

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 TOPIC INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates the socio-spatial inhabitation of the domestic architecture of a collective of South African architects – the ‘Silent Subversives’ - during the heyday of apartheid (1950s to 1960s).

1.2 PROBLEM SITUATION

The convention of passing history in biographies of single figures, or dispensing theory in the gnomic vocabulary of academe, springs from the conception of the history of art and literature as a tale of individual genius, independent of social context (Watson 1995: x).

In 1993, Clive Chipkin undertook most of the writing surrounding this cohort. Chipkin (1993:294) singles out individuals of his generation to support the aphorism of what he then labelled ‘Johannesburg Vernacular’. Based on a “post-war confluence of ideas”, Chipkin (2008:104) then fifteen years later redefines the domestic work of our generation as a ‘Modern Highveld Vernacular’. He however in both instances highlights the influences that shaped the “new domestic vernacular”, stylistically rather than socially.

In compiling sources of a domestic prototype named ‘Patio Houses’, Chipkin (1993:294-295,303) refers to the 1965 supplement of the *South African Architectural Record* (SAAR) entitled ‘Domestic Architecture. For the purposes of reacting against aestheticized “eye catchers, useless novelties and gimmicks” towards “a better understanding” of post-world war “Domestic Architecture and its implications”, the SAAR complement provides influences from 1652 to 1965 (Anon 1965:ii). Yet one can argue that Chipkin neglects the social aim of this supplement, which is therefore worth revisiting.

Architecture, therefore, reflects the society in which it exists, for it is this society which changes its ideals; social, religious and moral (Bergs 1965:8).

Later, Fisher (1998:123-147) selects individuals of our collective with “Afrikaans origins” to reinforce an historical continuum for his construct of a ‘Pretoria Regionism’. Fisher’s (1998:123) essay starts with a reference to Chipkin (1993:278) describing the relationship between Johannesburg and Pretoria and the post-war influence of the latter cities’ “regional architectural styles”. However, many of the architects Chipkin mentions as representative of the Pretoria School are a generation older than our ‘Silent Subversives’. For instance, Chipkin singles out both the German Helmut Stauch as the most “significant” of “household names”, and Norman Eaton as more “remote” and “at a distance”. Yet in contrast with Fisher, Chipkin (1993:278-279) hints at a disjuncture in the period of “Grand Apartheid” of these early Pretoria graduates from the older generation, when he writes:

In the decade after the war, the new generation of architects, now freed from the compulsions and fuddy-duddiness of Gerhard Moerdijk and his contemporaries, turned, not to the dominant Corbusierism of the Wits School or its subsequent angst-ridden debates, but to a new source of nation-building, partly state-promoted modernity – the architecture of post-war Brazil.

Without suggesting any possible incoherence affected by the social context of either World War Two or 'Apartheid', Fisher (1998:124) historically positions our generation (represented by Jooste) within a stylistic continuum from Moerdijk, to Eaton and others as an 'Afrikaner origin' for the emergence of a Transvaal 'Third Vernacular'. Then irrespective of specific social analysis, the Pretoria Regionalist "Style" is characterised by a list of "aspects" which the older Norman Eaton's work is said to represent.

Eaton is "an important reference point" for both Pretoria and Johannesburg Silent Subversives (Chipkin 1993:287). However, a closer examination exposes discrepancies. For example, one observes that Eaton's most influential houses for our generation - the waterproofed timber flat-roofed Greenwood and Anderssen houses with attenuated Wrightian plan-forms and large sliding doors without verandas – paradoxically do not satisfy Fisher's checklist. Yet, due to Eaton's role as educator and mentor for some of our Silent Subversives, Fisher implies the label of 'Pretoria Regionalists' for them as well, which requires rethinking.

