Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria, Business Tech Available at: <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/135113/a-look-at-stats-sas-r1-4-billion-new-head-offices-in-pretoria/> [Accessed April 2017]. 198
- Figure 115 GLH Architects, 2016, *Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria construction* [Photograph] in A look at Stats SA's R1.4 billion new head offices in Pretoria, Business Tech Available at: <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/135113/a-look-at-stats-sas-r1-4-billion-new-head-offices-in-pretoria/> [Accessed April 2017]. 198
- Figure 116 NEL, K., 2017, *Map of hotels, formal and informal tenants* [Digital Image]. 199
- Figure 117 DE KLERK, M., 2015. *View of substation in Marabastad from Belle Ombre Station* [Photograph]. 200
- Figure 118 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015. *Meat market in Marabastad* [Photograph]. 200
- Figure 119 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015. *Produce market, Marabastad* [Photograph]. 200
- Figure 120 SCHOLTZ, J., 2015, *View of the White Mosque from Jerusalem street, Marabastad* [Photograph]. 200
- Figure 121 QUAZI, T., 2014, *Warwick Junction* [Photograph] Available at: <http://aet.org.za/www12.flk1.host-h.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/3-MB-version-1200x661.jpg> [Accessed April 2017]. 202
- Figure 122 FAITH47, 2014, *Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour* [Photograph] Available at: <https://faith47.com/a-study-of-warwick-triangle-at-rush-hour/> [Accessed April 2017]. 203
- Figure 123 FAITH47, 2014, *Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour* [Photograph] Available at: <https://faith47.com/a-study-of-warwick-triangle-at-rush-hour/> [Accessed April 2017]. 203
- Figure 124 FAITH47, 2014, *Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour* [Photograph] Available at: <https://faith47.com/a-study-of-warwick-triangle-at-rush-hour/> [Accessed April 2017]. 203
- Figure 125 FAITH47, 2014, *Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour* [Photograph] Available at: <https://faith47.com/a-study-of-warwick-triangle-at-rush-hour/> [Accessed April 2017]. 203
- Figure 126 FAITH47, 2014, *Murals: A study of Warwick Triangle at rush hour* [Photograph] Available at: <https://faith47.com/a-study-of-warwick-triangle-at-rush-hour/> [Accessed April 2017]. 203
- Figure 127 NEL, K., 2017, *Inner city churches* [Digital image] adapted from OpenStreetsMaps. 204

- Figure 128 DE KLERK, 2015, *Social infrastructure support and refugee support facilities in Pretoria inner city* [Digital image] in De Beer, S.F. & Vally, R. (eds.), 2015, *Pathways out of homelessness: Research report 2015*, University of Pretoria, Pretoria. 209
- Figure 129 CLARKE, J.F.C., 1970-1973, *Marabastad in the 70s* [Photographs] in *A glimpse into Marabastad*, 2008. Also available at: <http://www.aglimpseintomarabastad.co.za/index.html> [Accessed April 2017]. 210
- Figure 130 UNKNOWN, 2015, *Xenophobia: illustrated during the Homeless Summit Interactive session* [Drawing] in De Beer, S.F. & Vally, R. (eds.), 2015, *Pathways out of homelessness: Research report 2015*, University of Pretoria, Pretoria. 214
- Figure 131 NEL, K., 2017, *Cafe Riche, Pretoria* [Drawing]. 218
- Figure 132 UNKNOWN, n.d., *Historic view of Pretoria, looking east from Church Square* [Photograph] Available at: http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/42176/church_square_east.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [Accessed April 2017]. 227
- Figure 133 NEL, K., 2017, *Burgers Park* [Sketch]. 230
- Figure 134 PRETORIA NEWS, 1999, *Article in the Pretoria News of 9 Aug 1999 about a plaque won by Burgers Park in a public spaces competition* [Newspaper clipping] Available at: <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/22156/vw00016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed April 2017]. 233
- Figure 135 RAND DAILY MAIL, 1979, *Pregnat Oyster of Strijdom Square*, Pretoria [Newspaper clipping] Available at: <http://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/22270> [Accessed April 2017]. 235
- Figure 136 UNKNOWN, 2016, *Women's Museum in the new Lilian Ngoye Square, Pretoria* [Photograph] in Makhubu, N. Women's Museum in city finally opens its doors, Pretoria News, 9 Aug 2016. 235
- Figure 137 NEL, K., 2017, *Gathering under a tree* [Drawing]. 236
- Figure 138 DICKERSON, T., n.d., *Shembe Church procession* [Photograph] Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pantheracats/6056489981/sizes/l> [Accessed April 2017]. 237
- Figure 139 EISNER, W., 1986, *The city* [Drawing] in *New York: The Big City*, 1986. DC Comics, New York. 244
- Figure 140 DEE, C., 2001, *Drawing after Jean Dubuffet "Traces de pas sur le sable" 1948* [Drawing] in *Form and Fabric in Landscape Architecture: A visual journey*, Spon Press, London. 246
- Figure 141 NEL, K., 2017, *City* [Drawing]. 247
- Figure 142 NEL, K., 2017, *Walking my tortoise* [Drawing]. 248
- Figure 143 NEL, K., 2017, *Participation* [Drawing]. 256
- Figure 144 SIYA, 2014, *Playing* [Photograph] in [un]Shackled: a child's perspective on being free and restricted in the city (Through their eyes V) p. 81 [see www.throughtheireyesphotos.com]. 259
- Figure 145 UNKNOWN, 2014, *Tree of life + Photo Workshops* [Photograph] in [un]Shackled: a child's perspective on being free and restricted in the city (Through their eyes V) p. 3 [see www.throughtheireyesphotos.com]. 259
- Figure 146 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015, *Homeless in Pretoria inner city* [Photograph]. 259
- Figure 147 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015, *Homelessness* [Photograph]. 264
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- Figure 150 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015, *Homelessness in Marabastad, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 268
- Figure 151 EISNER, W., 1986, *Streets* [Drawing] in *New York: The Big City*, 1986. DC Comics, New York. 270
- Figure 152 DE VEREDICIS, M., 2015, *Waste pickers in Marabastad, Pretoria* [Photograph]. 280

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| 506

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| 512

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