POLITICS AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Perspectives from Yeoville Studio, Johannesburg

EDITED BY

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU • SARAH CHARLTON • SOPHIE DIDIER • KIRSTEN DÖRMANN

This book is a new and courageous examination of the complexity of embedded research. It is an honest and insightful reflection that … challenges and deepens arguments around spaces of participation through theoretical reflection and, more centrally, through the actual experience of the embedded research of Yeoville Studio. It is an important work for this and other reasons.

DR TANYA ZACK, URBAN PLANNER AND WRITER, JOHANNESBURG

We need more of this kind of community-based research. A masterful study on 'making the invisible visible' in Johannesburg, the book openly discusses ethical challenges, memory and uncertainty. Through this humbling and exciting experience authors challenge the fundamentals of participatory research while illuminating informality.

PROFESSOR JULIE-ANNE BOUDREAU, URBANISATION CULTURE SOCIÉTÉ RESEARCH CENTRE, INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE, MONTRÉAL

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We wish to dedicate this book to three key figures among our community partners – Maurice Smithers, without whom the Studio would not have been born; George Lebone, who gave the Studio wings through the breadth of his experience and networks in Yeoville; and Edmund Elias, who perhaps most clearly understood the possibilities opened up by the Studio, and continues to work with us to this day.

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SECTION D: POLITICISING: COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH AND THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE

Acknowledgements

No book is a single person's adventure, but this book even less so than any other.

The book is the tip of an iceberg – a reflection on a much broader research initiative, Yeoville Studio, undertaken by the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) between 2010 and 2012, and involving more than 300 students and 20 staff, including some from other departments. The book itself includes only a few of the Studio's participants, young and senior scholars alike. They committed to the Studio and to Yeoville, beyond the class project, and did not give up editing and updating their work in spite of the many years it took to finalise the book: we thank them all. The book is dedicated to the young scholars who are authors in the book: Abdul Abed, Ophélie Arrazouaki, Pauline Guinard, Willy-Claude Hebandjoko, Obvious Katsaura, Mamokete Matjomane, Simon Mayson, Eulenda Mkwanazi, Potsiso Phasha, Nicolette Pingo, and Naomi Roux, who now have become experienced and engaged professionals – activists, academics, artists and officials – and whom we saw blossoming within the Studio. They are making us proud.

This book is not about community voices: it is about scholarly reflections on what it has meant to engage with one specific community in post-apartheid Johannesburg, as academics, researchers and educators. Yet of course these reflections were born and developed in multiple deep, heated or friendly engagements with a number of community members in Yeoville – meaning, people involved in Yeoville public life who partook in our workshops, activities and events. We would like to honour in particular Suzanne Afoué, Elisabeth Lethlaku and the Yeoville Women's Forum, Angelina Motsepe, the late Aura Msimang, and also pay tribute to all the micro-traders of Yeoville, who were at the core of many studies, student projects, interactions, workshops and events – even today, their livelihood and place in the city remains unrecognised. Their stories form one key thread of this book.

There were also more sustained conversations – central to opening our minds and keeping our feet grounded – with our three community partner leaders. Maurice Smithers, who at the time was the director of Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust, opened the possibility of the Studio in the first place through his dedication to the development of the neighbourhood. George Lebone, the chair of the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum, deepened the engagement with a variety of residents in Yeoville through the breadth of his social network. And Edmund Elias, the spokesperson of the South African National Traders and Retailers Association, who joined the partnership mid-way, sustained it, and grew it far beyond Yeoville Studio. We thank them for their trust, for their engagement, their openness and generosity, and for their friendship. We hope the book is another moment in this conversation.

The Studio and the book could only take place in the context of institutional support. Wits University and the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment – the School of Architecture and Planning in particular – were enormously supportive, granting us strategic

SECTION A

Introducing the book

1 Why tell the story of Yeoville Studio?

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

I need your assistance. My landlord is about to evict me.
– Request to Yeoville Studio in Yeoville ward public meeting, 2010

We would like to identify and map every illegal construction in Yeoville. Can the Studio help?
– Request from the Yeoville Community Policing Forum, personal conversation, 2011

We need your support to propose an integrated trading solution for Yeoville.
– Request from a Yeoville street trader leader, personal conversation, 2011

Evictions, informal livelihoods, illegality, fear, public management and lack of collective control over the neighbourhood are defining features of daily life in the Johannesburg inner-city neighbourhood of Yeoville. An area typifying many of the complexities, opportunities and struggles of urban life in the metropolis of Johannesburg, Yeoville as a site of community-oriented research was always likely to be challenging, engaging and fruitful. Considering and reshaping community expectations – such as identifying and mapping illegality, imagining integrated trading, aiding evictees and fighting slumlordism – required our team to consider, reflect upon and at times reshape these demands on our research. Through the Studio, Yeoville speaks to the challenges, opportunities and methodologies of community-oriented research.

Based in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Yeoville Studio was a community-oriented research initiative in the neighbourhood of Yeoville between 2010 and 2012. It was conducted in partnership with three civil society organisations, and involved a number of Wits University academics and students – from

first-year undergraduates to PhD postgraduates. The professed aim of the Studio was to support community initiatives through a multi-disciplinary, intense research focus on Yeoville – an aim that was to be questioned and reframed throughout the conduct of the Studio, and that this book reflects upon. The Studio was conducted over a relatively short period – roughly two years – for practical reasons (we could not have generations of students study only Yeoville) but also because we initially conceived of our intervention as supporting existing or emerging community initiatives: we were wary of becoming a player in the local community game.

This initial conception was to be challenged, however. We did not know exactly what support we could provide, or to whose initiatives and requests we should respond. Nor did we know how far to go in our support of local initiatives: our choices ranged from research material to mobilisation support, from local documentation to an overview of broader policy instruments, from empowering local residents to accompanying them in their movements or even embarking on advocacy ourselves.

We had only a few partner organisations to start discussions with, whom I happened to know through previous activist commitments in the neighbourhood, and who were willing to join us in this experience, understanding its stakes. These were the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), a federation of community-based organisations, and the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), an NGO directed by a long-standing activist.[1] Through a large community workshop organised with them, we had predefined four themes that seemed broadly relevant to those organisations' members and that intersected with our expertise and the course structure in the School of Architecture and Planning. The four themes were: public space and its management, diversity and the quest for social cohesion, housing as a public issue, and local memories and identity. Interestingly, the latter theme emerged from the academic side of the partnership, but it turned out to be foundational for the three other themes.

The quotes at the beginning of this chapter are typical of the support demanded of the project. The first type of request, of an emergency nature, was dominant during the first year of the Studio. To this sort of request, I usually responded by recasting as clearly as possible what the Studio could or could not provide. As a group of researchers, we were powerless to solve immediate and personal issues. What the Studio could and would do is put the housing question on our research agenda; we could document landlords' abuses, analyse housing practices through research reports, present recourses for tenants through booklets and workshops, explore alternative forms of building management and elevate the issue as a public problem through various forms of communication across multi-scale platforms. These types of emergency request, which Yeoville local leaders are accustomed to and a little less disempowered to answer than we were, became scarcer after the first year of the Studio, following our weekly reiteration of who we were and what we could and could not do. Incrementally, the purpose and nature of our Studio was clarified – to the community, but also to ourselves – and we became identified and recognised, by at least a part of the Yeoville community, for what we were: not an all-problem solver, but a relatively innocuous group of researchers who could perhaps provide some resources in some instances. This occurred thanks to our continuous presence in Yeoville public meetings, our proactive publications in the local newsletter, displays in the public library and our participation in and organisation of local events.

The second and third types of request (assisting in mapping illegal constructions and in imagining alternative trading management models) became more frequent in the second year. These requests tapped into exactly where we could possibly be of use: the individuals or groups who formulated them were acutely aware of the power and the limitation of research – both from a content and from an institutional perspective. Research could assist in documenting a phenomenon and in exploring possible alternatives through analysis, imagination and comparison, for instance. But research, and the documents it produced in their materiality (we soon learnt the power of the physical production of a report, a poster, a newsletter, or a scale model, and their display – even in the age of social media and virtual circulation), were also political weapons. Stemming from an institution as established as Wits University, research could be used politically as an instrument for mobilised groups to gain institutional backing and political legitimacy.

The second request, to map illegal constructions and activities, made us profoundly ill at ease. 'Making the invisible visible', to paraphrase the title of a famous planning book (Sandercock 1998) and the injunction made to progressive planners in the late 1990s, could not be less adequate in a neighbourhood marked by many forms and degrees of informality – from undocumented migrants or those whose documents are constantly on the verge of expiring; to a profusion of informal trading activities, hardly tolerated by the public authorities; to innumerable subdivisions of flats, rooms and spaces to let and informal building extensions; to existing criminal activities that we were not naïve enough to completely ignore. The 2008 national riots which had led to 100 000 internal displacements were in our minds, and xenophobia had become normalised in a number of local and even national leaders' public discourses. Self-policing was common, racketeering practices among police and associated groups of residents were thriving in contexts of informality, and the recourse to violence in mass movements was on the rise. I was perhaps especially sensitive to these tensions and the risks in 'making the invisible visible', having researched community policing in post-apartheid South Africa, and having been part of an NGO dedicated to fighting xenophobia, founded in Yeoville in the aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic violence.

'Making the invisible visible' was our task as researchers and lecturers, and would necessarily be the consequence of our research endeavour, as is the case with all research: illuminating and consolidating what is not part of academic and written knowledge; inventing or making intelligible what has not been seen, imagined or understood yet; and formalising, conveying or translating voices that have been disregarded or ignored. But it was clear from the outset that knowledge is not neutral, and that many residents in Yeoville were using invisibility as a shield, as the last-resort tactics of the most marginalised, as the barest survival kit. A politics of invisibility was at play and 'making the invisible visible' would disturb and endanger those practices and those people. We were therefore at odds with much literature on community-oriented research and empowerment, on knowledge co-production and open-access mapping, on empowerment through public voicing and recognition. We were also at odds with the increasingly pressing research ethics procedures required by universities to ensure absolute transparency, honesty to the researched and the publicised deconstruction

of the knowledge production process – in possible contradiction with the equally pressing requirement of the attempt to 'not do harm' and 'protect the anonymity of our sources'.

So, what were we to do in response to these two requests for research support to collective action – the one sinister (we believed), and the other progressive (we imagined)? How were we in a position to judge the mapping request as illegitimate, and the integrated trading model request as welcome? Were we to engage only with what fitted our originally defined agenda, which might be legitimate but might also negate the purpose of our Studio: to be open to voices from the community? Were we entitled to read the need beneath the voice, to deconstruct the way it was framed (that could lead to potentially violent and destructive actions), and were we able to do so? Were we to deconstruct our own privileged positioning and adopt moral relativism (see Winkler & Duminy 2016)? Were we to ignore the likely consequence of publicisation as it is always complex and uncertain (as Charman & Petersen [2015] may argue when publishing detailed maps of informal shops in townships)? Or, if not, how were we to shape our research endeavour, methodology and production? These were not idle questions – their answers had concrete and potentially explosive consequences. The questions sometimes demanded clear-cut choices, sometimes more subtle, intuitive responses or even retreat, and sometimes negotiations in which we did not necessarily have the upper hand, the needed political skill or strategic analytical tools.

For both types of request, we found some guidance by returning to the core of our academic trade, training and skill, which also incrementally assisted in defining our role. We deconstructed the categories used by social groups in their historical and spatial contexts, questioned the requests whilst taking them seriously (which is not the same as taking them at face value) and brought these analyses into the engagement with the claimants. Obviously, our sympathies and emotions, our personal values and our politics also shaped our involvements and the way we ultimately responded or did not respond practically to the various claims.

This book tells the stories of our choices, our trials and errors, how we learnt along the way. It reveals how we consolidated a vision that could encompass hope for empowerment and social progress, without romanticising the 'community' or the poor, learning to unpack the complex politics of the neighbourhood, and becoming a de facto player in the fray, for a short period of time.

The book matters beyond Yeoville, as we believe most of the literature on community-oriented research neglects community politics. While most of this literature has become better at deconstructing the notion of a united and single community, it seldom takes its heterogeneity, its internal contentions and even its centrifugal dynamics seriously, treating its politics as an accident, an obstacle, something that can, should be, or de facto is delegated to others or kept at bay. At best, it is irrelevant for the research initiative; at worst, it is an obstacle to the realisation of the project. When community-oriented literature focuses on power, it generally unpacks the unequal power position of researchers vis-à-vis marginalised communities – but barely touches on the politics of the community itself and how researchers become entangled in it.

Shifting the gaze towards the *community* politics in engaged research (and considering academics as a temporary agent in these community politics) is the main contribution our book wishes to make. Entering the local political game as a marginal and temporary

actor (willingly or not) disturbs and therefore illuminates community politics. It nourishes reflection on the academic practices of engaged research, in South Africa (Winkler 2013; Oldfield 2015; Miszczak & Patel 2017) and beyond. It unpacks the complex politics at play beyond the researcher-researched direct interaction. It reflects on academics' choices and tactics, thoughts and doubts, perhaps more explicitly than other existing work on the matter, in times when the blurring of the boundary between academics and communities, the legitimate deconstruction of expertise and the emphasis on the hybrid nature of knowledge construction have rendered these interrogations difficult.

This shift in focus is also a response to two specific contextual elements that the following chapters unpack, by way of introducing the book. First, our experience is embedded in Yeoville, a peri-central, diverse, multicultural, fluid neighbourhood marked by high densities and mobility (chapter 2), dissimilar to the townships, informal settlements or ghettos that are usually the target of community-oriented research initiatives globally, and that are marked by a relatively higher residential stability in terms of residents and leadership figures. Most documented community-oriented research initiatives are therefore set up as a partnership with one, complex but relatively united, 'community'. It was not our case, and we were often caught in multiple and contradicting relationships, competing requests and loyalties. Second, the form of the Studio itself aggravated the fragmentation of our politics: for two years, it involved about 20 staff members from various disciplines at Wits University and 150 under- and postgraduate students around different short-term projects and studies. Some colleagues and I, alongside three community leaders who became the Yeoville Studio official partners, tried to streamline, direct and build bridges between these various projects. Chapter 3 reflects on the framing of the Studio, and positions it in the vast community-oriented literature.

The book alternates classically academic chapters and short, illustrated vignettes that present portraits – both visual and verbal – of people, places and urban practices. The vignettes are a way to echo, illustrate and enrich the chapters by bringing in the lived stories, framed by senior or junior scholars jointly with participating Yeoville residents. These vignettes are only the tip of the iceberg of a vast amount of knowledge produced on the neighbourhood, which was made public in Yeoville through reports, posters, workshops, events and other platforms. The images used have been constructed with the people they portray; they have been publicised and debated in several public spaces in Yeoville and at Wits University. This material is not, however, the focus of this specific book,[2] whose aim is to offer our reflections, as academics, on the practices of community-oriented research. The book therefore does not pretend to represent communities' voices, but reflects on the process of knowledge construction in interaction and in debate with these voices.

After this multi-pronged introduction (section A), the book is structured as follows.

Section B, 'Narrating: The politics of constructing local identities', corresponds to our point of entry into the neighbourhood. It shows how at first we were overwhelmed by stories, practices and experiences, which we needed to grasp and consolidate in order to introduce the Studio to our students. It also echoes the urge we felt to use the Studio's intervention to construct narratives of a neighbourhood that has a strong identity in spite of its fluidity and multiple centrifugal dynamics, to present the multiple voices we found on the way and the

various possible identities Yeoville leaders might embrace, consolidate or discard. Section B also speaks to a particular research thread – on urban memories – where reflecting on ordinary memories and understanding how everyday stories are collectively made sense of appeared important, both academically and politically. This concern echoes Terry Kurgan's project Hotel Yeoville, a public art intervention in the neighbourhood (Kurgan 2013), which had a greater focus on individual aspirations. Our research on memory culminated in the 2010 Yeoville Studio exhibition in the Yeoville Recreation Centre, where residents collectively expressed their pride in the neighbourhood being acknowledged, explored and represented through narratives and images that neither romanticised nor further stigmatised their neighbourhood.

Section C, 'Recommending: From understanding micro-politics to imagining policy', interrogates the relevance of our research for policy, attempting to articulate what academic in-depth engagement with Yeoville residents' practices, challenges and politics has taught us in our quest for more relevant and responsive design, planning, policy or management tools. It reflects on the challenges of bringing this knowledge and imagination into broader, supra-local policy discussion circles, at least in the short term, in a context where the municipality was not intending to intervene in the neighbourhood. It explores how planning, in particular, may imagine policy instruments from reflecting on residents' own practices – learning from informality's pragmatic responses to needs and to the scarcity of resources, without romanticising the inventiveness of the poor and ignoring the structural and practical flaws in their responses.

The final section of the book, 'Politicising: Community-based research and the politics of knowledge', is more explicitly reflexive, and focuses on the politics of knowledge. It includes reflections based on practices in multi-disciplinary engagements, a politics of knowledge internal to academia, brought about by the institutional positioning of the Studio but also by the very nature of the urban issues we were confronting. The section also analyses the politics of constructing knowledge in and with communities – gaps and bridges, alliances and competition, power, the risk of discredit and the construction of local legitimacy. By presenting our trials and errors, our disappointments and our hopes, our quest for responses and confrontation with new questions, we hope to foster debates and to better equip engaged scholarship and reflective activist communities with the research tools to engage in local politics, and with the political tools to conduct engaged research.

Notes

1   The third partner, the South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA), joined the partnership on the way, as its spokesperson, a resident and activist in Yeoville, understood the nature of the Studio and its potential benefits for traders.

2   Some of it can be found on the Yeoville Studio website: https://www.wits.ac.za/archplan /interdisciplinary-engagement/yeoville-studio-school-of-architecture-and-plan/.

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2 Introducing Yeoville: Context and representations

SOPHIE DIDIER AND CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

Greater Yeoville (hereafter, Yeoville), which includes the suburbs of Yeoville, Bellevue and Bellevue East, is located north-east of the inner city, and is part of the City of Johannesburg's Region F, which broadly encompasses the central business district (CBD) and the inner city (see figure 2.1). This peri-central neighbourhood, located only a couple of kilometres from the CBD, offers a built form and urban structure very distinct from neighbouring inner-city Hillbrow, which is easily identified by its residential high-rises in the Johannesburg landscape. It also stands in contrast to the lower-density mansion landscape of Observatory (Meyer 2002), further east of Yeoville and the CBD, starting at De la Rey Street. To the south, where it abuts the Ridge, Yeoville offers spectacular views of the CBD and Doornfontein, and to the north, it is bordered by a major artery of the inner city, Louis Botha Avenue, currently being redeveloped under the City's Corridors of Freedom Development scheme around the extension of the Rea Vaya bus-rapid-transit network (City of Johannesburg, undated).

The dense urban fabric of Yeoville is structured by a tight grid of narrow streets separating blocks of 50 x 100 metres, subdivided into, at the most, 20 plots. The area's building stock includes two- to four-storey apartment buildings, some of which are fine examples of the Art Deco period of Johannesburg (such as the Beacon Royal on Grafton Road), but most of which stem from the occasional 1960s and 1970s style of plot redevelopment that spilt over from neighbouring Berea (such as the Ralton Corner block of flats on Raleigh Street). Most of the building stock, however, consists of earlier, Edwardian detached houses with tin roofs and *stoeps* (front porches) located on tiny plots that often get subdivided to accommodate the
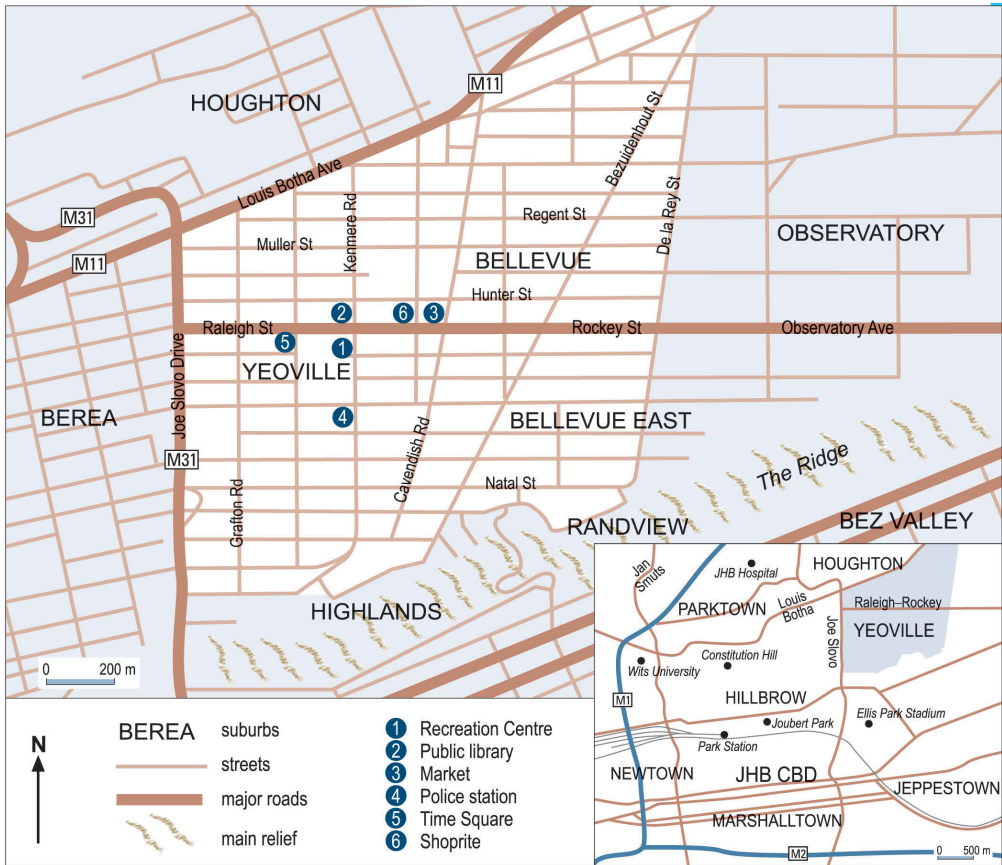
FIGURE 2.1: Locating Yeoville

Source: Didier 2018, based on Google Maps 2018, redrawn by Janet Alexander

construction of a number of backyard rooms and extensions. The general feel of the streets is that of a walkable and agreeable Joburg suburb, offering a distinct urban quality and a good balance of street atmospheres. The quiet and shaded Muller Street, lined with jacarandas and detached homes, for example, contrasts with the ever-busy Rockey-Raleigh Street, which acts as the main commercial and transportation spine. Most of the neighbourhood shopping activity is concentrated in Rockey-Raleigh Street, which is a composite of a string of 1900s canopied shopfronts housed on the ground floors of old one-storey buildings on the eastern end of Raleigh, banal 1970s mid-sized chain stores and restaurants such as Shoprite or Nando's, and the covered produce market built by the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) in the late 1990s. These formal areas of commerce are complemented on most of the residential streets by tiny spaza shops (informal convenience stores) carved out of residential units and offering basic sundries to their customers. Small restaurants and taverns abound in the area, some clustered in the corner block of Time Square, some developed from detached units on the main arteries. They cater to different communities of African customers, giving

Yeoville its unique attraction as a meeting point for foreign-born Africans in Johannesburg and beyond. Finally, numerous private schools, churches of all denominations, a police station, a swimming pool, several public parks and public amenities (such as the Recreation Centre restructured in the early 2000s by the JDA), as well as a taxi rank and numerous bus stops add to the neighbourhood's inner-city quality. A self-contained neighbourhood full of resources and public amenities, and well connected to the employment markets of downtown Johannesburg, it contrasts sharply with under-serviced communities in the peri-urban areas of the metropolis and raises very different questions in terms of public intervention.

Transformations

These coexisting generations of the built form as well as the functional mix are testament to a neighbourhood which has seemed desirable for several generations of Joburgers. Yeoville and Bellevue were founded in the early 1890s, and quickly attracted a working-class white population searching for housing opportunities close to the CBD (Roux 2010). The 1920s saw an influx of Jewish residents who had fled the European pogroms and settled in South Africa or simply relocated from more central areas of the city (Rubin 2004). In the following decades, Yeoville acquired its identity as a middle-class and aspiring neighbourhood, fairly tolerant and cosmopolitan (Harrison 2002). South Africans of southern European origins also chose Yeoville for residential and business purposes. Still, the Group Areas Act implemented in the 1950s profoundly altered this image of inner-city possibility for most non-white residents, who were barred from accessing the residential opportunities of the neighbourhood until, eventually, the growing contestation of the apartheid regime in the 1970s reconnected Yeoville with its tolerant tradition. A growing influx of black African residents (Jürgens et al. 2003) matched the rise of a booming cultural and deeply political scene. Yeoville evolved from a quiet suburb into a night-time hotspot in that period, with the opening of jazz and rock clubs such as Rumours in the 1970s, the Black Sun and La Tortu in the 1980s, as well as the short-lived jazz club of Hugh Masekela located in Piccadilly Centre in the early 1990s.

From the late-apartheid period onward, Yeoville's residential dynamics were in fact no different from that of the whole inner city, which became home to increasing numbers of black urban residents hailing from the city's townships and also from outside Johannesburg (Morris 1999; Guillaume 2001; Beavon 2004). Simultaneously, the white middle-class residents moved en masse to the northern suburbs, attracted by new suburban lifestyles as much as fleeing from what was perceived as increasing urban decay. This process was exacerbated when banks began redlining buildings in the inner city, preventing potential owners from acquiring property in the area. In the context of these very complex and superimposed demographic movements, for those who had left these neighbourhoods (or had never experienced them) a simplified narrative of fear and loss emerged around the inner city, rooted in fears of crime and, often, xenophobic suspicion around the African migrants

who began to congregate in Johannesburg's inner city. To a large extent this overarching narrative remains in place, 20-plus years on.

Over the years, census results for Yeoville show the racial transformation of the neighbourhood, with the proportion of self-identified black residents growing from 9.8 per cent in 1980 to 78 per cent in 2001, and the proportion of white residents falling from 89 per cent in 1980 to 15 per cent in 2001 (Jürgens et al. 2003; Smithers 2013). Simultaneously, the shift from a middle-class to a mostly lower-class population, combined with rapid population densification similar to that of the entire inner city of Johannesburg, has contributed to transforming the image of Yeoville from middle class and aspirant to its current image as a slum.

A neighbourhood in crisis?

Due to these rapid changes affecting the neighbourhood, linked to the general dynamics of inner-city Johannesburg, Yeoville has suffered from several major issues. In the late 1990s, this prompted the JDA's efforts to improve public facilities that had become inadequate to address the complex issues of the neighbourhood, which reflected more global social phenomena: suburbanisation and middle-class flight; migration and residential turnover; and densification and impoverishment, associated with urban decay. The Studio's community partners identified a number of core issues that still needed addressing as priorities in the late 2000s: the lack of housing opportunities stemming from population densification, the issue of diversity and the associated difficulty of pinpointing the neighbourhood's identity, the issue of trading opportunities and their development in both public and private spaces, inter alia. The neighbourhood is still generally reviled as 'declining', 'dirty' and a 'hotbed of criminality', and understood as a 'metanarrative for crisis' (Nuttal & Mbembe 2008). Yet Yeoville is not the most deprived neighbourhood in Johannesburg: census figures for Ward 64 (part of Yeoville and neighbouring Berea) are testament to its inner-city dimension with regards to the median income of its population – R29 400 per year, similar to that of Gauteng as a whole – a relatively high rate of employment due to its close proximity to employment resources, as well as relatively high levels of education (see table 2.1).

	Ward 64 Berea	Gauteng	South Africa
Median age	27	28	25
Median household annual income (R)	29 400	29 400	29 400
Born in South Africa (%)	55.00	88.00	93.00
Employed (%)	59.00	51.00	39.00
Completed matric (%)	56.00	51.00	39.00
Access to Internet (%)	60.00	46.00	39.00

TABLE 2.1: Census profile of a section of Yeoville, 2016
Source: Adapted from Wazimap (2016)
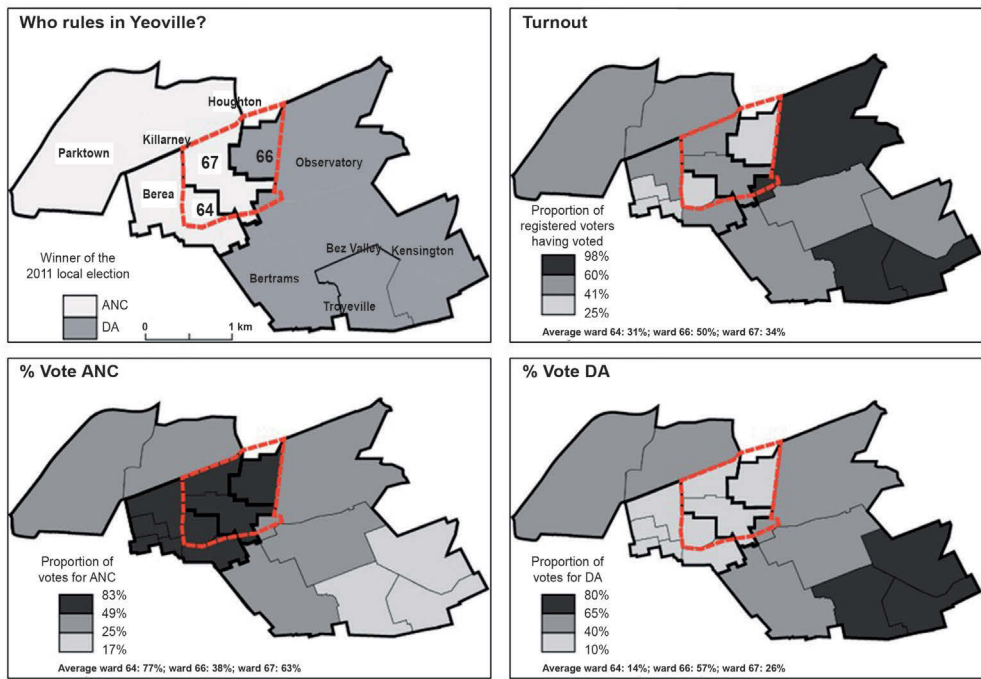
FIGURE 2.2: Yeoville political fragmentation

Source: Bénit-Gbaffou 2013, based on information from the Independent Electoral Commission website

Note: ANC = African National Congress; DA = Democratice Alliance

The number of residents in Yeoville today is unclear due to the political fragmentation of the neighbourhood into several wards, which also shapes the way census data are framed (see figure 2.2). Yeoville falls under three main electoral wards, causing community leader Maurice Smithers to argue that 'nobody really rules Yeoville', particularly since the three councillors belong to opposing political parties, which eventually taxes the coherence of a strategic vision for the area. Nonetheless, the population figure frequently given by community associations such as the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust is about 40 000 people, the result of continuing densification since the mid-1990s (Smithers 2013). Thus, identifying what a Yeoville constituency might want and what is to be done are central in this neighbourhood with a rapid turnover of population, active but fragmented community-based organisations, and a diversity of origins frequently excluding many from traditional local political representation.

Yeoville can also be depicted, perhaps less specifically than other inner-city neighbourhoods (such as Hillbrow), as a point of entry for several generations of migrants to the city – from Eastern European Jews fleeing the pogroms at the beginning of the twentieth century, to predominantly French-speaking Africans in the 2000s, to a broader variety of migrants hailing from the African continent today (Prabhala 2008), who maintain strong social networks at various scales. In the aftermath of the 2008 xenophobic attacks, a public art

initiative directed by artist Terry Kurgan (Kurgan 2013; Dodd & Kurgan 2013) aimed principally at giving foreign residents a degree of agency in their self-representation. Against the backdrop of the current contested discourse on foreignness in the country, some local activists consistently attempt to deconstruct the negativity of xenophobic discourses. Noting that the majority of Yeoville residents are currently foreign migrants,[1] Yeoville activists celebrate the neighbourhood's cosmopolitan dimension and aim to consolidate, formalise and even perhaps capitalise on what they term a pan-African identity.

Yeoville mythology

Yeoville is specifically a part of the mythology of transitional Johannesburg – the 'place to be' in the early 1990s, where political activists and the artistic vanguard would gather, where apartheid segregation was defeated less via the confrontation and open struggle of the townships, than by meeting and mingling across racial lines in spaces devoted to culture, arts, music and socialising (Harrison 2002; Jürgens et al. 2003; Smithers 2013; Bénit-Gbaffou 2014). It was a very short period in Yeoville's history, but it definitely helped define Johannesburg's collective identity as a city. Virtually all progressive intellectuals, artists and activists have had an experience of Yeoville. Most of the School of Architecture and Planning academic staff have lived or socialised in Yeoville at some point in time; most cherish the memories of the place, linked to a key moment when history and their own trajectory intertwined, at the crossroads of freedom, youth, encounters and possibilities. This representation has also nurtured discourses contrasting the liveliness and vibrancy of Yeoville with the crime and dangers of the neighbouring area of Hillbrow – which, in spite of an urban trajectory not dissimilar to Yeoville's, is nicknamed 'Hell-brow' and is still depicted, in popular fiction for instance, as the main crime hotspot of Johannesburg, if not of South Africa (see, inter alia, Mpe 2001; Beukes 2010; Moele 2011).

Yeoville dominant narratives, even when focused on crime and decay, depict it as a slum rather than a crime hotspot – highlighting its neighbourly and vibrant character despite its urban decay (Higgs 2012). Yeoville has been compared, not to Hillbrow (with all its undesirable connotations), but to what Sophiatown was prior to the 1960s. Sophiatown, a black suburb legendary for its dynamic culture, was erased by the apartheid administration, yet attained the status of myth as 'the creative slum', the ephemeral and unlikely place of racial and social mix, creative arts and politics (Hart & Pirie 1984; Gready 1990; Harrison et al. 2014). It also represents, in South African minds, a form of public space that has systematically been destroyed in the past. This systematic destruction occurred precisely at the time when Jane Jacobs (1961) vigorously questioned the meanings of 'slums' and advocated for their urban and social value.

But Sophiatown was celebrated as an ideal neighbourhood (racially mixed, lively, arty) only *after* it was destroyed, in a retrospective rather than in a contemporary appreciation. While we celebrate the idealised memory of Sophiatown as a public space, we neglect to interrogate what Sophiatown might have looked like in reality. A careful examination of Yeoville represents an opportunity to understand such neighbourhoods in all their complex

and contradictory dimensions. Yeoville might well be such a 'slum' – vibrant with life, diversity and inclusion, but not without its social tensions and urban ills.

Note

1   According to the 2011 census, about 50 per cent of Yeoville residents are foreign born (quoted in Smithers 2013). See also the statistics for Ward 64 in table 2.1.

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3 Exploring the politics of community-engaged research

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

South Africa is marked by a long history of relations between academia and broader society. It is known for the engagement of academics in the public sphere: in critiquing the apartheid system, in constructing post-apartheid visions, and in transforming society and institutions in support of social movements and marginalised groups (Spiegel et al. 1999; Dawson & Sinwell 2012). Such opportunities for engagement multiplied in the post-apartheid era, where the boundaries between academics, activists, experts and consultants become porous and blurred (Siméant 2002). This situation, prevalent in the 1990s and 2000s, had the exhilarating atmosphere of a frontier, of a new world being constructed, where it seemed possible to have a say, to play a role, to shape the future: where words and thoughts mattered and perhaps could change society.

Beyond South Africa, particularly in English-speaking academia, a vast literature has developed reflecting on the role of research in broader society. This has been given various names (public sociology, action research, participatory research, service learning, to name a few) within various disciplines (sociology and anthropology, and especially in the more applied disciplines, such as planning, design, architecture, health and education). The practice of involvement in social debates and in specific communities is currently becoming institutionalised across the world, via dedicated departments within universities, such as Service Learning, Community or Stakeholders Engagement, and Strategic Partnerships,

depending on local priorities and positioning. This is to be both celebrated and decried. It challenges the ivory towers of academia and prompts academics to engage in the challenging work of translating and justifying research to the broader society. But it also responds to an increasing, neoliberal questioning of educational institutions' 'value for money', requiring immediate and visible usefulness and applicability of all forms of knowledge production and pushing for the alignment of higher education with identifiable 'skills', the more technical and less critical knowledge assumed to be required by the market.

In this national and international context, no wonder an abundant literature has been generated on the matter. It is so vast that for a long time I have postponed the exercise of engaging with it. It is, however, not merely its expanse that had caused my reluctance: it is mostly its normative character, and often politically angelic posture on urban politics, that I find difficult to grapple with. The irritation I often feel reading it, traps me in the position of the cynic (which I am not) and does not equip the activist-academic (which I try to be) with useful guidance and inspiration. What follows, therefore, does not pretend to have engaged this entire literature, nor to accurately and synthetically cover all of its debates. It is a subjective selection of readings, responding to the excitements as well as the challenges, to the questions and the ad hoc decisions, and to the principles and the pragmatic compromises that I have been confronted with when directing the Yeoville Studio from the School of Architecture and Planning and Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies (CUBES)[1] at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, between 2010 and 2012.

Repoliticising our understanding of engaged, community-oriented research

Yeoville Studio was premised (the choice was made intuitively rather than philosophically) on the desire to produce knowledge that could be useful to local groups and residents – where we wished, as expressed in Margaret Abraham and Bandana Purkayastha, 'not only *to develop* knowledge that is more directly useful to the communities of people [we] seek to address, but [also] … to link *existing knowledge to practice*' (2012: 124, emphasis theirs).

Our aim, however, was not (at least initially) centred around community organising[2] as much as it was around research itself, considered our core skill. Yet we intended to go beyond the objective expressed by Abraham and Purkayastha, who 'envisage a sociology that is pertinent to the social group [they] work with and … *hope* that such research will lead to social action' (2012: 128, my emphasis).

We wanted to remain committed to research; to our core mandate as educators (Winkler 2013); and to our objective of facilitating and supporting communities' mobilisation a bit further than just 'hoping' they would find a way to use research results. We attempted to construct sustained partnerships systematically with specific local community structures and groups, starting with those where a relationship already existed, growing and consolidating trust – sometimes to the level of friendship with their leadership – and expanding the partnership to other relevant social groups along the way.

I understand 'community' here as a group that expresses a common identity or goal in the public realm. In Yeoville Studio this existing, emerging or contested 'community' was place-bound, framing its boundaries around local urban issues (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book). But it was important to understand – and I assumed this from the start, theoretically (as a researcher) and practically (as a former activist in the area) – that Yeoville public spaces and communities were shaped by a multiplicity of forces and dynamics, not all of which could be considered progressive, democratic and non-violent.[3]

Looking for guidance: A growing unease with literature on service learning

When reading literature on university–community engagements at large, I have felt a growing unease with what I see as a disconnect between a highly normative literature on academics' duties towards 'communities' and social change on the one hand, and the basic tenets of urban studies on the other, attentive to the messy politics of communities, the complex dynamics of urban change, the possibilities marred with challenges of local political mobilisation and collective agency.

This vast literature on service learning simultaneously celebrates its intention to drive social change and promote justice, and criticises academics' power position and insufficient challenge of the socio-economic status quo. It emphasises the need to respect, elevate and empower a mythical and authentic 'community' that academics are accused of instrumentalising (as a research laboratory from which they 'extract' the data that they will use for their own careers); of patronising (through a politics of charity, of othering and condescension); and of oppressing through the imposition of an unquestioned institutional expertise. *A contrario*, a strong, normative emphasis is given to researchers' accountability to the 'community', as well as to their duty to deconstruct the process of knowledge production and their own position as experts.

This focus is to be understood as a criticism of modernist research practices, masking power relations behind an unproblematised definition of 'the truth', and the detrimental effect they have in some instances on the groups and communities they are researching, particularly in post- or neocolonial contexts. It is crucial to foreground imbalances of social and institutional power between academics and the (often marginalised) communities they engage with, not only in social sciences as a whole, but also in the more specific framing of academic research practices, from ethics procedures to epistemological and methodological reflections.

Whilst service learning literature denounces exploitative or extractive research practices and stresses the risks of harm and instrumentalisation, the counter-models put forward generally imply a romantic view of 'communities', 'agency' and 'change' that is potentially detrimental to their relevance. Getting involved in community-oriented research requires a level of (self-)blinding, optimism and hope, and a staunch belief in the power of agency and the possibility of change. But one is arguably a better researcher and a better activist with a deeper understanding of social and political dynamics at different levels of urban societies; with the constant awareness that the challenges of urban change cannot be seen only through the lens of heroic (individual or collective) action; and with an explicit engagement with the complex modalities of community organising in various contexts.

How and where, then, could I learn to better navigate these two challenges: community politics and the nature of knowledge production? Where could I find inspiration, guidance, advice? Disappointingly, it has *not* been in the engaged research literature so far – but in confronting this literature with a research methodology and a reading of reflexive literature, in sociology, anthropology and political studies mainly, focusing on 'dangerous' or 'sensitive' topics, sites and fieldwork.

Bringing literature on 'sensitive research fields' into the picture

Sensitive research has been defined as 'research which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who have been involved in it' (Lee & Lee 2012). I have therefore been looking for academics' reflection on conducting research in conflict or post-conflict zones, in violently divided societies, or in groups that do not generally attract researchers' sympathy (such as extreme right-wing, fundamentalist groups, xenophobic movements, groups engaging in violent actions). This literature is research-focused: less driven than the former by the desire to act or redress specific and structural positions of marginality or oppression – it is not necessarily engaged beyond the minimum objective of 'not harming' the individuals under study, although it is generally inspired by the broad ideal of social justice and change. It does not purposefully reflect on the duty to provide feedback and access to knowledge, but reflects on the challenges and the harm that 'making the invisible visible' can cause (instrumentally, through their access to the site, but also altruistically, for their informants and the groups they have been researching). This reflection on extreme cases usefully unpacks knowledge production and its politics in contexts of uncertainty, partial trust, and multiple uses of knowledge by a variety of groups – sometimes for sinister, exclusionary and violent aims. It problematises the question of accountability, of incomplete transparency, of researchers' difficult negotiation around proximity and distance, openness and reserve, in ways that service learning literature is oblivious to and, I argue, could gain from.

This literature problematises further the rapport[4] between researchers and communities – unavoidably marked by power imbalances – by focusing on contexts where power dynamics are shifting, multiple and multi-directional, especially when one starts understanding communities as marked by internal power struggles, in which knowledge and the relationship with the researcher are likely to become a stake.

As illustrated by Obvious Katsaura in this book, different types of knowledge are developed in local arenas and used in various situations of competition for power. An initiative such as Yeoville Studio alters, disturbs or fuels existing local struggles in which information, knowledge, recognition and networks form part of leaders' political capital in highly competitive sites (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014). Community leaders have developed entrenched political skills that are used to instrumentalise and sometimes manipulate the researchers who, on the local terrain, often actually find themselves dominated. Witnessing these political games – understanding each step as it unfolds (or afterwards) without being able to foresee or influence it (as in a chess game), being played, as an activist and later as a researcher, as 'the ball in a ping-pong game' (Bénit-Gbaffou 2010) – is actually what initially triggered my fascination for leadership and political capital in South African cities, displayed

in marginalised neighbourhoods as a major resource and a truly spectacular skill (Auyero 1999; Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014; Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book). These power relations also shift in time. During the fieldwork stage, researchers are actually in a position of dependency – requesting access, respondents' time, their knowledge and their networks. It is during the writing and publication stage that they regain a dominant position (Lepoutre 2001), distancing themselves in the way that some argue is essential to the process of research itself.

What these considerations reveal more broadly is that the power involved in the relationship between academics and communities is diffuse, shifting, multi-directional and complex, shaped by multiple agencies and sites of struggle in which the rules of the game are unclear and diverse. Engaging in community-oriented research requires understanding some of these dynamics, equipped with more detailed analytical frameworks than the simple dichotomy of extractive academics versus victimised 'communities'. It requires clarifying to these communities some of the rules of the academic field, but also unpacking, as an object of research, the stakes and the rules of the local political field. Understanding this local field arms the researcher with an enhanced ability to configure research directions and research communication in a way that is efficient for collective mobilisation and political action – even if academics' role here might only be to crystallise or frame a debate on issues where no consensus, no common vision exists. Stoecker (1999), for instance, interestingly differentiates academic roles depending on the nature and level of organisation of the local 'community'. What he fails to fully uncover, however, is the process through which knowledge of community dynamics is constructed, which he equates perhaps too rapidly with academics' own skills or inclinations, according to how 'good' or 'bad' they are at community organisation.

Partial trust, differentiated accountabilities, empathic disagreements

Much of the service learning literature urges researchers to directly involve 'communities' in every step of the knowledge production process, from research framing to data collection and analysis and access to data produced. But it does so uncritically, as a matter of universal principle, independently of the local context. In contrast, literature on sensitive research explicitly includes a reflection on contexts to frame knowledge production processes, and advises on the importance of distance, protection, mediation, translation and screening of the data collected throughout the research.

In this respect, Anuradha Chakravarty (2012), working on post-genocide Rwanda and community courts, usefully discusses 'partial trust' between the researchers and their informants (a grouping that it is difficult to call a 'community', and yet in which information and rumors flow, with potentially damaging consequences for them). By acknowledging this type of situation without framing it in terms of ethics and academic domination, she allows, and legitimises, careful consideration of the politics of knowledge construction and dissemination.

Dorothy Hodgson (1999) usefully coins the term 'differentiated accountabilities' when unpacking her political and moral dilemma. Her research on an indigenous group oppressed by

the national state uncovered its internal oppressive practices, in particular along gender lines. Was she to silence the mechanics of internal gender oppression, in order not to jeopardise the movement's claims confronting the state, or its legitimacy vis-à-vis its international donors? Who was she ultimately accountable to: the broader indigenous movement, or the oppressed indigenous women?

This talks more broadly to what Philippe Bourgois usefully termed 'the violence of moral binaries', quoting Loic Waquant's 'unwritten "code of writing about the poor" in American social science that produces moralistic and depoliticized accounts of urban marginality' (2002: 229). Wacquant reflects on the risk of further stigmatising the poor when describing and analysing the dark or ugly side of their everyday practices: where often the victims of structural violence also become perpetrators of violence. This unwritten code of writing about communities seems even stronger in engaged research – why would researchers engage with groups whose struggle they do not support, who are not 'the good guys'? Yet researchers engage with selected partners in highly complex sites and communities where power dynamics, and forms of violence that researchers cannot ignore, thrive. The distinction between 'good guys' and 'bad guys' might not always be so simple to draw (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014).

Faced with this question, Hodgson (1999) proposed the concept of 'differentiated accountabilities'. She resolved to stress different layers of oppression, depending on the context of the public presentation, so that she could trigger different debates with different 'communities'.[5] To complement this concept, I found David Gordon's (1987) concept of 'empathic disagreement' useful. He uses it in situations where the researcher's own position (academic or political) differs from that of the group he is embroiled with in a process of ethnographic research, and creates a space where disagreement, implicit or explicit, is not necessarily seen as betrayal or double dealing. Reflecting on and actively preparing for the reception of ideas and texts by researched groups (Lepoutre 2001) is also helpful in deciphering with whom such conversation can unfold, with whom 'empathic disagreement' can occur, and to whom we are accountable as researchers.

Yeoville as a 'sensitive terrain'

Can Yeoville be described as a 'sensitive terrain'? The question emerged during the research on spaza shops and the issue of xenophobia.[6] What might have happened if we had widely publicised a map locating all spaza shops in the area, in a context where these spaza shops are predominantly run by foreign migrants, and where their 'illegal' status (as shop owners or as foreigners or both) renders them vulnerable to practices of racketeering by a variety of local groups and institutions? In a context where some groups openly make xenophobic statements and threaten to take the law into their own hands?[7] In a context where local discourses to fight the informalisation of Yeoville were growing, with at times strong xenophobic accents (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014)?

It is not that these spaza shops and their owners are not known in practice by all Yeoville residents. But the objectification and visibilisation of their presence through a map could, we thought, produce new political dynamics – for instance, simply by the revelation of their

number and spatial extension.[8] Should we abstain from conceptualising or producing these maps altogether, because their use by certain groups could lead to violence? Was it illegitimate and irrelevant research? Were we 'patronising' because we assumed a duty to judge 'good' or 'bad' uses of research findings by community groups? Balancing the need 'not to harm' with the desire to give the broadest public possible knowledge that could inform its democratic practices is a tricky exercise that the normative injunction to transparency and the naïve, simplistic conceptualisation of 'communities' does not help with.

How far did our responsibility extend? I discussed these challenges informally with involved students, colleagues and some of the Studio community partners, relying also on my own experience of activism in the field of xenophobia – by no means a neutral position. I intuitively adopted what Kovats-Bernat (2002: 214) calls a 'localised ethics': 't[aking] stock of the good advice and recommendations of the local population in deciding what conversations (and silences) were important, what information was too costly'.

It became clear that such information would definitely talk to the local debates, but the conditions for it to be used in constructive and non-violent ways were not guaranteed. When there was disagreement with one of our partners, we discussed it more privately with him, found agreement and understanding in some respects, and agreed to disagree in others.

Bringing reflexive literature on sensitive research into dialogue with literature on engaged research means repoliticising our reflection on community–academic engagements. Beyond the sole deconstruction of academic power and dominance, towards a more complex analysis of the politics of the relationship. Beyond the depiction of a virtuous community, towards an understanding of its internal politics and the place an engaged research initiative might take in the existing, but dynamic, local political field. Beyond generic normative principles, towards a situated ethics. Beyond universal and simple accountability, towards multiple and differentiated accountabilities.

Questioning the politics of the relationship between academia and local communities in their grounded context and suspending too many normative preconceptions is necessary. This leads to an interrogation of the 'partnership' as a constructed process involving forms of transaction (Cunliffe & Alcadipani 2016) where the terms of the exchange are framed and reframed, in the course of the relationship, with a degree of clarity but also of necessary haziness and silencing, openness and uncertainty – perhaps as in each human relationship.

Is this a cynical take? The experience of Yeoville Studio was about learning how to navigate and construct the terms of the exchange – managing expectations as is usual ('no, we are not able to sort out your difficult relationship with an abusive landlord'), but also co-constructing, with selected groups identified initially and encountered along the way, which research could be useful to them and how this research could be framed and communicated to facilitate and support such uses. In other words, defining the groups one works with, as well as the terms of the exchange (which might be different for different groups), is a process that can hardly be defined in advance, and requires specific attention and focused effort on the part of the partnership coordinators (academics and community leadership) all along the way.

Locating Yeoville Studio in the confused terrain of community-oriented research

My discomfort with key assumptions made by most literature on service learning, and what I have analysed above as its puzzling disconnect with local politics, means that, initially, I attempted only minimally to theorise and locate the Studio within this literature. My framing of it has been intuitive, situated, flexible. Locating Yeoville Studio in the literature of engaged research is therefore an exercise undertaken after the fact. It is only now, a few years after the official end of Studio's research and pedagogic activities (but not its political support to organisations, which is ongoing), that I am able to locate the choices I made as Yeoville Studio director[9] in the academic field that I am about to present, in broad brushstokes, below.

Mapping the terrain

One cannot but feel a degree of confusion when looking at the diversity of terms used to designate practices of community-oriented research, and the often discipline-specific but always heated debates each of those terms has triggered in academia: participatory research (PR), participatory action research (PAR), collaborative action research, community-based research, community-oriented research, action research, engaged research, service learning, community engagement (CE), and so on. Some of those terms have gained the status of acronyms, testimony to their institutionalisation and mainstreaming. Many new terms are coined in order to criticise and add a layer of 'authenticity' or 'radicalism' to previous experiences of engaged research (see, for instance, Morton 1995; Marullo & Edwards 2000; Mitchell 2008; Blouin & Perry 2009; Tinkler 2012). Kerry Strand et al. (2003: 5), for instance, propose 'a community-based research (CBR) model that is *genuinely* collaborative and driven by community *rather than campus interests*; that democratizes the creation and dissemination of knowledge; and that seeks to achieve positive social change' (my emphasis).

However, this is not the place for me to debate further the genealogy and the politics of this fragmented field. I only attempt here to make some sense of this diversity, through locating each of these approaches of 'engaged research' (which is the broader, more encompassing term that I will adopt for now) between three poles I have selected, emphasising where the priority of the engaged research lies.[10] These three poles are represented by the three points of a triangle in figure 3.1.

First, is the focus mostly about the research *product*, and the research value of the knowledge produced – sanctioned in a (more or less conventional) academic field? Or, second, is it mostly about the research *process*, and how it empowers community organisations, how it equips marginalised groups with knowledge and empowers them to appropriate the research process and results? Or, third, is it primarily about the concrete political efficiency of the action based on research – about driving social change?[11]

This question could also be asked in terms of how the initiative might be assessed: has it produced new research insights that are more in touch than 'traditional research' is with issues of the contemporary world? Has it challenged and shaken the research production process,
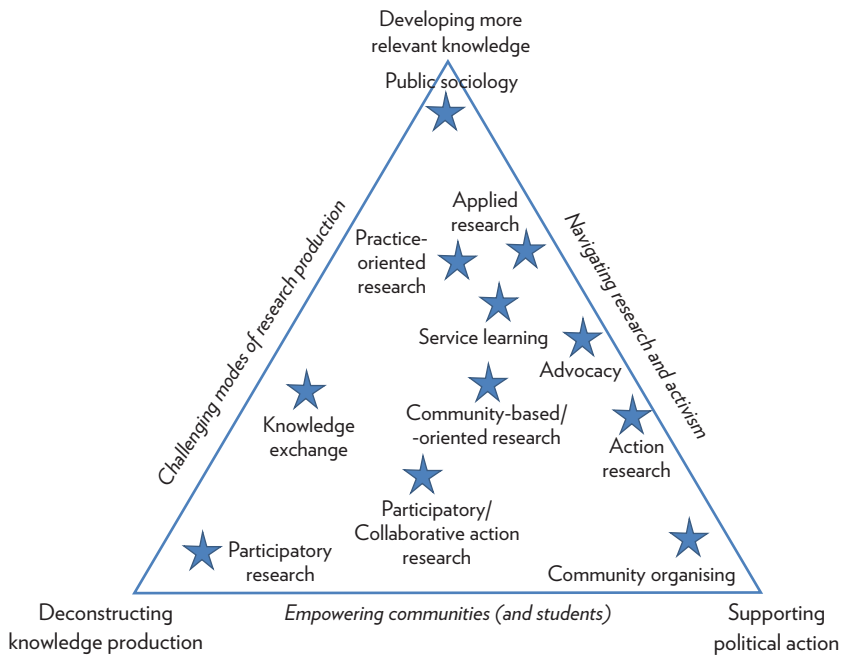
FIGURE 3.1: Forms of engaged research according to main objective

Source: Author

developed and equipped communities or individuals with knowledge and tools to better analyse their environments and challenge the status quo? Has it led to significant changes – material or symbolic – in the physical or political space for the communities involved?

Towards the 'Developing more relevant knowledge' point of the triangle (focusing on the research product), engaged research is primarily a labour of translation through demystifying discipline jargon, expressing ideas in public platforms and media, making explicit or constructing the linkages between research and contemporary issues, and unsettling the spaces and the format in which researchers usually publicise their research. Close to that vision would be the debates around public sociology (Burawoy 2005) and public anthropology (Lassiter 2008), which aim at enlisting the discipline 'in a larger stream of public issues, concerns, and debates; cultivat[ing] a more aggressive public presence through print and other media; and enlarg[ing] public outreach, which may or may not be meant to influence public policy' (Lassiter 2008: 71).

Applied research, focusing on solving concrete issues but not necessarily in partnership with beneficiaries or users (and not unsettling the position of the researcher as expert), would be close to this position in the triangle – but with a redefinition of research towards less theoretical objects and issues. Practice-oriented research and service learning would be similarly positioned, with an emphasis on the training of students and professionals (as future experts) 'instilling in students the values of community and social responsibility' (quoted in Mitchell 2008: 50). Advocacy research also considers academics as experts, but implies their more direct engagement in political spaces, without necessarily involving direct community engagement.

Towards the 'Deconstructing knowledge production' point of the triangle (focused mostly on the research process), engaged research means challenging the status of academic knowledge, deconstructing truth and expertise by considering diverse sets of situated stories and knowledge as different, relative and equally legitimate forms of truth. This conception of knowledge is embodied in the term 'knowledge exchange', for instance. Collaborative or participatory research 'deliberately and *explicitly* emphasizes collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it – from project conceptualization, to fieldwork, and, especially, through the writing process' (Lassiter 2008: 74, emphasis his). It is focused on empowering and actually training groups of residents or micro-communities, responding to issues of power inequality and knowledge production processes, but also to questions of the legacy of the engagement (through skills transfer), and emphasising community mobilisation and autonomous capacity. It is about supporting residents to become, individually or collectively, the agent of their own neighbourhood's understanding, documentation and change. The attention to the process and authorship of knowledge production is central; the research objective is to foster debate amongst community members (individual or collective), reflection based on their own lived experience, and an ability to voice and communicate these lived experiences – which constitutes one form but by no means all forms of research. Change is conceived of mostly at the individual transformation level, following a Chambers-inspired understanding of change, where confidence, legitimacy, and enhanced skills are key to encourage individuals to consolidate their own agency. It can take the form of research training (such as participating in or conducting mapping, surveys and interviews), and/or training in communication and representation of ideas (be it through writing workshops, design, video, photography or art training). Such shared knowledge production processes have been explored in several initiatives in South Africa (following, explicitly or not, the principles of Paolo Freire), including direct skills training sessions for community members (Winkler 2013), joint research with a technical training component (Oldfield 2008; Wheeler 2009), and initiatives involving social media, communication and open-source access to knowledge (Charman 2012; Weakley 2013). As stressed by Lassiter (2008), this type of engaged research is perhaps particularly relevant where social groups are confronted with, or structuring their mobilisation around, issues of identity and representation – and when engaged research is centred on legitimising and supporting different, alternative voices. Integrating those voices into knowledge production and fields is a means of legitimising and institutionalising their claims.

Around the third point of the triangle, 'Supporting political action' (mainly about driving social change), the emphasis of engaged research is about supporting political action for social justice, through research but also through community organising. 'Advocacy research' entails academics' direct use of research evidence in political arenas and decision-making sites. This can be done jointly, or separately from the groups the research aims to benefit. Action research entails direct intervention in political action with an emphasis on community mobilisation, consolidated and supported by the research process; more than advocacy, it entails direct academic support for communities making their own claims, in their own voice. Collaborative action research goes a step further in this direction, emphasising partnerships

between academics and communities, with a joint focus on unsettling knowledge production processes and supporting collective political action based on research.

Community-based and community-oriented research are perhaps less specific, implying different forms of direct engagement with communities without specifying the aim (research product, research process or political action) or the degree of engagement with communities (subject or object of research). The latter term implies a sense that research should be useful to communities, is aimed at them: this is the term I prefer to use to characterise the Yeoville Studio, together with engaged research (which does not account for the community, local dimension of Studio).

Yeoville Studio's modes of engagement

I initially envisaged Yeoville Studio mostly around the first type of engaged research: producing locally relevant research that could support community claims to influence their own environment. This was how I generally presented the objective of the Studio in various community and public settings. The intention was not to become directly and actively involved in Yeoville politics and struggles. This was linked to the form of the Studio, where a variety of students (junior and senior) and staff would participate, some more accustomed to classic research and classwork, in a multiplicity of themes and projects. Beyond my own preferences, exposed earlier, the sheer scale and diversity of the Studio was therefore not conducive to the depth of engagement required by co-production of research. If there were formal partnerships with specific local organisations (as done by Oldfield [2008] or Winkler [2013]), they were not to be exclusive, and many class projects focused on specific themes explored other groups and relationships. Overall, some analytical distance needed to be kept, vis-à-vis a vast array of groups with different interests and politics.

In retrospect, however, Yeoville Studio was actually located between the first and the third 'poles' of engaged research. The Studio paid specific attention to community organisation and mobilisation, working towards framing research interactively. It put specific effort and resources into communicating selected, relevant research findings in support of specific groups, in direct conversation with them but also accompanying them in various public spaces and political arenas.[12] In so doing the Studio sometimes crossed the blurred line of our initial academic reserve to become almost a local political agent, at the neighbourhood and the City levels (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011).

Of course, these ideal types of engaged research, or the three objectives, were mixed in practice, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there was the size and scale of Yeoville Studio, in terms of the number of students and staff involved, the diversity of their expertise and the unevenness of their ease with, or interest in, community engagement.[13] This meant that several forms of engaged research were explored in practice. Unlike a single researcher engaging with one site in a small team for short or discrete periods of time, where engagement can be focused and channelled, Yeoville Studio was a relatively loose network of multiple initiatives happening almost continuously over two years. In this context, it was not merely that coordination was a daunting task: homogenisation of forms of community engagement (beyond certain core principles such as honesty, protection of sources, management of expectations, and explicit

feedback and communication of research findings[14]) would have crushed the variety of initiatives, ideas and talent brought by the various staff, students and community members involved in each subproject. Some projects and individuals were focused on research co-production, structured around design, mapping or photography workshops.[15] Most were about framing research according to levels of understanding of neighbourhood issues, and translating this research into 'outputs' or events to foster various forms of collective debate.[16] Others were less directly participatory but still reflected on policy or project proposals, some of which were presented to and debated with local authorities and professionals.[17]

Secondly, various modes of engaged research have been used over time within the same project or with the same community groups. Didier and Roux's co-production workshops on identities and places have led in a second, related project to the production of tour guides on a variety of themes, which were made available to local community members as a potential resource for income-generating activities in the field of tourism, and as a tool for potentially changing perceptions about Yeoville and its slum reputation in Johannesburg. One of our partners, the chair of Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), Maurice Smithers, was centrally involved in the design and finalisation of these maps, used them once or twice with a number of local tour guides,[18] and even mentioned the possibility of getting public funding to further train local tour guides. However, the initiative was short-lived, and did not survive the end of the Studio.

Another shift occurred in a project involving engaged research on street trading. What started as research on representations and uses of street trading, which was presented in local debates on the place of street trading in Yeoville main street and was used by trader leaders, continued and expanded in years following the Studio, and turned into both forms of advocacy, where research findings were presented by academics to city officials, and training workshops organised for trader leaders, in the aftermath of Operation Clean Sweep in 2013.[19]

Setting up and coordinating partnerships in Yeoville Studio

The opportunity for setting up Yeoville Studio was opened by the availability of strategic funding from Wits, which the then Head of School of Architecture and Planning, Alan Mabin, had applied for. This was complemented by research funding from the School of Architecture and Planning; from the French Institute for South Africa (IFAS), who were interested in the specific theme of urban memories; and, in 2011, from the Goethe-Institut, who were interested in public events on the broad theme of the city. The funding (R500,000 over two years in total) was used mostly to pay for a Studio administrator (postgraduate students from the School: Naomi Roux in 2010 and Simon Mayson in 2011) who helped to coordinate Studio activities; to pay for various outputs, academically and community oriented (workshops, events, exhibitions, posters, photographs, scale models, publication in the local newsletter, books); and, to a minor extent, to fund a teaching replacement for me (as directing the Studio was extraordinarily time-consuming) as well as some payment for community members involved in the Studio.

This funding was key in starting a City Studio of this scope, involving so many students, staff and class projects over two years. It gave both certainty and flexibility in the making and direction of the Studio. Whilst this required a daunting amount of coordination within the School from my side (interaction with lecturers and students, attendance and participation in colleagues' classes, negotiated framing of the courses and their outputs, meetings to share information and assess progress, the collection of class reports and translation into publishable documents), what I would like to reflect upon here is the setting of the Studio in Yeoville, the choice of community partners, the joint and shifting definition of its strategic direction, and the (never perfect) attempts to ground the Studio in the Yeoville broader community.

Choosing a site and community partners

Yeoville was chosen for a number of reasons. The primary – and very practical – reason was my familiarity with the neighbourhood. Firstly, I had lived in Yeoville for periods of several months (in 1997 and later in 2004), and I had conducted research there between 2003 and 2005), with an activist dimension to the research (I ended up mediating the presence of French-speaking African migrant organisation leadership in the Yeoville Community Policing Forum). Secondly, I had engaged in Yeoville as an activist, as a founding member and general secretary (2008–2009) of the African Diaspora Forum (ADF), an organisation founded in 2008 in the midst of the xenophobic attacks sweeping the country. On this basis, I had already some knowledge of the area, some sense of its space and its politics, its urban challenges and its vibrancy, and I had worked with a number of civil organisation leaders, including Maurice Smithers, a founding member and executive committee member of ADF, and also the director of YBCDT, which was to become the first community partner in Yeoville Studio. Before I expand on this partnership, I need to mention a third practical reason that consolidated the choice of Yeoville for the Studio: it was attractive to both Wits staff and students. Many, if not most, staff members had lived or spent time in Yeoville in the early 1990s, which gave them a degree of familiarity with, or nostalgia for, the neighbourhood. Moreover, Yeoville was close to Wits, accessible for students via public transport – they could go to the neighbourhood on their own, outside of class trips, to conduct their research or engage with community members. Furthermore, the neighbourhood was vibrant, full of cafés and affordable restaurants, which made spending time in the area natural and perhaps even attractive to them, in spite of some initial fears and prejudice.

Returning to the pre-existing networks and establishing the community partnership, I can never stress enough how crucial Maurice Smithers's role was in crystallising this Studio. A long-term community activist, having set up a number of civil society organisations (Smithers 2013),[20] and director of the YBCDT, he was strongly supportive of a Studio initiative. In my eyes, this partnership with YBCDT was ideal. We shared an objective – developing public and collective debates around Yeoville urban futures and mobilising communities around urban projects, which research produced by the Studio could assist in triggering.

Whilst YBCDT was crucial as the initial partner for the Studio at the end of 2009, the partnership shifted along the way. A second partner, Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), a forum of local civic organisations, chaired by George Lebone,[21] was expected to broaden

the partnership beyond the YBCDT (an NGO, not a community organisation, and very much organised around the person of Maurice) to various sections of Yeoville civil society, from women's groups, migrant and faith-based organisations, to environmental groups. This broadening happened to some extent, and during the first year, YSF was very involved in the Studio, participating in a number of projects. But in 2011, YSF stopped being functional; its monthly meetings became increasingly irregular, and then stopped completely. An unexpected third partner emerged at the beginning of 2011: the South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA), a street trader organisation, in the person of Edmund Elias, its spokesperson. SANTRA fully understood, shaped and made use of the resources that the Studio could provide, and established a partnership with Wits that still exists today.

Grounding the Studio in Yeoville

The idea for a Studio in Yeoville was publicly presented to the YSF annual general meeting at the end of 2009, where it was well received by the members. A broad discussion with its affiliate members was subsequently organised, in early 2010, in an inaugural Yeoville Café.[22] Wits staff members, students and residents sat around the table to identify, debate and draw the research themes that would intersect residents' concerns and academic skills and specialisations, initially in the planning, architecture and design disciplines, but soon opening up to include geography, history and anthropology.

The themes identified in this café (Yeoville memories, public spaces, African diversity and housing) became the four (overlapping but distinct) threads structuring the Studio. These threads were particularly important internally to Wits (and to me as Studio director), to give direction to the diversity of class projects and course topics.

The first theme, renamed 'Yeoville stories', corresponded to a strong existing research interest in urban memories, but also echoed residents' discussions on Yeoville's identity – their concerns about decay and rapid urban change, their understanding of the various migration waves that were shaping the area, and their outrage at hearing Yeoville represented as a 'slum'. It was also an entry point for the Studio, as hearing, crafting, capturing and documenting people's stories, trajectories and lived experiences of spaces and places was key to further understanding the other issues the Studio was to focus on. Linked to this theme, but within the frame of 'African diversity', were a number of projects that became prominent because of the context – 2010 being the year of the Soccer World Cup, which was celebrated as the 'African World Cup'. The question of embracing, if not celebrating, Yeoville as a 'pan-African' neighbourhood, and a counter-model to the xenophobic tensions marking other areas, became topical. 'Yeoville stories' became the focus of the first Yeoville Studio exhibition, curated by Naomi Roux at the end of 2010 – a moment of residents' self-awareness and pride that was palpable, surprised that the Studio had managed to avoid the two shortcomings of stigmatisation and romanticisation of their neighbourhood. 'Narrating Yeoville' has subsequently become the theme of section B of this book.

The focus of this first year had also been necessary to establish Yeoville Studio's presence in the neighbourhood. Information about the Studio permeated only very slowly, and it was

only after the first year and half that a significant number of Yeoville residents seemed to be aware of our activities. We actively worked on providing information and feedback on the Studio's activities and progress, negotiating a permanent space (a shop window, nicknamed the fish tank) in Yeoville Library, where we would exhibit posters and announcements. However, this was not the most efficient way of communicating. Systematic attendance of monthly ward public meetings, monthly YSF meetings, and other public meetings proved to be more effective. There, the chairpersons would often give us a brief platform to present Studio activities and events – but also, perhaps even more importantly, to answer questions and explain what the Studio could or could not provide: 'No, I can't solve your housing issue, but I could document what is wrong in the management of your building, if you are interested in your building being a case study for this research.' This systematic presence in various public meetings in the area was key in refining the Studio's objectives[23] – in our as well as in participants' views – as, once it was clarified what the Studio was (research support for a variety of causes), interested parties could easily approach us and unrealistic expectations would stop coming up. The widely distributed YBCDT community newsletter, *Yeovue News*, which we used to report on our research or to announce our public events, also supported us in our endeavour to publicise the Studio and open it up for engagement and debate. Our public events were another way of translating the research – in the form of street posters, workshops, exhibitions, interactive scale models and mapping, as well as photo competitions – to open it up for community debates.

After this first year of the Studio, during which a number of ad hoc meetings were organised with partner leaders and other groups (around specific subprojects), I reconvened with the two organisation leaders, Maurice Smithers and George Lebone, to reflect on the past year and strategise research directions for the second year of the Studio. Both suggested that the Studio should focus on more practical and urgent issues, and could usefully explore solutions and ways forward on what they saw as two of the most pressing issues at the time: street trading (that was still unauthorised on the main street, and therefore not managed other than through cycles of repression and laissez-faire, although the City was starting an engagement with all stakeholders) and decaying buildings (termed 'bad buildings'), which were at the centre of many residents' concerns and about which both organisations felt powerless.

Under the theme of 'public spaces', a focus on trading thus became a key driver for the Studio in 2011. This reshaped the format of the community partnership, as SANTRA's spokesperson, Edmund Elias, an inner-city trader living in Yeoville and a street-trading activist, became involved. Edmund very quickly understood how research findings could be used to support the cause of trading as a whole, and of street trading in particular. More so than the two other partners, whose mandates were more diverse and perhaps at times scattered, Edmund had a focused struggle – the recognition of 'the people's economy', the legalisation of street trade and its management. There was an easier convergence of a variety of research projects: on perceptions of street trading, portraits of traders, street-appropriate trading stalls design, market dynamics, spaza shops, models of informal trading management, to mention but a few. We developed a strong partnership and an ongoing dialogue in which research and political mobilisation were constantly connected. The final Yeoville Studio exhibition, in the

Yeoville Recreation Centre at the end of 2011, was focused on street trading, with models of trading stalls exhibited in Yeoville Park, interactive scale models of the street questioning the dominant discourse that pavements were too narrow to trade, explorations of street-trading management models, and 'Tomato Stories' demonstrating the effect of street-trading repression on the limited diversity of trade. However, it was mostly in subsequent years, after the official end of the Studio, that this partnership between academics and activists yielded some results – modest in terms of the working conditions of local street traders, which have not changed in the context of a municipality still determined to severely restrict street trading, but perhaps important in terms of public discourse and the legitimation of the sector.

On the fourth theme, 'housing', it was more complicated to establish a similarly focused partnership as the sector was extremely fragmented, in a context of limited state intervention, with weak tenant mobilisation in the neighbourhood – or even across the inner city – apart from sinister forms (connected to criminal elements, or marked by xenophobic tendencies). Many studies were conducted by students and staff, sometimes in interactive and participatory workshops with our partner community organisations, documenting residential trajectories, forms of densification and building management.[24] The links between this research and local politics and mobilisation were less immediate, but took the form of a series of workshops with City officials and housing professionals, coordinated by Sarah Charlton.[25]

Assessing Yeoville Studio?

How to assess Yeoville Studio? Without succumbing to the neoliberal fashion of adopting a 'cost-recovery' logic, or an 'evaluation and monitoring' gaze, it is a legitimate, puzzling and interesting question to ask. If engaged research is to be assessed according to the actual social change it triggered (as seems to be the direction taken by many authors critically looking at service learning), perhaps we should stop engaged research entirely. Whilst most service learning literature makes grand claims for its objective of structural change, a fight for justice and trust in agency,[26] most academics as well as community partners are aware of the complexity of change, its multi-dimensional nature, and the issue of time. Making this statement is not about abandoning hopes for change and a drive for social justice, but it is about questioning the status and expectations of the epithet 'instant heroes' conferred on students and lecturers, community leaders and social movements.

Setting modest goals, not pretending to transform the world or the city in two years, does not mean abandoning a radical take. Bringing other perspectives and imaginations into the public debate, at various scales, through different media and languages, and identifying groups or activists (whether in the state or society) focusing on the drive for change and justice, and supporting them with relevant research, support and training, were the more modest, and perhaps more honest, ambitions we set up for the Studio, at least on the community side. In practice, we tried to contribute to the legitimation of street trading in Rockey-Raleigh Street and in Johannesburg through a variety of initiatives and over a long period of time. We challenged dominant discourses on street practices, street life and informality in dialogue with different groups of residents at street, organisational and neighbourhood level; we complexified the image of Yeoville as a 'slum' in radio debates; we translated knowledge on

practices of building management into policy ideas, in workshops with officials as well as through various types of text.

How do we gauge whether we succeeded? The multiplicity of community outputs, often framed in close interaction with community organisations or looser participant groups, is testimony to the multi-dimensional ways in which local issues were researched and debated in the various collective or public spaces punctuating the neighbourhood.[27] Many of these outputs were not meant to have a lasting impact beyond the process of putting them together,[28] or beyond voicing residents' stories, perceptions or realities – for the eyes and ears of their community, their councillor, their city.

Some initiatives opened up to broader, sometimes unexpected possibilities, many of them falling short after a period of crystallisation and excitement. There was an attempted participatory design workshop with market traders to jointly redesign the Yeoville market – based on research showing that the market design, not conducive to pedestrian flow, was partly responsible for the lack of business that traders were complaining about (especially for market stalls that were not facing the street). But the initiative failed under hotly contested trading politics, the Studio's position supporting the legalisation of street traders, and my own complicated relationship with one market leader and gatekeeper.[29]

An interesting interaction around alternative management and design started between the urban design master class (facilitated by Astrid Ley) and the various stakeholders (a church, a primary school and the YBCDT) managing a fenced open space: one of the students even offered pro bono work from the design company in which he was working, beyond the course. But, in spite of a promising stakeholders' workshop, the initiative did not bear fruit.

The tourist guides jointly developed by residents and students were great moments of identity-building and storytelling, placing oneself in a neighbourhood and a community and consolidating networks – moments that the participants seemed to thoroughly enjoy.[30] Beyond this (the value for individual participants being impossible to assess), the practical and economic outcomes were limited: the tourist guides, which were to be updated by community members and used for local economic development under the leadership of YBCDT, were used once but not taken up, partly because YBCDT eventually stopped its activities in 2015.

Research conducted on housing demonstrated the opacity and confusing profusion of legislation defining rights and duties of tenants, landlords and sectional title owners, leading to abuse and mismanagement.[31] Community partners suggested and participated in the consolidation of booklets providing guidance on tenants', landlords' and owners' rights, as well as more generally on building management, with the support of a legal NGO, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI). The booklets were workshopped by CUBES and SERI in partnership with YBCDT, and have been put online[32] to remain a resource (whose usefulness is difficult to assess).

Some Studio initiatives did not do well because they were not locally relevant. Many were, but did not take off because the community partner intended to use the research product lost interest, or ceased to exist. This was inevitable in a space where local organisations are fluid, fragile, permanently working under financial constraints and political uncertainty,

and legitimately opportunistic (Simone 2004). Some initiatives, whilst not having led to visible change in people's living conditions, are still ongoing. Even if street traders are still illegal in Rockey-Raleigh Street, discussions on legalising their presence have emerged in City Council meetings. Informal trading is still restricted in Johannesburg, but alternative, progressive models of street-trading management have been proposed, debated with traders supported by CUBES, and publicised in various government circles. Partnerships between Wits and street trader organisations have expanded and developed. Yeoville is not attracting more international tourists or local middle-class visitors, but is again the focus of a pilot investment and national attention. Students trained in Yeoville Studio, working on informal housing, are now working as officials specialising in housing, and staff is continuing to give inputs into Johannesburg housing policy and strategic documents, possibly enriched by the Studio's experience. What, in these slow, unspectacular, ongoing shifts, is directly imputable to Yeoville Studio is difficult to say. What we can say, however, is that through intensive and deep engagement with various community groups over the two years, the Studio participated in supporting collective agency, framing public claims and imagining possible policy models or instruments that are geared towards the acceptance, recognition and legitimation of the place of informal livelihoods and practices in contemporary Johannesburg.

Notes

1   I was research director of CUBES from 2010 to 2012. The Centre hosts many of the debates about city studios and urban research.

2   According to Randy Stoecker, 'Participatory research is not a research project: it is a community organizing and/or development project of which the research is only one piece … Doing the research is not a goal in itself but only a means' (1999: 845).

3   See Glaser (2015) on the romanticisation of participation and collective mobilisation, which tends to obscure our theorisation of democracy.

4   There has been much reflection and debate in anthropology around this term, which is key to the discipline (Springwood & King 2001), in the context of the 'crisis' of the discipline in a critical, postcolonial perspective, as well as in times of the bureaucratisation of ethics for social sciences more generally in universities (see, for instance, Bourgois 1990; Laurens & Neyrat 2010).

5   It is perhaps not that simple, especially in an era where texts circulate (Flamant 2005; Lepoutre 2001; Schurmans et al. 2014). Such clearly bounded debates might not remain long under the control of their author or facilitator.

6   Bénit-Gbaffou and Mkwanazi, and Matjomane and Bénit-Gbaffou, this book.

7   The Studio occurred between 2010 and 2012 – after the first wave of xenophobic attacks in 2008, and before the second wave in 2015, which targeted more specifically spaza shops in urban townships.

8   An ongoing discussion with the Sustainable Livelihood Foundation, whose systematic mapping of the informal sector in Cape Town townships (Charman et al. 2015) does not seem to have crystallised local violence so far, but whose strong visual effect is used mostly beyond the local level, in broader political and policy circles, to legitimate their presence and support the development of small businesses.

9   This does not pre-empt colleagues' own engagements with community groups, which have adopted a diversity of forms. See below for a reflection on this diversity.

10   It is understood that engaged research straddles each of these objectives, but with different emphases.

11   To these three imperatives, one would need to add a fourth: about students' education and training. Although it has been central in the framing of the Yeoville Studio, it is not at the core of the reflection for this specific book.

12   See inspiring reflections on the different communicative roles of researchers in engaged research, in Benequista and Wheeler 2012.

13   In 2010, about 226 students (from second year to PhDs) and 16 members of staff were involved in the Studio, through about 10 different courses and class projects, and individual staff and postgraduate research projects. The figures for 2011 were 104 students, 10 members of staff and about eight class projects.

14   One of my tasks as Studio director was to encourage fellow staff members to include, in the brief given to students, an explicit form of research or project communication – which certainly created more work for students and for staff. In many cases I myself translated the outcome of class projects into publishable outputs displayed in community settings.

15   See, in particular, Didier and Roux; Dörmann et al.; Phasha; and Pingo; in this book.

16   See, in particular, Abed; Bénit-Gbaffou in section D; Bénit-Gbaffou and Gaule; Bénit-Gbaffou and Mkwanazi; Matjomane; and Mkhabela et al.; in this book.

17   See, in particular, Klug and Klug, and Charlton, in this book.

18   See Didier and Roux's chapter in this book.

19   The City of Johannesburg evicted all street traders, authorised or not, from the inner city in this brutal 'clean-up' operation.

20   From residents' associations to a forum of civil society organisations, the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), to a local NGO (YBCDT) – that he chaired or directed. He also participated in and supported a multiplicity of other community organisations (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014).

21   And where Maurice Smithers, the founding member, had remained a key participant.

22   Inspired and facilitated by a German visiting scholar at the time, Astrid Ley.

23   It also became, unexpectedly, an important point of observation and analysis of local politics. See Bénit-Gbaffou and Mkwanazi, and Katsaura's chapters in this book.

24   See Charlton; but also Bénit-Gbaffou; Dörmann, Matsipa and Bénit-Gbaffou; Dörmann and Mkhabela; and Mayson; in this book.

25   See her chapter in this book.

26   See, for instance, Mitchell (2008: 51): 'Critical service learning programs encourage students to see themselves as agents of social change, and use the experience of service to address and respond to injustices in communities.'

27   See Yeoville Studio's website, www.bit.ly/yeoville, for a presentation of some of these.

28   See, for instance, neighbours' debates around challenges and representations of their streets, through an interactive photograph street exhibition, in Bénit-Gbaffou and Gaule, as well as Mkhabela et al., in this book.

29   See Abed, and Bénit-Gbaffou, this book.

30   See Didier and Roux, this book.

31   See Charlton; Dörmann et al.; and Bénit-Gbaffou; in this book.

32   http://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/research-7/resource-guides.

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Narrating: The politics of constructing local identities

4 Introduction

SOPHIE DIDIER

This section deals with the issue of identity, understood as a social construct and a constant process of redefinition. It is an understanding that rings particularly true in Yeoville, both internally (for its residents) and externally (for outsiders): Yeoville the poverty-stricken slum, the neighbourhood inhabited by foreign nationals, the hotbed of criminality, the old bohemian neighbourhood 'fallen from grace', and so on are all powerful stigmas that have become attached to its identity since the political transition. But Yeoville is also an important spatial resource and a place of strong attachment for its residents, and one of the difficulties we had as researchers was navigating the fine line between romanticised depictions of Yeoville and the more ingrained narrative of decline, for both are intertwined in current as well as in former residents' perceptions of the neighbourhood. Despite these difficulties, all the authors in this section were keenly aware of the necessity to provide alternative narratives for Yeoville. Doing so called for sensitivity to the various and sometimes contradictory meanings the narratives hold, but it seemed a necessary step towards the articulation of a positive vision for the neighbourhood, through a capacity to formulate a shared future. The methodological imperative of letting Yeovillites tell their own stories informed this particular goal and is represented in the vignettes of this section. Most of the research developed in this section did not directly inform policy or community action: our partners, as Sophie Didier and Naomi Roux explain in chapter 11, had identified more urgent priorities dealing with housing issues and trading in particular. Yet the various Studio workshops and activities addressing the issue of the identity of the neighbourhood were also significant to the residents

who participated in them. It was important to acknowledge the diversity of perceptions and hopes they individually held with regard to the neighbourhood. It was also important to let these stories be heard more broadly, in public exhibitions and events, as a deterrent against caricature: the process of defining a collective Yeoville identity is necessarily complex, but it is also hotly contested.