In light of the aforementioned SAAR supplement, which expands on the urgency of satellite cities and housing (Mallows 1965:20-21, Coltman 1965:22-24, Schlapobersky 1965:25-29) so typical of the post-war condition, Fisher's (1998:139) legitimisation of "the very lack of urbanity" of Pretoria Regionalists invites re-examination. In addition, the final chapters of Fisher's essay begin to question the very notion of a 'Regional' tradition that opens doors for research. Fisher's (1998:140) hypothesises that "Afrikaner origins seem to have been pivotal in the emergence of a Pretoria Regionalism", he contests himself when he writes:

The aspect of Afrikaner heritage has been surveyed in this essay, yet finally it is impossible to clearly define what 'Afrikaans' might be, if it is not understood as being merely 'of Africa', or even 'African'. It is not necessarily a long association with African soil since we have seen that newly immigrated people have developed strong African bonds. It is not even an issue of language. Political and cultural ideologies are as diverse as the personalities cited. The common bond does not seem to be a sense of African landscape and of a dwelling on African soil, of the constraints of available materials, of the nature of the climate and an awareness of the devices of climatic response.

By highlighting some of our 'singled-out' agents with an affinity to the Cape traditions, Barker (2013:50-58) questions Fisher's taxonomy in favour of what he terms a 'Fourth Cape Vernacular'. Any stylistic labelling of our generation requires critical re-evaluation with regards the situated socio-political circumstances of the 1950s and 1960s. More importantly, the "particular cultural expression of the community" and the post-war social context poses questions and thereby invites a re-evaluation of any so-called 'emergence'.

It was Marschall (1998: 20-34), who observed how the reassessment of Postmodernism at the end of the sixties “gained new currency” after the first democratic elections in South Africa for a conscious quest for an Africanised ‘regionalist architecture’. By the end of the 1980s, regionalism had “again become associated with parochialism, sectarianism, intolerant conservatism, and oppression” (Marschall 1998:22). Later Marschall (2001:142144) re-assesses Eaton’s ‘Africanising’ as being just as multivalent as Brazilian and Mediterranean. More importantly, she recognizes a transference in the work of our generation as separate from Eaton.

In the 1950s and 1960s, several architects developed a strong interest in incorporating contemporary African or Afrophile art into their architecture. This constituted an important shift from Eaton’s pan-African atemporal focus on tradition towards the recognition of a changing contemporary urban culture (Marschall 2001:139).

Therefore, any ‘gnomic vocabulary’ that labels our generation within a stylistic agenda (i.e. post modernism or critical regionalism) without considering the social repercussions of a world war and apartheid that took place over decades, is problematic. One could however argue that due to a post-war condition prior to any conscious ‘critical regionalism’, it was both local (regional) and international (global) socio-political influences, which informed the domestic architecture of our generation in the 1950s and 1960s.

A number of architects in other regions – Gawie Fagan in the Cape and Barrie Bermann in Natal, for example – developed regionalist idioms of their own...Fagan’s private residence in Cape Town and Biermann’s in Durban are strongly inspired by each region’s vernacular but are, at the same time, decidedly modern and incorporate elements eclectically drawn from other sources...On a political level this period coincided with the introduction and consolidation of apartheid and South Africa’s increasing international isolation, resulting in an attitude of defiance... (Marschall 1998:21).

The Netherlands Architecture Institute’s (NAi) catalogue accompanying the *South African Seasons* in Rotterdam (1998) entitled *blank_architecture, apartheid and after*, was an attempt at connecting architecture and urban planning with politics and culture (Judin 1998:5). From the NAI research, the impact of apartheid in the 1950s and 1960s is evidential in the social housing programmes, but neglected the effect of politics on the post-war domestic architecture. Without acknowledging any disjuncture, the contributors tended to lump post war architectural styles in the same light as that of the pre-war Modern Movement. The reason probably being that...

During the half century of apartheid, South Africa was subject to an academic and cultural boycott. In the country itself there were few critics or historians of architecture to examine the complex relationship between architecture and politics...And within the universities, the discussions were predominantly of a technical or professional nature. This situation is to large degree the same today (Fereiss in Judin 1998:5).

