

Towards deliberative democracy through the democratic governance and design of public spaces in the South African capital city, Tshwane

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Abstract

Many political, economic and social transformations have occurred in South Africa since the first democratic elections in 1994. The country has made significant efforts in trying to establish and rebrand its cities as multiracial and multicultural hubs with democratic public spaces. In an ideal city, public space represents and embodies the ideology of deliberate democracy as postulated by Habermas. However, attempts in South Africa to re(design) public spaces also reflect instances of alienation, conflict and anxiety. This article focusses on the governance and design of public space in the capital of South Africa, the City of Tshwane. The analysis highlights the challenges encapsulated in the governance and design of different types of spaces towards enabling opportunities for deliberate democracy in Tshwane. The paper argues that to address these challenges, urban designers and local authority officials need to focus on both the process and product of urban design, through an emphasis on Spatial Democracy; to readdress governance practices, and Democratic Space; to redirect design practices, both of which have a significant impact on the use, misuse and lack of use of public space.

Keywords: public space, South Africa, City of Tshwane, spatial democracy, democratic space.

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, we find ourselves in a space and at a time where democracy is seen as an ideal standard, pursued by many actors in many different ways (Hoskyns, 2014; Parkinson, 2014; Phillips, 2003). As such, attempts have been made towards the transformation, governance and re(design) of public space to uphold the values of democracy. In the disciplines of architecture, urban design and planning the ideas of involving stakeholders/ communities in the design and production processes of public spaces has become necessary in the quest for democratic spaces. This relates either as an attempt to incorporate the desires of the masses, to uphold diversity or as a tick-box exercise that will render the project some legitimacy (Holmes & Scoones, 2000; Goetz & Gaventa, 2001).

In the context of South Africa, many political, economic and social transformations have occurred since the first democratic elections in 1994. The country has made significant efforts in trying to establish and rebrand its cities as multiracial and multicultural hubs or nodes that are democratic through the provision, design and governance of their public spaces. However, the results are not always as envisioned due to the country's diversity. In an ideal city, public spaces physically represent and embody the ideology of democracy that stems from the works of Habermas. His views of the public sphere alongside the narratives of the Greek agora have influenced many contemporary urban scholars in terms of thinking about democracy and public space (Bently, 2014; Hoskyns, 2014; Parkinson, 2014). Consequently, public spaces continue to be romanticised as uniform, equal meeting grounds that serve various socio-economic and political activities.

As part of ongoing work on the transformation of public space in South Africa, we investigated a multitude of different types of public spaces in various cities across South Africa, including the capital of the country, the City of Tshwane. Public space in this paper is understood as space where freedom of speech and assembly is promoted and protected. Our explorations, carried out from 2014 to 2018, investigated the nature and use of these spaces. We also examined the experiences and perceptions of the users and spoke to planning officials and urban designers regarding the production and management of public spaces. Underlying many of the comments from both the users and the producers was the notion of creating spaces that are more democratic and inclusive. Yet, urban designers and other actors are not always clear on the physical nature of democratic public spaces and how this is connected to the production of space.

In this paper, we discuss several public spaces in the City of Tshwane and explore how the process and product of urban design contribute to Habermas' notion of deliberate democracy. Parkinson (2014) is adamant that we need to accept that democratic space is produced through spatial, social and political relations. Inevitably, architecture and planning stand conflicted in trying to reconcile these dynamics of democracy through design. Thus, it is important to consider how democratic spaces can be designed and governed, with a clear understanding that the "democraticness" of the spaces does not only lie in the end product but also the process of production and management. Given this, the paper sets out to highlight the challenges related to the governance and design of public space in pursuit of deliberative democracy, followed by an investigation thereof in the City of Tshwane. The paper argues for a dual understanding of

deliberative democracy in space through an emphasis on both spatial democracy and democratic space, or in other words, redirecting both governance and design praxis to facilitate and enable deliberative democracy through and within public space.

Urban design, democracy and public space

Urban design refers to both a product and a process (Madanipour 1996; Carmona, 2014; Lang, 2017). The concept has been defined as “what urban designers do as much as what they produce” (Kindsvatter & Von Grossmann 1994 cited in Madanipour 1996, p.104). The University of Washington describes it as follows: “Urban design can be thought of as both a product and a process. As a product urban design occurs at scales ranging from parts of the environment, such as a streetscape, to the larger wholes of districts, towns, cities or regions. As a process and a conscious act, urban design involves the art of shaping the environment which has been built over time by many different actors” (cited in Madanipour 1996, p.104). Similarly, Lang (2014) also highlights urban design as a product, manifesting as new towns or precincts, or as a process, through total, all-of-a-piece, plug-in and piece-by-piece urban design. However, he also adds another dimension, namely the paradigm of urban design. This paper focuses on democracy as the urban design paradigm driving the transformation of public space and unpacks the relationship between democracy and public space through a focus on both urban design as a process and as a product. While the process of urban design relates to the people and groups involved in its allocation, production, management and maintenance, the design tends to focus on the elements and organisation of the built form.

