Diachronic and synchronic identities of multicultural groups in South Africa

Estelle Alma Maré
Department of Architecture, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria
E-mail: mare_estelle@fastmail.fm

Indigenous ethic groups and White settlers in South Africa historically established their various identities by means of their settlement patterns and architecture, in an indigenous, or compromised European way. During the past century this diachronic diversity has become obsolete, especially in the present rapidly urbanising post-apartheid country. Population growth and the accelerating rate of integration of all ethnic groups are presently transforming most urban sectors, giving rise to the extremes of secluded affluent suburbs and informal settlements on the outskirts of cities or overcrowding in run-down urban areas. It is proposed that the current cultural chaos and loss of identity of South African peoples may be countered by the restructuring of built environments in order to harmonise the diachronic and synchronic life worlds of various groups, affording them a choice of habitat - a freedom not previously granted by institutionalised segregation.
Key words: South Africa, diachronic and synchronic identities, multicultural groups, life worlds

Diachroniese en sinchroniese identiteite van multikulturele groepe in Suid-Afrika
Inheemse etniese groepe en blanke setlaars het histories hulle onderskeie identiteite by wyse van hulle nadersettingspatrone en argitektuur gevestig, in 'n inheemse of gekomprimenteerde Europese wyse. Sodanige diachroniese veskeidenheid het gedurende die afgelope eeu uitgedien geraak, veral in die huidige post-apartheid-land waarin verstedeliking teen 'n versnellende tempo plaasvind. Bevolkingsaanwas en die toenemende tempo van die integrasie van alle etniese groepe transformeer tans die meeste stedelike sektore, wat aanleiding gee tot die uiterste verskynsels van afgeslote welgestelde voorstede en informele nedersettings aan die buitewyke van stede of die oorbewoning van vervalle stedelike gebiede. Daar word voorgestel dat die huidige kulturele chaos en identiteitsverlies van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking gestuit kan word deur die herstrukturering van beboude omgewings ten einde die diachroniese en sinchroniese lewenswêrelde van onderskeie groepe te harmoniseer, ten einde hulle 'n keuse van woongebied te bied - 'n vryheid wat nie voorheen deur geïnstitusionaliseerde segregasie moontlik was nie.
Sleutelwoorde: Suid-Afrika, diachroniese en sinchroniese identiteite, multikulturele groepe, lewenswêrelde

Waar geen collectieve herinnering meer is, kan geen cultuur zijn [Where there is no longer a collective memory, culture cannot exist] (H.W. von der Dunk 2009: 46).

South Africa covers an extensive geographical area where various peoples have historically developed in isolation and shaped their own identities and destinies, notwithstanding sporadic conflict and intermingling with other groups. The introductory part of the paper deals with some ethnic groups that traditionally created their own material and social environments, comprising their life worlds, that is their worlds of everyday existence. Among these are the San or Bushmen, various black tribes and white settlers. These peoples' various kinds of shelter, settlement patterns or town layouts have all but become obsolete in a rapidly urbanising, post-apartheid country. With political change the apartheid urban model of segregation by means of peri-urban group areas and the emphasis on ethnic identity in homelands, was abolished in the early 1990s. Since then population growth has been transforming urban sectors, most often for the worse because of overcrowding and the overloading of existing services. In informal settlements on the outskirts of expanding cities or overcrowded, run-down urban areas that are deteriorating into slums, the sense of a meaningful life world for the dwellers, mainly blacks, is destabilised. The political and social transformation since 1994, when the African National Congress came to power, has also affected whites, the more affluent of whom still live in green suburbs where fear of crime has grotesquely transformed street vistas nationwide

by the erection of high security walls and barbed wire fences around isolated houses. Blacks, Indians and Colourds who have acquired wealth have also moved into these suburbs and their life style follows the same environmental pattern as that of the secluded whites. The outcome of the changing sense of place for South Africans reflect an unequal society, no longer divided by colour, but by poverty and wealth. The future consequence of this trend is unpredictable. However, some guidelines for harmonising diachronic and synchronic life worlds are forthwith suggested for restructuring built environments to curb the present chaotic situation.