As was the case with Jooste, the work of our generation “is still the subject of speculation and myth” (Jooste 2000:48). Besides, the lack of academic interest in the socio-spatial aspects of the period, the generation itself was ‘silent’ (Pienaar 2017:42). Jooste and his associates exemplify a generation who was less concerned about having work published and thereby largely unknown (Jooste 2000:49). In 1993, the Pretoria School of Architecture’s Golden Jubilee Exhibition exhibited some examples of work of the early post-war graduates, such as Carl Gernecke, Felix Viljoen, Anton du Toit, Willem Steyn, George Wilsenach and Juan Malherbe, for the first time. Unfortunately their buildings “created in an intense intellectual environment, are today unknown and largely forgotten” (Jooste 2000:48-49). Albeit silent, one can argue that it was in the 1950s that our focus generation sowed the seeds for the sixties.

Within the decade 1950 to 1960, the millennial review entitled *Architecture 2000* (Prinsloo 2000), mentions the “growing ideology and resultant culture” of apartheid and the “responses for support both functionally and symbolically”. To exemplify this, the examination dedicates only one paragraph to “housing delivery” in newly established townships of the time, in support of the governing National Party policy. The bulk of the chapter is concerned with “the counter position of architects”, which the writer suggests were “architects following their own aesthetically driven principles and forms”. Again, Eaton is the “single figure” for his “concern with an indigenous African regionalism”. The review stylistically weighs up South African architects (younger and older than our generation), against Scandinavian, Brazilian and American influences that counter the pre-war ‘International Style’, neglecting to observe any local subversive-ness to the apartheid status quo (Prinsloo 2000:87-91).

Nevertheless, the “major paradigm shifts in the arts, music, architecture and urbanism” is attributed and dominated by the students of the 1960s and particularly the global student uprisings in 1968. Ivor Prinsloo was one such student and therefore when he wrote ‘Sixties Revisited’ (Prinsloo 1993:31-42), the rowdy reforms of his “class of 1960” overshadow any ground-breaking societal reforms from a silent generation from whence they drew their ideas,. Hall (2016: xii-xiv) reinforces the problematic:

During the past decade alone, dozens of books have appeared that attempt to capture the essence of an era, make sense of broader political, economic and cultural forces, or explore turning points in world history ... while writers have produced evocative accounts of various aspects of 1956, the year’s collective drama – and contemporaries’ own sense of living through momentous times – has largely been forgotten. The contrast with 1968, which is widely (and loudly) acclaimed as an international ‘year of revolt’, is striking. This historical absent-mindedness actually reflects a wider tendency to view the 1950s as rather drab ... By the 1950s, however, large parts of the world were on the cusp of dramatic change, as simmering social, economic and political tensions and deepening frustration with the post-war order made for a potent mix. Ten years after the victory over Nazi Germany, the ideals for which the Allied powers had supposedly fought the Second World War were, for many, ringing increasingly hollow ... white supremacists in both the United States and South Africa to maintain systems of racial control, made a mockery of such lofty goals. Among the subjugated, the marginalised and the oppressed, a decade’s worth of frustrated hopes and disappointments were ready to erupt.

Notwithstanding, architectural theoreticians such as Hays (2000: x) in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, rather view the “beginning of contemporary architecture theory” in 1968. Therefore, the historian Mallgrave (2005:xvi) selects the end of his survey of *Modern Architectural Theory* in 1968, which he denies as indicating “some greater paradigm shift” whereby theory changed, but rather as a “context radically shifted”. Mallgrave (2005:404) exemplifies such shifted contexts as World War I, the Great Depression and then ignoring World War II jumps to the year 1968 as ushering “in a new era of thought”. These studies fail to recognize the 1950s as essentially the period termed ‘Contemporary’ and which Jackson (1994:9) points out “long overdue for recognition and reappraisal”, which therefore requires “treating the period seriously”. Without denying the impact of 1968, one observes a gap worth studying. Jackson (1994:9) elaborates:

In the field of domestic architecture..largely ... the first decade after the war ... it was during this period that the main trends were established which would dominate design during the 1950s and early 1960s. The cut off point ... is 1962 ... this date marked a turning point in the direction of modern design, after which the spirit of youthful innocence and exuberance which had characterised the early post-war period was, to a certain extent, lost. Popular culture, consumerism and the teenage revolution of the late 1950s and early 1960s..well covered elsewhere..have, in any case, tended to receive attention at the expense of other equally important and interesting aspects of the period in recent years ... This is not just the story of big-name architects of the period [but] many less well-known figures and aims to illustrate the general application of the ‘Contemporary’ ... within society as a whole..a stimulus for further investigation.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main problem is:

Research has misrepresented and/or neglected a collective of South African architects and writings on their domestic architecture during the 1950s and 1960s due to the following sub-problems:

1. When describing the domestic work of some of the agents, historians have not considered the socio-political situations of the 1950s to 1960s adequately. The historical imperatives have largely ignored a studied impact of political ideologies influencing the habitus or dispositions of the agents.
2. Spurred on by postmodern critiques and an attempt to construct a unique national style for a post-apartheid South Africa, architectural literature tends to polarizes the ‘regional’ in opposition to ‘international’ independent of the parallel architectural lessons stylistically situated in previous times and places elsewhere. Scholars therefore read the early post-war generation’s architecture through this lens.
3. Without due consideration of socio-political disjunctions, architectural writers construct a parochial historical and stylistic emergence for the generation in question. This academic approach results in singling out dominant figures (mostly of other generations) to weigh up the

work of a collective, irrespective of changed circumstances. An inadequate study to support our cohort specifically, results in a discrepancy of stylistic labelling.

4. The dominance of stylistic form over the effect of post-war and apartheid social aspirations and behaviour (i.e. freedom) on the dispositions and organisation of the suburban dwellings of our generation is evident. The limited writing surrounding the agents fails to address the reciprocity of social dispositions (habitus) to dispositioned structures (habitat).
5. Architectural theories have largely failed to recognize and reappraise the time focus and contribution of the generation in question seriously, due to attention focused on later periods where abundant theoretical resources are available. There is a lack of critical enquiry and theory into the silent reforms of our agents with regards socio-spatial aspects and particularly theoretical contributions relevant to suburban housing.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In light of the above problem situation and problem statement the research questions are:

1. What were the socio-political ideologies that influenced the lifetime dispositions (habitus) of our agents?
2. What were the global stylistic ideologies that informed the architectural situation relative to our generation?
3. What were the local stylistic constructs that formulated an emergence relative to our generation?
4. How did the Silent subversives reconcile their habitus with their habitats beyond stylistic ideologies and constructs?
5. What contributing theory underpins the Silent Subversives approach to dwelling?

The hypotheses are:

1. Following the Second World War and during the heyday of apartheid (1950s to 1960s) a cohort of architects born in the Great Depression –the Silent Subversives – initiated their careers designing suburban dwellings that reflected the socio-political and economic dispositions of their early lifetimes.
2. By virtue of their architectural education and similar generational aspirations, global stylistic debates of ‘internationalism’ and ‘regionalism’, relevant to the period in focus, defined the stylistic situation that were complimentary to our agents. Particularly, the post-war notions of ‘Freedom, democracy and equality’ were characteristic of an international contemporary condition to which our agents aspired.
3. Both the global post-war condition and the added circumstances of apartheid immediately thereafter, brought about a shift in the approach of our generation from their educators and mentors. Therefore, any attempt at a regional, linguistic or parochial labelling for the construct of an historical stylistic continuum and emergence for our cohort is questionable.

4. The 1950s and 1960s was a significant period for our agents aspiring to a newfound post-war freedom. The challenge for our agents during the restrictive burden of apartheid was how to find ways of living freely under subjugation – a silent subversive-ness. This they expressed in the socio-spatial dispositions of their dwellings.
5. The condition of everyday social living and reciprocal relationship with the structured spatiality is a necessary theory of inhabitation relevant to suburban housing irrespective of changed times and political transitions. The Silent Subversive lesson is that consciously constructed styles and forms alone are not adequate for a society's identity and appropriation of the built environment.

