



# chapter 4

theory

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## 4.1 Introduction to Theory

*“A city, however perfect in its initial shape, is never complete, never at rest... more cities come about without benefit of designers or once designed, set about instantly to adapt themselves to the rituals of the everyday.”*

*Spiro Kostof (1991)*

The rapid organic urbanisation of informal settlements and edge cities has been seen as a negative phenomenon by many authorities, suburb dwellers and even residents of informal settlements themselves. The main problem is not that of rapid urbanisation but the clashes that occur between structured planning policies, that usually has an end goal in mind, and the unstructured urban growth, which uses resources more efficiently on an immediate time scale.

Design strategies could be adapted to move away from the idea of project as an isolated finished design to one of insertion, that better responds and adapts to the complexities of the everyday.

Steyn (2008) states that the imperative now is for architects, activists, planners and politicians to accept the informality that David Dewar is so passionate about, and to work with communities. He argues that *“if properly handled it could form the basis for prosperity and provide pleasant public spaces”* (Steyn, 2008)



Figure 4.1 African fractal geometry (Eglash, 1999)

## 4.2 Ritual of the Everyday

*“... a belief in the genius of man; a belief in the creative ability of man and his ability to manage and mould his own environment. Not only does man have this ability, but it is essential that it be given rain. By definition, the process of human development involves self actualisation – the utilisation of an individual’s own energies and talents to improve his condition. Good environment necessarily stimulates self actualisation. While maintaining overall environmental quality, it provides the framework within which the individual does those things he is best able to do. It enables and frees – it does not restrict.”* Dewar (1977).

Parvin (2013) believes that designers have the ability to notice lost opportunities and to synthesize how a countless of divergent elements could lend themselves to creating platforms for users to activate space.

*“In the field of architecture, public buildings have the ability to work both with the built fabric and the community as they are, communicating what they have the potential to become. The architect is also an interpreter of values and aspirations in a culture, and because of the life span of the built environment, thereby contributes in a significant way to a society’s present and future self-perception.”* Holden (1995)

According to von Kotze, 2010 a livelihood approach deals with people as subjects and considers them as “active agents who draw on particular locally available resources in order to create the means for life and living”. A livelihood approach recognizes that people, however poor, have developed and mobilise coping mechanisms, capabilities, knowledge and skills. People draw on local knowledge and locally available resources in order to make a living and deal with daily obstacles and uncertainties (von Kotze, 2010).

An architecture of the everyday is shaped by careful consideration of ordinary activities that form part of domestic rituals (Harris & Berke, 1997)

## 4.3 Living Heritage

In 2004 the Gauteng Department of Housing intends to eradicate all informal settlements by building 200 000 medium density, low-cost houses (Gauteng Department of Housing, 2004). This however was not achieved and completely ignored the heritage component of townships which has lately received a lot of tourism interest. The idea of clean slate housing for the poor is very noble but neglects to incorporate existing social networks, ingenuity of materials used and existing skills within the communities of informal settlements.

Marinelli (2015) explains that street markets and hawking played an organically constitutive part of Hong Kong's history, culture, and socio-economic development. Since the inception of the colony trading on riverbanks and around harbours, street markets always played an integral role in shaping the landscape for population growth and urban development of Hong Kong. He argues that they not only serve as localized and more cost effective alternatives to supermarkets for fresh produce, but that they also provide their local customers with the chance to interact directly with the producers, distributors, and ultimately, with one another. He describes markets as spaces of social inclusion, laboratories for collective experiences of public space and 'living heritage', and in addition to that, they

have progressively become the testing grounds for bottom-up practices of democratization thanks to the community's battle to preserve this 'living heritage' against the profit-driven logic of domicile and memoricide (Porteous, Smith, 2001).

## 4.4 Education

The 2011 census recorded that 3.2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 were not in employment, education or training. Of these, 523 000 had only achieved a primary school education or lower, and nearly 1.5 million had less than a Grade 10 education (DHET, 2014).

The White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (DHET, 2014) calls for a new type of institution to be built that could offer a diverse range of possibilities to people for whom TVET colleges and universities are not desirable or possible.

As part of the technical occupational stream of schooling, 26 new subjects will be introduced, that includes spray-painting, panel-beating, hairdressing, upholstery, husbandry. There are immense possibilities of utilising

existing skilled residents in informal settlements. The patterns of Alexander et al. (1997) could be used to identify and utilise existing networks within communities.

Alexander et al (1997) states that a university should be a collection of small buildings that are situated along a path. Each of these building containing one or two educational projects. The horizontal circulation between these projects should be in the public domain by opening directly to a pedestrian path. Like a marketplace, the paths should form one major pedestrian system (Alexander et al., 1997)

A network of learning in the community should rely on decentralised learning. Alexander et al (1997) argues that the fundamental learning situation is when a person learns by helping someone who knows what they are doing. If the educational system becomes radically decentralized it will become congruent with the urban structure itself. Alexander et al (1997) envisages that people of all walks of life could offer a class in the things they know and love and that professionals and workgroups would offer apprenticeships.

Ferrinho (1980) states that a school should not be divorced from the surrounding world of living reality because it does not solely exist to perform academic tasks, but also to meet the felt needs of a community.

Nafukho et al. (2005) states that it is possible that through mutual respect and trust, traditional knowledge experts can work with those from other knowledge systems to generate more effective solutions for contemporary problems in Africa and the world.

## 4.5 Conceptual

The concept is to address the void left by pendulum migration through skills development and platform provision. The abundance of informal shops and trades provide an opportunity to investigate potential network, collaborations, skills training and African market streets. Low-carbon input materials, that are locally sourced, and craftsmanship utilizing the local community are crucial in creating resilient communities. Skills development and pride in local materials and methods ensure the sustainability of future development.

Alistair Parvin (2013) suggests that we should design for disassembly by not removing design from the cycle of alteration. He proposes that we construct using parts that are able to change the function of the design over time, thus allowing it to be flexible to the changes in culture and society.

*“We want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought often to be thinking, and the thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen, in the best sense. As it is, we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising, his brother; and the mass of society is made up of morbid thinkers and miserable workers. Now it is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity.” - John Ruskin*