Defining identity

A city is not constructed only spatially, but also socially and culturally, with accumulated historical knowledge. According to Philippe Gervais-Lambony (2006: 53) identity "refers not to a given reality but rather to a discourse which is intended to bring order to things. It is a narrative 'the function of which is to make normal, logical, necessary, and unavoidable the feeling of belonging to a group'" (quoted from Martin 1994: 23, translated by Gervais-Lambony). Thus Gervais-Lambony (2006: 66) concludes that identity is informed by time, by choice and politics that are all "spatialised".[1] What is spatialised by a group refers to the material expression of identity, i.e. an identity that can be recognised in architecture and settlement structure that are the basis for the formation of cultural landscapes that in past eras distinguished vernacular places in South Africa. Following on this statement, the historical territorial identities, expressed in cultural forms, of various groups that manifested in uniquely different ways in the same land, are outlined in the next section.

Diachronic life worlds

The San peoples demarcated the boundaries of the geographical areas they occupied by means of signs, later designated by archaeologists as "rock art". These forager communities, present in Southern Africa for half a millennium, rarely altered their temporal natural habitat. They left traces of their whereabouts in the form of depictions that researchers have interpreted in various ways. Jan Rosvall (1972: 216) aptly states that "Rock paintings are not comparable to archaeological artifacts in general, they are intentionally visualized messages". There seems to be specific reasons why certain boulders and rock shelters were chosen by the San, rather than others (figure 1). Vitorio Vaccaro (1992: 104) who carried out research in the Drakensberg area of Natal, came to the conclusion that the influence of factors such as habitation and refuge from the elements could not entirely account for the choice of one rock shelter or boulder in favour of another, since "the shelters and boulders containing paintings may have served a social function tied up with San rituals and ceremonies rather than the 'material' needs of the San". The choice of surfaces for graphic depiction was not merely of aesthetic importance to the San community, but also served to demarcate ritual venues, i.e. life world contexts which, to them, were as meaningful and important as material considerations such as the availability of water or a view of the hunting fields. The San created a sense of meaning by utilising a symbolic and mythological place-making process that satisfied the psychological needs of the tribe. Their sense of orientation in the natural environment did not entail the modification of their habitat by the construction of long-lasting dwelling places.

Figure 1
San shelter, Lesotho Highlands
(source: internet).

All the other ethnic groups who settled in the southernmost part of Africa altered their natural habitat. Consequently, every dwelling and all communal settlements represent a separation from nature by means of which people who build them constitute for themselves a specific identity. In South Africa those historical peoples who made their life worlds visible in dwellings, settlements and towns comprise two main groups: the Bantu-speaking tribes and the white settlers. These two groups dwelt and built differently in the same land.