Indeed, underlying the inherent fragmentation of individual representations of the neighbourhood is the basic idea that there is no obviously fixed, collective Yeoville identity and that the articulation of a particular one always reveals a political purpose, as Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Eulenda Mkwanazi underline in chapter 8. For our community partners, an accurate definition of what Yeoville´s identity is was always needed as a preamble for targeted action. The Studio's role was crucial in building a solid academic inventory of key issues defining the neighbourhood, jointly chosen with our partners. In the process, however, the Studio's findings could either reinforce or contradict certain perceptions, and thus be appropriated or simply ignored.

The first vignette, captured by Potsiso Phasha, addresses the issue of identity by exploring young people's perceptions, explorations and appropriation of their neighbourhood, as well as their hopes and dreams for themselves and for Yeoville. The vignette leaves us with a strong sense that the neighbourhood we live in helps define who we are, and that this is particularly true for young people who are trying to define themselves in life as well as in the city.

Pauline Guinard, in chapter 6, on the adventures of creating a recurring pan-African festival, traces a number of issues intrinsic to the creation of major cultural events in neighbourhoods such as Yeoville. The organisers aimed to build a defining, unifying moment for the community during a period of xenophobic tensions, but also aimed to change outsiders' perceptions of Yeoville, in this way possibly attracting investment and triggering development. Guinard's work addresses the complexity of acting out identity in support of such a loaded agenda.

The second vignette, dealing with love stories in Yeoville, was collected by Willy-Claude Hebandjoko, Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Shahid Vawda. Chance is not absent from these stories, but we get a sense that the local terrain also plays a role in these intimate stories. What is most striking in the lovers' stories are the links between social diversity, tolerance, and the need to overcome material hurdles. In a sense, the stories the interviewees tell illustrate the careful negotiation of who they are, both as residents of Yeoville and as people in love with aspirations that the neighbourhood sometimes cannot provide for them as a couple.

Chapter 8, by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Eulenda Mkwanazi, explores the performance of Yeoville identities used on the local political scene, in public forums. These public spaces are analysed as theatres in which the identity of the community is carefully constructed and disputed, in particular with regard to whom it includes or excludes. The chapter stresses the responsibility of the leadership in their manipulation of identity formation, and in allowing adequate time for this gradual process of instrumentalisation before fixed identities can be imposed on the community and justify a specific vision for the neighbourhood.

Maria Suriano, William Dewar and Clara Pienaar-Lewis anchor chapter 9 in the 1980s, using mostly oral history to reinterpret the creation of a particular musical genre rooted

in the Yeoville terrain: that of Voëlvry music. In their chapter, Yeoville's musical foray into Afrikaner punk-rock rebelling against apartheid echoes that of the broader history of South African youth movements. But the chapter also pays close attention to the milieu of Yeoville as a racially tolerant area during the late period of apartheid, nurturing contestation but also creativity. The fragility of these alternative cultural movements is eventually reflected in the demise of the Voëlvry counterculture, but as the authors show, Yeoville's cultural tolerance of the past is still key to understanding its current social fabric.

'Leaving Yeoville', the final vignette in this section, written by Sophie Didier and Ophélie Arrazouaki, documents memories of the neighbourhood as experienced by some of its former residents in order to capture how the historical identities of Yeoville interacted with former Yeovillites' residential trajectories in life, and in the city. In the individual vignettes, the qualities of the neighbourhood – as urban fabric as much as in social configuration – come across strongly and are shared by all the former Yeovillites interviewed, whatever their position in life at the time. This is an important lesson, for it opens up perspectives for the articulation of a truly shared Yeovillite identity.

Chapter 11, by Sophie Didier and Naomi Roux, also addresses this issue by introducing us to the notion of ordinary public history and combining an analysis of the many productions of the 'Yeoville Stories' leg of the Studio with a more reflexive approach to the lessons learned in the quest for public history in Yeoville. Most of all, the chapter addresses the problematic dissociation of identity in perceptions of current and former Yeoville, which in the process seems to suffer from a bad case of split personality. The authors underline that this dissociation, which feeds on the general feeling of loss and decline associated with the neighbourhood, needs to be addressed, for it infuses visions for the neighbourhood with a counterproductive feeling of nostalgia.

5 Being young in Yeoville

POTSISO PHASHA

This vignette sets out to look at the issues, challenges and opportunities a group of teenagers face in public spaces in Yeoville. Such issues include dealing with relationships; dealing with alcohol, clubs and bars and prostitution; as well as coping with limited public open spaces to engage in preferred recreational activities. The teenagers were given disposable cameras and were asked to answer a set of questions by taking pictures. Through interactions with others in public space, young people define and explore their own identities.

NORMA JEAN

FIGURE 5.1: Norma Jean

BIO: When I came to South Africa, I lived in Diepsloot. I was not as free as I used to be back home. It was difficult to communicate with other children because I could not speak Tswana or Sotho. I came free when I came to Yeoville. Here you meet Ndebeles, Shonas, whatever. I did not feel alone anymore.

AGE: 17
BORN IN: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN YEOVILLE: A year and a half
WITH: Mom and a younger brother
DREAMS OF LIVING IN: Strijdom Park, because the area has houses, not flats. 'It's nice, beautiful and quiet.'

FIGURE 5.2: What I do not like about Yeoville

I cannot walk past this place after 6 pm, it's always full of hobos. They make fire and sometimes when you pass by they do these funny things.

FIGURE 5.3: My meaningful space

The Yeoville Clinic is meaningful to me because it is free. No one pays for anything. It is good for the community, for people who are less privileged. If you are sick, you just come here for free.

FIGURE 5.4: My favourite place in Yeoville

My favourite place is called Dunbar Street. I love it; it's so quiet … When you're stressed, I advise you to come to this street, and you walk … I tell you, you'll go back home relieved.

FIGURE 5.5: A place I would change

I don't understand why people from Pikitup don't care about this place. They collect dustbins in every street in Yeoville, but not here. It bothers me a lot because it is near to the shops; I go there everyday.

LENEANCE

FIGURE 5.6: Leneance

BIO: When I arrived in Yeoville, my mother was too protective; she preferred me to stay indoors. She was teaching me a lesson, because I used to come back late from school. She was worried about the streets, especially Rockey. There are too many drunkards there (*laughs*).

AGE: 17
BORN IN: Soweto
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN YEOVILLE: Seven years
WITH: Mom, two younger sisters and a brother
DREAMS OF LIVING IN: Rosettenville, where it is 'nice and quiet and the people are civilised'

FIGURE 5.7: A place I would miss

This is where I grew up. This park was close to my house and I spent a lot of time here.

FIGURE 5.8: My meaningful space

I grew up as a Catholic. When I lived in Soweto I went to a Catholic church. These churches are very old, have a rich history and have been around for many years, and they are still here.

FIGURE 5.9: What I like about Yeoville

I am very comfortable in Rockey Corner. It has just been renovated. It is now clean and safer; there is a guard here.

FIGURE 5.10: My favourite place in Yeoville

The library … Here you get a lot of education. Yeah, you read, there's Internet … You research about the world! It's better to work here, because at home they'll be sending me to the shops – you know, disturbing me.

LORRAINE

FIGURE 5.11: Lorraine

BIO: Yeoville is different to where I used to live [Durban]. When I first came here I thought it was fine because where I used to live it was boring, quiet, but here it is different. I enjoyed being here. That's where I began to make a lot of friends.

AGE: 17
BORN IN: Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN YEOVILLE: Two years
WITH: Mom, Dad and a younger brother
DREAMS OF LIVING IN: Norwood because she used to live there and still likes it as it is quiet

FIGURE 5.12: My meaningful space

I met my first boyfriend here, after two months of living in Yeoville, but soon he went to the Eastern Cape. He then called me to say he was not coming back.

FIGURE 5.13: What I like about Yeoville

You find pool tables, soccer tables, jukebox and the TV, if you want to watch. Even if the vandals are there, they won't do anything to us girls.

FIGURE 5.14: My other meaningful space
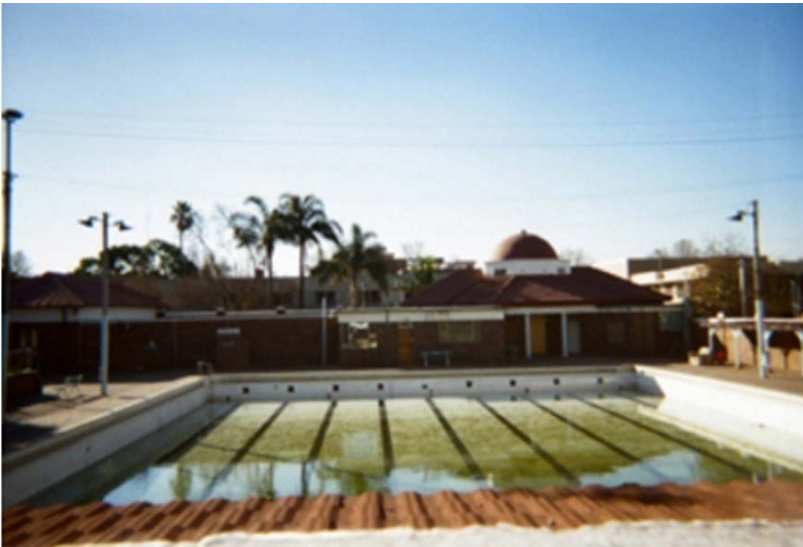
That's where I met my [new] boyfriend, last year. I was sitting on the side [of the pool]; he was inside the water. He pushed me into the water. I pretended I was drowning so he could save me.
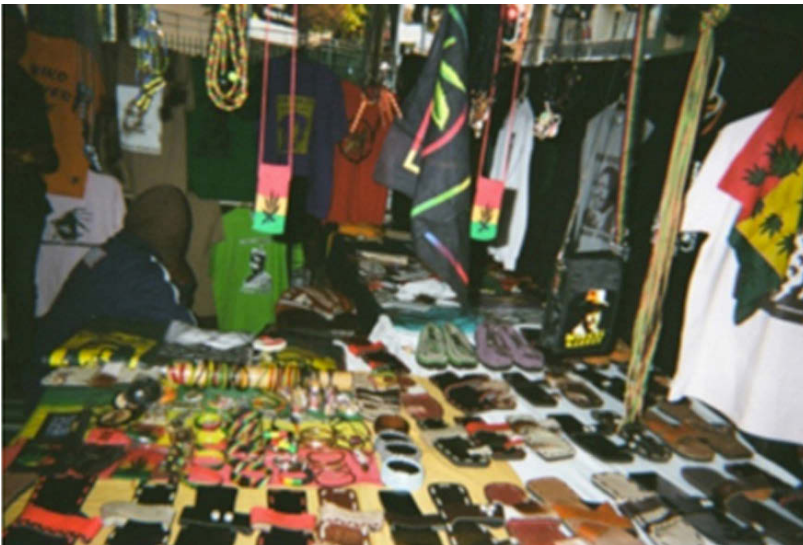

FIGURE 5.15: My favourite place in Yeoville

I go to the market every two days. I buy veggies, fruits. I feel safe because there are security guards – so I know nothing will happen to me.

6 Africa Week Festival in Yeoville: Reclaiming a social and political space through art

PAULINE GUINARD

Since the early 2000s, several community-based organisations in Yeoville have been involved in an annual week of celebration, ending with a street festival, to honour the neighbourhood and the diversity of its residents. The first of these festivals took place on 29 May 2010, a symbolic date chosen to commemorate both Africa Day (established in 1963 to mark the formation of the Organisation of African Unity) and the 2008 South African xenophobic attacks.[1] In the context of Yeoville, characterised since the mid-1990s by a cycle of decline marked by 'white flight', urban decay, unemployment and xenophobic tensions, the festival is also conceived as a means to promote a renewed image of the neighbourhood in order to attract people and investments into the area, and as an opportunity to bring all the people from the community together.

Yeoville earned the reputation of being cosmopolitan early in its history because of the importance of migrants from southern and eastern Europe in the area (Harrison 2002). The history of Yeoville as a place of immigration is thus not new, but this representation of the neighbourhood today is directly linked to the gradual influx of new residents (South Africans and foreigners from other African countries) and the departure of the white middle classes from the mid-1990s onward. Unlike today, immigration in the early days was not regarded as a problem, probably because the European immigrants had a similar socio-economic

background to the people already living in the area (Beall et al. 2002), and this probably facilitated their integration. The current reputation of Yeoville as an immigrant entry point was historically built alongside a general pauperisation of the neighbourhood and an increase in crime rates: violent crimes doubled from 1994 to 1998 (Jürgens et al. 2003). Once known as an attractive place, in less than two decades Yeoville became known as a decayed neighbourhood, like most of the inner city. Given this context, for some residents (South Africans and others), the easy explanation for the decline of the area lies in the arrival of foreigners. This perception creates a climate of distrust and suspicion amongst the people living in Yeoville. Therefore, while Yeoville was not directly affected by the 2008 xenophobic attacks, it is far from being a place of tolerance (Harrison 2002). Verbalised and silent tensions between South Africans and foreigners exist on a day-to-day basis (Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book).

On the other hand, local political activism against apartheid and cultural activities from the late 1970s onward contributed to building Yeoville's reputation as a counterculture hub and a bohemian place where people could mix and express themselves in unconventional ways (Suriano et al., this book). This second representation of Yeoville, as an artistic, non-conformist place, consolidated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the people who used to live or go out there at that time now perceive this period as the golden age of the area (Prabhala 2008). This also leads to nostalgic reconstructions of what was Yeoville in those years (Didier & Roux, this book).

Given this composite image of the neighbourhood, Africa Week Festival could play a central role in shifting its representation. The festival is not only or simply a cultural event, but also a symbolic and political statement made by the residents of Yeoville to reclaim the space of their neighbourhood while delivering a new kind of narrative about diversity in South Africa in general, and in Yeoville in particular. In this respect, the festival can be considered an extra-ordinary single performance aiming to transform the everyday performances – the ordinary practices and discourses – of the neighbourhood. Yet, one can wonder why this particular form of expression was chosen to promote and initiate change in Yeoville. To what extent can such an ephemeral and cultural event truly transform a space at the social, economic or political level? What could be the short-term and long-term impacts of the Yeoville Africa Week Festival on the area and its residents?

This last question raises an important methodological issue: how does one assess the consequences of extraordinary performances, especially on a symbolic level? To analyse the perceptions and representations linked to the festival, I used press releases published before and after the festival by various media, pictures taken by the participants on the day of the festival, and interviews with Yeoville residents, the festival's organisers and the people who attended it. These interviews were carried out in 2011, almost one year after the first festival in 2010, in order to assess the memories left by the event in the longer term. Similarly, I looked at the second festival in 2011 in order to examine how it had evolved.

The reinvention of Yeoville

For the last decade, several projects have been conceptualised by public authorities, but also by some residents, to rebrand Yeoville as an attractive place. The idea of the Yeoville Africa Week Festival has to be understood as part of these various strategies.

Reinvesting in public spaces and infrastructures: Gentrifying Yeoville

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Yeoville became a priority area for the City of Johannesburg. The main objective defined in the successive metropolitan strategies for the inner city[2] has been to fight urban decay in order to attract people and investments, which have been diverted to the northern suburbs since the 1980s (Bremner 2000; Beavon 2004). The emphasis put on the inner city is linked to the importance of the area for the City, as a hub of economic activity and infrastructures. Beyond that, there also seems to be an emotional attachment to the inner city, imbued with nostalgia. The idea is not only to transform the area into a 'world-class African [inner] city' (as stated by the 2000 City of Johannesburg motto), but also to restore its past glory (Murray 2008).

Consequently, several regeneration projects have taken place in Yeoville. The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) managed the more recent one, from 2005 to 2010.[3] Based on a strategy conceived by a Yeoville community-based organisation formed in 1998 by local activists such as Maurice Smithers (Farouk 2007), this project involved the repaving of Rockey-Raleigh Street, the creation of a new library, and the renovation of the community Recreation Centre and the park next to it, to create what was conceived as a 'civic spine' for Yeoville. Furthermore, a public art programme designed for Yeoville and neighbouring Hillbrow and Berea was added to the project in 2008. Artist-designed benches were installed in Rockey-Raleigh Street, mosaics were crafted in the park and a sculpture was built for the library (see figure 6.1).

This programme was intended to be site-specific and community-based. For example, a local artist was hired to conceive and produce the mosaics in the park, and she chose to represent all the flags of Africa to echo the diversity of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the observations and interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 strongly suggest that the project fails to make sense for passers-by and the residents. Most of the interviewees thought that the flags in the park are linked to the 2010 Soccer World Cup, rather than acknowledging their own diverse origins. In addition, to ensure the security of the library employees' cars parked in the courtyard of the library, the sculpture erected there is now made inaccessible to the public.[4] Which public is the public artwork made for? This begs the question of whether public art can be more than (decorative) art in public spaces, whether it can be art that is appropriated and reclaimed by the people who use these public spaces.

Certainly, as explained by Trinity Session, the art consulting company in charge of the project, this problem was partly due to time and budget constraints, leading to a lack of consultation and even of information about the project for the Yeoville residents. But it is also symptomatic more generally of the City of Johannesburg's top-down strategy in the inner city to promote gentrification (Farouk 2007; Murray 2008; Gray 2010). The role of
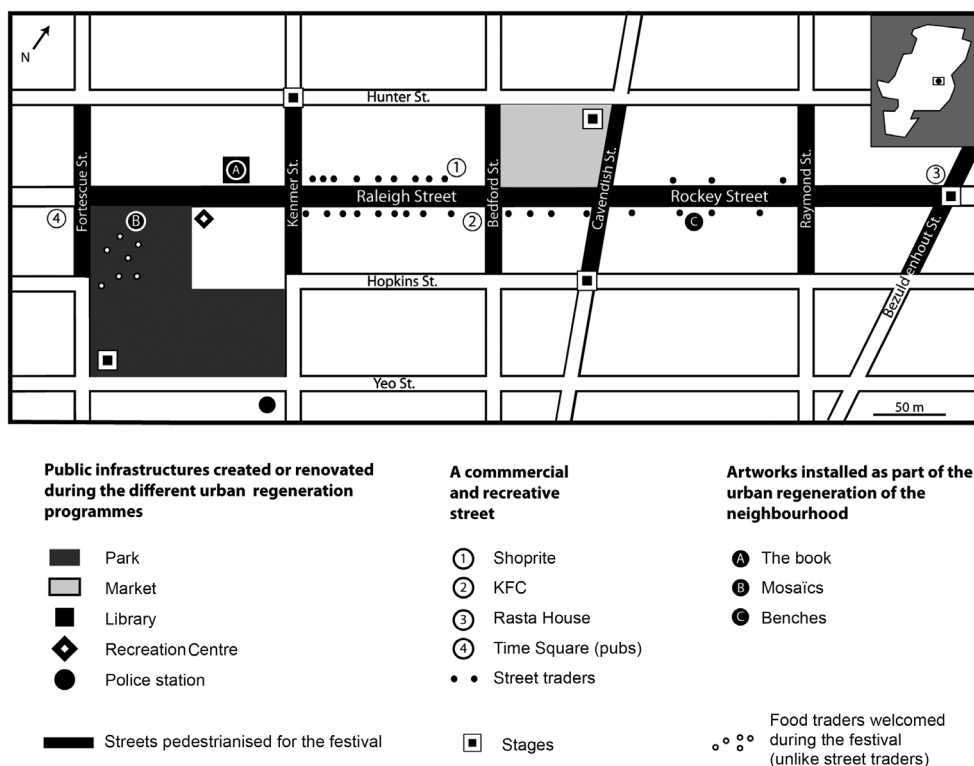
FIGURE 6.1: Yeoville: Which art for which neighbourhood?
Source: Author, 2012

art in that process is particularly ambiguous, as revealed by the JDA Public Art Strategy launched in 2011: 'Urban space by nature is contested space, and in attracting investment and improvement of Johannesburg, development projects run the risk of alienating communities and contributing to negative gentrification. Public Art can help to minimise this conflict' (City of Johannesburg 2012: 2).

Interestingly enough, the JDA recognises here the potentially damaging consequences of regeneration strategies on communities, such as the symbolic or physical exclusion of the poorest from the neighbourhood. In this regard, art is presented as a means not to prevent gentrification, but as a way to reduce its unwanted effects in order to promote a more 'positive' gentrification that would be able to support both economic and social development. Nevertheless, the formulation used is far from clear. Is it truly about limiting the negative effects of gentrification? Or is it only about reducing the tensions caused by this process? What might 'positive gentrification' really be? As denounced in other cities around the world (Miles 1997; Deutsche 1998), the risk is indeed that art is reduced to becoming a tool intended to mask or to make acceptable new forms of socio-spatial exclusion induced by urban regeneration projects. In this view, art is most likely to give shape to a standardised, aestheticised, but also exclusionary inner city.

What about people, such as street traders, international migrants (documented or not) or poor people (Götz & Simone 2003; Farouk 2007), particularly present in Yeoville, who do not fit into this process of gentrification? Is it possible to reinvent Yeoville in a way that can resonate with the place and the people living and working there, while addressing the issues of the area? Could art be a means to embody such a reinvention?

Reinventing Yeoville as a 'pan-African village'

The City of Johannesburg is not the only entity to produce new visions about the inner city. In a more bottom-up approach, residents and civil society activists such as Maurice Smithers have tried to change the image of their neighbourhood, characterising Yeoville as a 'pan-African village'. Behind this catchphrase is the idea to transform negative perceptions about Yeoville in general, and about (African) migrants in particular. As Smithers puts it: 'Let's market Yeoville as this pan-African destination where you can come experience the diversity of African culture all in one place, because it's all here.'[5]

With this in mind, migration should be considered not a burden but on the contrary a cultural resource that must be celebrated in order to attract people and investments into the area and to bring all the residents together. The choice of the adjective 'pan-African' might be a way to bypass the usual associations with the City's motto 'African'. The use of the word 'pan-African' underlines not only the particular identity of the people living in Yeoville, but also the potential relations between them. And 'village' brings to mind an idyllic vision of rural areas where the village is a welcoming, quiet, peaceful place and where people know and help one another. To present Yeoville as a 'village' could then encourage a perception of the area as a united neighbourhood, challenging the lack of a sense of community and belonging, often deplored by its own residents (Beall et al. 2002; Harrison 2002; Gray 2010). It might also be useful to differentiate it from the nearby neighbourhoods of Hillbrow and Berea, known to be tough places, and implicitly defined as urban 'jungles' in contrast with the 'village' of Yeoville. Yet, we can wonder if this kind of representation is shared by the community as a whole or if it is just a vision created by the people who are more involved in the community – the 'community-builders' described by Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell (2002). However, these community-builders' actions may be a means to give a voice to and legitimise counter-discourses on and from Yeoville that could challenge the City's top-down approach and force it to work more closely with – and not only in or for – the community.

The debate around the launch of the new library is emblematic of this process of power negotiations between City and community, and of the extent to which the community can influence metropolitan strategy. The launch of the library was initially supposed to take place on Thursday 7 April 2011. However, various local organisations complained that people would not be able to attend the function on a weekday. They criticised the lack of community consultation and participation in the planning of this event. As a result, the launch was postponed to Saturday 7 May 2011. Officials as well as people from the community – activists, children and residents – thus attended, while local artists were invited to perform in the library, in and in front of the Recreation Centre.

Whereas the JDA used public art to market its regeneration project, the Yeoville community seems to favour art to promote its reinvented identity as a united, diverse and vocal neighbourhood, able to shape its own vision. Yeoville Africa Week Festival is symptomatic of this. But my question is: why choose an art performance such as a festival to embody and promote this vision of Yeoville as a 'pan-African village'?

Art festivals as catalysts for change

I would argue that this emphasis on art as performance by the community is a result of both global and local contexts. At the global level, culture in the post-industrial era is increasingly understood as an integral part of the urban fabric, and hence promoted as a key driver in urban (re)development strategies (Zukin 1995; Paddison & Miles 2007). The public art strategy adopted by the JDA is perfectly coherent with this trend (Miles 1997). But this focus on permanent, tangible art is not the only way of using culture as a driver for change. Another method is the 'festivalisation' of cities: an increase of cultural performances and events such as festivals in order to market and reinvent a place (Gravari-Barbas 2000; Quinn 2005). Festivals are not something new. They have always been a means to celebrate the identity of a group in a specific place. However, the number and size of festivals today are without precedent. This 'festivalisation' is often problematic in that the current festivals tend to be mainly economically oriented, losing sight of the social and local dimensions that formed their original raison d'être. The Venice Carnival,[6] for instance, is now a global tourist event, attracting millions of visitors every year but no longer reinforcing Venetians' sense of togetherness (Quinn 2005). Yet, in Yeoville, the process seems to be slightly different, as the initiative to create a festival comes from the residents – or at least from some of them. In their understanding, the festival is a catalyst to fight economic decline and xenophobia, while building a deeper sense of community. This attention to the economic and social components of the festival might well be the result of a locally rooted approach.

As stressed above, culture in all its forms – including festivals – has been a distinguishing heritage of the area since the late 1970s. According to Maurice Smithers, shop owners of Rockey-Raleigh Street were already organising festivals in the late 1980s to celebrate 'Mardi Gras'.[7] In the late 1990s, another kind of community-based event, which can be seen as a prelude to the Africa Week Festival, emerged in Yeoville in the form of a carnival.[8] As Kamal El-Alaoui (one of the main organisers of the event at that time and a carnival consultant in Johannesburg and London[9]) explained, this project was conceived as an opportunity for all the people living in Yeoville to gather, at a time when the area was experiencing drastic economic, social and cultural change.[10] The aim of the festival was thus (already then, in the late 1990s) to fight decay by creating a platform for cultural exchange. Unfortunately, because of a lack of funding, this festival happened only once, strongly undermining its capacity to be more than a one-day event, and to initiate a long-term process of community building. Nevertheless, as the 1999 Yeoville development plan proved (Marais & Lucke 1999), local organisations never quite abandoned this idea of a community festival, seeing in it a good opportunity to embody their vision of Yeoville as a 'pan-African village' and maybe also to get public funding in a context where the City itself promoted its 'African-ness'. In the late 2000s, two

major events reactivated the need for such a festival in Yeoville: the 2008 xenophobic attacks and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The xenophobic attacks made it obvious that something needed to be done to tackle the issue of xenophobia, while the World Cup made the money available as the drive to celebrate 'African-ness' in South Africa and in Johannesburg became more compelling. As a result, in 2010, the Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage of the City of Johannesburg allocated R520 000 to three local organisations, the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF) and the African Diaspora Forum (ADF), to organise the first Yeoville Africa Week Festival.[11]

Finally, the Yeoville Africa Week Festival is potentially more than simply another avatar of the global 'festivalisation' of urban spaces. Its local roots and its focus on economic and social objectives for the neighbourhood mean that the festival is more likely to have a wider, more multi-layered impact on the area (Quinn 2005). Indeed, as confirmed by their leaders, the three local organisations that supported the inaugural festival promoted different but locally rooted objectives: 'YBCDT is promoting the regeneration of the area';[12] 'YSF is encouraging popular participation';[13] 'ADF is promoting integration between South Africans and non-South Africans.'[14]

Although this multiplicity of objectives might prove an asset for the festival, it might also be a source of lack of clarity and conflicts, and might consequently affect its efficiency. Therefore, it remains to be seen what short-term and long-term impacts this event might have in the area. Based on my study of the inaugural Yeoville Africa Week Festival in 2010 and on the organisation of the second festival in 2011, the next section will analyse the festival's expected or unexpected effects in and beyond the area.

Yeoville's Africa Week Festival and the (re)appropriation of space

Walking in the streets as a statement

During the day of the festival, Rockey-Raleigh Street and several adjacent streets were closed in order to allow the public to walk freely between the various venues scattered in the neighbourhood (see figure 6.1). The major spots of the festival were the library, the Recreation Centre, the park, the market and five stages (instead of the six initially planned) that were set up for the event. In the morning, a carnival paraded down the main street. At 12 noon, officials, amongst others the head of the Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage of the City of Johannesburg and the ward councillor of Yeoville, officially launched the festival. Till dusk, a wide range of activities took place on the various stages: music gigs, poetry sessions, dance and theatre performances. In addition, throughout the day, the Yeoville Studio ran workshops and exhibitions in the courtyard of the library, while the 'Hotel Yeoville' initiative – a participatory public art project that was based in the library at that time – was launched. All these activities were free of charge and all those who had registered beforehand were allowed to perform that day – and were paid for doing so. People from the neighbourhood were also encouraged to sell African art, craft or food on the streets. As already mentioned, the festival was intended to showcase the diversity of the people of Yeoville in order to perform and give life to the 'pan-African village'.

FIGURE 6.2: Yeoville residents as performers in the Africa Week Festival

The carnival was especially conceived in line with this goal. The parade was supposed to wander all around the neighbourhood, inviting people to join in. It was finally restricted to Rockey-Raleigh Street due to the lack of police officers to secure safety during the event. As a result, the parade just went up and down the main street. The festival organisers themselves admit that the parade did not achieve the expected success, not only because of its scaled-down route but also because there were few participants and not enough masks or costumes. Despite the small number of 'official' participants – or perhaps even because of that – people from the neighbourhood, dressed up for the occasion, progressively became part of the parade and of the festival, rather than being merely spectators (see figure 6.2).

Thanks to specific clothes, flags, and so on, the festival as a whole was indeed an opportunity for the performers and the passers-by to showcase – and through that to construct – their identities. During that day, being South African, Nigerian or Congolese was thus something to be proud of. Fear of the 'Other' gave way to curiosity: people started to talk about their own customs and to appreciate one another's cultures.

The fact that this event took place in the streets and in public spaces was itself crucial to the process of place- and identity-building. Marching or parading in the streets is a means to reclaim a place, to make it public property by the simple act of occupying it (Mitchell & Staeheli 2007). By walking in the streets, the people from Yeoville physically and symbolically took ownership of their neighbourhood. It also gave visibility to all who used the area,

foreigners and South Africans, legal and in particular illegal migrants, for whom visibility is often synonymous with danger. Their presence in the public domain of the festival can be understood as an implicit claim for recognition. Nonetheless, one wonders about the impact of this kind of event, beyond the event itself. For example, according to Maurice Smithers, in subsequent public meetings some inhabitants blamed the festival committee for having favoured foreigners instead of South Africans as part of the organising committee, and as artists performing for the festival – they, too, wanted their part of the resources produced by and during the event. This does raise questions about whether the festival really can challenge the stereotyped divisions between foreigners and South Africans, the 'us' versus 'them' being so easily mobilised in contexts of resource scarcity and dire economic need. To what extent can the festival really promote social cohesion?

Building social cohesion

Almost all the persons I interviewed in April 2011 – organisers of the festival, artists and residents – agreed that the main achievement of the event was, in their own words, its ability to 'bring people together'. Almost one year after its first occasion, the festival was still seen as an opportunity for gathering and sharing beyond national, racial, gender or age differences. However, it is important to assess critically these celebrations of diversity. There could be, for instance, a distortion between the interviewees' words and their practices. Furthermore, these discourses were produced and delivered within a specific context: an interview conducted by a white, French researcher. On the one hand, my being French – hence a foreigner – and an academic might have given my interviewees the implicit feeling that I sided with the migrants, no matter what. Consequently, the interviewees – South African as well as foreigners – might have inflected their discourse in an attempt to please me. On the other hand, being white and French also meant that people did not always see me as a foreigner. This is actually symptomatic of the particular type of xenophobia – mainly directed against black Africans – that is currently dominant in South Africa (Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2008).

Notwithstanding the apparent enjoyment of having been together during the festival, xenophobic tensions are still a daily reality in Yeoville. One year after the event, the debate that took place in the *Yeovue News* – the local newspaper edited by YBCDT – in March 2011 is symptomatic of these tensions. Obvious Katsaura – the ADF deputy secretary and at the time a University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) PhD candidate working on community policing in Yeoville – published an article entitled 'Let difference and diversity be a resource rather than a curse in Yeoville Bellevue' (*Yeovue News*, 17 March 2011). Answering the article, which was in line with the spirit of the Africa Week Festival, Thembi Majombozi – a Yeoville South African resident – wrote that 'migrants must be more responsible' (*Yeovue News*, 24 March 2011). Although Majombozi denies being xenophobic, her article vigorously accuses migrants of not respecting the law and of not being involved in the community, in contrast with other complaints deploring the fact that migrants were too present at the festival (see also Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book). This gave rise to another wave of comments about the role migrants play in the community (*Yeovue News*, 31 March 2011). While this debate

is certainly a sign that Yeoville is far from being a diverse but united 'pan-African village', the fact that the issues of migration and xenophobia are openly and publicly discussed might itself be a significant sign of progress. It seems that xenophobia is becoming an issue people can at least talk about, instead of being something that must be resolved through violence. Perhaps, thanks to the spoken and unspoken exchanges that happened during the festival – through dance, music or just smiles – the festival might have helped initiate dialogue between the people living in Yeoville. But how, then, to sustain this dialogue? How does one transform the euphoria of being together during an extraordinary day into an ordinary, daily practice of mutual respect?

According to Kamal El-Alaoui, a festival should not be considered as an event but as a process: 'So what it [a festival] does is that it allows community a platform where it can actually express itself – meaning that the community has to prepare itself months and months before the event in ideas, concept, vision, preparation, production and presentation. That makes different elements of the community come together to share ideas, to work as a group, to drive their own vision to the future.'[15]

This understanding of the festival as process, and more especially as a process through which the residents of a neighbourhood are learning not only to live but also to work together despite and beyond their differences, is notably shared by Marc Gbaffou, the ADF chairperson, for whom 'it is certainly that kind of event [the festival] that can bring together the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. We can't only live in a neighbourhood: we have to do things together in a neighbourhood. So I think it is that kind of platform that has been created by Africa Week.'[16]

However, for this vision of a festival to be effective, all the residents of the area should be involved in one way or another in the event. The extent to which the people living or working in Yeoville were included – or felt included – in the festival is problematic. For instance, whereas Yeoville – and especially its main street – is a trading business community, most of the shop owners I interviewed in Rockey-Raleigh Street in April 2011 did not feel concerned about the festival: some barely remembered it; some declared they could not appreciate it because they had to work that day; and some even said that the festival was detrimental to their business. So, even if they enjoyed it, the shop owners mostly remained spectators of the festival. They did not take part in the organisation of the event, nor did they really attend it. They did not even seem to have benefited from it from a business point of view. Ultimately, the feeling predominantly shared by shop owners was one of indifference, if not of exclusion. Moreover, street traders who sell daily on Rockey-Raleigh Street, some of whom are foreigners, were physically excluded from the festival; they were asked to leave the premises on the day of the festival. The symbolic and physical exclusion of some of the most visible people of Yeoville – traders and particularly informal traders – certainly questions the capacity of the festival to be an inclusive event for all in Yeoville. If its main street is a trading space, it is also a space contested between South Africans and foreigners, formal and informal traders, and so on. Trade is indeed a nexus of xenophobic tension, as business competition (with, often, more skilled foreign businessmen) takes on xenophobic accents. Excluding traders from the festival appears

to contradict the ambition to celebrate 'African-ness'. Yet, if the festival did not manage to involve all the people of Yeoville, was it nevertheless able to attract people from elsewhere in the city?

Changing the image of Yeoville to attract visitors and investments

One of the objectives of the festival, as stated in particular by the YBCDT, was to change the image of the neighbourhood in order to attract more people and investments from other parts of the city, and even beyond. But the compatibility of this objective with the previous one is far from being obvious: could the social and ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood really attract people from the outside? Or does the improvement of Yeoville's image presuppose, for instance, a ban on or a formalisation of informal trade, even at the cost of marginalising the poorest traders, or excluding foreign ones? To evaluate the attraction of the festival it is necessary to look at its attendance as well as at its capacity to generate income.

According to the organisers' assessments and common perceptions among the locals, between 5 000 and 10 000 people attended the festival in 2010 – a huge crowd, considering the estimated 40 000 people living in Yeoville – the audience being predominantly from the neighbourhood, and black. Since there are now very few white people residing in the area, their attendance of the festival can indicate the extent to which the festival managed to attract people from outside Yeoville, despite their overwhelmingly negative representations of the place. As Maurice Smithers observed, the few white people who attended were somehow connected to the Yeoville Studio and the Hotel Yeoville projects.[17] Even though some of them stayed for the day, it means that the festival in itself did not really manage to attract a completely new crowd. In addition, the fact that the festival alone was not able to attract a significant number of whites – and presumably of people from the outside – is a sign of its difficulty to reach beyond its own area. The organisers of the festival themselves have acknowledged and deplored this point. For them, the difficulty in reaching a broader audience was mostly a consequence of poor marketing of the event due to a lack of funding. To tackle this issue, the budget for the 2011 festival was increased from R520 000 to R1 100 000, with a quarter of the budget reserved exclusively for marketing purposes. However, the festival committee never managed to get this funding, for a variety of possible reasons: because of internal competition for funding amongst the various organisations of Yeoville, because of the end of the '2010 World Cup window of opportunity' (financial availability as well as political prioritisation) and also because of the lack of interest and involvement of local traders and businesspeople.

Nevertheless, the Alliance Française of Johannesburg agreed to lend the festival seven award-winning films from the Burkina Faso Film Festival. With this external contribution, the festival committee hoped to attract outsiders in 2011, as became clear during a discussion concerning the scheduling of the movies. One of the committee members was arguing that the films should start at 5 pm, that is to say, after work hours but before it gets dark, in order to allow workers as well as women and children from the neighbourhood to safely go to the screening. Another member argued that the films should start later, to give outsiders the

time to arrive. In the end, it was suggested that maybe two screenings could be organised in order to accommodate both audiences. This debate is symptomatic of the issues that can arise when targeting audiences that have different and sometimes conflicting expectations. Being a community-based event, should the local audience be prioritised? Or should a wider audience be favoured in order to attract attention and money into the area? The organisers of the festival had assumed that it would automatically have a positive impact on trading revenues for Rockey-Raleigh Street, but this was apparently not the case. The market traders, for instance, estimated that they lost up to 50 per cent of their revenue on that day. According to them, the road closure was very detrimental to their business: firstly, because their suppliers were unable to deliver fresh produce for the week; and secondly, because it prevented their usual customers from accessing the market. These allegations are to be interpreted carefully against the background of sometimes conflicted relationships between the market traders association and other local organisations. Be that as it may, the benefits generated by the festival are unclear. For example, the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in Rockey-Raleigh Street welcomed 1 117 clients for an average tab of R33.09 on the day of the festival, whereas there were 1 192 clients for an average tab of R34.64 a year before. The reason for this underachievement is also unclear. It might be the result of the lack of attendance of people from outside Yeoville, or the consequence of the lack of involvement of the shop owners who did not really take advantage of the festival to make more money – some even closed their shops to go to the festival.

It is certainly difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the economic potential of the festival. Nevertheless, these are issues all festivals have to deal with if they want to become sustainable. Given the extreme precariousness of the organisations involved in the project and their lack of funding, being able to organise an annual recurrence of the festival since 2010 – with an exception in 2012 – might actually be seen as an achievement. But the financial uncertainties around the festival still jeopardise the essence and the future of the festival, not only at the social and economic level, but also politically.

Emergence of new political voices?

As the festival was still in its early stages in 2011, its role in the local political scene was still to be defined. Could it work as additional support for existing local organisations or representatives? Or would it become an emerging alternative voice in the local political arena? Was it potentially a channel through which all the people from Yeoville could be represented? By developing the 'pan-African village' vision 'from below', the local organisations were challenging the top-down approach usually implemented by the City of Johannesburg. However, this did not mean that these organisations were contesting the metropolitan authority itself or its backing of the gentrification of the neighbourhood. In fact, in order to happen, the festival needed the support of the City of Johannesburg, since it funded the 2010 festival. Furthermore, some of the festival organisers did not think that gentrification was necessarily inconsistent with their own vision – even

though they recognised its potentially damaging effects on the neighbourhood. As Aura Msimang-Berton, a late cultural activist in charge of the artistic programming of the festival, said: 'I want the neighbourhood to stay healthy. I don't want our buildings to be crumbling. It is unfortunate that it takes speculators to fix a place where then poor persons cannot afford it.'[18] For her, gentrification was seen as a necessary evil in order to improve the area.

Ultimately, the festival was not a means for local organisations to contest the legitimacy of the City of Johannesburg, but rather a means to establish a direct link with it, and in so doing be recognised and legitimised as effective organisations. In this respect, relations between local organisations and the City were more complementary than conflicting. However, this reality completely bypassed the ward councillor: although Councillor Mohlala was the representative of the metropolitan authority at local level and a member of the political party in power at the time, she was not particularly involved in or supportive of the festival. Her withdrawal seemed to result both from her personal antagonism towards the festival organisers and from her own political strategy: she was accused of pushing a xenophobic line for purely electoral purposes (Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book).

The relationship between the City and the festival committee itself was not without ambiguity. On the day of the festival, the head of the Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage declared: 'The area has such a cosmopolitan vibe about it. I hope more carnivals like this are held here.'[19]

Despite this declaration, the City decided not to fund the second Africa Week festival but instead to support other events, such as the Africa Day concert in Newtown. This annual concert, which also celebrates Africa Day, is a very different kind of event. Firstly, it is located in one of the first regenerated areas of the inner city, Johannesburg's Newtown Cultural Precinct. Secondly, its programme is made up of mainly international artists or well-known local ones, in order to attract a large 'arty' middle-class audience. In this respect, the City seems to prioritise events that promote the 'world-class African city' image it is trying to build (Sihlongonyane 2015). Such events, of course, cater to the privileged rather than promote community development. The organisers' reactions to the City's decision were ambivalent: some deplored it, while others celebrated the fact that it would force the festival to become more independent. Because of the lack of support from the City, the festival committee had to look for public funding at provincial and national level as well as from private companies. Unfortunately, two weeks before the 2011 event, the festival committee still had not managed to secure funding. Nonetheless, the team was not ready to give up: they decided to organise the festival anyway, but a scaled-down version of it, using all the volunteer forces available. The same thing happened in 2013 but for different reasons: one week before the actual festival took place, one of the major funders had to withdraw because of legal issues related to the fact that some of the local partners were organisations operating as community-based organisations (CBOs). Could these latest developments be a sign that local organisations were gaining power and independence on a local level? Or was it, on the

contrary, evidence that the event was not sustainable and that it was likely to disappear in the next few years?

The festival was organised to give visibility and a voice to people who do not usually have a chance to be seen or to be heard. In this respect, it could have been the first step towards an empowerment process for those who are 'powerless' and often have to construct a 'politics of invisibility', such as the African migrants. On the other hand, specific individuals seemed to have a strong hold on the organisational process, to the extent that some people from the community felt excluded. Criticism of this in 2010 prompted the creation of a selection committee, which advertised each position for the renewal of the festival committee. But, once again, due to a lack of funding, the positions were taken by people willing to be volunteers – in other words, mainly people who had been involved in the festival the previous year. In addition, these members of the festival committee were also involved in other community organisations or activities. How to ensure, then, that these activists' vision for Yeoville was shared by the whole community? The risk was that the festival committee would end up reproducing, on a local scale, the very metropolitan top-down strategy it initially wanted to challenge.

The inability of this particular festival committee to organise an event in 2012 illustrates the failure of the approach defended predominantly by Maurice Smithers and the YBCDT, in both its form and its substance. On the contrary, the rebirth of the festival in 2013, thanks to the support of the ADF and the Foundation for Human Rights, marked a turn in the vision promoted by the festival, since it implied a shift from a strategy predominantly focusing on regeneration to a strategy mainly looking at the issues of migration and xenophobia. Is this approach more likely to regenerate local support and participation from all the inhabitants of Yeoville, migrants as well as non-migrants? The question is still an open one, but this shift does indicate a change in the vision of the neighbourhood promoted by the festival.

Conclusion

The Yeoville Africa Week Festival is an interesting event from an artistic point of view and, most importantly, from a social, economic and political one. At a global level, and in the context of a 'festivalisation' of urban public spaces, this challenging case study questions the so-called social potentialities of such art performances (Quinn 2005), as they are intended to be predominantly focused on the community, and not only on the marketing of a place. On a metropolitan level, this festival is also remarkable because it is one of the few public art projects to be initiated by the community itself, rather than imposed by the City of Johannesburg. As such, the festival is a stimulating example of an effort to question the City of Johannesburg's top-down strategies and to suggest alternatives to it. Sadly, one of the causes of the weakness of the festival lies in that it did not offer an explicit counter-vision to the City's regeneration scheme. At the local level, the festival is also emblematic of how art becomes the object of local negotiations around social, economic and political issues, despite the threat to its sustainability in view of the major problem of funding.

Ultimately, the involvement of formal and informal, South African and foreign traders in the festival might be crucial both to provide financial support to the festival and to promote reconciliation at community level.

Notes

1   The xenophobic attacks refers to a wave of violence against predominantly, though not exclusively, black foreigners in South Africa. It started on 11 May 2008 in the north-east of Johannesburg before spreading across the country (Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2008).

2   See, inter alia, the 'Inner City Regeneration Strategy' (City of Johannesburg 2004); the 'Inner City Regeneration Charter', (City of Johannesburg 2007).

3   The JDA is the metropolitan agency in charge of implementing urban development and regeneration strategies.

4   See debate on this issue in the local newpaper, *Yeovue News*, 19 August 2010.

5   Interview with Maurice Smithers, Johannesburg, May 2010.

6   The two notions of 'festival' and 'carnival' are often used interchangeably in the literature as well as in the discourses of the organisers and participants of such events. Strictly speaking, a carnival refers to festivities including a parade in costume, while the notion of festival is wider. It refers to a period of artistic performances, which can include – but not necessarily – a carnival in the strict sense of that word.

7   Interview with Maurice Smithers, Johannesburg, April 2011.

8   The precise name and the exact year of this carnival are uncertain. It was, however, filmed by Gillian Schutte in her documentary *Yeoville in 2 Genres* (Handheld Films, 2008).

9   More precisely, Kamal El-Alaoui has been involved in the organisation of the Notting Hill Carnival in London for several years as well as the New Year Carnival in Johannesburg during the 2000s.

10 Interview with Kamal El-Alaoui, Johannesburg, April 2011.

11 The YBCDT is a non-profit organisation interested in the redevelopment of Yeoville, officially founded in 2010 but operational since 2008. The YSF is a community-based forum, which brings together all the organisations of Yeoville. The ADF is a community-based organisation created 2008 as a response to the xenophobic attacks in order to give a voice to migrants in South Africa. For further developments on these organisations and their relations, see Katsaura, in this book.

12 Interview with Maurice Smithers, April 2011.

13 Interview with George Lebone, Johannesburg, April 2011.

14 Interview with Marc Gbaffou, Johannesburg, April 2011.

15 Interview with Kamal El-Alaoui, April 2011.

16 Interview with Marc Gbaffou, April 2011.
17 Interview with Maurice Smithers, April 2011.
18 Interview with Aura Msimang-Berton, Johannesburg, April 2011.
19 'Yeoville rocks Africa Day', 31 May 2010, City of Johannesburg website. Accessed March
    2011, https://joburg.org.za.

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7 Love stories

WILLY-CLAUDE HEBANDJOKO, CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU AND SHAHID VAWDA

Love stories are about encounters, dreams and fantasies. While they reflect the structure of South African society – inequality, xenophobia, prejudice and precarious lives – love sometimes challenges these structures: individuals stand against injustice, fight assumptions, overcome barriers. These stories are also about migrant lives – the fragility linked to mobility and survival; concerns about documents and legalisation; differences in language, culture and expected gender roles. They are also about the beauty of encounters, strokes of luck or chance, amidst these complexities. These stories are about hope.

In order to capture them, the authors chose to interview lovers individually, in order to understand their rationale and how individuals recall their own story of the making of their couple. The authors also accompanied each person for a photography session on the sites that meant the most for the unfolding of their love story.

FIGURE 7.1: Héritier Lena

BORN: Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1982
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2005
PROFESSION: Spaza owner

THUMI
BORN: Eastern Cape (South Africa), 1975
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2004
PROFESSION: Nurse

FAMILY STATUS: Engaged, one child
MET: At Hillbrow Hospital in 2006
LIVE: Berea, in a 3-bedroomed flat (two rooms are sublet, shop on the ground floor)

How we met

I met Thumi at Hillbrow Hospital in 2006. I had been attacked by tsotsis on my way to work. When I got into the hospital, the queue was long. Thumi was treated before me. When she came out, I was still standing in the queue, unattended. I was bleeding. All the nurses were there; no one had even approached me. She went to them and pleaded them to attend to me. When I came out, I saw her sitting there; I didn't know that she had been waiting for me. I went to thank her. We started walking together, chatting. While we were walking, I told her to come with me to my place in Yeoville, where I was sharing the room with two other friends. My friends were surprised to see me with a beautiful lady and they were calling her *mundele* [white] because of her skin complexion. Since that time we started dating and visiting each other. We would go to Yeoville KFC [Kentucky Fried Chicken] because she loves that cuisine.

Building our household

In 2008 we organised a trip to her home in the Eastern Cape, to meet her parents and formalise our relationship. I was accompanied by a friend who played the role of my uncle to my in-laws. When we came back, we moved together to Berea, and in 2009 our child was born.

At the time we met, she was not working; I was the one who was providing through my job as a security guard. She got a nursing job in 2009. Then we put the money together and we started a spaza shop. My wife always helps in the shop when she's back from work or when she's off. This shows my success in South Africa and in Joburg. I moved from being a security guard to a businessman, through the support of my beautiful nurse wife.

Navigating difference

We are human beings: I can't say that we don't have problems, but they are minor problems. Like when I want food and she says, 'No, you can make it yourself, I'm tired', I get angry. I know I'm a bit strict. It was a time when we newly opened the shop, she needed money and I refused to give her money; she called the police saying that I should give her access to finance, the shop is the effort of both of us. They arrested me, but released me the following day. Since then we have a joint bank account and we both contribute. Otherwise, we are mature people and we solve our problems responsibly.

MICHELLE

FIGURE 7.2: Michelle Justine Nlandu

BORN: Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1972
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2001
PROFESSION: Market trader (CBD)

HENRI
BORN: Lodja (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1967
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2000
PROFESSION: Shop owner (Kempton Park)

FAMILY STATUS: Separated since 2008, two children
MET: Berea, 2003
LIVE: In a 3-bedroomed flat, Yeoville

How we met

I was a school teacher in Congo, but my family decided that I had to travel to the UK, and they sent me via South Africa as I could not get a visa. I faced a lot of sufferings, as the person

I paid to help me travel did not keep her promises. A man called Henri tried to help me but I did not trust him. He kept on visiting me, and told me that he loved me and wanted to marry me. My friends convinced me, saying that after failing to travel overseas, I had nothing to lose in getting married.

Living together

When we started living together, I communicated with my sisters back home, but not with my parent, because my sisters had lied to our father, telling him I was already in the UK, whereas I was still in South Africa. When my father heard about it, he cried a lot, but then he cooled down.

Henri officially introduced me to his family when I was pregnant, and gave cultural dowry to my family. In 2003, we had our first daughter. We decided to move to Yeoville, where I gave birth to the second child.

Living in Yeoville

Our main places in Yeoville were the church; the Yeoville market, where we used to buy Congolese groceries; and several shops like Shoprite and Supa Saver; KFC for the children; and the bakery, corner Raymond and Rockey, where they sell good breads. Out of Yeoville, we go to Eastgate Mall and Cresta Mall to restaurants and for the kids to play. There is also Oriental Plaza, where we were buying items to send to Congo; that's our business provision place.

The couple and migration

We lived as a married couple in harmony, until Henri decided to go to Congo for business. We never had problems before. Maybe he had his own problems that he never shared with me. I even went to see him in Lubumbashi to try to bring him back. When I arrived, he started by telling me that he wanted to make money for us, just had started a business in Lubumbashi and was not ready to go back home with me. Then someone in the house told me, 'Oh, who are you? Are you Henri's new wife?', and I said, 'What do you mean, new wife?' He explained that Henri was married and his wife had just passed away, 'so you are the new one'. I was very shocked, and I did not understand. I took the decision to move on and leave him.

It took me seven months to come back to Johannesburg: I ran out of money, and then my visa expired. It is a priest that eventually paid for my [return] ticket. My commitment now is to raise these children.

DÉSIRÉ*

FIGURE 7.3: Désiré Mutombo

BORN: Mbuji Mayi (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1988
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2010
PROFESSION: Security guard (Fourways)

LINDI
BORN: Botswana, 1986
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2008
PROFESSION: Cleaner (in town)

FAMILY STATUS: Dating
MET: At Hillbrow park in February 2011
LIVE: Yeoville, in a room (him); downtown, with her two aunties (her)

How we met

It was a Sunday. I was in the park accompanied by my friends; she was walking in front of us. I followed her, I introduced myself. I told her that I don't speak English very well, but I am learning. But Lindi said there was no problem because one learns by speaking. I asked her if

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* Not his real name

she would help me improve my English. The following day, we met in Yeoville Park. I never expected what she did. She hugged and kissed me. I was surprised. In Congo, you know, when you cruise or you are after a girl, she cannot hug or kiss you first; you have to convince her. So we stated dating.

Our places in Yeoville

We only have two places in Yeoville: Art Café and Time Square. Art Café: to tell you the truth, every Wednesday we go because there is promotion for dagga! Time Square: we go because I like South African music.

Family pressures

Once she came in our flat unexpected. I then had to introduce her to my brother, and he got very angry: 'You came here to study, now you waste your time with whores.' He told our parents in DRC. My parents are Jehovah Witnesses, they do not approve of our relationship. They now even gave me a nickname, 'Champion', meaning womaniser. Since then, I've left the flat, and I am free to see her. But this pressure is weighing on me. Fortunately I have a job now. I introduced her to my friends. I know her aunties; she lives with them in town. The aunties appreciate me; they call me their 'in-law' already.

JENNIFER*

FIGURE 7.4: Jennifer Zuma

BORN: Newcastle (KwaZulu-Natal), 1987
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2007
PROFESSION: Hairdresser (Yeoville)

ETIENNE
BORN: Katanga (Democratic Republic of Congo), 1984
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2005
PROFESSION: Shop owner (Yeoville)

FAMILY STATUS: Living together, one child
MET: Shoprite housing adverts wall in 2008
LIVE: Yeoville, sharing a flat with other subtenants

How we met

When I came to Jozi from KZN [KwaZulu-Natal], I went to Yeoville, as that's where I could easily connect with people who are migrants here. I spent three months in a guest house as

* Not her real name

a sex worker. After I had some cash, I decided to get out of that place to become respectable and start a good life. I was using the day to search for jobs. Remember that sex workers are mostly busy afternoons and in the evenings. I came across this hair salon in Yeoville. I begged the lady there to help me get out of that job that was making me ashamed. The lady saw I was serious and gave me the job.

The same day I went to Shoprite [to the housing adverts wall] to look for accommodation. There was a group of men greeting me: 'You are beautiful, hey!' I took it as an insult because I was planning to get out of my prostitution life. I was surprised when one of them, Etienne, was cooling me down and said that he could help me find a better place. They took me to a flat where I would share the room with a Congolese woman, and for the rent Etienne said, 'Give whatever you have, I will pay the rest.' I needed that help and called Etienne to move my stuff. He came and I explained [to] him everything. He told me that I should leave all this behind as the experience of my past. Then we went to the place and he said, 'Welcome home and feel at home.' It just happened. I started falling in love with him, just for what he was doing to me and his behaviour that day.

Becoming a family

Some months later he suggested that we could stay together. In July 2009 I became pregnant. When I gave birth, we organised a trip to KZN to see my parents. The most important thing is that my parents know Etienne and whenever he will be ready for *lobola* he will pay. His family doesn't have a problem. They love me and I love them also.

WILLY-CLAUDE

FIGURE 7.5: Willy-Claude Hebandjoko

BORN: Mwembe (Democratic Republic of the Congo), 1973
ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2007
PROFESSION: Student

PORTIA
BORN: Bhofolo (Eastern Cape), 1968
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1996–1999
PROFESSION: Bank employee

FAMILY STATUS: Dating
MET: Sandton (mall) in 2008
LIVE: Yeoville (him), with his cousin; Soweto (her), with her son

How we met

I met Portia in Sandton, in the bank where she was working. I had tried unsuccessfully to open an account in Yeoville – I didn't have the proof of address in my name, as a tenant. One of my friends told me it would be easier to open a bank account in Sandton. Portia attended to

me. Surprisingly, she only requested my passport. She asked where I was staying. 'In Yeoville.' She then said, 'How come that you came all the way from Yeoville to open a bank account?' And I replied, 'It seems like FNB [First National Bank] has different management policy according to branches. I preferred this one here.' She smiled and said, 'I don't understand.' I added, 'You are right. You can't understand.' But while she was asking all these questions, she had already opened the account. She told me to sit in the waiting room. After about 10 minutes she came; I had started worrying. She introduced herself and I did the same. And then she looked at me and asked, 'Why are you too serious?' I answered, 'Because I am in front of a professional.' She asked about my age, but I told her that a man never has an age; be him young or old, he is a man. Then she gave me her phone number. So, since 2008 up to now, we are boyfriend-girlfriend.

Cultural issues

We have sometimes fights on cultural issues. She would say that Congo is not South Africa, that we are equal and we must discuss issues together, '50/50', and even, 'ladies first'. Another thing that she could not accept: to stay with my cousin without him contributing financially to the household. It's like South Africans have lost African hospitality. Language sometimes brings suspicion. One day I broke her phone because she talked for more than 30 minutes on the phone in Xhosa. She said, 'Can't you learn our language, if you are jealous?'

Our places in Yeoville

We like going out a lot and discover new places, mostly out of Yeoville. She doesn't like Yeoville, because she doesn't feel comfortable there. The only place she likes in Yeoville is the market where she buys plantain bananas. She also sometimes comes to St Francis Catholic Church with me, in Yeoville. She is Christian Catholic and we share the same religious belief.

8 Managing xenophobia and constructing Yeoville community in public meetings

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU AND EULENDA MKWANAZI[1]

Community meetings have been a key element in the conduct of Yeoville Studio. As a former activist in Yeoville, and as the director of Yeoville Studio, Claire was committed to attend, sometimes with students and colleagues, as many public meetings as possible: as a means to communicate what the Studio was, what it did, its progress, its findings, and as a means to shape or reshape its direction, as a form of accountability. In the process, attendance at meetings became intriguing as an investigative end in itself: what was happening in those meetings? What was at stake, why did people continue to participate, even though the discussions might sound empty – mere shop talk, repetitive and ritualistic, as some members of the Studio commented (Katsaura 2015)? Claire decided to take these meetings seriously, and frame them beyond their use as a means to inform the community about the Studio, and a means to gauge neighbourhood atmosphere and concerns, framing them instead as an object of enquiry on the making of local democracy and the construction of a 'community'. This became the focus of Eulenda's research (Mkwanazi 2010).

'Community' is not taken as a given, implying shared values and identities existing purely out of living in the same local area, or deriving from residents' supposedly essential characteristics; it is understood as a social construct, based on the incremental and contested definition of shared values as well as of boundaries. Tapping into our long participant observation of Yeoville community meetings,[2] and following Norbert Elias and John

Lloyd Scotson's (1994/1965) attention to how the categories 'insiders and outsiders' are co-constructed in the public realm, and become consolidated and rigidified over time, we excavate some of the processes at work in building a 'Yeoville community' and negotiating its boundaries over time.

In this chapter, we chose to focus our analysis on how xenophobia, and foreigners in general, are publicly and openly constructed as issues and categories, in processes involving the definition of the self as much as the definition of the other. It is important to mention that during every single public meeting, the issue of foreigners and xenophobia came up. Thus, a study of the management of xenophobic tensions during these meetings allowed us to capture the setting, exploration and consolidation of community boundaries and concomitant definition of insiders and outsiders, both key elements of community building. Attending a variety of public meetings over a year, regularly and consistently, also allowed us to see how ideas or practices displayed in one forum percolated into another, were repeated and consolidated or expanded in the next meetings, in this way constructing a shared – or rather, dominant – vision for what a Yeoville community ought to be.

Much has been written on xenophobia in South Africa, as the first massive and widely publicised outburst of xenophobic riots in 2008 seemed to generate a degree of surprise, related to a vision of the South African 'miracle' and expected 'exceptionalism'. This is not the place to review this literature: suffice to say that those interrogating the local roots of xenophobic violence identified local demographics (Fauvelle-Aymar & Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2012), the salience of economic competition (Charman & Piper 2012), competition for resources in contexts of (insufficient) state intervention (Nieftagodien 2012), and competitive local leadership using xenophobia as a means to construct followership (Misago 2012). It is mostly in conversation with the latter that our chapter delves into the issue of local leadership (see also Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014) as it played out in public neighbourhood meetings.

Observing meetings over a long period of time gave a sense of depth to our study, allowing us to witness the repetition of patterns, shifting contexts, changing (missed or exploited) opportunities that do matter in the process of constructing a sense of community. Consequently, even if we, like Katsaura (2015), observed the sterile repetition and the reiterated non-resolution of local issues, we do not emphasise this 'tautology'. Rather, based on the assumption that people attend these meetings for good reasons (Gervais-Lambony 2015), and with a sensitivity honed to the subtleties, variations and nuances of public discourses over time and spaces, we interrogate these repetitions as a partly ritualised process of community building.

The chapter starts with a preamble describing the three types of regular public meeting we observed. Its structure is based on what we identified as three main elements of community building around the question of xenophobia, which we argue is constructed (and, occasionally, deconstructed) in public forums. The first one is the issue of hate speech or xenophobic utterances; the second is the issue of who participates in the meetings, often used as tool to build 'us' and 'them' categories; and the third is the extent to which contested or sensitive issues (involving xenophobia) are permitted into public debate.

Setting the scene: Contrasting several community fora

Throughout our research, three public spaces of participation were selected for observation. We selected public platforms that were organised on a sufficiently regular basis and that were relatively broad in their geographic scope (we therefore excluded street meetings). We were able to consistently attend public ward meetings (chaired by the ward councillor once a month, opened to all residents of the ward); the monthly meetings of the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), a forum of various local civil society organisations; and sector crime policing meetings, held less regularly and intended to facilitate dialogue between residents and the police. Each of the three spaces is unique in its own right, having its own goals and objectives (see Katsaura, this book). Each space was created with different outcomes in mind and had different types of influence on the community at large.

Ward public meetings were created by local government legislation to provide a more accessible platform from where residents can interact with the state, via their ward councillors. In post-apartheid South Africa, ward meetings were to deepen democratic accountability through a set of participatory mechanisms, structured around the ward councillor, the ward committee (an elected body of ten residents with specific portfolios), and regular ward public meetings (see *Transformation* 2008). This platform is therefore not unique to Yeoville, as it is a national requirement for all wards, but some of the issues raised in meetings are specifically relevant to Yeoville.

The Yeoville Stakeholders Forum is a forum of local civil society organisations (28 are currently registered members). The Forum was initiated by the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the development arm of the municipality, when a public intervention was planned in Yeoville during the period 2005 to 2009. The need to include residents in the regeneration of the area, and the impossibility of addressing too many fragmented and diverse community organisations, led to the creation of the forum. However, the YSF has since developed its own dynamics. Chaired by an elected local leader, no longer organised around the JDA's requests as its intervention in Yeoville has ended, it is now chaired and convened by residents themselves. Each registered member organisation can send a maximum of two representatives to Forum meetings.

There are two forms of community policing forum in Johannesburg. Community policing forums (CPFs) are chaired by elected members of civil society and were created to keep the police accountable. They are mandatory in each police station: this is the result of the need to restructure the South African Police Service in post-apartheid times, moving away from the political and repressive apartheid police service, and rebuilding (black) residents' trust in the institution (Bénit-Gbaffou 2006). Sector crime forums (SCFs), chaired by a police officer in a subarea of the police station's jurisdiction, discuss crime issues with residents at a more local level. They were developed as the police claimed that CPFs were too politicised to fight crime efficiently, and possibly also because the police wanted to regain control of community–police interactions. We observed meetings of the two SCFs that cover Yeoville.

To analyse these public forums, we looked for similar research focused on observing and analysing meetings. We hoped to find methodological and conceptual guidelines: how to

observe, make sense, write about, present and analyse such chaotic and multi-dimensional objects as public meetings, over the long term. Surprisingly, we found very little. Andrea Cornwall (2007), for instance, gives an interesting, detailed and lively account of a health public meeting in Brazil, which she presents as a series of relevant 'scenes' (using the metaphor of a theatre that Katsaura [2015] explored further). She reflects on the impenetrability of community politics and the challenges in observing and making sense of what goes on – stakes are hidden; rules are opaque, clear only to what Robert Dahl (1961: 91–93) would describe as the 'political stratum': those who attend each and every meeting. Cornwall does not propose any observation methods or conceptual frameworks. Graham Williams (1994) proposes a simplified method of observation, focusing on two categories: content and process. Content is focused on individuals' contributions to the discussions and the broader aim of the forum – but the author does do not seem to consider that content matters very much, even for the participants. With regard to processes, Williams delves into aspects around communication and decision-making, highlighting the implicit that is often not communicated verbally, but through other means, in order to capture the underlying nuances of communication in meetings and to understand both the implicit and the explicit. He argues that these non-verbal forms of communication – including eye contact or avoidance, body movement, dress, and way of speaking and observing formalities – are difficult to observe and record. Marian Barnes (2007) further considers the importance of a venue as an important aspect of whether meetings can be held or not based on the availability of the space. Philippe Gervais-Lambony (2015) pays more attention to two spatial dimensions of meetings – where they are located in a neighbourhood (as it influences attendance, materially and symbolically) and how the internal space of the meeting is configured (and sometimes reconfigured during the course of the meeting).

Inspired by these approaches, but also in the absence of sufficiently comprehensive observation and analytical tools, we developed an observation grid (see table 8.1) around three key topics: *spatial settings* within meetings (as displays of power); the *attendance* of meetings (as forms of inclusivity or exclusivity, but also of dynamism or dormancy, stability or fluidity); and the *stakes* of each meeting (the explicitly discussed as well as the implicit in these meetings).

Tolerance, rejection or encouragement of hate speech in public

The way xenophobic statements, or more elaborate hate speech, are managed in public meetings is crucial in setting a norm – what is tolerated or not; what is legitimate or illegitimate. As innocuous as it may seem, passive tolerance of xenophobic statements by the chair of a meeting is a form of legitimation: local leaders' lack of reaction to xenophobic comments acts as an implicit validation of what is being said. Even if individual members of the audience sometimes react to xenophobic statements being made, the leaders' lack of endorsement or even rebuffing of their comments has a strong impact on what is proposed as a collective local norm of behaviour.

		Ward public meetings	YSF meetings	SCF/CPF meetings
SPATIAL SETTING	Arrangement of space	Authoritative: ward committee sits (silently) behind desk; councillor chairs, addresses audience, invites speakers to come to the table.	Power-sharing: circular arrangement with a table for writing; members and leaders huddled around the table.	Authoritative but shared power: police officer and forum chair behind desks, evolving towards a circular arrangement.
	Participants' intervention	Questions addressed from seats; people raise hand and stand up when talking.	Everyone speaks from their seat, conversation mode. Close interaction amongst participants.	Everyone speaks from their seat, conversation mode.
ATTENDANCE	Visible diversity of the audience	Clothing: ANC T-shirts displayed. No traditional or ethnic gear. Language: national diversity sometimes perceptible through language and accents. South African languages: mainly English, isiZulu, Sesotho (not always translated). Age and gender: mixed; many older residents.	Clothing: traditional, ethnic or national gear. Diversity of political affiliation (ANC or ANCYL present but not displayed; COPE* displayed). Language: English as communication vehicle. Age and gender: mixed.	Clothing: uniforms (police officers, street patrollers). No traditional or ethnic gear. Language: isiZulu in SCF1; English and local languages in SCF2, English mostly in CPF. Age and gender: mostly male; mixed ages.
STAKES	Topics discussed	Wide variety: community and local projects, development – soccer World Cup, housing, xenophobia, city council.	Community wellbeing: human trafficking, employment, gambling and drinking, education, integration and xenophobia.	Crime in a broad sense; poverty issues (unemployment, overcrowding, migration); xenophobia.
	Atmosphere of the meetings	Tone: authoritarian; defensive; informative. Tensions: sometimes confrontational (challenging the councillor; hate speech; people standing and pointing fingers).	Tone: consensual and friendly; an open (but directed) discussion. Tensions: limited; sometimes between COPE representative and other members.	Tone: question and answers (strong leadership role). Emotional, dominated by key figures. Tensions: sometimes arise, especially around xenophobia issues.

TABLE 8.1: Public meetings observation grid: Yeoville

Source: Mkwanazi (2010)

Note: * COPE = Congress of the People, a party that split away from the ANC in 2008

Box 8.1 displays an instance of tolerance for hate speech in the name of freedom of expression. This tolerance often derives from personal sympathy; but more importantly, it corresponds to a political strategy: the councillor needs to be in line with her constituency, which at least in one respect excludes foreign migrants, who are not voters. There is a fine line between taking the pulse of her constituency and allowing people to voice their concerns, and tolerating hate speech. It is the definition of this line that is being explored and debated in these public meetings.

BOX 8.1: 'Let him speak'

Notes from public ward meeting, 20 April 2010

Context: An old man, speaking in isiZulu, has been making allegations against foreigners about a crime committed in Yeoville. He is using the term kwere-kwere *(a derogatory term for 'foreigners'). A South African member of the audience stands up and interrupts.*

Man A: Councillor, this should be stopped.
Councillor: I would have stopped the guy if I had thought these were xenophobic comments. Let him speak.

Notes from public ward meeting, 13 February 2010

Context: A South African man makes statements in isiZulu, with an angry and accusing tone (pointing fingers), and using the term kwere-kwere. *A member of the audience (with a strong Nigerian accent) reacts and asks the councillor to stop the man from speaking. The councillor retorts she won't do so.*

Councillor: People come to these meetings to speak their hearts out. Let him speak his heart out.

Note: This Nigerian man is a well-known and active member of Yeoville civil society: a representative of a Nigerian association, and an executive member of the African Diaspora Forum (ADF), he also used to be involved in the Yeoville CPF. The dismissal of his request is also a dismissal of his person, a non-recognition of his role in the community.

Box 8.2 illustrates a second tacit validation of xenophobic statements. The councillor asked the CPF chair to present the CPF programme to the audience, and failed to react, even to aspects that are clearly xenophobic and actually illegal. Some worried (but mildly expressed) comments come from the audience; they are not really followed up by the leadership.

This stands in contrast to the constant tracking of xenophobic discourse expressed in YSF meetings, driven by liberal anti-apartheid leaders with strong views that they don't hesitate to put forward in other participatory forums, such as the ward committee meetings, even if they hold a minority view there and are not backed up by the meeting's leadership. They enforce a zero-tolerance attitude towards xenophobia. Using repetition of the same mantra, they constantly remind all participants about the dangers of slippery discourses and oversimplifications in order to construct a common social norm, but in a direction opposite to that of the CPF leadership (see box 8.3). This norm might be internally contested, or not understood equally by each member, but leadership is firm in constantly reaffirming its position and debunking prejudice.

BOX 8.2: 'We have a problem about the citizenship around Yeoville'

Notes from public ward meeting, 13 February 2010

Context: The councillor asks the CPF chair to present the CPF programme. Since the election of the new CPF leadership in 2009, there has been no CPF public meeting. The chairperson presents their programme in a mixture of English and isiZulu.

Mbuyiseni, CPF chair: We have a problem about the citizenship around Yeoville, because if, for instance, you arrest a person, he calls himself by the name Sifiso; tomorrow the same man mugs you, you check his name on his passport and it is now Thokozane; and after that you ask for the ID, it says Sanele. So we are trying to get hold of those people. These are some of the issues we are going to report to the station commander about …

The next part of our programme deals with businesses. We want to know about the businesses of Yeoville, that there are people like this and that. We want to see who they are hiring, check the percentages of the people that are working there, whether there are five Nigerians, five Zimbabweans and five South Africans, and whether those people have the relevant documents. You find those people are using the money to get citizenship …

Man A (*with a strong Nigerian accent*): When the chairperson of the CPF was talking about citizens, it was spoken in a different language and some of us could not hear what had been said, so could you please clarify? And I would like to ask just one more question: how many foreign nationals are part of the new set-up of the [CPF] executive? I know that we voted for people. You guys cannot fight this crime alone; we need people who speak the languages you cannot understand to interpret. Not everybody as you say has a criminal record. We need to come together as people of Yeoville. So we need to restructure ourselves in Yeoville in terms of this.

Woman A: It is interesting to hear the CPF programme as we are all eager to know and engage. We would have much to say about it. Will it be possible to have the programme in writing, or will it be open for discussion sometime?

Mbuyiseni: About the issue of the foreign nationals, it is only your nation [Nigeria] that we have a problem with. From Congo and Ghanaians, they are committed. We want foreign nationals to be part and parcel of the CPF. So that whatever we discuss, they know about [it]. And if we are going to organise, they are there. About the programme, we'll have a public meeting soon.

Councillor: Good. I propose to close this meeting here.

BOX 8.3: 'We must be careful not to blame foreigners'

Notes from YSF meeting, 15 April 2010

Maurice (YBCDT chair): In the last three weeks, 22 people were arrested involved in syndicates, linked to two guest houses. They found 22 guns and 10 stolen cars. There is an important thing that the superintendent said: every one of these people are South Africans. They are not foreigners. These are syndicates operating from KwaZulu-Natal.

Notes from YSF meeting, 21 October 2010

Mbuyiseni (CPF chair): Some community members are complaining about these spaza shops [informal shops selling convenience goods in residential areas]. It is not manageable. Lots of things are happening within those premises. Foreigners dealing drugs … For us as a community, how can we tackle this?
Maurice (YBCDT chair): We must be careful not to blame foreigners …
George (YSF chair): (*interrupts*) It is by-law transgression. There is no xenophobia here.
Maurice: Many people breaking the law are South Africans too. Currently YBCDT is conducting an audit, noting all the spaza shops and car repairs. We'll take this information and discuss the way forward with the City …
Old woman (unknown organisation): These people see that they can do what they want, here. South Africa is the mother of Africa. In other countries there are no street kids, it is not allowed. Here they are, in Yeoville.
Two Congolese men, members of the forum, look at me, smile, and sigh – what can we do? She is so old…
Hussein (Muslim community representative): I am not accusing foreigners; I am not accusing South Africans. Wrong is wrong.

Building a dominant vision through repetition

More active ways of building a local community and defining insiders versus outsiders are used through the repetition in each meeting, almost as a ritual, of the same mantra: foreigners do not attend 'our' meetings. Through repetition, this mantra, true or false, builds into an accusation (foreigners are accused of 'not being interested', of 'not being part of the community') and a stigmatisation ('foreigners are happy to come here to do business and exploit South Africans, but when it comes to giving their time to the community, they don't care'). Box 8.4 illustrates this.

Notes from public ward meeting, 20 March 2010

Councillor: As long as they don't want to be part of us, it will be difficult to educate them. I invite them at each and every meeting. They don't come. Maybe these meetings are a waste of their time.

Note: This was reflected in the meeting's minutes as an item called: 'Explore the inclusivity of Foreign Nationals'.

Notes from public ward meeting, 14 August 2010

Councillor: Fighting xenophobia should not be done by South Africans only. Please brothers, come to our meetings.
Man A: People can own business [es], but why don't they participate in meetings of this kind? There are also people who think they can take the law into their own hands. We need workshops to talk. Our brothers are taking our people out of their houses at night. That is what I see. That will result in xenophobic violence.
Man B (*stands up*): I beg your pardon! I am here. I am Nigerian.
Councillor: Yes, but where are your fellow brothers?

After the meeting, I talk to Man B (the Nigerian participant who spoke up). He is organising daily after-school activity for children at the Recreation Centre – for free, to keep them off the street. As a man working for the community, the councillor knows him well. He is angry – but not surprised – at the way he was treated in this meeting.

Notes from public ward meeting, 11 September 2010

Councillor: It is a problem that our brothers do not attend meetings. I always invite them, but they never come.
Marc (ADF chair): Councillor, I am happy to help you mobilise the migrant community. Could you keep me informed of the meeting dates?
Councillor: You can read *Yeovue News*, the dates of the meetings are always indicated there.

Despite these accusations, some foreign residents do attend the meetings. In the ward meeting of 20 March 2010, out of the 40-odd members in the audience, we could identify at least eight foreign participants – this is far from negligible. But they do their best to remain invisible, wearing plain clothes (never traditional or ethnic gear, unlike in other meetings such as church or YSF meetings), seldom talking, and hardly engaging in discussions involving xenophobic or hate speech. Invisibility is their general survival strategy in this type of public

BOX 8.5: 'We don't have time to translate. We encourage you to learn local languages'

Notes from public ward meeting, 14 August 2010

Context: Speaking isiZulu, several people have made comments about foreigners that are visibly xenophobic – they include the use of the derogatory term kwere-kwere *to designate foreign migrants. They speak loudly and vehemently; part of the audience claps hands.*

Marc (ADF chair): I am Marc, the chair of the African Diaspora Forum. We are engaging our communities to learn local languages, but for meetings like these it will be very helpful to feature someone speaking a local language and English, so that he can translate. Please allow us to hear every person who is talking.
Councillor: Unfortunately, we don't have time to translate each and every comment in public meetings. The meetings are long enough. We encourage you to learn local languages, since you are in South Africa.

Notes from public ward public meeting, 11 September 2010

Context: An old South African lady has made a long comment in a local language. The audience cheers and laughs.

Marc (ADF chair): Madam Councillor, we have been sitting in this meeting since 2 pm; it is already 5 pm. We are all tired, and wanting the meeting to finish, but, please, we also would like to laugh, together with you. Could you kindly translate?
Everyone in the audience laughs. The councillor translates the conversation, and the meeting resumes.

space. It is only when they are involved in community-oriented activities that they dare speak up (such as the Nigerian speaking up in box 8.1). While invisibility represents a basic survival strategy, foreigners also often do not feel welcome in these public meetings. Beyond the repeated (and sometimes wrong) accusation of 'not coming to meetings' equating 'not caring', or 'not belonging'), the attitude of the leadership is generally unaccommodating and unsympathetic, and this is especially visible when it is related to language issues (see box 8.5).

While foreign residents or activists may try various strategies to be more included (using, for example, a discourse of rights – which does not work – or humour – which worked in this instance), and repeatedly raise the issue of language and inclusivity, there is clearly no policy among the meetings' leadership to welcome and include those who do not speak local languages.

Furthermore, 'migrants do not attend meetings' has now become common knowledge, even common sense, and is used on a variety of platforms to incriminate foreigners as 'others'. We saw in box 8.4 that the councillor's repeated statement was appropriated and further

Notes (translated from isiZulu) from Sector 1 Crime Forum meeting, 22 September 2010

Context: Sector crime forum meetings have not been held for some time, and on this day attendance is very low (ten people). The meeting (two hours) is almost exclusively devoted to discussing how to increase attendance, and focuses mostly on the issue of foreigners' attendance.

SCF1 chair: I want to know for each and every one who is sitting here as a citizen, as a community: how many of you encourage and inform others that the CPF [*sic*] exists and is working and they need to participate in these meetings?

South African Police officer: Sir, last year it is was me and Captain X, we went to Congo nationals, Ghanaians ... Most of the international foreigners don't want to attend the meetings; they don't want to be involved in the CPF [*sic*]. I do not know what their problem is.

SCF1 chair: Thank you. You know the question I ask: Who went to the neighbours to publicise? The inspector just put it; they went here and there to recruit foreigners ...

Member X: Residents, this is true. I went house to house from the bottom to the top. I found our brothers, now let me be clear ... We want a relationship with our brothers from Zimbabwe, our brothers the Congolese, Nigerians and others, really to find ourselves as one. What bothers me firstly is that they have been allowed into South Africa, but how do we welcome them when they do not want to work for the community? Secondly, yes, others do things that are against the law, and that is why we call the CPF and the SCPF [*sic*] in order for us to be one ...

Member Y: We can go door to door to understand in each house, in each flat how many people are staying here, and their difference. How many Nigerians are here, how many South Africans are here, how many Zimbabweans are here.

SCF1 chair: He is just suggesting.

Member Y: Yes, I'm just suggesting.

Member X: People of God, let us decide where are we going to start to make a door to door to tell our brothers, look, come, let's come together because we've got a problem coming. There are people here in South Africa legally; there are those that are illegal. If we want, we can tell our government that we want 'operation clean-up houses'. With 'operation clean-up houses', we will be going into people's houses with the police and together as the CPF and search the houses, people popping out. They are going to run to the [news]papers, saying that the police of Yeoville are no good. But to avoid that, let's come together and strategise how we can live in Yeoville.

Member Z: I was with [Member X] when he went door to door; we tried, I don't want to lie. We tried. We went from door to door from Louis Botha until Raleigh. What can

we do? Because you can take the horse to the water but you can't force it to drink …
Why would we help them if they don't attend?

Member W (foreign national): I remember when we started meetings, many people
came. But since the patrollers have started patrolling, … they [foreign residents]
doubt … None of the patrollers is foreign, so they doubt now.

SCF1 chair: Okay, now we're starting on patrolling. When the patrols started, they were
only taking South Africans, and excluding foreigners from patrolling, yes?

Member W: Yes.

developed by the meetings' participants. Box 8.6 illustrates how xenophobic statements are repeated in other public platforms, and become a way of singling out foreign migrants as problematic 'others'.

What is striking in this long transcription is, firstly, the obsession with foreigners' participation, while it is the overall participation of residents which is failing; there is in fact at least one foreigner present in the meeting. The discussion on foreign migrants' participation takes up half the meeting. Interestingly, this topic is first mentione by the police officer, as a biased response to a rather broad question about the overall lack of participation, asked by the chair. The chair, however, allows, thus affirming, the narrow direction taken by the discussion.