Deliberative democracy

Habermas is popularly known for his belief that deliberation amongst society can bring about consensus and rationality. He describes deliberative democracy as a system that enables communities to assemble, communicate their realities and deliberate on their solutions or next actions (Habermas, 1984). The process of deliberation according to Habermas, is one that can give a voice and agency to the poor and marginalised who are often silenced. Agency in this context is conceptualised as the capacity for individuals to act and make decisions at their own free will without being limited by any structures of power, customs or social class amongst other societal factors. With deliberative democracy, society can negotiate and contribute to the discussions on matters that affect them, whether as beneficiaries, consumers or citizens. What differentiates Habermasian theory of deliberative democracy from other political scholars such

as Benjamin Barber and Micheal Walzer is that; he emphasised the diversity and equality of participants. He focused extensively on voluntary involvement of participants, the disclosure of all information regarding the procedures of deliberation, the freedom to choose themes of discussion and most importantly, the emphasis of agency and the suspension of power and domination. Many have described this as the “ideal speech situation” or what Habermas himself calls “unrestricted communication” (Mansbridge, 1999; Parkinson, 2006). Arnstein (1969) considers citizen participation as the cornerstone of every democracy and as a process which enables those that have been previously marginalised to be included in the shaping and making of their future. She provides a ladder of eight levels of participation, beginning with the first level of nonparticipation and ending with the last level where citizens attain power. Nonparticipation refers to the state where citizens are considered incapable of decision making and citizen power is where they negotiate as equals and share power. Arnstein’s ladder appeals to various scholars because of its simplicity, however its different levels fail to reflect how power can be practically shared amongst citizens in unique contexts that may not have the goal of attaining power or require different ways of power sharing. Habermas on the other hand takes into account the realities of the uniqueness and pluralism that societies possess and how this plurality may pose as limitations to deliberative democracy and genuine citizen participation. Despite this limitation, Habermas advocates for spaces wherein this inevitable diversity can be encouraged.

Habermas is not without criticism. One that is most common is that of societal power dynamics that can hinder the success of such an ideal speech situation in public space (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). Kohn (2000) is specifically concerned with how only particular voices are heard in these spaces, and how only certain realities are deliberated upon. This, unfortunately, draws on the flaws of society as power dynamics are constantly present in public and private spaces (Dryzek, 2000; Madanipour, 2003; Mansbridge, 1999). However, as echoed in public space literature, public spaces are a representation of the socio-political and economic condition of a community, and as such, these conditions will influence the processes of deliberative democracy. According to Blundell-Jones, Petrescu & Till (2005), community deliberation and participation in architectural and planning projects is not merely a catalyst for the transformation of the role of the user, however, it is also a catalyst for the transformation of the practice of architecture and planning.

Governance challenges in the pursuit of deliberative democracy

Four governance challenges hinder the realisation of deliberative democracy in public space, namely alienation, representation, homogenization and resistance. Various scholars agree that the process of involving communities is beneficial to design processes as it can lend alternative avenues for holding and expressing opinions, especially those of variance in diverse societies (Carmona & Tiesdell, 2007; Cornwall, 2017; Faga, 2006; Madanipour, 1996). However, for many, the action of involving communities is merely seen as an exercise of endless colorful sticky notes that cover the walls during this process and then find their way to the bin (Till 2009) or to prove a project's participatory credentials or substantiate decisions already made (Hickey and Mohan, 2013). This reflects a view of participation as temporal and not as a continual process as suggested by Habermas' deliberative theory. Deliberative processes need to be long term and extend beyond the process of production. Lefebvre (1991), influenced by Karl Marx's theory of *Alienation*, described how alienated society becomes when they are not involved in the production of their own spaces. "If the production of public space and architecture is power independent of users then alienation occurs between citizens and their environment" (Hoskyns, 2014, p.75), negatively influencing the level of ownership and attachment to space. Deliberative democracy suggests that participation in the forms of discussion and debates is integral to space production. The participation should not be in the form of merely voting as what democracy has now been diluted to be, but in the form of active engagement and decision-making (Hoskyns, 2014).

However, deliberative democracy may be difficult to achieve, as not every individual may have the chance to stand up and have their say (Barnett & Low, 2004; Dryzek, 2000). In an era where populations in the developing world keep growing, representation is crucial. Representation refers to "the action or an instance of representing or being represented", or "speaking for" (Concise Oxford Dictionary 199:1215). The danger of this is that often deliberation is limited to the process of a large group represented by a few people. How those who represent the group are selected may sometimes be contested and instead of reaching the goal of empowering the marginalised, the unintended consequence is that they may be silenced even further (Kateb, 1981). Planning processes face challenges in identifying the appropriate parties to represent stakeholders, for example, to elect someone to represent future generations (March, 2012). As such, representation in deliberative processes face challenges that are difficult to resolve in light of collective decision-making.