Bantu-speaking tribes who were traditionally agro-pastoralists, migrated to the southernmost parts of Africa by 200 BCE. They created a distinct kind of settlement pattern, consisting of mud-walled and thatched dwellings in hierarchical order or in differentiated social groupings around a central cattle precinct, while the boundaries of the area they occupied were demarcated by grazing cattle (figure 2). Another such settlement pattern is that of the KwaNdebele of which few authentic examples remain. The Southern Ndeble traditionally lived in an *imizi*, structured circularly or semi-circularly for dwelling and other functions around a cattle pen. In this layout families as units of an extensive tribal group lived together.[2] The pattern of indigenous rural settlements in Southern Africa are generally characterised by the physical provision made for the various interpersonal relationships that are entrenched in the traditions and culture of tribal peoples. These relationships are mirrored in the organisation of their habitats to the extent that an individuals status in his or her society or peer group will predetermine a personal location in the overall settlement layout and structure (figure 2). Franco Frescura (1983: 40) typifies this kind of architecture as highly ordered and functional, "capable of expressing a variety of spatial principles, of responding to the builder's needs and aspirations for a comfortable dwelling and of reflecting the inhabitants' cultural mores and social organisation". The settlement patterns of black tribes confirm the statement by R. Woodward (1982: 288): "Settlement form has traditionally offered deep psychological nourishment for the emotional and spiritual needs of man, culturally reworking and exploring the inexhaustible power of symbols."
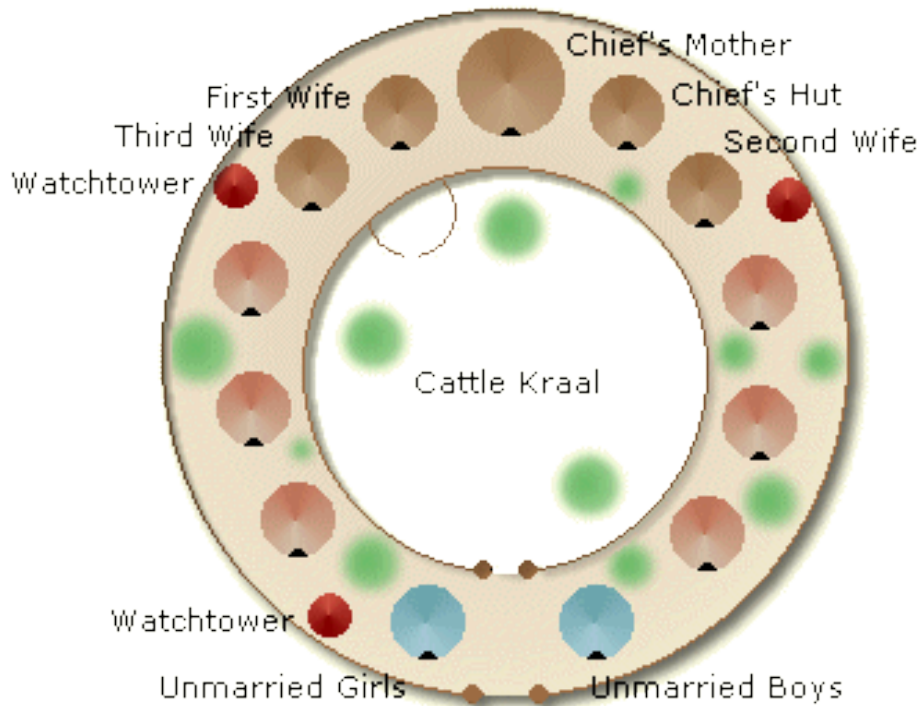
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Figure 2
Schematic layout of a Zulu kraal (source: internet).

However, White designers of mass housing for Blacks in or adjacent to segregated cities showed no sympathy with social and symbolic norms as expressed in indigenous tribal settlements. Nicholas Coetzer (2013: 189) summarises the prejudice against retaining tribal layouts as follows:

> There had been a longstanding desire on the part of missionaries to remove the circle as a structuring device from native dwellings and buildings as a way of continuing the "civilizing" mission - the instrumentalist programme par excellence. The Natal government had even [in 1914] offered tax incentives to those Natives who lived in orthogonal dwellings filled with Western furniture.

The Dutch settlers who arrived at the Cape of Good Hope from Europe in 1652 had a post-perspectival mindset.[3] They demarcated the boundaries of their homesteads and farms by means of surveyors' posts, as a sign of land ownership. Later they geometrised all their new-found towns by means of a grid pattern such as Graaff-Reinet, the fifth oldest town in South Africa, founded by the Dutch East India Company in 1786 (figures 3 and 4). Other towns that exemplify this pattern are Pietermaritzburg, founded in 1854, and Pretoria, founded in 1855. This rectilinear pattern that characterises post-industrial Western cities became the dominant one in South African urban layouts. It is presently also applied in informal settlements where reticulation for water and electricity is provided.

Figure 3
View of Graaf-Reinette
(photograph by the author).

Figure 4
Plan of of Graaf-Reinette
(source: Basson 1994: 143).

When the Cape came under British control in 1806 their imperialist vision was to "construct Cape Town into the ordered Imperial landscape of Country/Town/Suburb and Self/Other/ Same..." (Coetzer 2013: 13). The agents of Empire were Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), called "The Architect of Empire" and Herbert Baker (1862-1946), an architect who arrived at the Cape in 1892. The English conjured up a "retroactive presence, alongside the Dutch, as the original settlers of the Cape" (Coetzer 2013: 43). Inspired by building preservation and nationalist architectural movements in England Cape Dutch homesteads were appropriated as a common English/Afrikaner heritage. Thus, according to (Coetzer 2013: 81):

> Cape Dutch architecture, and Cape Dutch homesteads in particular, came discursively to represent and symbolize a useful take on history, civilization and culture through which White South Africans, and more directly, upper-middle-class English South Africans, made claims of possession of the land; the valorized Self was located in the countryside, through what was generally considered "high" architectural design. It was axiomatic then - and if one excluded the rural predominance of "tribal" Africa - that the Other resided in the city, literally in the slums and back alleys hidden behind the façades of polite society.