Therefore, the main research question is:

How did the Silent Subversives go beyond stylistic ideologies to design dwellings of socio-spatial inhabitation during apartheid (1950s to 1960s)?

1.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The delineated thesis statement is:

This dissertation goes beyond stylistic ideologies to investigate the socio-spatial inhabitation of the domestic work of a collective of South African architects, the 'Silent Subversives', during the heyday of apartheid (1950s to 1960s).

The delineations are:

1. The reference to stylistic ideologies is that which relates to Western architectural discourse within the time focus of the dissertation.
2. The study limits the lessons of socio-spatial inhabitation relative to the cultural group or clients, which occupied the dwellings within the time focus of the dissertation.
3. This study is restricted to domestic dwellings and does not include the entire body of work of all the dwellings designed by all the agents within the time focus.
4. In order to facilitate a hypothetical argument, the bias is towards representative architects that does not imply that all architects of the generation in question followed the same approach.
5. The research selects the proponents on subversive associations such as isolation, 'silence' and/or non-conformity to the prevailing political and architectural status quo and its propaganda during the chosen time period. Acknowledgement is made of the possibility of other streams, groups or individuals that exist parallel to our collective, but excluded to reduce the scope of the study and ensure clarity and similarity of example.
6. Although, the Pretoria-Johannesburg region dominates the topic literature, the physical focus of this study includes other relevant suburban situations in South Africa.

7. Except for the relevance of highlighting a subversive-ness opposed to the socio-political status quo, writing in detail about the broad subject of apartheid is ongoing and therefore beyond the temporal and physical focus of this study.
8. This study will be limited to a broad temporal focus of the 1950s to the 1960s often adjusted slightly before or after to support the political dispositions and stylistic situations of the period in question.

The limitations are:

1. By the very nature of the exclusion, isolation and even censorship, direct relevant secondary sources of the Silent Subversives and their work, are limited.
2. Due to the closure of practices, subsequent destruction of documents, fragility of archival material, inaccessibility from local authorities and/or altered conditions of built works, primary sources such as archival material (i.e. representative drawings, surveyed altered built works, personal collections) may be limited.
3. Reliance will need to be made on existing interviews with proponents, but direct primary sources may be restricted due to deaths, dementia or ethical restrictions.

1.6. RESEARCH RATIONALE

The importance of the study is:

1. The study sheds a different light on South African socio-political ideologies in relation to international events relative to the lifetimes of an under researched generational cohort.
2. The research provides a dialectical approach to global architectural debates of 'internationalism' and 'regionalism' for another stylistic reading as an informant for a lesser-known post-war architectural tradition.
3. The study undertakes an alternative critical approach to the largely unchallenged South African regional debates and their cultural associations as related to the early post-world war two and apartheid period.
4. The undertaking expands on limited archival material of a young post-war generation during the heyday of apartheid for the benefit of understanding the socio-spatial aspects of their domestic architecture.
5. As derived from the lessons of the Silent Subversives domestic work, the thesis proposes a theory to transcend political and stylistic ideologies as another contribution to the ongoing design debates regarding suburban housing.

The purpose of the study is:

1. To explore the socio-political period and milieu relative to a generational cohort.
2. To reconsider a broader stylistic narrative in order to align stylistic informants relative to the time focus in question.

3. To reframe regionalist arguments for expanding South African historical architectural debates and thereby claiming an architectural voice specific to a neglected tradition.
4. To discover something new regarding the socio-spatial aspects of domestic work of a collective in a specific time period.
5. To formulate a theory in a broader narrative of Stylistic/Ideological versus Experiential/Inhabited architecture that has resonance with today and contributes to future research on suburban housing.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Architecture is humanities based (Lucas 2016:7). Therefore, this research will be a qualitative emic account produced within the culture of architecture. In order to fulfil the purpose of the study and achieve an outcome for the delineated thesis statement (Hofstee 2015:110), this research will employ mixed methods and methodologies for the thesis investigation.