Furthermore, professionals are often criticised for carrying ideas of homogeneity. Hickey and Mohan (2013) describe this as seeing the community as self-evident and unproblematic social categories or as seeing communities as homogenized groups without having a historical or current understanding of its context. Identity and cultural specifications are important to how a community may respond to participation and engage with their expectations of the process and ultimately the product (Massey, 1994). Notably, there are a variety of factors that influence societal responses to deliberation, such as the histories of governance within that society, how they have experienced public spaces in the past and the process of its production (Hickey & Mohan, 2013). In other instances, it is the culture of everyday citizenship and the precedent set by those that have made promises in the past (Cornwall, 2017). Planners and architects need to let go of their ideas of standardisation in deliberative and participatory processes as spaces present multiple users, with multiple desires and thus there is a need for participatory methods that consider this multiplicity (Blundell-Jones et. al. 2005).

The above is also necessary to avoid resistance, which refers to any form of opposition to a specific development or nature of a space. It would be dangerous to assume that every community member and built environment professional is as committed to the design project and the process of deliberation as the next person. Foucault in his work on *governmentality*, argues that people move between different character traits in different public spaces (Foucault, 1997). The fluctuation in character traits can be influenced by how people perceive themselves in a space, the way they perceive others and how they think they are perceived by others. This dynamism of self and others can influence certain vulnerabilities, resistance and assertiveness, amongst many other traits and ultimately influence the process positively or negatively. Thus, no matter the conditioning of the process, it cannot defuse certain perceptions, as they cannot merely be left at the entrance of the space before deliberation. Foucault (1997) points out that society will behave in a manner that it will and resistance is sometimes inevitable before, during and after the public space project.

Design challenges in the pursuit of deliberative democracy

In addition to the governance challenges, yet related to these, four design challenges also influence the pursuit of deliberative democracy, namely disconnection, differentiation, exclusion and confrontation. Alienation is often exacerbated by physical inaccessibility or disconnection. If people cannot access a space, they cannot actively participate in the activities or resources offered by it. Public space is often poorly connected or located within the

movement system with a poor visual connection to the external public realm (Hillier, 2000; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012). For example, in the United States, many neighbourhoods lack appropriate spaces and safe facilities for walking and physical activity. Besides, the layout and urban form of these neighbourhoods (long blocks, wide streets, dispersed activities, high traffic volumes) significantly reduce opportunities for pedestrianisation (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012). Similarly, in Europe, public space has also been changed through the increase of traffic and parking space alienating pedestrians from public space access or use through dirt, noise and visual pollution (Gehl and Gemzoe, 2001).

Representation or active participation can also spatially be challenged through differentiation, which refers to the unequal distribution of development or type of physical infrastructure in different parts of the city. This is especially related to the lack of development or maintenance of public spaces in marginalised communities or the intolerance of unwanted users. Madanipour (2004, p.270) points out that, "the city as a whole provides a framework for social differentiation and segregation based on access to resources". Therefore, while the rich can choose where to go, the poor are restricted to the marginal spaces available to them. Due to limited resources, these marginal spaces are often neglected, showing signs of dereliction or destruction (Ibid) due to a lack of management or maintenance. These spaces are characterised by "litter, piled with rotting rubbish, covered in graffiti, polluted, congested and choked by traffic, full of mediocre and ugly poorly maintained buildings" (Tibbals, 2001, p.1). Differentiation is also expressed through 'lost space', "in need of a redesign, such as edges of freeways, abandoned waterfronts, vacant sites, deteriorated parks and marginal public housing projects (Trancik, 1986, pp. 3-4). The nature of the public space has a direct influence on opportunities for representation and participation, as the marginal spaces become battlegrounds. While some tend to dominate these spaces, others are intimidated. Consequently, they withdraw from these spaces and therefore, lose the opportunity to engage with others (Madanipour, 2004). Finally, differentiation is also evident in the intolerance of unwanted uses, such as rowdy teenagers, informal vendors or homeless people where institutions or developers either do not accommodate these users or push them out of mainstream spaces (Carmona, 2010; Loukaites-Sideris, 2012).

In such cases, explicit strategies such as high walls, impenetrable street frontages, sunken plaza, hidden entrance and other security measures are used to discourage unwanted users (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998; Carmona 2010), creating physical exclusion through

design. Through the separation of urbanism into components, diversity is severely compromised, limiting the generation of urban vitality and opportunities for improved interactions among multiple urban components (Talen 2008). The danger is an over-emphasis on social homogeneity and as mentioned above, a reduction of the culture of everyday citizenship. This ‘enclosure of the commons’, which privileges some, but exclude others, has been characterised as an ‘assault on public space’ (Low & Smith, 2012, p. 12). Urban design utilises strategies of separation and enclosure through defensive mechanisms to address fear and control, protect and fortify spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2012). “In the place of the real city, a hyper-real environment is created, composed by the safe and appealing elements of the real thing, reproduced in miniature or exaggerated versions” (Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee, 1998, p. 280). These market and design considerations displace spontaneous interactions of engaged people towards the determination of the shape of urban space in the contemporary world (Cameron, 2002, p. 120). Ironically, however, these spaces often create more intense feelings of fear and vulnerability and while they may increase safety, they escalate insecurity (Marcusse, 2006, p.219). This in turn, often leads to a greater manifestation of homogeneity.