As a practical application of high architectural design Rhodes commissioned Baker to convert Simon van der Stel's extensive barn building, called Groote Schuur, that he had bought in 1883, into a Cape Dutch homestead as his own residence and that of future prime ministers of the Union of South Africa (figure 5).

Figure 5
Herbert Baker, Groote Schuur, Rondebosch
(source: http: www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl).

Following a policy of creating an aesthetic urban order based on the ideals of the English Arts and Crafts village and City Beautiful planning by excluding slum-dwellers from the city intended to be a civilized social White space, the agents of Empire "operating through the imperatives of Empire, laid the solid foundations on which the ugly edifice of apartheid was built" (Coetzer 2013: 13).

The British "invented tradition"[4] of architectural identity at the Cape was a fantasy that sought to "inculcate certain values and norms of behavior [...], which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm 2000: 1). The continuity of the Cape Dutch architectural tradition as an indigenous creation with European roots obviously denied the South African reality of a multiracial and multicultural society and excluded all indigenous peoples who devised their own settlement patterns.

Colonial architecture, of both the Dutch and the British variety, graced South Africa with landmark buildings, for example the neo-classical Union Buildings in Pretoria, designed by Herbert Baker and completed in 1913 (figure 6). The twin domed towers of this curved building symbolise the languages of the white South groups – Afrikaans and English – that were united in the integration of the four South African provinces in a union. That gesture of nation-building excluded the black and coloured peoples.[5]

Figure 6
The Union Buildings, Pretoria
(photograph by the author).

Later, during the second half of the twentieth century, the International Style that became the dominant architectural style in South Africa contributed to the homogenisation of the built environment in cities. However, in a socially diversified country such as South Africa, spatial uniformity is, at best, an artificial achievement that denies the expression of past identities without manifesting a more inclusive or national identity that still remains elusive.

Synchronic life worlds: perceptual and associational

Intergroup conflict, the disruption and dislocation of socio-cultural systems and the subordination of one power by another, mostly involuntary, has always occurred as far back as human memory stretches. However, disruption and dislocation of groups of people have occurred with alarming regularity in South Africa. Indeed, South Africa has a history of extensive displacement of people, even before the first half of the nineteenth century when the Voortrekkers (the descendants of Dutch settlers) left the Cape to escape British rule. Ethnic confrontation and the displacement of nomadic peoples happened during the expansion of early colonial settlements. Not only colonial governments and their agents, but also missionaries and other expansionists, such as hunters and traders, enforced their conviction about what was "best for the natives" for centuries. During the second half of the past century, in the name of the segregation of races, referred to as "separate development" some of the worst cases of social engineering was committed by South Africa's previous government.

The result of the prolonged displacement of people in order to keep the races apart, has resulted in South African cities and towns suffering from three characteristic spatial patterns: low density sprawl, fragmentation and separation.[6] To remedy this situation international principles for urban spatial restructuring could be applied, such as the integration of built-up and non-built-up environments, compaction and densification, the integration of functions and activities within urban spaces, and urban development as a continuance process, as opposed to fragmentation.[7] The requirement that citizens' dependency on automobile transport be reduced is all but impossible to realise in a country where apartheid planning created extensive distances between labourers' dwelling and work places.

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The multicultural nature of South African society may be explained in the same terms that Ross Woodward (1982: 289) describes contemporary Western society, "where there is an agglomeration of world-views and no overarching canopy to define concrete perceptual meanings". This implies a chronic state of cultural disorder without an appropriate state response.[8] In dealing with this complex situation the advice of James Hillman (1986: 16) is appropriate: that ways of looking at a situation imply ways of dealing with it. Thus, by looking at the original life worlds in South Africa that have all but disappeared, one may surmise that only in a very general sense can diachronic life worlds be reconstituted synchronically in an attempt to reestablish cultural identities in order to eliminate the present disorder of anonymity.