To avoid multiple focuses, we adopt a theoretically led overarching approach to inform the discussion. Rather than studying individuals, the thesis statement requires an investigation of a collective. Since we know the sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) for his interest in the common aspects of a group of creators, this study considers referencing his theories as appropriate for a generation of which he was a contemporary. Bourdieu (2005:44) pointed out that the tendency of socio-psychologists to focus behavioural studies on individuals that brings about divisions between “noble practices” and “common practices”. The reasoning is that he “wanted to destroy the dichotomy which is the basis of a kind of aesthetic racism”, that Bourdieu suggests is “very common amongst cultivated persons”. Moreover, Bourdieu (1993:2) provides us with a useful theoretical understanding of socio-spatial inhabitation (*habitus*) closely suited to the thesis undertaking.

The majority of architects mentioned in this thesis are deceased or are not in a condition for us to interview. Therefore, the data is restricted to secondary sources. However, these sources do include adequate interviews already conducted by Professor Alta Steenkamp in 2001 in lieu of her doctoral studies covering the same generation. Furthermore, Alan Lipman’s extensive book collection donated to the Department of Architecture repository provides us with funnelled literature available for scholars of our generation within the time focus of this study. The particular sources on housing will reinforce our theories on high-density inhabitation. In addition, the availability of the entire book collection of the Silent Subversive Jack van Rensburg¹ overlaps with those of Lipman confirming the reliability of the sources. The possession of van Rensburg’s personal scripts (c. 1960s) on the history and application of domestic architecture for radio broadcasting are primary. These typewritten texts will contribute in the form of quotes as a ‘voice’. The access to the University of Pretoria’s archival repository and author’s private

¹ The author inherited Jack van Rensburg’s archival material as confirmed in an interview with Steenkamp (2001).

archival collection of original sketches, working drawings and photographs supplement the secondary sources.

To avoid cross-referencing and to situate the data, the review of selected literature will occur after the introduction to each chapter. Thereafter, the study will engage with the sources through a desktop analysis for an iterative discursive approach. The iterations refine the structure of the chapters from thesis data collection, to thesis previewing, then thesis smoothing and finally to thesis reviewing. The method of study arranges the structure of the thesis from the general, to the unique, for the specific.

The first step in the research process is to sort data according to a traditional mode of historical periods coinciding with the childhood, teenage, student and career dispositions of a collective. To avoid an objectified categorization of decades, sub-headings will be indicative implying overlaps (For instance 1920s to 1930s). A historical-comparative text based methodology, will enable us to establish the broad local and global socio-political lens for each of these periods and understanding of the dispositions or habitus of a collective within the focus of our chosen theory.

Then, we need to direct the dispositioned socio-political context within the narrower field of architectural discourse as a frame of reference for reading the domestic architecture of our collective. From the premise that architectural theory generically revolved around style debates (Mallgrave 2005: xvi), the study will organise the stylistic situations one assumes to have been influential on our collective architectural position according to open-ended decades. Since these debates primarily are dichotomies, a dialectical methodology will assist in framing the research. Our second hypothesis above postulates that both 'internationalism' (hypothesis) and 'regionalism' (antithesis) are relevant to the stylistic situation aspirations of our collective therefore lessens a biased argument (Lucas 2016:41). The overriding theoretical lead eases this possible methodological weakness. Four synthesised stylistic situations with contrasting literature from each period will then contribute to what Bourdieu calls a "set of acquired characteristics" which are "changed by history" (Bourdieu 2005:45).

Thirdly, we will diminish the global context to the unique localised condition. The study will therefore arrange content according to junctures that correspond to the previously structured stylistic situations and their decades. Then, we need to identify and apply a critical discourse analysis to enable a re-evaluation of academic content that tests stylistic labels assigned to our architect collective. The intended methodological outcome is to arrive at an alternative reading to enable an expansion of existing text within the lens of our adopted theory.