The reasons given for inviting foreigners are ambiguous: is it because they are perceived as 'a problem', and inviting them is a peaceful way of dealing with the problem; or is it because they also are part of 'us', and therefore part of the solution to crime issues? Both presumably, but nonetheless, foreigners are systematically stigmatised as 'other', as is obvious in the police officer's initial statement, and in Member Z's speech ('Because you can take the horse to the water … Why would we help them if they don't attend?'). This ambiguity is present also in the mixture of threatening and appeasing sentences (mere political correctness?). Overtly offensive contributions are gently corrected (perhaps because of the researcher's presence), such as Member Y's (not rebuffed openly, but the chair subtly reminds him that he does not hold an official position: 'He is just suggesting'). But there are also threatening discourses in the form of suppositions – see Member X stating that they could raid foreigners' houses, but they'd rather invite them to discuss, as a sign of their goodwill. The whole meeting is about constructing acceptable norms, or rather, acceptable expressions of a relationship with foreigners irremediably seen as 'other' – a sort of trial-and-error process where expressions are being publicly tested and debated; where the *doxa* exposed in public ward meetings is repeated, deepened and further explored (even questioning the access of foreign migrants to the community policing service, as if their presumed lack of attendance was a legitimate reason to exclude them).

Shaping public debate around the tolerance of xenophobic speech

The constant stigmatisation of foreigners as outsiders to the community is taken further by more direct and thematic accusations against foreigners, often driven by local leaders

themselves. Here the incremental construction of a Yeoville community takes the form not of repetition, but of constantly pushing the limits and opening new arenas for the expression of xenophobic resentment. In many ward meetings, it was the councillor herself who brought up new topics at each meeting which directly blamed foreigners for the challenges encountered by Yeoville residents, or even for the rise of xenophobia.

The councillor's statement in box 8.7 echoes a long-standing debate on housing issues within the ANC and the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), the latter proposing publicly and repeatedly (in ANC meetings and in public ward meetings) to go door to door and investigate who is living where, and to chase away foreigners. There are even rumours that the councillor has been involved in a housing scam (Dube et al. 2010). Some YSF and ANC members, however, have successfully intervened to stop such potentially explosive allegations from being made in public. The councillor finally abandoned these public stances, while some of the ANCYL's most turbulent members were excluded from the ANCYL. But the idea comes back now and again, as illustrated in box 8.8.

At each meeting, a new topic pertaining to xenophobia arises. Sometimes it is raised by members of the audience, in their individual capacity or as community leaders; but often it is raised by the councillor herself, opening a new door for public discussion on xenophobia. The issues raised by leaders reflect tensions occurring outside the space of the meetings: community policing dynamics (as illustrated in box 8.6), or emerging informal

Notes from public ward meeting, 20 April 2010

Simphiwe (CPF deputy chair): I would not want xenophobic violence to start again. But there … [difficult to follow as he switches to isiZulu] … a building on corner X and Y streets, that has been hijacked by Zimbabweans … [difficult to follow as he switches to isiZulu]
Councillor: You raise an important concern. Myself, I have many times raised the issue. I would like a door-to-door survey about who lives in these buildings. But I've been discouraged to do so.

After the meeting, I approach the CPF chair to have him clarify his statements for me. His reply is unambiguous:
'My aim is to get Yeoville back to what it was before. You need to go at the root of the problem: there are just too many foreigners. You see, if you chase a pig away, another pig will come. If you chase the mother pig, all the piglets will follow.'

groups directly challenging the councillor. Indeed, a group of residents, unhappy with the existing 'invited' spaces of participation, invented its own: the Yeoville Community Forum (YCF), nicknamed 'Under the Tree' as its members used to meet weekly under a tree in a public park. The forum boycotts the ward meetings, ostensibly considering them incapable of solving the housing and crime issues, criticising the councillor as soft and passive, and calling for more direct action, especially against foreign migrants (see Katsaura 2012, 2015).

While it is not illegitimate per se to bring issues of xenophobia to public ward meetings for broader discussion, the way in which they are raised seems to exacerbate them rather than appease or defuse them, as box 8.9 reveals.

The councillor's initial statements set up the tone for the conversation, to the point that even the other ANC leaders felt obliged to criticise the way the meeting was led (although in an oblique way: by criticising the item on the agenda), and to call for a more inclusive and constructive way of handling the meeting. Some community members dared speak differently (such as the taxi driver, a pragmatic businessman), hinting at the fact that foreigners are not the main issue and trying to start a petition on a local need instead; but their comments were neither echoed nor followed up. Ironically, the COPE representative, generally systematically in opposition to the councillor, ended the discussion by agreeing with her – which she did not acknowledge.

Notes from ward public meeting, 14 August 2010

Councillor: Moving to point 6 of the agenda, on xenophobia … We must admit in Yeoville we are very mixed. When I go for my hair, I go to a Nigerian hairdresser. There is not one single South African there. That is not right. I said, I want to see the owner, can't you find any South African hairdresser? If she cannot get them, I will assist her. We can't build such a society. We are talking about xenophobia. The shops, they only deal with their own nationals. They need to change. Where are they anyway? They never are part of our meetings …

This starts a whole conversation on xenophobia. Xenophobic statements are made, people concur, tension rises.

Thandi (ANC chair): We should remove the word xenophobia. If we are going to talk about that, there will always be anger and complaints. We must make this meeting about constructing communities.
Patrick (ANCYL): It does not matter the nationality of the person who does something wrong. The issue is if it is wrong, it must be dealt with.
Man (taxi association representative): Without them, there is no business. We accept whomever we do business with. Our business is our family. In this regard we need a taxi rank in Yeoville, with shelter, toilets for drivers. We would like a petition requiring a taxi rank.
Ben (COPE representative): We need affirmative action so that foreigners hire South Africans.
Councillor: Let us move on to the next issue on the agenda.

Conclusion

Local public meetings provide spaces for the incremental construction of collective, local, legitimate and dominant norms: of expression, of conduct, of action. It is not surprising therefore that many outbursts of xenophobic violence within South Africa erupted after CFP or public meetings (Misago 2012) – a place to test what is acceptable or not, and to measure the popularity of ideas or actions, as well as their legitimacy. Continuity in time, repetition and consolidation validate a specific community vision that becomes the dominant one.

This case study illustrates two points regarding the construction of a xenophobic community. The first is the key role played by leadership, to a great extent setting the tone and the boundaries of interactions occurring in these public spaces, through a variety of more or less subtle, implicit and direct interventions. Local leaders' ways of tolerating various expressions of xenophobia, such as being silent or not reacting to some ideas (either as a form

of support – 'let it be' – or as a form of dismissal – lack of follow-up), developing or emphasising others, accommodating or not accommodating a diversity of languages, putting issues on the table or avoiding them, are scrutinised by the audience as ways of legitimising the local order-to-be. These are not necessarily easy choices to make: a cap on xenophobia might ignore real and rising issues that possibly need to be discussed; choosing English as a communication language might be detrimental to the full participation of the less-educated participants; and so on. In this sense, the pressure on local leaders to listen to their constituencies and respond to their requests or at least concerns (a pressure much easier to avoid at higher levels of government) lies at the core of local democracy. It requires both strong leadership and a clear vision to be able to deconstruct xenophobic resentment and redirect local angers and frustrations towards other, more constructive and more relevant forms of collective action. In the absence of such leadership, supra-local levels of debate, regulation and recourse (at other levels of government or political parties) are crucial – however, they do not seem to exist or function currently.

The second point is more specifically about contesting local leadership and the dominant vision of a local community they build. An obvious conclusion might stress the importance of local activism – the multiple spaces of participation allow for different norms to be tested, different leadership choices to be explored and different discussions to emerge, with partly overlapping audiences interconnecting all these local spaces of participation. Within this multiplicity, one is exposed to both more exclusive (xenophobic, violent) and more liberal (inclusive, tolerant) visions of the local community. However, this conclusion does not take us very far, as is often the case with tautological debates on social capital (Fine 2001). More interesting, possibly, is the issue of migrants' strategies and tactics of visibility or invisibility. In Yeoville, the ability to openly challenge the dominant, xenophobic vision rested on the existence of an organised group of migrants who had demonstrated both local anchoring and powerful, extra-local networks. Needless to say these conditions are not easily created and Yeoville might be quite an exceptional case in Johannesburg. Individual (and even collective) migrants' visibility is often too much of a risk to take, seldom balanced by the political gains made in participating. A tactics of visibility is mostly resorted to as a response to specific, crisis circumstances, rather than constituting an ongoing form of local participatory engagement.

To return to the nature of these local participatory spaces, it should also be stressed that they are not all equally in a position to construct the dominant norm of what the community is, or ought to be. In Bourdieusian terms, the political field is highly competitive and by no means even (Bourdieu 1981; Stokke & Selboe 2009; Katsaura 2012). Whether or not a participatory space will become the platform for legitimising a set of collective norms depends on a variety of factors, including the scale of the audience and regularity of the meetings, and the degree of connection with other spaces of participation. But it also depends, perhaps even more importantly, on the political power, influence and legitimacy of the leadership itself: more or less institutionalised through an official position in the party and in the state and thus considered more or less able to mobilise resources and constituencies (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014). In Yeoville, the ward public forum (headed by the local ward councillor, whose political legitimacy is validated by local government, the voters and the ANC) sets

the tone, which is echoed and amplified by community policing forums, for instance. The ward public forum is ultimately more able than others to construct the 'dominant' vision for the community. It is the leader's own political legitimacy that confers legitimacy to local norms debated in the forum where the leader is the chair. The other participatory spaces, driven by leaders with other, less institutionalised forms of political legitimacy, can be better understood as *challenging* the dominant norms constructed in the ward and community policing forums: proposing alternative visions and alternative ways of living in Yeoville, or directly confronting the vision constructed in the more official participatory fora.

Notes

1   An earlier version of this paper was published as a chapter in Bénit-Gbaffou C (ed.) *Popular politics: Unpacking community participation in South African cities*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2015.
2   The authors attended, on average, one public meeting a week over a period of one full year.

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9 Yeoville as a transgressional space: Voëlvry and the Afrikaner counterculture of the 1980s

MARIA SURIANO, WILLIAM DEWAR AND CLARA PIENAAR-LEWIS

The Fees Must Fall campaign that swept across South Africa between 2015 and 2017 was the most significant youth political movement in the country's democratic era. Students of this movement were inspired by the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, in which black youth were the most prominent actors. The radical and contentious politics of the 1980s also found expression among Afrikaner youth, one expression of which was the rise and popularisation of a short-lived but significant artistic and social movement known as Voëlvry.

During the 1970s Yeoville, particularly Rockey-Raleigh Street, saw the emergence of several nightclubs and became the hub of a youthful counterculture, which complemented Yeoville's enduring reputation for cosmopolitanism. From the mid-1980s onwards, Yeoville's clubs came to play a crucial role in the development of Voëlvry. Literally 'free as a bird', better rendered as 'outlaw', Voëlvry (*voël*: bird; *vry*: free) was both a social movement and a subversive and satirical anti-apartheid punk-inspired rock 'n' roll. Sung in Afrikaans, and dubbed 'boere punk' (Allan 1989), this music was performed by the so-called Voëlvryers (members of Voëlvry), mostly white, youngish, Afrikaans-speaking male artists from middle-class backgrounds (Grundlingh 2004: 487). They were deeply dissatisfied with the government, represented by the National Party (NP). Based on interviews with Yeoville residents and individuals who patronised its entertainment spots from the 1970s onwards, this chapter focuses on how the nightclubs that thrived in the high street of Yeoville during the course of the 1980s enabled counterculture Afrikaans-speaking youths to escape,

transgress and oppose the legal and socially sanctioned codes of behaviour of the dominant society. They did so by performing, dancing and listening to witty punk-rock. What could be conveyed in 1980s Yeoville through light-hearted performances and concert parties was in stark conflict with the hegemonic – and allegedly homogeneous and monolithic – Afrikaner cultural identity, which was carefully produced and protected by the official nationalist institutions run by, or aligned with, the NP government through a number of both legal and secret organisations (O' Meara 1996: 44).

Key works on popular arts during apartheid have focused on black performance culture (Coplan 2007/1985; Ballantine 1993). Jazz, in particular, is widely seen as having played a substantial role in the South African struggle for liberation – musicians were often political activists, and political activists often frequented jazz clubs. White counterculture arts, and more generally, the significance of youth movements historically, remain a scantly studied topic, however. In his fine analysis of Voëlvry, historian Albert Grundlingh (2004: 486) mentions in passing that the Black Sun theatre in Yeoville played an important role in the early stages of this movement.

Drawing on scholarship on music and politics, and on the interconnectedness between music, identity formation and the spaces in which music is made and received (see, inter alia, Connell & Gibson 2003; Frith 1996), we argue that Rockey Street and the Black Sun in particular were central in granting Voëlvry artists and their young audiences considerable freedom of expression. These youths – of both British and Dutch descent – whose lifestyle can be defined as bohemian, alternative or counterculture, chose to spend time or live in Yeoville because of their common disenchantment with, and rejection of, the dominant Afrikaner identity and political establishment. Here they mingled with white leftists, working-class whites, black activists and black musicians and their audiences, and here they often contravened a key component of apartheid legislation: the Immorality Act.

Far from romanticising Yeoville, and fully aware of the past and present complexities of this space, this chapter maintains that Yeoville was a unique neighbourhood in a highly oppressed and racialised late-apartheid South Africa. To be sure, aside from Yeoville, in the same period there were at least three other bohemian, racially and socially mixed, and quite politicised youthful spaces in Johannesburg, such as Hillbrow, Crown Mines and Judith's Paarl. Johannesburg jazz clubs such as the renowned Kippie's in Newtown were key in experimenting with multi- and non-racialism. By performing with black artists, Johnny Clegg epitomised artists' struggle at an international level. Mixed areas frequented by artists and activists, and sharing some bohemian features, also existed in Cape Town and Durban. However, Yeoville was unique in that during the 1980s it attracted a core of both black and white anti-apartheid activists, and became a remarkably distinctive space of transgression, where the apartheid racial laws were violated and people of different racial backgrounds often interacted as equals, in nightclubs and elsewhere.

Yet, this specific status of both Voëlvry and Yeoville lasted only until the 1990s. After a brief sketch of the historical links between this movement and an early Afrikaner cultural protest initiated in the 1960s, and after an examination of the key features of Voëlvry, the final part of this chapter will convey a sense of why South Africa's rapidly changing political

circumstances of the early 1990s brought about the fading of Voëlvry, together with that of the Yeoville nightclubs that promoted it.

## Rockey-Raleigh Street: An entertainment strip

In 1970s Johannesburg, the hub of urban sociability and entertainment for young white residents started to shift from the central business district (CBD), particularly Joubert Park and Hillbrow, to Yeoville. The latter developed prior to the advent of professional planning and was characterised by low buildings alongside a walkable high street (Rockey-Raleigh): this may have been the pre-condition for the flourishing of a vibrant counterculture in this suburb from the 1970s onwards. The two blocks between Cavendish and Bezuidenhout streets (see figure 9.1) came to form the spatial core of the white anti-apartheid culture and music scene between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. It is here that some of the oldest Yeoville buildings, such as Scotch Corner and Solomon's Building, both completed in the 1920s, are located (Dewar 2010a). Although most nightclubs along Rockey Street targeted primarily white youths, they saw the presence of a minority of black audiences and artists as well.[1]

Interviewees' memories convey a sense of how Yeoville became an alternative area. Born in Benoni in 1955, Liz Kirsten moved to Yeoville in 1976 and lived there until 1993, on the corner of Raleigh and Cavendish streets. In her view, the first wave of white youths moving into Yeoville from the mid-1970s onwards consisted of English-speaking university students in their early twenties who flocked to Yeoville mainly because it was close to the University of the Witwatersrand.[2] These young white residents coexisted there with a largely working-class Jewish community that had been living in the neighbourhood since its inception in the 1890s.

By the 1980s alternative clubs were increasingly relocating from Berea and Hillbrow to Yeoville. They were mostly run by white men. Although some popular venues like Le Chaiem were located in Hillbrow, in the interviewees' memories Yeoville seems to have had additional attraction.

Looking at Yeoville retrospectively, Sanpat Kalmer remembers it as 'a fun place to be' and as 'the only place that you would see actually a mixing of people'.[3] Frank Raubenheimer, who has been running a pottery business in Rockey Street since 1994, when he moved there from Joubert Park in the CBD, describes the 1980s as a time when 'Yeoville was very ripe, what people used to say were the golden days'.[4] In Liz Kirsten's words, 'Le Chaiem … was in Hillbrow, but everybody would come back to Rockey Street. You would go to the clubs in town and you would then come back to the clubs in Rockey Street because some of them would stay open until the early hours of the morning.' She also recalls that Yeoville 'was like a little village' where 'you didn't need a car' and could walk everywhere. The rapidity with which Rockey Street clubs flourished is well captured by Kirsten:

> When we went there, [at first] there wasn't much. There was Mama's on the corner … and … Casablanca, one gay club … and … maybe one restaurant … Then it got developed into this strip, Rockey Street, where everybody came from all over Joburg; … we could
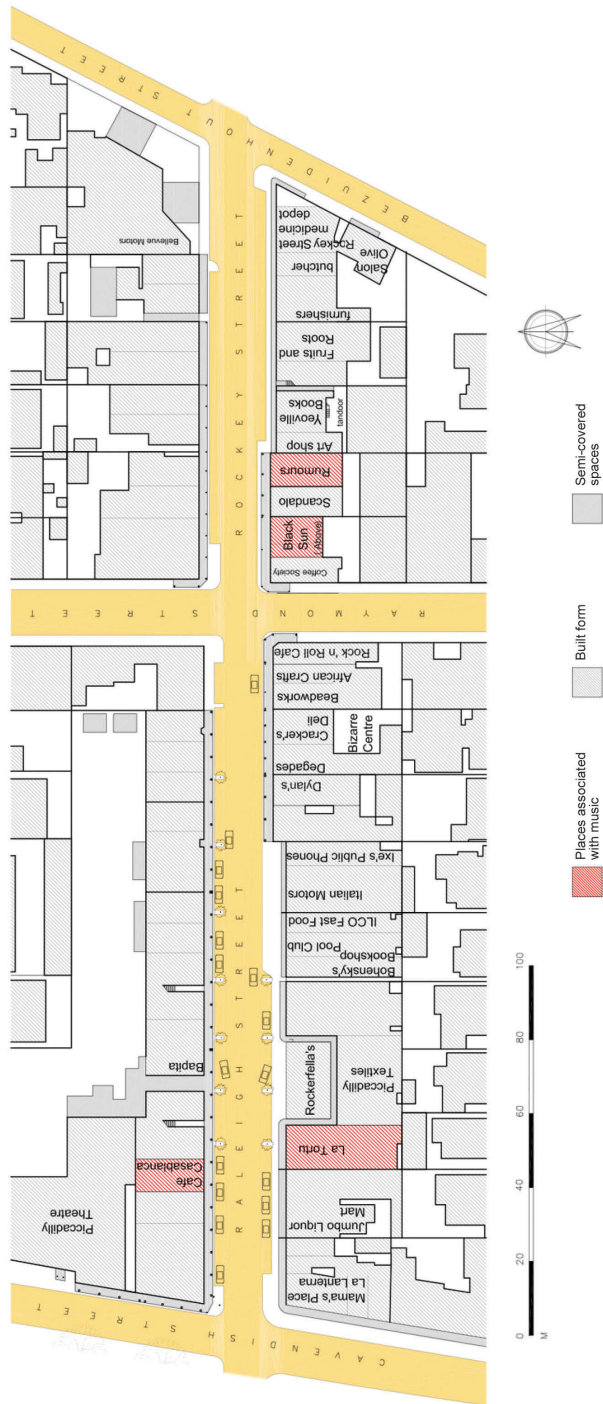
FIGURE 9.1: The music scene of Yeoville 1980–1994

Source: Compiled by William Dewar, 2014

just walk around the corner … Later, what was so nice about it was that clubs started to spring up on our doorstep – so the party came to us and we just happened to be living there.[5]

In this period, self-consciously alternative Afrikaners also began to make Yeoville their home. They were generally educated, middle-class people in their late twenties and early thirties, and were no longer university students.[6]

The roots and key features of Voëlvry

Voëlvry and 'the choice of music as a vehicle of Afrikaans disenchantment' (Grundlingh 2004: 490) arose out of a particular set of socio-political circumstances of increased protest music activity, in a national context in which any other overt form of Afrikaans anti-apartheid political protest was absent.

Afrikaners' cultural production and the related preservation of their dominant identity remained strictly controlled until the 1960s, when a literary movement known as the Sestigers (the generation of the Sixties) emerged, which attacked 'the foundations of the very idea of "the Afrikaner" ' (O' Meara 1996: 368). Initiated by a group of Afrikaner poets and novelists such as André Brink, the Sestigers' cultural production questioned the legitimacy of the NP government and the whole Afrikaner nationalist mission by rejecting the idea of *loyaale verset* (loyal resistance) that well-known and loved Afrikaner NP-affiliated poets had conceived in the 1950s. Instead of being loyal, the Sestigers challenged for the first time some of the most essential claims of the nationalist cause (Giliomee 2003: 554). Although it did not have a big impact on the greater part of Afrikaner society, which in the 1960s was still united and widely supportive of the NP, this movement opened a new space of disobedience within Afrikaner culture, identity and consciousness.

Earlier events that prepared the terrain for Voëlvry were the conscription laws (late 1960s onwards) and the Border wars of the 1970s–1980s (Conway 2012). Some musicians who were later associated with Voëlvry had been conscripted in the 1970s. A 1984 song by the late James Phillips (aka Bernoldus Niemand),[7] which would become one of the movement's iconic tracks, '*Hou My Vas Korporaal*' (Hold me Tight, Corporal), humorously and angrily recalled this experience (Phillips 2002: 72; see also Baines 2003; for the lyrics, see Grundlingh 2004: 512, and Hopkins 2006: 46–47; see Michael Cross [2018] for more about the life and work of James Phillips).

While the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by severe political authoritarianism, the 1980s were a period of rapid change and were crucial years in which a wider mobilisation of alternative Afrikaans identities was possible, despite Prime Minister PW Botha's increased repression and unprecedented intensification of internal and border security measures in a desperate attempt to curb the wave of resistance that was sweeping the country (Beinart & Dawson 2010). In the 1980s, the majority of white Afrikaans-speaking students in South Africa still officially supported the NP and were attached to Afrikaner nationalism and its symbols. Nonetheless, in this decade a growing number of Afrikaner intellectuals became

disillusioned with the hegemonic Afrikaner identity founded 'on exclusion, difference and dominance', as represented by the NP and its supporters (Laubscher 2005: 310).

For many non-conforming young and relatively young Afrikaners, disillusionment did not result in adherence to any political organisation, but in a conscious detachment from the oppressive Afrikaner identity. Voëlvry music was characterised by humorous and angry lyrics, combined with traditional Afrikaner musical instruments and rhythms used in a derisive way (Jury 1996; Drewett 2002; Pienaar 2012). Artists also adopted hilarious stage names, and even bands' names mocked the system: Die Gereformeerde Blues Band (The Reformed Blues Band) made fun of a key Afrikaner institution, the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk). The lyrics of '*Energie*' (Energy) perfectly encapsulate the expectations of traditional white society, such as 'proper' appearance (which for men entailed having short hair), getting a house and a spouse, and voting for the NP. Ridiculing this conformist lifestyle as 'a waste of energy' and endorsing anarchy aptly conveyed what Voëlvry was about.[8]

Being anti-establishment in multiple ways, Voëlvry provided white youths with an avenue for departing from a very repressive culture. Regardless of whether the Voëlvryers formed a (rather weak) social movement or a loose, tiny group of individuals, they certainly 'opened up a cultural space for young Afrikaners to renegotiate their identities and narratives of self in a society undergoing transformation' (Baines 2008: 108).

Yeoville as a non-racial space of escape and protest

In Yeoville, Voëlvryers and other alternative whites found an already established community of socially and politically progressive people from various racial and social backgrounds, whose main common ground was condemnation of apartheid. Thus, 1980s Yeoville appealed as a space where counterculture South Africans could meet others with a similar worldview and form a community. Aware of being ostracised, many found a place of comfort, acceptance and mutual sustenance in Yeoville. Former Voëlvry artist 'Koos Kombuis' recalls that although Voëlvry musicians originated from various places across South Africa and did not first meet in Yeoville, their earliest performances took place largely in Rockey Street, and most of the band members and solo musicians lived in Yeoville and its surrounding suburbs such as Berea and Hillbrow. During the 1989 Voëlvry tour and before, he said, 'We were all based in Yeoville. Our consciousness was shaped by the small Yeoville subculture … There were a lot of like-minded people living in one place … Yeoville was one of the few melting-pot type places in the old South Africa.'[9]

For Harry Kalmer, an anti-apartheid Afrikaner man who lived in Yeoville in the late 1980s, 'it was the first time that I was surrounded by other people like me'.[10] Significantly, another former Yeoville resident, Sanpat Kalmer, highlights that Voëlvry was not so much against apartheid and racial segregation, but rather, against Calvinism. Challenging Calvinism was central to the 'outlawed' Afrikaners, since Calvinist values were cherished and taken very seriously by the Afrikaner establishment, to such an extent that, to be an Afrikaner, 'someone had to subscribe to a Calvinist and conservative world view' (Giliomee 1992: 347).

It can be argued that the Calvinist mentality came to be openly challenged in Yeoville for the first time.

From the mid-1970s onwards, Rockey Street saw the development of a thriving rock 'n' roll and punk scene. Voëlvry musicians were not the first to play rock 'n' roll in South Africa, but they used it in a new way: not only to create a communal space of expression and resist oppression, but also to shift their own perceptions of the world as well as the stereotyped views of Afrikaners held by some non-Afrikaners. Journalist Charles Leonard, a former Voëlvry fan who lived in Yeoville in the early 1990s, speaks about Voëlvry musicians as the first to play serious rock 'n' roll.[11] Des Latham, who attended some of their Yeoville concerts in the late 1980s, believes that 'a lot of the bigoted English speakers completely did a 180 on the spot from believing that all Afrikaners were illiberal and unable to recognise the fact that there should be change [in South Africa].'[12] Harry Kalmer maintains that the importance of Voëlvry lies in the fact that it helped circulate alternative Afrikaner ideas throughout the country, also reaching those young Afrikaners who had not been exposed to the progressive ideas that could circulate in places like Yeoville. In his words: 'I think [Voëlvry] had curiosity value for people … like us – I mean we were so alienated from Afrikaans [both the language and the dominant Afrikaner identity] by then, because of the army, because of apartheid.'[13] As Sanpat Kalmer adds, 'If you look at it [Voëlvry] in retrospect … the fact that people found a home where they felt comfortable, where they could protest, where … they could escape … from what was acceptable in the Afrikaans society – in that way I think it was very significant.'[14]

It seems that Die Gereformeerde Blues Band, which performed in Rockey Street on a regular basis, was well received by a number of non-Afrikaners. Their success among non-Afrikaners partly stemmed from the band's mission to mock and 'demythologise the Afrikaner' (Allan 1989). Therefore, in the late 1980s, Voëlvry musicians appealed to a growing number of open-minded Afrikaners, at the same time deliberately attempting to shift some of the ways in which non-Afrikaners perceived Afrikaner culture. This was largely made possible by the free environment and the venues provided by the Rockey Street nightclubs. Notably, another key feature of Yeoville was that '[it was] non-racial. It seemed to be the only place in Joburg where somehow the [apartheid] rules were overlooked. Everybody had their own space in Yeoville, there was this sense of great freedom. And because there were always people who were artists and musicians and big parties.'[15]

Some bands were made up of both black and white musicians, and their audiences were also racially mixed. South Africa's first mixed-race punk band, National Wake, gave an open-air performance on Rockey Street in the early 1980s. It disbanded soon afterwards due to 'pressure from the secret police and the banning of their music' (Dewar 2010b). Liz Kirsten recalls that in Rockey Street:

> There was a punk band, black … It was Ivan Kadey's band, National Wake, and I think that there were two white guys and two others [black members]. There were black people in the clubs, definitely, and I think this was still illegal. And so most of these [black] guys had white girlfriends; they would live in Yeoville. So there was that kind of thing: flouting the [apartheid] rules [the Immorality Act].[16]

While there was only one black person (also the only woman[17]) involved in Voëlvry music – Tonia Selley (stage name: Karla Krimpelien), who would have been classified as coloured – Voëlvry artists were eager to perform for multiracial audiences, and played alongside bands that included black members. Significantly, the first alternative Afrikaans rock concert in South Africa was planned for the Yeoville Recreation Centre in 1988. However, the Johannesburg City Council banned black musicians from playing, and black audiences from attending this non-racial rock concert. Boogy Gottsman, one of the concert organisers, cancelled the event as a sign of protest against the City Council's racially motivated decision. This unique event would have seen multiracial South African bands like National Wake performing side by side with Afrikaner artists. Boogy Gottsman's decision was fully supported by the Voëlvryers. Yeoville, with its distinctive socio-political landscape, encouraged the expression of non-racialism, together with the shaping of counterculture Afrikaner identities.

Rumours and the Black Sun

In 1979 Art Kelly and Howard Libson established a jazz club called Rumours in Rockey Street. Its clientele was mainly white and the club became a preferred venue for the first wave of counterculture English-speaking university students who moved to Yeoville between the mid-1970s and early 1980s. Rumours turned into an influential institution of the counterculture scene in Yeoville. Asked about what made the venue distinctive, Liz Kirsten had this to say: 'There were a lot of actors and musicians. I don't know what the drawcard was exactly. It was definitely the people [who frequented the bar] and the people that ran the bar [itself].'[18]

Mfaniseni Thusi, the trombonist of the jazz band Bayete, active on the Johannesburg jazz scene between 1984 and 1993, has described Rumours as providing a platform for progressive musicians and poets: 'There were lots of jam sessions, musicians enjoyed sharing the stage. In those days we had bands like Bayete … Sakhile, Theta, African Jazz Pioneers, Tananas and Peto, just to name a few.'[19]

The Black Sun was a nightclub and avant-garde theatre which moved from Berea to Yeoville in 1984. Located very close to Rumours, it was started by George Milaras and Chris Christoudoulou, two South Africans of Greek descent, in a small dingy venue above their restaurant. In Maurice Smithers's words:

> Scandalos, [the] Black Sun and Coffee Society were all in a large double-storey house in Berea on the corner of Tudhope Avenue and De Beer Road and they decamped to Yeoville. Scandalos opened [in Rockey Street with] Coffee Society next door and the Black Sun upstairs, which was this kind of avant-garde theatre.[20]

The Black Sun became the key space associated with Voëlvry performances: in the mid- to late 1980s Voëlvryers performed there frequently, and the club became the focal point of white protest theatre, and an elected venue for Afrikaans-speaking artists and audiences. The first Voëlvry cabaret was performed for the first time at the Black Sun in 1987.

Two key Voëlvry artists were Ralph Rabie, aka Johannes Kerkorrel, the lead singer and keyboardist of Die Gereformeerde Blues Band, and André le Roux du Toit, aka Koos

Kombuis, who was a member of the band, but eventually left to perform as a solo artist (for an autobiographical account that goes beyond Voëlvry as a merely anti-apartheid protest movement, and for its afterlife in post-apartheid South Africa, see Koos Kombuis 2009). Even when these two artists turned to rock 'n' roll and stopped using the cabaret as a vehicle for expression, the Black Sun remained their venue of choice (Hopkins 2006: 160–162). Kerkorrel has explicitly acknowledged the role of this theatre not only in promoting his work, but in shaping and advancing Johannesburg's alternative anti-apartheid white culture, and the city culture at large: 'Anyone [could] say anything in any language and the management doesn't worry. It's also important that we weren't part of the ordinary Afrikaner theatre or cultural structures. It was completely alternative. As such it made an invaluable contribution to the culture of Johannesburg.'[21]

Both English- and Afrikaans-speaking habitués of nightclubs gathered at the Black Sun and Rumours. Apparently there were more Afrikaans-speaking people in the English-dominated venues than the other way around and, despite some degree of success, Voëlvry music and cabarets were not always popular among the English-speaking whites – a perception mostly held by English-speaking counterculture individuals. For Liz Kirsten, the limited appeal of Voëlvry was the result of English and Afrikaans alternative individuals' different tastes: the former were not attracted by Voëlvry because they did not see it as 'serious music', like jazz. In her view, this punkish-rock was the preferred genre of those Afrikaans-speaking residents who had moved to Yeoville much later; they were younger than the previous wave and were 'slightly looked down on by English speakers'.[22]

Thus some oral records point to the fact that early counterculture white residents and those who moved to Yeoville later on retained separate identities. Indeed, this indicates that the white alternative Yeoville music scene lacked homogeneity. Yet, it should be underlined that in racialised apartheid South Africa, Yeoville represented a culturally diverse neighbourhood, where the racial laws of apartheid could be disobeyed.

Conclusion: The role of Yeoville, the impact of Voëlvry and its decline

This chapter has argued that in the 1980s, partly by virtue of its spatial layout – with low buildings alongside a walkable main street – Yeoville was one of the very few urban spaces in apartheid South Africa to facilitate the type of social environment which allowed then, as it does now, some degree of daily cross-cultural interaction. In a decade of increasing state repression and dissidence against apartheid, Yeoville constituted an ideal environment to foster the emergence and expansion of a white, Afrikaans-speaking, alternative, youthful music and protest scene. Throughout the course of the 1980s, the sense of belonging to a quintessentially alternative neighbourhood, where young 'outlawed' Afrikaners could find a comfortable home and meet like-minded people, was accompanied by a 'lived', day-to-day anti-apartheid stance.

Yeoville, with its venues, afforded Voëlvryers freedom of expression, and the clubs in Rockey Street were particularly conducive spaces where artists could wittingly attack and mock the key symbols of Afrikaner identity. Nightclubs such as the Black Sun provided a

space for the Voëlvry artists to perform, and provided their (predominantly, but not only) Afrikaner audiences with socio-politically conscious entertainment – in other words, with a chance to express their opposition to Calvinism, apartheid and racial segregation – while having fun. Interviews point to the fact that the Voëlvryers were quite visible and fairly prominent in the late 1980s counterculture spaces in Johannesburg, and by the late 1980s they represented a growing section of the Afrikaans-speaking counterculture population.

However, one should not overemphasise the impact of Voëlvry, which quickly faded as a music and social movement. Mocking apartheid could not be sustained in the long run; some artists also fought over copyright issues and aimed to pursue solo careers. More importantly, key historical changes occurred between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. While in the mid-1970s more than 90 per cent of Afrikaners still supported the NP, by 1991 their number had dramatically decreased (Giliomee 2003: 580). When the NP government began negotiations with the ANC, which included unbanning various organisations and ultimately freeing Mandela, young Afrikaners may have felt less motivated to resist the government. Generally speaking, the white alternative experience in Yeoville declined as a result of the drastic political shifts at national level. Caspar Greeff (2004), writing about the closing down of Rumours, serves to illustrate this point:

> South Africa also changed, big-time. Democracy came in 1994. Yeoville, which in the apartheid days was a bastion of non-racialism, a place where many ANC heavyweights lived, became a slum and whites started leaving in droves. One Tuesday in 1994, Louis Levy [a jazz pianist born in Chicago; he died in 2001] never came to Rumours to play the piano. 'I found out Lou had passed away,' says Howard [Libson]. 'I looked at Art [Kelly] and he looked at me, and we both knew.' We said, 'That's it, that's the end,' and we closed Rumours that night.

Ridiculing the establishment was the main feature of Voëlvry, but perhaps played a role in its ephemerality. The fading of apartheid, evident by the end of the 1980s, precipitated the quick end of the movement. Nonetheless, even if the ephemeral nature of Voëlvry is undeniable, from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, as this chapter has argued, Yeoville was a rather unique place in apartheid South Africa. Its nightclubs and music performances allowed young individuals of different social, racial and class backgrounds to form a 'like-minded' community and to openly transgress the racial laws of apartheid.

Notes

1   In terms of the racial classification in South Africa, the term 'black' includes those previously classified as African, coloured and Indian.
2   Liz Kirsten (former Yeoville resident; she was a regular at Rumours), interview with William Dewar, Senderwood and Orange Grove (Johannesburg), 24 July 2010; 14 August 2010.
3   Sanpat Kalmer (former Yeoville resident), interview with Clara Pienaar, Observatory (Johannesburg), 4 December 2011.

4   Frank Raubenheimer (potter on Rockey Street), interview with William Dewar, Yeoville (Johannesburg), 27 July 2010.
5   Liz Kirsten, interview, 14 August 2010.
6   Harry Kalmer, Sanpat Kalmer, Hans Pienaar and Corné Coetzee (former Yeoville residents), interview with Clara Pienaar, Observatory (Johannesburg), 4 December 2011. See also Grundlingh (2004: 487).
7   James Phillips chose the stage name 'Niemand' (nobody, in Afrikaans) before the rise of Voëlvry.
8   For the original Afrikaans lyrics, and an English translation, see Pat Hopkins (2006: 76–77).
9   Koos Kombuis (born André le Roux du Toit, novelist and former Voëlvry artist), personal correspondence with Clara Pienaar, November–December 2011. For subcultural formations, see Hebdige (1979).
10 Harry Kalmer, interview, 4 December 2011.
11 Charles Leonard (former music journalist for the progressive weekly newspaper *Vrye Weekblad* and Voëlvry fan), interview with Clara Pienaar, Auckland Park (Johannesburg), 1 December 2011.
12 Des Latham (journalist and former Voëlvry fan), interview with Clara Pienaar, Rosebank (Johannesburg), 22 September 2011.
13 Harry Kalmer, interview, 4 December 2011.
14 Sanpat Kalmer, interview, 4 December 2011.
15 Liz Kirsten, interview, 14 August 2010.
16 Liz Kirsten, interview, 14 August 2010.
17 For insights on Voëlvry as a masculine and sexist space, see Grundlingh (2004: 496–497).
18 Liz Kirsten, interview, 14 August 2010.
19 Mfaniseni Thusi (jazz musician), correspondence with William Dewar, 20 August 2010; 5 September 2010. Quoted in Dewar (2011: 61).
20 Maurice Smithers (activist and former Yeoville resident), interview with Clara Pienaar, Yeoville (Johannesburg), 2 September 2010.
21 Kerkorrel, quoted in Hopkins (2006: 125).
22 Liz Kirsten, interview, 14 August 2010.

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10 Leaving Yeoville

SOPHIE DIDIER AND OPHÉLIE ARRAZOUAKI

The way we understand and negotiate the past of our cities often conflates with the understanding of our own past as city dwellers. Memory plays an active role in the construction of our urban identities, as much as in the way we react to urban change. Our residential place in the city is certainly unstable, and we often move during our lives, but these moves are not solely the product of rational choices. How we as urban dwellers understand these moves, and how nostalgia, regret, fear, and longing for lost places combine with the necessity of making a new home elsewhere, were the initial questions behind 'Leaving Yeoville'.

In addition to the collection of interviews with former Yeovillites of all classes, nationalities, age, race and gender, photo sessions with photographer Lerato Maduna were arranged for our former residents to revisit old haunts in the neighbourhood, as a trigger for the unravelling of their memories of their personal histories and that of the neighbourhood. This work also benefited from the help of Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, Thembani Mkhize and Willy-Claude Hebandjoko Mbelenge.

CLIVE CHIPKIN

FIGURE 10.1: Clive Chipkin (seated) and his childhood friend Bentley Philips in front of 14 St George St

> My father always dreamed of moving to the northern suburbs. Most of the people of Yeoville wished to move out. It was a suburb of great ambition.

BORN: Yeoville (Johannesburg), 1929
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1929–1949
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): A child with his parents
LIVES NOW: Hyde Park
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Married, lives with his daughter
PROFESSION (NOW): Architect/writer
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): Craighall Park

A large part of my life was our family. Yeoville was much more rural. My grandmother's house at 93 Francis had stables – no horses in my time – but she had a cow. It was a lovely middle-class suburb, little detached houses, with verandas that faced the street and people, a lot of social life occurred on the veranda … you sat on the stoep and watched the street. Yeoville had a large Jewish population but it also had a large Anglican church. It was a white suburb, completely segregated, with a large black population working as, as called at that time, servants. They lived on the premises, in little back rooms. There wasn't a conscious awareness that this was a very unfair society.

I was young and enjoying life. But I could see the world. For example, we had, around the corner, Indian tailors. They were Hindu, and they taught me a lot about their religion, very gentle people ... Our family also knew Mahatma Gandhi. He walked through the streets. He had a big influence on me on – just on how to live life in a decent way.

We moved out when my father bought a stand in Craighall Park. It was just a natural impulse to go to a better suburb.
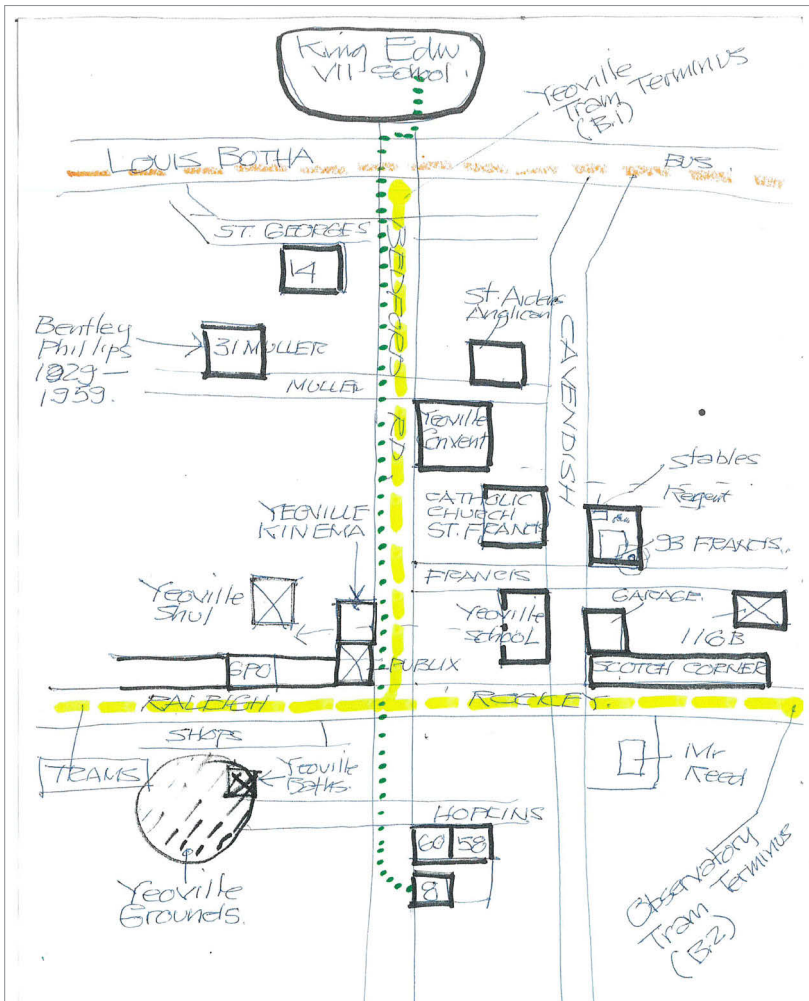
FIGURE 10.2: Clive Chipkin: My Yeoville
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

'My' Yeoville was linked by trams: it was a wonderful thing, the trams ... You didn't need to own a car, you could go everywhere with trams. The owner [of Scotch Corner] was Mr Reed, and he flew the Scottish flag. The rooms on top were for poor people. [Next to it] was a garage; I used to pump my bicycle tyres here. Then, in 1942, they turned it into a cinema, Piccadilly Cinema.

IVOR CHIPKIN

FIGURE 10.3: Ivor Chipkin on the Ridge

> I remember feeling very free … Ordinary living was very radical in
> some sense. We were exploring a whole new way of being.

BORN: Troyeville (Johannesburg), 1970
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1992–1996
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): Single/ living in a commune
PROFESSION (THEN): Researcher/activist (Planact)
LIVES NOW: Emmarentia
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Married, with a child
PROFESSION (NOW): Academic
LIVED (BEFORE YEOVILLE): Kenya
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): Paris (study), Parktown, Auckland Park, the UK (job),
Emmarentia

I loved living in Yeoville. My life changed dramatically when I moved into a building called
San Remo … I knew lots of people in the building; we were a community, all politically active.
Astonishingly, all very diverse. It was racially mixed. I worked for an organisation called

Planact, which was a group of urbanists involved against apartheid. The fact of just being in this place was a political deviance. In those days, having a mixed circle of friends was radical stuff. And Yeoville was a free zone. It was the promise of post-apartheid non-racialism. We were naïve … I remember feeling very free. One could be 'not white' in that space, get a sense of, this is what the new South Africa was going to be like. We were wrong. Really wrong. From Yeoville, I left for Paris after 1996/97. When I came back, Yeoville was tough. I don't go there now. But it's not only about Yeoville. My life is also very different.
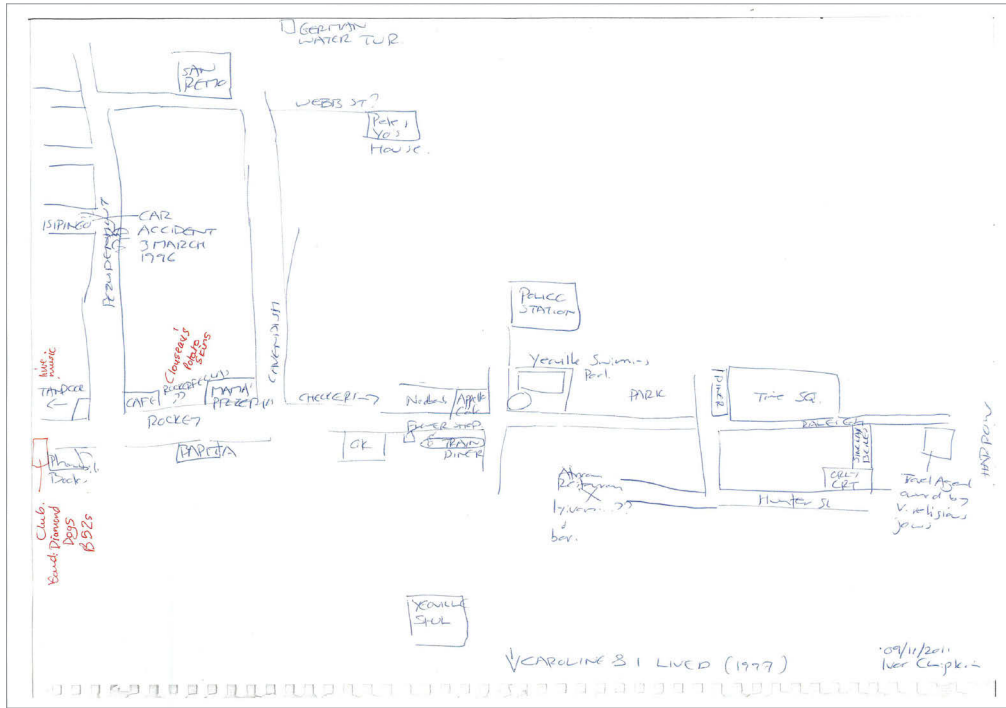
FIGURE 10.4: Ivor Chipkin: My Yeoville
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

In 'my' Yeoville, we were spending a lot of time in Tandoor, a great club … There was a place called Rumours, with a wonderful band. I think when I first started listening to jazz, it was in Yeoville. I had a car accident in 1996 at the corner of Isipingo and Bezuidenhout streets; [smashed] the lamp post and the wall … It was pretty much a turning point in my life.

SOLAM MKHABELA

FIGURE 10.5: Solam Mkhabela in his old St Johns View apartment

At Time Square I met all my heroes, basically.

BORN: Swaziland, 1967
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1996–1999 (but first visits 1986, 1992)
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): Single
PROFESSION (THEN): Film-maker, radio DJ
LIVES NOW: Melville
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Lives with his partner and son
PROFESSION (NOW): Urbanist
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): Cape Town, Melville

In the 1990s, there were a lot of exiles coming back to South Africa. I came back from NYC [New York City] in 1996. The discussions were just different to pre-apartheid, where they were mostly political. These discussions were about hope, about a new country and, ultimately, what jobs people were going to have. It did feel like coming back home to people that were ultimately going to shape the future of our country. Everyone I knew lived in Yeoville. That hardly ever happens; you can grow up in a city and usually people live all over the place,

but literally everyone very close to me lived around Yeoville. Those people tended to stick to each other; at the time I didn't see a problem, but in hindsight I see how we didn't really mix with the local community. At Time Square, there was Catalyst Films, a film production house, very active for the post-apartheid South Africa. A lot of very artistic and intellectual people would meet here: musicians, writers, poets, film-makers. That's when people were still formulating the youth radio stations, YFM … It was a hub of creativity. When I came back from Cape Town, around 2004, all my friends had left Yeoville. There's nothing that draws me to Yeoville now and I am not at that age where I go to those clubs.
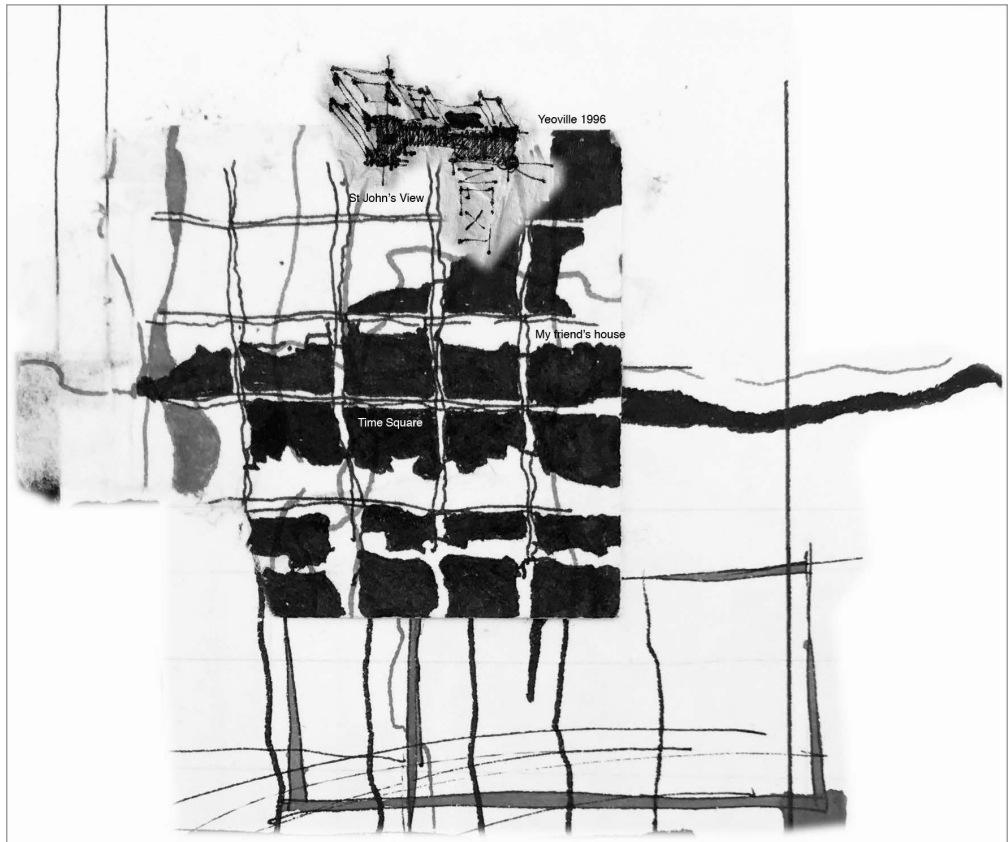
FIGURE 10.6: Solam Mkhabela: My Yeoville
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

In 'my' Yeoville, everything is close to each other. From the roof of St John's View, where I stayed with the family, I could see Time Square, the meeting point of post-apartheid creatives. Some were colleagues. A little bit to the east is a friend's house, a Victorian bungalow. In a northern direction lie the sites of the college built by Sir Baker, supported by a stone plinth.

FIGURE 10.7: Oy-Ling Booth on the streets of Yeoville

Everyone was quite hippy-like, you were free to do as you please. But obviously, there was someone watching me all the time to keep an eye that I didn't go out of line.

BORN: Johannesburg, 1982
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1990–2001
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): A child with her family
LIVES NOW: Parkhurst
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Single with a partner
PROFESSION (NOW): Office manager
LIVED (BEFORE YEOVILLE): Doornfontein
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): London (study), Cayman Islands, London, Parkhurst

My dad's dojo for karate was in Doornfontein. The business wasn't so well, so he decided to move to a new house in Yeoville. A lot of my family lived in the area. They officially moved out beginning of 2010, but our house is actually still on sale, because no one wants to buy it.

At least now, in Parkhurst, my mom can just walk up the road, to the main street with all the shops and the restaurants, and my father doesn't have to worry.

Where I lived was just literally a street away from everything. I remember the colours and all that … This is what Yeoville reminds me of, everything was so colourful for me. It was so fun, it was free.

My school was also around the block, so I always remember walking. It was like you could walk to and from school up until what? 1997, '98 … We stopped walking … we stopped walking.
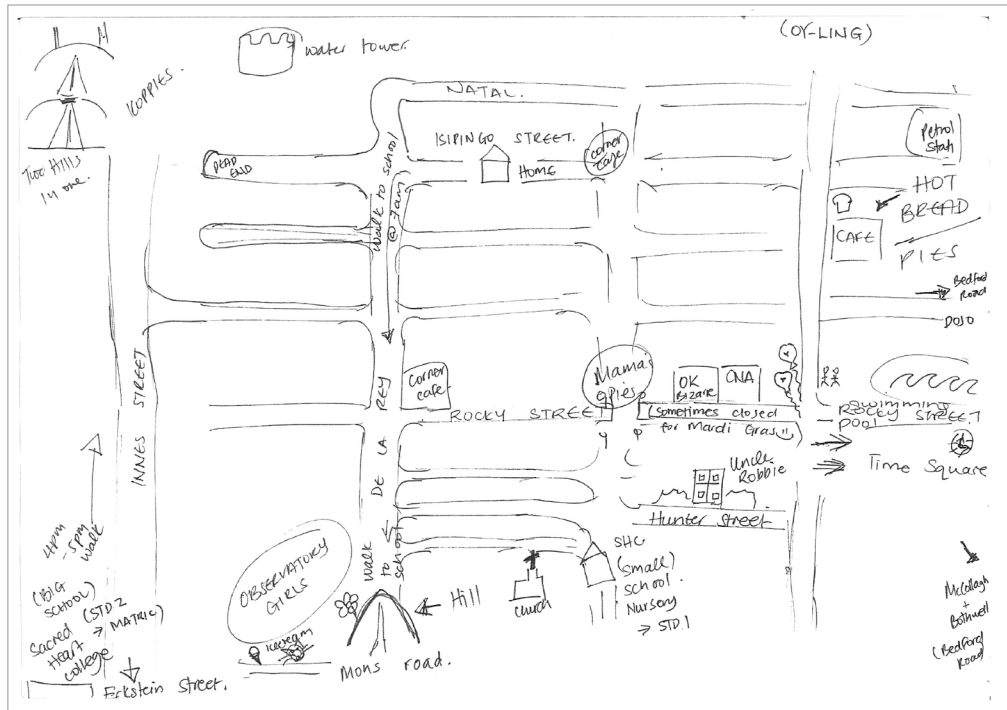
FIGURE 10.8: Oy-Ling Booth: My Yeoville
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

'My' Yeoville … Mama's Pies … I wish that was still open. That was the most authentic Italian restaurant ever! We just walked past Observatory Girls' and always looked at girls in the blue uniform. At the top of the hill was Mons Road – I remember that 'cause we walked this way to get to school and there were these dogs that my mom used to feed ice cream to.

GEORGETTE ADJOBA*

FIGURE 10.9: At Gaba's restaurant, also known as the Ivorian House, with owner Gaba and head cook Suzanne

Yeoville – in fact, I can't tell you what I miss from it.

BORN: Ivory Coast, 1972
LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 2001–2003
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): Married, one child in Ivory Coast
PROFESSION (THEN): Housewife, then property manager
LIVES NOW: Lyndhurst, Johannesburg
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Married, child at university in South Africa
PROFESSION (NOW): International relations officer
LIVED (BEFORE YEOVILLE): Ivory Coast
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): Rosettenville, Bramley, Lyndhurst

After six months [staying at the Ivorian House with my husband], I had a home of my own. The owner of my house was a Jew who owned five buildings in Yeoville, and he was looking for someone to do the admin for him. He really was an understanding old man. I always had

* Not her real name. Interview translated from the French.

my dictionary by my side, and when we had problems understanding each other, he would open it to tell me what he wanted. This is how I started learning English with him, easily, automatically, while I was working.

[I left because] I was mugged [in the workplace]: someone pointed a gun to my head. One of the buildings was full of Zimbabweans and these people owed money to the owner. Instead of taking it [out] on him, they took it [out] on me. I was pregnant then and lost the child in my fright. It really put a toll on me. I said I didn't want to work there anymore, and when I got a job somewhere else, the owner was very frustrated and started to give me problems.

Yeoville … in fact, I can't tell you what I miss from it. Maybe it's the fraternity, maybe it's my old memories that I am trying to find again, maybe that's what I am missing, but it's not much.
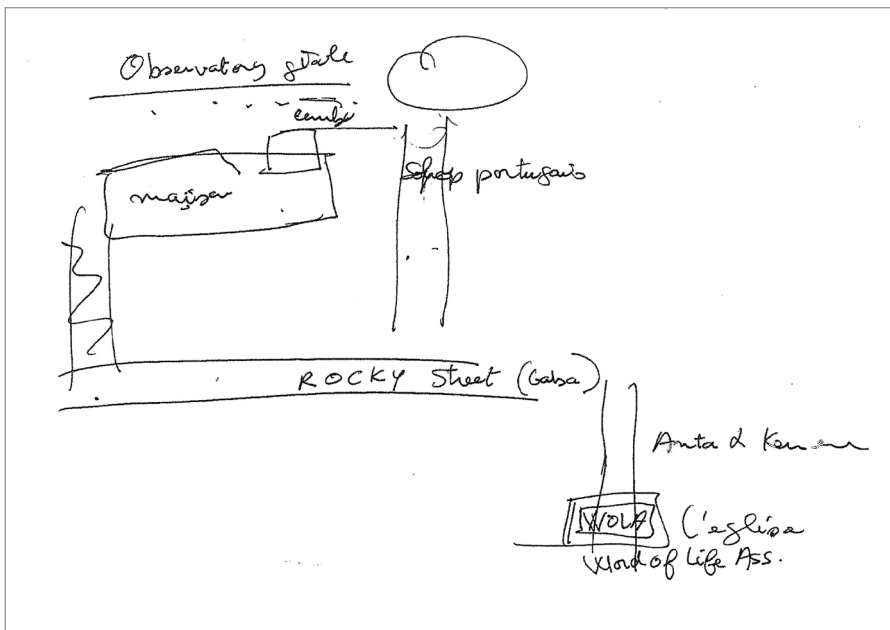
FIGURE 10.10: Georgette Adjoba: My Yeoville
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

'My' Yeoville: since I had just arrived, I did not speak English … my husband was going to work every day, so he told me I should not leave the house by myself. I was always at home. I only went out when I was with someone who could accompany me to go to Shoprite, to Checkers or to the African market. I only walked down Rockey, straight, just like my husband told me to do. Every Friday afternoon and Sunday, I went to church, the World of Life Assembly. And then, after church, we often used to go to Ivorian House (Gaba's).

SEAN JAMES*
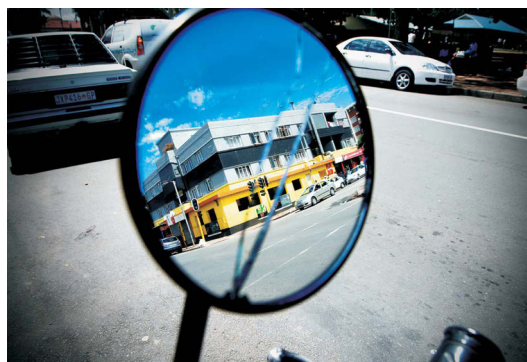
FIGURE 10.11: View of Time Square

I could go to restaurants if I wanted to. If I felt like going to a club, I could go to a club. If I wanted to just stay at home, I could stay at home and have a braai in my backyard.

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1997–2000; on and off 2000–2005
FAMILY STATUS (THEN): Married, with four children
PROFESSION (THEN): Security agent (clubs and restaurants)
LIVES NOW: Regent's Park
FAMILY STATUS (NOW): Children moved out; lives with daughter due to serious illness
PROFESSION (NOW): Unemployed
LIVED (BEFORE YEOVILLE): Kensington
MOVED TO (AFTER LEAVING YEOVILLE): Bez Valley, Regent's Park

I found it extremely desirable [to live in Yeoville]. I didn't own a car, so I used public transport. Most of my night was taken up sitting at bars and clubs here and eating out or having supper or dancing with my wife. And yeah, we entertained.

Those years I was well known in the area because of my security work. I used to work with the South African police when it came to club-related issues. I also used to assist the owners, because a lot of them came from [Eastern Europe]; they weren't familiar with the area.

As soon as it started changing and the more elegant of the restaurants started closing down, I decided to make a move. Because that's more or less when the drug scene started really. My eldest daughter unfortunately fell into a trap of drug abuse. I decided to get my family out of here before it got chronic.

It's just that it's not a place to bring up a white family … I feel silly now speaking like this. I don't really have a, how can I say, a barrier against other race groups or colours. I mean, my eldest daughter is married to a coloured chap and my son has got a black girlfriend from Kwazulu-Natal. And I haven't got a problem with it, you know.

* Not his real name

11 The Yeoville Stories project: Looking for public history in Johannesburg

SOPHIE DIDIER AND NAOMI ROUX

In early 2010, when we embarked on the Yeoville Stories project, one of the four legs of the Yeoville Studio, we had only a vague idea of where this would take us, but a keen desire to tell the extraordinary tale of an ordinary neighbourhood of Johannesburg. We wanted to contribute to the creation of what could be a truly public history of Johannesburg, not necessarily backed by grand memorials or focused on heroic figures, but a public history telling the continuities in the ways that urban residents make sense of a city that often seems to be characterised by fragmentation and contestation. There are multiple possible approaches to the telling of such 'smaller' or 'ordinary' histories, via the media of visual arts, oral history, mapping, performance and many others. In the case of Yeoville Stories, we adopted multiple strategies as an exploratory approach to uncovering and detailing some of the neighbourhood's multiple and layered histories and associations. Specifically, we were interested in the ways in which individual memories and life histories coalesce to inform a sense of neighbourhood, and in the place of that neighbourhood within the city's social history.

This research drew on the work of urban theorists who have written on the idea of neighbourhood histories and local memory as vital elements in the way city space is appropriated and experienced. In particular, we were inspired by the work of Dolores Hayden (Hayden 1995), and her exploration of the fragmented and hidden histories of 'ethnic'

neighbourhoods of Los Angeles in the 1990s as expressions of the city's public history, and often unacknowledged in the grand narrative of the city. Hayden made the case for the recognition of 'hidden' or everyday memories of the city and vital elements of urban life, and of people's experiences of the city, arguing that 'identity is intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories (where we have come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbours, fellow workers, and ethnic communities. Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories' (Hayden 1995: 9).

Today, oral history, the valorisation of local histories, the burgeoning of 'community museums', and a growing recognition of the importance of public participation in heritage and memory projects have become much more embedded in the practices of public history than they were at the time Hayden's *The Power of Place* was written. Nonetheless, we wanted to explore what it really means to think of the urban landscape as a 'storehouse' for memory, and to think about urban space and 'place memory' as spaces and practices of collective memory in the context of Yeoville, where local histories and identities are often in tension with processes of urban development, gentrification and city branding.

Hayden's call is also for an urban public history that is truly inclusive, and that acknowledges all residents as co-owners of the city and its histories. In the case of Yeoville, with a large and diverse migrant population that has settled there over the past 15 to 20 years, we felt this was an important issue to address: whose memories and narratives are acknowledged as part of Johannesburg's story, and whose are not? Who claims the rights of 'ownership' and belonging in the city? What do people's memories of Yeoville, both contemporary and of the more distant past, add to or reveal about the city's story as a whole? How does Yeoville's story speak to themes that are salient to Johannesburg's other memories – of migration, work, integration, xenophobia, fear, nostalgia, creativity, urban change, local economic and social networks? And who is acknowledged as the 'expert' or the authority on the city or the neighbourhood's memory? These were some of the broader questions that informed our work in the neighbourhood.

The Yeoville Stories work was not directly linked to the pressing material concerns of the kind being dealt with in other sections of Yeoville Studio: housing, informal trade, public space management, and so on, although many of the Yeoville Stories workshop participants also contributed to other sections of the Studio. In a sense, a great deal of our work was exploratory, attempting to articulate what Yeoville meant to those who lived there or had done so in the past, and seeing what grounds exist for a sense of collective ownership over the neighbourhood as a space whose many histories, cultures and meanings are worth acknowledging in a rapidly changing urban space, particularly one where inner-city neighbourhoods like Yeoville are often viewed as simply problematic, poor or overcrowded. Yeoville Stories was also an opportunity to train architecture students at Wits University in research and engagement skills which they may not have encountered before. These included narrative, oral history and visual research methodologies that often had very little to do directly with the practices of architectural design. However, we hoped that the experience would, in some way, inform students' future practices as architects, designers, and shapers of

urban space by encouraging them to recognise the importance and vitality of social histories and locally embedded memories in residents' experiences of space and the city.

Yeoville Stories used multiple approaches and methods to think through some of the issues we have outlined above, and to produce a set of outputs and public dissemination of the work which acted as records of the research, and as bases for possible future projects. Central to the work was a series of monthly workshops, which were open to all interested Yeoville residents and which ran throughout 2010. In practice, most of the attendees came to the project via our community partner organisations, the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT) and the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), with the result that the core group of regular workshop attendees – about ten people, although this number fluctuated over time – tended to be people who were already engaged in and committed to the neighbourhood's development. The group of participants was, of course, in no way necessarily representative of Yeoville residents more broadly: one of the project's limitations was that we did not go far enough in drawing in people who were not connected to existing civic organisations and representative bodies in the suburb. Nonetheless, the value of the small but relatively stable group was that it allowed for the development of a sense of trust, reliability, and security within the group, which enabled participants to share stories more freely than might otherwise have been the case, and to produce a body of work that offered an in-depth view of some of the different ways residents see and experience the neighbourhood. Participants were more or less evenly split along gender lines, and included both South Africans and migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, as well as South Africans who had lived in exile in other parts of Africa, Europe and the United States. From these workshops, many different processes involving a broader variety of participants unfolded, as explained in box 11.1.

BOX 11.1: Yeoville Stories in Yeoville Studio: Main processes and outputs

Yeoville Stories workshops: Monthly meetings throughout 2010 at St Aidan's Church (Yeoville), facilitated by Naomi Roux and Sophie Didier, and involving about ten participants (various ages, nationalities, genders), around a number of themes and activities.

Stories from home: In one of the first workshops, participants (including the facilitators) were asked to bring an object that reminded them of home, using the objects to spark storytelling and discussion. Some participants brought things that had travelled with them from other places to Johannesburg; one participant brought the cellphone that he used to keep in touch with his home in the DRC.

Yeoville as a character: Participants developed short characterisations of Johannesburg and of Yeoville as people. The suburb was described variously as nurturing, welcoming, protective, accepting; and as young, adventurous, energetic, reckless, risk-taking or dangerous. One participant, a Zimbabwean migrant, likened Johannesburg to a

welcoming grandmother who had taken him in after he crossed the border, and Yeoville to her 'beautiful granddaughter' with whom he had fallen in love.

Mapping personal sites of memory and significance: We began this process by displaying an oversized map of the suburb and inviting participants to mark sites of personal memory and significance that they were comfortable to share with the group. These included sites of fear, sites of happiness, spaces of arrival and spaces that were connected with particular memories. This was a means of beginning the process of connecting personal narrative to shared spaces in the city; in some cases participants marked the same spot as carrying wildly differing personal significances (for example, a tavern on Rockey Street might be a site of fear for a participant who had witnessed an act of violence there, and be remembered by another as the space where they met their partner). The map was retained and added to through various exhibitions and public participation events throughout the year, and later some photographs and extracts from comments made by workshop participants were added to it, creating a layered 'collage' of memory and experience superimposed on the two-dimensional street grid.

Photo-maps: This began as an extension of the workshops aimed at identifying sites of significance in Yeoville. Participants were given disposable cameras and asked to photograph some of the sites we had already discussed, although the selection of sites was left open. These images were developed, with one set being returned to participants. A second set was used to create individual photo-maps of Yeoville, in which participants incorporated the images into mental maps of Yeoville that marked, for example, home, spaces that were visited often, spaces that were avoided, routes taken regularly, paths into and out of Yeoville, sites of relaxation and recreation, religious or spiritually significant sites, and other spaces of personal importance. Each participant shared their map with the group, adding a verbal layer to the narrative. The discussions and narratives were recorded, transcribed and incorporated into the maps, creating a multi-layered representation of each participant's own experience of Yeoville. As a collective display, the ten photo-maps intersect and overlap, acknowledging the many histories and meanings of Yeoville's shared spaces.

Walking tours and book *Walking through Times*: Second half of 2010, fourth-year architecture course (research project) facilitated by Naomi Roux, with ten architecture students partnering with the workshop participants.

Thematic walking tours: The development of the walking tours and pamphlets formed the core element of a group of architecture honours students' engagement with the Yeoville Stories project. To begin with, each workshop participant took one student on a personalised tour of Yeoville, based on the mental-mapping and photo-mapping workshops. The aim was not to provide a comprehensive overview of Yeoville, but rather for students to experience the suburb as a site of individual memory and narrative. These tours were recorded and mapped by the students, and the routes taken were later also

incorporated into the large Yeoville map. Following on from this, students worked with the residents to produce a set of four thematic 'walking tour' maps, which incorporated work done in other sections of the Studio, oral history work, and archival and historical research. The four themes were political history, African diversity, arts and culture, and architecture. The maps were then edited and printed as prototype tourism products, and served as the base for the development of a tour guide training scheme orchestrated locally by our community partner, YBCDT, with funding from the Gauteng Department of Tourism.

Leaving Yeoville research project: Conducted in 2011 by Sophie Didier with students Ophélie Arrazouaki of University Lille 1, and Thembani Mkhize and Willy-Claude Hebandjoko Mbelenge of Wits University.

In-depth interviews and mental-mapping exercises were conducted with 25 former residents of Yeoville of various ages, gender, and ethnic and national backgrounds who had lived in the neighbourhood at various times (from the 1930s to the 2000s), in order to gather a sense of personal memories of the place and to understand participants' life stories and residential trajectories before and after their life in Yeoville. A very emotional component saw participants return to their old homes in Yeoville with South African photographer Lerato Maduna to get their pictures taken. The interviewees included South African citizens as well as foreign African migrants – white and black – professionals, artists, bouncers, nurses, security agents, and so on. We aimed, not so much to capture the nostalgic dimension of these Yeoville memories (and especially its pitfall, restorative nostalgia), as to underline commonalities in the residential trajectories and perceptions about the neighbourhood across time and social and race barriers (see chapter 10).

Translating and publicising the process and its results: Many outputs of the workshops and the research were exhibited in interactive ways in public spaces in Yeoville, as part of local public events or stand-alone exhibitions (as posters, interactive maps, interactive scale models).

Africa Day celebrations and Yeoville Studio exhibition, 29 May 2010, Yeoville Library yard: Some of the Yeoville Stories work-in-progress was presented at the Africa Day celebrations held in Rockey Street in May 2010, along with work being done in the other sections of Yeoville Studio. At the exhibition, an enlarged map of Yeoville was displayed and visitors were invited to mark personally significant sites with coloured dots, and to leave a note with an anecdote or a memory. This element of the exhibition did not work out quite as we had hoped as the bulk of those who visited the map were children, who delighted in putting the colourful stickers wherever they could reach – although it certainly created a lively participatory buzz! The second Yeoville Stories element was a 'washing line' where a selection of photographs taken by Wits University students, staff,

and research participants from various sections of the Studio were hung. Visitors were invited to 'vote' for the images that best represented Yeoville (see figure 11.1). The six most popular photographs were printed as a set of 'Greetings from Yeoville' postcards and were distributed free of charge at other Studio events.

Yeoville Stories exhibition, 20–27 November 2010, Yeoville Recreation Centre: A larger exhibition of the Yeoville Stories work took place at the end of 2010 in the recently renovated Yeoville Recreation Centre, and included (inter alia) the photo-maps; the large collective map; the walking tour pamphlets and an accompanying book, *Walking through Times;* a Yeoville soundtrack offering a compilation of old rock and pop songs identified as typically from Yeoville; and an accompanying poster that had been developed by student William Dewar. The exhibition was well attended by a mix of Yeoville residents, academics, community leaders, arts practitioners and a handful of former Yeoville residents curious to see what the neighbourhood looked like now.

'Memory and City' conference and YBCDT walking tours, September 2011: An international scientific conference on the topic 'Memory and City' was organised in September 2011 in partnership with the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and their team, led by Natasha Erlank. The UJ team had been engaged for several years in a similar project on the public history of the inner-city neighbourhood of Sophiatown (see Erlank 2015), in partnership with a local heritage institution (Sophiatown Heritage and Cultural Centre). The conference was an opportunity for YBCDT to premiere three walking tours of Yeoville, using the maps elaborated by the Studio in 2010. *Touring Yeoville*, a film of the 'cultural diversity tour' led by Maurice Smithers of YBCDT and Jean-Pierre Lukamba, deputy chair of the African Diaspora Forum (ADF), is available online.[1]

Yeoville Studio final exhibition, November 2011, Yeoville Recreation Centre: A selection of posters from the Leaving Yeoville leg of the project was part of a broader Yeoville Studio exhibition which took place in November 2011 in various locations of the neighbourhood and incorporated this recollection of 'old Yeoville' into more recent stories and memories.

This research was not specifically aimed at problem-solving or at generating policy or development agendas. Rather, the aim was to engage with different discourses around Yeoville and the inner city, particularly those that have emerged over the last 15 years or so, and to locate Yeoville's stories at a scale wider than that of the neighbourhood. There remains a dominant discourse around Johannesburg's inner city as 'dangerous' or 'chaotic', although these attitudes are slowly shifting. It was towards the nuancing of this negative imaginary, and a more balanced assessment of the people's genuine care for the place, that the Yeoville Stories project developed. This has direct implications, first and foremost since the City of Johannesburg has been busy imagining a new future for the inner city for a number of years.

In the text that follows, we reflect on some observations regarding ordinary neighbourhood memories and stories: how they could play a more central role in regeneration plans, and how

they are worth taking into consideration in order to imagine the possibility of an inclusive city. To begin with, we examine some of the prevalent discourses about Yeoville and the inner city, to understand how the neighbourhood has been experienced both by those who live here now and those who lived here in the past. In the second section, we consider whether the micro-narratives and ordinary histories that were reflected in the Yeoville Stories project can (or should) be considered 'heritage', and if so, how this non-monumental, embedded and embodied public history could be acknowledged. This particular approach to the making of South African urban history and collective memory emerged in a context where collective memory and public history in the country had been largely focused on inscribing histories of struggle and resistance in the memorial landscape. The final section of this chapter broadens the discussion to include what was at the time a mostly exploratory approach to the national picture in the memory-making world of South Africa.

Turning around the discourse about inner-city Joburg

The popular description of the various inner-city neighbourhoods of Johannesburg, including Yeoville, seems to exemplify a 'meta narrative for crisis' (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008) where a mix of racism, fear of crime, and xenophobia fuel apocalyptic visions of the city centre. A notorious blog called 'The Death of Johannesburg'[2] provides a good, if extreme, example of this dominant narrative. Founded in 2006 by a white South African expatriate, the blog features 'photographic safaris' performed in various neighbourhoods of the inner city between 2006 and 2008. The entries in the blog display intense nostalgia (as a manifestation of displacement in time and place), accompanied by assorted violent and racist commentaries, and a general political undertone blaming the new regime for the crime and urban management 'crisis' of Johannesburg. Borrowing from Svetlana Boym's analysis of post-socialist cities (Boym 2001), we can identify a clear case of the restorative form of nostalgia in this blog, with an underlying desire to bring back the past, an implicit commentary that apartheid times were better, and an explicit one stating that the new residents (local or foreign) are to blame for the decay of Johannesburg's inner city since 1994. While this particular display is exceptionally offensive, it relies on the usual cause-and-effect interpretation of inner-city change.

Our findings in Yeoville, fuelled by testimonies of both current and former residents of the area, offered different narratives around the notion of change. For former residents (those who left the area between 1990 and 2004), the narrative of decline was dominant in their recollections of the neighbourhood, but in practice it was virtually impossible to extract a simple time frame for this decline in their testimonies. For instance, the perceived height of crime in the area could be traced back in testimonies as early as 1995, or as late as 2003 for more recent African migrants. Similarly, while decline was generally acknowledged and could occasionally trigger moving out of the neighbourhood (especially when the person had experienced crime among their inner circle of friends or family), a lot of other reasons were judged as equally important in their decisions, such as the redlining of the neighbourhood by commercial banks as early as 1996, which prevented them from

buying property in the area, or the need, as they entered a new stage of their lives, to change their lifestyle and thus move to a quieter neighbourhood. Furthermore, the testimonies of current residents invariably revealed their mixed feelings about the area, issues of dirt, crime, trash and the general lack of maintenance by the City of public facilities surfacing time and again. That residents of the inner city would want clean and safe streets, well-maintained public facilities and proper housing should come as no surprise. For most of our current Yeoville residents, whatever their standing in life, the way they dreamed their future in the city concurred with the comments of former residents stemming from the white working class who had grown up in the neighbourhood. As has long been the case, Yeoville is an entry point to the city, but personal success means moving out of it to access a more affluent suburb (and possibly even escape from the pressure of the community). This identity of 'aspiring neighbourhood' was remarkably stable, ranging over a period of 50 years, in the testimonies.

Through juxtaposing former residents' memories with current residents' perceptions of the place, strands of continuity could be traced and a sustained identity for Yeoville emerged that cut across the traditional before/after picture. Moreover, recurring intrinsic qualities of the place were identified by all cohorts of interviewees, focusing on particular features in the built environment and on the ambiance of the neighbourhood. For all its residents, Yeoville worked as an agreeable and walkable neighbourhood offering proximity to needed amenities, thanks to the humane scale of its built environment. For former residents, this quality was usually contrasted with their current life and the sense of physical isolation caused by the layout of more recent suburban environments. For former and current residents alike, the small-scale quality of Yeoville was also considered an asset that held the social fabric in place: former *jollers* (revellers) of the seventies and eighties mentioned bumping into their friends all the time in the early evening in the club- and café-lined Rockey Street, while current members of various African diasporas similarly talked about their easy socialising on the same street, today lined with its various African restaurants.

Spatial markers were also identified by all residents across time and defined a strong visual identity for the neighbourhood even though the uses and practices around these markers might have changed: the water tower, the swimming pool, Rockey-Raleigh Street, Time Square and Yeoville Ridge featured prominently amongst these highlights. The Ridge, for instance, was appreciated by former residents for the view it afforded of Hillbrow and Troyeville, while current residents underlined the importance of its contemporary uses as a place for religious rituals (see figure 11.1).

All in all, we tried to connect testimonies from former and current residents, to avoid the potentially exclusionary effect of memory-making: for former residents, remembering the neighbourhood 'as it used to be' can become a powerful way of excluding current residents on the grounds that they are incapable of assimilation, despite similar stories of arrival and migration. The selection of a period of time deemed 'more representative' of Yeoville would foreclose the inclusion of other experiences and memories of the neighbourhood: something we were wary of risking. The idea of pairing students with residents to design

FIGURE 11.1 A Yeoville spatial marker: 'The Ridge'
The Ridge marks the border between Yeoville and the denser neighbourhoods of Hillbrow and Berea (visible in the background). The photo was selected as one of the best representations of Yeoville by residents during a 2010 public exhibition.

tours integrating past and present features of Yeoville was thus used to avoid disconnection between the different experiences of the neighbourhood (see figure 11.2).

This principle should be maintained in future regeneration processes: using shared imaginaries in the construction of an appropriate urbanistic response is crucial. As Peter Eisinger has shown in the case of the regeneration of Detroit, relying on memories of old downtown Detroit (prior to the racial change induced by 'white' flight) as a signature theme for the City's regeneration project could prove extremely problematic, since the now defunct patterns of racial segregation that shaped the experience of downtown Detroit back then would totally exclude most of Detroit's current black residents from this vision for the contemporary, regenerated downtown area of the city (Eisinger 2003).

The idea of appropriation was central in having current residents know about former residents' testimonies and the long history of Yeoville, if we accept the idea that shared memories and an appropriated history can help people relate to their neighbourhood and develop social cohesion and a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the neighbourhood (Till 2012). At a community exhibition which took place in late October 2010, the visitors'

01
Frank Raubenheimer &
The Ceramic Underground
59 Rockey Street, Yeoville

Meet Frank Raubenheimer, a local potter who has been at 59 Rockey Street since 1994. You should find him sitting in his front pottery studio making crockery for the chain of Moyo restaurants in Johannesburg. He may be entertaining a member of the community at his book swap shop where you are free to take a book, if you leave two behind.

He has converted a small block of flats into a multi-disciplinary craft centre which is open to anyone wanting to do metal work, wood work or pottery.

If you meet him on the right day, you may be lucky enough to experience what he calls the *Ceramic Underground*, which is perhaps one of Yeoville's best kept secrets: a cave-like maze of rooms has been excavated to form a subterranean gallery. Frank's finely crafted ceramic lamps dramatically illuminate many cosy niches with their dappled, warm light.

02
Rasta House aka
The Green Gate
84 Bezuidenhout St, corner Hunter.

Founded in 1998 this place is a non-alcoholic bar which exhibits art and holds live performances for music and poetry. You can view performances of Reggae music on Sundays and an open-mic session on Thursdays.