Of the total population of some fifty million more than a quarter live in informal settlements (figure 7).[9] Planners have tried to structure their layout by means of access roads and straight streets to facilitate water reticulation and other services. The resulting arrangement of stands in a regular geometric way makes it virtually impossible for the inhabitants themselves to rearrange their physical layout in order to create worthwhile social relationships in slum conditions. Despite an almost willful disregard of the subject by academics and a resultant lack of public awareness of diachronic life worlds, evidence seems to indicate that the idioms and spatial values of the Southern African rural dwellers play a far greater part in what has been retained in the common culture of the people themselves than has been the case in the post-industrial white society.

Figure 7
An informal settlement, near Cape Town (source: internet).

There seems to be a need to recover associational worlds for which the planners ignorantly fail to make provision. The notion of associational worlds derives from Amos Rapoport (1970: 5) who differentiates between perceptual and associational worlds. He suggests that the perception of an object becomes more and more culturally determined as it possesses high levels of meaning, which in a pluralist society are more personalised and hence not accessible to designers. However, perceptual and associational worlds are linked. A pluralist society is, by definition, segmented, which means that conscious design for shared symbolic associational worlds is virtually impossible. Therefore, in the deteriorating South African built environment, the words of G. Banz (1970: 95) ring ominously true: "In the past, when individual and community

were uniformly attuned to the symbolism of urban form, signals could be precise and messages subtle." The same is true in the case of the rural and pioneering settlements referred to.

Past visions of the future

Under the white nationalist government (1948-93) separate urban for black people were established because their labour was needed in white cities. This policy did not create a viable or sustainable future for the country and, to the detriment of the blacks in search of a livelihood in an industrialised society, it compromised their identity as a pastoral people. In this regard M. Koll (1972: 12), a German advised as follows on the South African situation: "Rather than imposing their own norms and values, authorities should try to get into closer contact with the people, observe what felt needs of the people are, how people build if they are left to do so on their own behalf and then align institutional norms of housing agencies with the spontaneous action of the people." Further outside advice to the minority white government's planners came from the Americans, W.J. Hanna and J.L. Hanna (1971: 68), who motivated their plea for the creation of acceptable life worlds for urbanising Africans, because "the culture shock of the shift from rural to urban life as well as the future shock of continuing urban change – may lead to increased personal anxiety and stress". Now that the process has run its course and the new majority government has neglected the needs of rural blacks in informal settlements, the problem of creating physical environments with the symbolic value of cultural places that will diminish personal anxiety and stress needs to be addressed anew.[10]

Place-making has been interpreted in different ways, but in the context of South Africa's future, the words of Michael Mooney have an ominous ring: "Individually and culturally, our lives are 'fixed' by places and events. We are caught up in them as if in a web, having in them our bearing and orientation. To be 'in place' and a part of events, also means to be in flux, and thus in a kind of permanent jeopardy." It is granted that existentially all human places and events are more or less permanently in jeopardy, but the epochal changes that South Africa has been undergoing during the past twenty years since the demise of apartheid in 1992, add to the uncertainty of the mass of the people. No doubt, Koll and the Hannas are right in pointing out that the change of life worlds lead to personal anxiety and stress. The rapid migration of rural people to urban areas have been aggravated by vast numbers of illegal immigrants descending on South Africa from Zimbabwe and other African states. The resulting uncurbed overcrowding in informal enclaves is aggravating poverty and countless other social problems. Violent crime, one of South Africa's worst social problems, is exacerbated further by increasing unemployment and a slow-growing economy.

The future as a mirror of the present, or the place of hope?

Forty years ago there was no dearth of advice from well-meaning fist world advisors, such as Koll and Hanna and Hanna, about South African affairs. However, since past ideals for developing places for urbanising agro-pastoralists to which they can relate, have not come to fruition. On the contrary, urban growth is becoming increasingly disorderly. Slum conditions in informal settlements and overcrowded inner-city enclaves are becoming increasingly hazardous, while affluent whites and blacks are becoming paranoid refugees in their high security suburban homes surrounded by high walls.

What urgent steps should now be taken to meet the physical, social and cultural needs of urban dwellers? What guidelines will be appropriate for urban restructuring that would to some

extent curb the present chaotic urban expansion, and, most importantly, give all South Africans a sense of belonging in life worlds that they identify with by choice?[11]

None of us can return to the life worlds of the past, but the insight should be heeded that in order to provide satisfactory domiciles for the urban dwellers of the third millennium, designers should acknowledge the hunter, gatherer and farmer concealed in the genetic code of human behaviour. This is an insight borrowed from Grant Hildebrand (1999: 6) who reminds us that "the period in which we have been elsewhere than Africsa is brief; the period in which most of us have been other than hunters and gatherers is briefer still; the period that we have been primarily urban dwellers is the blink of an eye. The period that most South Africans have been primarily urban dwellers is less than a century".