Resistance can be exacerbated or prohibited through confrontational design elements or sanitised spaces which either provoke or prohibit specific social reaction. Democracy needs physical space for its performance (Parkinson, 2012; Arora, 2015; Mislán & Dache-Gerbino, 2018), including places for protest and physical symbols of democracy. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that vital public spaces are essential for the maintenance of participatory or deliberative democracy, the design and layout of spaces can influence the opportunities for this to take place, either promoting resistance or controlling it through “intimidation or identification” (Goodsell, 2003, p. 367). For example, Tiananmen Square was intentionally designed by the state as a symbol of the political might of the Chinese party. The square was large, rigid and open and no provision was made for benches. The only trees lined the edges of the square. Also, the square was lit with large lampposts and fitted with video cameras to enable the surveillance of public leisure activities (Arora, 2015). In this way, the nature and organisation of physical elements can inhibit engagement. Ironically, this symbol of the Chinese party became the site for massive resistance against it in 1989, where it witnessed a mass massacre of protestors against the state (Short, 1996; Arora, 2015). In a new wave of protests, people in Hong Kong have taken to public spaces across the city in 2019 to protest against the enactment of new legislation to extradite offenders to China. To restrict actions of mass protests, privatised spaces, in addition to stringent security measures, also utilise strong

regulatory measures to prohibit resistance within these spaces, "converting them into sanitised domains that few feel compelled to inhabit" and where people must socialise in certain ways according to dictated rules. This can also result in low levels of engagement (Arora, 2015, p.61).

The discussion highlighted several interrelated governance and design challenges that have the potential to challenge the expression of democracy in public space and raises the question as to what extent these challenges are also present in public space in South Africa.

Study area and methods of research

As mentioned before, the paper focusses on public space in the City of Tshwane, as the municipal area is known. The municipal area incorporates the city of Pretoria, the capital of South Africa. It accommodates about 2.9 million people spread out over a total land area of 6298 km² at a population density of 464 people/km². While the city is home to large diplomatic service and known as the 'intellectual' capital with major industries and the offices of the national government, 135,645 households have no income and the unemployment rate is 24% (Tshwane 2055 Strategy, 2013, p. 42). It is thus also a city of inequality. Consequently, the public realm is often characterised by rivalry and the transformation of public space through various forms of privatisation and exclusion, where more middle-and higher-income users become reluctant to share these spaces with homeless people and beggars (Landman, 2016). Yet, the 2012 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Tshwane promotes the enhancement of the quality of people, social cohesion and the need for open space. The Tshwane 2055 Strategy explicitly calls for the gains of democracy to be consolidated by tackling poverty, unemployment and inequality and one of the actions to achieve this is the development of public parks or space – at least two per ward (p. 220).

The discussion of public space in Tshwane draws on over 50 case studies carried out as part of a larger project, "The Transformation of Public Space" between 2014 and 2018 in various parts of the city, including the inner city, suburbs, former marginalised areas or so-called African townships and the periphery. The initial focus areas included the nature and use of public spaces, the management of public spaces, the impact of traffic on the use of public spaces and the development of open spaces in informal settlements and gated developments. The data gathering included semi-structured interviews with users of the spaces, as well as participant

observation within these spaces. It also involved interviews with officials from the local council and developers involved with the production of public space and interviews with urban designers on the transformation of public space.

As part of a more recent study (2017-2019) on public space in Tshwane investigating Harvey's conceptualisation of space as related to public space, in-depth individual interviews were conducted with City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipal officials who serve in the Environment and Agriculture department, under the division of Parks, Recreation and Crematorium Operations. Thereafter, a focus group interview was conducted with all the officials together. The officials were purposively sampled to enable the research to represent a wide geographic spread. Thus, only officials from the directorate who serve the entire metropolitan were interviewed to ensure that rich data was collected and its impact on the larger population could be analysed and discussed. The study also conducted observations and spatial analysis on selected public spaces within the City to take note of the physical nature of the spaces, their functions and all activities in and around them. As such, experiences, narratives and ideas around public open space production processes, design and management were interrogated and interpreted.

Challenges and opportunities for democracy in public spaces in Tshwane

Many challenges remain in terms of the expression of democracy in its public spaces. Following is a discussion of these governance and design challenges. The challenges, however, do not always remain unchallenged. To explore the potential for democracy, the discussion also highlights the opportunities for democracy in public spaces in Tshwane.

From alienation and disconnection to recognition and connectivity

The investigation of over fifty different types of public spaces in the City of Tshwane revealed that communities are often alienated through a lack of participation in the production of space. When asking the officials about the benefits of involving communities in their design processes, the responses indicated that community participation is not prioritised.