The Rasta House is based on Rastafarian ideals; it provides free work and performance space for practicing artists. This phenomenon is not unique to Johannesburg or South Africa. Similar places can be found in Maputo and other large African cities.

The place has a wonderful sense of serenity because of the nature of its enclosure. It becomes a retreat from the busy roads of Yeoville. One could stop here to write, draw, daydream, into thought or view the array of diverse art produced here.

03
The Sweet Pot
Rastafarian Cuisine
30 Rockey Street, Yeoville

Stop here to indulge in the cuisine of Rastafarian culture. Delight in a plate of sweet or savoury vegetarian dishes from the buffet. With a choice of fragrant rice, japati or dhal, this food has an Indian influence.

04
The House of Tandoor
26 Rockey Street, Yeoville

This is one of the places that still bears its original name. Started in the early 1980's Tandoor was a very popular restaurant, serving authentic Tandoori cuisine cooked in a traditional wood-fired oven which is still visible.

Thereafter it assumed new management which brought the place to life with different, themed gigs on each night of the week, such as *Monday Night Blues*.

Today, Tandoor is still a popular bar. It has had a long relationship with Rockey Street. On first floor level you can sit and look over the street from an elevated position. Sunset is a particularly atmospheric time to be here as you watch the vibrant street life while relaxing over a beer.

05
Rumours &
All that Jazz
24 Rockey Street, Yeoville

The site of Rumours is now an internet cafe. This jazz club was once the heart of Rockey Street. It was started in August 1979 by two friends, Art Kelly – a bassist, and Howard Libson. The clientele were a who's who of the creative world.

It wasn't easy to get into Rumours: You pressed the doorbell and were scrutinised through the peephole. If you were cool enough or beautiful enough or famous enough or Art or Howard liked you enough then you were in.

This was the club that the musicians who played in the jazz clubs in the CBD and Hillbrow would end up at after their gigs. Visiting musicians like Chick Corey, Al Jarreau and the like have been known to join in impromptu jam sessions with Art and the boys.

06
The Black Sun &
The Coffee Society Building
22 Rockey Street, corner Raymond

The Black Sun was a small avant-garde theatre started in 1984 as an extension above the Greek owned Coffee Society café. The Black Sun was important in the formative years of the Afrikaans Alternative Music Movement and much of this material first saw the light of day here.

Most notably, André Letoit (later known as Koos Kombuis) and Johannes Kerkorrel performed their piece of protest theatre, *Ons Het Vir u 'n Kabaret Gemaak* which got them banned from the RAU campus. Their material was usually satirical criticism of the Botha regime.

Kerkorrel described the theatre: "*I have a lot of respect for the Black Sun. No other theatre would have been able to present work like ours. It taught me how important a domestic theatre venue can be, allowing anyone to say anything in any language and the management doesn't worry*".

07
La Tortu &
Cafe Casablanca
8 & 9 Rockey Street

What you will see now at 8 Rockey Street is Rockerfella's which was built in the mid-1980s and closed up what was once a u-shaped building forming a courtyard open on one side to the street. The original u-shaped building housed one of Yeoville's first clubs, which started in the late 1970s. In the centre was a fountain flanked on the one side by *La Tortu*, where *Rich Man Poor Man* is now, and a clothes shop, *Normal* on the other. Cafe Casablanca was directly across the road from *Rich Man Poor Man*.

La Tortu was a very popular meeting place for young bohemians in the area, playing only alternative music. *Cafe Casablanca* was a gay club (but not exclusively so) started by music producer Patrick van Blerk.

In the corner of the site was a small record library which catered to the alternative musical tastes of the young people who started to move into Yeoville in the mid 1970s.

See reverse to learn more about this site.

08
The Piccadilly &
Hugh Masekela's Jazz Club
Cavendish Street

The Piccadilly started life as a cinema, or what South Africans then called the 'bioscope'. In the late 1970s, the Piccadilly changed to a Cinema Nouveau, catering to the alternative tastes of the young bohemians who were moving into the area at that time.

The cinema was also used as a venue for live bands like the African Jazz Pioneers, Bayete and the like. In the early 1990s, it was the site of Hugh Masekela's short-lived jazz club which gave the many black jazz musicians living in the area a solid platform from which to perform.

09
Recreation Centre,
Pool and Park
Raleigh Street

Gabrielle Ozynski was responsible for the mosaic motifs you will see here at the pool and at Yeoville Square. She is a Yeoville resident and practices from her home. This was her first mosaic undertaking and she has since become passionate about the art – "*I'd love Yeoville to be full of mosaic*".

The African Arts Centre hosts an array of community events from school shows to professional performances and has become well known in Yeoville as a place for debate, community talks and entertainment. It is well situated here, opening onto Yeoville Square which is often used as a place for outdoor art exhibitions at the weekend.

FIGURE 11.2: Music and culture walking tour brochure (inside flap)
Designed in 2010 for Yeoville Studio by William Dewar, at the time a postgraduate student and arts activist living in Yeoville, to demonstrate the neighbourhood as an environment tolerant of alternative cultural practices, whether current Rastafarianism or 1980s Afrikaner punk-rock.

remarks in the exhibition's guest book demonstrate the sense of pride they derived from the storytelling and the effort of memory involved, as well as knowing what the long history of the neighbourhood was. The collective act of remembering during the workshops also introduced forms of ritual about the act of narrating: after a while, participants always connected their own story to that of their fellow participants and also publicly said that they had learned a lot of things about the neighbourhood that they were not previously aware of. In a sense, telling their story and learning from the neighbourhood's long history of migration might have helped the participants articulate their own place in the neighbourhood and express their care for it in a collective way.

The principle of inclusion and consultation is widely promoted as crucial in public history and heritage projects in South Africa as well as within urban development projects more generally. However, much as a discourse of 'participation' is seen as a vital alternative to top-down projects, in practice such processes do not guarantee ownership of memory or of development projects. There are many instances where urban development projects, often hand in hand with heritage work, have ticked the boxes of 'community consultation' but have remained contentious, often being rejected or outright vandalised by the residents who are meant to be the beneficiaries of such projects (see Judin et al. 2014, on the case of Kliptown). Such consultative processes also often entail problematic notions of 'community', suggesting a sense of cohesion and consensus that is seldom the case in reality (Coombes 2004). It is important to add, here, that in socially complex and shifting neighbourhoods such as Yeoville, the definition of community and the possible contestation of whose memories matter enough to be displayed are an important risk in any memorialisation endeavour (Didier et al. 2007).

What public history for Johannesburg?

As we tried to explain in the above sections, between 2009 and 2011, our approach to memorialisation and its possible applications was fairly experimental and open, and only fleetingly connected with the chosen national path in this regard. Since the democratic transition of the mid-1990s, the 'new' South Africa as a nation-in-building has been caught up in a 'memorial' fever, which is tied not only to the political transition itself but also to an undeniably global phenomenon (Hartog 2002). Maybe more so than elsewhere in the world, however, the selection of past events and what they mean in South Africa is not done indiscriminately, but services the very contemporary issues raised by the ongoing political transition. In a country previously divided according to overlapping criteria of race, space and social status, the national imperative for memorialisation efforts in South Africa is grounded in a belief that it will help bring together these divided communities and play a central role in the redressing of previous imbalances (Houssay-Holzschuh 2010; Marschall 2010; and the 1999 South African National Heritage Act itself[3]). Much of the creation of new forms of public history was centrally directed by the state, via the creation of the Legacy Project in 1998, managed by the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and tasked with directing the creation of new museums, memorials, and other forms of symbolic public history, mostly within the realm of the built environment (Rassool 2007).

For the most part, the creation of post-apartheid public history and new heritage projects has been firmly linked to the memory of struggle, with a strong emphasis on memorials and museums commemorating the heroes and the sites of major episodes of the fight against apartheid. The narrative has been one of 'unity in diversity', reconciliation, and the triumphant overcoming of past oppression, often through the efforts of heroic individuals (Rassool 2000). At the same time, however, and particularly now, as the era of triumphant nation-building forms of heritage-making seems to be drawing to a close, there is a plethora of heritage and public history projects that seek to move away from the traditional forms of the museum and the monument, working to upend the notion of academic expertise as the only legitimate approach to history and drawing directly on the experiences and knowledge of people and communities affected by apartheid. The best-known example of community museums, and one that has served as a blueprint for several other small, locally based museums across the country, is the District Six Museum in Cape Town, which adopted an approach centred on dialogue, exchange and the acknowledgement of multiple voices rather than any attempt to function as an authoritative container for history.

Incrementally, the forms of the monument and of the museum are supplemented by alternative ways of remembering apartheid and acknowledging its continuing effects in the present. The walking tour and the historical route have become popular forms of memory-making, such as the memorial routes in Soweto that link up sites connected with the 1976 student uprisings (Hlongwane 2008), or walking tours of neighbourhoods that were erased by forced removals during the 1960s and 1970s – including Sophiatown and Fietas in Johannesburg, District Six in Cape Town and South End in Port Elizabeth. Public art and memory projects such as the Sunday Times Heritage Project, a series of small memorials in the form of public sculptures commissioned as part of the *Sunday Times* newspaper's centenary, are examples of public memory projects that are small, transient and dispersed, rather than being monumentalised.[4] Documenting the injustices created by the structure of apartheid society on communities, these and other projects open a more mundane path towards understanding experiences and the continuing effects of apartheid. It is a change of pace, and of place, although the apartheid period, which is becoming more distant by the minute for younger generations, is still often the sole focus of this collective act of remembering.

A number of voices (including many academic historians) are concerned that this emphasis can have unwanted side effects. Jacob Dlamini, reflecting on the happy moments he spent growing up in the township of Katlehong, has made the point that designating townships *only* as victimised spaces under apartheid is to deny their residents the possibility of dreaming an alternative (and happy) future for them (Dlamini 2009). Furthermore, it would appear that ending the official heritage narrative at the moment of liberation in the mid-1990s, to the exclusion of forms of public life and historical continuity emerging after this period, also fosters the much lamented disconnection between heritage and its appropriation. As much as it was the product of apartheid, Katlehong has evolved in 20 years and this transformation should also be acknowledged.

For all of us involved in the Yeoville Stories project, these discontinuities through time and space reproduced forms of exclusion in the imaginaries of the city. During discussions with our colleagues running the Sophiatown Project at the University of Johannesburg,[5] which focused on the neighbourhood so deeply marked by the forced removals of 1955, they appeared just as frustrated sometimes that the post-1955 period did not seem to exist for the institutions involved in memorialising Sophiatown. We tried to express all this in an editorial for a special issue of the *Mail & Guardian* on the occasion of Heritage Day 2011 (Didier et al. 2011), in particular this idea that the mundane, the ordinary – but also the profound racial and spatial restructuring of South African cities since the end of apartheid – should also somehow be interpreted and included in memorialisation efforts.

Nonetheless, since then, attitudes have changed, and in Johannesburg it seems that the time is ripe for such ordinary stories of the city to emerge. While the image of the central Johannesburg region and Yeoville as a no-go zone is still hard to shake off, this is nevertheless changing through processes of regeneration, which accelerated in the early 2000s. Similarly, the 2010 FIFA World Cup represented an important incentive to the City to change the image of its central districts for international visitors and, through a hoped-for trickle-down effect, for local investors as well.

In this more global process of reimagining the city, specific neighbourhoods have been foregrounded as particular markers of the city's identity, articulated around a set of specific memories. Nonetheless, Johannesburg's most recent efforts at capitalising on heritage still mostly evoke the struggle against apartheid: for instance, in the Johannesburg Development Agency's (JDA's) design of a revamped Vilakazi Street around public art commemorating the Soweto uprising of 1976 (Guinard 2012) or in the design of Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Kuljian 2009; Roux 2009) in Kliptown. This neighbourhood's entire history was subsumed into a monumental representation of the 1955 Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter. Kliptown's history was recognised only insofar as it contributed to an already-established linear narrative of oppression and liberation (Roux 2009). Yet, other narratives have been mobilised in recent regeneration attempts in the central part of the city, notably around the pedestrianisation of Main Street and its corporate mining headquarters, the opening of the Workers Museum, and the historical markers in Newtown and Chinatown installed by the JDA and the City Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage in 2010. The unique interdependence of capital, labour and oppression that contributed to the building of Johannesburg from its early colonial days is thus strongly underlined, contrasting the Art Deco opulence of the corporate headquarters on Main Street with the squalid living conditions of the electric plant employees remembered in the Newtown Workers Museum and the migration motif evoked with the old Chinatown JDA marker. These endeavours mark a new approach aimed at celebrating the specificity of Johannesburg as a unique city, and happen at a time when the city centre, its history and its meaning for South Africa, is becoming popular again in a dramatic change of values. This is confirmed by a range of walking tours organised by private as well as non-profit organisations, most of which were developed after 2008, mostly in view of the 2010 World Cup tourism opportunities. They offer their generally young and middle-class clientele a taste of the city centre and a return

to the glorious past of Johannesburg, intertwined with glimpses of the 'exotic' shops and restaurants available today. In this particular process, one could read a form of fake nostalgia at play since most of these young visitors never experienced central Johannesburg during apartheid (on the issue of fake nostalgia and its association with postmodern times, see Appadurai 1996). Or perhaps it makes more sense to talk of 'postponed' nostalgia, driven by memories of Johannesburg's city centre 'passed on' from parents or older generations. Most of these young visitors nevertheless appear genuinely interested in as well as sensitive to the more recent transformations and the issues they raise in terms of social change, and the tour guides, speaking the militant discourse of the community activists they are, expertly translate the issue of urban change for their clients (Didier 2015).

Yeoville is not yet fully caught up in this reimagining process, for a range of reasons. These pertain mostly to difficulty in pinpointing its current territorial identity – important in the designation of urban heritage areas – due its population dynamics, fuelled by a variety of migration processes. Yet the marketing of ethnicity is a staple of major metropolises, as Sharon Zukin (Zukin 1995), writing about New York City, has shown. In fact, for the past five years, community associations such as the YBCDT have been trying to construct a pan-African image for Yeoville, aiming to attract visitors from other neighbourhoods. More importantly, like neighbouring Hillbrow and Berea, guaranteed visitor safety is still shaky in Yeoville, hampering tourism initiatives – unlike the areas of Newtown and corporate Main Street, which are constantly under surveillance, and where a lot of walking-tour guides operate. These efforts complement the long-awaited (by the municipality) realestate turnaround in the city centre, operated by young private developers in select areas of Braamfontein and the Maboneng precinct. With the quality of its built environment, and its proximity to the economic centres of Braamfontein and downtown Johannesburg, Yeoville could well become the next step in the gentrification process of the inner city. This issue, however, poses an ethical problem for us as academics involved with the Yeoville Stories: what started as an exercise designed for the local population to appropriate its neighbourhood history could easily feed into the commodification of nostalgia and the attached risks of displacement for the local population. On this issue, the position of one of our main community partners (YBCDT) was more ambiguous than ours since its number one priority was to fight urban decay, whatever the (private or public) means available.

Epilogue

As we were writing this in distant Europe, reflecting back on our time at Yeoville Studio, we experienced a mixture of both warm, proud memories about what was achieved – the sheer number and richness of the relationships created and the materials produced – and a form of disappointment in the practical or operational value of the work accomplished, as well as its limited impact. For instance, the possibility of a sustained locally driven tourism scheme based on the local memories captured in the guides, maps and the Yeoville Stories workshop was short-lived. The guided tours scheme, proposed by the YBCDT and coordinating a set of local activists telling and showcasing their vision of the

neighbourhood, based on the guide maps co-designed by students and residents in Yeoville Studio, did not last very long. As a product ultimately geared towards Joburg tourists (both local and foreign), the walking tours scheme needed serious publicity exposure, a proper reservation system, some kind of regularity for tour dates and times as well as the training of guides. All of this needs dedicated and trained personnel and a form of institutional stability, an often missing element despite the willingness of local community associations to take on the task. It does not necessarily mean that these projects cannot be revived at some point; the walking scripts could easily be rewritten accordingly to provide additional information to potential visitors. Nevertheless, for better or for worse, the issue of sustainability over time remains a fairly normative request from funders investing in such projects, in stark contrast with the capacity of most community associations to comply with this.

The most interesting development of the tour scheme might well be the community organisation Dlala Nje's[6] launch of a series of commercial walking tours of Yeoville in February 2013. Based in Hillbrow at the foot of Ponte Tower, with a dynamic Facebook account founded in October 2012, the organisation aims at 'changing South Africa's prejudiced perceptions ... one day at a time'.[7] The Yeoville tour follows prior endeavours around the Ponte Tower and Hillbrow, and promises 'a truly unique experience by offering a tour through one of Johannesburg's most diverse suburbs … Local performer and artist Desire Seko leads the walk and will show you all the sights, smells and sounds that make Yeoville.'[8] Using this multi-sensory approach, the tour thus made accessible a neighbourhood otherwise largely erased from middle-class imaginaries. Indeed, in a follow-up note published on the trendsetting website JHB Live, one of the tourists appeared somewhat disappointed by the lack of historical content of the tour, yet embraced rather enthusiastically the general motto of the organisation:

> If you are expecting detailed descriptions of the history of Yeoville, this is not the tour for you. If, however, you want to experience something different, break through preconceptions and misconceptions and really experience an area of Johannesburg that is often written off, this is the tour for you. It is a tour about a community rather than a place, I thought to myself as I deposited my bulletproof vest in the dustbin.[9]

That this initiative is in a way a form of reincarnation of one of the Yeoville Studio tours must come as a joyful 'told-you-so' moment for all the Yeoville Studio partners, but also as a bitter 'missed-opportunity' one. That being said, the event must also be read as bringing about the complex issue of territorial ownership and legitimacy that can potentially plague the appraisal of any such community project: Dlala Nje is not a Yeoville-based organisation, and one could object that their tour is not directly benefiting 'the community' – a very slippery path to negotiate. How different community projects created around memory can coexist without destructive competition and how they tap the same types of resource are also important questions raised by the mobilisation of neighbourhood memory to serve development goals. This problematic issue, as well as the other problematic issues discussed in this chapter regarding the exploration, selection, definition and use of neighbourhood

memories, should be taken seriously in any critical approach to the analysis as well as to the building of meaningful public history, in Johannesburg and elsewhere.

Notes

1   See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y63JK1NMt18.
2   See http://deathofjohannesburg.blogspot.fr/2006/07/visit-to-yeoville.html.
3   'Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs' (National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999, emphasis ours).
4   For further discussion on the Sunday Times Heritage Project, see Cynthia Kros (2008) and Sabine Marschall (2010): while acknowledging the change of pace brought about by such new projects, these authors are at the same time cautious in coming to any conclusions about their transformative power – a power which is still announced as the core goal of these heritagisation processes.
5   Conceived as community–academia collaboration, the Sophiatown Project (directed by historian Natasha Erlank) 'involves the co-creation of knowledge and research agendas, provides agency and identity for complex communities, and is an experiment in news ways of creating knowledge'. See http://www.uj.ac.za/en/Faculties/humanities/CommunityEngagement/Pages/CommunityEngagement.aspx. See also Erlank (2015).
6   This is an isiZulu phrase, translated as 'just play'.
7   Founding Facebook entry of Dlala Nje. Accessed 13 October 2012, https://www.facebook.com/DlalaNje?ref=ts&fref=ts.
8   Dlala Nje's 2 March 2013 Facebook entry. Accessed 13 October 2012, https://www.facebook.com/events/163831093767570/?viewer_id=0.
9   Anna-Belle Mulder, 'White girl goes Yeoville walking'. Accessed 13 October 2012, http://www.jhblive.com/reviews/outdoor/white_girl_goes_yeoville_walking/133438.

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Recommending: From understanding micro-politics to imagining policy

12 Introduction

SARAH CHARLTON

In this section of the book we turn to the materiality of living conditions in Yeoville, in particular the house and home, and the neighbourhood micro convenience store. Ways of occupying houses, yards and flats in Yeoville, as in some other parts of Johannesburg, had become dense and intense, multi-use in nature, and frequently non-compliant with City regulations. Throughout the city there was no effective response to housing trends emerging from changes in the socio-economic and demographic context, reflecting a gap in national housing policy, limited and unreformed urban management tools, and municipal capacity overwhelmed or distracted by other pressing issues. In Yeoville, stressed buildings and living conditions had become a major concern for our Studio partners.

From diverse angles the Studio scrutinised physical conditions, residents' experiences, social and management arrangements, and the contestations and innovations around these. Analysis of local and micro dynamics became the basis on which to build policy commentary and to facilitate discussion of it – a form of engaged research interactive not only with ordinary residents and community partners but also with its policy, regulatory and institutional environment. Authors' contributions in this section thus extend beyond analysis to propose ways of intervening – through policy proposals, pilot projects or governance mechanisms, for example – in other words, to 'recommend'.

Ambitious to use grounded research to inform more directly policy impasses and conundrums, the Studio convened a series of 'roundtables' or dialogues with housing practitioners and local authority officials at the end of the project. Despite frank discussions,

these ultimately had limited success in shaping inner-city housing approaches, as Sarah Charlton's chapter reflects on and accounts for. Amongst the constraints – such as restrictions in the policy environment, alternative political imperatives and limited pressure from residents – was also the disconnect of City departments from the Studio: they had neither partnered in the work nor invited housing policy input. Nevertheless, a core member of Yeoville Studio with direct and important fieldwork experience, Simon Mayson, subsequently became a key driver within the City of a fresh and innovative inner-city housing plan.[1]

Though concentrated on Yeoville, the chapters here explore an issue of central concern across the global South, one almost universally elusive in housing policy approaches: affordable accommodation in locations of access or opportunity for poorer city residents. In centrally placed Yeoville several features provide a potent case-study site: a high demand for accommodation from people with limited resources; the absence of formal, regulatory-compliant, and well-managed low-income housing; and a state overwhelmed by or inattentive to the situation. Lack of state oversight has provided opportunity for poorer people to appropriate buildings for budget accommodation, but it has also arguably contributed to precariousness and vulnerability: in the overcrowding, lack of building maintenance, overloading of engineering infrastructure and landlord–tenant practices operating 'below the radar' of official oversight. Practices and their consequences are at times visible and apparent (for example, in the evidence of building decay) but often hidden behind the facades of outwardly compliant and formal buildings.

Yeoville Studio enabled a multi-dimensional examination in one locale, in some depth, tackling socio-legal aspects, built-form issues, governance dimensions and, crucially, the lived experience of residents. Aspects resonate with housing debates elsewhere on new provisions of housing micro-spaces (see, for example, Few et al. 2004; Huchzermeyer 2007) or appropriations and adaptions of older forms of housing (Custers 2001), as well as the pervasive intertwining of income generation with places of residence, through home-based enterprises, for example (Kellet & Tipple 2000).

In the opening vignette Kirsten Dörmann, Mpho Matsipa and Claire Bénit-Gbaffou simply yet powerfully illustrate diverse living conditions as seen through the eyes of their occupants. Some point to brutal and harsh living spaces; others are more neutrally portrayed. We get a clear sense of people and places in intimate configurations. Later, in Simon Mayson's chapter, a thick description of living in a communal flat extends and deepens the resident's gaze. Formed over several months, this unusual documentation of spatial configurations, organisational systems and personal relationships highlights just what levels of negotiation, cooperation and management are required, and hints at what forms of conflict must be kept at bay.

Residents' accounts are grounded within particular spatial configurations and activities. Kirsten Dörmann and Solam Mkhabela's chapter discusses 'urban compounding', inspired by the physical transitions and adaptations that have enabled new uses and relationships in Yeoville. Houses have transformed internally through multiple rooms and spaces for rent, and externally through backyard rooms and kiosks. Of key importance is the interface with public space: the role and potential of this edge in people's lives in conditions where internal spaces are minimal and intense, and much of life is played out externally. Stimulated by

actual practices, the discussion also introduces proposals and dreams for future ways of organising.

Homing in on retail and other economic practices within residential fabric – enormously significant across contexts of poverty, joblessness and inequality in the global South – Mamokete Matjomane's vignette introduces us to the spaza shop, a small convenience store taking many different guises and forms. Excerpts from interviews with traders and their customers show us why this is a pervasive and persistent activity, offering not only basic necessities in a handy location but also a personal touch for some residents living alongside these often unauthorised structures.

In their subsequent chapter, Matjomane and Bénit-Gbaffou tackle attempts to facilitate appropriate governance of these spaza shops: local leaders' understandings of the trajectory of neighbourhood change through which spaza shops became widespread, and their mobilisation, of a sort, against municipal clampdown in order to try to manage the phenomenon better. But these initiatives largely failed to establish alternative governance models, with competing organisational agendas, the lack of a common forum, and fragmented leadership and institutional structures helping to account for this. The limited acceptance by authorities – and some residents – of the inevitability and in fact desirability of mixed-use neighbourhoods that spazas help build remains a core problem.

Fundamentally, how to manage space in the interests of multiple city dwellers but particularly poorer residents is at the core of many issues encountered. Heinz Klug and Neil Klug's chapter makes a concrete proposal on the potential and relevance of community land trusts for housing provision in places like Yeoville. Underpinning their discussion is how land value and access to affordable housing can both be retained for low-income residents. Drawing from examples in the United States and elsewhere, they show how the ownership of improvements on the land (such as buildings) can be separated from the land itself. The chapter tackles the issue of housing affordability from a legal and planning perspective, and considers the City's potential and powers to play a role in a new model for the provision of low-cost housing.

Illustrating the difficulties of management practices and what can be at stake in this, Bénit-Gbaffou's vignette narrates key moments in the lives of four different buildings, providing brief but potent glimpses into diverse forms of building management and the tenant experience of this. These portraits showcase the delicacy of 'buildings systems': the complex mix of management, behaviour, responsibility and 'life' that influence the operation and experience of a building. Sarah Charlton's chapter contextualises such systems and micro-practices of tenants and landlords in relation to low-income housing policy and practice in Johannesburg. With accommodation conditions, associated economic activities and management of these little debated in housing policy, the chapter accounts for the local government's predominant responses of either censure or neglect, at the time. It reflects also on the experience of bringing work from a teaching and research studio into dialogue with the views of housing managers, niche financiers, humanitarian and rights organisations, and city officials, in which both the contributions of the Studio and its limits were revealed.

Together, these contributions engage with one of the 'practical and urgent crises' identified with partners for attention in the second year of the Studio (Bénit-Gbaffou, this book). Though there were limits to the direct assistance the Studio could provide, research prompted the development of significant practical guides for tenants and landlords, and multiple actors beyond the Studio debated inner-city housing issues connected to their work. Rich and engaged grounded research perhaps spawned ambitions for a policy and strategy contribution beyond its scope and its institutional make-up; at the same time its multiple dimensions and angles demonstrate the power of this approach.

Note

1   ICHIP, the Inner City Housing Implementation Plan (2016). RebelGroup, commissioned by the Johannesburg Development Agency and the City of Johannesburg Department of Housing.

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13 My place in Yeoville: Housing stories

KIRSTEN DÖRMANN, MPHO MATSIPA AND CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

These are tales of coming to Yeoville and finding a home there. The stories are not rosy; they show the challenges of finding decent places to stay: stories of cramped spaces, exploitative landlords, evictions and extreme mobility, densities and lack of amenities, aspirations to leave while being trapped in the area. But they also demonstrate a place of friendships and networks that can provide, for some time, a place for free or sub-market rent; the centrality of the place and the opportunities it opens to; a housing market that offers flats in all shapes and sizes, adaptable to shifting households and fragile situations.

These housing stories have been collected in the context of community housing workshops facilitated by second-year architecture students and their lecturers, where Yeoville residents told their residential stories and mapped their homes. These housing portraits were consolidated in discussion with participants, and were publicised in various community events in Yeoville.

FIGURE 13.1: George Lebone

> I like the central location of my place. I relate a lot to Rockey
> Street. It gives me an advantage as a community activist.

Biography

George came to Johannesburg from Ga-Rankuwa, North West, and stayed in Meadowlands a
short time before moving to Yeoville in 1998. He lived in a flat on Webb Street for two years,
then in a house on Natal Street for 14 years. Thereafter he lived in a converted office on
Raymond Street. George works for Yeoville community and for the ANC.

Housing trajectory

Webb Street

The entrance of the flat opened on a large living room divided by a decorative iron grid. On
the other side was the lounge, with a music/TV system and big sofas – lots of light due to
a large window. Then there was the late Themba's bedroom, the kitchen, and my bedroom.
The balcony was converted into a room, sealed with corrugated iron sheeting, for the tenant
who was staying there, using a single bed and a cooking plate.

Natal Street

I lived in a large L-shaped house on a double stand. There was also a backyard garage converted
into an apartment and a cottage, as well as a large backyard garden. There was a mix of people
from South Africa and from the rest of the continent (Zimbabwe, Ghana, Zambia and Kenya).
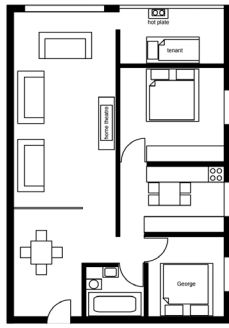
Plan of House on Webb Street
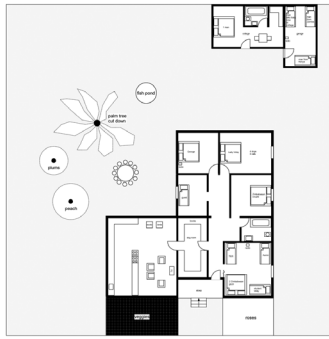
Plan of House on Natal Street
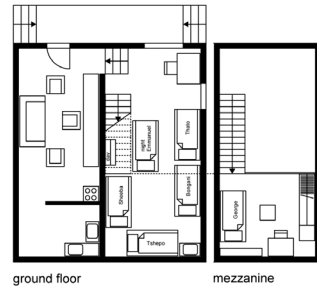
ground floor   mezzanine

Plan of House on Raymond Street

FIGURE 13.2: George's housing trajectory

Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

Raymond Street

I enter through steps leading to a broad space, divided in two parts by a temporary wall (a previous shop at the back), with a counter door. There is a sink and a basin now in the back part of the room. From there one takes a few steps down into the next room, which has two levels. Five young men stay on the ground floor. My room is on the top floor. It is a mezzanine separated from the rest of the apartment by a rail. I work in exchange for rent.

FIGURE 13.3: Jackie

I would not like to stay in Yeoville for long. I am moving away soon.

Biography

I was born in Port Elizabeth and came to the city of Johannesburg at the age of 20. I moved to Soweto for a few months. From 1993 to 1996 I lived in Yeoville, and came back in 2003. I work as interior decorator, seamstress and realtor.

Housing trajectory
Harley Street

The worst place I lived was on Harley Street. There were 21 people in the main house and we paid R1 300 per room to the landlord. He was a nice man, but nobody took care of the building. The kitchen was the most horrible place. The floor had holes and there was an old gas stove; there were big rats there. I used to cook in my room. I would only use the kitchen to wash my dishes.

Pope Street

I live in a small cottage at the back of the plot with my son. My niece and children lived in an adjacent cottage. The main house has three bedrooms, which include two master bedrooms with separate bathroom attached and one guest room. There are four cottages around the main house (three in the back, one in the front). At one time, a total of 24 people lived on the property. My monthly rent is R1 500. The overall rent is R11 200. The caretaker collects rent per room every month. He lives on the property.

Plan of House in Harley Street

Layout of Yard on Pope Street

Plan of Cottage on Pope Street
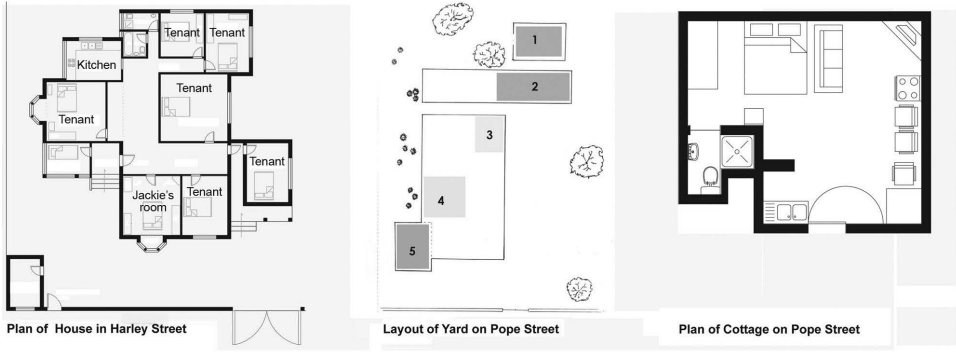
FIGURE 13.4: Jackie's housing trajectory
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

FIGURE 13.5: Jephias Ndlovu

I would live anywhere where I can find work …
If I could, I would move to Sandton.

Biography

I fled Zimbabwe and moved to South Africa when I was 20. I was an undocumented immigrant between 2000 and 2006. I spent those years running away from the police until I applied for political asylum. As a performance artist I now teach acting to children in local schools and run drama workshops with them.

Housing trajectory
Hendon Street

This storeroom was in the basement of a three-storey apartment building. We were let in by a security guard – a friend. I shared this room and one bed with four other people: each night some of us had to sleep on the floor. There was no window; the plumbing inside the room was noisy and sometimes leaked. There was a single plug and no bathroom nor kitchen. It was for free, but I was so pleased to move out of this house.

Regent Street

I share a room with a friend who works with me on the church grounds, in exchange for rent. There are another two adults with us. We share the bathroom.
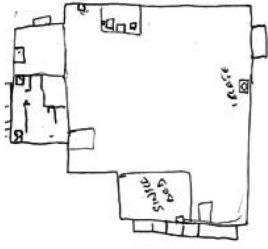
Jephias' Sketch of Store Room on Hendon St   **Plan of Store Room on Hendon Street**   **Plan of Cottage on Regent Street**
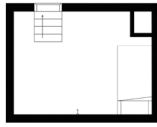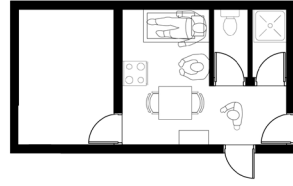
FIGURE 13.6: Jephias's housing trajectory
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

14 Urban compounding in Johannesburg

KIRSTEN DÖRMANN AND SOLAM MKHABELA

Yeoville is an exemplary area for the study of extreme transformation, as one of the oldest previously white suburbs that has been almost completely reoccupied by a black African and multicultural populace – official census records show that 89.7 per cent of the registered population was classified as white in 1980, as opposed to 96 per cent of the population in Yeoville Bellevue being recorded as black in 2011, a doubling of the total number of black people in the area since 1991 (Statistics South Africa 1980, 1991, 2011).

 South African cities built and expanded under the apartheid administration housed 'the most racially defined society in the world, in which "whites" and "blacks"[1] were segregated by laws controlling every aspect of their lives' (Suzman 1993: 1), including movement and accommodation in cities. Black Africans were – in principle – excluded from urban areas as a permanent place of residence other than through passbook permits and – mostly domestic – employment.

More than 20 years into democracy, how does this very specific spatial environment and physical fabric deal with rapid social change in urban areas that were built under different circumstances for different people in different times? What can be learnt from studying this that might be of relevance to the regulation of existing space usage and the design of new spaces at a residential and urban neighbourhood level?

In this chapter we introduce the term 'urban compounding', applying it to this neighbourhood of Johannesburg, a metropolitan African city with distinct rural characteristics. 'Urban compounding' refers to current models of habitable urban space,

including rentable rooms (in houses, apartments, backyards and hostels), often subdivided or shared in existing or adapted structures. The term deliberately evokes both a rural African family compound with its social and physical structures, and the financial term of compound interest which is understood as the sum of both the accrued interest and the original principal amount gathering interest. The concept of urban compounding intentionally collides the social, physical and financial contexts and displaces them (from rural to urban). This provides a framework for the adaptive spaces and people evident in an African inner-city environment in the process of de- and regeneration.

In the discussion we have in mind that people moving to cities and neighbourhoods transport beliefs, rituals, habits, languages and spatial practices that continue to connect them to home from a distance, and in close proximity to other strangers with similar attachments and experiences in the new environment where they now live and work. Deborah Pellow (2002: 2) raises the question: 'How do [these] strangers cohere and create a socially meaningful world? How do they nurture a cohesive and familiar community in the city?' She suggests 'that they do so by engaging in social practices (exchange) and spatial/temporal practices (the use of public and domestic spaces over time) linked through the social production of the spatial environment'.

We describe the initial process of compounding as a self-generative urban model that accommodates new communities in higher residential densities with different needs. It suggests the need to rezone (and ultimately redesign) specific parts of the existing open space system, and to negotiate new relationships between public and private spaces, land management, buildings and neighbourhoods, social structures and in/formal economies. Ultimately, the question that steers the debate is not whether urban compounding can become a new African model – flexible, mobile, adaptive, active and resilient – because it already is, but rather, how to enhance it, improve its operations so that it becomes more sustainable, more respectful and fairer in its offering of better places to live and work. Is urban compounding a possible form for successful sustainable living in the African metropolis? These questions will be explored through studies in Yeoville.

The chapter argues that compounding is an urban process of cultural, economic and spatial value, and interrogates its interdependence in private, communal and public spaces. Although the provision of affordable accommodation is a major component of it, we consider alternative public forms as a place to begin enhancing these emerging urban compounds and improve their operations. We thus work from the outside in, before interfering with the sensitive construct of the existing private rental space system and its multiple actors and agents.

This approach to the analysis of urban compounding as a contemporary model for life in an African metropolis developed through the authors' involvement in various projects that introduced us to the phenomenon from a visual and observational perspective, such as photo-documentaries on cross-border traders in southern Africa and government hostels and compounds in Gauteng. But it was the intense focus on living conditions in Yeoville during various courses with architecture and planning students during Yeoville Studio that provided the impetus to explore the idea as an architectural and urban framework. Largely based on empirical findings, this text initially refers to material from five different student projects and related events.[2]

The Yeoville site

Home to an estimated 40 000 people, many of them migrants from the African continent, Yeoville's population is as multicultural as it has been since the 1980s. Yet it struggles to maintain the existing urban fabric and adapt it to current and potential future living conditions. In the light of a housing policy that was declared unconstitutional in 2014 during a series of evictions[3] and manifestations of both urban management and housing crises in the inner city (Zack et al. 2010), one of the most pressing concerns in Yeoville and surroundings remains the lack of regulated low-income accommodation. What does exist, however, is the private provision of affordable living (or sleeping) spaces in the form of rentable rooms in houses, apartments, backyards and other structures.

The residential typologies in the area consist of:

- single-storey structures, mostly free-standing, some semi-detached and row houses, mostly built between 1900 and 1940 and since then altered;
- additional outbuildings and rooms on these residential plots;
- blocks of flats, generally four-storey walk-ups, many erected between the 1920s and the 1950s, which are today either occupied as constructed or renovated, rented out, hijacked or empty;
- rooftop accommodation in previous servant quarters.

According to mappings by Meyer (2002), 62 per cent of a total of 2 076 standard plots have residential buildings and 38 per cent are blocks of flats. The outcome of the 1996 census reversed those percentages in terms of density of occupation: an estimated 66 per cent of the population lived in apartments, 14 per cent in houses and 18 per cent in servant's rooms and backyard spaces, whereas only a total of three outbuildings, classified as 'huts', were counted in the census of 1991 (JFK School of Government et al. 1998). The official 1991 and 2011 census data (Statistics South Africa 1991, 2011) reflect that the overall population in Yeoville alone doubled, from 8 209 residents to 18 884, which might partly explain the growing number of backyard structures and the recent types of shared space advertised on the 'renting wall' of the Shoprite Checkers supermarket on the corner of Raleigh and Bedford streets. What numbers do not necessarily reflect is the way in which residents occupy these spaces, how they are personalised, what is shared, how subdivisions are managed to accommodate their current needs and, ultimately, what quality of life they offer in the neighbourhood as a whole as opposed to available alternatives (but see Mayson, this book). Perceptions from the outside are of 'higher than before densities' or 'overcrowding' or popular blogs announcing 'The Death of Johannesburg'.[4] But views from the inside tell stories of finding a place of one's own, such as Lerato Maduna, a photographer living in the area:

> I grew up sharing a bedroom with my two younger sisters. To me this was normal, but with time I found myself needing more space and privacy so I moved to the city. Here, especially in my 'hood Yeoville, the concept of space is quite interesting. People rent a room in a flat and others would rent space in that room, so privacy seems to be the least of their concern … They all share their space with others, but one thing they do is to call the little space they rent 'my place'.

It is here that the investigation into an existing context as a (fragmented) urban compound begins. Three major factors that led to changes within Yeoville's existing spatial morphology were identified and considered to be 'pre-conditions' for urban compounding.

Different and more residents

From the 1970s and into the 1980s, Yeoville gained a reputation for nightly entertainment, artistic media production and eventually vibrant political dynamics that challenged the apartheid laws of racial segregation in its clubs, cafés, galleries and homes. With a rising number of (officially illegal) black tenants in the white-zoned area, it became one of the first 'grey areas' in South Africa. Racial mixing became part of daily life: the ruling powers tended to turn a blind eye to Yeoville. Later, while numerous ANC activists and regime critics such as Sankie Mthembi, Joe Slovo and Albie Sachs returned from exile to reside temporarily in the area, political and economic changes triggered a dramatic shift in Yeoville's residential composition: it deracialised, densified and experienced capital flight. The black population dramatically increased. In the mid-1990s foreign nationals from other African countries arrived, many of them (initially) illegal migrants (see Guinard, this book). The 2011 census reflects an average black population of 96 per cent in the Yeoville Bellevue area. It remains to be determined whether the net result of these processes has truly been the often quoted yet contested 'middle class abandonment (white flight) and disinvestment' in Yeoville (Murray 2011: 149) or if the new residents moved in after the previous occupants had left the area, possibly fearing what might happen after the first free elections in 1994. What is apparent, however, is the fact that apart from some of the central business districts (CBDs), surprisingly few parts of the pre-1991 existing suburban fabric in major South African cities have undergone radical demographic change, with Yeoville being one of the places that has radically transformed in terms of residential profile, racially, culturally and economically. This transformation is the first of the factors that we identified as pre-conditions for urban compounding.

Different accommodation

Supply of the original urban fabric (medium-priced apartments and houses) and the needs of the new residents (affordable accommodation for many) did not coalesce during and after South Africa's transition to a democratic republic. As a result, existing flats and houses were adapted, through subdivisions into single and shared rooms and spaces, and through additions to houses and outbuildings on the average roughly 400-square-metre stands. This created a new urban currency: rooms that cater for current Yeovillites' basic needs and for population densities in the area. This is the second major factor leading to morphological change. Currently uncontrolled, the typology is very flexible yet exhausts existing infrastructures and comes at the price of poor, unsustainable living conditions. It resonates with the 'enclosures' of Kim Dovey and Ross King's (2011:14) typology of informal settlements, in which the 'use of the term "type" is morphological rather than functional', understanding informal typologies as 'typical urban conditions rather than building types':

Enclosures [are] where informal settlements are physically contained within a formal shell of a large building, vacant lot or institutional compound. The defining characteristic here is that the formal boundary sets a limit to the extension (and often the visibility) of the informal settlement … The principle here is that the original shell becomes the bounding condition of the informal appropriation even where the informal accretions are clearly visible. (Dovey and King 2011: 17–18)

In a Yeoville Studio workshop, during in-depth interviews with local residents about their housing histories, complemented by drawings of their living spaces, the rooms they inhabited appear as 'sites of circulation' (Soussan Burzynski 2012) as opposed to the notion of residence as home. One of the workshop participants, Simba Sagide, told this story:

I came to South Africa from Zimbabwe when I was 20. I had to leave because of political and economic hardship. I crossed the border illegally and I couldn't swim, so it was very scary. I lost everything in my backpack. But I walked from the border to Musina. Thinking about it now, I would never do that trip again. Never. When I arrived in Yeoville, I needed to find my brother. I didn't have a contact number for him. So I looked for him as long as I could, then I found a place on the street to sleep. In the morning, I asked around, trying to find people who knew him and someone told me that they sometimes saw him by the soccer field. So I went there and waited, and eventually I saw someone who knew where he was – someone from home that I recognised. So I went to live with him. I didn't pay any rent there. But it was horrible to live there, very run-down. We stayed on the roof in the old servant's quarters. It was always crowded, with no privacy. I shared a bed with my brother. There was never any hot water. I moved lots of times in Yeoville, maybe six or seven in ten years. The worst place I stayed was on Bezuidenhout Street. There were 18 people in the whole space. It was like a passage that was partitioned into four rooms. Then people put curtains up. It had one toilet, one shower, no hot water. It was a queue every time to go to the toilet, shared between men and women. Now I am staying in the backstage room at the church with a friend. We enjoy it very much. It is a rewarding life.

Understanding rooms as 'sites of circulation' introduces their role as urban currency: the circulation of people, cultures and money around a loose yet consistent system of shared spaces. Rooms and the different ways of sharing become the smallest common denominator of rentable accommodation that enables potential residents to access and afford urban living spaces which are located in close proximity to work opportunities, transport systems, social networks and infrastructure. In exchange they increase urban densities and cultural diversity, and provide a highly adaptive rental system that is able to absorb 'constant changes in family size and revenue flow' (Bénit-Gbaffou et al. 2010).

The emerging typologies are reflected in the advertisements on the 'renting wall'. An inventory of all advertisements on 27 March 2010 (Pincus et al. 2010) shows seven main types of rentable space between approximately 500 offers, many of them handwritten and pinned up at least twice: shared beds, shared bedrooms, bedrooms, sitting rooms, alternative spaces, cottages and flats – the most common being bedrooms, single and shared, equipped

with cupboard or not, lockable or not. Their location on the map (see figure 17.1 in chapter 17) highlights the southwest corner of Yeoville as an area of concentration for rooms to share. The built fabric of this part of the neighbourhood comprises predominantly apartment buildings, many of them frequently offered for sale by the real estate agency 'Imagine', which advertises on their website their specialisation 'in distressed/discounted properties' that 'produce a massive income from day one',[5] a direct link to the change from rooms to currency as profit generators.

Changing edge conditions

The third major factor contributing to a changed spatial morphology is the need to generate income on the one hand and the need for affordable retail services on the other, which has resulted in small, often informal businesses that modify the street edge of the urban fabric in the larger Yeoville area. Former front gardens in the previously middle-class neighbourhood, zoned mainly residential, have been transformed into a mixed-use, income-generating zone, a gathering place and call centre, with multiple offers, from tomatoes to news, sweets, cigarettes and other daily consumer goods. The property boundary has transformed into a productive space, often of social value (see figure 14.1). This informal transformation is not

FIGURE 14.1: Existing edge condition as a meeting place

without controversy. The illegal nature of certain businesses like informal 'liquor outlets and sheebens,[6] and spaza shops sometimes used as fronts for drug dealing or selling of illegal cigarettes', are described as 'plaguing' the area (Cox 2012). However, the small businesses on the threshold of public and private spaces, and elsewhere, are in high demand, and are often the only possible source of income for the informal traders.[7] Within the argument of urban compounding, they have the potential to operate as prototypes for truly sustainable live-and-work models in urban areas such as Yeoville, where formal and informal activities coexist.

Parallel to the changing morphology of space is the changing form of capital. Compound interest is understood as the sum of both the accrued interest and the original principal amount gathering interest, basically interest earning interest as surplus. In the financial sector it is known as a safe, preferably long-term investment strategy – the longer the money compounds, the faster it grows – that can be applied to any amount of capital. Applying the analogy to urban investments, the built structure and the land it stands on could initially be understood as the capital base, and the multiplied rental income of those subdivisions, shared spaces and backyard additions would then be considered as one form of 'interest that earns interest'. However, the exchange for extended income often comes at the price of exhausted resources and infrastructure, as well as difficult conditions. In sale adverts those properties are openly declared to be 'cash cows'. And while capital simply accrues, building structures deteriorate if they are not maintained or if they are overused. In addition, there is a foreseeable limit to subdivisions that is determined by a combination of factors such as access and light.

In figure 14.2, examples 2 and 7 reflect housing as a lucrative income-generating activity. A two-bedroomed flat that is rented out to ten adults and two children yields a total of R6 000 per month, or a house with four rooms rented to several families and individuals – 22 people in total – brings an overall rental income of R11 500 (Bénit-Gbaffou et al. 2010). At the same time, the large number of people suggests a fairly low share of rent per person – between R500 and R1 500 – and therefore access to affordable urban accommodation for many, though with no control or set minimum quality standard other than the influence of supply and demand. Similarly, with rental processes example 2 suggests a multitude of rental exchanges and thus subletting, but with pros and cons. Those who might not qualify for a rental contract under common conditions, two of them being having a valid work contract and a bank account, can sublet a bed(room), but landlords may overcharge tenants, not take care of amenities or terminate informal lease agreements as they wish. At the same time, figure 14.2 shows that one might be able to stay for free for some time, a valuable possibility in times of need. What the diagram does not reflect is the effect of the increased densities on social and private needs, which spill out into courtyards and corridors (if permitted) or, ultimately, onto the street and on the sidewalk.

Gathering interest on interest to accumulate value is a complex process in the urban environment. To go beyond understanding the 'value' of compound interest as monetary, it is essential to negotiate the interests, rights and responsibilities of the participants in the urban compounding process in relation to public and private spaces, buildings and migrant neighbourhoods, their social structures and in/formal economies. These are now explored through a graphic reading of the basic elements of the traditional African compound, used as a reference model.
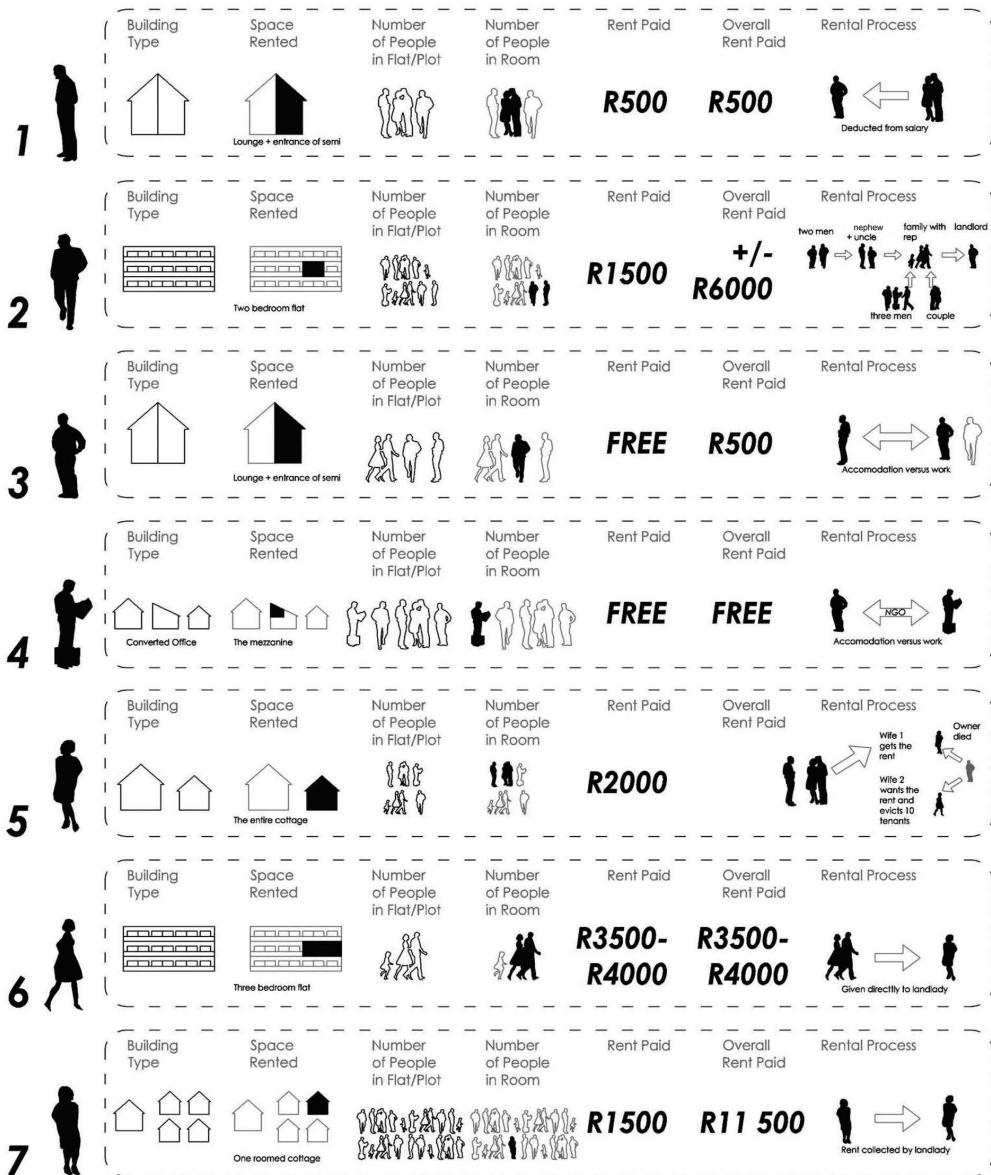
FIGURE 14.2: Rent–space processes
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

The African compound as a reference model

The traditional African compound is a complex social system that is directly linked to the spatial environment and economic production (see figure 14.3). The way it is built, in terms
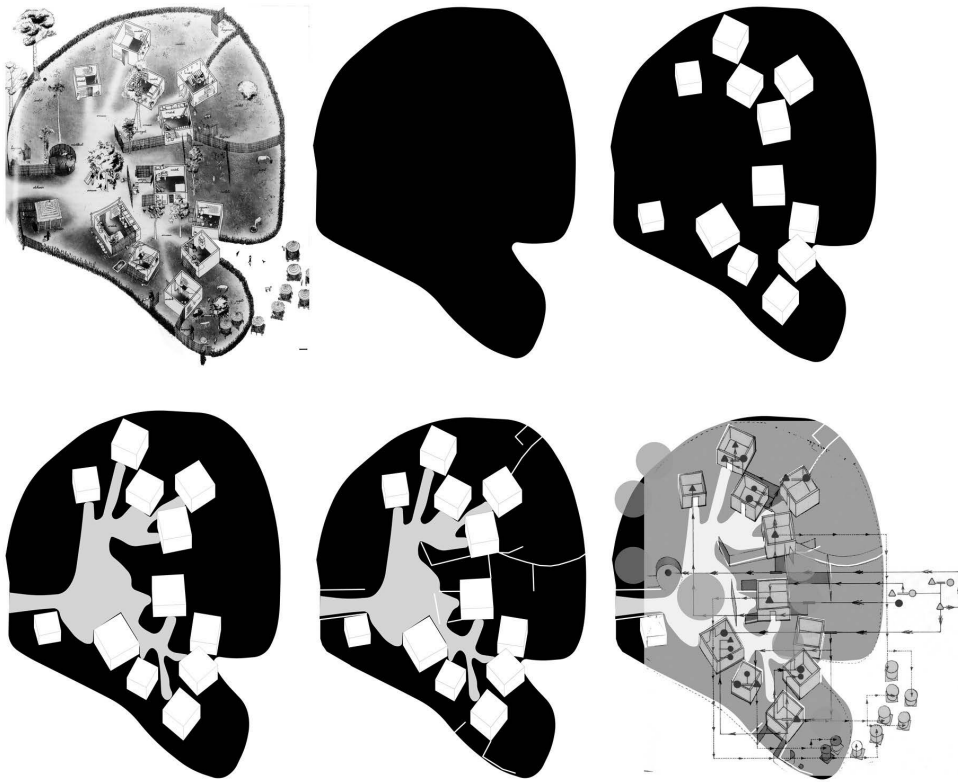
FIGURE 14.3: Elements in the compound anatomy
Key: From top left to bottom right: compound, West Africa; compound site; compound rooms; compound zones, public and private; compound thresholds and productive zones; compound social networks
Source: Authors, 2011; drawing top left after Bourdier and Minh-Ha (1996)

of size, structure, layout and location, may vary greatly throughout the continent. What the different compounds share, however, is an inherent order (Bourdier & Minh-Ha 1996), an apparently loose yet strict arrangement of:

- rights and responsibilities;
- spatial and social layouts;
- living and working areas;
- thresholds of borders and boundaries;
- forms of adaptability and extension.

The compound house satisfies basic family requirements: a place for each member to sleep, a place to cook, places to store food, places to pen animals such as chickens, goats and sheep, and a place to eat and socialise (Denyer 1978: 21). While Pellow (2002) focuses on spatial meanings as 'cultural constructions, produced by social realities', Anthony King (1984) states that the compound house is everywhere congenial to the form of economic activity and to its social organisation.

The basic spatial elements of a compound are (i) a site, specifically marked through a built boundary; (ii) private inside spaces, mostly simple rooms; (iii) adjunct semi-private public outdoor spaces; (iv) demarcated zones that organise movement through public, semi-private and private areas, the most significant one the point of entry followed by a central and other smaller meeting places; (v) demarcated thresholds between those zones and adjunct productive spaces; (vi) spaces for livestock; and (vii) green essentials, such as trees and hedges to structure the setting. Apart from natural parameters such as sun orientation, flows of wind or land contours, those spatial basics would become operational through the daily routines of sleeping, washing, cooking, meeting, working and playing, and through kinship systems within an extended family, traditionally often headed by a chief and organised through the natural relation or recognised union to him, and furthermore through customs, gender, age and systems of belief.

This complex construct of what Pellow (2002: 7), with reference to Ulf Hannerz, calls the 'face-to-face' society, who 'share a community of space as well as time', has subtle yet clear spatial distinctions: back and front, residents' and visitors' spaces (private and shared), social and productive spaces that are able to adapt to changing circumstances. Pellow (2002: 3) describes it as 'a context developed through practice', with a remarkable ability to absorb intricate forms of life in a rather simple, but not simplistic, spatial arrangement.

If we assume, based on personal narratives and observation, that parts of the kinship network as well as social and spatial practices move, through rapid urbanisation and continental migration to the city, and reconfigure into something new, then can compounding, as evident in Johannesburg, be considered an African type of city process? Currently, it seems like an intense, mostly informal layer that infiltrates existing urban structures to the extent of dominating them. Generic in its appearance (rooming, private landlordism, small-scale informal trade, shared community yards), it might look similar in Yeoville, the Johannesburg CBD and even in areas of Nairobi, although depending on origins and cultures, specifics such as types of food, kinds of trade and forms of congregation would differ. The (fragmented) reproduction of the traditional model may even be unintentional yet, arguably, it occurs in practice. The initial driver of the urban compound seems to be a combination of cultural dynamics, social (network) needs and the necessity to save costs and generate income in one or another way. Many individual narratives, like Simba Sagide's, talk about arriving from elsewhere and trying to locate relatives, overcoming language barriers and getting introduced to people in the area. Others, like informal traders, are connected through their professional networks. The main difference from the traditional model, however, lies in the multiple personalities that take on the role and responsibilities of the 'chief': private landlords and businesspeople, the government, trading organisations, community development trusts, stakeholder forums, cultural and religious organisations, among others. Apart from benefiting the area and the community as a whole, this is the reason why we suggest implementing the compounding process from a place with shared interests – the public edge – on three different scales: land-use policies, alternative ownership models and design-based proposals.

The public edge: A place to start compounding

People in Yeoville do not necessarily reside close to their friends. Although they often use extended family and kin as a base when they arrive, mobility is generally high. Costs rather than social relations determine where they live. But residents do not live anonymously next to one another; rather, social networks adapt and expand as situations require, as described in Mayson's (this book) narration of his residential experiences. The relatively consistent number of vacant rooms offers a large spatial database of choices in the area. The public space remains the constant in this equation: Yeovillites meet on the street, at work, in the park or in community yards.

One informal trader told us that she changes accommodation once a year or more, but has occupied the same spot on the pavement for nearly a decade. We learned that she is the rule rather than the exception. This suggests that the urban compounding process is best triggered in the public open space, through investment in the design of places that people can share. The public edge could enhance these emerging urban compounds and improve their operations from the outside in, before engaging with the sensitive construct of private spaces and multiple actors and agents.

We propose three different approaches to support and enhance the urban compounding process, with a strong focus on the combination of residential space and small production spaces:

- rezoning the urban edge to accommodate small business rights and mixed land use (this is as much a socio-economic as it is a political debate);
- creating community land trusts for 'bad buildings' as an alternative to other forms of ownership and belonging;
- designing affordable housing as a holistic framework within which to live, work and socialise.

The first approach proposes that private land along the public edge becomes a carefully regulated zone with small business rights, including informal trade which will activate the edge, meet supply and demand for retail services, create a sustainable urban work-and-live environment, secure income for urban micro-entrepreneurs and possibly increase property values. The zoning regulation should stipulate the kinds and size of trade permitted; the responsibility for implementation would lie with the owners of the buildings. This de-links the edge from residency and does not interfere with the inside spaces of the building.

The second approach addresses occupied but degraded buildings in Yeoville and considers these properties as an opportunity for change by making them 'the target of any broader revitalisation project' through community land trusts (Klug & Klug, this book). The underlying principle of community land trusts is the separation of land ownership from the ownership of the building and therefore the separation of their respective monetary value. The land, managed by a (Yeoville) community land trust, would be frozen in value, which in turn slows down the increase of the property value and keeps rentals affordable – 'a sustainable redevelopment of bad buildings' (Klug & Klug, this book). This proposal
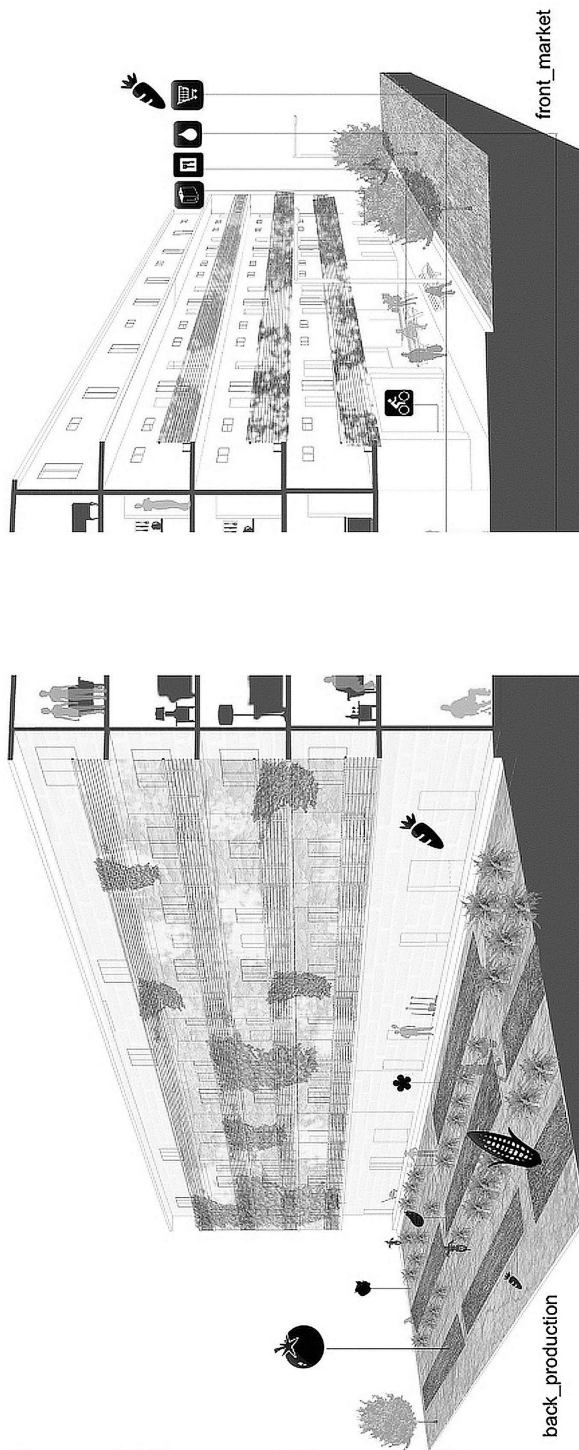
FIGURE 14.4: Urban trellis: Sectional perspective back and front
Source: De Villiers et al. (2010), for Yeoville Studio

concentrates on the use of the edge as rentable business space available to all interested inhabitants of the building, which links the edge to the residency.

The third approach takes up the challenge to design new affordable housing according to urban compounding principles on an empty site in Yeoville, introducing imaginary live-and-work models proposed by students, based on intense fieldwork findings.

One model draws on the 'urban trellis' concept (De Villiers et al. 2010), which responds to the need for high-density accommodation (450–500 people per hectare) and reinterprets the often underutilised courtyards, roof spaces and vertical surfaces such as facades (see figure 14.4). It minimises circulation spaces in favour of 'neutral rooms' that can be used communally or added onto specific units. This tries to address the flexibility that backyard rooms offer. The close link between productive space and residential space in the trellis requires a specific kind of community to participate: people that are able to physically work can commit to a certain period of time and thus will accept limited mobility. Typical forms for similar systems are communes or intentional communities.[8]

An alternative, the 'Building dreams up-on a row' project by Francis Sadie and Jarred Pincus, is based on the existing residential model of shared living spaces in Yeoville (figure 14.5). A traditional row house is designed as an 'open house system' that meanders along the urban edge and thus allows for different activities in the front and back of the houses as well as a range of three different layouts inside for different residents: one for a local mechanic (Axle's Grease), one for a spaza operator (What a Lot I Got), and one which functions purely as residential accommodation (The Lost Boys). The mechanic's unit has a large front yard to accommodate an informal, outdoor workshop, with the result that the unit is set back from the street. In contrast, the spaza operator's unit is built close to the street edge, to entice potential customers into her store. The standard residential unit has no commercial function and therefore less relationship with the street. Both 'Axle's Grease' and 'What a Lot I Got' contribute to an interactive and porous street edge and embody the live-and-work concept. The commercial functions of these units provide a sustainable income stream to the residents while providing convenient everyday services to the community. Various models of renting or ownership are possible. The row house division allows individual ownership per plot or sectional title if the land is owned by one party.

The system of tenure in this design is modelled on the existing rental process in Yeoville (landlord–tenant–subtenant). This system has multiple permutations. For example, the 'Axle's Grease' unit can be rented by a single tenant with an extended family or different individuals who share communal spaces. 'The Lost Boys', by contrast, would be rented by multiple households: a family, a student and two single workers, altogether making three different subtenants. In the case of 'What a Lot I Got', a family might occupy the first two floors but rent the top floor to a young couple.

Pavement economies

While the above approaches focus on accommodation in combination with proposals for productive street edges that could literally compound income for entrepreneurial residents and accommodate informal trading models, the issue of legalities and duties of informal

AXLE'S GREASE – THE MECHANIC UNIT
OCCUPANCY: 6–8 PEOPLE
INCOME PER ANNUM: R6 000 P/M

THE LOST BOYS – THE RESIDENTIAL UNIT
OCCUPANCY: 7–8 PEOPLE
INCOME PER ANNUM: R9 000 P/M
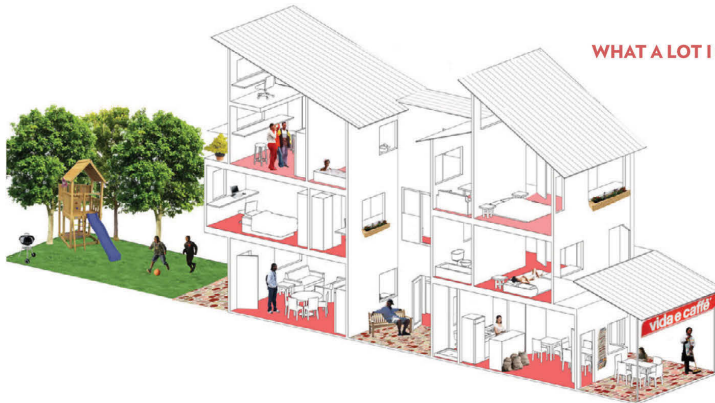
WHAT A LOT I GOT – THE SHOP UNIT
OCCUPANCY: 7–8 PEOPLE
INCOME PER ANNUM: R10 000 P/M

FIGURE 14.5: Building dreams up-on a row
Source: Sadie and Pincus (2010), for Yeoville Studio

trading remains complex. If the idea is to integrate the pavement into this alternative live-and-work development (mainly trading on the pavement from within the private space), an equally alternative system of taxation may be needed to fund and maintain spaces, activities and networks. This is a very current debate in the City of Johannesburg, with no permanent solution to date. What was thought to be an approach of the apartheid past – anti-street-trading measures such as the payment of excessive fines and confiscation of goods to prevent street trading in the cities (Willemse 2011: 7) – resurfaced in 2013 under the name of Operation Clean Sweep,[9] an initiative by the City of Johannesburg aimed at clearing the CBD of illegal hawking and trading. Between 30 September and 31 October 2013, around 6 000 hawkers were removed and barred from trading. They were allowed to return to their stalls based on a judgment by the Constitutional Court that was handed down on 4 April 2014.

The proposed interdependence of public and private space and live-and-work in the compounding model might offer the framework to manage a system that is less open to current forms of racket and bribery in informal activities. Here the idea of a 'Yeoville patente'[10] could be useful as a specific form of exchanging funds and services: informal traders purchase a day/week/month ticket for trading space along the pavement from the property manager, at an affordable rate. In exchange, the traders could take care of maintaining the pavement in front of the property, which is currently the duty of the Johannesburg Roads Agency. This could bridge the gap between the dual system of top-down official planning and service delivery and bottom-up DIY urbanism that has evolved in areas like Yeoville.

Urban interests and compounding principles

This chapter concludes with a beginning, as we have only started the investigation into possible, intentional and publicly orchestrated forms of urban compounding to transcend from an urban process born out of necessity into a complex design tool for planning processes that include the realities of diverse cultures, informal economies and the need for affordable accommodation in the existing urban fabric. Neighbourhoods like Yeoville, with locally mobile, low-income communities residing in former middle-class structures, have the opportunity to develop and support a new neighbourhood identity that may be distinctively different from previous, more homogeneous and planned ones, yet highly adaptive and relevant to the current living situation of the many. This will require new urban forms, alternative policies and alternative practices that need to be recognised by governing bodies, activists, private investors – from real estate agencies to property owners and slumlords – and residents.

A compound is by definition[11] a composite of two or more parts and/or having two or more activities. We consider the formal possibility of urban compounding to be a real opportunity to develop a new and necessary prototype for urban African work-and-live models that will link public spaces, private places and urban life with shared cultural interests and economic gain. A similar process needs strong support, and also courage, from official governance. But with operations such as Clean Sweep and its eviction of thousands of traders in Johannesburg's CBD by the City itself,[12] prospects for this seem unlikely in the near future of Yeoville and surrounds.

Notes

1 The use of these racial categories is necessary in this study as they were the basis for the politics of racial segregation and discrimination as pursued by the apartheid administration.

2 We acknowledge a range of work that has influenced our thinking on urban compounding including: Hostels and Compounds, a photo-documentary of all government hostels in Gauteng driven by Khanya College and the Market Photo Workshop (2008), which included a series of aerial photographs by David Goldblatt (assisted by Solam Mkhabela); Back and Forth: Informal Cross Border Traders in Southern Africa (2006), a photography project by the Market Photo Workshop and the International Organisation of Migration (managed by Kirsten Dörmann); and Urban Infill, second-year Architecture Studio projects (supervised by Dörmann) undertaken as part of Yeoville Studio – in particular, Urban Trellis by De Villiers et al. (2010); Building Dreams Up-On A Row by Sadie and Pincus (2010); Renting Analysis Booklet by Pincus et al. (2010).

3 A press release from the Socio Economic Rights Institute (SERI) and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) reported on 1 December 2011 on a Constitutional Court ruling the previous day, which ordered the City of Johannesburg to find alternative accommodation for residents being evicted from a property in the inner city. See http://www.housingfinanceafrica.org/blog/constitutional-court-declares-city-of-johannesburgs-housing-policy-unconstitutional/, accessed 12 August 2013.

4 See http://deathofjohannesburg.blogspot.com/2006/07/visit-to-yeoville.html, accessed 25 December 2018. See also Didier and Roux, this book.

5 See http://www.imagineproperty.co.za/, accessed 11 October 2017.

6 In the South African context, sheebens were originally illicit bars in black townships where alcoholic beverages were sold without a licence.

7 See also Matjomane and Bénit-Gbaffou, this book.

8 See http://www.ic.org/.

9 See http://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/19-litigation/case-entries/206-south-african-informal-traders-forum-and-others-v-city-of-johannesburg-and-others-saitf, accessed 11 February 2019.

10 'Patente' is an old French term referring to a tax one pays to be allowed to exercise any activity in a city (originated during medieval times in France, but still in use in some French-speaking African countries).

11 See http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/compound.

12 See http://citizen.co.za/73336/informal-traders-in-the-city-of-joburg-accuses-officials-of-illegal-evictions/, accessed 2018.

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15 Community land trusts and social inclusion

HEINZ KLUG AND NEIL KLUG

Abandoned and illegally occupied buildings are a usual feature of run-down and declining neighbourhoods, impacting also on the continued downward spiral of these neighbourhoods. Often called 'bad buildings',[1] they reflect multiple failures including 'market obsolescence' (Mallach 2010): declining property values that negatively affect property owners, leading to reduced maintenance of buildings, and often resulting in exploitative landlord–tenant relationships, all contributing to the further decline of neighbourhoods. The decline has been explained by broader trends, such as increasing suburbanisation, population shifts and resulting capital flight, in South Africa attributed to political changes and 'white flight' based on racial prejudice (Morris 1999; Tomlinson et al. 2003; Beavon 2004). Although the circumstances leading to the ultimate abandonment of properties by their owners vary widely, urban planning solutions generally fall into the sphere of urban regeneration. In this chapter we explore an inclusionary and pro-poor land-law approach to address this issue, using as a springboard for our discussion an in-depth interview conducted with one of Yeoville Studio's key community partners, and desktop research conducted by second-year urban planning students.

Expropriation is one of the tools governments have to acquire these abandoned buildings. However, in many cases these properties are occupied, either legally or by illegal occupants (Zack et al. 2010), making regeneration a complex process. Many of the traditional market approaches to regeneration lead to the displacement of the poorest inner-city residents who often occupy these buildings (Marcuse 1986; Freeman & Braconi 2004; Newman & Wyly

2006; Atkinson 2010). Displacement both impacts on the economic sustainability of these solutions and raises significant issues of equity and justice. The question is therefore how to avoid displacement and social exclusion, while using these buildings to contribute to more sustainable neighbourhoods.

This question was raised in Yeoville indirectly through work being undertaken by students in a second-year course on land management. Maurice Smithers, the chairperson of the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), described the negative impact that a number of 'bad buildings' were having on the neighbourhood. Responding to Smithers's 'dream' of some kind of a community housing trust, students examined international case studies on the impact of 'bad buildings' on local communities, and how this problem has been addressed elsewhere.

This chapter explores the adoption of a modern common property system, community land trusts: a system of land tenure in which land is held in trust while the ownership of improvements on the land is separated from the land. This form of tenure was established about 100 years ago in the United States and in recent years has garnered increased international interest and application. The model has been applied in Kenya in the context of low-income housing, with some lessons drawn for an African context (Bassett 2005, 2007). We argue that this system is an appropriate mechanism to overcome both the seeming lack of capacity of local governments and non-government organisations (NGOs) to undertake urban renewal, as well as the inability of the private sector, constrained by their profit motive, to address concerns of equity, justice and capitalisation that lie at the heart of the 'bad buildings' problem. We explore this issue through discussion of four abandoned and resettled properties in Yeoville. The chapter brings together two distinct perspectives, an urban planning and a legal perspective, to shed light on the policy and institutional issues that 'bad buildings' raise, and offers appropriate, viable and implementable solutions.

'Bad buildings': Where the owner(s) fail to maintain the property

A 'bad building' is usually defined in North American literature as 'a property whose owner has stopped carrying out at least one of the significant responsibilities of property ownership, as a result of which the property is vacant or likely to become vacant in the immediate future' (Mallach 2010: 1). Tenants' occupation is not central in this definition, as in the US context these properties are often (but not always) vacant, whereas in South Africa they are mostly occupied. Occupants could include slumlords, hijackers and tenants who are either complicit with, or victims of, those hijackers. In Johannesburg particularly complicated cases are the many failing sectional title buildings, where the owners in general and thus the body corporates are unable to carry out their obligations, leading to the decline into 'bad building' status.

Buildings or properties are abandoned by their owners for three broad reasons: location, physical obsolescence and market obsolescence. However, there are a number of abandonment triggers – factors that give rise to events leading to abandonment in each of these categories. For multi-family rental buildings and single-family homes, which are the

focus of this chapter, these triggers include inadequate income or cash flow, inability to address deterioration or the need for major repairs not supported by market value, difficulty in obtaining finance, unsustainable secured debts or liens, management and maintenance difficulties, neighbourhood change and perception of market trends, household transitions (e.g. death or relocation) and fraudulent transactions or hijacking of properties (Mallach 2010; Zack et al. 2010).

The effects of 'bad buildings' or property abandonment can have a severe impact on a neighbourhood. This has been described as a 'black hole' or 'drain' in the middle of a neighbourhood in that it tends to suck the energy and value out of the surrounding properties.[2] Furthermore, a 'bad building' can be a health and safety risk for occupants, including the increased risk of fires, and can impact negatively on a city's revenue (Zack et al. 2010; Mallach 2010).

The controversial 'broken window theory' of policing, advocated in the United States by George Kelling and James Wilson (1982) and popularised by Rudy Giuliani, mayor of New York in the late 1980s, emphasised the norm-setting and signalling effects of urban disorder and vandalism, such as a broken window that nobody fixes, claiming these conditions promoted additional criminal and anti-social behaviour. Regardless of whether failing properties in fact have this direct effect, it is clear that 'bad buildings' are a significant factor in blighted communities.

The failure to address the problem of 'bad buildings' in Johannesburg

The physical decline and attributed negative perceptions of the built environment in the Johannesburg inner city and adjoining suburbs, including Yeoville, has been well documented (Morris 1999; Beall et al. 2002; Meyer 2002; Tomlinson et al. 2003; Beavon 2004; Harrison et al. 2008; Zack et al. 2010). Reasons for this decline include a wide range of both historical and current factors. In the 1960s economic decline was attributed to processes of suburbanisation of retail and commercial activities. From the 1980s the demographic shifts that accompanied the unravelling of apartheid saw the beginnings of 'white flight' from the inner city. By the 1990s the decay of the inner city and immediate surrounds was accelerating due to increasing crime levels and poor urban management practices. As a result the inner city and immediate surrounds now contain a large number of 'bad buildings',[3] many of which are described as hijacked,[4] and all of which are dilapidated and critically lack maintenance.

The City of Johannesburg has adopted an operational definition of 'bad buildings' as follows:

> A [bad] building is one that has deteriorated to such an extent that its market value is below the outstanding debt owed … Living conditions in the building have become extremely harmful to the occupants … The buildings are usually controlled by slumlords/ flat hijackers who overfill the flats, charge exorbitant rents and allow the buildings to become rundown. Slumlords neglect to pay the rates over to the City, and electricity and water are terminated, further jeopardising the quality of life of the tenants. (Davie 2004)

This definition is perhaps more relevant for our study than Alan Mallach's, as it assumes that some 'bad buildings' continue to be occupied by tenants in spite of (or maybe because of) their lack of maintenance. Further possible characteristics have been supplied by Tanya Zack et al. (2010: 9–11), who argue that a nuanced understanding of the variety of 'bad buildings' and their occupants (if occupied) is required if proper and appropriately targeted remediation mechanisms are to be adopted.

In the worst cases conditions in these buildings include basements filled with sewage to the extent that the acid in the urine is leaching the lime out of the mortar in the concrete (Rubin 2014: 6). According to Matthew Wilhelm-Solomon, 'Health challenges in the so-called "bad buildings" of the inner city are potentially on the scale of a humanitarian crisis, and yet remain hidden in their darkened corridors' (Wilhelm-Solomon 2010).

The closing of Johannesburg's inner-city flagship hotel, The Carlton, in 1998 and the freezing of investments in the inner city by a major financial and insurance company prompted the City of Johannesburg (hereinafter the City) to begin to take action. This was initially in the form of a vision, launched in 1997 by the then deputy president Thabo Mbeki, in which the city would be seen as the 'Golden Heartbeat of Africa'. This was followed by a series of strategies and frameworks which guided the work of an Inner City Office, established in 1998 as the product of a public–private coalition, the Central Johannesburg Partnership, with the task of administering the redevelopment of the inner city (Rubin 2014).

The City, through the Inner City Office, first began to address the issue of 'bad buildings' in 1999, when the City Council approved a 'Proposed Programme on Bad Buildings' under the broad banner of the 'Inner City Regeneration Scheme' (Rubin 2014). This was to provide a mechanism for dealing with buildings that were 'abandoned by their owners, were derelict or in a deplorable state; were invaded by crime lords and squatters, were overcrowded; or where they contravened various by-laws or other legislation or were the seat of criminal activities, etc. etc.' (Fraser 2011). The principle was that the City would purchase the buildings from the owners (or banks who held the mortgages), but since the buildings were generally massively in arrears to the Council, the City would foreclose on the debt and then bid for the properties in sales of execution.[5] The plan was then to sell the building on to a bona fide developer for the amount owed to the Council but, where appropriate, discounted to the market value of the building.[6]

This Bad Buildings Programme (BBP) faced immediate difficulties. First, the legal process to acquire the properties by obtaining foreclosure judgments against the owners and then bidding for them at the foreclosure sale led to excessive delays. Second, loan financing was in short supply and 'the pool of people who could be called upon to actually renovate the buildings' was limited since 'only existing landlords who were already in the inner city rental market were both willing and able to participate in the BBP' (Rubin 2014). Then, when a few buildings were eventually sold to developers, there were conflicts between the profit objectives of the developers and the City's objectives of urban regeneration and improved quality of life for lower-income inner-city residents. This was accompanied by large-scale evictions by developers with the resultant resistance by residents, Constitutional Court challenges and bad media coverage for the city. As a result, less than 10 per cent of

the targeted buildings (only 12–15 buildings) were ever successfully upgraded under this programme.