It therefore makes sense to look back at both the rural and urban legacy of all groups in South Africa and to make the conservation their environmental and architectural heritage a priority. Although government funding for preservation and restoration is limited, university departments of Architecture may teach courses relating to the history of rural settlements. Studying vernacular styles will not only make students aware of indigenous solutions to architectural problems, but may influence a more authentic architectural paradigm for modern urban architecture.[12] It may well be true that "The humbler buildings, by reason of their adherence to type and numerical superiority, are more important markers of basic cultural processes than are uniquely designed structures" (Kniffen 1865: 553). Also Amos Rapoport (1980: 302) concludes that modern built environments fulfill functions regarding the communication of culture less effectively than vernacular environments. Regarding the uniquely designed structures it has been established that various groups, whites, Coloureds, Indians, and urban blacks identify strongly with historical buildings that relate to their culture or have been appropriated during recent political events.[13] If, for the sake of the much vaunted African Renaissance, official and academic preference should be given to a specific associational life world above all the others, this would surely be discriminatory and negatory of South Africa's diverse cultural traditions.

The lessons to be learnt from the past should be extended to social issues. In addition to the study of historical evidence of physical planning with a social purpose, anthropologists should be included in all planning teams to offer advice about the structure of community and family bonds that have shaped the layouts of pastoral settlements, in order to achieve a symbolic echo of tradition for the design of urban neighbourhoods. In doing so, planners and architects could possibly revive a sense of identity and permanency in the interrelationships of groups of people who choose to belong together and find solutions to the functional requirements of individual dwellings and social gathering places. This new approach to planning could serve as a remedy for the fragmentation caused by apartheid planning. Even in informal settlements the revival of layouts reminiscent of traditional settlements could be implemented by adapting modern building technology and materials, since it is unlikely that in this day and age anyone would be willing to live in a thatched mud hut. As an "African architect", as Peter Riche designates himself (see his website), succeeded in designing for the needs of black residents, for example the layout of a sub-economic suburb outside Johannesburg, the River Park housing project, embarked on in 1994. The 150 housing units that were built are constructed of modern materials and arranged in a way that enhances communal life (figure 7).
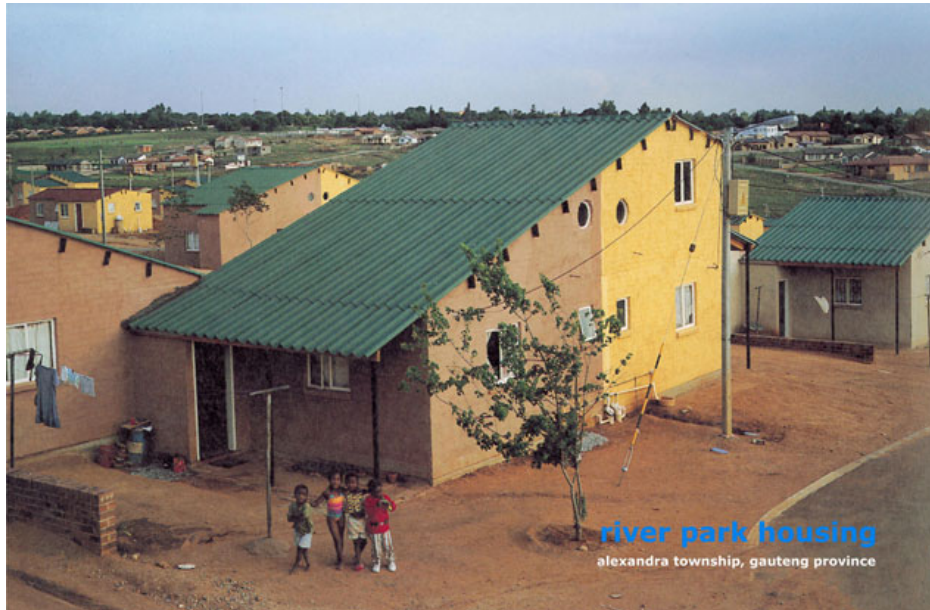
Figure 8
Peter Riche, sub-economic suburb outside Johannesburg
(source: http://www.peterrichearchitects.co.za/projects/riverpark).