“The demand is too high and there is no time to think about trying to understand why certain things happen in some areas and not others. Ideally yes, that's how it should be

done, we should involve the community. However, at the moment it's not done".
[Interview with official, July 2018]

Consequently, the high demand for fully designed and equipped public spaces in previously disadvantaged areas means that the officials are focusing extensively on the numbers and not necessarily on the process of consultation or appropriateness of the public spaces that they intend to provide. Therefore, officials are forced to "pick up" their pace, which implies that not much attention is paid to involving potential users in a discussion and deliberation regarding the design of public spaces. The rush to keep up with the numbers results in alienation, wherein the user's autonomy is stripped away as they are not involved in the production of their spaces.

The alienation is further exacerbated through physical inaccessibility. Although there have been many attempts to improve the physical conditions of previously disadvantaged or new marginalised areas, many are still lacking adequate infrastructure such as walkways, proper waiting areas for taxis, lighting, etc. This does not only increase the vulnerability of pedestrians related to fast-moving vehicles speeding along the roads but also in terms of safety from crime. A recent survey in Mamelodi, a former disadvantaged area in the east of Tshwane, revealed that women and children are afraid to walk in the dark, through parks or to the train station. These fears are also amplified by the poor condition of the roads, no sidewalks, broken pathways through the park and no lighting (Business Enterprise UP, 2017).

To address the alienation, there is a need for active engagement and decision-making in the production of space. In reaction to the results of the community survey in Mamelodi and as part of the Safety Promotion through Urban Upgrading (SPUU) project, the project team organised a three-day workshop to engage residents on the problems faced in the Pienaarspoort Park and Station and the potential for future development. Participants highlighted the need for safe pedestrian routes, proper lighting, furniture, and safe access to the railway station. Interviews with users in other public spaces indicated that the comfortable and safe use of the space often depended on the nature of walkways and whether these were visible. For example, in two suburban parks, Jimmy Aves and Springbok Park, visibility in some places is compromised through dense vegetation. Besides, the proximity of good public transport also improved the use of public spaces. Interviews indicated that visitors to Pretorius Square in the CBD came from all over the metropolitan area to visit the space over weekends due to the

proximity of Pretoria central station. The above confirms the importance of connection as highlighted by Hillier (1996) and Talen (2008).