The BBP went through a number of different iterations of its financial model between 1998 and 2000. It was moved first to the housing department and then, in the mid-2000s, to the Johannesburg Property Company, a publicly owned company established to manage the City's property portfolio, and 'renamed the Better Buildings Programme' (Rubin 2014). In 2002/2003, under the newly established Inner City Regional Office and Inner City Task Force, the 'Inner City Regeneration Strategy' was formulated (February 2003), which translated the aims of 'Joburg 2030' (later 'Joburg 2040') – a vision of Johannesburg becoming a world-class city: a 'Tokyo or New York of Africa' (Rubin 2014) – into a five-pillar strategy that included addressing 'sinkholes' and promoting 'ripple-pond investments'. An 'Inner City Regeneration Strategy Business Plan' (March 2004) then translated the strategy into concrete projects. As a result, the focus of the BBP shifted from 'arrears' to 'regeneration', concentrating not just on buildings in financial arrears but those that were in poor physical condition and having a 'negative impact on the surrounding urban fabric' (CoJ, 2007; Garner 2011).

The Better Buildings Programme varied from the earlier BBP, in that it intended that the City take some form of ownership of these buildings (whether through a trust or a parastatal) and then sell them to the private sector to offset the service costs that the buildings owed. The City would then encourage the new owners to refurbish the buildings and provide residential stock. The BBP was now intended to meet the 'dual objectives of securing the whole or portion of the arrears and rejuvenation of the buildings in the inner city' (Patel 1998, cited in Rubin 2014). According to the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE),

> In this vision, dealing with 'bad buildings' was no longer simply a technical matter of fixing 'derelict' or 'unsafe' buildings … The task of clearing these buildings had become much more than that, a vital step in turning areas from 'sinkholes' into 'ripple-ponds', linking up one 'ripple-pond' with another, spreading an upward spiral of confidence and meeting the overall goal of 'raising and sustaining private investment leading to a steady rise in property values'. (COHRE 2005: 46)

Once again the programme largely relied on the City's finance department to write off debt in order for the buildings to be financially viable to any private transferee. But officials in the finance department refused to move the programme forward, since writing off the arrears would have a direct impact on their record of recouping money and hence their individual bonuses, which were tied to the department's financial performance. It was only through political pressure that a compromise was reached and the programme initiated (Rubin 2014), although it was further complicated when the Council official responsible within the Johannesburg Property Company left the Council after 18 months, leaving the programme leaderless (Fraser 2011).

In 2006, with the start of Amos Masondo's second five-year term of office as mayor, the programme was moved to the Department of Economic Development and the focus shifted again to include Black Economic Empowerment (BEE),[7] among the already difficult

aims of the programme. Furthermore, based on a major 2007 inner-city summit and in response to a Constitutional Court judgment against the City for infringing the rights of building occupants by evicting them from 'bad buildings' without providing alternative accommodation, a new policy document, the 'Inner City Regeneration Charter' (ICRC), was adopted in 2007. Section 6 of the ICRC acknowledged that the response to date had been too reactive, and not proactive. Furthermore, the ICRC committed to eliminating all 'bad buildings' in the inner city by 2015 through scaling up the BBP, dramatically increasing funding for refurbishment and ensuring that BEE players were able to access new property ownership opportunities from the portfolio of buildings. The ICRC also aimed at improving technical efficiencies, facilitating the acquisition of buildings and resolving difficulties in securing rates write-offs and clearance certificates on debts for municipal services such as water and electricity. A major shortcoming of this strategy, however, was the contradiction between the acknowledgement of the constitutional and legal rights of existing occupants of buildings – requiring that refurbishment take into account both temporary accommodation and the availability of affordable rental and ownership options in the inner city – and the ICRC's strong commitment to eliminate all 'bad buildings' (CoJ 2007). As a result of this unresolved contradiction, 'after a survey of the inner city, COHRE estimated that up to 26,000 squatters living in the inner city are suffering widespread human rights violations as a result of the city's redevelopment plan' (IRIN Africa 2007).

By late 2008, the BBP had again evolved, this time into the 'Inner City Property Scheme Project' (ICPS). This new model focused on economic growth and jobs and business growth and investment, to include the entire inner-city region and public–private partnerships (CoJ 2008). In 2009, consultants were appointed to formulate new financial and structuring models for the amended programme. Their report addressed detailed methods of property acquisition and models of partnership arrangements with the private sector, and outlined a business model for the scheme. It still ignored the fundamental challenge of regenerating 'bad buildings': how to deal with vulnerable occupants without infringing on their constitutional rights.

In April 2011, 'bad buildings' were again the subject of a summit meeting in Johannesburg, where it was reported that there were 321 buildings under investigation, with 244 building hijackers arrested. Together with their consultants, the City's environmental health operations manager argued that 'the success of dealing with "nuisance buildings" depended on a good multidisciplinary team approach' (CoJ 2011). Stakeholders at this summit concluded that there was a need for a permanent anti-hijacking unit to be established in the South African Police Service to 'win the war against the hijacking of buildings and slum-lording' (CoJ 2011), further criminalising the treatment of what is essentially an issue of poverty. However, ever since the ICPS's launch in 2008, with an advert requesting suitably empowered partners, little has come of the new scheme. This was broadly attributed to disagreements among stakeholders and the general unworkability of a plan which required that each member of the scheme contribute R5 million to participate in the programme (Masondo 2007). Furthermore, the programme lacked integration within local government, and given the fragmented information base and operational dysfunctions within the City's management, it was simply overambitious (Rubin 2014). Of equal relevance is the absence of any resolution of the seemingly intractable issue

of the need to attract private capital to refurbish buildings that house vulnerable populations, without solutions to properly address their housing needs. So yet again, in 2013 the City undertook a review of the programme. This review was completed with the finalisation of the Inner City Housing Implementation Plan (ICHIP) in July 2016. This plan set out six housing strategies for the inner city, of which the fifth was 'bad buildings rehabilitation'. This strategy proposed a pilot project to begin with, targeting households earning above R7 500 per month in particular listed precincts within the inner city.

In October 2017, a tender went out to registered social housing companies to put forward proposals for 12 properties (including four abandoned buildings), all in the City of Johannesburg's ownership, to develop housing for the poor (of which 20 per cent must be for the sub-R900 rental market). However, even if these tenders are successful, the question remains as to whether the buildings will stay affordable as the areas gentrify.

Why right of expropriation hasn't been used to tackle 'bad buildings'

Interestingly, the then mayor, Amos Masondo, in his acknowledgement that the Better Buildings Programme had achieved only limited success, ascribed the failure to a number of factors including 'the lengthy expropriation process, the screening of participants and the requirements to provide transitional housing to people who were being evicted' (CoJ 2011). His reference to expropriation is extraordinary, since the City had in fact failed to use its extensive powers of expropriation (refer to box 15.1). Instead, the mayor's statement confused expropriation with the process of foreclosure based on the existing rates and municipal services arrears. Although foreclosure may be seen as a regular or normal legal transaction, a decision by the City to expropriate these buildings would have been at variance with the market-based policy approaches that were hegemonic in this period.

While the power of eminent domain is recognised in the Constitution, it is the Expropriation Act No. 63 of 1975 that remains the statutory basis under which government, including the City of Johannesburg, has the legal authority to expropriate property. The minister of public works may, according to the statute, expropriate land for 'public purposes' subject to an obligation to pay compensation (Act No. 63 of 1975 § 2). The Act states that

> the amount of compensation shall not exceed, in the case of any property, the aggregate of the amount by which the property would have realised if sold on the date of notice in the open market by a willing seller to a willing buyer; and an amount to make good any actual financial loss caused by the expropriation. (Act No. 63 of 1975 § 12)

Given the condition of these buildings and the amounts already owed to the City it does not seem that the owners' claims to compensation in the event of expropriation are likely to be a major cost factor in any redevelopment effort. Instead, it is more likely that the City is concerned that exercising the power of expropriation will be read by the real estate market as threatening property rights. Yet even this could be debated, as by clarifying ownership and refurbishing the property the City would in fact be securing the property rights of neighbouring property owners.

BOX 15.1: Compensation in cases of expropriation in South Africa: Ongoing debates

The issue of compensation under the Constitution remains an open question and proposals to enact a new expropriation statute in light of the Constitution's property provisions should facilitate any effort to address 'bad buildings'. The Constitutional Court examined the role that market value should play in compensation decisions in *Du Toit v. Minister of Transport* 2006 (1) SA 297 (CC) and noted the potential conflict between the Expropriation Act of 1975, which bases compensation decisions on market value, and the Constitution's property clause, which lists five factors for 'just and equitable' compensation. The Court cautiously endorsed an approach to reconciling the Expropriation Act and the Constitution used in the land claims court case *Ex Parte Former Highland Residents* 2000 ((2) All SA 26 (LCC)). In this two-step approach, the Land Court first determined market value, and then decided whether an upward or downward adjustment was warranted by the other four factors listed in the Constitution. While the Constitution allows expropriation for 'a public purpose or in the public interest' subject to 'just and equitable' compensation (Constitution of the RSA, 1996 § 25(2)), it specifies five elements that must be considered in determining compensation:

'The amount of compensation must be just and equitable, reflecting an equitable balance between the public interest and the interests of those affected, having regard to all relevant circumstances, including – (a) the current use of the property; (b) the history of acquisition and use of the property; (c) the market value of the property; (d) the extent of direct state investment and subsidy in the acquisition and beneficial capital improvement of the property; and (e) the purpose of the expropriation' (Constitution, 1996 § 25(3)).

Furthermore, the Constitution explicitly states that 'the public interest includes the nation's commitment to land reform' and lays out the Constitutional basis for three major land reforms: land tenure reform, land restitution and land redistribution (Constitution, 1996 § 25 (4), (6), (7), (8)). The redevelopment of blighted buildings and the recognition of a new form of tenure designed to facilitate the public goal of affordable housing falls well within this constitutional mandate.

Another concern is that the City might face even longer legal wrangles if title holders come forward to claim their constitutional right to compensation. While the right to compensation in the case of expropriation is clearly granted in the Constitution, this must not be confused with the consequences of using the authority to expropriate. Through expropriation ownership transfers immediately to the expropriating entity and is not dependent on the determination or payment of compensation. Thus the process of refurbishment cannot be held up by claimants and is not dependent on a lengthy process of foreclosure in which the City must bid at auction to obtain ownership of the property. The auctions that have taken place on foreclosed properties in the inner city show that the market value of these properties has been negligible, often less than the amounts owed to the City.

A more likely concern is that the City would find itself responsible to the present occupiers for the management and upkeep of the building. Under expropriation ownership shifts to the government or other authorised entity as soon as notice of expropriation is served, immediately raising the problem of what to do about the 'bad buildings' and those who occupy them. We suggest that it is the City's failure to imagine a viable and sustainable alternative that has led both to the failure of the existing programmes as well as to the City's reluctance to effectively use its legal authority to address the problem of 'bad buildings'. Instead the focus has been on demonising the occupiers, seeing 'bad' people as a problem to be resolved by ever more aggressive forms of social and criminal policing.

Yeoville's 'bad buildings' and emerging community-based solutions

It is within this policy context that the inner-city suburb of Yeoville, (located on the north-eastern edge of the inner city of Johannesburg) and its issues with 'bad buildings' is viewed.

Within a decade, from 1989 to 1998, the black population in Yeoville increased from 3.4 per cent of the population to 84.1 per cent (Beall et al. 2002). Although the majority of new black residents could be classed as middle class (in terms of income and educational qualifications, if the average black income and education level is used as the standard), there were still huge disparities between the new black residents and white residents in terms of household incomes. Together with increased crime levels this led to changes in the perceptions of the area by real estate agents and financial institutions. Fearing a progressive loss of real estate value, financial institutions redlined parts of Yeoville (mortgage loan applications were declined based on where the property was located within Yeoville). Many property owners in the area thus 'milked' their properties by trying to amortise their investment in the properties over a short period – dividing their houses or flats into several units, increasing rents and reducing or ceasing their maintenance of the units (Meyer 2002; Tomlinson et al. 2003).

The mid-1990s saw an influx of foreign nationals from other African countries, with different legal statuses (see Guinard, this book). Depending on their status, many of these migrants were unable to participate in the formal economy resulting in both high unemployment and increased informal-sector employment in the area (Jürgens et al. 2003). The net result of these processes has been 'middle class abandonment (white flight) and disinvestment' in Yeoville and elsewhere (Murray 2011: 149). Many landowners have left the area, either abandoning their buildings or leaving them with management agents to extract as much rent as possible with limited reinvestment or maintenance. In cases of abandonment, utilities and rates have been unpaid and ultimately cut off by the municipality. There are also instances where buildings have been squatted or hijacked.

In Monica Meyer's (2002) mapping of Yeoville, she identified 108 'decaying buildings' in the Greater Yeoville area, although 'only obvious defects of the architectural fabric were assessed, such as broken or missing windows, broken or missing entrance doors and major defects of the outside walls of the buildings or of other external walls on the same plot (often in the form of missing bricks)' (Meyer 2002: 64). While these buildings were not necessarily abandoned or hijacked, her overview provides a good starting point for our case study. We have cross-referenced her identified 'decaying buildings' with a more recent 'tentative list' of
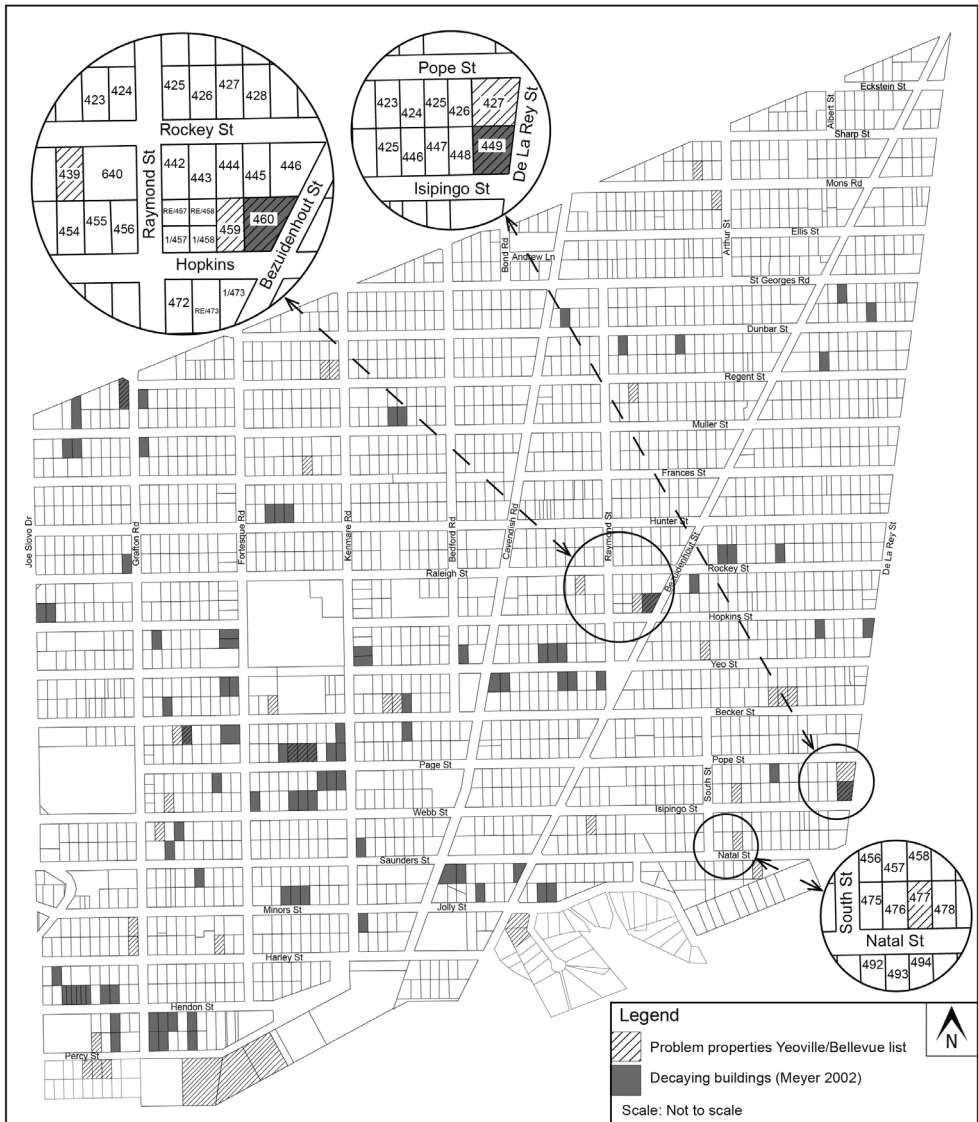
FIGURE 15.1: Greater Yeoville area, showing the extent of Meyer's 'decaying buildings'

Source: Adapted by G Leighton for the authors from Meyer (2002) using City of Johannesburg base material

20 'problem properties in Yeoville Bellevue', provided by Maurice Smithers, that confirms which of the buildings or properties have been perceived as long-term 'bad buildings' in the area.[8] We chose our four case studies based on this double list, located in different parts of the suburb, to illustrate a typology of 'bad buildings' in Yeoville (see box 15.2 and figure 15.1).

These examples show a wide range of circumstances surrounding 'bad buildings' in Yeoville. However, the common theme is the de facto dispossession, abandonment, or neglect of the

The first case is on the main business street through Yeoville, Rockey Street, and involves a commercial property owned by a deregistered company. It is currently occupied without a lease by a number of people including sex workers. They do, however, pay rent (amount unknown) to someone who claims to be the owner (a family friend of the original owner) but he appears to have no legal rights to the property. Interestingly, while this property was not identified as a decaying building by Meyer in 2002, she did indicate that the road outside the property was being used for either drug dealing or prostitution.

The second case is that of a nearby property on Bezuidenhout Street, rumoured to be owned by a Mauritian drug dealer, who no longer lives in South Africa. The property is occupied without a lease by a number of people, with unauthorised spaza shops and other informal businesses being conducted from the property.

The third case is an old Art Deco building on Isipingo Street, which was initially squatted and then hijacked. Subsequently there was a fire in the building resulting in it being demolished. It has been a vacant site for the past few years. This property was identified as a decaying building by Meyer in 2002.

The fourth case is a block of flats on Natal Street. This property was hijacked twice from a Taiwanese woman who was found murdered two weeks after she had returned from a trip to Taiwan, to discover that the building had been taken over for the second time. It caught fire sometime in 2012, and while it is still occupied by a number of people, it is not clear whether anyone is charging rent for it.

properties by the landowner. In the first case the ownership is unclear due to the holding company having been deregistered; in the second case the owner is missing; in the third case the owner was displaced by hijackers; and in the fourth, the owner was deceased. Even if in some cases, a form of rent is being paid to a person claiming ownership or asserting control over the building, no payment is being made to the local municipality for rates and services. In 2008 Yeoville accounted for 6 per cent of the entire City's arrears debt (CoJ 2008). All four properties remain a matter of concern for the surrounding residents, are under investigation by the local police, and are on the YBCDT's list of problematic buildings/properties based on community concerns. According to Smithers, the City of Johannesburg is overwhelmed by the problem of 'bad buildings' in the much denser inner city and does not have the capacity to deal with, or is not interested in, the 'bad buildings' issue in a place like Yeoville: he has been attempting to get the City Council's assistance on the matter for some years now, but with no response.[9]

Until ownership of these properties is clarified and the tenure status of the occupants stabilised, there is little chance that their condition will improve. Even a limited process of refurbishment, to stabilise the structures and ensure habitability for the occupants, seems highly unlikely unless some degree of legitimate control is regained over the properties.

While the only official response at this time is a policing response (whether in the form of anti-crime raids, drug interdiction or the rounding up of undocumented migrants), any sustainable response must address the underlying structural conditions, including the acute problems of the built environment, from 'bad buildings' to a failing municipal infrastructure.

While local government has both regulatory authority and the power of eminent domain as a means to take these properties in hand, the City's inability to use these is an indication of both its lack of capacity as well as its failure to imagine a viable alternative that does not simply rely on market mechanisms that displace low-income residents. Even if commercial interests in the central business district have begun to purchase some 'bad buildings', leading to legal conflicts over evictions and the City's duty to provide 'alternative accommodation' to those evicted, there has until now been little market interest in addressing 'bad buildings' in Yeoville.[10]

The challenge and opportunity of 'bad buildings'

Given the economic and social impact 'bad buildings' have on their neighbourhoods, there is good reason to make these properties the target of any broader revitalisation project.

Our proposal is for the City to consider the existing 'bad buildings' as an opportunity to achieve its goals of inclusionary zoning,[11] leaving the private sector to participate in the redevelopment effort by taking advantage of low property values and redevelopment opportunities that will arise as the area is stabilised and its infrastructure improved. This approach acknowledges, as previous plans have, that 'bad buildings' are in pivotal locations for public intervention, but at the same time argues that instead of seeing them as simply opportunities for private investment and profit, they should be viewed as the basis of a non-profit, public–private housing sector through which low-income residents may be served while establishing the core of a sustainable redevelopment process. The key element of this approach is to lock down the value of the land so as to ensure that the values of the new or refurbished buildings on these properties are separated from any rising value of the land and thus remain affordable to low-income or subsidised residents. Given the particular post-apartheid context of inner-city Johannesburg, including the suburb of Yeoville, the legitimacy and hence sustainability of any revitalisation project may very well depend upon the success of efforts to include low-income residents as beneficiaries of redevelopment.

In order to lock down the value of land and property, and sustain its social objectives in the absence of a strong municipal will and capacity to advance policy and manage an inner-city housing stock, we explore the relevance for South Africa of a tenure form that is known in the United States as community land trusts (CLTs).

The community land trust (CLT) model

CLTs represent a form of tenure in which the ownership of the land is separated from the ownership of the buildings on the land. The land is owned by the CLT, a registered non-profit corporation, which then grants the building owner a long-term ground lease for the building, or any other improvements on the land. Ownership of the building is now separated from the land and may be held by a public or private entity or by individual owners through

sectional title or a cooperative legal structure. Importantly, the CLT retains an option or a right to purchase the building or units, in the case of a condominium or other sectional title form of ownership, at a price to be determined by a pre-established formula rather than the open market. This option means that the CLT entity retains an ability to intervene on the property if for some reason the owner of the building fails to maintain it or it falls into any of the circumstances that led it to become a 'bad building' in the first place.

The net result is that the rental value or even ownership costs are held down despite the expected rising value of the land that might accompany a redevelopment effort. This is a form of common property land tenure that can be seen as a supplement to existing modern common property forms such as sectional title or condominiums, limited equity cooperatives and gated communities, which traditionally serve the needs of middle-class urban dwellers. While sectional title buildings are at risk of financial ruin when the individual owners face economic crisis or fail to maintain effective governance due to internal conflicts, the structure of the CLT, which includes participation by residents as well as NGOs and local government, provides a level of institutional support that may be crucial to the sustainability of these new forms of land-holding and low-income housing opportunities.

The basic concept of a community land trust and its relationship to an individual homeowner or other building owner can be summarised as follows: the homeowner purchases the building and leases the underlying land from the CLT. At some stage the homeowner may sell the house back to the CLT at a formula-determined price, in which the seller is compensated for costs, improvements and a portion of appreciation. The CLT then makes the house available for sale at below-market price, to a purchaser who qualifies in income terms (Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond 2012). While this description focuses on home ownership, CLTs are also applicable for long-term leases which are more relevant in the South African context.

CLTs generally have three basic characteristics. First, they are non-profit organisations that hold land for the purpose of providing affordable housing opportunities to individuals and families defined by income and in need of low-cost accommodation. Second, the governing structure of the CLT usually includes three distinct stakeholder groups: the lessees of the land, local government or other representatives of the public interest, and representatives of the broader community within which the CLT is located. Third, the CLT fulfils its purpose of providing affordable housing through the mechanism of long-term ground leases that include a pre-emptive right, allowing the CLT to enforce a price-limited resale formula on individual unit or building owners.

The name 'community land trust' implies that the land is held *in trust* for the benefit of the constituents; however, CLTs are not land trusts but rather non-profits.[12] The planners of New Communities, one of the original CLTs in the United States, chose to incorporate as a non-profit rather than a land trust, and that model has been generally followed (Davis 2011: 43–44). A CLT acquires parcels of land held in perpetuity and conveys the improvements while retaining a pre-emptive right to purchase the improvements back at a price determined by formula. The price formula is designed to 'ensure that the improvement remains affordable to low- and moderate-income families in perpetuity'

(Davis 2011: 43–44), thus ensuring that the organisation remains true to its original purpose in purchasing or obtaining the land.

Community land trusts are usually organised so that the corporate governance structure includes representation of its intended community – with membership open to those who lease land and other community members (White 2011, chapter 2: 8–9). The model CLT form calls for a three-part board with equal numbers of lessee representatives, general representatives and a third category – 'public representatives' – in addition to the community categories. The public representatives, elected by the entire membership, can come from local government, service organisations, religious organisations, or financial institutions (White 2011, chapter 2: 8–12). This tripartite board is also incorporated, in the United States, into the federal definition of a community land trust, which states that the board of directors 'is composed of equal numbers of (i) lessees, (ii) corporate members who are not lessees, and (iii) any other category of person described in the bylaws of the organization' (42 US Code § 12773(f)(5)(B)). The board of directors of the non-profit company governs the entity, making decisions about which properties to purchase and to whom the land leases will be given. The board also monitors the buildings on the CLT's land to ensure that they are adequately maintained and do not fall into arrears with their rates or service payments. Ultimately, the CLT board has the authority to intervene if a building on CLT land is failing, by invoking the buy-back agreement in order to repurchase the building and restore it.

If we were to imagine a CLT being established in Yeoville, the idea would be to place ownership of a few of the existing properties in the CLT, whose board would be comprised of four categories of participant. The first category would be a local NGO, such as the YBCDT. Over the years, this NGO has developed a degree of expertise on local housing issues, local government and urban policies. As such, its role might be to promote the idea of the CLT and to engage with occupants in buildings that the City targets for inclusion in the CLT. The second category would be representatives of the future owners of the buildings on these properties, whether individual owners or multi-unit leaseholds, or an entity such as the Johannesburg Housing Company, which owns and manages public housing. The third category would be representatives of the residents who will lease or even own units within the building, and finally, these members of the CLT would elect a group of public representatives from the local and/or wider municipal community to serve as the fourth category of members on the board.

The basic funding model would involve a number of elements. First, the City would expropriate the property and divide the interests in the property between the CLT, which would become owner of the land, and the owner/s of the buildings on the land. Second, the new building owners, who would hold title to the building only (subject to the buy-back option held by the CLT,) and could be either a public housing entity or a non-profit developer, would have the immediate task of refurbishing the building and providing for its future management. There would most likely be a need for initial public financing to pay for the refurbishment, maybe in the form of a subsidised bond to be paid off over time, using rental income from tenants. In some cases the building might be held in

sectional title with low-income owners of units being responsible for the management of the building, but also subject to the CLT's ability to intervene if necessary, through individual buy-back agreements with each sectional title owner. Finally, the City would be able to continue to influence the development of the CLT through either the public representatives on the board, or through the public housing entity that owns buildings on CLT land and is also represented on the board. Ultimately the CLT might be established on the basis of its ownership of only a couple of plots of land, but then, as it gained experience it might be expanded to include a range of properties within the same geographic area, thus providing a sustainable source of low-income housing within the urban core.

Affordability for low-income tenants or owners can be achieved through long-term ground leases that allow lessee-ownership of the property's improvements. The ground lease enables the CLT to restrict the property's resale price, buyer eligibility,[13] occupancy and use,[14] and mortgage financing.[15] The CLT's continued interest in the property, via its ownership of the land, allows it to monitor and ensure that the restrictions contained within the ground lease are followed. Through the long-term ground lease, the CLT retains a pre-emptive option to buy the improvements should they come up for sale. The pre-emptive option gives the CLT the right to buy the unit, building or other improvements on the land for the lower of the market value or value as determined by a resale formula. The resale formula ensures that the building owner retains only a portion of the appreciation. The choice of which resale formula to use involves important policy decisions. CLTs employ a variety of formulas that strike different balances between the competing goals of (i) keeping the property affordable and (ii) giving the CLT building or homeowner a fair return when the property is sold.[16] The most commonly used resale formulas are appraisal-based formulas, fixed-rate formulas and indexed formulas.

A CLT's pre-emptive option serves an important purpose: maintaining the affordability of housing. CLTs often receive government funding for their programmes; the pre-emptive option allows the property to retain that subsidy rather than lose it when the current owner decides to sell. The subsidy is passed on to the next owner in the form of a lower purchase price. Subsidy retention benefits several parties: the CLT, which is able to use new government funds to add more properties; the government, which is able to use funds to increase affordable housing stock; and the community as a whole, which sees efficient use of its tax and increased home ownership or lower rental costs among its low-income members. While there are negative attributes to the enforcement of a pre-emptive option – a building or homeowner may be discouraged from investing in maintenance or improvements if they do not think they will be compensated properly when they sell, or a unit homeowner may be discouraged from moving, either because of the limited resale price or because housing elsewhere may be unaffordable – pre-emptive options do promote important public policies. The CLT has a legitimate interest in the property as owner of the land, and the pre-emptive option is enforced to maintain affordable housing, an important public policy which benefited the building or homeowner when they bought the property at a subsidised price.

What a CLT model might achieve in Yeoville

Placed in the context of a redevelopment plan for the inner city and a suburb such as Yeoville, the CLT form may provide an important model for the sustainable redevelopment of 'bad buildings'. First, unlike the existing models, the CLT offers a means to retain affordability even as land values increase in response to infrastructural and other improvements in the community. Second, CLTs provide a form of governance in which public and community interests continue to play a role and serve to ensure that new building owners or other beneficiaries of the programme maintain their commitments – including management and upkeep of the property. Finally, a successful CLT may serve as a platform for incremental redevelopment as it expands the number of properties under its control and uses its base in the community to engage with other property owners and residents within the community.

In order to achieve these goals the CLT must of course be sustained. Traditionally, CLTs have financed their own management costs through a very small fee placed on all the ground leaseholders – including building owners, tenants and homeowners. In other cases the CLT is housed within an NGO or is directly subsidised through the public participation in the CLT. In the context of existing City programmes it is possible to imagine an area-based CLT – a Yeoville CLT – as an entity with representation from local government, a housing company, a community NGO and members (owners and/or tenants) of the buildings included within the CLT. Such an entity might include mixed-use developments as well as renovated residential blocs and single-family homes, combining individual owners, public housing companies and tenants.

While most experience with CLTs has occurred in North America, the Tanzania-Bondeni settlement located in Voi, Kenya, became a pioneering experiment in using the CLT model in informal settlements in Kenya in the early 1990s (Bassett 2005). Faced with problems commonly experienced when informal settlements are upgraded – the intended beneficiaries sell the land; the actual residents become an income class the settlement was not originally intended for; and many houses are owned by absent landlords – Voi community leaders turned to the CLT model as an alternative to existing individual titling models. Participants appreciated various aspects of the CLT model, including the emphasis on community participation in land management, the ban on absentee ownership, restrictions on the sale of land, provisions for community control of land, and retention of individual ownership rights, such as the right to sell improvements. Community ownership of land was understood to be a way of preventing involuntary sales by poorer members of the community who feel economic pressure to sell as land prices rise. And the retention of ownership in the improvements was important, since residents would be building the improvements themselves.

The community organised itself as a 'settlement society', registered under the Societies Act of Kenya to perform the day-to-day management of the CLT. The society then formed a new, separate entity – a charitable trust registered under the Trustees (Perpetual Succession) Act – to hold title to the land.

Despite a number of difficulties (Bassett 2005), the CLT in Voi serves as one of a number of models for using common property forms to address the problem of access to urban land for

impoverished communities in Kenya (Midheme & Moularet 2013). Among the difficulties identified are the complexity of the legal instruments used to create the CLT, especially in a legal environment which favours individual property ownership; the difficulty of maintaining active community participation over the long term; and resistance from the established land administration bureaucracy which has, in the past, benefited from the 'opportunities to extract rents, particularly during the award of individual titles to land' (Midheme & Moularet 2013: 81). While the long-term sustainability of the Voi CLT remains in question, it provides useful lessons about the possibility of introducing this form of tenure in South Africa.

Most clearly there is the need to maintain active participation by the public authority and members of the broader community, in addition to the beneficiaries of the CLT. It might be necessary to adopt legislation to provide for the particular legal structure of the CLT. Since CLTs are a form of non-profit company, it may be important to use the province's concurrent legislative authority to adopt provincial legislation outlining the necessary features of a CLT, similar to state laws in the United States that provide for this form of divided tenure and governance authority over housing stock. Alternatively, the City might make the adoption of a specific form of CLT company rules contingent on the placing of expropriated land into the hands of the CLT, or on the provision of financial support to refurbish or even construct suitable housing on the land. A CLT statute would have the advantage of providing an explicit legal model to facilitate both the creation and control of such entities, particularly since they have the potential of channelling significant amounts of public funding to the redevelopment of blighted properties and the provision of low-income housing.

Given the fact that 'bad buildings' are usually in arrears on their rates and utility bills, it is these properties that provide the clearest opportunities for the City to facilitate the creation of CLTs to address both urban blight and the need for low-income housing within a broader inclusionary housing plan. The City should use its power of expropriation to place the ownership of these properties in public hands. Concerns about compensation should not preclude the exercise of eminent domain, since issues of compensation and the debts owed by existing owners may be resolved by the courts independently of the ownership of the property. While the cost of forgoing the collection of arrears through foreclosure may raise some questions in the City, the fact that the City is owed these sums will mean that it is highly unlikely that the original owners will make claims for compensation. In fact it could be argued that the City may still seek payment of arrears from the previous owners based on their individual obligations to pay rather than on the negligible amount of market value remaining in the building. Gaining ownership of these properties will enable the City to promote the creation of CLTs by donating the land to the CLT in trust while allowing one of the existing public interest housing authorities to take over and renovate the buildings on the land.

Conclusion

We see our CLT proposal as, firstly, a new planning instrument in the policy context of South Africa and as part of a 'pipeline of urban regeneration processes' that needs to take place to

address the abandoned buildings and properties issues. With that said, if we consider the four properties we have identified, a CLT might be used to involve existing residents, with the promise of redeveloping these properties to include a future mix of tenants and unit owners. While it may not be possible to include everyone – in a situation where there is overcrowding of individual units/flats or houses – the process of inclusion will create a degree of legitimacy among building residents as well as provide a basis for an ongoing dialogue through the redevelopment phase. This could further obviate some of the legal and other confrontations that surround attempts to evict or displace the occupants of many of these failing buildings.

Beyond the identified properties and the inner-city suburb of Yeoville, the adoption of the CLT model would add an additional modern common property regime to the existing range of urban tenure options, with the distinct advantage of being focused on the preservation of low-income housing opportunities within the urban core of South African cities. While market forces and processes of gentrification, if they take hold, may slowly reduce the number of abandoned buildings, one consequence would be the further marginalisation of low-income households. The adoption of the CLT model, modified to embrace the already developed South African landscape of social movements, NGOs and community or social housing companies, may provide a means of integrating the different interests. This would be a necessity to build and sustain a process of urban planning and land tenure that will challenge and eventually reform the basic structure of the apartheid city that haunts post-apartheid South Africa.

While the concept of the CLT model has struggled to obtain purchase in Johannesburg in recent years (for reasons to be explored elsewhere), there appears to be an impetus by the new Johannesburg Council to tackle the 'bad building' problem within the inner city. This may offer an opportunity for the CLT model to gain some traction in the near future.

Notes

1 The term 'bad buildings' has been criticised because of the frequent slippage between 'bad buildings' and (supposedly) 'bad' people living in them – tending to criminalise poverty, whereas most tenants are in fact victims of terrible housing conditions. However, it has now become a common term in policy language and is even adopted by housing activists and professionals. Therefore we use this term throughout the text, but between quotation marks.

2 Interview with Maurice Smithers, director, Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust, 2 March 2011.

3 A range of figures have been quoted over time, ranging from 700 to the 1 380 buildings mentioned on the City of Johannesburg's website dated June 2011. See http://www.joburg .org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6802:task-team-targets-slumlords &catid=166:inner-city&Itemid=254.

4 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 2 March 2011.

5 A sale of execution is a public auction held by a sheriff of the court. A court order is obtained by the bank to attach and sell the property to recover the money that has not been repaid on a home loan. See www.fnb.co.za/home-loans/sale-in-execution-properties.html, accessed 16 December 2013.

6   See www.fnb.co.za/home-loans/sale-in-execution-properties.html, accessed 16 December 2013.

7   Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is a programme launched by the South African government to redress the inequalities of apartheid by giving previously disadvantaged groups (black Africans, coloured, Indian and some Chinese people) of South African citizens economic privileges previously not available to them.

8   Maurice Smithers, personal communication, 2 March 2011.

9   Maurice Smithers, personal communication, 2 March 2011.

10 Some property developers have invested in buildings on the main street. A second dynamic exists around small-scale local landlords purchasing and renovating buildings, supported by the Trust for Urban Housing Finance (TUHF) (see Bénit-Gbaffou, this book). However, a multiplicity of approaches is needed, and profit-driven renovation by small or medium private landlords is only one part of the solution.

11 Inclusionary zoning, also known as inclusionary housing, is an American term which refers to municipal and county planning ordinances that require a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes. It was included as an objective in the Johannesburg 2007 'Inner City Regeneration Charter'. In 2016, the City began another attempt to formulate and institute an inclusionary housing policy, which was approved by Council in February 2019.

12 CLTs are registered as non-profit companies and are not, legally, trusts at all. Thus they need to be distinguished from trusts that exist in South African law. Trust law imposes legal inflexibilities that make it a less suitable form than the non-profit company form which the CLT has taken.

13 These restrictions ensure that when the home is sold again, it is sold to an 'income eligible' buyer – a buyer in the income range that the non-profit is intended to serve (White 2011, chapter 8: 2).

14 These restrictions ensure that the home remains owner-occupied or occupied by the owner's tenants and that the home is properly maintained (White 2011, chapter 8: 2).

15 These restrictions allow the CLT to review a mortgage that encumbers the property to make sure it is not predatory and to negotiate for the right to intervene, in case of default, to prevent foreclosure (White 2011, chapter 8: 2).

16 Additional concerns include not allowing homeowners to turn a quick profit in a rising real estate market, encouraging home maintenance and improvement, and helping homeowners move into the non-subsidised real estate market when they move out of the CLT home (White 2011, chapter 12: 3).

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16 Building stories

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

These are glimpses into organisms made of many parts: multi-unit buildings. With its mix of houses and small-scale buildings, Yeoville is neither entirely of the inner city nor comparable to suburbia. Most non-profit housing institutions won't invest, as only bigger buildings make their intervention sustainable. Instead, small-scale private landlords emerge and provide a vast range of affordable accommodation, either within the fabric of existing blocks of flats or in the surrounding houses and yards. This series of building stories portrays how complex and fragile systems such as multi-unit buildings are lived in and managed.
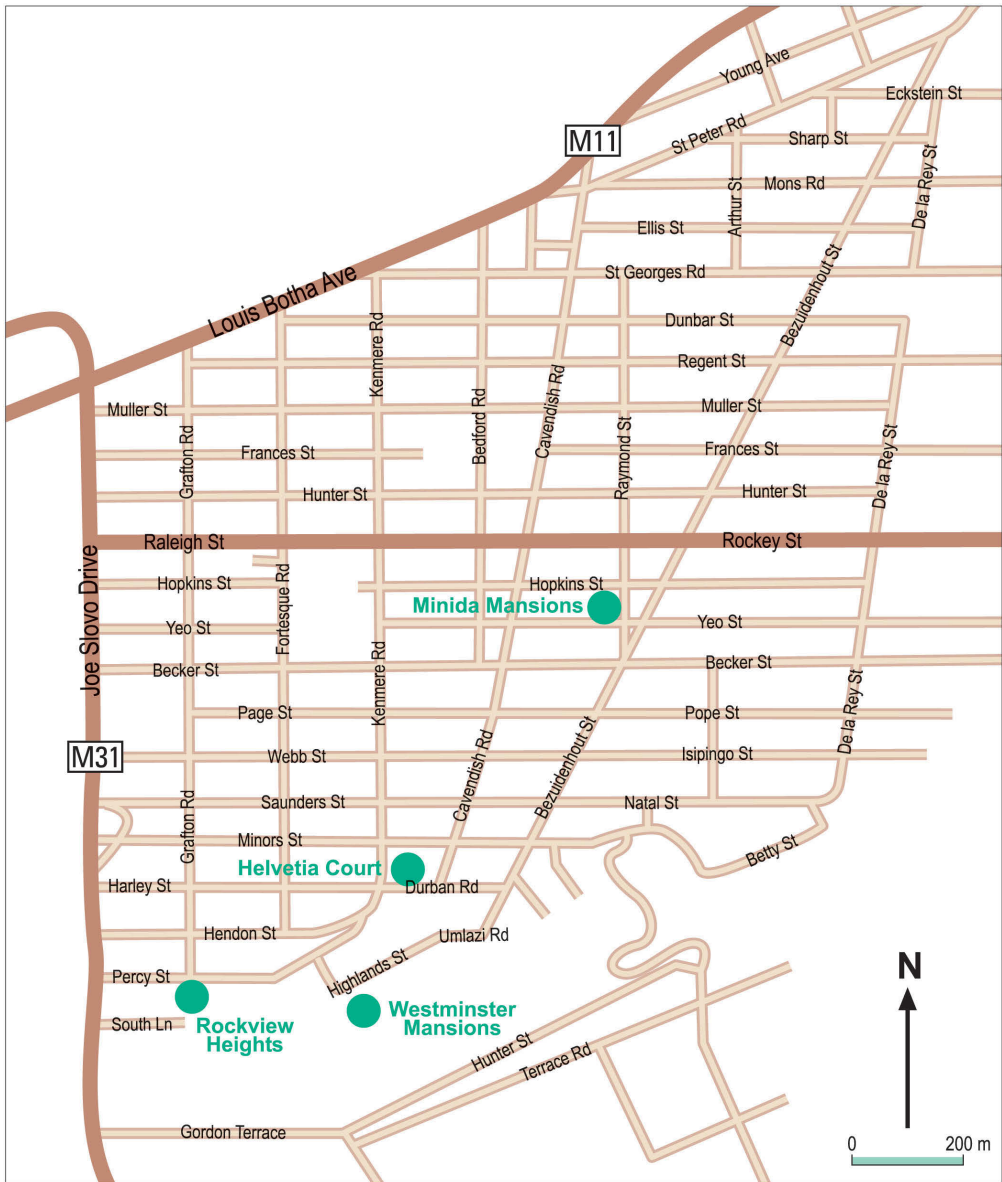
FIGURE 16.1: Location of the buildings

Source: Author, 2011. Map redrawn by Janet Alexander.

HELVETIA COURT: A STORY OF TENANTS' MOBILISATION

FIGURE 16.2: Helvetia Court

Helvetia Court, a large Art Deco building, was home to a mix of academics, artists, media professionals and working-class people. From 2007 to 2010, tenants mobilised against the company that had purchased the building. They negotiated for upgrades in exchange for increased rents; they attempted to purchase the building collectively; they approached pro bono lawyers and even the South African Heritage Resource Agency to stop the company from aggressively renovating the building. Nonetheless, the company's use of dirty eviction tactics over several years, and the lack of institutional support, led the residents to leave and their mobilisation to eventually collapse.

PATRICK: I knew a few people but everyone really got together with the eviction issues, at the first meeting when we heard about rent increase … Each one fuelled the other, the most unlikely people would get involved.

ROBERT: It was just getting too dangerous in the building because they'd switch off the lights most of the time; four days out of seven there was no water. There was absolutely no security. They were also locking the building at 8 pm.

CONNIE: The lift was a very scary thing. The light would die so you'd get stuck between the floors. And eventually it just died and people started throwing rubbish in it.

FIGURE 16.3: Westminster Mansions

Westminster Mansions, home to a mix of academics, artists, NGO activists and professionals, is a well-maintained building on the Yeoville Ridge, overlooking the city and surrounded by an open space used by Zionist groups and homeless people. This creates a sense of vulnerability to urban decay at large, in addition to residents' vulnerability at the hands of defaulting owners in the building. Sound building management practices (constituting a financial reserve, applying strict rules, working through a managing agent) compensate for this, as does building a strong sense of community through initiatives such as creating a recycling and composting system, and turning a staircase into an art gallery.

JULIA: Everyone feels quite special living in the building. That is what connects us.

LAZARUS: This block is my favourite place in Yeoville because it is a bit quiet … And we just walk to the shops.

GABRIELLE: It doesn't take much; it just needs a few people not to pay their levies and then the whole building collapses.

ROCKVIEW HEIGHTS: WHAT TO LEARN FROM FAILED MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 16.4: Rockview Heights

Rockview Heights is rapidly decaying: litter in the parking lot and in the dysfunctional lift, frequent service cuts, massive densification through subletting. A sectional title building and home to owners, tenants and subtenants, there is a great deal of confusion, even among the board of trustees, about who owns and who manages the building. This confusion feeds a variety of illegal and possibly criminal activities. Residents pay their levies, but these are not transferred to the service providers, leading to service cuts and building decay. Creeping speculation is suggested by opaque auction sales of flats to a property company.

SHEPHERD, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: We started to open our eyes when they cut electricity and water. We phoned the managing agent to say, "Look, we are paying our levies so what's wrong?" Then he started to duck.

SHEREZA, OWNER AND ACTIVIST: There are people who have owned units for ten years, but when you go to them and ask, "What is a levy?" you're talking about an animal, they don't know anything.

SHEPHERD: When we look to the levy roll, we find that we've got a lot of flats now belonging to X Properties. Then we phone the managing agent as the trustees to say, "Now we want to know when did you auction these units, because we are supposed to know, you are supposed to inform us … so what is going on?"

MINIDA MANSIONS: WHAT IT TAKES TO 'TURN AROUND' A BUILDING

FIGURE 16.5: Minida Mansions

Minida Mansions is owned in majority by a landlady, Patience, also residing there. A former activist from ACTSTOP, which fought for the rights of inner-city black tenants in the 1980s, Patience received funding from the Trust for Urban Housing Finance (TUHF), supporting small-scale landlords. She uses a mix of pragmatism, social understanding and a 'no-nonsense' approach to collect the rent from her tenants, based on her experience and networks.

PATIENCE: I've learnt a lot from ACTSTOP – that you've got to pay, but the landlord's supposed to do his/her duties as well.

PATIENCE: I said to TUHF, "Guys, be clever. People here, they don't earn that much. They won't be able to pay a flat of R4 500, because they are earning R3 000. And there's no way you're going to charge them less, because you are paying the bond." But that rent is divided amongst them. So, screen the tenants yourself, put the tenants yourself, because if you don't, they're going to do it. So I divide the place myself. Especially this place, because the flats are big.

Helvetia Court — Multi-storey 1 owner — 28 Units

No. People in Unit	No. Bed Rooms per Unit	Facilities Shared	Tenure	Rent paid by Interviewee	Rent for Whole Unit	Services
3 x People	2 x Bedrooms	Shares with 2 sub-tenants	Rent paid to bank	R1,000–1,500	R3000–4,500 Possibly	Not included
2 x People	3 x Bedrooms	Does not share	Rent paid to bank	R2,900	R2,900 per unit	Included

Westminster Mansions — Multi-storey sectional title — 26 Units (13 x 1 bed, 11 x 2 bed, 2 x staff units)

No. People in Unit	No. Bed Rooms per Unit	Facilities Shared	Tenure	Rent paid by Interviewee	Rent for Whole Unit	Services
1 x Person	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent deducted from salary	R1,400	R1,400 per unit	included
3 x People	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent paid to bank	R1,500–3,500	R1,500–R3,500 per unit	Included

Minida Mansions — Multi-storey sectional title — 21 Units (3 x bachelor, 12 x 1 bed, 6 x 2 bed, 11 x rooftop rooms)

No. People in Unit	No. Bed Rooms per Unit	Facilities Shared	Tenure	Rent paid by Interviewee	Rent for Whole Unit	Services
5 x People	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent paid to landlady	R5,100	R5,100 per unit	included
6 x People	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent paid to bank	R3,500	R3,500 per unit	R1,200
6 x People	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent paid to landlady	R2,800	R2,800 per unit	R800
8 x People	1 x Bedroom	Does not share	Rent paid to bank	Possibly R800–1,000	R4,200 per unit	R2,000

FIGURE 16.6: Four buildings and their units

Source: Yeoville Studio, 2011

continued

	No. People in Unit	No. Bed Rooms per Unit	Facilities Shared	Tenure	Rent paid by Interviewee	Rent for Whole Unit	Services
ROCKVIEW HEIGHTS	6 x PEOPLE	1 x BEDROOM	DOES NOT SHARE	OWNER	R1,500 — R 1,500 INCLUDES WATER	R 1,500 — R 1,500 PER UNIT	+R 720 — R 720 ELECTRICITY AND WASTE
	2 x PEOPLE	1 x BEDROOM	DOES NOT SHARE	RENT PAID TO BANK	R2,670 — R 2,670	R 2,670 — R 2,670 PER UNIT	+R2,000 — R 2,000
	15 x PEOPLE	1 x BEDROOM	OTHER SUB-LETTERS	RENT PAID TO OWNER	R 1,100 — R 1,100	R 12,000 -15,000 — POSSIBLY	INCLUDED
MULTI-STOREY SECTIONAL TITLE	9 x PEOPLE	1 x BEDROOM	SHARES WITH OTHER SUB-LETTERS	RENT PAID TO OTHER SUB-LETTER	R 900 — R 900	R 3,400 — R 3,400 PER UNIT	INCLUDED
125 UNITS 82 x FLATS 43 x ROOFTOP ROOMS	7 x PEOPLE	1 x BEDROOM	SHARES WITH 2 SUB-LETTERS	OWNER	R 1,000 — R 1,000 INCLUDES WASTE	R 2,500 -3,000 — R 2,500 - 3,000 PER UNIT	+R 1,400 -1,900 — R 1,400-1,900 ELECTRICITY AND WATER

17 Learning from low-income living in an inner-city suburb to inform policy

SARAH CHARLTON

Introduction

The housing pressures in the neighbourhood were a matter of considerable concern to our Yeoville Studio partners. Many residential living arrangements had come to defy building regulations, urban management norms and policy prescripts, influenced by a significant increase in population over the years, a shift in the typical socio-economic profile of residents to a poorer demographic and a stagnation of the housing stock. When compared with both national housing policy and the practices of the formal private sector, the Yeoville Bellevue situation illuminates key issues for the low-income housing debate in South Africa. These include significant gaps in a state housing policy specifically targeted to assist poor people, the limits of a narrow view of housing that overlooks related income-earning activities, and the opportunities as well as dangers of a hands-off or incapacitated state in responding to these trends.

Housing research from Yeoville Studio illuminated occupation of buildings far in excess of their designed densities, poor maintenance of building stock, fractured relations between tenants and landlords, and the pervasiveness of activities 'beyond the residential' in buildings nominally residential. But the research also showed what these circumstances have to offer, and some opportunities and ingenuities in these practices. When brought into dialogue with other experiences of inner-city low-income living through a series of 'roundtable' discussions

with major players in the sector, held at the end of the Yeoville Studio project, particular concerns elevated attention on pressing housing and urban management agendas. But also evident in the dialogues were the limits to improving the low-income housing situation, in particular the constraints evident in the local state.

This chapter draws on a variety of research conducted in Yeoville (see appendix 1) that goes beyond the main Studio period: the housing booklets, for example, responded to a gap revealed through Yeoville Studio research, and were subsequently developed by the Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies (CUBES) and other partners to provide advice on rights and responsibilities in the rental and sectional title situations. Most of the findings were formatted to contribute to structured discussions with officials and other professionals in the field, which were themselves conceived as a process of further knowledge-construction, through debate and deliberation on the Studio findings.

The chapter starts with a detailed portrayal of accommodation in Yeoville, as documented by the Studio, against the broader perspective of inner-city housing in South Africa and in cities of the South. The second section reflects on the experience of bringing Studio-based research into explicit dialogue with policy-makers.

Building a picture: Trends in shelter conditions and practices in Yeoville and beyond

Accommodation practices in Yeoville reflect an altered context and a set of pressures, and also contribute to transforming the built environment. Whilst neglect by City authorities has enabled unauthorised changes to emerge and take root, the relative absence of the state's attention has also hampered the potential for changes to shape environments more supportive of their residents and less damaging in their wider impacts. The findings highlight a terrain difficult for the state to navigate with its current tools and procedures. This is an environment of small-scale landlords, with devolved, localised and fine-grained management practices, where discussion, negotiation, flexibility and personal interest are all important to how spaces actually function. This realm of low-income housing activity does not resonate well with an institutional approach to housing management, structured by current policy regulations. However, this does not need to signal an irreconcilable policy and governance dead end. The research highlights the need for a focus on the mechanisms that can help shape this complex interface between the state and a myriad of small and intermediate housing suppliers, and how relationships between and amongst the state, accommodation suppliers and residents can be structured and facilitated.

Small size and variety in physical spaces

A particular set of accommodation practices is apparent in Yeoville. People's occupation of low-rise maisonettes, larger blocks of flats, and the yards of individual houses reveals configurations and intense concentrations which conflict with original design intentions and reflect the high demand for cheap shelter. Individual portions of lettable space have become

very small: instead of renting out a flat or an apartment, space is let at the unit of a room or, often, a subportion of a room – just a bed-space, even. Much of this accommodation is in existing building stock where generously proportioned original spaces have been appropriated and redesignated. In some cases private spaces such as bedrooms or even bathrooms have become collective spaces whilst collective spaces (living rooms, corridors, and staircases) have been appropriated for private use (ARPL 3013 2010; Mayson 2014).

The creation of ever-smaller lettable spaces, carved from dwelling spaces and other parts of buildings, occurs without regulatory permission. It echoes a more formal process under way in nearby parts of the inner city, where financiers and some social housing institutions (SHIs) have developed models such as 'bachelor communes' ('B Comms', as they are nicknamed): bachelor flats with access to a communal toilet outside the flat, or a cluster of rooms, individually let, with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The Yeoville Bellevue pattern illustrates how space can be consumed in much smaller portions than is on offer in institutionally or organisationally run buildings, in order to reduce costs. The responses to a small snap survey conducted in 2010, for example, included living arrangements described as 'floor-space in someone's rented room in a flat', 'part of a room shared with a woman and three kids' and 'the balcony of a flat in Yeoville' (ARPL 3013 2010). Figure 17.1 shows the distribution of such spaces in Yeoville, as mapped in 2010.

Beyond being available in very small configurations, there is also considerable diversity in the size, nature and cost of these subspaces, as illustrated by Simon Mayson (this book), echoing Lone Poulsen's discussion of the considerable variation in 'physical, spatial and social quality' (2010: 27) amongst rooms for rent, and lamenting the neglect this crucial subsector of rental accommodation receives in South African policy discourse.

Conditions can be extreme

Physical conditions in Yeoville-Bellevue can be extremely basic in spaces not intended and not equipped for residential use, such as basement storerooms. Spaces can be shared to such a degree that there is neither room for privacy nor easy access to basic amenities (Dörmann et al. 2010). Some conditions are exceptionally stark, extreme and survivalist, as illustrated by Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) description of conditions in multi-storey, often dilapidated buildings in the Johannesburg inner city. These 'secret worlds of deep vulnerability' (Zack 2011) exhibit extremely congested living conditions, festering refuse, very poor sanitation and few sources of clean water – conditions that nurture communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and other gastro-intestinal afflictions.[1] This is 'living under the radar' or metaphorically 'living underground' (Pederson 2011), largely out of view of authorities.

In Yeoville, too, there are scattered examples of such extreme living conditions, though not at anything like the scale and intensity of high-rise central Johannesburg. This raises the question of how very basic living circumstances relate to 'welfare' situations, and how to understand these interfaces and distinctions in a situation of widespread unemployment, poverty and limited welfare assistance from the state. The Yeoville research reflagged the real dissimilarities that can exist amongst an apparently homogeneous group of people in

FIGURE 17.1: Mapping housing adverts
Source: Yeoville Studio, 2010

poor living conditions. City of Johannesburg officials note a clear distinction between the 'night-shelter population' and the 'rental population': significant differences in need and profile between those people who regularly or intermittently seek a place just to sleep for

the night, and those seeking a place to rent but who have very limited affordability (Koseff 2011). Whilst overnight shelters – and associated facilities such as bathhouses and public toilets – are an essential component of the accommodation spectrum, they do not cater well for this separate category of people: those who are too poor or otherwise constrained for regular market-related rental accommodation, even for portions of spaces, and yet are not itinerant assistance-seekers, having a more settled and rooted lifestyle.

Despite dire living conditions, some of the derelict buildings cater for this category of people also, revealing examples of settled residents carving out a living and making strategic choices to conserve meagre earnings for other priorities beyond the comfort of daily accommodation (Zack et al. 2012). In a related vein, a study on migrants noted their use of bare-bones accommodation: 'an entire network of renting bed-space in semi-built environments, such as converted industrial buildings' (Greenberg & Polzer 2008: 10, 11).

Social issues of space sharing

Portions of spaces and shared living such as commonly found in Yeoville, whilst offering a range of cheap accommodation, are not unproblematic. These dwelling spaces bring into abrasive contact different household configurations, ages and genders, and may include various individuals, couples, and people with children, all sharing an intimately configured unit of space. A street vendor interviewed in Yeoville sleeps, at no cost, with her baby on the floor in a room shared with her sister and sister's husband (ARPL 3013 2010). These clusterings of ages and genders, with stranger and kin, adult and child in close living quarters, raise a set of issues around privacy, personal safety, and security of possessions. The situations demand negotiation skills, the ability to compromise, the courage to defend gains, and tolerance on a daily basis.

Poulsen (2010) reiterates that apartment living, particularly when space is shared internally, requires careful management and maintenance of the public areas and clear assignment of roles for individual and communal spaces. With backyard rooms and household rental in mind, Vanessa Watson notes that amongst landlords, tenants and neighbours are 'highly complex, sensitive and often fragile social and economic relations' (Watson 2009: 7), whilst Leslie Bank's research into the social relations in the backyards of township housing reveals 'the darker side of yard life – the struggles for power, and the role of violence and abuse embedded in everyday yard life' (Bank 2007: 208). Key to the functioning or distortions of the particularly dense and intimate inner-city living flagged by Yeoville Studio are thus these delicate and at times skewed social relations, social and management practices at the micro level, which need to be better understood to capture their policy and operational lessons.

Space sharing is complex and demanding. Elsewhere in the inner city, reports from managers of state-sponsored SHIs, and the particular experience that unfolded in the relocation of the San Jose community to the MBV building[2] (Royston 2009; Tissington 2011), flag that caution is needed in the arrangement and management of space sharing. Physical, practical and emotional relationships between people make for complex interactions. Researchers and policy-makers know comparatively little about space-sharing strategies in privately run shared-space buildings. Mayson (this book)

highlights one aspirational dimension: the increments through which highly desirable tangible aspects of privacy and security are advanced: drywall partitions represent a step up from curtained internal divisions, a lockable storage space is hugely important, a lockable living space more so, and so on. Temporary, cheap and lightweight divisions are an immediate solution to the need to divide space and lower its price, but these have security and privacy limitations which more robust materials address better, with their resultant price tag.

Better understanding patterns of mobility and their consequences for housing

Research from the Johannesburg inner city confirms that although recent middle- and up-market developments are shifting some of the demographic profiles (Silverman & Zack 2007), current residents are poorer than the residents for whom those suburbs were designed. But researchers contest the assumption – argued to underlie some municipal attitudes (COHRE 2005) – that run-down buildings house criminals and other socially undesirable people. The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) contends that the City's concern with 'bad' buildings 'goes further than the assertion that they are simply unhealthy or unsafe. The municipality has viewed these buildings as 'sinkholes'; 'hives of criminality, which degrade the public environment and defeat the purpose of inner city renewal' (COHRE 2005: 41, 42). For the most part, occupants are arguably more vulnerable to being victims of crime than perpetrators (COHRE 2005: 58), and are 'ordinary people engaged in low-paid formal sector jobs, and informal livelihood strategies, which are anything but criminal' (COHRE 2005: 42). As in many other developing countries, residents of these buildings thus include poor but 'working and productive members of society' (Tipple & Speak 2009: 140). For these people this housing provides a foothold in the city, a way for people who are often sidelined from formal housing options to gain a spot from which to survive, and thrive.

Networks of family and friends and social infrastructure such as church links are crucial in finding accommodation for new migrants into the inner city (Greenberg & Polzer 2008). The privately run shared-living buildings, often not complying with regulations, are more accessible to many people's personal circumstances. For example, a deposit may not be required in order to gain occupation in these buildings, in contrast to the prerequisites of formal landlords and institutions which, in addition to demanding a deposit, often require a prospective tenant to be a permanent South African resident, able to pay rent on a particular day of the month, with a defined income, and so on. Jennifer Greenberg and Tara Polzer note that personal circumstances – such as being without a South African identity document – foster corrupt practices, even in formal buildings: 'bribing must … be seen as a survival strategy in this context, in which payment to building security or the building manager is often a requirement to access shelter' (Greenberg & Polzer 2008: 11).

Some people's residency in shared-space buildings is cross-subsidised by others: examples of 'no cost' suggest that someone is living there by grace and favour, on compassionate grounds (Mayson 2014; Dörmann et al., this book). Other research confirms that in Yeoville

'you can find places for free, for some time. It helps in periods of crisis ... even if the standards of such accommodation might be low' (Dörmann et al. 2010).

In some buildings there are indications of a sense of 'community' and commitment to the area; in an example from other research in Yeoville, residents demonstrated that they were 'deeply embedded in associational life in Yeoville' (COHRE 2005: 52). The sense that there are stable communities in Yeoville, and that not all people are transient as is often assumed, is supported by some of the organisations working in the area (Kwesiga 2011). In other cases residents are portrayed as isolated and individualistic.

There is thus considerable diversity in tenant circumstances, and important distinctions must be made to avoid unhelpful generalisations. COHRE's research into a particular building in Berea showed 'a complex web of circumstances and reasons' (COHRE 2005: 55) for why people live in such conditions. The reason of 'affordability' for the user is not a straightforward matter. Yeoville Studio research showed that some people with 'good' incomes spend only a small component of it on rent (ARPL 3013 2010). Others spend a considerable portion of their income on rent. There is thus not always a direct correlation between earnings and rentals paid: some comparatively high-income earners choose to live in low-cost accommodation. This suggests other spending priorities, such as sending money to family members elsewhere and a concern with minimising living costs, challenging the assumption often made in policy discussions that people can and will spend 25 to 30 per cent of their income on accommodation.

In Yeoville, as might be expected, people move into better- or worse-quality accommodation, more expensive or cheaper spaces at different times or circumstances of their lives. These relocations might reflect agency and improvement in circumstances, or increased vulnerability. Cross-border migrants have particular difficulties which add up to a 'common housing story of constant displacement and movement from one temporary, precarious housing situation to the next' (Greenberg & Polzer 2008: 11, 12). Other accounts reflect improvements in circumstances as the story of Simba Sagide in Kirsten Dörmann and Solam Mkhabela (this book) shows.

Movement to different types of accommodation resonates with Poulsen's (2010) account of the journey of a man and his family through various forms of cheap accommodation across Johannesburg over a number of years, largely dictated by work circumstances. But in Yeoville, relocations within a small geographic area come into view. Whilst Mayson's research (this book) indicated a relatively high turnover of people in the subdivided flats of a building, some of this movement was to other spaces *within* the building, or even within a unit, from a subspace in one area to another. What appears to be instability and high levels of movement from a particular building might rather, on closer examination, reveal movement adjustments within a particular area.

Beyond the notion that people are destitute or too poor to afford formal accommodation, there are thus other reasons why Yeoville has appeal: the low entry costs of shared-space accommodation, the possibility of short-term stays and an 'easy-in, easy-out' system offer some people enormous advantage over institutionally managed or formal private sector accommodation (Mayson 2014).

Diverse management practices to enable cheap living

Its low cost is clearly a key factor in the demand for shared-space accommodation. Amongst the space and quality range are configurations with very low rentals, spaces for R200 or R300 per month. By comparison, the lowest formal, institutionally run accommodation in the inner city of Johannesburg in 2011 offered shared space for R750 per person per month. Comparative research between two buildings, one considered informally run and the other formally run, shows that whilst the rental rates per square metre are similar between the two, the privately run 'informally operated' flats offer much smaller units of space for rental (Mayson 2014). These tiny spaces therefore offer a cheaper form of accommodation, as a smaller amount of money can purchase a living space.

State-supported SHIs, originally established to provide affordable rental accommodation, are not able to achieve very cheap rentals because of the balance they have to manage between regulatory compliance, government funding requirements and income generation to cover (non-subsidised) operational costs. This pushes up rental amounts. The operational and management costs of SHIs comprise a long list of items such as covering bad debt, utilities, audit fees, cleaning, insurances, security and gardening. In certain kinds of building, such as former commercial buildings turned residential, City rates are also a huge cost. Even with shared ablution or kitchen facilities, maintenance costs are also high (Stroebel 2011).

Across the board, formal building operators complain of very high service charges or utility costs in Johannesburg, which make up a significant percentage of expenses. At the time of writing these costs were at a ratio of almost 1:1 with the other costs making up budget rentals, with the Johannesburg Social Housing Company, JOSHCO, warning that the cost of utilities is the primary risk from a financial management point of view (Gallagher 2011). As a mechanism to help bring down rental costs in approved buildings, the City of Johannesburg offers a utilities-based subsidy through its expanded social package and the registered social landlord programme. However, it is not clear whether this package is attractive enough to the private sector to make it worth their while to go more 'downmarket' in order to provide cheaper accommodation (Koseff 2011). Overall, JOSHCO contended in 2012 that in a large project with many accommodation units the absolute minimum cost of management per unit was R740 per month.

By contrast, the cost structures of the shared-space Yeoville buildings are not clear. In many, there are lettable spaces of a size or nature that do not comply with City regulations, at very high ratios of residents to facilities, and at least some are in arrears with rates or other municipal payments. Some indeed are 'hijacked' buildings, where the legal owner has been displaced, and another party is illegally acting as rightful owner, allocating space and collecting rental with no onward payment to the City for rates and services. But in other situations owners have given up on buildings. Melinda Silverman and Tanya Zack (2011) suggest some blurring of distinction between the two processes of people occupying a building, and a building being hijacked. They raise the difficulty of discerning between various similar-looking but qualitatively different situations: when are tenants victims of abandonment, when are residents complicit in criminal take-over of the building, when are legitimate tenants victims of criminal take-over, and when are landlords victims of defiant tenants? The 'bad buildings' strategy developed for the City of Johannesburg[3] (Zack et al.

2009) shows the importance of differentiating between distinct circumstances arising from the combination of the condition of the building, the control of the building, and the activities and practices within the building. Current definitions or characterisations are often relative to the formal legal system – such as 'illegal', or 'non-compliant', or 'outside of the law'– which tends to conceal the pathway to becoming a 'bad building', its particular nature, and routes out of the situation. For example, the needs and possibilities of a sectional title building with several absentee owners are very specific, and somewhat different to a single-owned building with many tenants (Zack et al. 2009).

Labels such as 'illegal buildings' also conceal examples of residents' self-management of buildings. In the San Jose building in nearby Berea, for example, there were internal practices in place for managing disputes, regulating functional usage (e.g. income-generating activities) within units, and managing vacancies in a context of high demand, prior to eviction (Royston 2009), and COHRE also refers to 'co-operative arrangements, which accumulate support and legitimacy within buildings for their ability to solve everyday problems' (COHRE 2005: 48). But residents' self-management can also easily break down and become quite dysfunctional, as Bénit-Gbaffou's (2011) example of Rockview Heights in Yeoville demonstrates. Here confusion reigned about who ran the building: there were parallel governing bodies, blocked channels of communication and large payments owed to the City. In response to the complexity of by-laws pertaining to sectional title management, common malpractices by building management agencies, and the opacity of rights and responsibilities and recourses in case of non-compliance, CUBES and the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI) developed the housing booklets referred to at the beginning of this chapter.

In Yeoville and surrounds the practices and motives of accommodation providers range from benign to exploitative. A study on small-scale rental in the inner city in South Africa has usefully identified four categories of small-scale landlord in terms of their legal and physical relationship to the building. First are landlords who share their own living space with a tenant; second are landlords who own units but themselves live elsewhere; third are owners of whole buildings 'who maintain a direct relationship with their tenants'; and fourth are landlords 'who own units or buildings but who outsource the management function to a managing agent' (FinMark Trust et al. 2006, cited in Carey 2009: 14).

But Yeoville Studio research suggests more differentiation is needed to capture variations in attitude and practice within these categories. For example, research has identified that residents may be not only tenants but sublandlords too. Many migrants subrent from existing tenants (Greenberg & Polzer 2008), because of difficulties in producing documentation acceptable to formal landlords and confusion amongst South African providers about what constitutes legality and so on. These situations can be characterised by high prices and threats of eviction (Greenberg & Polzer 2008: 11). Mayson's account (this book) identifies the function of the 'mastande', a type of live-in overseer and rent-collector within a subdivided flat, who is a tenant (though perhaps with discounted rent), but with a level of control and authority over the other tenants.

Investigation in Yeoville Bellevue confirmed that tenants can be at the mercy of manipulative and harsh landlords, who evict tenants with just 'a few days' notice; prohibit the use of a heater in the middle of winter and request unreasonable domestic chores from tenants' (Dörmann et al. 2010). Another view is that many landlords are entrepreneurs (Poulsen 2010: 27), seeing a gap in the market and stepping in where the state and bigger private players have failed. They are innovators, at the cutting edge of adapting, modifying and reconfiguring relationships and ways of operating that respond to a new situation.

Information gathering, analysis and conceptualisation which starts to make useful distinctions between quite different situations typically lumped together in an undifferentiated manner are important contributors towards appropriately tailored and crafted state responses. For better housing conditions to emerge, attention needs to be focused at the interface of small-size, shared-space living arrangements and the responsibilities and capacities of the state. This takes into consideration both the realities of the accommodation patterns, and, as noted below, the strength and limitations of the state in the low-income housing terrain.

Appropriation and adaption of stock

The emergence of diverse types of landlord is fostered by new demand layered on existing urban fabric. Although there are new structures in backyards, a larger number of living arrangements result from new appropriations of established apartments, a trajectory echoing experiences in Central and South America. In Mexico, poorer people occupied buildings vacated by the rich before newer purpose-built accommodation sprang up in response. Low-rise apartment blocks known as *vecindades* emerged, where a room could be rented with access to communal ablution facilities (Bredenoord & Verkoren 2010). In this way these central city areas became significant sources of rental housing 'offering cheap (underserviced) accommodation to the lower-income groups' (Bredenoord & Verkoren 2010: 360). In Lima, within the category of *turgurios*[4] (Custers 2001), are subdivided colonial houses (*casa subdividida*), which the rich vacated in the mid-1800s, and *callejones*, consisting of up to 50 rooms built on either side of a long corridor, usually in response to the demand for accommodation. This latter phenomenon recalls the privately supplied (newly constructed) tenement buildings which have emerged in Nairobi (Huchzermeyer 2007): intense, 'large scale private rental' accommodation, often in the form of rooms with shared ablutions and generally in buildings not compliant with zoning and building regulations.

In South Africa, Silverman and Zack (2011) argue that high-rise inner-city buildings are very specific with respect to maintenance requirements, and can't be left to a caretaking whim. 'Bad landlords', they argue, do not control occupancy rates, and do not adjust infrastructural systems, leading to overloading and breakdown. 'Good landlords' are those who adapt and modify in response to new conditions: for example, allowing strategic – but manageable – densification to make flats more affordable (Bénit-Gbaffou, chapter 16, this book). These landlords also make innovative infrastructural adjustments to cope with additional densities, such as installing individual geysers in flats rather than relying on an overloaded coal-fired geyser for the building or, where possible, installing or lobbying for the installation of water

and electricity meters at the level of the individual flat rather than per building. Zack (2011), however, warns of 'innovations' by landlords that might be more problematic, or at least contested. She cites the example of convenience shops situated internally, within buildings, which goes against attempts to develop 'people quality' neighbourhood, supported by activity and life on the streets and in public places.

Limited tenant mobilisation and contestation

Given the very poor conditions which exist currently in many buildings, why aren't tenants energised to take action, demanding better conditions? The experiences reported from Yeoville show little evidence of tenants' mobilisation. At the roundtable discussions it was noted that tenants seem disempowered, with little means to challenge situations (Silverman 2011), little recourse and little information available to them (Tissington 2011). Mobilisation does not seem to be an answer for most people; for tenants, moving is easier than confrontation (Dörmann et al. 2010). For example, Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (chapter 16, this book) shows that despite their being mobilised and resourced, a community in Helvetia Court were unable to contest their situation: the power distribution was too imbalanced, and notice periods in lease agreements so short as to disallow a planned strategy over time. In comparison with experiences from Europe, it appears that 'maybe in Yeoville the age of tenant mobilisation has not arrived' (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011).

JOSHCO put forward a contrasting view at the housing roundtables: they reported organised, although fragmented, tenants in their social housing buildings elsewhere in Johannesburg. They noted that management has to be extremely skilled at identifying whether a particular spokesperson actually represents a common position (Gallagher 2011). These experiences raise the question of whether the difference in extent of tenant mobilisation and perhaps confidence is related to whether the landlord is the state, or perceived to be linked to the state, as might be the case with JOSHCO (Gallagher 2011). Confidence might also be engendered where there are formal lease agreements, an acknowledged status of tenants as citizens with rights, and so on.

Built-form opportunities and constraints for suppliers

If demand for accommodation is high, and is forging the sorts of shared configuration described above, why are the larger formal providers of low-income accommodation in Johannesburg (social housing institutions or private sector suppliers) not actively supplying accommodation in Yeoville? Although they are unable to supply the very cheap spaces described above, there is considerable demand for their slightly more pricey products and one might expect penetration of their models of stock from Hillbrow and the central business district (CBD) into nearby Yeoville. It seems that, fundamentally, the built form of Yeoville is not attractive to the for-profit formal sector or even the SHI sector operating in the inner city, at least those active in 2011. These developers need higher densities, and a greater concentration and quantity of accommodation, to make the operating finances work: at the roundtable discussions, the affordable housing company Afhco[5] indicated that it needs a minimum of 200 units per building to make rental accommodation financially viable. The Yeoville built form has been seized by suppliers who operate outside of formal constraints

because it is possible to do so, and because the location is good and demand is high, but the model is currently unappealing to formal suppliers because it is difficult to make the buildings formally compliant whilst remaining financially profitable. In the hands of informal suppliers, adaptions and transformations happen despite regulatory constraints that largely prevent this from happening within formal frameworks.

Aside from built-form issues, some current tenure arrangements in Yeoville are not appealing to formal housing organisations – such as the particular legal form of sectional title. And, as elsewhere in the inner city, the private sector is wary of buildings that are currently occupied: rendering the building vacant in order to do maintenance and renovation is difficult, slow and costly due to legislation and precedent protecting tenants from arbitrary displacement. Afhco commented that 'reasonably priced' buildings in nearby Jeppe that are 10 per cent occupied will take three years and cost R4.5 million to make available for development. In this climate some in the private sector reportedly resort to other strategies rather than formal processes of eviction: 'R5 000 a piece and you walk' are the type of incentives offered to current occupants.

The alignment between built form and profitability described by SHIs and formal providers suggests the Yeoville built fabric lends itself to small-scale landlords, with the Trust for Urban Housing Finance (TUHF) already invested widely in financing small-scale caretaker landlords to own and manage small blocks of flats,[6] a 'hands-on' approach to management which TUHF considers a crucial element for success (see Bénit-Gbaffou, chapter 16, this book). It does not directly echo the 'manager per flat' de facto practice found in a number of the existing Yeoville buildings, but the principle of direct contact between landlord and tenant echoes the view that property management at the lower end of the income spectrum is incredibly hands-on and tough, involving a little bit of rent collection and property management, and a lot of facilitating and managing social issues. Discussion, negotiation, flexibility and taking a personal interest are all important to build into the approach.

Unlike much of the inner city, Yeoville also offers the opportunity for ground-related new housing stock, in yards and gardens of houses. These sorts of rooms are highly desirable: TUHF reported in 2011 they can be let for about R1 000 per month. As is pointed out, however, investment in an area by organisations such as TUHF raises prices and costs, often prompting displacement and at times increasing vulnerability of existing residents. In the inner city, Silverman and Zack (2011) note that over three to five years, property prices have escalated by 300 per cent.

Activities beyond the residential: Opportunities in the neglect

A key aspect of life in Yeoville, and intimately related to living in the area, are the non-residential activities that take place within buildings or which interact with public spaces at street level. As with those elsewhere in the inner city, these include the penetration of retail uses into residential buildings, introduced by both landlords and tenants. Some buildings in the inner city increasingly operate as 'enclaves' of self-contained activities (Silverman & Zack 2011): retail, but also laundries, shebeens, churches, shops, crèches and schools. Despite

the residential land-use zoning for the area, a survey by architecture students identified the following in some streets in Yeoville: a church operating in a domestic room, day-care facilities behind houses, hair salons operating from containers, brothels, surgeries, car wash services, car repair spaces and shebeens. This is another form of 'hidden activity', the 'secret inner life behind buildings',[7] or hidden places within the inner city. Some of these activities are literally unseen behind a building facade; others are very evident through the clues and uses made of the space and surrounds.

Outside of buildings, at street level, are a plethora of trading activities along pavements and public spaces. Silverman and Zack (2011) characterise the current situation in places like Hillbrow and Berea as 'the radical juxtaposition of … a superficially ordered, modernist physical environment with fluid, informal and superficially disordered social conditions'. This is not simply a case of informal laid onto formal; these terms are not useful enough in a context where the boundaries between the two are not clear. In Yeoville, self-appointed car guards voluntarily register with the police station, and truck drivers seeking casual removal work at the Shoprite wall[8] also have contract transport work with companies. The situation suggests, rather, that shifting conditions have opened up gaps which are appropriated in different ways: some shy away from regulation; some are more indifferent and opportunistic; others seek benefit from various forms of authority.

Silverman and Zack (2007) note that much of what goes on in places and spaces is determined by a variety of actors, with the City authority only one of these, and often quite a weak one. The notion of 'land-use management' assumes or rests on the presumption of a 'well-capacitated municipality' regulating space 'in the interests of citizens, to raise revenue from these spaces, which in turn is spent on meeting citizens' needs' (Silverman & Zack 2011). But regulatory mechanisms have to a large extent collapsed, and a number of people's needs are met precisely *because* of the lack of oversight, they argue. People thrive in a certain degree of spatial and regulatory flux. Neglect by the City and the formal private sector has opened up spaces for the poor, allowed the exercise of agency on the part of poor people and in this way contributed towards less inequality – but unevenly, and inadequately.

Within City-run residential buildings elsewhere in Johannesburg, tenants also reportedly informally change space-use from residential to commercial: taverns, shebeens, drug dens and vehicle 'chop shops' (Khan 2011). In their long-standing rental accommodation buildings, City officials report unauthorised construction and resident-initiated amendments to built forms that can compromise their structure as a whole. But as SERI reports, the City actively discourages even benign economic activity, such as the sewing work of the women who moved to the MBV building, and does not seem to make any distinction in degree of severity or impact amongst various non-compliant practices (Tissington 2011).

The link between housing and economic activity is key in neighbourhoods like Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville, where people are earning income through trade and retail activities near their immediate living environments. There is huge diversity in these activities, from very small-scale to larger businesses. An architecture student commented that these practices reflect how townships work, and that the inner city is becoming 'like any ordinary township' in terms of micro-economies and activities. This might reflect a lot of innovation – ways

of making a living that the classic modernist city doesn't allow, which creates a richer, more diverse and more complex environment – or, from another perspective, degradation of the existing fabric. At the same time, although the context is one of dramatically high unemployment, not all people living cheaply in the inner city are involved in these sorts of business; others are absorbed in conventional jobs such as supermarket cashiers, cleaners and security guards.

Impacts and implications: The damage in the neglect

Whilst the absence of a regulatory authority can engender opportunities to earn income, it can also lead to considerable problems. These include uncomfortable living conditions, friction between sharers of space and the erosion of valuable building stock. There are particular technical issues with high-rise formal buildings, which are heavily dependent on sophisticated infrastructure such as lifts, the pumping of water and sewerage (Silverman & Zack 2011) and require a certain form of building management as well as a consistent supply of services. By contrast, in ground-related built form these technical issues are far less fraught and, in addition, there is often a confluence between the person living in the house or room and the spaza shop, whereas in high-rise buildings these are not run by the same person (Silverman 2011). As a whole, these interactions between accommodation and economic activity create spaces of complexity, offering opportunity and convenience for some, but also containing aspects that can compromise the amenity for other residents and the long-term functioning of the area.

The public environment around these altered residential environments is thus seen either as developing a new richness, a quality of 'urban-ness' lacking in many South African cities and needing guidance, management and new creative thinking, or as messy, unruly, and disorderly – a threat to the orderly city and desirable economic growth. But these environments also need essential complementary infrastructure. For environments to offer quality living experiences, local, neighbourhood amenities – such as a crèche, a library, Internet, access to a councillor and a children's recreation place – are crucial. These are needed near to where people live, obviating the need to get into a car or a bus or a taxi to go somewhere else, and must also offer opportunities for social interaction – including to pause or rest – in the public environment. Whilst 'loitering' is often seen as a suspicious activity, as former City official Yasmin Dinath expressed it, 'I *want* to be able to loiter in my neighbourhood' (Dinath 2011). These amenities and social interfaces are particularly necessary in congested living areas.

Responses, gaps in responses and explanations

What is the role of the City authority in these environments exhibiting altered functions and different needs of occupants? This was one of the questions discussed in the three housing roundtables Yeoville Studio organised.[9] Participants included City officials from housing, urban management and social development departments; representatives from non-governmental organisations; private sector suppliers of budget accommodation; niche

financiers, humanitarian organisations and development practitioners; the private sector and academia. In each session, findings from Yeoville Studio were presented alongside inputs on the low-income accommodation approaches and experiences of three or four other participants, and an invited respondent extracted key themes and facilitated a wider discussion amongst attendees. The aim was to explore how experiences and insights from related contexts beyond Yeoville resonated with Yeoville Studio findings and how the juxtaposition between these could sharpen understandings and ideas.

Crucially, these discussions were positioned against a particular area of national housing policy debate, that of affordable cheap rental accommodation in well-located or desirable parts of the city. Always a policy intention within the South African low-income housing policy, the realisation of this accommodation with state funding has proved very difficult. Fundamentally the difficulties result from a combination of three factors. First are the physical standards and configurations of accommodation considered politically acceptable,[10] which push up the costs of supply of formal accommodation. Second is the limited funding available from the state (in particular the absence of an ongoing rental subsidy). And third are the low levels of affordability of people – or their desire to minimise living costs and therefore rental costs. In combination these factors result in state-funded accommodation being offered at higher cost than many people are willing or are able to pay for.