In a more theoretical way, Jodi Davids (2007) submitted a master's degree at the University of KwaZulu Natal that echoes the ideas reflected in the present article. Davids states the purpose of his research as follows:

> This study focuses on the role of identity in architecture and examines the transformation and development of South African architectural expression of South African architectural expression and reflexion as seen through the window of identity. The study seeks to question how the built environment can begin to respond to and reflect the concerns and aspirations of its inhabitants and also highlights the existence of the mutually constitutive link between identity, space and the built form.[14]

This case study looks in particular at the area of Wentworth, situated south of Durban, and how architecture can "be used to create public space which contributes to the formation of a collective and heterogeneous community identity, an identity which celebrates the diversity of its inhabitants while giving dignity and a sense of place to the environment".[15] This is a laudable ideal which presumably remained on paper because it is difficult to accept the thesis that a diverse society can be homogenised or integrated by means of identification with a public space created by architecture. The ideal here seems to be what Robert Adam (2013: 1) calls :the two poles of globalisation "homogenisation and localisation".

From a different point of view Jonathan Noble (2011) focusses on projects that were won in architectural competitions, since such competitions are conceived within ideological debates which allows for an examination of interrelationships between architecture, politics and culture. These projects are the Mpumalanga Legislature, Nelspruit, the Northern Cape Legislature, Kimberley, the Constitutional Court of South Africa at Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication, Kliptown, and Freedom park, Pretoria. The author examens "questions of postcolonial identity" (2011: 3) with reference to Franz Fanon's ideas about "skin" and "mask", the former a given reality, the latter a projection of the self, suggesting a tension or duality of being. In architectural theory the skin is taken to represent modernism, while the mask "emerges as a return to repressed elements, those not deemed to be functional, that

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may lead to a dubversion of dominant codes" (2011: 7). In the projects dealt with, designed more or less exclusively by white architects, they turned away from colonial aesthetics to create works of contemporary public architecture that "'concretes' imaginative dialogues with African landscapes, craft and indigenous traditions" (back cover).

These attempts as "localisation" of post-apartheid government projects are meaningful in that they promote a meaningful African identity. These "imaginings [have], in their various ways , ... each made meaningful contributions to an emerging African imaginary in South Africa" (2011: 264). This achievement is laudable, but the projects are isolated in their areas, without historical echoes of community - the ideal advanced in this article.

Conclusion

The physical deterioration of existing informal communities with a diversity of inhabitants that disgrace the entrances to many South African urban areas should, wherever possible, be reversed. The revival of suburban places or the layout of new areas for specific groups the historical roots of the people should be taken into consideration in the planning of social meeting and event places. Thus choice of identity should be advanced as an ideal to encourage meaningful citizen participation, but its implementation in the form of neo-vernacular pastiche should never be enforced by well-meaning planners. In cases where the upgrading of informal settlements is viable they could possibly be integrated into the fabric of established urban areas. This is in line with the international principle that cities be densified and would, furthermore, facilitate rural migrants' social acculturation in a city by affording them a permanent urban foothold.

This enquiry cannot be concluded with quantifiable specifications for urban transformation in South Africa. However, as Zaheer and Zarrin Allam (2013: 3), so succinctly states with reference to developing nations – such as South Africa:

> There is a need for a new urbanism, one that should not aim for the construction of standardized configurations, but instead aim to create a harmony between history and structure, between our past and our present. We need to provide a cohesive architecture that is responsive to human needs and sensibilities. We must emphasize the importance of proper planning more than ever, since the continuation of our present haphazard construction trends will deprive our descendants of a heritage rich in cultural identity and design.

The present urban development in South Africa unfortunately offers little hope for a future that will not amplify the current confusion. Furthermore, the influence globalisation on the built environment does not favour design that takes into consideration issues concerning cultural identity, race, gender, ethnicity or nationality. In this regard, Song (2010: 6) refers to W. Kymlicka (1995: 103) who responds to views that cultures have become cosmopolitan, that "multicultural theorists agree that cultures are overlapping and interactive, but still maintain that individuals belong to distinct societal cultures and wish to preserve their cultures". This insight is reiterated by Adam (2013: 4): "Localisation is closely associated with the politics of identity. Identity is community and place related and the individuality of community and place are undermined by global homogenisation."