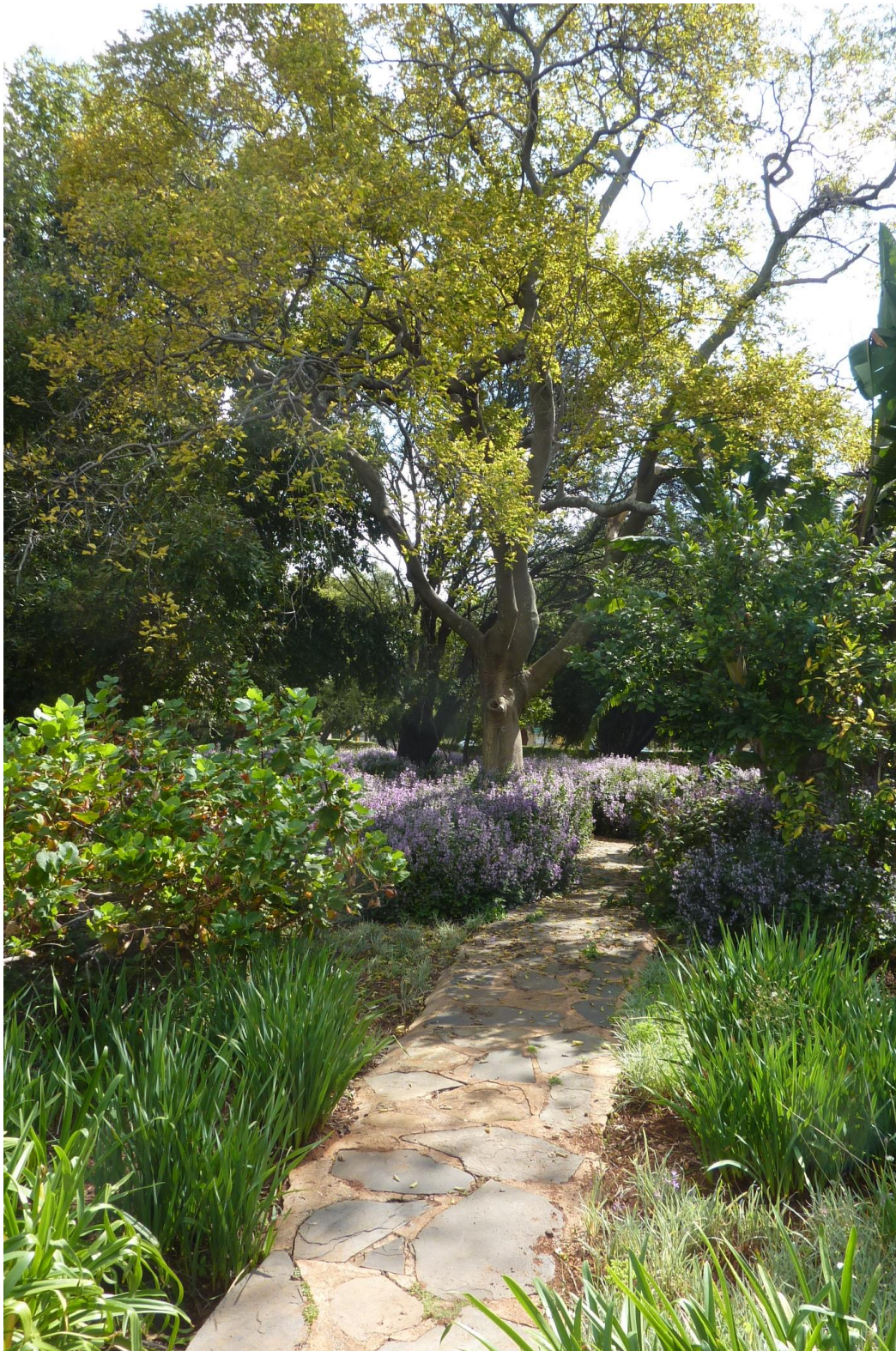


Figure 1: Overgrown vegetation in Springbok Park hinders visibility

Addressing non-representation and differentiation through voice and equality

There is a lack of representation when only a few people are represented or there is a difficulty to decide who will represent the community. Officials from the City of Tshwane indicated that the city is currently facing a public space or park backlog. The backlog is significantly apparent in townships or previously disadvantaged areas. Formerly, these areas were denied social facilities and infrastructure for meeting and gathering. Consequently, as officials explained, the City has to pick up its pace in providing public spaces for those areas. Unfortunately, this implies the need for fast delivery:

"The backlog is too big, that's what I am saying, if you go to Mamelodi and other areas, the townships were established with leftover spaces and those spaces have been waiting to be developed into parks. So, you have a number of open spaces, some invaded by churches, some invaded by informal settlements, so the backlog for developing parks is too big. The thinking around the parks and the processes that go along with it have not been thorough because of the rush" [Interview with official, July 2018].

The process of representation is largely overtaken by politicians or ward councillors. The officials approach the community through the councillor's office and deliberation occurs with the councillor who stands as a representative of the community. The councillor is provided with the design concepts and drawings and he/she handles the consultative process with the community and reports back on their inputs.

"We depend on the councillor to consult with the communities on site selection, the designs and the final product". [Interview with official, July 2018].

The quote from the official implies that the officials and their designers do not encounter the community in the site selection and design phases. Communities may, therefore, be misrepresented as councilors may have their political agendas and often the voices of the marginalised or real needs of the communities are not heard. Besides, there is not always agreement on who should represent the community. Before the commencement of the SPUU workshop mentioned above, there was a conflict between potential representatives of the community. As a result, the workshop started two hours late to allow for the resolution of the conflict.

Opportunities for representation are further restricted through differentiation in public spaces related to different levels of development and management. Apart from township upgrading programmes, these former marginalised areas are characterised by lower levels of physical infrastructure investment, as mentioned above. While plans for former marginalised or township areas often make provision for public open space through zoning, many of these remain vacant or minimally developed spaces that do not cater to the real needs of the surrounding communities. For example, in Soshanguwe, there is a need for sports fields and trading facilities. While Soshanguwe Park offers grass and some play equipment for children, there are no formal sports facilities. Yet, people gather there over weekends to play soccer, while schoolchildren use the space in the afternoons for extramural activities and sport. Although there are no formal facilities, many informal traders are operating on the edge of the space. In other cases, the lack of management and maintenance have contributed to the degradation of many parks. For example, several upgraded parks in Mamelodi, have been vandalised. In Phola Park, users complained about the broken park furniture, including swings, benches, tables and bins. There were also concerns about drug users and heavy drinkers, who did not only destroy furniture when intoxicated but also threaten other park users. Consequently, many users withdraw from space.

One way to address non-representation is by allowing individuals and groups to voice their concerns and suggestions. Although there were problems at the start of the SPUU workshop, the workshop offered opportunities to various groups to highlight the problems faced in the public spaces and suggest ways to address these. These suggestions involved physical interventions, concretised through the building of models (day 2) and management and maintenance suggestions (day 3), which assisted to give people a voice and shared their understanding of the context. It is thus necessary to find novel ways to bring stakeholders together and facilitate representative engagement (Nasser, 2017). Giving people a voice also opens up opportunities for greater equality to emerge in addressing differentiation. Therefore, although there are still existing backlogs, the City of Tshwane has actively engaged a programme of two parks/spaces per ward. This has contributed to the development of some great spaces in former marginalised areas that are actively used, for example, the Kalafong Fitness Park in Atteridgeville, in the west of Tshwane. The municipality has also worked with National Treasury and benefitted from their Neighbourhood Development Programme to redevelop undeveloped township parks such as the Solomon Mahlangu Square in Mamelodi and the Refilwe Park, located close to Cullinan in the east of Tshwane.