This higher-rental accommodation, in SHIs and also in buildings run by the formal-compliant private sector, is much in demand. But it leaves a big gap in regulatory-compliant accommodation at rental and affordability amounts below this. As the research demonstrated, Yeoville is the location of an intense set of accommodation practices occurring outside of state housing policy, and in spite of City building and planning regulations.

Responses and gaps

Currently, neglect is argued to be one of the responses characterising the City's interaction with Yeoville. Despite the opportunities created by the lack of regulatory intervention noted earlier, several roundtable participants made the point that a laissez-faire approach (abandoning any management) is 'no good for anyone, especially not the poor' (Adler 2011). Under conditions of neglect by the authorities, informal access to urban opportunity by the poor might be short-lived because of long-term deterioration of 'the urban stage' on which the poor depend (Silverman & Zack 2011). The existing platform of buildings, infrastructure and amenities need investment and management to retain and improve their utility value, with a lot of thought about where and when such interventions should occur (Silverman & Zack 2011).

In other parts of the inner city there have been more forceful interventions aimed at evicting residents and closing down non-compliant activities. But in clearing buildings, the City has encountered vigorous legal challenges which have characterised it as a violator of constitutional rights – including the right to housing – by making people's inadequate situations worse through rendering them completely shelterless. This may have contributed to something of a policy impasse, at least around the housing dimension of the matter.

Responses by the local authority have thus included evictions and shut-downs, a fraught process which has mobilised a number of rights-based organisations to oppose and prevent further similar action. However, there are also examples of the City working with formal private sector organisations in some urban management initiatives to restore or foster new order in subneighbourhoods.

But the City is only one of many actors impacting on and shaping the urban environment. The eKhaya neighbourhood project in Hillbrow demonstrates public environment initiatives facilitated by an individual connected to a social housing institution. The focus here is on organising leaders and residents of an area to take responsibility for key issues that matter to them (Adler 2011). The guiding principle is to foster a liveable area in which 'the business of everyone's life must work' (Adler 2011)), through promoting a relational society in which people acknowledge one another's place in it. Characterised by time-consuming effort dependent on a skilled facilitator, this sort of initiative implicitly recognises the limits of City capacity in urban management, and looks for new ways to improve neighbourhoods through channelling local energy. It is premised on recognising the ubiquity of conflict in areas of contested resources and finding ways to work with this through tapping into people's self-interest. In the eKhaya project, Josie Adler comments that although three-quarters of the issues initially identified have not been resolved, it is hailed as a success and tangible differences in the quality and usability of environments have resulted. This raises the question of whether other neighbourhoods such as Yeoville have the individual champions, and resources, for this sort of extra-state response. Elsewhere in the inner city Afhco has also invested beyond the building, in an effort to 'take ownership' of streets, and invest in public spaces and maintenance, along with the City of Johannesburg. This, they maintain, is important in providing an outlet for people in the buildings, an area for them to meet and opportunities for involvement in their environment, and relies on creative strategies – such as training petty offenders plaguing the neighbourhood to instead work in the area for a basic stipend.

The neighbourhood and building improvement projects (such as the eKhaya initiative and building clean-ups by MSF) have links to physical interventions, but the primary work is with people, developing good neighbourly practice, establishing norms in and around a building that will, over time, shift practices and improve conditions. This sort of work is likely to increase in importance in a context where the state lacks capacity to enforce and regulate, even if it had context-relevant tools and mechanisms. This argument advocates not for an absent state, but for one with a strategic and 'light touch' which learns from practice, learns by doing through pilot projects, and which supports investment in people as well as places.

Crucial, thus, is the need to understand 'what works' in the current situation (Zack 2011), and to take a position on what the notion of 'working' is: allowing for the possibility that buildings that are not compliant in zoning, land use, and building standards may still 'work' in definable ways. This suggests a trajectory of learning from existing situations, analysing the range of interventions possible and desirable, and the possibility of 'a light facilitatory touch' in guiding change. This is a difficult thing for an authority to do, but a

key initial step is to start gathering information, from the lens or perspective of building occupation and building management, and sharing and cross-checking information from and the perspectives of different city departments and individuals (such as those engaged with health, social development, and so on) (Zack 2011). This emphasises the importance of accumulating layers of information that can assist with disaggregating the complexity of what is observed, locating it relative to other experiences, and understanding where it contests policy and where it provides new directions to explore. This is thus not just about collecting information but digesting it, managing it and making it available, so that data sets and information articulate. This, it is argued, needs to be followed by piloting some interventions through a series of ongoing small projects, as well as the crucial component of assessing and monitoring interventions. In this way new local policy can ultimately be developed, one grounded in bottom-up experience and learning. The Yeoville Studio experience, including the roundtable forums, offered an important step on this road – but one with limits, as noted below.

Accounting for neglect

If there are strong arguments in favour of involvement by authorities in the current situation and in future initiatives, from a rights and a practical perspective, what therefore are the arguments to explain the relative neglect of the area and the relative policy void in both the housing and related matters of land-use management? Beyond this, why is policy dialogue on these issues difficult, even if academia has findings that are policy relevant, such as in Yeoville Studio?

For the roundtable discussions were not only about positioning Yeoville Studio findings relative to other inner-city housing; they were also an attempt to stimulate and provoke engagement by the City in an issue which had essentially stalled, following the polarisation that had built up during inner-city housing eviction court cases. Through bringing forth empirical material from a particular neighbourhood, we aimed to make available 'bottom-up learning' on the housing situation, to mix it with the deep experience of current housing practitioners from various organisations, and to offer this as a fresh entry point into a paralysed debate. Results were mixed. Our offerings from Yeoville Studio, despite providing important empirical material where little is available, were not viewed as the stimulus for new ways of thinking that we had hoped – perhaps also because at the time we had not yet fully digested and synthesised them and were therefore not in a position to shape and direct discussion through taking a particular position. Despite its attempts to catalyse fresh thinking, the Yeoville Studio initiative was not a long-term driver of pilot projects or policy formulation in its own right, and this important role was lacking within the City too.

Thus the roundtable experiment worked only in part: we gained a deeper understanding of some dimensions of practice, policy and the difficulties the City faced in responding more closely to the de facto situation discussed in the research. But despite candid presentations and reflections by most participants, the roundtables also showed the relatively limited appetite within the state and among established practitioners for spending time and energy in searching for new approaches to accommodate poor people in inner-city areas. In the section

below I draw on literature and experiences, some from other contexts, that help illuminate the state–housing interface. These suggest some of the factors that inhibit the translation of the Yeoville Studio research findings into the housing policy process in South Africa in the current context.

First is the dominance of other housing imperatives, notably the pressing concerns of informal settlements which are a phenomenon in many developing countries. In Lima, for example, the dominance, visibility and large population size of emerging informal settlements are what draw the attention of authorities and others (Custers 2001). The phenomenon of poor living conditions in central city areas is more generally neglected as an area of focus in Latin America, despite inner-city rental accommodation being 'the oldest type of housing for low-income groups in modern Latin America' (Custers 2001: 249). These sorts of living conditions are paradoxically both highly visible – located in central areas, in defined and identifiable buildings, at a significant scale – and at the same time 'invisible', with unseen, unacknowledged practices behind facades of 'normality and respectability'. But interest in inner-city housing issues has been growing: Custers posited in 2001 that this was because of a growing sense of very poor and deteriorating conditions in the central areas, contestation for space and the range of 'complex problems of the colonial and post-colonial inner cities' (Custers 2001: 250). Likewise, in Johannesburg, the inner city has recently become a site of renewed attention under the Democratic Alliance administration which took over in 2016.

A second explanation for inner-city housing issues being overlooked focuses on the limited suite of housing policy responses that authorities in developing countries currently draw on, and in particular the widespread focus on home-ownership strategies rather than rental accommodation. Writing on household rental in Tanzania, Jenny Cadstedt argues that 'property ownership has historically been associated with citizenship', and in particular with more 'reliable and stable citizens' (Cadstedt 2010: 50). She notes that the experience of public rental accommodation in Tanzania has also been a difficult one, with rental amounts 'too low to maintain the public rental houses … [and] numerous conflicts between landlords and tenants in the public sector' (Cadstedt 2010: 50). In Johannesburg, Zunaid Khan (2011) indicated that rental collection levels are extremely low in the older city-run rental accommodations, and massive write-offs of rental arrears have taken place. This makes it an unappealing form of tenure for the state to directly provide and run. High-rise home ownership, through tenure arrangements such as sectional title, is considered unsuitable for impoverished and unsupported households because of the time and cost demands made on managing the common property and the severity of problems that can result from inadequate maintenance.

The extensive South African low-income housing programme has comparatively little to offer by way of response to the situation in Yeoville and elsewhere in the inner city. The policy has very constrained ways of responding to the need for cheap rental accommodation; social housing is too costly and targets higher-income earners than many tenants are, and the policy is largely directed at South African citizens, excluding many impoverished city dwellers from other countries. At the same time, state housing policy is still dominated by a pro-ownership housing delivery programme. There are contradictions in how the rental

market in places like Yeoville and the inner city is viewed in policy discourse. On the one hand, 'low-income private rental is a significant, efficient, effective, functioning market that provides poor people with affordable accommodation that is well located' (Carey 2009: 2). On the other had, rental accommodation in 'buildings originally designed and built for other purposes, often occurring in central city areas: warehouses, factory buildings and ex-office blocks', tends to be cast in terms which suggests it has little value, being 'generally exploitative' (Watson 2009, cited in Carey 2009: 8, 9). There is a feeling that this kind of accommodation cannot be supported, improved and seen as part of a longer-term suite of rental housing options 'as it promotes people living in inferior living conditions' and thus 'should be eradicated' (Carey 2009: 2).

The third reason for the neglect of the sorts of living environment discussed in this chapter is political in nature. One dimension of this argument is the suggestion from other contexts that speculative interests might be intertwined with politicians' interests in certain circumstances. '*Turgurios*' in Lima, for example, have also been the subject of some politicians' business interests (Custers 2001). But ultimately lack of improvement in this centrally located housing is explained by 'the lack of genuine interest on the part of the Lima elite and local and national governments in the inner city' (Custers 2001: 250). This lack of interest might stem from the sense that this constituency is not politically strong: in South Africa, for example, there are perceptions that the inner-city population includes significant numbers of non-citizen cross-border migrants.

A fourth explanation flags the paralysis engendered by the complexity presented in these inner-city situations. If authorities are to move beyond attempting to enforce compliance with regulatory apparatus that is out of sync with new demands, coupled with evictions, a new approach is required, an approach that is more intricately, subtly and sensitively attuned to an ever-changing situation. During the roundtables, discussion of the City of Johannesburg's responsibilities in respect of this housing and urban environment quickly flagged how the structure of the institution itself limits easy engagement with new ideas and new approaches. The municipal apparatus is generally oriented towards trying to keep areas under control, with measurable targets and scorecards through which City employees get evaluated (Dinath 2011). Most of the time officials are 'firefighting', reacting to daily pressures of particular incidents and problems. Approaching an issue from a different perspective, such as facilitating people's ability to access an income or lowering barriers to entry to the formal economy, requires a different response from the institution. In the absence of real tools to manage a complex and changing situation, the tendency of the institution is to clamp down on deviations, focus on maintaining the orderly where possible, and to 'sanitise' deviant situations (Dinath 2011). Yasmin Dinath noted that many good intentions are in City policy documents but that it is very hard to get the same vision embedded across all departments and entities. Earlier attempts by the City to think through new approaches to inner-city rentals came to nought, and now there is no clear driver focusing on this initiative. Others noted that an institution like the City has relatively little traction for 'the long haul' as office bearers and politicians shift and change, and a long-term perspective is often compromised by this (Dodd 2011). What this flags is the tension between the demands of a complex situation needing

a fine-grained response, and the nature of policy-making and state management, which is argued to be more oriented to much cruder categories and generalisations (Scott 1998).

A fifth inhibiting factor is that the City has not experienced sufficient persuasive pressure to require it to change practice. There has been limited tenant mobilisation so far, and where there has been, it has culminated in confrontation in court to resist evictions or force provision of alternative accommodation in the vicinity of the inner city. Attitudes have become polarised and officials have felt under attack in a situation where there was little by way of policy or funding assistance to carve out alternative situations. This has fostered an environment of confrontation, not one of shared engagement to find constructive solutions to a complex situation.

Conclusion

There are a number of possible explanations for the limited extent of proactive and forward-looking interactions by the state with the altered living environment evident in Yeoville. Although this lack of attention has arguably assisted the emergence of new forms of shelter and income-generating opportunities, there are also new problems along with the new opportunities, and a physical and social infrastructure exhibiting enormous strain. Attempting to undo the new accommodation patterns by implementing the norms and regulations of the past is not possible, given the limited capacity of local government to tackle the scale and depth of difficulties. But a reversion is also not desirable, given that the socio-economic environment has fundamentally shifted and the existing built form and management of this must also adapt. The Yeoville Studio research in dialogue with the roundtables illuminated the value of the information produced through the process, the richness of detail that in turn points to the need for more sophisticated categorisation. New practices must be better understood to help sift the innovative from the exploitative, the positive from the destructive, the life-enhancing from the life-threatening. An examination of the micro-practices in the accommodation and earning situation in Yeoville helps illuminate gaps and silences in municipal and national policy, where attention can usefully be directed. These include, first, the intimate relationship between shelter practices, earning activities and amenities, which must be thought about explicitly and collectively as related dimensions of the same situation, rather than partitioned in policy or institutional terms into issues of 'housing', 'facilities' and 'urban management' where the connections and relationships become obscured. Second is the very limited capacity of the local authority to rethink, and react, in the new and innovative ways required by the first point – a situation not unique to Johannesburg. Third is the importance, and potential, of private, small-portfolio and non-institutional suppliers of small spaces, and the need for appropriate points of intervention in supply models that can be supported (complementing the caretaker-owner support provided by TUHF). This indicates the need for innovations in harnessing and developing capacity and energy beyond the state whilst nevertheless demanding essential state investment in the built environment and in institutional support – a delicate path of moving both with and beyond the state, one which requires considerable energy in partnership to help forge.

Notes

1   Jak Koseff (2011) quoted MSF statistics from the inner city of Johannesburg indicating 82 buildings with an estimated '50–60 000 people living in appalling conditions'.
2   The MBV building was used to accommodate people evicted from the San Jose building in Berea, central Johannesburg, after a high profile Constitutional Court case obligated the City of Johannesburg to provide alternative accommodation for them elsewhere in the inner city.
3   But not adopted by the City.
4   A blanket name for situations in which families rent rooms or often just one room, in different building types.
5   Afhco is a private company supplying rental accommodation in the central areas of Johannesburg and elsewhere on the African continent.
6   TUHF is the fourth largest lender in the inner city, focusing on supporting 'affordable housing', but with a focus on financial viability and profit-making (Kwesiga 2011).
7   Personal communication from Mpho Matsipa (2010).
8   Used by locals as a bulletin board where providers and seekers of rental accommodation in the area post their adverts.
9   The first roundtable focused on the range of accommodation typologies and options for poorer people across the inner city (9 November 2011); the second focused on management issues associated with organising and running high-density rental accommodation (16 November 2011); and the third, on moving the conversation beyond an often narrow 'housing' focus towards one which explicitly considered related activities and their impacts (23 November 2011).
10 Some attempts to provide more stripped-down accommodation with very basic finishes have met with opposition from political leaders who view these as undignified. This was demonstrated in the planning of the Strollers overnight shelter in central Durban in the late 1990s.

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Wits staff or postgraduate students involved	Nature of the project	Output
Kirsten Dörmann, Mpho Matsipa and Claire Bénit-Gbaffou	Research on housing conditions in Yeoville (2nd-year architecture) including past, present and desired living conditions in Yeoville (7 portraits); non-residential uses of residential properties in Yeoville	Housing posters (2010), Yeoville Studio Africa Day exhibition, May 2010 (Yeoville Library) Yeoville Stories exhibition, November 2010 (Yeoville Recreation Center); online See chapter 13 in this book
Kirsten Dörmann	Design course (2nd-year architecture): Imagining building designs in response to living conditions as researched	ARPL 2000 (2010) (online) Posters presented in Wits Fassler Gallery exhibition (Wits University), September 2010 See chapter 14 in this book
Mpho Matsipa	Gentrification: Comparing developers' and residents' practices in Yeoville and Maboneng	Students' report, unpublished
Sarah Charlton	Housing course (3rd-year planning): Living and working in Yeoville Bellevue: Accommodation situations of people who earn an income in public spaces	ARPL 3013 (2011) (online)
Simon Mayson	Master's research report (planning): Accommodation and tenuous livelihoods in Johannesburg's inner city: The 'rooms' and 'spaces' typologies	Mayson (2014) Mayson & Charlton (2015) See chapter 18 in this book
Mamokete Matjomane	Honours research report (planning): Spaza shop keepers, the City and the '"community": The case of Yeoville	Matjomane (2011) Matjomane: Spaza shop posters (online) See chapters 19 and 20 in this book
Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Margot Rubin	Politics course (3rd-year planning): The politics of building management in Yeoville	Bénit-Gbaffou & Rubin (2011) Building politics posters (online) Informed the CUBES-SERI-YBCDT housing booklets (online) See chapter 16 in this book
Neil Klug	Land management course (2nd-year planning): Comparing existing to planned land uses in sections of Yeoville – understanding land-use conflicts	Workshop presentation: international examples of dealing with inner-city decayed buildings (2011) See chapter 15 in this book
Sarah Charlton	Housing roundtables: debates with housing professionals and officials, based on Yeoville Studio's findings	The roundtable events on 9, 16 and 23 November 2011 helped inform this chapter. Three themes: (i) the nature of accommodation; (ii) the management of accommodation; (iii) housing, neighbourhood and income generation
Margot Rubin, Kate Tissington, Claire Bénit-Gbaffou	Housing booklets: housing guide series unpacking rights and responsibilities for tenants, landlords and owners/occupiers of sectional title buildings. Done in partnership with SERI, involving honours students	CUBES-SERI-YBCDT housing booklets

APPENDIX 1: List of Yeoville Studio projects (2010–2011) with relevance for housing

Source: Author

Note: Posters and unpublished report summaries can be found online: https://www.wits.ac.za/yeovillestudio.

18 Sharing a flat in Yeoville: Trajectories, experiences, relationships

SIMON SIZWE MAYSON

Accommodation in inner-city Johannesburg is dominated by subdivision, subletting and subdivision again, into rooms and spaces which are further shared. If one looks at the adverts posted on the Shoprite wall off the main street in Yeoville, one can see, for example, offers of a balcony, a curtained-off space in a dining room or even a bed to share (see figure 18.1).

I was intrigued by how life could be in these rooms and spaces, and decided to experience it myself. I have since analysed the experience of living in a variety of such spaces for my master's thesis,[1] but this chapter focuses on the four months I stayed at 404 Hillview Mansions in Yeoville. It provides a descriptive account of the experience and the people I got to know well,[2] focusing on the lived experiences in rooms and spaces in Johannesburg, about which comparatively little has been written.

The chapter is divided into three main sections: finding the room and moving in, the people I shared with and the physical spaces, and a typical day in the life of the flat.

Finding the room and moving in

Located just off Rockey-Raleigh Street and opposite the market is the Shoprite community board or the 'Shoprite wall'. It could be said to be at the heart of Yeoville. At month end, notices tacked onto the wall with Chappies bubble gum stretch along almost the full block.

FIGURE 18.1: Advertisements for rooms and spaces in Yeoville

Most of these notices advertise accommodation: rooms or spaces for rent individually or to share. The notes are mostly handwritten and basic, identifying the building name and nearest cross streets, and providing a telephone number (see figure 18.1). They are just one part of the accommodation economy operating at the wall. At month end, lessors seeking lessees wait around the wall and approach potential lessees directly. Bakkie drivers park alongside, servicing those who have found a place and wish to utilise removal services. Taxis park opposite, servicing accommodation-seekers wishing to view the accommodation once they have made contact with the lessor. Both taxi and bakkie services are governed by informal organisations that advise on prices for the area and take membership fees. Additional notices advertise second-hand furniture and appliances. Sometimes people display household items further down the street, or the bakkie drivers dump furniture in bad repair or no longer wanted by those they assisted to move, and other people pick these up (see figure 18.2).

I visited the wall mid-month in May 2011. There were around 20 notices for accommodation: the wall looked very sparse compared to what I would witness at month end. There were also very few 'lockable bedrooms' advertised – I wanted to start with a secure place. I visited five rooms that afternoon, and settled on the last. One room was being

FIGURE 18.2: The rooms and spaces economy at the Shoprite wall

rented out by a friendly Ghanaian who came to fetch me at the wall, but the flat was close to a nightclub, which he said could get very noisy. The other flat was musty and dirty and I couldn't get in to view the actual room because the occupant was out at the time. The other had only French speakers (I wanted people to speak a language I understood as much as possible) and the other, only older people who seemed to keep to themselves (something I did not want either).

Hillview Mansions, although in relatively bad repair, had a good 'vibe' to it, which I felt as soon as I went into the courtyard. It was a large block, and many people were out chatting together enjoying the winter sunshine and leaning over the parapet around the roof. Children were playing in the courtyard and along the courtyard balconies. The flat was clean, and while door handles were broken, floor tiles ill-fitting and paint peeling, the basics worked (lights, toilet, bath, kitchen sink and stove). The bedroom was large with built-in cupboards and had a closed balcony which provided additional accommodation options for me: after seeing balconies advertised on the wall, I decided I'd try out living on the balcony and sublet the room. The prices of all five rooms were similar, between R1 500 and R1 700 per month.

Melissa, whose boyfriend Byron had placed the advertisement, was to be the new 'mastande' – the live-in 'boss' or manager of the flat. She was taking over the position from the previous occupant of the room I was due to rent. Although there was nothing to sign, Melissa asked me to put down a deposit of half the rental to secure the room, because it was so early in the month, and to pay the remainder when I moved in at the start of the following month. Although I did not have much when I moved in, it was quite a taxing process carrying it all up five flights of stairs – the lifts were long broken. But my friend and I were simply part of the flow of people shifting belongings in and out, and no one on the stairs offered to help. I learnt later that many people are actually ready to help in these circumstances, but only if you can offer them a small amount of cash.

On moving in I had no sense how the people I found in the flat were connected to one another, whether they were residents or visitors, which space they stayed in, and whether there were occupants I hadn't met yet. It was a strange combination of coming into people's intimate space yet remaining removed. But Melissa was very helpful as a 'mastande', answering questions, helping to sort out keys and to get a garage remote from the owner of the flat who lived a few doors down. I discovered that he was also chairperson of the body corporate.

The other occupants in the flat were not unfriendly, greeting when we met in communal spaces, but kept to themselves. I could hear voices, TVs, movement in the different spaces, but if I had not asked Melissa, I would not even have been able to work out how many spaces there were in the main room.

However, on the fourth evening I shared a drink with Melissa, and we started talking about our personal lives and histories. We met another of the housemates properly, and then cooked together, talking late into the night. A similar scenario happened the following night and I wrote in my field notes:

So less than 24h since I started talking properly to my housemates and there is so much I have learnt already. There are just too many stories to write down – I feel I could already

write a novel based on the little bits of the life stories I've heard so far. This evening we talked about witchcraft, giving birth, more on how Mama Ahmad is really feeling – that she does not love herself, her difficulties in the relationship with her ex(?)-husband and 'co-wife'.

The people I shared with: Trajectories, relationships

Originally a relatively large, one-bedroomed flat, 404 Hillview Mansions had been owner-occupied by an old man and when he died, the chair of the body corporate bought the flat and rented it out. When I moved in in June 2011, the lounge area had been informally partitioned into three sections using curtains and sheets, and the bedroom leased as a lockable unit (see figure 18.3).[3]

Although the main demarcations and relative costs remained largely the same,[4] the occupants of each space and internal sharing arrangements changed almost every month. Below I describe the occupants of spaces over the period I lived at 404 Hillview Mansions, what they had in their spaces and how they arranged things.

Space 3

Mama Ahmad, Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie moved in as part of Baba Ahmad's idea that they would be one household, though in different spaces. Mama Ahmad rented a separate
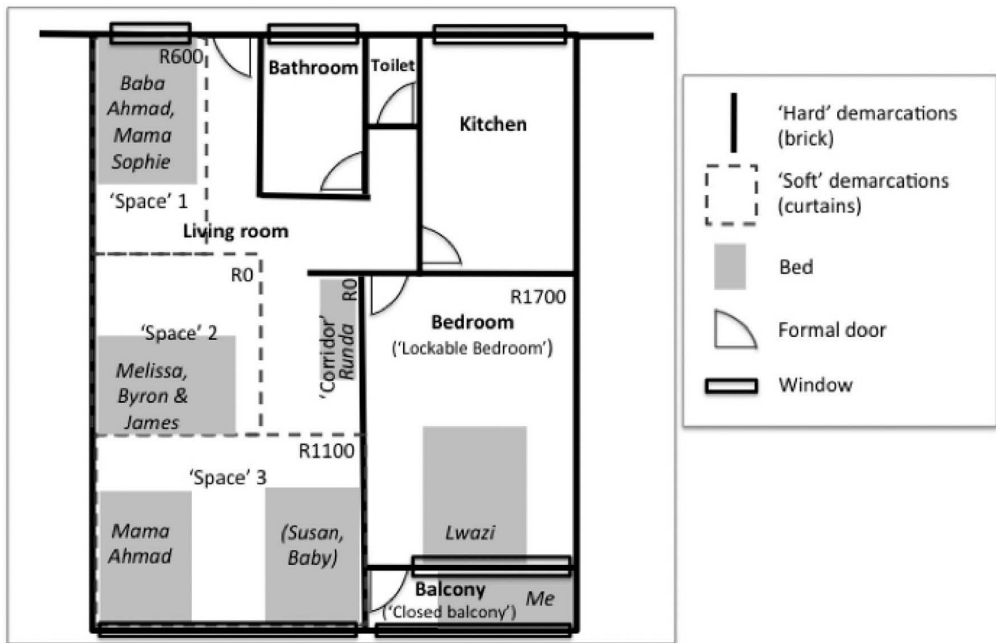
FIGURE 18.3: Original room, informal demarcations and occupants upon moving in
Source: Author, 2011

space, while Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie shared the same room/bed. However, Mama Sophie and Mama Ahmad both objected to this relationship in different ways, and effectively two households were formed.

Mama Ahmad was born in Uganda and lived in Kampala with her four children and two other dependents before coming to Johannesburg in late 2010. She was in her late thirties at the time of research. She fled her job as a nurse at a military hospital in Uganda when caught in political warring involving an attempted murder. She came to South Africa on tenuous terms with her 'ex-husband' (although they are still married and in his eyes she is his first wife), and while reliant on him for support, he made her pregnant. She arrived at Hillview Mansions four months into the pregnancy with health complications as well as relationship stress. She had immense pain in her legs and struggled to walk, especially up and down the five flights of stairs. She spent many days without leaving the flat, mostly just watching TV or DVDs.

As part of an entrepreneurship initiative, Mama Ahmad was receiving funding from a Muslim foundation. She received R2 200 for rent, and a R400 food voucher per month, on condition that she set herself up in a business. She was looking at starting a salon or a restaurant. However, she was not able to do so within their time limit. Near the end of each unsuccessful month she needed to renegotiate with the funders, and was never sure whether they would agree to extend the funding. She sent R1 100 of the funding allocated for rent to her children in Uganda, particularly to support her daughter who was completing a bachelor's degree at the time.

Mama Ahmad paid R1 100 for the largest space, at the far end from the front door, which meant no one had to walk past her curtains. It also allowed her monopoly over the main windows and whether to keep them and the curtains closed or open. She moved in from the single room the three of them had been staying in at Vlakfontein[5] with almost nothing but her clothes, very basic cooking and eating utensils, and a mattress that someone had abandoned in the building. Within the first week, Baba Ahmad bought her a TV and DVD player, as well as some small plastic organisers to arrange her things, and a small TV stand. She later got a proper bed and beanbags to sit on, and over the next four months collected additional small items of furniture.

At the end of June, Ma Ahmad was told a proportion of her funding would be cut, and one of her children was hospitalised in Uganda, so she placed a notice on the wall at Shoprite advertising a space to share, to which Susan responded. Susan, from Zimbabwe, was almost eight months' pregnant. She was relaxed, healthy and still active. She supported herself through doing women's hair, and had built up enough loyal customers not to have to spend much time on the street, instead going to people's homes.

Near the end of July, when the baby was almost due, her aunt came to stay with her, sharing the bed. Susan had the baby at Johannesburg Hospital, returning within a day. The child remained healthy, and received all the right immunisations over the next days: Susan was very happy with the free medical care provided. Her aunt's partner supported her for July, but she returned to her Zimbabwe home at the beginning of August, so her mother could assist with the child.

Mama Ahmad found it more and more stressful living in the same flat as Baba Ahmad and his 'second wife' Mama Sophie, and at the start of August moved out to a space just a few streets down, in a block in Berea.

Space 1

Baba Ahmad bought cheap Chinese and second-hand phones, and sold them at weekly markets around Gauteng, as well as in a small shop that he co-owned in the central business district (CBD). Although he had setbacks, he grew his business, month by month.[6] He was able to fix up a car that, along with the capital he managed to save, enabled him to start selling larger consumer electronics such as hi-fi systems.

Initially Baba Ahmad was assisted at the market by Mama Sophie. At the flat, Mama Sophie cleaned and prepared all meals for Baba Ahmad, and kept their small space well organised. When Baba Ahmad went to Uganda for a month (when Mama Ahmad's father passed away), Mama Sophie made a decent living posing as a sangoma in an establishment nearby.

Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie paid R600 per month for their space. Directly next to the entrance, it was small and narrow, only just fitting in their three-quarter bed. They were the first to call if visitors knocked, or if one of us needed to get in. If the door was left open, they got the draft. They had access to a window onto the flat's corridor but they hung clothes on it and left it closed. They owned a lot relative to the size of the space, and lifted their bed up high with crates and bricks, storing goods beneath it. Their appliances included a TV, DVD player, hi-fi, amplifier, iron and heater. Other possessions comprised lots of clothes including religious wear, a foldable chair they used at the market, and paint buckets that they used to sit on and store food. They also had many cellphones and sometimes other appliances that Baba Ahmad was testing, fixing or selling.

Baba Ahmad's business did better and better, and when Rolington and Mama Vicky moved out from Space 2 (see figure 18.3), Mama Sophie and Baba Ahmad moved in. At the end of 2011 they moved into a bigger space in the flat next door.

Space 2

Melissa, Byron and their one-year-old James occupied Space 2 in June and July. Melissa had lived in a 'location' just outside of Harare, Zimbabwe, before coming to Johannesburg in 2007. She could read and write well, but had not finished school, and couldn't find work in South Africa. She described how she had spent a week 'in the bush' getting over the border from Zimbabwe and how her previous boyfriend was shot, and she told me about how she had met her boyfriend Byron and hoped to marry and settle in a house in Johannesburg somewhere.

At the time I moved in she was financially dependent on Byron, who was linked in a small way to the Nigerian drug-dealer subculture, and 'hustled' in Yeoville. He also told me of other scams he pulled, such as ATM card fraud. Byron would bring home money on an ad hoc basis, about R8 to R150 at a time, once or twice a week. When they got into trouble with rent, his mother once sent money from Nigeria. Despite his promises, Melissa didn't know when he would actually bring money home. She bought food daily with what she had and cooked for Byron for when he returned at night, frequently intoxicated. I got the sense that

he spent a lot of what he earned on alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana. He considered himself a Rastafarian.

Caring for James limited Melissa's work options and she was reliant on the ever-fluctuating support from Byron. She would try to plan, but this relationship affected a lot of her life. For instance, Melissa struggled to buy credit and call her mother in Zimbabwe, as she didn't know whether there would be enough money for food the next day. Byron got into a fight and lost his phone, and because he had bought Melissa's for her, he simply took it back. She had no way of calling him about when he would be getting home, or to remind him about something James needed. There were also rumours of Byron being together with other women. These things caused Melissa considerable stress.

One month into my stay at Hillview, Melissa and I struck a deal that I would give her money to buy food to cook for James, herself and me. We didn't tell Byron, as she was worried he would feel jealous and stop supporting her. It changed our relationship slightly, as she started doing the same chores for me that she did as Byron's girlfriend, such as washing my dishes.

A complex relationship of owing, theft and possible lies also developed between Melissa, Byron and me. I had attempted to sublet my room while I was back at home in July. My tenants decided they couldn't live in those conditions, but left a contribution to the rent with Melissa. When I returned, Melissa told me a complicated story about having used this and some of my rent money to bribe police who had arrested Byron for not having legal residency. However, several weeks afterwards, Mama Ahmad accused Melissa of fabricating this story, and like many others, I will never know who to believe.

FIGURE 18.4: Space 2, after the painting had been completed

Melissa and Byron had a double bed, TV, hi-fi and ornaments stand, as well as numerous buckets and other storage containers. For James they had a walking ring and some toys. Their microwave didn't work, but Melissa stored Byron's food and leftovers in it as there was no fridge. Their space did not have window access.

Melissa and Byron did not pay any rent, but as Melissa was 'mastande' (and rent collector from all the spaces), they had arranged our rent in such a way as to cover the amount required by the owner. When Mama Ahmad, Mama Sophie and Baba Ahmad found out that they were effectively renting from Melissa, they were not happy.

When Melissa and Byron failed to hand over the full amount of rent for June and July, the owner of the flat removed some of their assets, including their TV and sound system. About midway through July, they were told they would need to move out at the end of the month if they still owed anything. Byron and Melissa pleaded with Byron's mother, his brother and me, but Byron had not paid his previous debts, and so there was no option but to leave.

Over the course of July, Melissa managed to find a job handing out pamphlets advertising a new crèche in the CBD. She was paid only R60 for a full day's work standing on the winter streets with James on her back, but there was the promise of promotion to the position of helper in the crèche. Melissa approached the owner, and asked if she and James could stay at the crèche at night, as two of the other helpers did. She and James moved there at the end of July, and slept on the floor at night. But James got very sick, and rats ate through the side of their bag and many of James's clothes. The water was also shut off, and Melissa spent a lot of the day carrying water from another crèche. The toilets were blocked up for a lot of the time, and flies permanently circled. James remained sick and started refusing food, becoming even weaker. Moreover, despite many promises, the crèche owner kept withholding wages of any kind, and Melissa struggled to find money even to buy food. In the last week of August, Melissa moved back into 404, staying in my room and sharing the bed with the woman who was by then renting it.

Byron stayed with his brother in another room in Yeoville, and continued selling marijuana. He gave Melissa small amounts over this period when she didn't have enough for food. I also bought her essential groceries. During the week that Melissa stayed at 404, she arrived home late one evening without James. She had accused Byron of not taking proper care of his baby and left the baby in the road in front of the tavern where he socialised and sold drugs. Byron came the next morning, and it was obvious he didn't know how to care for James. This episode seemed to make some kind of impression on Byron, as he rented a closed room for the three of them (in a flat subdivided by plywood), and started supporting Melissa and James a little more.

Before Melissa, James and Byron moved out at the end of July, the owner of the flat approached me about being 'mastande', as he trusted me, and was not getting along with Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie at the time. However, I did not want this responsibility. He organised for previous tenants – Rolington and Mama Vicky, who had an 18-month-old daughter – to rent the space Melissa had vacated and they acted as 'mastande'. Rolington worked as a sushi chef at Ocean Basket. At the time, he was in discussions with a Chinese business partner about starting a new restaurant. Mama Vicky was not expected to work and did not want to, given

that they saw the household as being financially stable. She did look after other children in the building sometimes, but seemed to be paid 'in kind' rather than in cash.

Corridor alongside curtains

Runda was from a rural area near Bulawayo and came to South Africa in early 2011. She was in her late teens at the time of research. She had not received much education, and could not speak English very well. She did not manage to find work, although while staying at Hillview she didn't seem to be trying that much. She found enough people to support her; she didn't seem to mind 'living rough', and was strong and healthy.

Melissa had found Runda staying in one of the abandoned cars in the parking garage on the lower levels of the building. She asked each of the occupants if we minded Runda staying, then let her sleep in the flat for free. Runda stored a box containing bedclothes, clothes and toiletries in the corner next to Mama Ahmad's space, and laid out bedding on the floor to sleep at night, folding her things up and putting them away again in the morning (see figure 18.3). Sometimes, when it was very cold, we would find that she had moved into the kitchen, turning on all the hot plates on the stove for warmth, with the lights on to keep some of the cockroaches at bay. This was a bone of contention with the housemates, and when the owner of the flat got angry at the electricity bill at the end of the month, Runda was blamed.

The women also felt that Runda was not pulling her weight with the communal housework, that she blocked the sink and didn't bother to fix it, and regularly used up all the hot water. Other occupants also complained about her attitude, blaming it on the fact that she was Ndebele and uneducated. Also, the owner of the flat found out that she was staying there although Melissa had not asked his permission. He said that either Melissa needed to raise more rent to cover the extra costs, or she needed to tell Runda to leave. Melissa approached each of us to ask our opinion and we decided as a house to give Runda warning that she would need to find somewhere else. At the end of July, Runda moved out to stay with a friend who was staying in one of the rooftop former servants' rooms.

Lockable bedroom and balcony

I am from Cape Town and moved to Johannesburg at the start of 2011. During the time of research I was in my early twenties, doing my first year of a master's degree at Wits University. I supported myself by working for Yeoville Studio.

I paid R1 700 for my room (see figure 18.3). I moved in with very few items, and decided to sleep on the closed balcony on my single mattress. I stored things in a box which I also used as a bedside table, and I had a beanbag. This was effectively my living space. I kept all my clothes, toiletries, camera and other small items in one of the cupboards inside the room, where I also plugged in my microwave and kept my bicycle when not using it. In the beginning I locked my room but soon stopped. Melissa would sometimes come in to hang clothes on the balcony, but no one else expressed any wish to use my space.

I went home for some of July, at the same time as Byron's brother was coming to visit. When I returned, I found that the owner had employed someone to paint, starting with my room. Mama Ahmad also told me that Byron and his brother used the room to smoke in

FIGURE 18.5: My sleeping area on the balcony

and sleep: they had broken the balcony door handle. It seemed none of my things in the cupboards had been touched, but both this and the painting felt like a big invasion of privacy, and I was hurt that no one had told me. When I moved back, Byron's brother moved to Byron and Melissa's room, where he slept on the floor.

I very seldom used the room in the first two months of staying there, as I used the balcony instead. With the owner's permission, I decided to rent out the room. I went to post a note on the Shoprite wall on the second to last day of the month, and as I was putting it up, Lwazi and a friend approached me about the place. I took them there and Lwazi immediately paid R600 to secure the room. She got the remaining R300 from her boyfriend before moving in a few days later.

Lwazi was studying at a private college in Braamfontein, completing her matric. She seemed to be mostly supported by her parents. She spent most nights with her boyfriend, and came to change her clothes and relax and sleep in my room during the day. She and her boyfriend had fought the previous month when they lived together.

This situation worked really well for me: because I generally arrived home in the evenings, I essentially still had the room to myself even though Lwazi had paid more than half the rent. However, in mid-August, I was climbing the fire escape stairs[7] when two girls who had

been knocking at a door on the third floor called out to me and explained that they had been out partying with their friends who lived there, but got separated and didn't have their cellphones. I agreed to let them stay the night, as Lwazi's bed was available, but didn't call Lwazi to check, as it was so late. We chatted together, and though there were some things that didn't seem to match up in their story, this didn't raise too much suspicion on my side. In the morning I needed to get to an urgent meeting, and they were still in the bathroom, so I said they should ask someone else in the flat to let them out. They ended up going through the cupboards stealing all of Lwazi's newer clothes and various things of mine, all stuffed into a wheelie bag I had, and were let out of the flat by Mama Vicky with wheelie bag in tow. Over the remainder of the month I went on a wild goose chase to track them down, to no avail, and ended up having to give Lwazi money to replace at least some of the stolen items. However, she told me that she was also partially responsible, as she had not been sleeping in the room. Lwazi then moved out at the end of August.

Partly due to this incident, in the last days of August I decided that I no longer wanted to stay there. I apologised to Mama Vicky that I was informing them so late, and also told the owner, but needn't have worried, as they put up an advertisement on the Shoprite wall and Jimmy from Zambia moved in immediately after I moved out. Because of the rush, the owner let me keep some items in the cupboard for the month of September.

Changes post-September

Although I moved out in September, I maintained contact with all the housemates that stayed in Johannesburg. Mama Ahmad continued to move every few months, but always within Berea and Hillbrow. She rented different rooms or a space depending on her requirements at the time: for instance, if she had children staying with her, or how much trouble her legs were giving her.

Baba Ahmad increased the size and privacy of his space with Mama Sophie as their income increased and stabilised, remaining within Hillview Mansions. Melissa, Byron and James moved to different rooms and spaces within Yeoville, depending on the stability of their relationship and Byron's feeling of responsibility for James at the time. Rolington and Mama Vicky remained at 404 Hillview until the end of the year, shifting to the largest space.

Such were the people with whom I crossed paths during my four months in 404 Hillview Mansions. I now turn to the more finely grained detail of movements during a typical day in the life of the flat and its occupants.

A typical day at 404 Hillview Mansions

Before dawn, the first sound would be running feet on the road outside, people running in the icy air on their way to catch the early shift. In our flat, Mama Sophie and Baba Ahmad woke first on market days. At around 5.30 am Mama Sophie prepared tea and lunch while Baba Ahmad bathed. Baba Ahmad then packed their sale stock, and Mama Sophie bathed. They would leave just after 7 am, before anyone else woke up, and get the taxi one block away, travelling for about 45 minutes, either to Krugersdorp or the East Rand. Runda rose next, taking a long bath before leaving the flat for the day. She spent a lot of her day around the

building, especially on the rooftop, and seemed to have a large number of friends who also didn't have regular work. I felt uncomfortable at times, as Runda was part of a regular 'gossip crew' that would lean over the rooftop parapet and watch people as they passed below.

Other than this, weekdays were relaxing. Hillview workers kept the common areas clean, and the wide diversity of people – from students, children and their carers and night-shift workers to people taking the day off – meant that there was always something to watch. Adults used the rooftop a lot. Some were drinking, some just socialising or keeping an eye on their children playing soccer below. There were also places to avoid, however, such as the bottom of the dark stairwell where water from a broken drain stagnated. Or the corner of one of the garages where a pile of rubbish lay, dating back several months to a Pikitup strike. It was the playground of so many rats that at night it moved as if one being.

I woke at around 8.30 am, performed basic ablutions and grabbed food for the day, and left for Braamfontein. By this time, Melissa and Byron would usually be awake, but remain in their space. They talked, argued or watched something on TV. James would have woken up sometime before but would remain on the bed, sometimes crying for food or attention. He was too small to get off the bed, but if he did, he would crawl into another space and cause a bit of a commotion.

Melissa rose at around 10 am and prepared pap or porridge for James and herself, and sometimes Byron, depending on if there were leftovers. Byron spent a fair amount of time bathing, and sometimes Melissa and James would join him. By lunchtime, Byron left the house for the day. He visited people or his brother in Yeoville, or stocked drugs to sell. Melissa would attend further to James, and carry water to a plastic bath in her space if he had not bathed already. She then cleaned and organised her and Byron's space and made the bed tightly (as it was used as a 'sofa' or living space for the rest of the day).

The women had an informal roster for cleaning the communal areas, including the passages outside the spaces, kitchen and bathroom. Men (Baba Ahmad and I) bought the cleaning fluids and utensils, but were not expected to clean, although if I cooked or made a mess I was expected to clean up after myself given that I was a 'bachelor'. The only thing I found unhygienic about the flat was an area behind the stove, which was spattered with deep grease, almost impossible to remove and probably there long before any of us had moved in. While the floor was scrubbed daily, this little area was left untouched. This, and holes running along the brickwork from where tiles had fallen off, was probably what created the cockroach problem – the only pests we had. We kept saying we should buy poison for and block up the holes, but we never did get around to it. The kitchen was overrun with them. When someone cooked and the steam heated up the grease behind the stove, the daring cockroaches would come out and eat at it. And if one of us switched on the light after it had been off for some time, rivers of cockroaches would stream into the holes in the tiles. But besides this, the flat was clean.

If it was Melissa's turn, she cleaned the communal areas right after cleaning her own space. If everyone else were awake she would put the radio on while she worked, usually tuned to Highveld Stereo.[8] She often put James in his walking ring throughout this time, as it prevented him from going into other people's spaces as easily when the curtains were drawn tightly, and

he couldn't pick things up that he wasn't supposed to play with. Because of this, he didn't have a lot of opportunity to develop his crawling abilities or coordination. If he did crawl into one of the other two spaces or my room, she didn't go in after him, but called after him and then asked the occupant of the space if she could enter.

Once finished with the household chores Melissa went to the supermarket on most days, to buy food for supper. Aside from this she would mostly stay around the flat with James, watching TV or spending some time on the rooftop.

If there was washing, the process could easily take the whole afternoon. She washed everything by hand in the bath and hung it on the rooftop if there was a lot. Sometimes she went up to check on it, and generally she took it down before dark, as there was talk of things getting stolen (although this never happened in my experience). If Mama Ahmad, Mama Sophie or I were there, one of us helped take the washing up or down.

Mama Ahmad would usually awake in the late morning, but if she was in a lot of pain, she could spend much of the day in bed. She made tea for herself, cleaned and bathed, following a similar routine to Melissa and sometimes at the same time. If she was not in a lot of pain, on a few days she looked for available shops or bought small items with her Shoprite food voucher.

Evening, while it was still light, was the most active time at Hillview Mansions. People were arriving home, visiting friends, creating a multitude of different supper smells, and children were still playing everywhere. Evening was also the busiest time at the flat, although people generally remained respectful regarding noise and behaviour. Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie would arrive back at around 5 or 6 pm. Mama Sophie would have bought something for supper. Though they had a relatively steady income, they still mostly bought things on a daily basis, even after Baba Ahmad and I together had bought a large fridge, which he said was to save costs by buying in bulk. At one point, there was some talk and fear between Mama Sophie and Mama Ahmad about poisoning the other's food or using witchcraft, which would have been an obvious disincentive. But people seemed to almost never keep fridges, even with 'free' electricity and enough disposable income to spend on flat-screen TVs. Mama Sophie tidied the space before settling in for the evening, and was first in the kitchen. She and Baba Ahmad ate in their space together while watching TV. If on good terms with Mama Ahmad (in the weeks after they just moved in), Mama Sophie cooked something for her too, and occasionally all three would eat together in Mama Ahmad's space. If she was cooking something like chapatti she offered me one if I happened to come into the kitchen.

Mama Sophie and Baba Ahmad would spend the rest of the evening in their space with the TV on. WWE wrestling was Baba Ahmad's favourite, and they would also watch the English-language news. Mama Ahmad and Melissa would also have their TVs on in the evening, but usually with the sound off or at a low volume. Sometimes they all watched the same programme, but in their separate spaces. Even if they weren't watching and sound was muted, everyone's TVs remained on for most of the time they were awake, and Melissa's remained on at least until Byron arrived back.

I arrived home at about 6 pm or much later, depending on work pressure. I generally chatted with Mama Ahmad and/or Melissa, or played with James. I worried a lot that he

didn't get any stimulation, and he would sometimes just stare at the TV even though he couldn't speak yet. Melissa then cooked, and Mama Ahmad and I sometimes joined her in the kitchen and chatted more. Despite both of them facing stressful lives, these were really good times – we laughed, told stories about our lives and compared experiences and beliefs arising from our different backgrounds.

A few times the volume of the TVs (especially Baba Ahmad's wrestling) was too loud, but he immediately apologised and turned it down if I told him. At around 9 pm everyone turned the volume down completely anyway, when Mama Sophie and Baba Ahmad went to sleep.

Runda arrived home at some point after dark, and because Melissa did not give her a key, would knock on the door or kitchen window until one of us let her in. This caused much frustration with Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie, who were closest to the door. If some of us were eating together, we would share with her. If not, she seldom had anything to cook. She washed some clothes or shoes in the bath if she was there early, and chatted to Melissa if available. Once people had settled in their spaces, she got out her bedding from her box in the corner and laid it down to sleep.

The single light in what had once been the lounge was usually turned off between 11 pm and midnight, by which time everyone was asleep, except Byron. If someone wanted to sleep earlier, they asked if the light could be turned off or simply covered their head with a blanket. Unless it was very cold, or at the end of the month when business did badly, Byron usually arrived between midnight and 3 am. He called Melissa to open the door for him, and she warmed up his food in the kitchen, where they chatted with the door closed.

I would sleep between midnight and 2 am. Sometimes I would get back after 11 pm, and even on a Friday and Saturday I was always surprised at how quiet it was, considering the number of people living just on our block. If I looked out of the balcony window where I slept, I could just see the night watchman in the moonlight, standing at the entrance to our building.

Concluding thoughts

Life in Hillview Mansions was marked by a rapid turnover of people on a month-to-month basis, both in and out of the flat as well as between spaces within the flat. Also, we all seemed to quickly adopt regular rhythms: the account of a typical day really did apply to almost every weekday, providing some stability despite the high mobility.

In spite of the apparent month-to-month transience, the relationships between occupants and the connection to the flat and the building were often maintained beyond the actual stay. As already mentioned, Rolington and Mama Vicky moved back into the flat to act as 'mastande'. Melissa and James returned, sharing my room with Lwazi for a while – a connection that enabled Melissa to share for free with Lwazi's best friend later that year, while still keeping some of her belongings at 404 with Mama Vicky. Baba Ahmad and Mama Sophie moved to a bigger space in the flat, then to a flat next door, and remain in the same building. I remain good friends with Mama Ahmad and have been part of significant events in her life, including the birth of her child, the immigration of her other children, illness, and many moves between spaces around inner-city Johannesburg.

Nevertheless, life in 404 Hillview Mansions was not easy. For me, the needs and demands of the other occupants and life in the flat became difficult to balance with the pressures of university and work. This became particularly difficult when I decided to take on someone to share the room with me, as well as have Melissa and James to stay. When I had a properly lockable space to myself, it was significantly more manageable. For all occupants, the intensity of sharing certainly took its toll on their relationships. I asked each of the people living in the flat whether, if money were not a problem, they would continue staying in a space like that, or move into more private accommodation. Each one wished for the latter. Even so, sharing in 404 Hillview Mansions, as in so many flats around the Johannesburg CBD, allowed occupants a place to stay that was well-located, contained a diversity of room and space configurations to best suit their pocket and living relationships at the time, was relatively secure, and provided access to services and infrastructure, as well as social capital. Given that occupants' financial resources *were* extremely tight, they were prepared to make sacrifices in their accommodation in order to survive and to enable spending on other aspects of life perhaps valued more greatly. All my fellow occupants hoped in some way for a better future, and in the meantime, people make do.

Notes

1   Mayson S (2014) Accommodation and tenuous livelihoods in Johannesburg's inner city: The 'rooms' and 'spaces' typologies. Unpublished master's thesis, Development Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
2   Pseudonyms have been used for all people and some places to protect people's identity.
3   As illustrated in figures 18.1 and 18.3, the different accommodation options available are advertised and spoken about differently. Rooms have 'hard' and more formal demarcations such as brick walls and a lockable door or even just drywalling. Spaces have 'soft' (although clear) demarcations, such as curtains or cupboards, and are a further subdivision of a room where applicable. Other accommodation types, such as balconies, are usually advertised using their name.
4   The owner of the flat increased the total rent required as national electricity prices increased, causing an escalation of rentals for each subunit.
5   An informal settlement on the outskirts of Johannesburg, which Mama Ahmad felt was far removed from any opportunities.
6   One of the worst setbacks was when two police officers one day raided his space at the flat, confiscating his whole stock and even taking some money.
7   We didn't take the internal stairwell, as if something happened to you there then no one could see – even though nothing happened to anyone I knew.
8   An English-medium pop radio station geared to higher-income youth/young professionals.

19 Running a spaza shop

MAMOKETE MATJOMANE

Spazas are neighbourhood convenience shops that are not fully formal. From a room in a house, a stand-alone building or a lightweight structure on the edge of a property, spaza shops bring in income while providing cheap and convenient local shopping.

What attracts customers to a particular spaza shop is its proximity. Prices do not vary strongly across shops. Only particular items or extended opening hours will attract customers beyond the spaza's immediate radius. The range of goods is limited: fruits, vegetables and airtime are the most common; cigarettes, public phones and games machines are rarer features. Spaza shops cater to the floating schedule of their customers, opening as early as 6 am, closing as late as 10 pm, long after formal shops have closed (see figure 19.1).
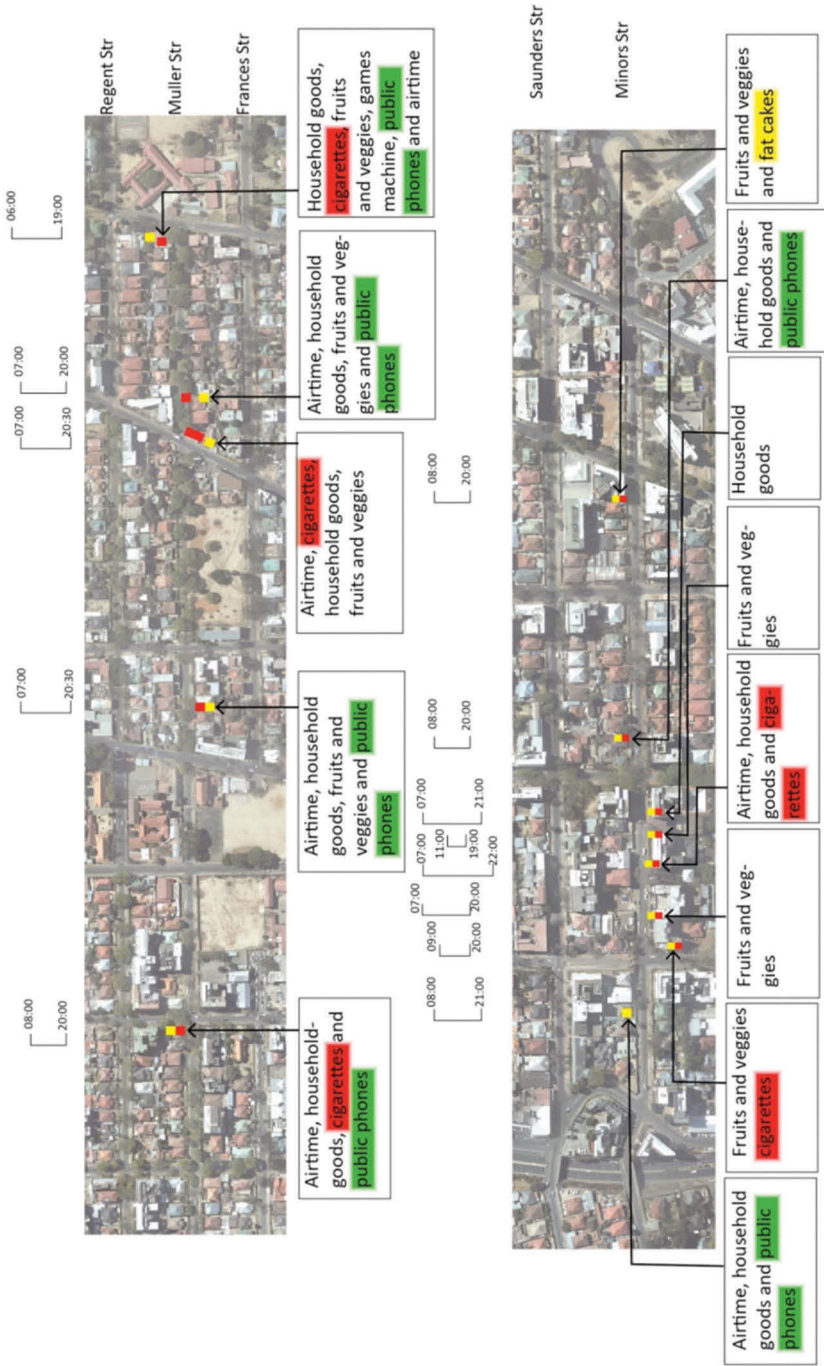
FIGURE 19.1: Spaza street strategies

Source: Author, 2011

Note: The highlighted goods indicate 'niche market' items identified by the spaza keepers to stay ahead of competition from others.

Entrepreneur	Surviving entrepreneur	Survivalist
Owns	Owns	Rents
Large shop/several shops	Medium shop	Small shop, sometimes makeshift
Investigates market: finds a niche; sells rare items	Does some market investigation: sells commonplace and less common items	Sells commomplace goods with some adaptation to market
Goods are delivered; employs a worker	–	Uses hired transport to fetch goods
Income: >R1 000 per day	Income: <R1 000 per day	Income: under R500 per day
Application for formalisation: done	Application for formalisation: sometimes	Application for formalisation: not done

TABLE 19.1: A typology of spaza shops
Source: Author, 2011

Spaza shop owners can be categorised into three types: entrepreneur, surviving entrepreneur and survivalist (see table 19.1). Types are very fluid: it is possible to change from one type to another rather quickly. These portraits illustrate the spectrum of spaza shop owners in Yeoville.

VINCO COMMUNICATIONS

FIGURE 19.2: Vinco Communications

OWNER: King
AGE: 26
GENDER: Male
EDUCATION LEVEL: Degree in Mechanical Engineering
FORMER JOB: Never worked

Business profile

OPENED: 2008
DELIVERY: No
GET GOODS FROM: Jamaica and Jumbo Cash and Carry
LEGAL STATUS: Applied to City Council
TRADING HOURS: 8 am–8 pm
GOODS: Airtime, cigarettes, public phones and household goods
INCOME: Undisclosed

KING: I started with selling cigarettes, sweets and chips. I stocked up, selling little by little. I like making friends and talking to different people. I don't like when customers complain about my service or my workers. I already own more than three spaza shops, and I would like to see them grow. I want to make my businesses bigger, like Shoprite.

CUSTOMER: I am a loyal customer; you can ask him, I buy here every day, mostly airtime. It is close to my house and his prices are reasonable. I can just run to the spaza when I need something.

MACO CHUCKS TRADING SUPERMARKET

FIGURE 19.3: Maco Chucks Trading Supermarket

OWNER: Olga (not her real name)

AGE: 33

GENDER: Female

EDUCATION LEVEL: Degree in Business Administration

FORMER JOB: Worked as an entrepreneur

Business profile

OPENED: 2009

DELIVERY: Coca-Cola and Albany

GET GOODS FROM: Cash & Carry and City Deep markets

LEGAL STATUS: Applied to City of Johannesburg and South African Revenue Services

TRADING HOURS: 7 am–11 pm

GOODS: Airtime, cigarettes, household goods

INCOME: R700 a day

OLGA: I started small, selling little things. But we have now grown, even from the last time you came. Business is good, people are buying. Even if one person comes it's fine: a little drop of water makes an ocean. I like being self-employed, but not waking up early and closing late. Also, I can't run out of the spaza and do other things; I am tied up. I plan to have my own establishment and employ more people.

CUSTOMER: Every day before going to work, I buy bread and sometimes eggs for breakfast. This is the one that is closer to where I stay. I can even send my children here at night; I am not afraid that they will get lost or mugged. Also, it closes late, at ten or eleven. When I don't have enough money they still sell to me; I am their regular customer.

JOYCE FRUIT&VEG

FIGURE 19.4: Joyce Fruit&Veg

OWNER: Joyce
AGE: 30
GENDER: Female
EDUCATION LEVEL: Grade 11
FORMER JOB: Never worked before

Business profile

OPENED: 2009
DELIVERY: None
GET GOODS FROM: City Deep markets
LEGAL STATUS: No application
TRADING HOURS: 9 am–8 pm
GOODS: Cigarettes, fruits (morning), snacks (day), frozen ice and vegetables (evening)
INCOME: R300 per day (month ends)

JOYCE: I started in 2009 when I saw that there was space in front of the flat. I asked the owner to let me use it for my business. Business is not good all the time, but I can't complain. I love talking to people. I hope to continue selling and maybe make my business bigger.

CUSTOMER: This spaza is convenient. When I need cigarettes or veggies I just come here. I don't have to walk all the way to shops on Raleigh because they sell the same things, although at higher prices.

JACOB'S ORANGE IN A BOX

FIGURE 19.5: Jacob's Orange in a Box

OWNER: Jacob
AGE: 45
GENDER: Male
EDUCATION LEVEL: Tertiary
FORMER JOB: Security guard

Business profile

OPENED: 2011
DELIVERY: None
GET GOODS FROM: Yeoville and City Deep markets
LEGAL STATUS: No application
TRADING HOURS: 8 am–8 pm
GOODS: Fat cakes (morning), fruits and vegetables (evening)
INCOME: R150 per day

JACOB: I asked the caretaker for this space in front of the property, to set up my spaza shop. I'm able to make some money every day. I can see business grow, it makes me happy. I don't have any competition. The guy in the spaza shop next to mine doesn't sell the same things. I mostly sell fat cakes in the morning together with some fruits, and veggies in the afternoon when people are [coming home] from work and want to cook supper. I'm still going to get a container to enclose my stall and then I will apply to the municipality.

CUSTOMER: I like having spazas because shops are far. They are helpful, especially if you need something and shops are already closed.

20 Integrating the 'community' in the governance of urban informality at the neighbourhood level

MAMOKETE MATJOMANE AND CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

Keith Hart (quoted in Hansen & Vaa 2004: 19) argues that informal trading is 'nothing less than the self-organised energies of people, biding their time to escape from the strictures of state rule'. However, the state's attention to the sector has been growing, in contexts of increasing competition for urban space or economic opportunity that call for regulation. Whilst repressive approaches to the informal sector are still dominant throughout the world (Bénit-Gbaffou 2018), in tandem with moments of laissez-faire, attempts to find pragmatic modes of regulation are on the rise in the face of the permanence of informal economies in cities faced by chronic unemployment. The governance of markets (with their potential high profits) and street trading (with its high visibility in dense urban centres) has received ample attention in policy as well as in literature. But the regulation of spaza shops (informal convenience stores at the neighbourhood level) remains a relatively new policy and academic terrain. For a long time, arguably, these house-shops did not attract the state's gaze and were left unregulated. However, the issue is rising in contemporary South African public and academic debate, as spaza shops are often at the core of xenophobic violence at the local level (Charman & Piper 2012; Demeestère 2016).

Literature on the governance of informal activities (Bayat 1997; Lindell 2008) generally focuses on the two-way relationship between the state and traders, neglecting the role of the local community[1] in this engagement. Lindell (2008: 1885), however, defines urban governance as 'encompass[ing] a range of actors, multiple sites, various layers of relations, a

broad range of activities or practices aimed at steering [the] economy and society, involving various modes of power, as well as different scales'. In this chapter, we investigate the role of the community in the local governance of spaza shops.[2] After a brief overview of informal trading and its regulation in South African cities, we unpack Yeoville community leaders' narratives of the development of spaza shops in the neighbourhood – where repressive municipal intervention led to the attempted set-up of community-based governance of spaza shops. We then explore why this governance model did not work in the neighbourhood.

Research methodology

Besides interviews with spaza shop traders and customers and participant observation of their activities (see Matjomane, this book), we analysed how the issue of informal trading was framed in public debates through official documents and forms, local meetings, and the local community newspaper, *Yeovue News*. In parallel we conducted interviews and conversations with local figures and officials who had a stake in the issue.

Prominent amongst these were Yeoville Studio partners, long-term activists in the neighbourhood: Edmund Elias, residing in Yeoville and the spokesperson of the South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA); Maurice Smithers, the director of an NGO, Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), and editor of *Yeovue News*; and George Lebone, the chairperson of the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF). Other community leaders interviewed included Mbuyiseni Khoza, the chairperson of the Yeoville Community Policing Forum (YCPF), dealing with by-law infringements (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, and Katsaura, this book).

Amongst municipal officials, we managed to interview the Region F quadrant manager,[3] Owen Mhlanga; the senior professional officer of development planning and urban management, Mrs Theron; and deputy director of the informal trading directorate in the Department of Economic Development, Xolani Nxumalo. Furthermore, we engaged with the two main ward councillors in Yeoville at the time: Councillor Myeki (African National Congress [ANC]) and Councillor Da Rocha (Democratic Alliance [DA]).

The governance of informal activities in cities of the South: The missing local politics

Informal trading activities are on the rise in cities of the South and contribute a high proportion to the overall economy (Bromley 2000). Many people are involved in informal trading as a response to the decline in the formal economy and high rates of unemployment, and (for internal and international migrants) as an entry point into cities and their labour market (Bromley 2000).

In South Africa's major cities such as Johannesburg, informal trading was seen as an invasion of urban spaces during the colonial and apartheid era. The state during this time was pursuing a strongly anti-informal trading approach, in order to preserve the proclaimed white areas. The logic was that the 'Natives' should be kept out and their informal trading activities

controlled, as these activities were seen as a sign of backwardness and underdevelopment. Tight control and repression of these activities were put in place to maintain order in the proclaimed white spaces (Rogerson 1988).

These controls manifested in severely limiting the number of trading licences granted to traders, and strictly regulating trading conditions though town planning regulations. Such containment of trading activities was justified around health, order and safety reasons. This included the delineation of no-trading zones in (white) business areas. This was done to protect white-owned businesses from competition by informal traders, and to respond to negative perceptions of informality amongst white residents.

In the 1980s in Johannesburg, the authorities' attitudes to and policies on informal trading started to shift, although at a slow pace (Rogerson 1988). This was because informal trading activity was growing at an exponential rate and authorities realised that it could not simply be wiped out. However, 'it would be difficult to describe this policy shift as being one from repression to promotion because the state's enthusiasm for the informal sector is often more apparent at the rhetorical level than at the level of policy implementation' (Rogerson 1988: 555).

One can track some of the real effects of this shifting discourse on the sector through the narrative of one of the first trader organisation leaders, Lawrence Mavundla (quoted in Manzini & Bénit-Gbaffou 2014), who used the loopholes in and new flexibility of regulation to grow the sector and organise it in inner-city Johannesburg during the 1980s.

In the post-apartheid period, municipalities have become more tolerant of informal trading, but policies designed to manage its activities are overwhelmingly restrictive. Beyond the South African case, many governments are still influenced by colonial legacies that criminalise informal trading, a legacy that is revived by contemporary choices to build global, 'world-class' cities. In Johannesburg, part of the challenge of informal trading management is argued to be an insufficient understanding of the sector (Pezzano 2016). Urban spaces that are free of informal trading are still being prioritised, as opposed to finding solutions that are more suited to the actual and practical needs of a growing unemployed population seeking livelihood opportunities (traders) and with limited purchasing power (customers). Furthermore, local authorities' mandates often conflict between the need to order the streets, manage conflicting uses in dense urban spaces, and gain spatial and fiscal control on the one hand (which leads to restricting or formalising informal trading), and, on the other, social priorities related to livelihoods (which leads to considering informal trading as a mechanism for poverty alleviation and job creation).

While the inner city of Johannesburg boasts multiple land uses – commercial, retail and residential – residential areas have been zoned for residential use only since the time of apartheid and modernist planning, when economic activities such as trading were not allowed. The 1979 Johannesburg Town Planning Scheme, however, finally recognised different regulations in that respect, being more flexible in spaces proclaimed as 'black townships', where residents could apply to the municipality for permission to open a 'house-shop'. But this possibility of applying for municipal consent was restricted to formal black townships and did not apply in other neighbourhoods categorised as white spaces.

Yet in the 1980s many inner-city and peri-central spaces started to become 'grey spaces' (Morris 1999), where the conjunction of suburbanisation, white middle-class flight and incoming black tenants started transforming those neighbourhoods. Yeoville, in particular, was a place of racial and social desegregation, before entering a phase of catering for predominantly lower-income population groups. Spaza shops started to thrive in an environment like Yeoville, finding customers and responding to a demand for cheap, everyday general goods at the street level. But Yeoville was still zoned as a strictly residential area, making spaza shop activities 'illegal' according to what was described as 'old apartheid planning' – the 1979 Town Planning Scheme. This illegalisation of spaza shops put them outside of any regulatory and management framework, effectively making their management impossible. This is why the local community of Yeoville started to mobilise – often ambiguously – both against the criminalisation of spaza shops, and for their regulation.

Community leaders' narratives of informal trading policies in Yeoville

There are strong contradictions between discourses and practices regarding spaza shops in Yeoville, where individuals have mixed and sometimes contradictory perceptions and discourses. Bénit-Gbaffou and Gaule (this book) show that many Yeoville residents do adopt official discourses criticising spaza shops as contrary to the world-class city they imagine, but are at the same time buying from spaza shops and finding them convenient. Many are caught in a gap between representation and aspirations on the one hand, and everyday practices on the other, whilst the everyday street culture (buying from spaza shops) is not informing the development of local identities, popular cultures or clear collective claims.

In 2003, the City came up with a strategy of eradicating informal trade in Yeoville as part of the regeneration programme in the inner city and the 'Clean-up Yeoville' campaign (Dhliwayo 2003). Spaza shops were identified as targets for such an intervention, and the City started sending bulldozers to demolish them.[4] This brutal intervention triggered the mobilisation of civil society groups, in particular the Informal Business Forum, to stop the demolitions, arguing that spaza shops provided a useful service in the neighbourhood. Through long processes of negotiation between the City, these groups and spaza shopkeepers, the City came to a compromise in 2005, allowing spaza shops to operate in the area but requiring compliance with certain conditions.

At the time of the research (2011) many local leaders felt there had been a multiplication of spaza shops which impacted negatively on the neighbourhood, and they questioned whether the agreement reached with the City in 2005 was working. Contestations around whether or not spaza shops should be allowed to operate in the neighbourhood prompted our investigations. We distinguished five periods within the history of the development of spaza shops in Yeoville, based on the narratives of the above-mentioned community leaders who shared a chronology of significant events related to spaza shops in Yeoville, despite having different understandings and positions on this history.

Before the City's interventions

All community leaders narrate the rise of spaza shops in Yeoville since the early 1990s:

> Spaza shops in Yeoville emerged because of the black population that started moving into the area. People felt that Yeoville was now a black area and started developing spaza shops in the area as they have done so in their previous townships … People started seeing the house they live in as more than a space to reside; as a source of income. (Smithers 2011)[5]

> With the advent of the new government and the freedom people got, there were more and more people coming into Yeoville. Because they couldn't get the jobs, they had to think of something to do to make a living, and the people went into selling. (Lebone 2011)[6]

Both leaders link the development of spaza shops in Yeoville to the demographic changes occurring in the neighbourhood, densification and residents' influx, which leads to a change in the value and use of residential spaces. Both stress the livelihood needs of this incoming, lower-income population, but Smithers further highlights a racial or cultural dimension – the reproduction of urban livelihood practices that are usual (and allowed) in township environments, with the conversion of sections of houses into trading spaces.

Local leaders further explain the legal context of such development, and criticise the ill-adapted municipal regulatory frameworks that do not respond to these socio-economic needs and actually criminalise income-generating activities:

> Shebeens and spaza shops are a direct product of apartheid. One of the things that the apartheid government tried to do was to prevent black people from getting involved in economic activities. (Smithers 2011)[7]

> [Even] after liberation of the country in 1994, the [1979] Johannesburg Town Planning Scheme prohibited spaza shops from being established in residential spaces [in former white areas]. These [spazas] are the people's economy, they are the micro-entreprises. (Elias 2011)[8]

Both leaders' accounts illustrate what Ananya Roy (2009: 10) analyses as the political dimension of informality, manufactured directly by the state, and its more or less arbitrary (or at least easy to amend) regulatory decisions: 'Informality is not a set of unregulated activities that lie beyond the reach of planning; rather it is planning that inscribes the informal by designating some activities as authorized and others as unauthorized.'

Whilst the apartheid state purposefully repressed and banned economic activities in black residential townships (and only started loosening the ban through the 1979 Town Planning Scheme), the post-apartheid municipality is also criticised for not proactively reforming existing legislation to move away from restrictive zoning. Elias is prompt to characterise the City's intervention against Yeoville spaza shops as based on an outdated piece of apartheid

legislation – Yeoville, as a formerly 'white suburb', not having the same flexible land uses as Soweto. This understanding is actually shared by City officials, which has led more recently to a revision of the Johannesburg 1979 Town Planning Scheme.[9] As stated recently by the City's Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Development Planning:

> Besides the fact that the tools were developed during the apartheid era … their differences create challenges for residents and the developing community in that they need to understand the specific town planning scheme whenever they intend on developing. Emphasis in these old schemes is premised on separation of land uses and areas rather than integration and inclusion. The prescriptions in the schemes create inconsistent rules for land development depending on the location in the city. For instance, a spaza shop in Soweto does not require any town planning application but in Cosmo City the same use requires a rezoning application, which is a specialised, technical and complex process. (MMC Ngobeni, quoted in CoJ 2017)

Moreover, Elias attempts to mobilise other tropes of the post-apartheid policy and political priorities, such as the development of (black-owned) micro-entreprises, as a key national priority – recalibrating what are seen negatively as informal (criminalised) activities into a positive contribution to economic growth, job creation and black empowerment.

The City intervenes

Elias accuses a local organisation of having exerted pressure on the municipality to shut down spaza shops, triggering municipal repression: 'In the early 2000s, a lobby group started exerting pressure on the City Council to close the spaza shops down. The City then gave spaza shopkeepers court orders to stop trading in the area and later bulldozed the spazas.'[10] One of the arguments of that (unnamed) lobby group was, according to him, that spaza shops impact negatively on property values in the area and that there was a need to respect law and order, as Yeoville is zoned for residential use and therefore does not allow retail activities. Smithers downplays the role of this local pressure and local divisions, framing the crackdown as a City initiative: 'In the year 2003 the City decided to crack down on spaza shops mainly for town planning reasons. During this time a lot of spaza shops were coming up and the local authority decided to ban them. They started issuing warnings to spaza keepers, removing many spazas.'[11] Similarly, Lebone sees the increasing visibility of spaza shops as triggering municipal intervention: 'There were so many [spaza shops] that they aroused the notice of the City Council. The City Council then started clamping down on them. Actually breaking and unshackling and breaking the locks of these shops and breaking down the structures, removing the corrugated iron roofs and breaking down the walls.'[12]

Unlike Smithers's, Lebone's account emphasising the brutality of the City intervention could be read as sympathy for spaza shopkeepers. These different accounts might be read as different positions with varying degrees of sympathy, along a continuum between direct support for spaza owners' claims and sympathy for their suffering, but also as recognition of a need for regulation, and understandings of the legitimacy and importance of enforcing municipal by-laws.

Local mobilisations

The City's brutal intervention, however, triggered open mobilisation of civil society organisations in support of informal traders – beyond the ambiguities and differing positions embedded amongst Yeoville residents that are reflected in the leadership's diverse views.

The Informal Business Forum (an organisation that we could not trace further, but in which Elias played a key role) drove the campaign, trying to reverse the stigma by decriminalising the representation of informal traders, and criminalising the municipal intervention through the reference to 'apartheid minded bureaucrats' (on the basis of the brutality of the municipal 'bulldozer' intervention, as well as the recourse to the 1979 legislation). Further, Elias mentions coordinating a petition that was signed by a significant number of Yeoville residents: 'The Forum collected 5 000 signatures on the streets of Yeoville and went to [then President] Mbeki with a written memorandum, arguing that the 1979 Town Planning Scheme is a piece of apartheid legislation and that it applies to areas where white people have or had property and it is not applicable to townships.'[13]

The Forum used various tactics to protect informal traders, far beyond the local level. In this instance it used networks going straight to the Presidency. Elias's account is also a critique of (other) local leaders, who in his views pushed the City's intervention without a mandate from the community: 'I don't know if some community leaders also signed the petition but what I know is that most of them are against spaza shops. They all claim that they are speaking for the community, but the petition proved otherwise.'[14]

The two other leaders, acknowledging local mobilisation, tend to underplay the role played by the Informal Business Forum in the movement:

> In 2003 Metro police came through Yeoville-Bellevue, shutting down illegal spaza shops. There was a reaction by spaza owners and some community members who felt the council was being unreasonable. (Smithers 2009)

> There was a reaction from the community arguing that it was unreasonable; spazas cannot just shut down, traders were not aware of regulations and that people are trying to make a living. (Smithers 2011)[15]

> I wouldn't say so much the community members, [it was rather] the spaza shop owners together with the City and particularly those two; they set up a set of by-laws whereby the spaza shops are going to be governed. People persisted: they persisted in rebuilding, opening up; many of them were beginning to seek permission to sell. (Lebone 2011)[16]

The two leaders view mobilisation from slightly different perspectives. Smithers confirms residents' mobilisation, but restricts its massive character, mentioning spaza shopkeepers and 'some' community members. His 2009 account subtly shows sympathy for the City Council's enforcing by-laws against 'illegal' spaza shops, a move that (only) 'some' members of the community 'felt' was unreasonable. His second account (in our 2011 interview) is more sensitive to the traders' viewpoints, citing lack of awareness about

regulations and legitimacy of livelihood needs as grounds for their claims. Lebone's account similarly traces municipal negotiation not on the grounds of the residents' or organisations' mobilisation, but on the power of 'quiet encroachment' (Bayat 1997) of spaza owners themselves.

These three different narratives of the political battles around spaza shops can be seen as further illustrating the competitive politics between the different organisations and leaders in Yeoville, who tend to work in isolation, without seeing or recognising the work others do. Besides competition for legitimacy as the most representative of the community (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014), there is also divergence about the future of the neighbourhood, and there are different constituencies, priorities and visions.

A victory for the community? Framing regulatory processes for the Yeoville spaza sector

The next phase was the revision of regulations, which allowed spaza shops to continue operating in the neighbourhood, albeit with conditions. Through the pressure mounting from Yeoville, the 1979 Johannesburg Town Planning Scheme was amended in 2005 to consider applications for spaza shops (in the form of applications for 'consent') in Yeoville. The 1979 Town Planning Scheme had already been amended in 2000 (CoJ 2000), extending to new areas in the south of Johannesburg (besides Soweto) the right of 'house-shop' owners to apply for legalisation. This permission was extended to Yeoville in 2005[17] in response to the 2003 mobilisation.

Again, each leader has his own narrative of the process leading up to the amendment of the scheme. Elias, directly involved in the process of negotiation, is the most accurate in terms of the actual documents changed: 'The President listened [to our petition] and stopped [the] onslaught against spaza shops and this resulted in the 1979 Town Planning Scheme being amended slightly to allow people to put in applications for consent use, but with certain conditions.'[18]

Smithers echoes Elias in linking the 2005 amendment to local mobilisation, but is less accurate on what this amendment entails. Besides not quoting the actual document, he emphasises what he sees as a new and empowering requirement for spaza shop regulation – the consent of the neighbours (street-level or even neighbourhood engagement) before a formal application to establish a spaza shop is made to the municipality: 'After a series of debates and arguments, there was an agreement and a regulation was passed in 2005 allowing for what were called "house-shops" with certain conditions. One of the conditions is that if a person wants to open a spaza shop, they have to talk to their neighbours for consent use.'[19] He explained this in the local newspaper that he edits (*Yeovue News*): 'This means all people who want to run a spaza must apply for consent. It also means neighbours have a right to object' (Smithers 2009).

The 2005 amendment did not actually tailor a governance structure that would have given the local community a say on the number, location or nature of spaza shops in the area. It (only) extended to Yeoville residents the opportunity to apply to the municipality for consent use in order to legalise their house-shop – consent use indeed requiring tacit consent from neighbours, in the form of absence of any objection, mainly at the

street level. The consent process requires the following regarding neighbours' agreement (CoJ 2000):

- proof of advertising in the media (unspecified);
- a signed affidavit indicating that a notice is displayed on site: within 14 days from the date of submission of application, and for a duration of 21 days; and
- notification to adjoining owners by registered post.

Smithers, through *Yeovue News*, recaps these possibilities for 'the community' to raise objections, and adds that 'the Council must inform the ward councillor … of the application and obtain their comment' (Smithers 2009).

Through editing a special issue of the local newspaper on the issue of spaza management, Smithers actively attempts at consolidating community awareness and involvement in the local regulation of trading – by informing on processes of application as well as of objections, and by highlighting the ward councillor's mandate and responsibility to maintain an overview of the applications. As there is not one but three different ward councillors operating in different parts of Yeoville, such an overview was unlikely to be achieved in practice.

Resurgence of contention around spaza shops

A few years later, however, there was a resurgence of public contention around spaza shops in Yeoville (Smithers 2009; Matubatuba 2010; Smithers 2011). In 2011 the *Yeovue News* announced the start of a municipal campaign called Operation Letsema ('let's fix it') in the neighbourhood (Smithers 2011). The objective of this campaign was to enforce municipal by-laws, and is depicted in the newsletter through photographs showing officials in the streets of Yeoville closing down what were termed 'illegal spaza shops': 'An unregistered spaza shop owner watches the CoJ Building Control team walk past … Building Control officials check their records for court orders against illegal businesses in residential properties' (Smithers 2011).

Many local organisations actually support the municipal intervention, whilst all agree that spaza shops need a degree of local regulation, based on the shared perceptions that spaza shops are multiplying at an accelerated rate in the neighbourhood, without anyone exerting control:

> Things have gone to the extreme, where one finds six spaza shops on one property for example, and residential properties being turned into little shopping centres. (Elias 2011)[20]

> Spazas are a big challenge because right now as we speak someone is starting or halfway through or putting the finishing touches to a new spaza. (Smithers 2011)[21]

Whilst the two leaders agree, Elias emphasises excess driven by possibly avaricious entrepreneurs, whereas Smithers expresses his feeling of powerlessness. Other leaders concur, but contribute to the criminalisation of spaza shops as a whole through allegations

that some spaza shops in the neighbourhood act as fronts for illegal activities. According to the CPF chair, for example, 'Spaza shops should sell convenience goods, but instead some sell illegal goods such as dagga and unlicensed alcohol. Illegal cigarettes from Zimbabwe are also found in other spaza shops.'[22] The CPF chair is quite careful in his criticism of spaza shops (it is directed at 'some' spaza shops, not all) but in fact discredits all spaza shops as a whole (they *should* sell convenience goods, which means they don't). He also hints at the link between spaza shops, illegal activities, and international migration of goods and people in the area.