Thereafter, case studies will decrease the research to specifics. The study will need to focus the scope on commonalities rather than diversities. As a methodology, the study will then adopt Bourdieu's theory to address the reciprocation of social dispositions (Fields of Power or habitus) to dispositioned structure (Fields of structure or habitat) pertinent to our architect's domestic architecture, albeit varied.

Lastly, we will collate all the sub-conclusions of the various iterations for the purposes of arriving at a research contribution. By probing the social and cultural role of the architecture of our collective, the

aim is for a hermeneutic methodology to allow a socio-spatial architectural construal to come about. The theory will test the research premise of what it means to house and dwell.

1.6 ASSUMED TERMS

Agent:

Through the concept of habitus, Bourdieu (1993:2) provides an analytical model which reintroduces a notion of the agent – which structuralism had excluded from social analysis – without falling into the idealism of Romanticist conceptions of the artist as creator (or subject) which Bourdieu mentions, still informs much literary and art criticism. Bourdieu (2005:44) is quite clear in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (*La Distinctions*, 1979) on the acknowledgement of “a group of persons occupying a similar or neighbouring position in social space” as “a kind of affinity of style”. (Bourdieu 2005:44).

When referring to “our agents”, the study implies someone regarded as a ‘Silent Subversive’. The text may replace the term ‘our agent’ with ‘our generation’.

Silent Subversives:

An article in the *Time* magazine (November 5, 1951) entitled ‘The Younger Generation’ described our cohort as the ‘Silent Generation’. They followed the GI Generation and preceded the Baby Boomers. This study is interested in the ‘silent generation’ demographic generally born in the mid-1920s to the early-1930s². However, Phillips (1996:12) warns:

Though not necessarily bad things, such popular descriptions of a generation often are at cross purposes with attempts to understand the richness and complexity of cultural history. Either hyperbolic or just banal, they bear little resemblance to the complex moments they purport to describe.

Furthermore, in referring to literary groups of the same generational and time focus of this study, Gardener (2002:28) raises how “harmful and dangerous it is to place a label upon an era”. For instance the notion of the ‘silent sixties’, he mentions, is inaccurate to describe others than the dominant groups and thereby colonizes the past. Therefore, writers have used various labels to be more specific relative to the “complex moments” Phillips mentions. Examples of such variations for our generation are ‘Found Generation’, ‘Silent Existentialists’ and ‘Silent Tangibles’. These labels avoid describing styles and rather represent cultural ‘circles, including those that disseminate aesthetic formulations (Watson 1995: x). In Fisher’s (2000:45) words:

Perhaps style labelling really reflects the lack of sense of having shared cultural expression.

² See Appendix A for the *Dramatis Personae* of the individuals mentioned in the text broadly regarded as ‘Silent Subversives’.

Therefore, in light of the above, suggestions by academics³ and relative to the above definition of 'subversive', this study adopts the nomenclature of 'Silent Subversives' to describe our agents in question.

Subversive:

In the context of this study, 'subversive' will not suggest an "overthrow of a government, legally constituted institution" as defined by the *Collins English Dictionary* but rather, from the same source, the definition of a "person engaged in subversive activities". The *subversive*-ness referred to in this study is not necessarily from a conscious activist position but rather *by association* during a 1950s to 1960s Apartheid regime.

Dispositions:

According to Bourdieu's definition, the *dispositions* represented by the habitus inevitably incorporate the objective social conditions of their inculcation. This accounts for the similarity in the habitus of agents from the same social class and authorizes speaking of class habitus. For instance in his book *Distinctions*, Bourdieu shows statistically how the working-class habitus generates analogous preferences across a broad range of cultural practice but adjusted to specific situations (Bourdieu 1993: 5).

This study assumes the two definitions for the word 'disposition' as adopted from the *Collins English Dictionary*:

- "A person's inherent qualities of mind and character (for example. the book is not recommended to readers of a nervous disposition). Synonyms are: temperament, nature, character, constitution, make-up, grain, humour, temper, mentality".
- "The way in which something is placed or arranged, especially in relation to other things. (for example the plan shows the disposition of rooms). Synonyms are: arrangement, arranging, disposal, ordering, positioning, placement, lining up, setting up, organization, configuration".