It is affirmed that in the case of a developing South Africa increased qualitative understanding of the distinct societal cultures of the past and the best options available at present may yet lead to ways of urban and architectural design that will avoid the cosmopolitan hybridisation of the country's diverse cultural and social heritage. This is possible, not by creating ethnic enclaves in urban wastelands, but by creating cultural landscapes in which architecture "connects people

to the land on which it is built" (Decker *et al.* 2006: 1) – and, one may add, to their heritage. Optimally, places should connect people, as Herbert Gans (1961: 134) points out: "[T]he more intensive forms of social interaction, such a friendship, require homogeneity of background, or of interests, or of values." Therefore, it is proposed that the current nationwide cultural chaos and loss of identity and anonymity of South Africa's peoples may be countered by the restructuring of built environments in order to harmonise the diachronic and synchronic life worlds of various groups, affording them a choice of habitat and association – a freedom not previously granted by institutionalised segregation.[16]

Notes

1   Noble (2011: 3) quotes the French philosopher Etienne Balibar who states that '[i]n reality there are not identities, only identifications. Or, if one prefers, identities are only the ideal goal of processes of identification... . In his analysis of the design of recent public buildings he thus focusses on "the more fluid cycles of identification" (2011:11) with reference to given contexts. However, this is a different approach from the idea promoted in the present article that does not focus on individual government buildings and their symbolic meaning but on the creation of urban enclaves and communal life worlds.

2   See Van Vuuren (1985) on the planning of KwaNdebele settlements. For more general descriptions of indigenous rural settlements see Denyer (1987), Kuper (1980) and Frescura (1981).

3   Maré *et al* (2008: 301-18) for a discussion of the different attitudes of the Dutch colonisers and the indigenous people at the Cape concerning the demarcation and possession of land.

4   The term "invented tradition" was coined by Eric Hobsbawm (2000).

5   See Maré (2012) for a discussion about the way in which special buildings in South Africa were utilised to symbolise nation-building.

6   See Donaldson and Van der Merwe (2000: 45).

7   See Donaldson and Van der Merwe (2000: 49).

8   Sarah Song (2012: 1) defines multiculturalism as follows: "Multiculturalism is a body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way ro respond to cultural and religious diversity."

9   According to a statement made in March 2013 by the previous minister of housing, Tokyo Sexwale, there is an "uncontrollable increase in informal settlements" http://www. citypress.co.za/news/uncontrollable-inclrease-in-informal-settlements- Sexwale, retrieved on 2013/10/10).

10   After having written the present text I came across and article by Jale Erzen, a lecturer at Izmir University, Turkey, who states: "In Turkey [it] is obvious in the rapidly built social housing complexes that replace the older peripheral settlements where migrants used to create an environment based on kinship and solidarity, with qualities reminding one of their original villages. Although these old settlements lacked many facilities they held these people together and gave them a sense of belonging and autonomy." Thus, one may conclude that urbanisation in rapidly developing countries in which masses of rural people move to cities, such as Turkey and South Africa, similar problems of loss of identity in alien urban settlements.

11   See Maré (1995). In the set assignment students had to identify historical buildings or places that they identify with. Most students articulated their choices clearly according to their ethnic backgrounds, while some also critiqued the places of other ethnic groups that they did not approve of.

12   A case in point is the Union Buildings in Pretoria, a former symbol of white South African unity, which has, since 1994, been associated with the inauguration of Black presidents.

13   For experiments with the application of African vernacular forms and decoration in contemporary South African architecture, see contemporary South African architecture, see Van Schaik (1983) and Riche (1993).

14   Quoted from http://researchspace.ukan. ac.za/xmlui/handle/10413/2323, retrieved on 2013/09/05.

15   *Ibid.*

16   This article is an extended version of the paper read at the international conference, Politics in the History of Architecture as Cause and Consequence, held at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul, 24-27 April 2013.

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Estelle Alma Maré holds the position of extraordinary professor in the Department of Architecture, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, and is the present editor of the *SAJAH*.