The ward councillor's attitude to the proliferation of spaza shops is unambiguous: 'I would imagine there are quite few that have been there for a long time that have been installed legally, but there is quite a number of them that are illegal, that are springing up everywhere. So obviously those have got to be removed. There is no two ways about it.'[23]

The ward councillor uses subtly derogatory language ('illegal', 'springing up') to characterise spaza shops, and a language of law enforcement discarding any thought of negotiation, debate or a formalisation process ('obviously', 'there is no two ways about it'). As a councillor and a representative of the residents, one could expect him to be more sensitive to these local businesses and commit himself to finding better methods for community governance of informal trading in the neighbourhood, although possibly the assumption that spaza owners are mostly foreigners and unlikely to be voters influences his vision. These negative perceptions of spaza shops are echoed by City officials interviewed:

> Ninety per cent of the spazas in Yeoville are illegal. They have either gone through the process of application and were denied permits or they just opened them. But in most cases people ignore processes and policies and therefore their businesses are illegal.[24]

> Most spaza shops are a front for illegal activities. Some sell drugs and others operate shebeens and sell illegal and unlicensed alcohol. Almost only 30 per cent of spaza shops are used for good purposes.[25]

These City officials share some of the leaders' negative perceptions of spaza shops, but are even less cautious in equating all informal shops with 'illegal' or even 'criminal' activities, and quicker to stick to a strict law-enforcement approach. The above statements show how the poor are criminalised when they find a means of sustaining their livelihoods and making a living in a period of high unemployment. This is done through the systemic confusion between concepts such as 'informal' (not compliant with regulation), 'illegal' (directly forbidden by the law) and 'criminal' (constituting a crime, emphasising the damage caused to society) in public discourses; the generalisation of covert criminal activities in spaza shops, often associated with specific (non-South African) nationalities; and the sole emphasis on by-law enforcement, rather than a more holistic and developmental approach.

Why community management of spaza shops did not really work in Yeoville

We argue that community governance of spaza shops after the reformed regulations did not really work, for a variety of reasons. These include the fragmentation and divisions within the community and local organisations; the absence of a dedicated community structure to encourage spaza shops to apply to the City Council and formally establish their businesses, or to debate collectively how the sector should be regulated; and the limited apparent benefit for spaza owners who engaged in formalisation, through what might appear as a relatively cumbersome and technical administrative application process.

Lack of consensus in the community

From the narratives above, it is evident that the 'community' is diverse and its dynamics are complex. In 2003, while some were defending spaza shop operation in the neighbourhood, others were lobbying the City for their eviction. In the early 2010s, some were denouncing the municipal law-enforcement logic to the detriment of development; others were calling for strict application of the by-laws and denouncing municipal inaction. Some felt there should be flexible land-use and zoning regulations in the area, while others fought to retain the residential character and mono-functionality of the neighbourhood. Many, however, agreed that there was no functional regulation of informal trading in the neighbourhood, and that it was needed – but with these different perspectives it is challenging for community leaders to form a united front.

> In [the] last six years there has been rampant extension of spaza shops with little or no regulation by authorities ... Houses are getting destroyed by overcrowding, illegal renovations, people changing them internally and externally to accommodate shops and hijacking of buildings. Already there is a housing crisis and people are converting residential properties into businesses and adding to [the] housing crisis by turning potential residential spaces into businesses.[26]

For Smithers, local management of spaza shops failed because the City was not enforcing the amended regulations. He defends himself against the accusation (often made by informal trader leaders) of wanting to keep the poor out of Yeoville by arguing that spaza shops destroy the much-needed housing stock in Yeoville. However, one might argue that for the unemployed, housing cannot be separated from income-generating activities in order to be able to pay the rent (Charlton, this book). Other residents and local leaders share this anxiety about the loss of control over the neighbourhood, and thus urge the municipality to act: 'Spaza shops and illegal businesses were plaguing residential areas. There are at least two or three on every block. The Council does nothing. If they issue a stop order, it is ignored as the owners know the Council will do nothing about it' (Matubatuba, cited in Cox 2012).

Matubatuba, a well-known priest and resident in the neighbourhood, who established the Yeoville Ratepayers Association (YRA), supports the view that Yeoville should be kept

a residential neighbourhood with no trading in dwelling units. He further expresses his anger at the Council's lack of action and at spaza shopkeepers themselves, in the name of the 'community', in the local newspaper, *Yeovue News* (see figure 20.1).

The notion that the neighbourhood is being 'destroyed', in particular its aesthetics, is dominant in this account: 'Where's the house? All that can be seen of the original building is the roof. Spaza shop regulations say that spazas should not change "the residential character" of an area' (Matubatuba 2010). The 1979 Johannesburg Town Planning Scheme (cited in CoJ 2000) indeed does state that

> iv. The residential character of the site shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the City Council and the predominant land use remain residential.
>
> v. The shop shall not cause an interference with the amenities of the neighbourhood.
>
> vi. The exhibition of any notice or sign other than a notice or sign ordinarily exhibited on a dwelling unit to indicate the name of the occupier shall be prohibited.

Matubatuba condemns the marketing and beautification attempt on this basis, premised on 'the beauty of our old Yeoville Bellevue houses'. The specific picture he comments on, however, reveals the ambiguities of this argument around aesthetics, culture and identity, running the risk of confining what constitutes these attributes to a specific period in time, thus not allowing for neighbourhood change. The decorated spaza shop (clearly managed by an African international migrant) might well be perceived, in other circles, as reflecting African confidence, belonging and pride – this type of imagery is often sold in arts and craft markets to local and international tourists, as a sign of African urban vibrancy, colourfulness and creativity.

While some prefer spaza shops to be invisible, others, like DA Councillor Da Rocha, would prefer maintenance and beautification in order to make them welcoming: 'At least they could make spaza shops nicer! Use nice material, paint, naming … that would show they care' (DA councillor, personal communication, 2011). The element of beautification and advertising is also encouraged by the YSF chair. He feels that leaving them as they are, with no signs of advertising and branding, makes them unwelcoming: 'But spaza shops by their very nature are not organised really, you know, they are very crudely organised, they are very rough, they don't look appealing, they don't look inviting for one to come and do shopping there … You just rush and grab and run away.'[27]

These contradictory statements show several things. First, not everyone thinks that spaza shops should be invisible. Some acknowledge that they are part of the urban fabric and make the city lively and diverse, and therefore should be visible through branding, naming and beautifying. Second, many leaders are quick to blame spaza shopkeepers – and in particular international African migrants – whatever strategy they use (invisibility is denounced as lack of care and commitment to the neighbourhood; attempted beautification as breaking the by-laws and not respecting legislation or local identity). Third, they show that there is

FIGURE 20.1: Spaza shop criticised by a community leader in *Yeovue News*

Source: *Yeovue News*, reproduced with permission

limited consensus on a vision for the neighbourhood within the community. Some leaders fight for the conservation of (or rather, return to) the residential character of the area, which is not only unrealistic (as impossible to implement in a democratic society), but also narrow-mindedly reproducing modernist planning of mono-functional urban areas. Others, less vocal and explicit perhaps, embrace mixed land uses, recognised especially in cities of the South as necessary to promote economic development, poverty alleviation and social cohesion (Benjamin 2004).

Absence of community-wide public space, institutions and process

This lack of community unity has not been helped by the fact that the process for managing and regulating spaza shops in greater Yeoville remains unclear. Beyond the administrative process of individual spaza owners applying for consent to the municipality, there is no clear mechanism for any institution, organisation or collective entity to regulate, monitor or even inform the development of spaza shops at the neighbourhood level. Had a participatory forum, or a community institution (possibly in partnership with City representatives – politicians or officials), been set up to achieve what was understood by some as the 'community management' or 'social contract' around spaza shops in Yeoville, possibly these differing views could have entered a deliberation process, and reached a minimum consensus.

It is clearly unrealistic to expect divided and competitive leaders to form such a forum spontaneously, when it is not in response to a direct threat or action, but when the dynamic is more about the continuous growth of an economic activity in Yeoville, and only a vague possible threat of violent repression by the City. Local government or the local councillor could have started establishing such a platform, in order to ensure links with municipal practices, mediation between competing local leaders, and regularity of engagements and follow-up. In the absence of such a participatory forum, the City continues to turn a blind eye to what it does not have the capacity to monitor, and to what is a thorny social issue on which it is politically difficult to take radical decisions.

Divided community leaders have neither the legitimacy nor the impetus to drive a public forum on these issues – that might also turn violent and possibly take xenophobic dimensions. This is what started to happen, inadvertently, when the YBCDT and the YRA organised a march against spaza shops in Yeoville in response to a threat received by the YBCDT director (possibly in reaction to his public stance against shebeens in the area) (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014). The marching crowd went through Yeoville streets, stopping in front of each spaza shop (many of which are run by foreign traders), and starting to boo and shout at them. It took the intervention of the police and of an anti-xenophobia organisation, the African Diaspora Forum, to mitigate what could have easily lapsed into violence. Other researchers (Demeestère 2016) also document, in other contexts, how a de facto 'community' regulation of spaza shops turns into competing gangs racketeering spaza owners, using threats, violence and intimidation, alternating with offers of local protection. The fact that most thriving spaza owners are foreign entrepreneurs (Charman & Piper 2012; Liedeman et al. 2013) gives an additional dimension to this local form of oppression, taking the form of regulation through violence that is delegated to the 'community' under the guise of community development (Demeestère 2016).

Finding regulatory institutions and processes that are balanced – neither purely administrative and municipality driven (as the municipality does not have the capacity), nor fully delegated to divided communities where the possibilities of dominant xenophobic discourses are high (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book) – certainly is a challenge, especially when ward councillors' territorial constituencies do not correspond to neighborhood boundaries. In Yeoville, the density and diversity of civil society organisations might have provided a favourable site to build such community-based institutions and processes.

Spaza shop owners applying for consent – for what benefit?

Smithers (2009) deplores that, four years after the regulation reform, very few spaza shops have actually applied for regularisation (consent from the municipality). The YSF chair indicates that this might be because of the low levels of success of such applications. Commenting on the post-2005 municipal approach to spaza shops in Yeoville, he notes that 'it was then thought that they should be given licences. They were given certain permits for spaza shops to start selling but those were limited and few'.[28]

Matjomane's 2011 survey of spaza shop traders (this book) shows, however (based on a small sample), that few have applied for consent: more out of lack of interest and need, it seemed, than because of explicit experience or fear of seeing their application turned down by the municipality. How can this perceived lack of interest in or need for legalisation be explained?

First, the application process is not user-friendly, especially for traders with sometimes low levels of literacy or English proficiency. One needs to physically go to council offices to fetch the necessary forms; basic information on the process and access to forms are not available online. Hence *Yeovue News'* recap on what it entails (Smithers 2009), but there are no further public platforms, campaigns or community spaces where the information is clearly and freely made available.

Second, there is no obvious benefit for spaza owners in applying for regularisation. One could (cynically) argue that, if there were more law enforcement or if local spaza shopkeepers were constantly harassed, formally or informally, by police officers or community members, they might see the benefit of formalisation and seek the protection of the law through municipal recognition. But it is not clear that such a negative incentive has worked towards the formalisation of the informal sector elsewhere. In particular, in the case of informal harassment by police officers, street committees or other community policing groups, such groups consolidate and entrench practices of racketeering (Demeestère 2016), and therefore develop a vested interest in keeping spaza shops informal, possibly in collusion with public authorities. Furthermore, the actual possibility of formalisation does not always exist in municipalities: in the case of street trading, for instance, the impossibility of legalising actual trading practices has drastically limited street traders' ability to protect themselves against ongoing police or community-group harassment.

Studying registration systems in South Africa and in the world, Simon Szreter and Keith Breckenridge (2012) have argued that few registration systems are sustainable if the targeted

group does not see an interest in being registered. Many oppressive registration systems have captured large numbers of individuals, expanding state control through registration, but few have actually persisted, and the most successful examples of registration are found when the registered find a benefit in being registered, 'consent' to it and even initiate such processes.

Here, the benefits of registering are not obvious to the spaza owners. This might be linked to the predominantly negative framing of the municipal by-laws, and the hegemonic law-enforcement discourses attached to legislation regulating informal trade. The gaps between officials' rationalities and the informal traders' entrepreneurial rationalities are glaring. For officials, regulating is about stating what cannot be done, limiting traders' freedom, mitigating economic competition and protecting other users' rights, whereas informal traders' interests are vested in what could be done to grow the business and formalise it, in spite of (parallel and disconnected) municipal discourses on support for small entrepreneurs.

This dominant law-enforcement discourse, not matched by a developmental approach with, for instance, small-business support structures (generally restricted to South Africans anyway), is unsurprisingly unconducive to voluntary application by spaza owners. In the context of rising xenophobia at the national, metropolitan and possibly local level, the foreign entrepreneurs who are currently dominating the sector (Liedeman et al. 2013) have a lot to lose in becoming more visible to the City and to the local community, and rather continue adopting a politics of invisibility.

This is the ambivalence we felt in Yeoville Studio, when it came to publicising our research results – was it wise to publish, present and circulate to the 'community' a map of spaza shops in Yeoville? Was it wise to publicise portraits and data on spaza shopkeepers, displaying their location, their number, their national origin? And in which public platforms, to inform which debates? At the time of this internal discussion in the Studio, the CPF (with strong xenophobic tendencies: see Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi, this book), mentored by the YBCDT, was preparing a street survey on zoning and by-law infringements in Yeoville. Academic members of the Studio were asked to review and comment on the survey questions, and they suggested that surveying 'infringements' seemed narrow, possibly biased and already restricting the 'solution' to law enforcement. This methodological-cum-political disagreement was debated openly with the organisations. They continued on their own with the survey, whilst the Studio decided to refrain from conducting or publicising neighbourhood-wide surveys and mapping, focusing instead on portraying people and processes, to render visible actual dynamics of the sector, and the fact that these 'law-infringers' were, above all, people, neighbours and human beings sharing similar aspirations and dreams with the would-be 'law enforcers'.

Conclusion

Yeoville community has played an important role in the governance of the local informal economy. Mobilised in a time of crisis by specific leaders sympathetic to the cause of economic development and poverty alleviation, it played a critical role in campaigning for spaza shops to be recognised as legitimate, to be allowed to operate in the area, and to be granted the right to apply for municipal consent to legalise their activities through an actual reform of existing

legislation. This reform opened opportunities for the local community to get involved in the regularisation of spaza shops – mostly administratively, through individual objections, but perhaps more collectively and constructively, through community organisations interested in building compromises between various needs, making councillors accountable and trying to facilitate collective debate on the place of spaza shops in the area.

However, a longer-term community governance of spaza shops in Yeoville did not emerge. Fragmentation, divisions and competition between community leaders with contradictory views on spaza shops did not make it easy to set up a joint front or forum. A formal entity (possibly led by civil society, or created around a partnership between civil society and the municipality) could have helped bridge these divisions and create a collective platform for discussion (not without risks, admittedly). But no such platform was set up – it was unrealistic to expect it to arise spontaneously from divided community leadership; it was maybe not to be expected from a City Council that has not fully embraced participatory urban management. Furthermore, Yeoville as a neighbourhood is divided between three councillors, which does not make community governance of spaza shops an easy task. As argued by the YBCDT leader, there is not one councillor who can claim to represent Yeoville as a whole, nor a ward public meeting where all Yeovillites can meet.[29] This disempowers community participation, and possibly exacerbates divisions within the neighbourhood.

More broadly perhaps, the vision of a mixed land-use city was still uncommon in post-apartheid Johannesburg, at the time of writing.[30] Many local leaders – including local councillors – didn't seem to be able to imagine the city beyond the mono-functional, strictly zoned city areas that were characteristic of modernist planning under apartheid. The reality of mixed land use, and the atmosphere it creates in a community in terms of activities, social networks and street safety, was seen only in negative terms because of the lack of management and the possibility of infringements on individual properties through unwanted local uses, pollution and noise – which are very real issues. More recently, however, there has been a clear shift in national legislation (such as the introduction of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act No. 16 of 2013) that might turn around these perceptions and representations.

The issue of the local regulation of such mixed land uses remains challenging nonetheless, as does a much-needed balance between municipal intervention and community debate. Turning around regulations and by-laws so that they become developmental and supportive instead of only limiting and prohibitive, as well as dealing with actual traders instead of excluding them on the basis of their nationality, might be one way in which various stakeholders, in the state and in the community alike, could see more benefit in engaging with one another.

Notes

1   'Community' in this chapter refers to local groups or individuals expressing claims in the public realm (in this case, on the issue of spaza shops).
2   This chapter is based on a research report undertaken for an honours degree in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand (Matjomane 2011).

3   Region F is an administrative area (also known as a quadrant) of the City of Johannesburg.
4   Interview with Edmund Elias, Yeoville, 18 June 2011.
5   Interview with Maurice Smithers, Yeoville, 18 June 2011.
6   Interview with George Lebone, Braamfontein, 4 October 2011.
7   Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
8   Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
9   This scheme has been revised in line with the 2013 Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), which marks an important shift in land management and planning, actively promoting mixed land uses in South African cities (CoJ 2017).
10 Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
11 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
12 Interview with George Lebone, 4 October 2011.
13 Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
14 Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
15 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
16 Interview with George Lebone, 4 October 2011.
17 We unfortunately were unable to find the exact formal reference of the 2005 amendment to the Town Planning Scheme. Elias, however, gave us a copy of the 2000 amendment with a handwritten addition, 'Yeoville (2005)', in the list of areas included in the permission to apply for a house-shop.
18 Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
19 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
20 Interview with Edmund Elias, 18 June 2011.
21 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
22 Interview with CPF chair, Yeoville, 3 October 2011.
23 Interview with ANC ward councillor, Yeoville Recreation Centre, 3 October 2011.
24 Interview with deputy director, SMME, Braamfontein, 7 October 2011.
25 Interview with Region F Quadrant officer, New Doornfontein, 22 August 2011.
26 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
27 Interview with George Lebone, 4 October 2011.
28 Interview with George Lebone, 4 October 2011.
29 Interview with Maurice Smithers, 18 June 2011.
30 As noted above, SPLUMA and its related legislation at municipal level are changing these practices and perceptions.

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Politicising: Community-based research and the politics of knowledge

21 Introduction

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

This section reflects on the specificities of knowledge production, in the context of the Yeoville Studio. The context is marked first by the concentration of a multiplicity of intersecting research initiatives, projects and approaches on a neighbourhood over a period of two years (sometimes extended to three through individual research projects). Second, the Studio implied constant, if uneven, engagement, dialogue and feedback, at times reframing the research object and knowledge production processes, with members or groups in the 'community'.

The point made by the collection of chapters and the vignettes in this section is not particularly new – that knowledge and its production are a highly political process. By this, we mean knowledge production is a process that constructs power, reveals but also challenges existing social fault lines, and generates a great deal of contestation and contention – which we perhaps underestimated when starting this project.

These contentions were internal, within the Yeoville community, between different knowledge holders or knowledge builders, amongst whom the Yeoville Studio academic team became, willy-nilly, a significant (if temporary) local stakeholder. There were also tensions, often productive in the context of a functional and collegial team at Wits, within the academic community itself. The different disciplines involved in the studio had different ways of working, ways of looking, of understanding and imagining, that highlighted both the challenges and the benefits of working in interdisciplinary ways.

Most important to us as an outcome, as it was the original intention of the Studio, the knowledge production process and its products sometimes also triggered external forms of

contention: agents used knowledge from the Studio to make claims on public authorities. These contentions could be short term or long term; a voluntary (based on existing and chosen partnership with the Studio) or an involuntary effect of the Studio; progressive (the intention of the Studio) or, at times, uncontrollable and appropriated by more regressive, reactionary or even undemocratic forces.

What we learnt through the Studio is that the internal and external dynamics triggered by the process of intense, publicised and to a degree participatory knowledge production are essentially intertwined and inextricable in practice. As engaged academics, it was impossible for us to focus on the latter (equip local activists with relevant knowledge for them to frame their collective claims – a noble cause, the realm of high politics) without becoming entangled in the former (competition and tensions around knowledge production, challenges in the legitimacy of discourse, selected transparency and accountability – the world of petty politics in which we were reluctant to engage and were caught in, almost by surprise).

The multi-disciplinary nature of the research project in Yeoville led to interesting frictions and debates between academic disciplines. Abdul Abed illustrates how the different priorities of each profession in the built environment (architects, designers, planners and artists), involved in working with street traders, failed to coordinate a joint, strong, public statement about the possibility and legitimacy of street trading in Yeoville – a missed opportunity in the Yeoville Studio final exhibition. Abed reflects on the challenges of this multi-disciplinary project, its failed coordination and the subsequent missed political opportunity, which leads him to adopt a more integrated approach in his own professional project. He also reflects on the importance of street traders' own experiential and practical knowledge, captured through a variety of means: interviews, conversations, workshops and joint action throughout the Studio (as in Bénit-Gbaffou's chapter), but also (as in Pingo's vignette) through offering street traders the opportunity to select and photograph themselves and the spaces and experiences that mattered to them on an everyday basis. This ethnography of street trading was completed by Abed himself selling in the street for one month. Based on this immersion, Abed developed his understanding of the urban dynamics of street trading and constructed his urban design proposal.

Multi-disciplinary approaches, however, did produce rich knowledge in those projects that were simpler or more focused, such as the interactive street photography projects bridging photography, urban design and urbanism, first in Muller Street (2010), then in Natal and Saunders streets (2011). In Muller Street, the tension between a concern for aesthetics and a focus on the social meanings of space at the core of each respective discipline, became part of the dialogue between the students and the residents, and opened a collective debate on the politics of representation. Is a picture showing a child skating in the street, amidst flying birds, representing freedom and innocence or the absence of 'proper' and safe public space for children's play? This dialogue, emerging in the chapter by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Sally Gaule, becomes the explicit object of the chapter by Solam Mkhabela et al., which exposes the essential tension, in their respective disciplines (design and planning), between the need for imagination and for social pragmatism.

The politics of knowledge production at times led to tensions beyond academia, between the Studio scholars and community leaders – even if most of the time academic and experiential knowledge became mutually constitutive, and blurred their boundaries, as shown by Obvious Katsaura. The generation of knowledge was at times misunderstood, even though the Studio was presented in numerous public meetings and platforms – be it the picture of a dwelling exhibited in the street mistaken for an eviction or auction threat (Mkhabela et al., this book), or the survey of street traders seen as the the first step towards legalisation by its opponents (the market traders). In other instances, scholars in the Studio were concerned about potential sinister uses of the knowledge produced, to the point of withholding its production or publication (the mapping and survey of informal activities in the neighbourhood, for instance). This became a point of robust debate with one of the community leaders – with the Yeoville Studio team reluctant to 'let go' of the knowledge it produced, if it was to become a tool of oppression against the most vulnerable. On the other hand, there were also moments when Yeoville Studio scholars supported residents or workers in producing their own knowledge, as in the case of the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust in Katsaura's chapter or the street traders themselves in Nicolette Pingo's vignette. The outcome of this appropriation of knowledge production by users (and its related politics of recognition) fell short, however, in the absence of continuous or solid mobilisation, in spite of the multiplicity and vigour of local leaders (or local activists, as they preferred to call themselves). In their chapter, Eulenda Mkwanazi and Nicolette Pingo depict how time- and resource-consuming the various forms of local activism can be – and how activists are essentially caught between the defence of their chosen cause, and the struggle for income generation. This explains the fragility of and discontinuities in mobilisations: except for those activists building their movements around the defence of their livelihoods (street trading, small construction companies), local leaders constantly need to balance their visions with the political and economic opportunities that arise, and that will resource their local action.

Ultimately, did the knowledge produced by the Studio assist activists in driving local change? This is extremely challenging to assess, as it is difficult to isolate and identify the effect of knowledge in mobilisation or contention strategies, let alone to witness change in the short term. The clearest example is to be found in the realm of street trading – although in Yeoville itself the situation of traders has not improved, which is quite sobering. Yet, as narrated by Bénit-Gbaffou, the critical mass of knowledge produced on street trading, its practices and its management, founded the basis for a longer-term partnership between the Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies and street trader organisations – beyond Yeoville and for the whole of the inner city. The networks, experience and knowledge built through the Studio led to growing expertise in alternative approaches to street trading management, which were widely publicised and partly infused into traders' and municipal officials' discourses in the years following the Studio.

22 Street trader stories

NICOLETTE PINGO

To me, photography is an art of observation. It's about finding something interesting in an ordinary place …
I've found it has little to do with the things you see and everything to do with the way you see them.
– Elliott Erwitt, documentary photographer

This project was embarked upon to understand the everyday stories of street traders in Yeoville, as the theme of public space – and trading in particular – had become one of the key threads in the Studio, and the voices of street traders seemed to struggle to be heard in the public realm, in spite of their defining presence in the main street. Eleven street traders chose to generously share their lives and their vision of their environment through photographs. Each participant was given a disposable camera and one week to capture some of their own stories. 'Photovoice' workshops were held at the Yeoville Recreation Centre in October and November 2011. The street traders were guided as to the types of photos to take exploring different aspects of their lives, with the primary focus on everyday life as a trader. Some of the key questions explored included why they started trading, why in Yeoville, why on this spot, what made trading interesting for them and what made it difficult in Yeoville.

Street traders are present across the developing world. Traders provide much-needed goods and services, whilst also creating their own livelihoods. A great deal of the vibrancy attributed to Yeoville's primary commercial street, Rockey-Raleigh, is due to the street traders that have operated there from as far back as 1992. What follows are some statements that Yeoville traders made through their photographs and narratives.

FIGURE 22.1: Angelina

TRADING AS EMPOWERING

Many of the participants indicated that trading is a choice. Some enjoy the fact that they don't need to answer to a boss; others enjoy time flexibility; and many said they earn more money than in their previous (formal) employment. Trading is for many an empowering step. Trading allows Memory Ndlovu to fetch her two young daughters from school each day, without time constraints. Trading has led Siphosezwe Moyo to gain more knowledge in the field of commerce and to attend a 'grow your business' course offered at Wits University. Trading, although challenging and often the only alternative in dire circumstances, can move beyond the fulfilment of only basic needs, and also respond to higher-order needs.

WHY YEOVILLE?

Safety is a primary reason many traders choose to trade in Yeoville rather than in the central business district or Hillbrow. Yeoville is also key in terms of networks: several traders came to Yeoville because of the presence of a family member, friend or fellow countrymen. Yeoville was also indicated as a good place for migrants to live, dense with diverse customers. Although tensions exist between street traders and market traders, and also between street traders themselves, is this not the rule for many work environments? It is clear that traders, both old and new, feel part of the Yeoville community. Knowing others and feeling part of Yeoville: that is the most enduring feature of trading in Yeoville.

TRADERS? NO, BUSINESSPEOPLE!

Many of our questions were phrased using the words 'street trader'. However, participants see themselves as businesspeople, not traders. Below are extracts from conversations showing my slow shift towards a terminology that would talk to participants' self-representation:

Q: Thabani, why did you choose to trade these products: sweets and cigarettes?
A: I did some research for my business and found that not many people here were selling these products.

Q: Siphosezwe, why did you decide to trade in this spot?
A: I decided to set up my business here, because in front of Shoprite is a good place.

Traders, in their own words, want their work recognised for what it is – a business. Many of the skills required in large-scale business can be seen in the work of the traders: from market research to sourcing the best and cheapest stock, to identifying the best spot and finding ways of displaying goods so that they are attractive to customers.

Me

My Wife and youngest son.

"When I arrived in Joburg I first stay with my sister, then I start selling tomatoes in the street then I can see that tomatoes got a life."

When I started selling, I used to sell tomatoes.

I saw people, many people selling tomatoes so I say, no I can sell my belts.

Rockey Str- Metro visit again.

I sell in front of Golden Hypermeat.

"I was working in this shop before, but then my money was small. So I say I want to put my small thing in front of your shop. Then he say no I don't have a problem, you can put, you can sell".

FARAI VUNDLA
BORN IN ZIMBABWE 41 YEARS OLD

ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE 2001   **TRADING SINCE 2001**

FIGURE 22.2: Farai

NETWORKS

Trading is a complex business that allows people to build their own and others' lives, often with a great sense of agency and often beyond mere survival. It is often a personal way of conducting business, with relationships that provide for the material and emotional needs of many. This is true for sourcing goods – from the rural home, to mobile trucks delivering fresh produce, to shops in the CBD or the Yeoville market itself. This is also true for creating a trading spot in the main street, where pedestrian traffic is sufficient to support business: the trading space is often negotiated with other traders and the nearby formal shopkeepers. Finally, there are the relationships with customers, some of whom have become loyal patrons and even supporters of the trader. This dense web of street networks is testimony to the degree to which traders have become an integral part of the fabric of vibrant Yeoville street life.

Me

Rockey Releigh Str. - View from my Spot.

" When I started I came with the mielie truck from home, when the mielies are finished they go back home. I wanted to stay to sell in Yeoville, so I slept in the garage."

This is my daughter

This is my grandson

I buy my stock everywhere, some-times people come in bakkies and sell to us here in Rockey street

I sell spinach and morogo when there are no mielies.

" I sell spinach and Morogo, but when they mielies come, I will go to the farm to get them, then I will be one of the only ones on the street selling mielies ."

LINAH MALIFALTLO
BORN IN PRETORIA 53 YEARS OLD

ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE 1993   TRADING SINCE 1993

FIGURE 22.3: Linah

Me

" I was just sitting there thinking what to do in the morning because that week Metro was coming in the morning.

This is my family

Cyrildene- This is the restaurant where I used to work.

Rockey/ Raleigh str - My Spot

Where I get my stuff-Yeoville Market

It is difficult to sell vegetables where there is no shade.

My Yeoville

" In Yeoville I like working there because there's business for what I trade, vegetables. There is no one who cannot buy tomato because we cook everyday."

MEMORY NDLOVU
BORN IN ZIMBABWE 43 YEARS OLD

ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE IN 2000   **TRADING SINCE 2000**

FIGURE 22.4: Memory

Me

Rockey str. -My spot is outside Shoprite.

My wife.

"This is my spot. Next to me is my wife, where we sell our products. We are both business people."

These are my products. If the by laws are not against us I could sell a lot more.

Yeoville- As Traders we have to keep our place Clean.

Johannesburg CBD- Legalised trading area.

" If the councillors can build something like this we can appreciate. There will be no grabbing our stock running away from Metro."

Wits- That's where I am doing a 'Grow your business' Course.

SIPHOSEZWE MOYO
46 YEARS OLD BORN IN ZIMBABWE

ARRIVED IN YEOVILLE 2008   **TRADING SINCE 2008**

FIGURE 22.5: Sipho

23 Designing with informality: Towards an urban design framework for Yeoville's main street

ABDUL ABED

The developing world continues to experience population growth and increasing urbanisation rates along with market failures. Effects of this are seen on the streets, as people living in these cities begin using the public environment as their places of work. Commonly, urban planners, architects and urban designers have attempted to tackle this problem at the street level, by trying to identify ways in which street trading – a phenomenon that is here to stay – can be made neat and orderly. Beyond the limitations of such an approach, I argue here that there are more dimensions to the understanding of informal activities in cities. Street trading is not simply an isolated activity intended to generate money for the urban poor, but also a mode of life where housing, social services, transportation and formal trading work in inter-related ways. In this chapter I use a design process in Yeoville, as part of the Yeoville Studio during 2010 and 2011 and my master's degree (Abed 2014), to illustrate how I arrived at this understanding through reflecting on trials and errors.

I begin with a design trajectory snapshot in order to introduce how Yeoville evolved into a neighbourhood containing informal activity to the extent that various municipal urban design and planning interventions have framed street trading as 'a crisis'. I then discuss a participatory design process within Yeoville Studio, involving informal traders, urban designers, planners, architects and community leaders. Reflecting on what I learnt from it, I explain how I shifted my approach towards an urban ethnography of informal trading, which led me to the design of interventions for trading in Rockey-Raleigh Street, Yeoville's main

street. The chapter then provides an urban design framework and precinct plan for Rockey-Raleigh Street as a means of creating sustainable conditions for informal trading.

Framing a design trajectory of informality in Yeoville

The history of design for trading in Yeoville reveals that the City's efforts to accommodate traders on the street were short-lived, and soon gave rise to unsuccessful attempts to contain the traders within a market.

From street to stalls to market and back to the street

Street trading in Yeoville grew rapidly in the 1990s, as the neighbourhood became host to lower-income residents and an active entry point for African migrants from the country and from the continent.

The developing phenomenon of vending on sidewalks was seen as problematic by the Johannesburg municipality. It perceived street trading as an obstacle to good street management, as cluttering the sidewalk and generating litter. In the early 1990s, when national policy was opening up inner-city spaces to informal trading through the Businesses Act No. 71 of 1991, the municipality developed stalls along the sidewalk to cater for the traders. Their design, however, was criticised in the whole inner city (where they were actually called 'cages') for further obstructing the street and creating safety issues. In the late 1990s, the municipal policy for inner-city street trading shifted, together with a tightening of legislation regulating informal trading, imagining the construction of markets as a sustainable response to remove street traders from the street.

In Yeoville, it was the Johannesburg Development Agency and the Metro Trading Company that commissioned consultants, urban solutions architects and urban designers to build a nucleated market located in the economic core of Yeoville. The market was intended to portray African aesthetics in its architectural style. It was constructed in 1999 and all street traders were removed from the street, with some offered stalls in the market.

Surprisingly, no formal council submission plans for the Yeoville market exist in the archives at the City of Johannesburg offices: I had to physically measure out the market and respective sidewalks so that an accurate floor plan of the market could be drafted, in order to conduct further analysis.[1] The market design included highly functional components, such as storage and ablution facilities, and an entertainment area surrounded by a food court, designed to cater for the needs of informal traders. Nevertheless, as will be argued below, the market was perhaps too contained and did not encourage enough pedestrian flow to support informal trading.

The goal of keeping traders within a designated and contained space was short-lived. After a period of low occupation and limited turnover, the market manager was compelled to open the market to non-South African traders,[2] after which the market became fully occupied. Some traders, disappointed by their turnover in the market, moved back onto the street or set up a stall in the street to supplement their market stall: street stalls were able to absorb greater pedestrian flow than those inside the market. Furthermore, newcomers to the city and to Yeoville found the street a convenient place to earn a living, in the absence of any

alternative opportunity. Consequently, the main street in Yeoville currently hosts 200 to 250 traders daily, demonstrating the failure of the market as a sole place of informal trade in the neighbourhood. This is not without its tensions: market traders sometimes accuse street traders of being 'unfair competition' as they occupy sidewalks illegally and free of rent, and are better positioned to capture customers (Yeoville Studio 2011a).

A second market in Yeoville?

To discuss this perceived competition, in early 2011, a series of community meetings involving local activists, market traders, street traders, the City Department of Economic Development as well as researchers affiliated to Yeoville Studio were hosted locally.[3] In these meetings, local activists and market traders recommended the development of a satellite market on a variety of proposed sites in Yeoville. The recommendation was informed by four main reasons given by the municipality and backed by market traders, as listed below.

Limited sidewalk sizes

In certain cases, trading on the sidewalks limits the size of the sidewalk and therefore impedes pedestrian flow. This is evident in the plan and cross-section drawings of a portion of Raleigh Street (see figure 23.1) where traders consume a metre of space on either side
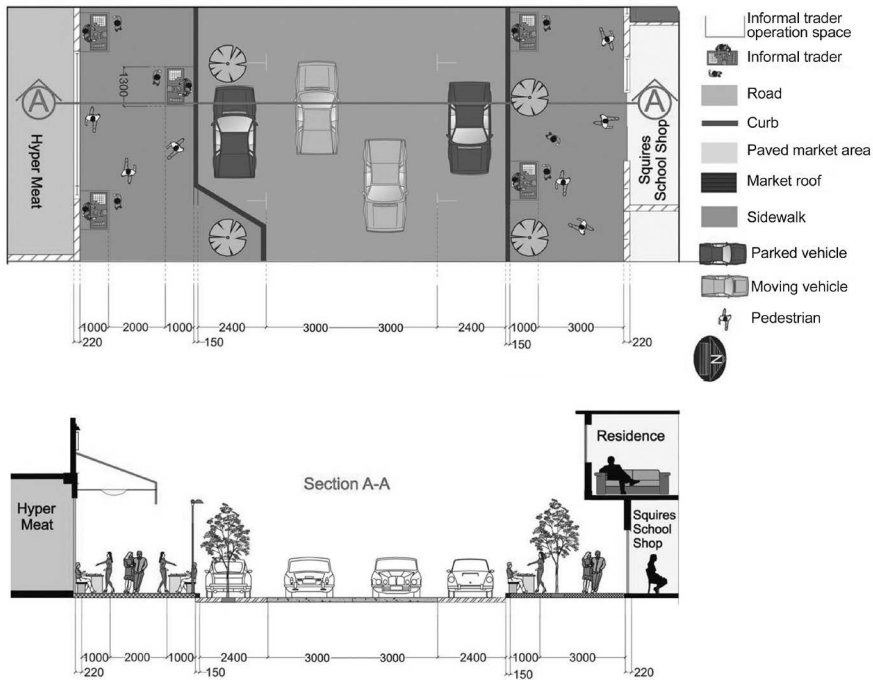
FIGURE 23.1: Plan and cross-section of a portion of Raleigh Street, Yeoville
Source: Author, 2014

of the sidewalk, leaving only two metres of space for pedestrian movement. This situation often causes problems between traders and pedestrians, as at times pedestrians step over the traders' goods or knock them off the table.

One might think that the situation outlined above is problematic, but when analysing it further, in particular through the experience of trading on Rockey-Raleigh Street myself, traders in fact create smaller circulation spaces in order to slow down pedestrian traffic, which allows pedestrians to take more notice of the goods being sold by traders. Designers often recommend that abundant sidewalk space should be provided that allows pedestrians to move at a regular speed while still providing a comfortable margin of space for traders; but this might actually be based on the perception of the street as a space of circulation only, rather than as a space of interaction.

Obstruction of formal entrances

In some cases street trading obstructs the entrances of formal shops. This limits physical and visual access into the formal stores, ultimately constraining the attraction of people into these stores. This is a persistent problem, especially during evenings as traders take full advantage of the lighting cast upon the sidewalk by formal stores.

Limited goods variety

Street traders are only able to sell a limited variety of goods. This argument is often used by their detractors to lament the lack of diversity and urban value created by their trade. However, this is not because they are short of imagination, but is largely due to regular raids by metro police, who confiscate goods. The metro police in many instances are corrupt, as after they have confiscated goods, they resell these goods back to the traders illegally. As a result, traders can only sell goods that are easily portable so that they can remove their goods when raids occur, and thus do not incur great financial loss when their goods are confiscated. Vegetables on a tablecloth serve as the dominant product base because they are inexpensive items that are easy to cart away. The limited goods variety disallows the growth of the informal sector and the amount of money that can be generated from it. This ultimately disenfranchises the ability of the urban poor to develop their businesses and enhance their business management skills, which could empower them to the degree that they have the opportunity to enter the formal economy.

Litter, storage and hygiene

Because informal trading is neither catered for nor managed, storage issues exist, making the sidewalk appear untidy as litter gets generated. Furthermore, in certain cases, food and vegetables are sold alongside the dustbin and in an environment strewn with litter. This poses a number of health as well as hygiene concerns for the buyers, sellers and members of the public.

The above concerns served as solid justifications against the existence of street trade. Nevertheless, there was no consensus on the location of the second market. For instance, an explosion in the Telkom centre on Raleigh Street, and Telkom's decision to sell the plot, was

seen by the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT) as an opportunity for opening a second market on Yeoville's main street, but this option was opposed by market traders because they saw this second market as further competition. Instead, market traders proposed two empty plots on the periphery of the neighbourhood – a solution strongly opposed by street traders as it would compromise their ability to catch pedestrian flows and run a viable business. Furthermore, Yeoville studio researchers were unconvinced by the recommendation of constructing a nucleated market, reasoning that the new market would soon get full and not absorb adequate pedestrian flow. This would be a repeat of the previous case, prompting traders to return to sell on the sidewalks. At this stage, the South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA), a street trader organisation grounded in Yeoville and a Yeoville Studio partner, offered to organise a tour to investigate mechanisms and tools used in other parts of the Johannesburg inner city that allow street trade to occur in a more regulated and managed fashion.

Looking for success stories: Integrated trading tour of Johannesburg inner city

The tour was organised in March 2011, two days after the last community meeting on trading, by SANTRA's spokesperson and Yeoville resident and activist Edmund Elias, in the Retail Improvement District (RID),[4] where Edmund himself trades. Yeoville Studio staff and students participated in the tour, but other Yeoville stakeholders failed to attend. Yeoville Studio therefore endeavoured to document the various design solutions used in the RID to create what SANTRA called 'integrated trading', where street trading and shop trading are working in complementarity rather than in competition with one another, and where street trading becomes an integral part of street life, not an obstacle to it (Abed 2011).[5] The following designs and models in particular were documented.

Kerk Street linear market

Kerk Street linear retail market lies along a critical spine within the inner city, in a pedestrianised street. This market is orderly and controlled. Traders pay a fee (but divisions between the RID management and the City have led to irregular collection) and are assisted by the RID in terms of security, cleanliness and conflict management (see figure 23.2).

The linear market works as an integrated entity with the shops strung along Kerk Street, creating a lively and attractive retail spine while allowing coexistence between formal and informal traders. In addition, the design provides enough room for pedestrian movement. Street traders are expected not to trade in the demarcated area, highlighted by means of a differing paving texture forming a trade boundary line throughout the market. The demarcation of a space for street traders promotes a sense of orderliness within the area, as pedestrians can flow freely and simultaneously have easy access to goods sold by both shops and street traders. The zinc roof structure of the market, the cantilevers attached to formal stores, the pedestrian lighting, trees and a water drainage system collectively promote a favourable physical environment for trade during evenings and on hot or rainy days – although
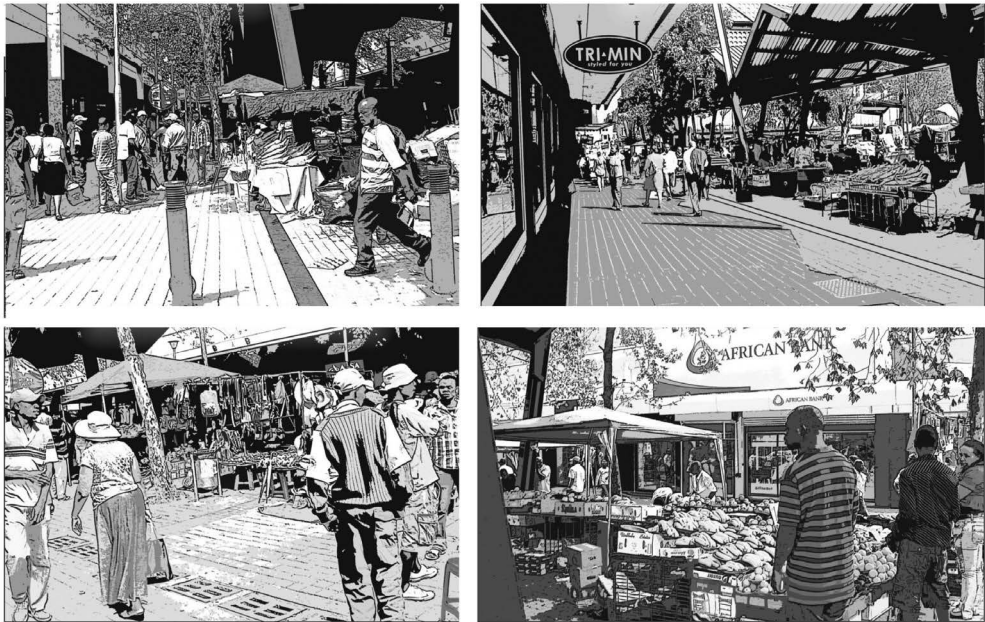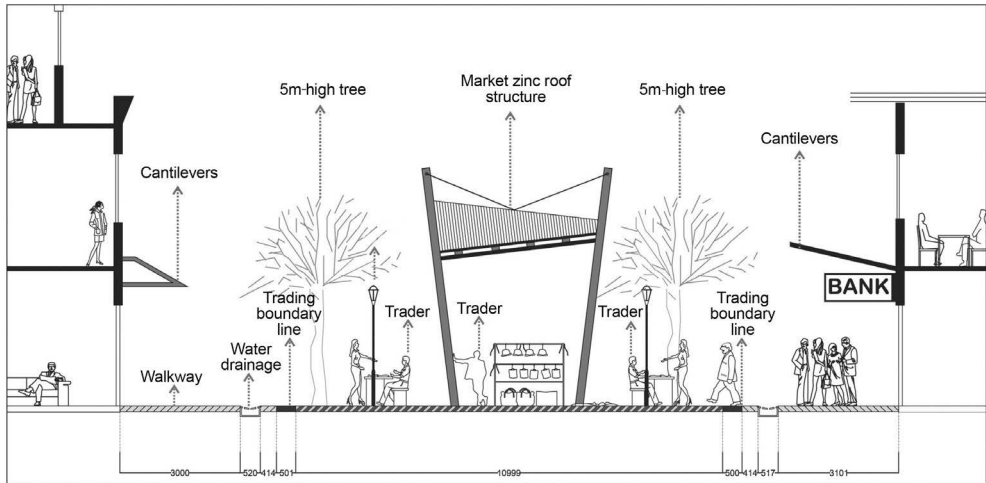
FIGURE 23.2: Kerk Street linear market: Physical design for integrating informal and formal trading
Source: Author, 2014

some traders complain that the cantilever is too high to efficiently protect them from the rain and wind (Malemagoba et al. 2012). Nonetheless, this infrastructure indirectly enhances economic interaction and also lessens the negative factors generally experienced by shoppers passing through this area, in terms of congestion and litter.

Edgar's street-trading stands along Rissik Street

The next trading spot examined was around the Edgars shop, along Rissik Street, where Edgars provided metal trade stands in the streets along its shop windows, for which traders pay a
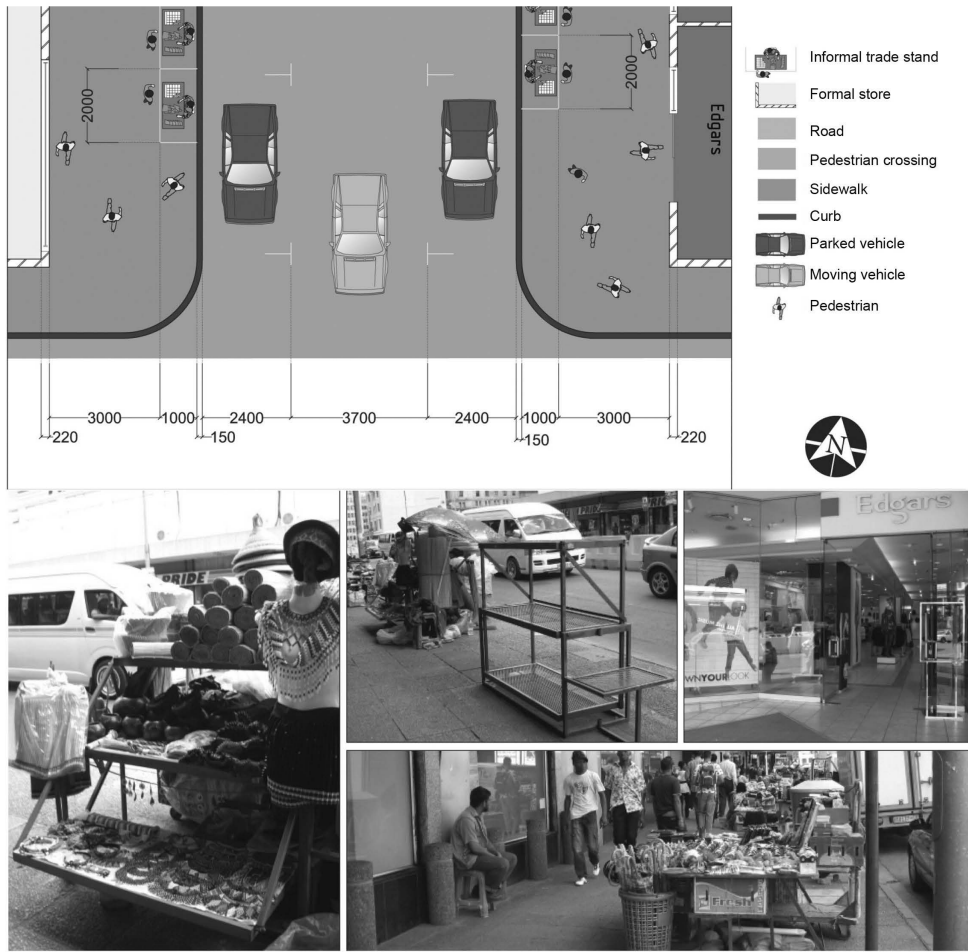
FIGURE 23.3: Rissik Street informal trade: Urban furniture
Source: Author, 2011

monthly fee (estimated by our tour guide to be approximately R30). Figure 23.3 indicates the positioning of the vending stalls outside Edgars, the physical structure of the area and the dimensional value of components such as the metal trade stands as urban furniture within the area.

The stands offer a layered display of products, complementary to those sold in Edgars, making the street more attractive. They have been conveniently designed to fold up when not in use, as the pavement is not very wide in this street. Furthermore, the stands assist in providing a sense of order within the environment, as no informal trader has occupied random portions of the sidewalk and Edgars' entrance remains clear and accessible. It is another successful example, at the initiative of a private business, of accommodating informal traders, making the street commercially more attractive, and managing the street so that the

flow of pedestrians around and into Edgars is not obstructed. Furthermore, the visual access for pedestrians through the glass windows of Edgars is efficiently maintained.

Demarcated sites for informal trading on Joubert Street

Along Joubert Street, street trade takes place along sidewalks, outside formal stores (see figure 23.4). Using yellow paint, the City has demarcated sites of two square metres for each informal trader along the Joubert Street sidewalks. Each demarcated site is given a number so that they are easily identifiable by the street traders who use them, and for easier management as well as allocation.

Joubert Street is a one-way street, offering a single lane for the flow of traffic and two lanes alongside for parallel vehicular parking. Next to the parking area, elevated by a 150 mm-high sidewalk, are the informal trade site demarcations (1 m wide x 2 m long). The dimensions of these sites allow a substantial amount of space for each street trader, giving them the opportunity to sell a variety of goods. It also leaves the traders free to set up a table or a stall to expand their retail space. Alongside the street trade sites lies a 3 m-wide pedestrian

FIGURE 23.4: Demarcated street trade sites along Joubert Street
Source: Author, 2014
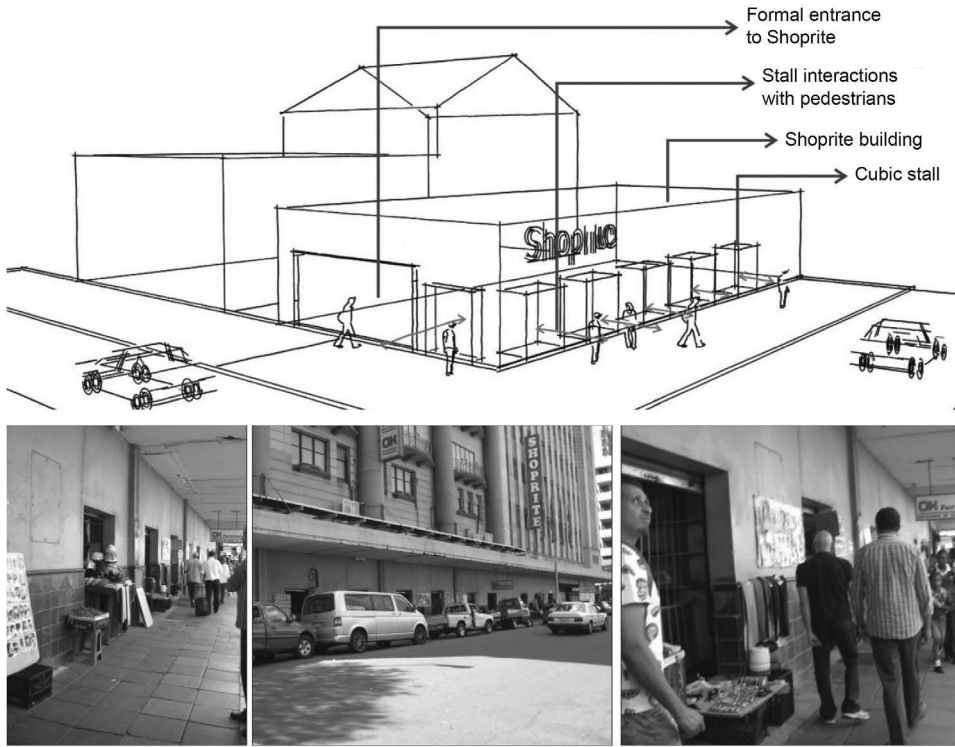
FIGURE 23.5: Cubic stalls embedded in the Shoprite building wall
Source: Author, 2014

walkway which allows a free flow of pedestrian movement between the shops and the street-trading sites. Interestingly, some demarcated areas remain empty. A trader explained that it was not because of lack of street traders, but due to an informal agreement with the specific shopkeeper fronting the demarcated area, who preferred not to have street trading in front of the shop. This area has been designed for pedestrians and considers the economic needs of the public as well as those of formal and informal businesses. The design does not prevent local negotiations between formal and informal traders, as it is light, simple, user-friendly and allows for flexibility.

Informal trade stalls incorporated into Shoprite on President Street

Embedded in the Shoprite building and framing the edge of the sidewalk along President Street are small trade stalls. The stalls, perpendicular to the sidewalk, face formal stores across the street (see figure 23.5). Shoprite, along similar principles to Edgars, seeks to accommodate informal traders around its premises. As the sidewalk is narrow, Shoprite has chosen to use its own space to carve small trading stalls, preserving some privacy for each trader from their neighbour, giving them storage space, and facilitating direct interaction

between traders and pedestrians along the sidewalks. The stalls actually promote interaction at a human scale – with limited encroachment on the sidewalk for advertisement purposes. Replacing what used to be a long, blind Shoprite wall, this series of stalls enhances human surveillance of the area, and changes the social dynamics of the area positively.

The tour revealed a number of different models of integrated informal trading and different physical layouts combined with management systems. The demarcated sites painted on the sidewalks, fold-up stands erected on the sidewalk, lockable stalls carved into a shop wall and linear markets covered with zinc roofs over pedestrianised streets all serve as useful pointers to ways in which informal retailing can be dealt with. The documentation of the findings from this tour (Abed 2011) was used as a tool for researchers to show community members and local activists in Yeoville that the construction of a satellite market in Yeoville was neither the only solution nor the best to solve the problems that existed in Rockey-Raleigh Street, and that alternative solutions could be devised.

Attempting the infusion of participatory design in Yeoville

This quest for integrated street-trading models and designs led Yeoville Studio to develop further research projects for relevant street-trading stall designs that would be adapted to the specific street and pavement layout of Rockey-Raleigh Street in Yeoville. This was organised in 2011 with a cohort of second-year architecture students, coordinated by Wits University staff: Kirsten Dörmann (architect), assisted by Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (urban geographer), Gerald Chungu (urban designer) and me (urban designer).

Participatory workshops were organised with students and street traders, which were held at the Yeoville Recreation Centre (Yeoville Studio 2011b).[6] About 50 street traders participated, and provided input towards the design of street trade stalls that would suit their needs. By responding to students' questions, the traders informed the designs of the stalls that the students were asked to prepare as part of their class project. The designed stalls were then built and presented again to the traders, as well as to the broader Yeoville community at the Yeoville Studio final exhibition, in November 2011.

Based on the first workshop, students and their lecturer developed six different stall types, with a mix between mobile and fixed stalls of different sizes and uses. The stalls were designed by the students, presented to the street traders for their comments and input, and modelled at a scale of 1:1. With the critical distance allowed by time, as well as my own ethnographic experience of street trading acquired in Yeoville and elsewhere, I present below my personal reflections on the final products produced by the architects.

The first stall, called the 'Bus Stop Stall', was based on the principle that traders can absorb the flow of people arriving or departing by bus or taxi. It included a sheltered sitting area and a table incorporated in the bus shelter, where traders could display their goods. Nevertheless, the bus stall was rigid and did not provide a comfortable space for a trader to locate himself/herself in a manner that allows interaction with customers.

The second stall (see figure 23.6), the 'Foldable Trade Facility', was focused on flexibility and convenience. The stall was cleverly designed and allowed traders to use it either as a table

FIGURE 23.6: The 'Foldable Trade Facility'

to display their products or as a stand from which products can hang. This design, however, only promotes the sale of small and light items and therefore limits the diversity of goods that traders are able to sell.

The third stall was called the 'Shade for Trade Stall' as it offered an overhang that provided the trader with shade. Furthermore, it was designed with wheels aimed at making it moveable, and provided areas both for the display of goods and for their storage. Nevertheless, the height of the stall overhang was designed inadequately, blocking the visual accessibility to the display of goods that pedestrians need. Furthermore, the bulky design of the stall made it difficult for traders to move freely along densely populated sidewalks.

The fourth stall, the 'Compartmentalised Stall', served as a more permanent, fixed design. However, the alignment of shelves and compartments was awkward and rather inconvenient to access. The stall offered too much storage space and not enough opportunity for goods display.

The fifth stall, the 'Roll-Away Trade Stall', was designed as a basic, vertical trolley that offered spaces for goods display as well as a space for traders to store the money that they generate. This design was simple yet effective, as it offered the basics that traders require. Following traders' inputs in the second participatory workshop, students added a shelter in the form of an umbrella. Nevertheless, traders would have to be provided with storage facilities for these stalls, as they are quite bulky, especially in cases where traders live on the upper floors of apartment blocks.

The final stall, the 'Drawstring Stall', was simply a cloth on which items could be displayed, allowing traders to quickly wrap up their goods in the cloth in case the metro police arrived. It should not have been considered as a proposal, as it merely replicated what was already happening, adding a string to fold the stall as quickly as possible. But it elicited a lot of laughter as well as interest from the street traders participating in the workshop.
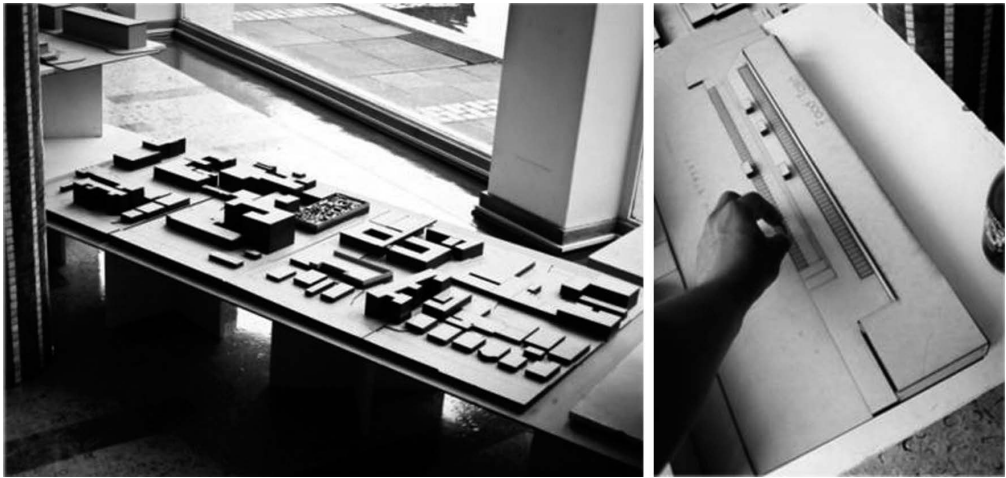
FIGURE 23.7: Participatory scale model of Rockey-Raleigh Street

While students designed the stalls, and after failed attempts to set up participatory design workshops with market traders,[7] Gerald Chungu and I undertook the task of building a model of the street at a scale of 1:500. The aim of building this model was to allow the stalls being designed by the architecture students to be located in context, and to demonstrate that the argument used by the City official, as well as some local activists (YBCDT), that 'Yeoville sidewalks are too narrow to allow for a lot of street-trading stalls', could be debated – if one adopts a more flexible approach to stall sizes and shapes, adapted to the micro-local size and configuration of sidewalks. This larger-context model, along with two detailed models built at a scale of 1:200 representing the densest sidewalks in Yeoville, with various shapes representing the stalls to be moved along the sidewalks, was aimed at allowing traders and the public to participate in the location and positioning of the stalls (see figure 23.7).

However, the political uses of these participatory items, such as a level of public debate around them, were disappointingly limited. A number of weeks was spent on the respective design and modelling exercises, and on the day the Yeoville Studio exhibition was launched (26 November 2011), the stalls were transported by a delivery truck to the Yeoville Recreation Centre, and set up in front of it.

On the day of exhibition, the traders did not understand clearly the purpose of this modelling exercise, as an adequate procedure to explain the usefulness of the context model in conjunction with the stalls designed by the architecture students had not been set up. Furthermore, the production of the context model occurred in isolation from the production of the model stalls: communication between the urban designers and architects had been limited, ultimately creating a misalignment of understanding. Ideally, the moveable stalls on the context model should have been colour-coded in conjunction with the stalls built by the architects, and the arrangement of the display at the exhibition should have been portrayed in this way.

In retrospect, I realise that a large amount of emphasis was placed on the stall designs by the architects, while the urban designers emphasised issues of physical context, and the urban planners and geographers placed their emphasis on the participatory process. In addition to this, and given the intense time pressures the Studio was working under (end of term for students, the exhibition date for the stalls and scale-model construction process), the three groups did not communicate adequately and the essence of the exercise, which was to achieve a composite solution satisfying both market and street traders, was lost. Adding another layer of complexity, the curator of the exhibition, the Visual Arts Network of South Africa (VANSA), which had been hired to help lay out the exhibition,[8] was not able to come on board – possibly also due to lack of time and last-minute finalisation of each item. As a result of VANSA's not understanding the political stakes of the exhibition, the stalls and model were not displayed in a way conducive to much debate.

Ultimately, the process had much potential for successful outcomes, but more time was required in order to facilitate further engagement, as participatory design is an ongoing, often lengthy process of knowledge exchange between designers and 'client'. The issue was also that 'the client' in this instance was a multitude of people (street traders, Studio community partners, and Yeoville pedestrians at large). In spite of the disappointing public debate on the place of street trading in Yeoville, many members of the public showed interest in the stalls and enquired into how they could construct stalls themselves. Designers responded to this by stating that they would produce a booklet on how stalls could be produced and used, but this did not happen as the project had ended for students.

Rethinking the approach to spatial proposals for integrated trading in Yeoville

After experiencing this disappointing path, I started interrogating more directly the role of urban design and designers in dealing with issues posed by developing cities. I realised that the field of urban design ought to look at the built environment holistically rather than monolithically. The participatory approach and general conceptual framework outlined in this chapter look at only one idea: street trading. They only have the capacity to produce new small-scale designs such as urban furniture, but do not allow attention to more macro issues that would give rise to a more holistic design allowing the alignment and overlay of complex city layers. Street trading forms only a single layer. I realised that as an urban designer I needed to act as the central nervous system of the built environment ensuring that all the elements of the city tie together, rather than analysing and solving singled-out aspects of the built environment. This was evident in the case of Yeoville, since the issue of trading served as the epicentre of every exercise.

The outcome of this was the fact that no bigger-scale or longer-term strategy could have been retrieved from any of the processes as a broader contextual spatial understanding was missing. The relationship that Rockey-Raleigh Street has with other important urban links and elements in the area needs to be investigated first in order to pin down a flexible and

agile design that will harness all aspects of the environment including trading. It is with this purpose in mind that I reorganised the conceptual framework of the exercise, along with an appropriate methodology, to be able to produce a tangible proposal, with a spatial component proposed in a design, for integrated trading in Yeoville. This became the course of the research I undertook for my master's research report in Urban Design (Abdul 2014).

A thorough connection between housing and social services, and transport and retailing exists as resultant forces of urban population density, land-use mixes and street connectivity. Increased people densities promote the subdivision of rooms in apartments, which can be considered as informal living. The dense living conditions then gives rise to increased pedestrian flow and extensive use of the public realm, as private spaces have very little room allocated to living space. In response to increasing unemployment rates due to market failure, people extend their living environments closer to or onto the sidewalk in order to create employment for themselves as the increased pedestrian flow creates the opportunity of absorbing a consumer base. Furthermore, they convert building uses in order to accommodate their religious, social and economic needs.

In order to explore these connections, I needed to look beyond Rockey-Raleigh Street and expand my site boundaries towards the whole neighbourhood, so as to understand the relationships of movement related to economics and housing that operate in the area. I then devised a methodology that includes urban ethnography (trading on the sidewalk and riding in taxis), mapping and counting, sketching out physical elements of the built environment and tracking people's movement. This combination of methodologies was influenced by Edmund Bacon (1967), who states that successful urban design can be originated only if the designer acts as a participator in the daily life existent on site. As a result, my approach as a designer was to spend as much time as possible as an active participant in Yeoville, in order to observe and read space intensively. Below I present the results retrieved from each part of the methodology.

Designer as participator: Urban ethnography in the form of trading

Urban ethnography revolves around immersing oneself in order to understand the phenomena one is doing research about. In this case it involved my becoming a street trader, and building personal relationships with traders so as to better understand their living environments, not only in relation to trading, but also in relation to housing and transport.

Executing the ethnographic approach did not come without challenges. Firstly, almost all the street traders in Yeoville are dark-skinned and of African origin, which put me in a vulnerable position as I am fair-skinned and did not blend into this environment easily. My initial strategy for entering the environment as a trader was to shadow an existing trader with whom I was already acquainted thanks to previous engagement with traders through Yeoville Studio: Nothabo, who has been trading in Yeoville for over 13 years outside the Still Coach on Raleigh Street, and was one of the street trader representatives in the participatory process initiated by the City. She agreed to guide me through the process.

At this point in time, many of the traders were still suspicious, fearing that I might be an undercover journalist intending to expose the illegalities of their businesses. I realised

this only when I began capturing photographs of the traders: some of them reacted with anger, and one of the traders snatched the camera from me and threatened to damage it if I did not delete the pictures of him. After much negotiation, I was allowed to take pictures of traders provided I gained individual permission from them prior to doing so. This incident helped me better understand that street trading has a stigma attached to it because of its illegality, and how this illegality is lived. Furthermore, the incident reflected the difficulty of communicating amongst traders: in spite of Yeoville Studio having been present for one year and working with street traders' representatives, information about it was missing, absent or incomplete.

I had to gear myself towards convincing the traders that I was merely there to conduct research, intending to provide a design proposal for Yeoville that would incorporate their needs along with other aspects, rather than to spy on them or even compete with them. I also began handing to them printouts of the pictures that I had taken of them. Incrementally, the ethnographic exercise became interesting and fun to the traders themselves, as they were invited to reflect on their actions in their daily environments in photographic format. Once some trust was built along Rockey-Raleigh Street, traders were no longer concerned about my photographing them. News gradually spread along Rockey-Raleigh Street that there was a new trader in town selling sweets and cigarettes, and capturing photographs of traders. This made it easier for me to relocate to the remainder of the spots along the street and to freely engage with traders.

Through the process of engagement with the traders, I managed to get information from a total of fifteen participants. Of the fifteen traders, thirteen resided locally within Yeoville while the other two lived in the inner city and travelled to Yeoville using taxis. In the context of Yeoville, informal trading is primarily a local phenomenon, carried out by people living in the same area in which they work, or working in the same area in which they live.

Some of my participants allowed me to access their living spaces, and I was able to map the layout of an apartment in which one of my participants lived, providing me with a better understanding of the people densities existent in buildings. Through informal subdivision of flats, the amount of sleeping space has increased dramatically, living space has decreased and ablution as well as cooking space has remained constant. One can hypothesise, with some certainty, that the high people density in subdivided apartments with a lack of space for living has caused an extension of people's living and working environments onto sidewalks as a means of socialising and conducting informal income-generating activity.

Other evidence from Yeoville Studio[9] analyses more broadly the rental housing market and allows for some generalisation of this phenomenon – where 'spaces to rent' are extremely dense and of a specific type, as advertised on the housing wall at the centre of Rockey-Raleigh Street. Studying these adverts shows that many spaces for rent consist of one room, or one lounge, or one corridor, as a response to the extreme scarcity of affordable rental space in Johannesburg inner city. Other evidence shows how this subdivision of living space in flats leads communal spaces, such as external corridors, staircases, building roofs, yards, and so on, to be appropriated for all types of activities – socialising, playing, reading, drinking, or selling.

More generally, the streets of Yeoville remain vibrant as people do not have a choice other than to socialise in the public environment due to limited living space in their immediate residences. Along with this, residents in some cases extend their homes onto the street edge in order to create self-employment in the form of tuck shops or spaza shops.[10] Densities in the private realm have a relatively proportionate relationship with densities in the public realm.

Designer as participator: Taking taxis, following pedestrians and tracking their flow

Becoming a trader enabled me to uncover a link between housing and trading. Furthermore, this ethnography helped me to understand the links between transportation and trading. While sitting and trading on Rockey-Raleigh Street, I noticed that most of my customers would approach me from the southern end of Yeoville in the mornings, but from the northern end of Yeoville in the afternoons.

I then studied the directional movement of pedestrians during mornings and afternoons. After asking some of my customers about where they were heading to, most mentioned that they were either coming from or heading towards Louis Botha Avenue to take taxis heading towards and returning from Alexandra Township as well as Sandton. The location of taxi stops was crucial, as points generating a constantly changing flow of pedestrians towards or away from Yeoville. This prompted me to further investigate the existent taxi routes, which I did by using the taxi system in order to collect data that represents the routes that pedestrians take (no such representation of taxi routes existed). I realised through this mapping exercise that Louis Botha Avenue plays a major role in feeding pedestrians towards the movement arms connecting it to Rockey-Raleigh Street, thus creating a strong relationship between transportation and retailing.

The next research step involved physically counting pedestrians forming the movement. This entailed following pedestrians from Louis Botha Avenue as they get off taxis and photographing them at strategic points. Most of the pedestrians moved towards Rockey-Raleigh Street, where they support both formal stores and informal traders before moving off and disappearing into built structures, which could be assumed to be their places of residence. Interestingly, however, whilst most of their mobility patterns intersected within the economic core, only one of the pedestrians entered the market, while the others supported formal stores or informal traders instead. This does prove that street traders absorb maximum pedestrian flow, while the market does not.

During mornings, many pedestrians head towards and congregate at intersections lying along Louis Botha Avenue as these are taxi drop-off and pick-up points, as mentioned earlier. At that time, street traders position themselves along the north–south movement ways, which takes the density pressure off Rockey-Raleigh Street. Also, at this time the density of traders is not extreme due to the fact that people are rushing to get to work, so support of them is minimal (see figure 23.8, left).

On the contrary, during lunch hours, pedestrian density is alleviated off the north–south movement ways while the density pressure increases along Rockey-Raleigh Street. This is due to the fact that many people flock towards Rockey-Raleigh Street at this time as it offers many restaurants. Furthermore, many people make use of the open spaces to relax and enjoy

Legend (right side):
- Building footprint
- Green open space
- Pedestrian behaviour
- Micro trader locations
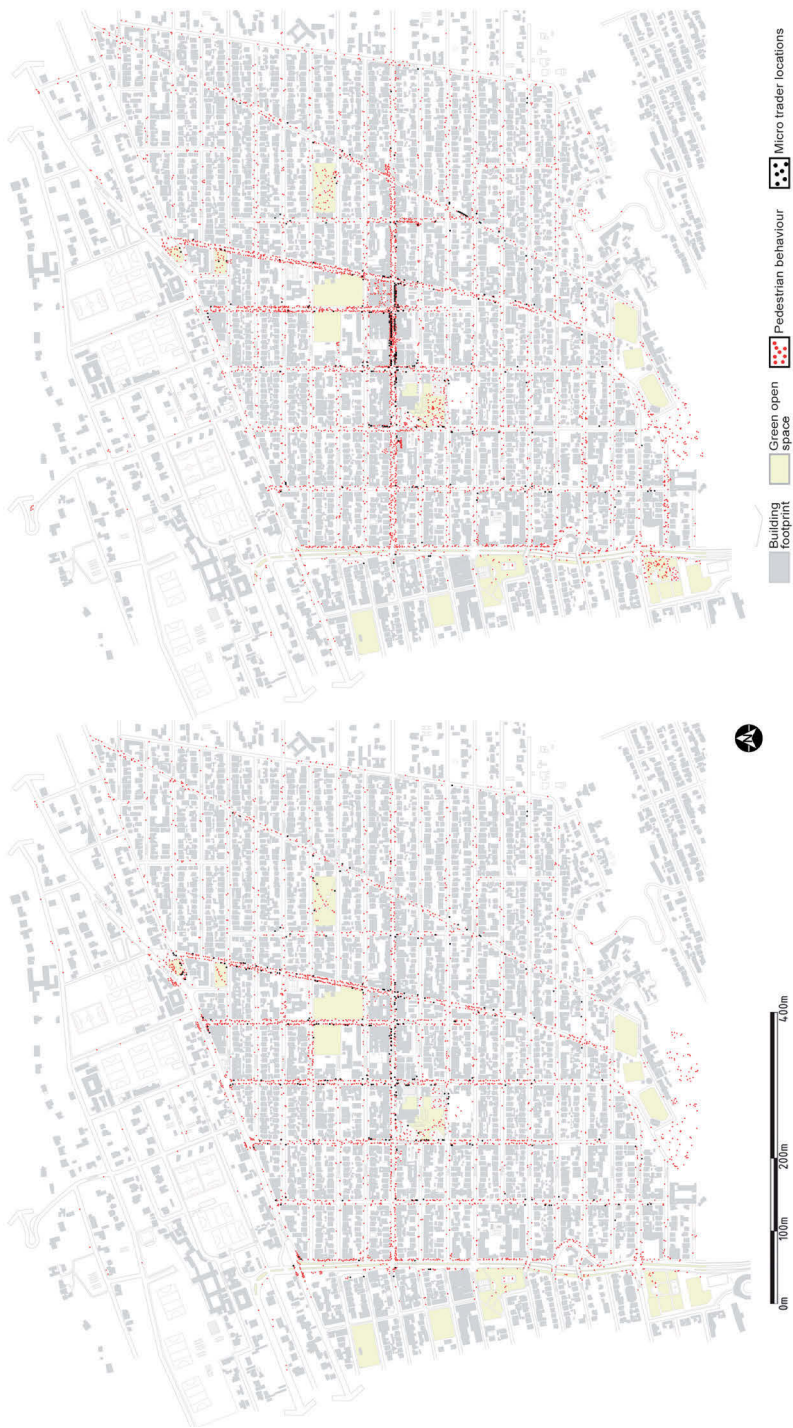
FIGURE 23.8: Pedestrians and street traders in Yeoville, morning (left) and late afternoon (right)
Source: Author, 2014
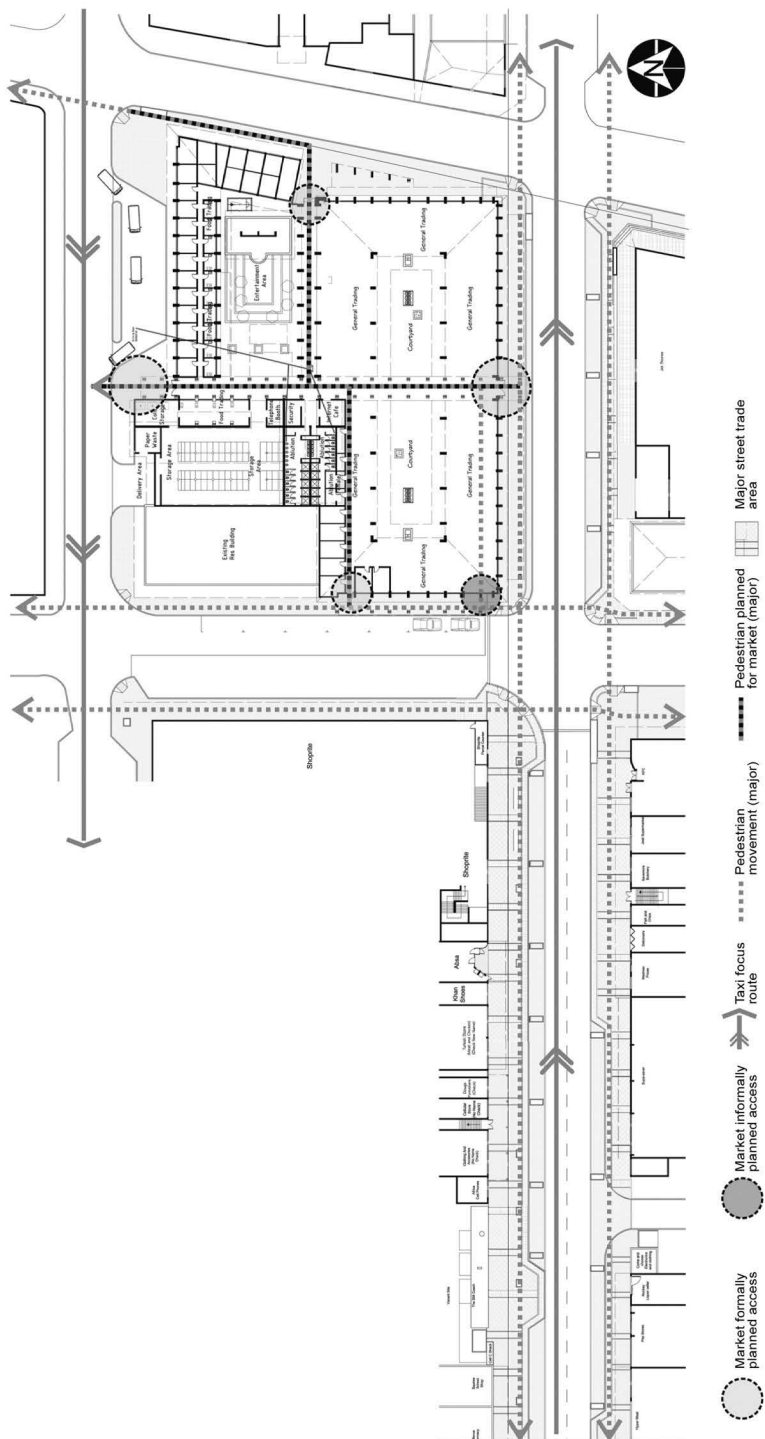
FIGURE 23.9: Failing to catch pedestrian flow: The dysfunctional design of Yeoville market
Source: Author, 2014

their lunch breaks. As a result, traders congregate along Rockey-Raleigh Street in order to absorb pedestrian flow.

During late afternoons, pedestrian movement inevitably represents the inverse of the morning movement as people are returning from work and get dropped off along Louis Botha Avenue by public transport. Intersections (such as the corner of Louis Botha Avenue and Cavendish Road) become extremely busy and therefore feed many pedestrians into Yeoville. Nevertheless, at this time of day, traders do not congregate along the north–south movement ways, but rather along Rockey-Raleigh Street (see figure 23.8, right), as pedestrians have time to linger in the area after work and are attracted to formal stores along the main street. Late afternoons are indeed the busiest time of day in Yeoville public life.

What this demonstrates is the extreme flexibility of street traders, whose location closely follows pedestrian flows and their shifts at different times of the day and the week. They are able to capitalise on pedestrian movement, and catch customers easily. This is in direct contrast with market traders, whose location is by definition fixed in a covered stall. Not only are market traders not able to adapt to shifting pedestrian flows, but the market itself is not designed to capitalise on existing movements around Rockey-Raleigh Street. Indeed, the axial alignment of the movement systems through the market represents a zigzag formation which does not promote pedestrian movement through it (see figure 23.9). The access points of the market are also not placed strategically within the line of pedestrian movement from Louis Botha Avenue towards the central portion of the economic core, which is the most intense area of activity.

An urban design framework for Yeoville

Based on these experiences and principles, I developed an urban design framework for Yeoville and, within it, precinct plans for Rockey-Raleigh Street and design sketches for the market and its surroundings that talk to the issue of integrated trading, which will be the core of this section.

A vision for Yeoville Bellevue as neighbourhood

The vision for Yeoville is embedded in a strategy to integrate housing with the economic environment and current as well as future transportation. This manifests itself through a pedestrian-oriented design, based on the interpretation of localised movement systems (street connectivity), an enhanced mix of uses and increased building density that can absorb and cater for the high volumes of people entering Johannesburg.

The urban design framework (see Abed 2014) rests on the following main principles:

- Using the critical edges (Louis Botha Avenue, Joe Slovo Drive, Yeoville Ridge) and Rockey-Raleigh Street as platforms for increased building density and ordering built form along these elements so as to promote connectivity.
- Viewing the edges as main urban levers and deciphering the function of each in order to trigger the formation of passive space reserved from the concentration of active space. For

instance, Louis Botha Avenue is to be seen as a fast active space, a primary public transport mobility spine; Joe Slovo Drive, as an active space with primary edge functionality; Yeoville Ridge, as a passive space with a primary function of preservation; whilst Rockey-Raleigh Street is defined as a slow active space with primary pedestrian mobility and a shopping spine.

- Creating a comfortable environment for pedestrian movement along major north–south pedestrian movement ways leading to the economic core, and promoting the use of activated hard open space/public squares as arrival spaces at identified major transportation junctions.
- Strengthening the urban economic core to provide local benefit to formally and informally based stakeholders, by formalising informally used built structures, yet respecting current densities without permanently displacing current occupants, and consolidating new open space that integrates into the economic core.

Designing the Rockey-Raleigh precinct for localised solutions in Yeoville

Within this general urban design framework, emphasising pedestrian movement and connectivity, the vision for the Rockey-Raleigh precinct more specifically (and the place of trading therein) relies on the following principles, informed by the extensive and multiple research methods presented above:

- Focusing on the needs of pedestrians through ensuring that vehicular movement (public and private transport) supports rather than hinders human movement and activity in the area. This includes building a road hierarchy to ensure categorisation of speed flows, but also planning regular stops for taxis in order to ensure efficient flow and to eradicate vehicle and pedestrian conflict, and creating safe, well-coordinated movement by calming vehicular traffic and enhancing the pedestrian environment.
- Retaining the flexibility of life on the sidewalk for street traders and pedestrians through minimal intervention. This entails promoting the construction of a comfortable and aesthetic public realm through the use of tree-scaping on paths and landscaping of public spaces, and paying particular attention to public squares and traffic intersections. Trees should be placed strategically to provide shade for taxi stops, street parking, urban furniture such as benches, and even informal traders.
- Ensuring that courtyards are permeable through to the main spine from transport stops lying on rear streets, while still being active work and entertainment zones.