Figure 2: The Kalafong Fitness Park in Atteridgeville

Dealing with homogenisation and exclusion through diversity and mixed development

Another challenge to the expression of democracy is that officials often see different communities in the city as homogeneous, giving rise to generalisation and uniform development. The officials narrated different stories of how they have witnessed many failed projects since their involvement in the division of Parks, Recreation and Crematorium Operations in the City of Tshwane. A particular story stood out. The officials were driving around the Township of Hamanskraal, a previously disadvantaged area consisting of both rural and urban characteristics. The officials mentioned that a particular park in the area was established in the year 2015, however upon their visit in 2017, the benches that were placed in the park were no longer intact, walls were vandalised and all other physical structures in the park were either broken or no longer there. It appeared that the park was used as a grazing ground for cattle. The officials mentioned that the same park was developed in another previously disadvantaged area, and was in a better state. The case of Hamanskraal reflects officials who homogenised all disadvantaged communities in the city by assuming that because something worked in a particular area, it will work in another. Hamanskraal is, however unique, necessitating a context-specific approach.

The Hammanskraal case also indicates how non-contextual homogenised spaces can lead to the abandonment and neglect of the space or a lack of ownership and can serve as a justification of differentiation related to the provision of open spaces. This is probably exacerbated by no or misrepresentation which gives rise to a generalisation of what is needed. In another upgraded park in Mamelodi, known as the Pienaarspoort Park, furniture, pathways and lighting were severely vandalised and damaged. Further inquiry into the matter during the SPUU workshop, revealed that the community was never consulted and that there was no sense of ownership in the park.



Figure 3: Broken pathway in Pienaarspoort Park

At the same time, the decline and neglect of public space lead to a withdrawal from space by those who can afford it. This has given rise to the growth of pseudo-public spaces linked to shopping centres and common open spaces in gated communities, both privatised spaces catering for the middle and higher-income groups. While the pseudo-public spaces are open to anyone, the behaviour is strictly controlled and enforced by private security guards. Only the residents and their visitors can use the common open spaces in gated communities. Therefore, although these spaces feature high levels of development with state-of-the-art security and infrastructure, they exclude unwanted people. However, ironically, people are not only

excluded from the privatised spaces but also publically developed spaces. In Mamelodi, the newly developed Solomon Mahlangu Square, built to commemorate an Apartheid struggle hero, is fenced off and locked to prohibit community members from vandalising the park (Landman, 2019). In this way, a symbol of the struggle for democracy becomes an example of the failure of democracy by not including the community in the production or the use of the space due to a fear of destruction. Today, Solomon Mahlangu stands as a white elephant in a former marginalised area and is used only for special events under strict security protection.



Figure 4: Fence around Solomon Mahlangu Square

To address homogenisation and exclusion, it is necessary to shift the focus on diversity and mixed development. Diversity is considered as the primary generator of urban vitality as it promotes interactions among people and opportunities for constant mutual support, reflecting the richness of human variation. In practice, diversity is promoted through a mix of land uses, services and facilities in and around public spaces (Talen, 2008). The investigation of various public spaces across the City of Tshwane indicated that in spite of some of the challenges, many spaces are still being used by a diversity of users. For example, in Burgers Park, people from various backgrounds and age groups gather to enjoy the outdoor environment, while users of Magnoli Dal emphasised that visiting the park allows them to connect to people from various backgrounds. Similarly, in Zita Park, people from various cultures join to enjoy diverse outdoor activities. A mix of facilities in the space and mixed land use promotes opportunities for diversity. For example, Refilwe Park offers a variety of amenities, including outdoor gym equipment, basketball and netball courts, a parking space, barbeque facilities, a pavilion, park

furniture such as benches and dustbins, trees, lighting and several jungle gyms for children. Kalafong Fitness Park also offers large grass areas for relaxation, an amphitheater, an outdoor gym, play equipment for children and a climbing wall.



Figure 5: Children swimming in Zita Park

From resistance and confrontation to dialogue and expression

Resistance refers to conditions where not all community members or planners/urban designers are committed to the project or discussions related to it based on specific perceptions. Our inquiry showed that in as much as the officials in Tshwane are aware of the benefits of deliberating with community members and end-users of the designed product, they are reluctant to form part of these processes:

“When you get to communities, they are sometimes expecting more than what you can do with what you have... [referring to budget and land constraints]...” [Interview with official, July 2018].

"The moment you open it up as officials to communities then you complicate things for yourself because they ask for everything, so rather have their community councillor doing the consultation" [Interview with official, July 2018].

Unfortunately, this resistance by the officials to engage with the communities due to the strenuous nature of participation, as well as the frustration linked to the reconciliation of community needs against budgets and timeframes, negatively influences the deliberative process. The second quotation also supports the notion of Foucault that societal perceptions of self and the other have implications on how we relate to one another. More importantly in this context, perceptions have implications for resistance or lack thereof that manifests in public space deliberative processes.