Architecture:

Various schools may have different 'cultural theories' and definitions of what architecture might constitute⁴. The theoretical position taken in this study belongs to the hermeneutic school of thought that differentiates between architecture (event) and buildings (physical) (Harries 2000:4). In order to reconcile contemporary and traditional conditions (including non-Western) for the understanding of what is termed 'architecture', the study adopts a hermeneutic translation of worldly *situatedness*. However, the study will avoid both phenomenological obsessions of ontology and what Harries (2000:4) terms, the post-modern *aesthetic approach*. Instead, the study views the essence of architecture as the important receptacle that accommodates event, appropriation and belonging.

³ Professor Roger Fisher (2015) suggested 'The Secreted Generation'. Dr Edna Peres (2016) proposed 'The Subversives' and Professor Alta Steenkamp (2015) mentioned 'The Silents'.

⁴ See Leach, N. 1997, *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in Cultural Theory*, (London: New York), that addresses different perspectives or models of Western architectural cultural theory.

Social place:

Harrison (1996:67) explains: "Whereas space refers to the structural, geometrical qualities of a physical environment, place is the notion that includes the dimensions of lived experience, interaction and the use of the space by its inhabitants". Such spaces therefore become social places. By extension, Dalibor Vesely (2004:216) describes a communicative social space as different to a fixed perspectival space. Vesely reminds that "the nature of a given communication necessarily depends on a particular mode of embodiment; any proper discussion of communicative representations must focus on a concrete example". The investigation of the communicative activities in this dissertation will give hints to what constitutes social place in the residential architecture of the Subversives. The clues to the communicative activities also lie in the naming of the spaces, i.e. patio, *binnehof*, kitchen, dining room, etc.

1.9 CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Three parts frame the thesis:

The **First** part consists of Chapter One.

Chapter One introduces the topic to the reader and provides a background for the problem from which the research questions are extracted. The thesis is then stated and delineated. The introduction rationalizes the objectives, significance and contribution to research. The chapter explains the design of the research, overarching theory and assumes terms as clarity for reading the text.

The **Second** part consisting of Chapters Two and Three and Four contextualises the study.

Chapter Two provides an interpretation of socio-political ideologies that contributed to the early lifetime dispositions (*habitus*) of our agents. Moreover, the chapter considers the heyday of apartheid (1950s to 1960s) as the socio-political lens through which we read the domestic work of our agents in the next chapters.

Chapter Three provides an interpretation of stylistic ideologies revolving around the debates of 'internationalism' and 'regionalism' for the purposes of reading stylistic situations through a global rather than a parochial lens. The investigation of this chapter culminates in the international architectural contemporary post-war condition, which the next chapters use as a parallel gage to weigh up the local context of the domestic work of our agents.

Chapter Four critically re-evaluates the available historical continuum and stylistic labels assigned to the 'emergence' of our generation by writers and historians. The contextual lenses provided by Chapter Two and Three are used in this chapter to re-think the local context and situation pertinent to our generation.

The **Third** part consisting of Chapters Five and Six establishes the theory.

Chapter Five adopts Bourdieu's theories to address the reciprocation of social dispositions (Fields of Power or habitus) to dispositioned structure (Fields of structure or habitat) of our agents. As derived from the second part of the study, via the subjugated post-war and apartheid socio-political circumstances, this chapter then establishes an existential theory of silent-subversive 'freedom' expressed in the domestic work of our agents.

Chapter Six goes beyond stylistic ideologies and architectural form to construe an architectural theory of free inhabitation as derived from the seeds of reforms of our Silent Subversive's dwellings. The chapter proposes a pedagogical theory towards debates concerning suburban housing autonomous from authoritarian restrictions.

The **final** Chapter Seven collates the sub conclusions from all the chapters to conclude with findings from the study and to open up the possibility of future research.