The kind of resistance discussed above is what often drives people in democracies towards public protests, where the public spaces become the space where democracy plays out. Ironically, however, one of the great symbols of the democracy, Freedom Park, is tucked away on a hill overlooking the City Tshwane and access is restricted through security guards, while visitors need to pay to enter the site. Similarly, in many other parks, access is controlled to ensure safety. Therefore, in the name of safety, democracy is inhibited, as a confrontation in space is limited through access control and entrance fees. This raises questions about the nature and design of public space and the emerging tensions between the need for open gathering spaces and safe meeting places.

To move away from resistance and confrontation, the focus needs to shift to dialogue and expression. Sudjic (2002) maintains that democratic experiences can be facilitated if democracy is theorised under the scope of everyday social relations in public space. This implies the need for constant dialogue as opposed to resistance against engagement. To overcome set ideas and perceptions from planners, designers or members of the community, it is imperative that processes are put in place so that common ideas or "the story of the place" (Mang and Reed, 2012:30) can emerge. The SPUU workshop in Mamelodi offered an opportunity for greater synergy to emerge over three days in terms of the way forward and the role of the community to facilitate and take part in this. It also requires spaces where the dialogue is allowed to happen. Given this, public spaces must offer the opportunity for democratic meetings on all levels (Gehl, 2010; Matson, 1999). Both Church and Lilian Ngoyi Square have been successful in this regard to facilitate various democratic protests. On 7 April

2017 more than 25 000 people from backgrounds and political parties, including the Economic Freedom Fighters, the South African Communist Party and the Democratic Alliance gather on Church Square to march to the Union Buildings to call for former President Zuma to step down. In another evident, a large number of people gathered on Lilian Ngoyi Square on 9 August 2019 (National Woman's Day) to walk 2.3 km to the Union Buildings to commemorate the Woman's March of 1956 in protest to the pass laws. In these ways, public spaces serve as stages for democratic action.

Conclusion

This article has sought to investigate the meaning of deliberative democracy in urban public space through an investigation of the challenges and opportunities for democratic governance and design in public spaces in the City of Tshwane. It utilised Habermas' notion of deliberative democracy to introduce an inquiry into the role of urban design to enable greater democracy in public space.

For the significance of deliberative democracy to be realised in public space, it needs to be understood within contemporary notions of urban design as both product and process, both in terms of challenges and opportunities for democracy in space. The challenges related to the process (governance) of urban design are alienation, representation, homogenisation and resistance. Alienation occurs when potential users are not involved in the production of space or not allowed to participate, while a lack of representation is evident when only a few people are represented or there is difficulty to decide who will represent a diverse community. Homogenisation refers to seeing a community as similar social categories, while resistance is evident when some community members, planners or urban designers are not committed to the project or discussions related to it based on specific perceptions. To address these challenges, there is a need to focus on recognition, voice, diversity and dialogue. Active engagement and decision-making in the production and management of space would enable recognition. Yet, this engagement should allow individuals and groups to stand up and have a say regarding the nature and use of their space, thus giving them a voice. This would also open up opportunities for diversity through an understanding of the context and history of a space and its users and recognise various cultural values or specifications. This would require an emphasis on dialogue to overcome set perceptions and ideas from planners, designers and community members so that common ideas can emerge.

The challenges related to the product of urban design are disconnection, differentiation, exclusion and confrontation. If people cannot access a space, they cannot actively participate in the activities or resources offered by it. Differentiation refers to the unequal distribution and levels of development of public space or type of physical infrastructure and low levels of maintenance. Consequently, public spaces can become battlegrounds for various groups. Following a retreat from public space, exclusion refers to the avoidance of the unwanted through highly controlled and gated spaces. Confrontation comes about through the intentional design of spaces to inhibit loitering or longer uses of spaces or through sanitised spaces. To address these challenges, urban designers should focus on connectivity, equality, mix and expression. Connectivity is facilitated through a focus on pedestrian access, walkable roads and access to public transport, while equality refers to the fair distribution and adequate development of public spaces to allow various activities to occur as appropriate in the context. Mix development involves a mix of facilities or amenities within the public space, as well as mix land uses around. To avoid confrontation, there is a need for expression through the establishment of places for protest and as symbols, as well as places to meet and deliberate. The design of spaces should, therefore, allow small or larger gatherings to occur.

Therefore, for the significance of democracy in space and its implications for the role of urban design to be fully comprehended, requires a dual understanding of deliberative democracy in space through an emphasis on both spatial democracy - the process, and democratic space - the product. This involves redirecting both governance and design praxis to facilitate and enable deliberative democracy through and within public space. Habermas' view of deliberative democracy has been used to inform the values of democratic space, arguing for deliberation that is continuous and never fixed in time, to address the ever-changing needs of an evolving society towards greater social and spatial cohesion. The challenges faced in deliberative processes should not be reason enough to abandon its ideals, rather, we need to become aware of the challenges and continuously seek solutions in practice. Moreover, we should see the challenges as opportunities to present multiple solutions for the multiple challenges brought by the quest for deliberative democracy in diverse public spaces.

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