Figure 23.10 illustrates how the design reflects some of these principles around Yeoville market. The axial alignment of the market has been changed to respect the intersection as a convergence point. The other buildings lying along this intersection also respect the convergence point as their entrances have been reconfigured. The market has been reconfigured in a way that promotes economic behaviour, as it houses a skills training centre and a light industrial/manufacturing space on its upper floors. Furthermore, it incorporates urban farming on the roof areas so that some vegetables can be supplied locally. A glass triangular roof assists in providing greater natural lighting, thus uplifting the atmosphere in
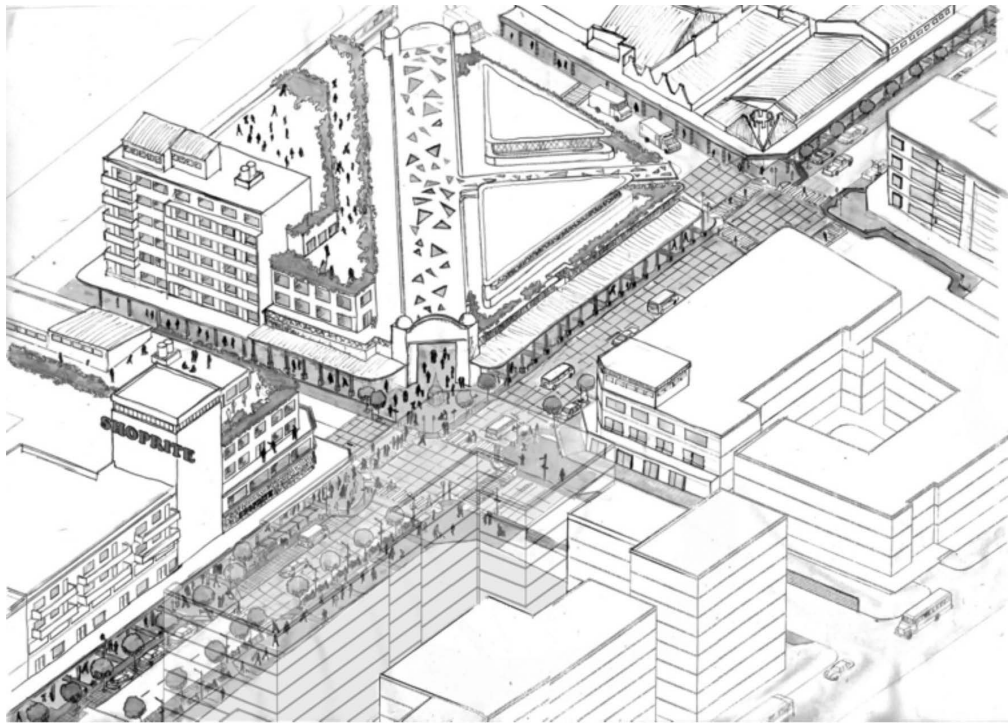
FIGURE 23.10: Catching pedestrian flow: A reconfigured market and street design
Source: Author, 2014

the market. The front portion of the market is therefore used to sell and respects the street edge while simultaneously absorbing movement of pedestrians (according to my analysis), while the rear portion, which appends itself to the already existing residential building, is a bulked-up portion promoting productivity to supply the market and street traders with goods. Programming buildings in this manner allows economic growth as people have access to skills development while working in the informal sector and can then graduate into manufacturing and production. Thereafter, they can be further empowered in terms of management principles and ultimately acquire the ability to build up enough capital to start their own more formal businesses.

Figure 23.10 also indicates the manner in which traders can position themselves in relation to pedestrian flow and building edges. In some cases, trees shading the on-street parking double up as shade for traders along with the overhang of buildings, while in other cases, where on-street parking is not present, trees are planted on the margin lines. The margin lines also host benches as well as dustbins in order to ensure a friendly and clean environment.

The blind wall outside the Shoprite building has been made to incorporate cubic stalls, and this building, along with many others on the link, has been extended vertically by three or four storeys. The area outside the Shoprite building is the densest area in Yeoville due

to the fact that people visit Shoprite. A transportation point has been created outside the building for buses and taxis, and this portion should remain clear of any form of trading. Instead, traders should use the cubic stalls provided.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that the physical functioning of developing cities and neighbourhoods must be treated with sensitivity. It indicates that housing, transport and retailing are connected and therefore recommends that street connectivity, building density and land-use mix serve as the building blocks for consideration when designing for developing cities. This collectively forms a new conceptual framework that can assist designers to deal with developing city conditions. The shift away from a narrow understanding of urban design as a tool that deals with micro problems and cleans up the city, to understanding it as a powerful mechanism that holistically deals with connected issues of the built environment represents a refreshed understanding for those dealing with the complex layers existent in contemporary cities.

The experience of the Studio has been key in making that shift, in ways that traditional exposure to urban design training or professional experience seldom provides. The ability to navigate trials and errors through prolonged exposure and multiple forms of engagement with traders, pedestrians, residents, activists and local authorities was key. Studio work in a multi-disciplinary academic team both demonstrated incredible richness that helped me go beyond the boundaries of my own discipline (urban design), and showed the challenges of sustaining multi-disciplinary work over time. These reflections have shaped the urban designer whom I have become.

The use of mixed methods to unpack the energies provided by the population of cities in the developing world assists one in providing finely tuned, composite proposals that will add value to the lives of contemporary urban dwellers. It also supplies a platform to harness longer-term visions that enhance the performance of cites and neighbourhoods such as Yeoville, generating sustainable livelihoods, away from unsustainable vehicular-dominated mindsets to new ways of living, working, playing, praying and relaxing.

Notes

1   See figure 23.9.
2   Interview, Maurice Smithers, Yeoville, 2011.
3   See Bénit-Gbaffou, chapter 28, this book.
4   The RID is a City Improvement District where property owners agree to pay a dedicated levy to an elected board of property owners, who use the funding locally to complement municipal services.
5   This became the start of a series of studies and research reports on the various street-trading management-model experiments in the RID. See Bénit-Gbaffou, chapter 28, this book.
6   A master's student volunteered to act as translator into isiZulu, in an effort to overcome the language barrier between researchers and street traders.

7   See Bénit-Gbaffou, chapter 28, this book.

8   As was required by the exhibition's main funder.

9   See Dörmann et al.; Dörmann & Mkhabela; and Mayson; in this book.

10   See Dörmann & Mkhabela; and Matjomane; in this book.

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24 Street photography and the politics of representation: A portrait of Muller Street

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU AND SALLY GAULE

Without romanticising Yeoville and the urban and social challenges it is currently facing, what strikes the outsider coming to Yeoville for the first time is the vibrancy of its street life. This is not often to be found in South African cities. In Yeoville, one can walk freely. As in some townships, one could say, but Yeoville's streets are denser, more diverse, less exclusively residential than in townships, giving them a specific buzz. Another difference is that, whereas some residents have lived in Yeoville for decades, many are newcomers, and stay for a short period of time before moving to other parts of the city. Some residents know their neighbours very well, some don't; most engage with others in the street – to greet, to borrow, to help, to chat, to patrol, to clean, to play, to shop, to work, to make a living.

It is this practice of the street, the specific material and social environment it offers, that second-year architecture students from the University of the Witwatersrand took as the object of a photographic essay in August 2010, under the coordination of their lecturer Sally Gaule (photographer), with the assistance of Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (urban geographer and Studio director). The students were tasked to portray the street in photographs, responding to its buildings, its character and the people who live and work there. They sought to show aspects of its poetry, its drama, and also its everydayness.

The street selected for this exercise was Muller Street, which runs parallel to Rockey-Raleigh Street in its western portion, between Grafton and Cavendish streets. Muller Street was chosen because of its active street committee, coordinated by one of its residents, Mr Wilfred Dudula,

who was excited by the initiative, which he saw as an opportunity to bring the street together as a community, beyond the street patrols and the cleaning campaigns he drives on a weekly basis.

This gave the whole exercise a different twist. After the students had finished the course with Sally, the lecturers decided to put together a street photographic exhibition, hosted in Mr Dudula's front yard, for street residents and users to engage. The exhibition turned into a workshop, a debate on the street between students and residents, and finally amongst residents themselves – the pictures objectifying an external gaze over residents' collective and intimate spaces, and triggering emotions – of shame, pride, fears, aspirations, agency, powerlessness – related to self and public representation (see box 24.1).

This chapter reflects on the tradition of street photography, whose significance is multi-layered in space and time, and its (almost fortuitous) interaction with the micro-community it represents in a specific moment, which led the authors to reflect also on the politics of representation.

What is street photography?

Street photography has a long history, beginning almost with the invention of photography itself. In Johannesburg, it is of unique value because so much of our cities is torn down to make way for new developments. Johannesburg is in a phase of redevelopment and the layering of different uses of space can be captured photographically. Images such as these are important, as they come to stand as part of the historical record *and* as testament to the metamorphosis of the city. Indeed they contain the imprint of history.

One of the premises that much cultural theory is based on is *looking*. As Neil Leach notes, 'What we see on the surface, is the product of deeper underlying forces, and in order to understand those forces we need to interpret the surface level' (Leach 2002: 1). By photographing in Muller Street, students were able to examine, explore and understand the social and economic histories embedded in its spaces, whilst simultaneously learning a valuable presentation technique.

As part of the initial thrust of this project, students were shown images from the history of street photography, including the work of, for example, Eugene Atget, Helen Levitt, Robert

Frank, Garry Winogrand, Gideon Mendel and David Goldblatt, to inform them about the scope of the genre, and to inspire their own work. These examples were intended to promote visual awareness of the possibilities offered by the theatre of the street. Helen Levitt's work was an important example demonstrating her awareness of the momentariness of events coupled with a speed and dexterity with the camera that is exceptional. In contrast, David Goldblatt's photographs of Johannesburg's streets showed a slower, more contemplative approach. Gideon Mendel's images from the project 'Living in Yeoville', taken in the 1980s, formed an important precedent for students since he depicted the community of Yeoville against the backdrop of the built environment when fissures in the apartheid regime were beginning to appear. Taken in supermarkets, shops, parks, streets and at bus stops, Mendel's photos depicted seemingly ordinary life in South Africa in the 1980s. One picture from this series showed two teenagers sitting on a swing in a park: one is black and the other white. Composed with the chains of the swing running down vertically between them, it suggested the divisions and separations that pervaded our society at the time. But those brave figures that Mendel photographed that day represented the beginnings of the change that occurred in the succeeding decades. Mendel's photographs heralded a future that the architecture students sought to enlarge upon. Some students, for instance, reiterated the picture of a swing, building on the strong geometric framing that swings give to space – but here depicting rather a feeling of abandonment, captured by the single child on the swing and the barren and deserted park in winter (see figure 24.1). Other students purposefully captured the street's liveliness – the casual and daily conviviality of familiar spaces, in their specific built environment, where

FIGURE 24.1: The swings

FIGURE 24.2: Natmiri Court

low-rise, partly derelict Art Deco buildings under the smooth shadows of jacaranda trees dominate the urban landscape (see figure 24.2).

In taking photographs of streets and ordinary everyday life, one must be alert to the features that are unique to the place, and also of the period. At the time of taking a photograph, one cannot know what will be important or noteworthy to a spectator 10 or 15 years hence. As Ian Walker (2011: 29) notes, 'The problem is that, at the point the photograph is taken, it's hard to tell which pictures will matter and which will not.' Thus, larger historical resonances, pasts, presents, and how images might be read in a future time of changed significance and changed importance were also considered by the students when taking these pictures. Of the issue of looking back at everyday scenes, Daniel Jewesbury (2011: 44) had this to say:

> Latent within them for all this time has been a wealth of information that was taken for granted because it was the environment that we could all see all around us; but one day, one looks at an image and realises that the world isn't like that anymore; sometimes one can't believe that it ever was; at other times, one is shocked not by change but its absence.

Although street photography, as Geoff Dyer (2005) maintains, had its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, it is a genre which continues to have currency today, and to be practised by photographers across the globe. Street photographs operate as historical markers.

FIGURE 24.3: Child in the street

Students handled photography in a non-judgemental and empathetic way, offering a lightness and poetry to the street that has parallels with Helen Levitt and also with the aesthetic that is exemplified by this genre of photography (see figure 24.3).

Arising out of an aesthetic of the picturesque, of the beauty in worn surfaces, rundown neighbourhoods and children playing on the streets, these images depict the kinds of things that aren't witnessed in 'well-to-do' suburbs, where leisure takes place, largely, behind high walls. What this project offered was a moment in the ongoing transition taking place in Yeoville, resonating more widely with political, economic and social forces that continue to change the landscape of South Africa itself.

The process

In the second phase of this project, residents of Muller Street were invited to a workshop to engage with the students' pictures. Forty-eight pictures were selected according to both their aesthetic and technical value and their social interest, printed, and posted on the walls of Mr Dudula's front yard in Muller Street. The workshop, facilitated by a Yeoville Studio team consisting of Wits staff and planning students on 30 October 2010, attracted about 50 residents and users of the street. Participants were asked to select images through the

FIGURE 24.4: Muller Street with a cyclist

use of coloured stickers and discuss their choices: two pictures that they liked, two that they disliked and two that in their view were 'representative of Muller Street'. Participants sat in small groups facilitated by Wits staff and students, and discussed their choices. Then all joined a general discussion, conducted by residents, on striking aspects of life in Muller Street, around a lunch shared in the street under the shade of the blooming jacaranda trees.

In the last phase of the project, an exhibition was held at the Yeoville Recreation Centre in December 2010, where more residents were given the opportunity to see the photographs and the debates they had triggered amongst the Muller Street users, some of which had been captured in writing and displayed alongside the pictures. As with the workshop conducted previously, the public was given the opportunity to write their opinions about the comments and the photographs, offering yet another level of interpretation and debate.

What we learnt from the types of picture chosen by residents

Pictures preferred by participants emphasised a sense of ownership, control, protection and pride over space. Three groups of pictures emerged:

- The photographs representing houses well taken care of through their domesticated nature (gardens or trees); a sense of home, of ownership and control over private space, through fences or a closed gate; or quiet human presence (as illustrated in figures 24.2 and 24.3).

FIGURE 24.5: Children in a cage

- Pictures showing peaceful and well-maintained public street space, with a strong sense of social order, through religious institutions and/or human presence. They conveyed a sense of quietness, safety and peace. In these pictures, there are no cars, few pedestrians, no children and no traders. The trees offer shade, and the street is clean and quiet (see figure 24.4).

The picture of children behind the bars of a crèche (see figure 24.5) was by far the most preferred, and also generated much debate about children's safety in Yeoville. Protection of youth was a key concern, even to the detriment of their freedom to play and explore. Interestingly, danger in the street was perceived as mainly coming from cars – more than from crime, gangs or abuse.

Pictures that were disliked the most were largely focused on youth, and the social fears youth embodies – unemployed and uneducated youth turning to crime, and issues of abortion, teenage sex and pregnancy (no mention of AIDS was made). Pictures highlighting informality, poverty or unemployment were also selected, linked in discussion to a sense of disorder and loss of control. Amongst the most commented on were:

- A photograph showing a yard displaying second-hand items for sale elicited a lot of negative comments on the disorder and sense of dirt and neglect it brought to the street, on the lack of accommodation of customers, and even on the possibly dishonest way in which the goods were acquired.

FIGURE 24.6: Loitering?

- A picture showing an abortion leaflet, posted on a street pole, raised the most heated debates and was unanimously detested. Discussions ranged from the right to abortion, to teenage sex and pregnancy, to health risks and women's rights.
- A photograph of young males loitering (see figure 24.6) embodied fears of unemployed young men turning to crime, and, more broadly, evoked women's fears when walking alone in the street. Another one, featuring schoolchildren in their uniforms, loafing outside the school, raised similar concerns, of teenagers not being serious about their education, smoking and loitering 'instead of studying', being exposed to drugs and other risks.

Pictures that were seen as the most representative of Muller Street 'as it is' were varied, as there was some confusion about the term 'representative': some participants selected the pictures they *wanted* to represent them, rather than those which were in their view the closest to reality.

A photograph of the church was selected as 'representative' – both because of the age and beauty of the building (it has always been there and always will be) and for the sense of dignity and social respectability (being 'proper') it conferred on the area and its inhabitants. This was overwhelmingly the first choice, even if most people who selected the picture confessed they did not go to this church!

Views of the street with its trees, in a quiet moment (as illustrated in figure 24.4), were chosen both as a true representation of Muller Street (pride in the trees), and a desirable state for the street (no cars, no children, no spaza shops, and so on).

FIGURE 24.7: Selling in the street

Pictures representing street traders and spaza shops (as exemplified in figure 24.7) were discussed as 'truly representative of Muller Street as it is, whether one likes it or not'.

Some pictures provoked interesting debate amongst residents, providing the opportunity to construct what Muller Street residents wish for their street as a community in the making.

A photograph of an original house, with particular architecture, artwork in the garden, and many cats, was unevenly appreciated, and raised debates about social conformity (see box 24.2). Whilst some admired its uniqueness, most did not enjoy it and saw its design and architectural features as signs of dirt, untidiness and lack of care, or even called it an 'unfinished building'. Social judgements abounded, on the house as well as on the owner's way of life (for instance, his love of cats): some stressed the mismatch between his way of living and their own representations of how a white man should live, possibly linked to middle-class aspirations.

A photograph showing an abortion leaflet created anger amongst all, but different things outraged different people. Some made statements on abortion as 'a sin', condemned by the Church, or on the need for sexual abstinence by teenagers. Others raised social concerns about teenage pregnancy and how it hinders female education and future prospects. Others were concerned about the informal character of this abortion practice ('quick same day'), and the risks it represented for teenagers' health and safety, as well as the high visibility and availability of this type of service – what it reveals about youth practices and what it supposedly encourages.

A: I like this house.

Facilitator: What do you like about the house?

A: It's different from all the other houses. It is the only that stands out, which has got this pottery thing. It's got its own design, the only house that has this old design, the roofing, the pottery. It's very nice.

B: I stay near here. A white man stays there. It's very dirty, even the front of the house. Those [roof] tiles are on the floor, there are about 20 to 40 cats and dogs – you won't say a white man stays there.

What we learnt through the process: The construction of a collective local moral order

The framing of the workshop, in focus groups facilitated by Wits staff and students, conditioned many of the comments that we collected. Debates and arguments were deployed in a small group, generally internally diverse (age, nationality, gender, race), and facilitators encouraged the expression of different points of view. But we did not hear a collection of individual points of view – rather, debates and processes of opinion building. We witnessed (and were an integral part of) processes of peer pressure, presentation of self (including to us academics) and a degree of competition within the group to lead the discussion or win the argument ('does this picture represent us "well"?').

What was interesting, beyond comments on the street itself, was to witness the process of collective construction of social norms: defining together what is acceptable and what is not, and, as such, building Muller Street as a community. Often, conservative or middle-class values were stated very strongly, emphasising law and order, cleanliness, safety and protection (which we understood as true aspirations), whilst downplaying various aspects of social life, entertainment, and informality (which we read as actual practices).

Peer pressure: Constructing a community of vision?

The best example of peer pressure towards the construction of social norms was the way judgement on specific pictures shifted in the discussion (see box 24.3).

Social aspirations versus daily practices: The place of informality in Yeoville

On informality, its place and its role in Yeoville, debates arose about pictures of spaza shops, which were sometimes selected as 'representative of the street', and sometimes discarded as 'disliked'. Often, views were not settled, as participants were caught between official City discourses, imagined middle-class visions of a residential suburb, and their own, everyday, buying practices.

An old woman, dressed beautifully in traditional Angolan attire, arrives, sits down in the shadow on the corner, points to photo (figure 24.8) and says something in Portuguese. The facilitator asks A, who presents herself as her granddaughter, to translate.

A: No, she does not understand; I'll explain to her what the workshop is about.
Facilitator: OK, but what did she say?
A: She says she likes [figure 24.8]. She said: 'The child is free.'

Later
A: She says she likes this one [figure 24.5], because the children are safe, and it is an example for all the other ones. This one [figure 24.8], she doesn't like it.

Note: These are the choices that A has also made for herself.
Facilitator: But I thought she liked the photo? Initially she said she liked it, because the child is free.
A: No, she liked it when she did not know that the child was playing on the street. Now that she understands, she says no, an accident could happen. It is better if they are kept inside.

FIGURE 24.8: 'The child is free'

BOX 24.4: 'I don't know if we should get rid of tuck shops or not'

A: These photos, the tuck shops. You can't change that. That represents Yeoville. They are almost in the whole of Yeoville. It is everywhere. Now on Muller a new one just open, just at the corner there. I don't know if we should get rid of it or not.
B: I think it is too much. It is a threat to business.
Facilitator: Do you buy from them?
A: We do use them. I can't go all the way to Rockey. Sometimes it is late, I am busy cooking and just something is missing, I'll go there and find it. But two or three are fine, they mustn't be too much.
B: They are damaging the view of the street, or the house itself. They're building one at the corner, there, and another one after the school. That is a competition.
A: We don't want them like the Ethiopians.
Facilitator: What do you mean?
A: Some of them have been forced to close down because of their [lower] prices.[1]
Facilitator (*smiling*): So you would like to pay more for the stuff?
A (*laughing*): No!

Poverty, fears and social shame

Most participants were not at ease with photographs showing poverty in their street. They seldom engaged with it as a collective social or policy issue. Rather, they blamed the poor, whilst occasionally stressing their individual courage or the difficult conditions they lived under. Many wished them away, as they thought visible poverty gave a bad image to the street, and of themselves as a result. A picture of homeless men, of an old woman selling (see figure 24.7), were occasions where this feeling of shame was implicitly or explicitly expressed. It is

BOX 24.5: 'Homeless people do not represent us nicely'

A: I don't like this photo (*showing two men in rags sitting on the pavement*). This boy is homeless. I am used to seeing him, at the same place. They are asking for food. It shows that there are some people suffering. Even once, he came to our place asking for food, this guy. I gave him some.
B: They must go. There are some places for homeless people. I feel scared when I pass through there, they might rob you. They are hungry and hunger can push you to do bad things. Also (*hesitating*) sometimes they sleep there, it is risky. It is risky for their own health.
C: This photo does not represent us nicely. They sit next to the church where they'll get some food. It shows we are not able to take care of our own.

A: I think this one [figure 24.7] represents Yeoville. It is opposite to where I stay. I know this lady.
B (*interrupts*): She should stay at home. Do you think she should work in the street? She is too old.
C: But it is better than those loiterers (*showing photo represented in figure 24.6*).

Note: C had also said earlier, pointing to the picture of an old man working in a garden: 'I also like this *madala*[2] of mine. It represents … at least it shows we still have our old people with us. Most of us are younger people. We are taking care of him; we did not put him in the street.'
A (*indignant*): But she is not that old! She is maybe in her sixties. Sometimes I buy from her, small things, sweets. She is there almost every day. I greet her.
C: This place is not a market – she is not supposed to be there. Metro police are always around.

difficult to say whether it was merely the shame of admitting local poverty in front of (Wits) outsiders; or deeper fears of being themselves not far away from poverty.

Representations of drinking and entertainment: Balancing social evils and popular sociability

On drinks and entertainment, discussion emerged around a picture of two men sitting in a yard, possibly a house converted into a shebeen. Perhaps because alcoholism is such an important issue in Yeoville, also possibly shaped by the strong official discourses against the shebeens and taverns proliferating in the neighbourhood, most participants were quick to morally condemn the drinkers, and even personify them as criminals – an interpretation that was, however, contested.

This last conversation, even more than the previous one, showed also the challenges of setting up a conversation in such an uneven social setting – Yeoville resident-participants adapting their discourses to what they thought was expected by Wits middle-class academics, in terms of social norms and moral values. Here the facilitator (a white middle-class woman) attempted to disrupt that pattern by breaking the format of the interview away from the 'neutrality' often expected from facilitators: challenging participants' answers and revealing personal details not matching with participants' assumptions.

More generally, however, the workshop process revealed how these strong (reciprocal) assumptions made conversations difficult: a classic phenomenon in the social sciences but perhaps reinforced in a post-apartheid society, in particular along racial lines.

However, prejudices and preconceptions are not limited to the relationship between academics and popular communities. During the Yeoville Stories exhibition, held in

A: I don't like this one (*showing two men drinking beer in a yard, sitting on boxes*). I don't like these guys, because after they drink … they're dangerous to all of us. It is not good to drink. *Everyone agrees.*

B: They are not on the street, they are in their yard doing their own thing. They look like *madala*.[3]

A: It is like they are drinking and planning something. You know, it is there you'll find organised crime.

Facilitator (*to A*): Don't you ever, ever drink?

A: No. You see, I used to drink a lot. The way I used to be when I was drunk … I know. I was very violent.

B: I, myself, I drink but not too much. There is nothing wrong with alcohol; it is up to the person. Sometimes if you are bored at least you can keep yourself busy. Of course, if you don't even have money to buy food for the family, you need to appreciate if you want to spend your money on drinks.

Facilitator: Me too, sometimes I drink, especially with my friends.

D: I do drink sometimes – for instance, watching soccer on the TV with my husband, or basketball, yes, he likes basketball. We drink at home.

Facilitator: Never outside?

D: Yes, we go out. But being a mom, it ties me. I don't go out that much.

Facilitator: Same for me … I used to go out much more. You know I actually met my husband in Time Square?

D: (*excited, giggling*) No! I can't believe you! Hey (*calling her friend*), come, come quick! You know that she met her husband in Time Square? … Yeah, I love Time Square. Time Square and eKhaya, there are very nice places. Lots of socialites go there. I used to meet most of the *Generation*[4] crew in eKhaya. It is a fun place to be. You mingle. That is the place to be. We also go to some other places, you know, my husband is Congolese.

Facilitator: Oh! So do you go to Kin Malebo [Congolese restaurant in Yeoville]?

D (*surprised, happy*): Oh, you know Kin Malebo?!

Facilitator: Yes, I often go there with my family. We enjoy the *mabundu* [Congolese fish] there.

E (*laughing*): Yes! *Mabundu*!

D: We go there all the time. The fish is good.

November 2010, where some of these pictures together with residents' comments about them were displayed, some visitors reacted strongly. In the picture representing young males 'loitering' in the street (figure 24.6), which had attracted such negative comments around crime and insecurity, one member of the public explained: 'But how can that be? This man [in the picture] is the church organist, he devotes his time to the community, he is no drug

dealer!' Schoolchildren also reacted with indignation to derogatory comments denouncing learners' irresponsibility, in response to a photograph showing them in their uniforms in the street: 'It was the day where teachers were on strike! We were not "loitering"!'

Conclusion

The process of capturing photographs and discussing them with residents demonstrated how powerful photographs are for triggering conversations and hot debates. Their aesthetic value was often appreciated by residents, and sometimes offered a space for imagination and storytelling, as mentioned above in the debate around figure 24.8, or as was the case in an individual comment on the picture displayed in figure 24.3: 'I like it. I feel good when I look at it. The boy is playing, or maybe he is just watching. It is peaceful.'

But generally it was the projection of social issues embodied in the photographs that dominated the debates. Debates were often vigorous – humorous and friendly but deep, as a result of the photographs bearing the dual meanings of 'representation' (Pitkin 1967): reflecting daily realities, as a mirror, but also advocating to the outside world what this 'community' of the street is or wishes to be, or not to be. Fantasies, fears, concerns and prejudices but also aspirations and dreams mark the comments made by residents. What was striking to us, as academic outsiders, was the gap between discourses and practices, and the difficulty in acknowledging, and perhaps even celebrating, popular cultures and ways of being. Illustrative of this were the reiterated ambiguities, if not contradictions, of residents' discourses about street traders: first condemning street trading as epitomising the neighbourhood's 'decay' and a mismatch with individual aspirations to middle-class status or perhaps collective aspirations to be part of a world-class city; then, when encouraged to talk about their own practices, appreciating street traders for providing services, contributing to safety and being a friendly presence in the street.

Participating student photographers

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Notes

1   Reference to xenophobic violence exerted against foreign spaza traders by South African residents (especially in townships and informal settlements).
2   Old man, in Zulu.
3   See note 2 above.
4   A popular TV show.

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25 Knowledge construction in a multi-disciplinary perspective: Portraying Natal-Saunders Street

SOLAM MKHABELA, CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU AND KIRSTEN DÖRMANN

The street is a juridically ambiguous, politically dirty, architecturally heterogeneous product.
At the same time it is a very simple void space, a very understandable theatre for action.
Its simplicity allows for its complexity.

– Maria Shéhérazade Giudici, 2012

In Yeoville Studio 2011, Solam Mkhabela (an urban designer who uses photography as a tool to understand the city) built his photography course for second-year students in the architecture programme, in dialogue with Claire Bénit-Gbaffou (a planner and Studio coordinator, who based her approach on the 2010 experience of a street photography interactive exhibition). This dialogue was stimulating and exciting, as Solam and Claire came from different perspectives, personal histories, academic disciplines and imaginations of the city, but shared a passion for Yeoville, for students, for the city and for walking the street. We chose to report part of this dialogue in this book, through the facilitation of Kirsten Dörmann (an architect interested in multi-disciplinary dialogue), to give readers an idea of what goes into the fabric of a course, to reflect on the production of knowledge and its pedagogy, and to illustrate some of the processes that occurred, within the School of Architecture and Planning at Wits, during Yeoville Studio.

Personal

For the purposes of this reconstructed dialogue, Kirsten, as facilitator, asked Solam and Claire for an initial statement on their experiences of the street.

Solam

I am an urbanist. Ever since I left the rural area where I was born, 47 years ago, I have been fascinated by the city. Whether it was Ermelo, Piet Retief, or Barberton, it did not matter. It was the allure of the pace. The energy of the thriving streets, the numerous lives on the sidewalk. When I came to Joburg, it felt I had arrived at something that was simply difficult to describe. Even though apartheid was in full swing, and I was told to allow whites the right of way on the sidewalk, it didn't deter me from being captivated. The different glimpses you have of the diverse – in my case unaffordable – wares displayed in the windows were intoxicating. The sidewalk was an avenue to otherness, other layers, other realities. It offered a possibility for metamorphosis. Much later, after fleeing UCT's apartheid agenda, I was sold a brick in a camera box on the sidewalk of Manhattan. The sidewalk has many faces. A sidewalk in Brooklyn stretched 13 metres and on other streets it was non-existent. I have fallen in love on the sidewalk, had my best ideas on the sidewalk as well as my loneliest moments; I reinvent myself on the sidewalk. As an urbanist in South Africa, I am concerned.

Claire

I was born in Paris and a privileged pedestrian – street and pavement life defining the city and the neighbourhood's identity, atmosphere, urbanity. It is where one feels the pulse of the city. It is what I also enjoyed in the African cities I visited: Maputo, Abidjan, Dakar, Douala, Casablanca … Walking in the street without purpose is what I miss the most in South Africa: *flânerie*, which is not well translated in English as 'loitering' (a criminal activity in South Africa!), walking without a clear purpose. When I discovered Yeoville, I felt at home. Slightly frightened by the discourses (and realities) of insecurity and urban poverty, but mostly I felt welcomed – by the mingling of various languages (including French) exchanged in the street, the permanent presence of people and activity, the liveliness of the street.

When discussing the pictures of their street with Muller street residents during the first year of the Studio,[1] I was surprised by the absence of any celebration of this street liveliness, the neighbourliness – descriptions we sometimes get when hearing people talk about Soweto. I started asking myself if I was not romanticising this whole thing, but the idea of street liveliness as a resource and an asset came through the back door when discussions shifted to actual daily practices of residents.

Urban narratives

The beginning of the conversation was around setting the brief for the photography course: choice of site, themes, outcomes and methods. This had to cover dual if not triple layers. Firstly, the teaching and learning about how to take photographs; secondly, the use of

photography as a tool to read urban context as a necessary prerequisite to design appropriate spaces; and thirdly, the understanding of the socio-political meaning of visuals in the urban geography of our cities. The gap between those layers; the politics of aesthetics – or the lack thereof; the necessity of access to place and people – or how close can you go; and the difference in perceptions turned out to be a discussion about the role of the built-environment professions, their challenges and limitations. The coursework itself went through a continuous process of construction and deconstruction of context, understanding and reading of the visuals produced by the students and presented to different audiences in changing formats.

Solam

The focus of the course was the construction of urban narratives through photographs. A narrative is a story that is created in a specifically constructed format (as a work of speech, writing, song, film, television, video games, photography or theatre) and describes a sequence of events. Urban narratives are stories about the city, in the city, from the sidewalks and streets of the city, with urbanites as the leading actors. Urban narratives are stories that are embedded in the scenarios of everyday life. Photography is the tool used to read, understand, rewrite and frame this context: the street as commonplace is the centre stage.

It is a key premise that reading context is a necessity for any successful urban intervention – not a choice. Whenever we intervene in the landscape, we alter the existing context. Thus it becomes imperative to fully comprehend what exactly the existing context is, and how best to deal with it, in order to promote and unleash its full performance potential.[2]

Claire

As a researcher in the urban field, this is an aspect of the process I value a lot and fully identify with, participate in, even if from a different perspective. However, I do often feel that architects and designers are so bound to their own visions, creative and graphic ideas, and their own authorship, that they deal only superficially with what they define as 'their' sites: a pretext, a support, a context in which they will frame their intervention, which will affect it, but only marginally.

I proposed to choose Natal-Saunders Street as the site for these urban narratives: a socially contrasted street, with well-maintained, lower-density sections on the western side, and more derelict, higher-density parts, marked by fear and suspicion, on the eastern side (see figure 25.1). We had also heard of an individual resident-activist in the street – Richard Holden, whose passion for green architecture and the environment has led him not only to redesign his own house, but to sometimes engage in cleaning and managing the public space of the street around him. Through these initiatives he keeps aware of many urban and social dynamics occurring in the neighbourhood. He happens to let his cottage to Granny Sarah, an active old lady – the living memory of the area. She kindly agreed to accompany students during their exploration. The presence of some collective mobilisation around the street was to me a determining factor of choice, even if eventually it did not play such a big role in the project.

FIGURE 25.1: Saunders Street at the time of the Pikitup strike

Construction

After engaging with Claire on the project and walking with her around the site that had been selected, Solam constructed his course with his students, clustered in teams to choose their themes. Claire was invited to attend and participate in the class at different stages of the students' work, when they pinned their photographs up for collective comment.

Solam

The students methodologically developed a 'script' by following the five Ws: *what* they were looking at, *why* they were interested in that subject, *where* they were going to photograph (places and locations), *who* were the people involved and *how* they were integrating their photographic perspective and techniques. They had to spend a lot of time on the street to observe and try to understand.

Claire

And during that time on the street, the students started to talk to everybody and collect incredible stories that they would report during class sessions – for instance, when presenting a photograph to the class: the interaction with the character depicted, the circumstances of the shot, the story told by our community partners that led them to take the picture. As

a social science researcher interested in urban stories, I was longing for these stories to be captured, to be attached to the pictures. But it proved impossible for students to formalise and record them. For me, these pictures remain the tip of an iceberg, a sign of deeper stories that are only partly captured or hinted at by the image. They might appear self-explanatory, but I liked the dimension that now is hidden: the stories behind them. Not because I lack imagination, but because the story attached to the picture further triggers my imagination.

Solam

Maybe we have to differentiate here between the story they wanted to tell, the focus they defined, and the stories they found on the way, without even recognising their value. The students all began their investigation by looking at the public edge of Natal-Saunders: the edge between buildings, the private space and the public realm – for example, frontages, sidewalks, windows, balconies, shops (see figure 25.2). They then followed their specific interests.

The initial question was basic but essential: what do you see and how do you capture it? And then, more complex: what does it mean? The students followed one initial rule of documentary photography: spend time with your subject, in this case on the sidewalk and the street: day, night, different times of the week. The outcome of the course is certainly not a 'fly-by' product but more of a documentary process of unpacking and highlighting the complexities of a particular segment of a community. As much as they were only beginning

FIGURE 25.2: San Remo

FIGURE 25.3: Construction of concepts: Street trade

to learn about composition, exposure, light and movement in technical terms, they have to be congratulated especially for their serious engagement with the context. Which, as future architects and if they continue to work this way, gives hope for the better comprehension, and ultimately design, of our cities.

The first group decided to frame the theme of 'access' very literally through photographing specific elements, tectonic apertures, like windows and doors. The idea was to create a visual inventory, a catalogue of the entire street facade and its (non-)porosity from outside to inside. And to then start to interpret actual form as desires, fears or simply realities of everyday life.

A second group looked at 'thresholds', the urban elements that define the sequence from public to private space and their possible change from day to night.

The third group chose 'land, people, buildings' as a theme and tried to contrast the existing status quo with what they considered the remaining nature on the street and invasion.

The fourth group looked at 'street trade' (see figure 25.3), as in spaza shops, converted garages, mobile shops.

Claire

I thought the concepts were interesting, yet abstract, and, in the way they were presented, partly removed from the context itself. I did not understand the translation of the first approach, the openings outside–in. I looked for but did not find in the photographic narratives what were for me the fundamental social contrasts between the two parts of the street – which have

FIGURE 25.4: Thresholds: Outside room extension

social repercussions, as people inevitably have different perceptions of and practices in these contrasted sections of the street. And secondly, there was no graphic reflection or exploration of intense local densities and subsequent lack of individual privacy, and residents' ways of finding additional space in the public domain – a reflection that could be built on the 'room extension' (see figure 25.4) or 'street inside-out' (see figure 25.9). And that is exactly what I find sometimes problematic in architecture: the focus on the built environment without explicit exploration of how people use this built environment, relate to it. Actually, building densification and its effects on social lives is a topic that you work on yourself, as a researcher.[3] But you did not bring it explicitly into the class debate … or perhaps it was there, and I failed to see it, being more used to reading texts than reading pictures.

Solam

As a concept, 'thresholds' was the strongest for me, because of how it was trying to read the physical context, which, with all due respect to the people who inhabit it, is ultimately what we are trained to design. They started to look at the street from above and introduce the aerial view (see figure 25.4). All of a sudden you understand where it is located in Yeoville, and that it runs east–west. And how the houses relate to each other. We are in the design profession and one of the tools that we have is that we can see from above. Literally. And then they tried to bring the street dimension to it, at eye level, like an architectural elevation or section (see figure 25.5). I am talking about the power of their idea here, not necessarily about the final execution.

Claire

I liked the 'street trade' group, as the most socially aware, but I missed the aesthetics. I felt almost too much at ease with it, and actually missed the different views that often architects and

FIGURE 25.5: So close to the centre

artists bring, which stirs my mind and challenges my preconceptions. Although the people-centred approach was interesting to me, I missed the spatial approach and asked myself: where is the strangeness of the architects' view, that moves the lines, creates a commotion, opens a gap – that I can start engaging with? What did you think of the spaza one?

Solam

The spaza project showed how numerous they were on the street. To simply unpack that is something I hadn't thought about. One street has so many spaza shops … So clearly there is a need for them. People are trying to make a living, by any means. And transform a former solely residential street in a previously white middle-class suburb into a fully mixed-use area. I call that DIY urbanism. And that goes beyond the aesthetic quality that you address. Although again, I see shops and you see people … But I am interested in that gap that you mentioned. Where did you see it?

Claire

In the 'threshold' group, it was clearly about the aesthetics. The concept was absorbing enough for a huge number of simply beautiful images, which, displayed next to one another as well as stand-alones, started to tell the story of the street with hardly any words (see figure 25.6).

FIGURE 25.6: Thresholds: Curtain at night

With 'land, people, buildings', the trigger to my mind was about the politics of migration. In fact, I was shocked by the analogy students made between plant invasion and people invasion: the plants that grow everywhere and cause cracks in the pavement (or use those cracks to grow?) and the parallel with people, especially in the current context marked by violent xenophobia. What about the social and political meaning, and where is the relationship? I feared that this was a purely aesthetic point, actually dangerously simplifying social realities. Did the students actually think of this? Perhaps they just did not, and that disturbed me. If they did, what were they actually saying by using this analogy? When I mentioned this in the classroom, the question was not taken up by students. Eventually, in the public workshop phase, this parallel was abandoned. Possibly by chance – we did not select the pictures portraying plants for the street exhibition; possibly by design – migration politics are complex to tackle, and in the absence of a carefully facilitated process, it might be wise to keep them invisible, at times.[4]

Deconstruction

The second phase of the project was initially not part of the academic curriculum. Claire felt that it was necessary to engage with the residents around the portraiture of their street – from, but also beyond, the themes or concepts that the students had been exploring. She thus deconstructed the panels into single images, displayed in the street, and asked pedestrians to choose their two favourite images, the two they disliked most, and the one that they thought shows the street best 'as is today'. Additional comments were encouraged through conversations with students.[5]

Solam

What was interesting for me in the next step of the street portrait project were the discrepancies among perceptions about the photographs. You took the panels apart to exhibit them on the street and collect the reactions and opinions of the residents. What we liked in the course and what residents liked differed – at times immensely.

Claire

The residents saw threats rather than aesthetics. The difficulty we had, as a group, to find a place in the street to set up the exhibition is testament to this. Students approached a body corporate to use their closed garage doors; they asked individual owners' permission to use their walls, and then public facilities such as a crèche and a religious centre. All refused to host us for a day, arguing it could bring in criminals, or being suspicious of the students themselves. Students eventually had to take over a piece of the pavement to set up the exhibition.

Solam

Let's just point out some of some of the discrepancies in perceptions and revelations …

Claire

… and call it: the broken window syndrome[6] … (see figure 25.7).
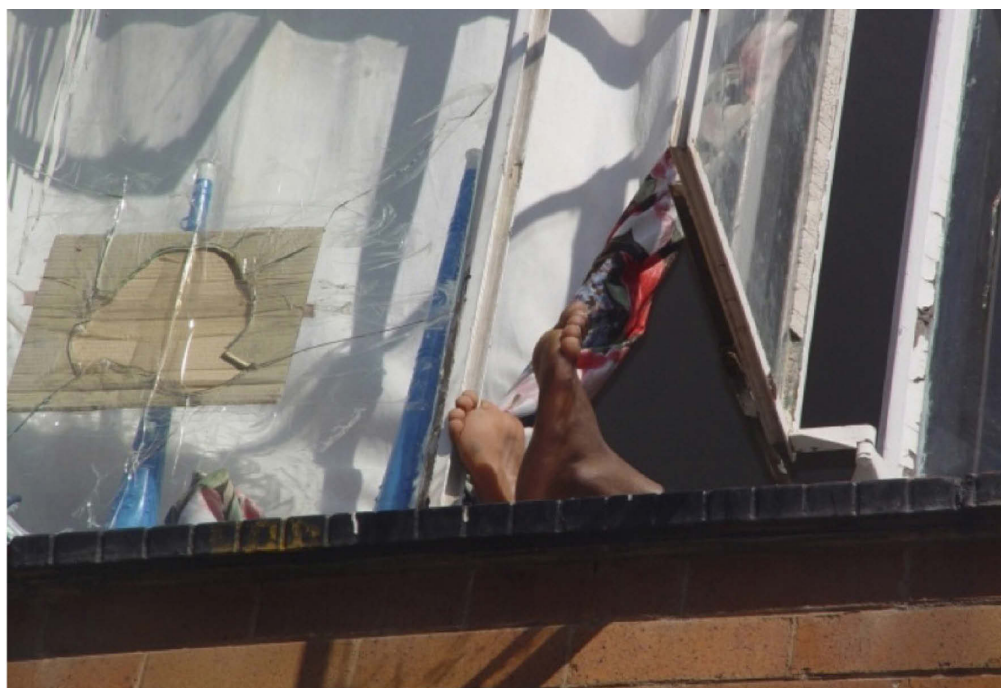
FIGURE 25.7: Broken window

Solam

In class, we considered Liam's image (see figure 25.7) as a great moment in terms of detail and composition, whereas in the workshop it was one of the most disliked photos, with a poignant comment:

> The window is broken with feet protruding. It shows the character and bad attitude of the person. He is a careless unemployed male. He probably drinks and is prone to violence. He can't afford to fix his window. It shows poverty. (Resident's comment on figure 25.7, interactive street exhibition, Saunders Street, November 2011)

Claire

The whole process talks about the fears, insecurities and divisions in the area. Students had perceived these divisions (although perhaps not enough!), but this extreme climate of distrust is something that was only brought about by the residents' reactions. This photo of Zuma's spaza (figure 25.8) was taken as an example of a local spaza. The fact that we chose it for the exhibition's final poster, and pinned it up in a public space to advertise the workshop, made the current lodger think the house was up for auction, as her sister told us during the workshop:

> We were worried because my sister lives in number 50, like on the picture. She saw the posters and said, "What is going on?' We were worried the house was going to be auctioned. She was working today, so she sent me to find out. Now I can tell her, just relax, my sister, no problem ... Yoh! We were worried. Because you don't know! Outside they just sell your house ... so now I am happy! (Resident's comment on figure 25.8, interactive street exhibition, Saunders Street, November 2011)

FIGURE 25.8: Zuma's spaza

FIGURE 25.9: Inside-out

This was a revealing gap, one I felt bad about, having involuntarily caused such panic! Another one, funnier and as revealing, was the conversation around the photo showing the 'inside-out spaza shop' (see figure 25.9).

> A: No offence to Dyer, but I do not get the point of this photo. The topic is the street; why did she photograph the inside of a flat?
> Q: But it is a view from the street, it is a spaza in a garage …
> A: Ohhhh! It is outside! I thought it was inside! The street is inside out. (Resident's comment on figure 25.9, interactive street exhibition, Saunders Street, November 2011)

Professional perspectives

The big question remains: where do we go from here? What do we do with this knowledge, these insights and experiences, this 'socio-aesthetic' approach to space reading? What did this multi-disciplinary approach – constructed during the course, but also very much an open-ended process between the two lecturers – result in?

Claire

During this course, I perceived a difference in discipline and pedagogy between architects and planners – where the former are encouraged and trained to let their imagination grow, a dimension that we as educators in planning are possibly missing. Planners are possibly so

embedded in social and political dynamics and context and what people say, expect and push for, that they might actually be imprisoned in it. Looking at a picture from an aesthetic point of view frees the imagination and makes professionals actually stronger, more independent and able to create. I saw that your students had a freedom of 'looking' that I and my students do not have, that we don't train them to have. We may be sensitive to the aesthetics of a picture, but it is not the primary relationship that we have to space and images. I feel I am geared towards understanding people's dynamics, local politics and imagining political strategies and processes to get to a common good, or at least to frame an arena where the common good can be expressed, debated, and ultimately constructed (although this is not solely in my hands).

How far do you go into understanding a context you 'picture'? Would you feel sometimes too much analytical depth is preventing you from imagining? What is the balance you seek, between sensitivity to context, and the freedom to imagine?

Solam

For me, it is about what can be taken into the design process. Accessing spaces and reading of context. Those are two very important skills for developing designers. And my position at the School of Architecture and Planning is that there is a lack of engagement with the context, especially by architects, but also with the planners. Photography is one medium between architects and urban matter that somehow forces them to look, to see, to frame.

What was interesting for me in this elective was that the context was largely determined by you. You made sure that there was this social aspect that was brought into the class from a professional point of view. I did spend time growing up in Yeoville. So for me Yeoville was familiar. What really worked in this constellation was that you brought the social layer to it, that was actually at the time too close to home for me to see it, talking about proximity and how far you go. It made the space and the project richer.

But, back to your question – as an architect, I choose to keep my distance. The camera is a great tool to come close and stay distanced. Because then I can do something without trying to solve issues that are just beyond my scope of work. I obviously come from a spatial perspective, asking in any pictured situation, how does this work, spatially? Because this is where I can contribute, what I've been trained in. Where do the garbage trucks come from, if someone is moving in, how do they not impede other people who are using the street? There are many dynamics, but of course, the city is complicated. And hence the beauty of having schools like this, where people come with different skills.

Claire

And finding one's own balance … Not everyone is a local activist, not everyone has a strong sense of aesthetics. But I think it was good to have exposed students to both dimensions.

Solam

Yes, some of the students had no idea why they were placed in that context. But after a while, they started engaging with it (see figure 25.10). Forming relationships with some of the local residents. And took good images that told a story of the place. It was a very good class. We were lucky.

FIGURE 25.10: Moving on

Land is political. It is very hard in South Africa to photograph something beautiful without understanding the political and social consequences of how the land historically has developed around colonialism, around apartheid, and very much since we've had democracy.

– John Fleetwood, Social Landscape Photography Project, 2013

Participating student photographers

Ricardo Andrade; Katherine Dewar; Dakalo Dyer; Tamsyn Hart; Alistair James; Tebogo Leshaba; Pandeani Liphosa; Anqi Lu; Sakhile Nkomo; Andre Nkuna; Liam Patterson; Mohini Pillay; Kamal Ranchod; Lenska Tweedy; Zakiyyah Vawda; Malika Walele; Desmond Zhang.

Notes

1   See Bénit-Gbaffou and Gaule, this book.
2   See Haramura (1995).
3   See Dörmann and Mkhabela, this book.
4   See Bénit-Gbaffou and Mkwanazi, this book.
5   The street exhibition was entitled 'Stories of a Street in Photographs', and was organised on Saturday 29 October 2011, from 9 am to 12 pm. Panels were displayed; seats were provided in small circles; Yeoville Studio staff and students facilitated conversations between residents and pedestrians about the photographs and their choices.
6   Reference to what has become known as the 'broken window theory' (Wilson & Kelling 1982): an understanding of crime prevention which proposes that fixing small things (like a broken window) is a necessary step to tackle urban crime – not fixing them being a signal that collective social control no longer exists.

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26 Knowledge capital and urban community politics in Yeoville

OBVIOUS KATSAURA

Deploying a Bourdieusian approach, this chapter discusses the importance of knowledge capital[1] in the field of urban community politics.[2] In recognising the significance of knowledge as capital, I argue that various forms of knowledge have played a key role in the configuration of everyday urban community politics. The idea that we are now increasingly living in an information society, and partaking in a weightless economy, is part of the semantics of our times (Quah 1999; Carnoy & Castells 2001; Castells 2005; Webster 2014). Yet this idea has generally been applied to the corporate and government sectors, to its neglect in our understanding of the functioning of communities at the local level. Most literature on knowledge capital tends indeed to present a depoliticised account, mainly focusing on knowledge capital management in business corporates (Carr et al. 1998; Petty & Guthrie 2000).[3] The focus of this literature has also been on how knowledge enables economic competitiveness and predictability for corporate organisations (Alraouf 2012; Salzbrunn 2013). The politicisation of knowledge capital only goes as far as highlighting the increasing significance of knowledge management for governments, or more broadly the state, highlighting how knowledge has been deployed in e-governance and various forms of biopolitics, such as the use of biometrics as a governance tool (Breckenridge 2005; Peters 2006; Foucault 2010). This corporate- and government-sector bias has meant the lack of any systematic attempt to analyse processes and politics of knowledge generation and articulation in the arena of community organisation and politics.

In light of this gap, I seek here to analyse the role of knowledge in the functioning of urban community organisations, in the configuration of urban community politics and, by extension, the operations of the urban 'social economy' (Amin et al. 2003).[4] The capacity of community organisations and individual local stakeholders to create and utilise knowledge deserves attention in our attempt to understand local politics. At the centre of this analysis is the view that community organisations are spaces characterised by struggles to articulate and convert various forms of knowledge. Knowledge is an important stake in the field of community politics, influencing the different types and modes of position-takings by community organisations and the individuals within them. Possession of situated or expert knowledge, or any knowledge form thus valued, becomes key for the legitimation of individuals or organisations in the field of community politics – knowledge capital being an 'admission fee' into occupancy of influential positions (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 107).

In conceptualising community politics as a field, I construe it as an arena of struggle in which knowledge is a key stake and crucial determinant of political recognition and competence (Bourdieu 1989, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Katsaura 2014). Knowledge is thus considered here as power, or a source of power (Foucault 1980) and legitimacy (Lyotard 1993) in the field of community politics. Deficiencies in knowledge could undermine a community organisation's or individual's legitimacy to lead or spearhead action. Community leadership is legitimised by the possession of situated knowledge about a neighbourhood's history, socio-spatial structure and economic trajectories, amongst other factors (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014).

Although predominantly theoretical, my account is based on ethnography of community organisations involved in local politics in Yeoville, Johannesburg. This ethnographic work was based on a case study undertaken as part of Yeoville Studio, focusing on understanding the politics of community safety governance in Yeoville (Katsaura 2013).

This chapter starts by presenting a brief account of the case study. It then conceptualises knowledge capital and finally discusses organisational and individual agents' negotiation of the community politics field through the deployment and conversion of knowledge capital.

The case study

In this case study, community organisations are conceptualised as arenas in which 'situated' and 'expert' knowledges[5] are produced, articulated and converted. I understand community politics as a battlefield of knowledge production, marketing and consumption, an interface between various social groupings, individuals and social experiences. Yeoville as a neighbourhood is considered, here, as a budding node for the production of situated and expert knowledges. My analysis is based on observations of the dynamics in six community organisations, forums or initiatives in Yeoville, whose examples I deploy to understand the significance of knowledge capital in the configuration of community politics. These bodies, which steered and rowed knowledge in their local struggles for survival and to provide public services (Katsaura 2012), are the Yeoville Community Policing Forum (YCPF), the sector

crime forums (SCFs), the ward committee, the Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), the African Diaspora Forum (ADF) and Yeoville Studio.

The Yeoville Community Policing Forum focused on issues of community safety, crime and policing, working in partnership with the South African Police Service and other community organisations. Related to the YCPF, and operating as subforums thereof, were the three sector crime forums in the Yeoville policing precinct (Yeoville, Bellevue and Observatory). SCFs were deliberative spaces where crime issues were discussed. They were repositories of grassroots knowledge about crime: members of the YCPF as well as of the SCF possessed street knowledge about illegal activities and criminality in Yeoville. They also possessed some paralegal knowledge which they invoked in their lobbies to reduce the number of illegal liquor outlets and spaza shops in Yeoville. Because the SCFs were chaired by police officers (in contrast to the YCPF, chaired by a representative from civil society), some of the knowledge possessed by the SCFs was specialised knowledge on crime trends and repertoires.

A key space for the public deliberation of local issues in Yeoville was the monthly ward public meeting convened by the ward committee, and chaired by the ward councillor.[6] The focus of the ward committee was to promote participatory local development, and to channel and resolve local discontent. The ward committee was a space for the intersection of the knowledges of local politicians or city government agents and the grassroots knowledges of the public.

Important also within the arena of Yeoville's politics was the YBCDT, a local non-government organisation (NGO) working on issues of socio-economic development in Yeoville and Bellevue.[7] Its knowledge was based on local research capacity, street and everyday (anecdotal) observations and the vast experience in community work and local government possessed by its executive director, a former provincial government official and long-time resident of Yeoville. The YBCDT director also possessed knowledge about urban policies and city legislation, as he was a participant in some of the community consultation processes organised by the City of Johannesburg. In cases of social or environmental problems in the neighbourhood, the ordinary residents and bureaucrats from the city approached the YBCDT director for advice.

In the diverse constellation of organisations in Yeoville, the ADF featured prominently as a representative of immigrants in this neighbourhood that was home to many people from all over Africa and the world. The ADF was formed in 2008 to respond to the xenophobic violence that rocked South Africa in May of that year. The ADF claimed to have about 23 migrant organisations affiliated to it, and focused on education for the promotion of cultural tolerance as a way of preventing xenophobic violence. The knowledge base of ADF relates to the challenges faced by international (mainly African) migrants living in South Africa, and in Yeoville in particular. The ADF had growing knowledge in legislation and local government, well aware of their discriminatory effects when it came to the treatment of migrants.

Finally, through the community-oriented research in Yeoville Studio, we were producing and co-producing knowledge, posing as 'experts' even if clearly locating ourselves as 'learning' from and with the community, and becoming key players in the local knowledge

economy and local politics. It became clear, in this endeavour, that our knowledge constituted capital that we could deploy in our interactions with local political actors, city bureaucrats and politicians. In other words, we were painstakingly fulfilling Pierre Bourdieu's desire to promote a 'scholarship with commitment' in which academics/scientists intervene in the socio-political world (Bourdieu 1988, 2000; Poupeau & Discepolo 2004). Our research output, thus, while gravitating towards the production of theoretical texts, was also convertible for practical usage by local political actors – activists, politicians and bureaucrats.[8]

These community organisations, forums and initiatives constructed various forms of knowledge lying in the situated-expert knowledge continuum, often complementing and competing with one another on the basis of their competencies. This chapter explores the ways in which these organisations enrolled their various knowledges and competencies in taking positions in the field of community politics, focusing particularly on how they partook in processes of knowledge generation, retention, articulation and conversion in their own right, and in relation to one another.

Conceptualising knowledge capital

As an entry point into an exploration of the forms and instantiations of knowledge capital, it is essential to conceptualise knowledge itself. Knowledge is not simply data or information, but an understanding which 'one gains through experience, reasoning, intuition and learning' (Cong & Pandya 2003: 26). Citing Alfred Schutz (1971), E Doyle McCarthy (1996: 5) notes that knowledge is defined as a 'bundle of accurate perceptions'. Expanding on these definitions and understandings of knowledge, I refer to knowledge as a set of ideas, information and skills that borders between the practical (knowledge by experience and practice) and the theoretical (knowledge gained through scholastic learning) (Bourdieu 1984: 68, 387), and that is socially constructed as significant in any given context. In exploring the concept of knowledge capital, it is important to extrapolate the various forms of knowledge that are relevant to our understanding of the community politics field.

Forms

There is a distinction between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formal and systematic and can be easily communicated and shared (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is in people's minds and is much less concrete than explicit knowledge, being more of an unspoken understanding about something that is difficult to write down or verbalise (Cong & Pandya 2003). Xiaming Cong and Kanshik Pandya (2003: 27) state that 'tacit knowledge is difficult to access and is often not known to others' and those who possess it may not necessarily be aware of it or its value to others. Bourdieu (1984: 387) refers to tacit knowledge as 'practical, partial, "tacit" know-how' and to explicit knowledge as 'theoretical' and 'systematic', suggesting the division between techniques and science, practice and theory, execution and conception, the manual worker and the intellectual.

Of significance to this endeavour are situated and expert knowledges. Situated knowledge is understood as information and skills acquired within a local context, or based on a moment or event in time and space – meaning that it is context-specific. Situated knowledge is produced and acquired at local levels by neighbourhood residents and neighbourhood power brokers, and is akin to what Marleen van de Kerkhof (2006) refers to as local knowledge. It can take the form of knowledge of local public places such as streets, parks and taverns, and of local events, local people and the local economy. Bourdieu (1991: 93) refers to situated knowledge as 'everyday knowledge of the social world'. In this case, it emanates from everyday experiences and is embodied in the people who traverse the local physical and social spaces. This kind of knowledge is historical, contemporary and even predictive or futuristic. If situated knowledge is appropriated by experts such as researchers, it can still be regarded as situated although it acquiesces to the flavours of intellectualism, thus becoming what I refer to as situated expert knowledge. In this respect, Yeoville Studio is considered as an entity that produced situated expert knowledge. In contrast to situated knowledge, expert knowledge is acquired through formal training, is often certified and codified, and is referred to as educational capital by Bourdieu (1984). This form of knowledge is understood as professional or scientific and is claimed or professed on the basis of its certification by a legitimate educational or training institution. In this chapter, holders of expert knowledge could range from academic researchers and urban planners to police officers.

Distinguishing between situated and expert knowledges can be a daunting task: this is because there are no clear boundaries between these two types of knowledge. The process of marking these boundaries is a project in epistemological politics – amounting to a hierarchisation of knowledges, which problematically suggests that situated knowledge is inferior to expert knowledge (Petts & Brooks 2006). Expert or scientific knowledge, as we were warned by Lyotard (1993: 7), 'does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, other forms of knowledge'. In fact, there has been strong recognition that situated knowledge is closer to reality, which brings into question the arrogance of expert knowledge (Janssens et al. 2009; Zhao & Hatayama 2012). While expert and situated knowledges may compete with each other, they can also reinforce each other, depending on context and circumstances.

Learning from Bourdieu's rejection of frames of thought based on antimonies, I jettison the division between situated and expert knowledges as fallacious and unsustainable. I prefer to classify knowledge as falling into three subcategories: expressive, experiential and intellectual knowledges, each of which cannot simply be boxed into situated or expert knowledge. Expressive knowledge is discursive or communicative and can be circulated in written, speech and graphic forms. In terms of its location in the situated–expert knowledge continuum, it can fall anywhere. Experiential knowledge is a form of knowing that results from repeated behaviour (routine) and experience, both in everyday life and in moments of practice (Bourdieu 1991; Salzbrunn 2013). It can fall into the categories of situated and expert knowledge depending on how it is acquired. Intellectual knowledge is a form of knowing that is embedded in the psyche, resulting from formal or informal education, and can also be codified on paper to form part of the pool of information for organisations,

thus becoming institutionalised knowledge. Intellectual knowledge generally falls under the rubric of expert knowledge, but can also be considered as situated knowledge since it is a product of specific historical and geographical junctures.

With the aid of examples, I now analyse instantiations of expressive, experiential and intellectual knowledge capitals by examining their significance in urban community politics.

Instantiations

Possession of expressive knowledge can take the form of control of or influence over the means of symbolic reproduction in the local context. This could be through control or influence over communication media. For instance, through its executive director, the YBCDT ran *Yeovue News*, a weekly newsletter in Yeoville. *Yeovue News* reported on social, cultural, economic and developmental issues. The political and socio-economic agendas of the YBCDT and of the editor were consistently communicated in this weekly newsletter. An analysis of the key thematic issues reported in the *Yeovue News (YN)* from its inception in 2009 up to 2012 reveals that they ranged from issues related to illegal liquor outlets in Yeoville (*YN* 2009a, 2009b, 2011a); regeneration of the image of Yeoville into one of a more habitable neighbourhood (*YN* 2009c, 2010, 2011b); criminalities and illegalities in Yeoville (*YN* 2009d, 2010), to the reduction of xenophobia and the promotion of inclusive and tolerant coexistence (*YN* 2009e, 2011c, 2011d). This kind of expressive knowledge was both situated and expert, in that it dealt with both local, everyday issues and with specific information on the neighbourhood, casting the editor of and contributors to the *Yeovue News* as local experts privy to the situation and to the conditions of life in Yeoville. In this case, expressive knowledge has to do with possession of what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as 'linguistic capital',[9] including spoken, written or any other communicative form. Possession of this linguistic capital, objectified in a local newsletter by the YBCDT director, ushered him into a position of influence in Yeoville, enhancing his ability to affect local public opinion and spur local debate on challenges facing the neighbourhood.

Related to expressive knowledge is experiential knowledge, which, in Bourdieusian analogy, is here referred to as a form of praxeological knowledge (Wacquant 1992; Bourdieu 1998) – that is, knowledge gained through repeated practice, experience and history. Consider, for instance, that Yeoville Studio in its community engagement initiatives depended on local activists and residents for guidance through the neighbourhood of Yeoville. Community members were enrolled to accompany members of Yeoville Studio through the neighbourhood as they were presumed to possess the necessary local knowledge and street wisdom to show the neighbourhood to visitors (in this case students and researchers from the university) and to tell stories about specific places, parks, streets and buildings. For instance, a local activist and member of the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF) gave me a descriptive account of the organisation of criminal activities along Rockey-Raleigh Street, the main business street of the neighbourhood, during a tour of Yeoville in August 2010. He narrated that at the corner of Rockey and Raymond streets, there was a building called the 'green house' which is frequented by Zimbabwean criminals who used 'cellphones to rob people and defraud banks and they also rob shops and sell stolen goods'. He further characterised the

front of Shoprite, in Raleigh Street, as a spot for 'lots of young men hanging closer to ATMs'. He explained that 'at that spot pin numbers are memorised and money is being withdrawn fraudulently'. Knowledge about perceived crime spots in the neighbourhood, notwithstanding its potential for sensationalism and bias, is an important form of street wisdom and spatial meaning-making that is part of a body of experiential knowledge embedded in the individual. The role of the community activist in guiding me through the tour of Yeoville reveals that local residents and activists are repositories of experiential knowledge gained through routine and constant location, and engagements, in the neighbourhood.

Expert and situated knowledges can both be intellectualised. Intellectual knowledge is evaluated in terms of education, skills or possession of information that can inform action, mobilisation or lobbying. In the case of the socio-political matrix of Yeoville, I classify Yeoville Studio as possessing intellectual knowledge. Involved in various kinds of research, the Studio can, in essence, be understood as an entity that simultaneously extracted knowledge from the locals (appropriating street knowledge) and brought knowledge to the local arena (bringing in formalised academic knowledge). Intellectual knowledge generated and possessed by Yeoville Studio gave it audience with community organisations in Yeoville as well as with those involved in city governance. Individual Yeoville Studio researchers, such as Professor Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, gained local recognition for their intellectual involvement in Yeoville. Bénit-Gbaffou was therefore invited to local functions and also initiated functions and policy debates at the local level in conjunction with local activists such as the leaders of the YBCDT and YSF. On a personal level, my consistent attendance of YCPF meetings during the course of my research earned me the position of *ex officio* member of YCPF. Owing to the assumption that I possessed writing skills, I was asked to take minutes of the YCPF and sector crime forum 1 meetings several times. The research activities also culminated in the objectification of knowledge capital through academic and non-academic research reports produced by Yeoville Studio researchers, becoming educational capital, in the Bourdieusian sense.

It is in light of this that intellectual knowledge is considered as conferring both symbolic and political capital to organisations and individuals possessing it. It confers symbolic capital in that it invites recognition to organisations and individuals. This recognition was translatable or tantamount to socio-political influence on community organisations and the community in general (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura, 2014).

Having discussed the instantiations of knowledge capital, I now move on to argue that, in the community politics field, mere possession of situated or expert knowledge is not enough. What also matters is its conversion or materialisation into political, spatial and economic outcomes. In the section below I examine some of the outcomes of knowledge generation, exchange and manipulation by local political actors, for purposes of its conversion to political, spatial and economic capitals.

Conversion of knowledge capital in the community politics field

Knowledge capital is useful to the configuration of urban local politics and the urban local socio-economy to the extent that it is convertible to tangible outcomes in political, economic,

social and symbolic terms. In other words, the value and saleability of the knowledge possessed by community organisations and its individual members are critical in the conferment of legitimacy. According to Lyotard (1993: 4), 'Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorised in a new production; in both cases, the goal is exchange.' Knowledge produced in the realm of community organisations, community politics or the local social economy is no exception to this. Although it is not always necessarily cashed in economically, it is cashed in (or wields value) politically and symbolically.

Possession of knowledge by a community organisation, or agent within the realm of community politics, is a source of power and influence. In respect of how knowledge is tangled with power, Lyotard (1993: 5) notes that 'knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major – perhaps the major – stake in the worldwide competition for power'. At the micro level of community politics, it is therefore not surprising that the production and circulation of situated and expert knowledges plays a significant role in shaping the topography of this field. Knowledge, in this case, is to be evaluated in terms of the extent to which it is convertible to, or cashed in as, political power (political capital), prestige and honour (symbolic capital), economic benefit (economic capital), and everyday geographic reading of the city (spatio-symbolic capital), amongst other gains. It is in light of this that local activists and politicians in Yeoville strive to acquire knowledge for the purposes of achieving concrete outcomes such as reducing crime, acquiring political power and economic resources, or broadening their socio-political networks.

Political capitalisation

The possession of knowledge capital can improve the standing of community organisations or individuals and can be used as an instrument to attain power or influence. In this case the knowledges of individual organisational stakeholders (embedded knowledge capital) or that codified and claimed by a community organisation (objectified and institutionalised knowledge capital) are important elements in the legitimation or delegitimation of community organisations and their individual stakeholders. In this section I examine three ways in which knowledge capital is convertible to the capital of legitimacy – that is, political capital – by focusing on its significance for the political stature of a community organisation, for inter-organisational competition and for spaces of community deliberation and activism.

Knowledge capital that is possessed by a community organisation influences its political standing. For example, in the context of the YBCDT, the previous experience of its executive director as a government employee and his long history of activism came in handy in boosting the YBCDT's political image and local status. As a consequence, the YBCDT was recognised by the City of Johannesburg and other urban development players as an authentic community development organisation in Yeoville. In public meetings held by the City of Johannesburg Council, amongst his networks within local government spheres, the YBCDT executive director was regarded as the local expert on Yeoville. It is by virtue of his location in Yeoville and his socio-political interventions there – in other words, his possession of locational capital

and accompanying local knowledge (Bourdieu 1999) – that the YBCDT director became recognised, and even referred to as 'Mr. Yeoville' by people from the City bureaucracy (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014). The YBCDT director was also able to exert influence on the community owing to his assumption of the role of advisor and mentor to several community organisations and individuals within them. In this case, the ADF appointed him as a member of its board of advisers in July 2011. In the YCPF, the YBCDT director took the position of treasurer, and focused on providing advice to the youthful YCPF executive that was elected into office in 2010. He once stated: 'I have been trying to instil confidence in these YCPF youngsters. I am hoping that they will learn the ethos of good and honest leadership through their association with me.'[10] All this is evidence of how his knowledge capital, experiential and expressive, boosted his individual and organisational local political profile. Of course there are factors other than knowledge at play here: the YBCDT director's long-standing political networks and his history of working as a bureaucrat all cemented his political standing. Nonetheless, it is still safe to argue, on the basis of the foregoing, that knowledge capital is recapitalisable as political capital by conferring influence and legitimacy on a community organisation or its leader(s).

The production, control, retention and conversion of knowledge for political purposes are arenas of struggle between and within community organisations. The local struggles for knowledge generation and control turn out to be struggles for political domination. Situated knowledge-based political power enables community organisations and activists to take on the role of local power brokers when they engage state agencies, private agencies or NGOs in their quest to seek solutions for local neighbourhood challenges. An example of the competitive struggles over local knowledge production is one of the tensions I observed between the editor of *Yeovue News* (also executive director of YBCDT) and the ward councillor – in what can be described as competition for local political space. During a ward public meeting in May 2011, at the instigation of the ward councillor, participants questioned the accountability of the *Yeovue News* editor and the day-to-day running of the newsletter. In his absence at this ward public meeting, there were allegations that the *Yeovue News* editor was not consulting the community. There was a proposal that there should be an editorial board composed of selected community members to oversee the publication of *Yeovue News* and safeguard what were alleged to be 'community interests'. In response to this, the *Yeovue News* editor indicated that the YBCDT, which was running the *Yeovue News*, was not a community-based organisation or a membership-based organisation, but an NGO. According to him, the YBCDT and *Yeovue News* were not obliged to be overseen by a group of community members. He stressed that the YBCDT was overseen by a board of trustees, all of whom were independent and detached individuals. While on paper the YBCDT director could claim that his organisation was just an NGO and not a community-based organisation, in reality the YBCDT seemed to straddle the worlds of both NGO and community-based organisation, given the convenience and the socio-political profits there were to gain. This claim is based on the fact that, in the name of the YBCDT, its director became a presence in the spaces of community-based organisations, having his feet in the YSF, the YCPF and the Yeoville Ratepayers Association. It is therefore not surprising that in the eyes of some

members of the public, who were attempting to bring the YBCDT to community or public accountability, the YBCDT and *Yeovue News* were community-based projects and as such the YBCDT was viewed as a community-based organisation, notwithstanding the technicalities of its NGO status. After all, community-based organisations can also be NGOs at the same time. The complexity of the contestation around the identity of the YBCDT seemed to have been influenced by the fact that its founder and director had a history of being a local activist and part of community-based organisations. In the eyes of the community, to then reinvent himself and cash in on this long history of activism, as a founder and director of a local NGO, deserved criticism.[11]

The field of community politics is also characterised by the struggle to control and appropriate various kinds of knowledge: overt and covert competition to produce and control knowledge is observable therein. The production of research-based knowledge – that could be counted as intellectual – was an arena of (hidden) forms of competition, if not of the analogous and isomorphic (co-)existence of organisations in Yeoville. While Yeoville Studio could make major claims of possession of intellectual, research-based knowledge, the YBDCT claimed and demonstrated possession of some capacity for local research, whatever level of intellectual engagement they operated at in their research attempts. In 2011, the YBCDT commissioned a survey of illegal liquor outlets and a housing audit, in which some executive members of the YCPF got involved as paid enumerators. The housing audit was an enumeration of illegal buildings in Yeoville. This shows that the YBCDT director also wanted to produce 'scientific knowledge', like Yeoville Studio, but on his own, parallel to (rather than in connection with) Yeoville Studio.[12] In this way he challenged the knowledge possessed by Yeoville Studio, which can easily be construed as intellectual, and put forward his everyday knowledge of Yeoville. Realistically, or rather, symbolically, the YBCDT director was juxtaposing and parallelling the practical, everyday, street and historical knowledge acquired through his long sojourn in Yeoville against and with the knowledge acquired by Yeoville Studio. The YBCDT's research endeavour intimated groundedness and relevance and therefore, by implication, the superiority of the director's knowledge. Nonetheless, the YBCDT's research endeavour can also be understood as reflective of the cross-pollination of ideas between Yeoville Studio and the YBCDT, with the latter in this case appropriating research gleaned from Yeoville Studio as a tool for the facilitation of local initiatives.

It thus suffices to highlight that the struggle over knowledge generates political action – the struggle for power – in the realm of community politics. In recognition of this, Bourdieu (1991: 127) states: 'specifically political action is possible because agents, who are part of the social world, have a (more or less adequate) knowledge of this world and because one can act on the social world by acting on their knowledge of this world.' This brings to fore the centrality of knowledge in the generation of political action, struggles for power and actions oriented towards the common good being examples of such political action. As such, individuals within the field of community politics endeavour to acquire and display knowledge of their local and trans-local social world as a way of seeking legitimacy.

Knowledge possessed by leaders of community-based organisations can earn them and the organisation a following and recognition – it can be a source of power and legitimacy. A leader's

traceable previous record or experience (experiential knowledge) and presumed education or skills (intellectual knowledge) are an important aspect in the generation of a followership (becoming a delegate) and recognition (as a delegate, nominee or representative) (see Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura, 2014). This also goes hand in hand with the way in which the leader publicly represents himself or herself, and his or her deportment and communication skills. An example is the chairperson of the ADF, Marc Gbaffou, who built up a track record of working with and for migrants and knowing the challenges they face during their sojourn in South Africa. He consistently chaired meetings of the ADF and addressed members of the public, signalling his possession of relevant 'linguistic capital' (Mander 1987; Bourdieu 1991) – his mastery of the language of civic activism and, more broadly, of politics. In addition, the ADF as an organisation boasted the membership of several people perceived as educated, having obtained university degrees and diplomas, further buttressing its standing in civil society and in the eyes of representatives of the state. This cohort of members possessing intellectual capital was used in ADF's media campaigns against xenophobia, producing newspaper articles in this regard. In 2014, most of these members, including me, produced articles for a newspaper called *Migrant Voice*, in which analyses of the situation of migrants and refugees, as well as informative pieces on migration and migrants, were published. This is considered as constituting 'political action' as it was meant to incrementally influence public imaginations of migrants in South Africa. For the scholars amongst the ADF cohort of activists, this amounted to what Bourdieu encourages and describes as 'a scholarship with commitment' (Bourdieu 2000). Proposals eliciting funding for the ADF were also written and critiqued by this cohort of intellectuals, increasing its chances of receiving donor funding – hence ADF's relative dominance as one of the most resourced community organisations in Yeoville. Clearly, educational capital possessed by its members was a source of power and legitimacy for the ADF.

Spatio-symbolic capitalisation

At the local level, everyday knowledge of the urban spatio-social world becomes embodied in the habitus[13] of individuals, a knowledge that urbanites draw on in their individual and collective attempts to adapt to their cities or neighbourhoods (Simone 2005). Community organisations, especially those engaged in deliberative security governance in a neighbourhood, are sites for the generation and exchange of this local or street knowledge which is essential for and a product of people's everyday encounters in the city.

Deliberations taking place in participatory forums generate and circulate knowledge on current issues affecting the neighbourhood. Through debates taking place in these forums, new ideas are formed or explored, and innovation can take place. This is classically explored by Frederick Bailey when he argued that it is through debate and possible compromise that innovation takes place (Bailey 1973). Debate itself is characterised as good for democracy and healthy city governance. Therefore, debate-induced innovation is tantamount to knowledge creation. Knowledge, in turn, generates and sustains organisational or individual honour and prestige (symbolic capital) for community organisations and community leaders, whilst strengthening social ties at the local level. Thus knowledge is as critical in shaping the topography of local socio-political relations as it is for the everyday navigation of

the city by civilians. What follows is an example of how everyday and professional knowledge is converted into street wisdom – which I refer to as 'spatio-symbolic capital'.

Such street knowledge was shared in, amongst other social spaces, public forums such as the YCPF and SCFs in the context of Yeoville. The YCPF and SCFs provided a space for intersection of the situated knowledge[14] of civilians and the professional, expert knowledge of police officers. In SCFs, for example, police officers reported on crime statistics and hotspot areas, and gave members of the public tips on strategies to avoid becoming victims of crime. On the other hand, community members reported on their daily challenges with criminality and violence on the streets and in their homes. This then became a two-way exchange of useful information that could shape the public habitus and the habitus of policing agents. The knowledge of the public, in this case, ordinarily understood as situated, everyday knowledge, qualifies them as experts on the local dynamics in their own streets and backyards. This also shows that police officers' professional (expert) knowledge is inadequate in dealing with local contexts, hence the need for them to learn from the local experts – the public. This brings the hierarchisation of knowledge into question, alerting us of the blurred boundaries between situated and expert knowledges. Retrospectively, it would be prudent to confirm my earlier assertion that the hierarchies between expert and situated knowledges are misleading, if not false. Rather, what is observable is a co-production of knowledges in which the everyday, the situated and the professional are fused. In this case, expert knowledge of the police and common-sense everyday knowledge of the public meet to generate a street science, which civilians deploy in their daily navigation of the city and the police also come to apply in their daily policing endeavours. This kind of knowledge is referred to as 'street wisdom' (Appadurai 1995; Anderson 2013) and it is a product of everyday practice (de Certeau 1984). Expert and situated knowledges are therefore inextricably dependent on each other in the field of community politics, influencing the political stakes and rhythms of neighbourhood or community life.

The conversion of knowledge capital into spatio-symbolic capital can take the form of co-production by those possessing experiential and intellectual knowledges. The interaction between Yeoville Studio, the YBCDT and community members in Yeoville in generating local maps to be used by local tour guides is a case in point. The process of producing these maps was characterised by the mobilisation of the experiential knowledges of the community members and community activists which were accumulated through their consistent and prolonged stay in Yeoville, and the intellectual knowledges of students and academics in the form of their mapping and urban planning skills.[15] The products – the maps – while embodying the combination of experiential and intellectual knowledges can also be read as 'talking objects' and as such as a form of expressive knowledge. They are objects expressive of street and intellectual wisdom – and forms of spatio-symbolic capital. I define spatio-symbolic capital as knowledge of the meaning and configuration of local spatial emblems, local artefacts, and spatio-temporal conditions. It involves the ability to read and know the neighbourhood and the entire city as a text (Derrida & Caputo 1997). Such neighbourhood reading and knowing is a powerful tool for street etiquette (Appadurai 1995; Anderson 2013) – a special form of street wisdom – and a local resource that can be used to generate income if the mobilisation of tour guides for income generation is taken into account. Spatio-symbolic capital is therefore

important capital for city life, especially because it sharpens members of the public's reading of the streets and, cumulatively, the neighbourhood.

The maps produced by Yeoville Studio in conjunction with Yeoville residents and activists were produced with the vision that the YBCDT would take over their management and use them, updating them as necessary, to train local tour guides. It was hoped that they would become instruments for use during guided neighbourhood tours for the promotion of local tourism, and would also be useful repositories of local knowledge. The production of these maps can be analysed as an instance of local innovation made possible by the intersection of, and debates between, various experiential and intellectual forms of knowledge (see Bailey 1973). The fact that the maps were meant to promote local tourism speaks to the creation of a platform for the possible conversion of local experiential knowledge and intellectual knowledge – of spatial capital – into economic capital. The conversion of knowledge capital into economic capital is important for the local socio-economy, as demonstrated in the next section.

Economic capitalisation

While knowledge is convertible to, and incarnated in, political, symbolic and spatio-symbolic capitals, it is also convertible to economic capital. This is inevitable in contexts of limited resources, which generate contestation for these resources – especially as community organisations vigorously seek donor funding. Local stakeholders and organisations make use of local and expert knowledges in an effort to change the material conditions of their organisations, the individuals within them, and possibly also of community members. Most local organisations in Yeoville battle to secure economic and material resources to sustain their operations. It is in light of this that their demonstration of accumulated experiential, intellectual and expressive knowledge is essential for their fund-seeking endeavours as they present themselves to potential donors. A case in point is the ADF's use of its previous experience of working with migrants to gain the confidence of potential funders. As the deputy secretary of the ADF, I attended a meeting of ADF with a potential funder on 28 January 2012. What struck me in that meeting was the value the potential funder placed on the success of previous projects handled by the ADF, and on the ADF's history of project record-keeping and financial management. Also important to the potential funder were the credentials and previous experiences of ADF executive members. In this case, it is apparent that experiential knowledge capital, as codified and recorded by a community organisation, is important in its grant-seeking endeavours as well as in boosting the image of the organisation. The funder's interest in the profile of the executive committee of the ADF also highlights the value placed on intellectual capital in the form of the skills of these executives, and as a pointer to decent organisational governance. Ancillary to this, the emphasis on record-keeping, and of course the capacity of ADF to pitch fundable projects, speaks to the significance of expressive knowledge capital. Therefore, the experiential, intellectual and expressive knowledge forms that are possessed by an organisation are convertible to economic capital (useful in grant seeking) and to symbolic capital (boosting of organisational image). Given its funding trajectory and the profile of projects it ran, the ADF incrementally built credibility and a knowledge base to attract further funding. Conversion of knowledge capital into economic capital is therefore not a formulaic one-way process, but a mazed constellation of

processes involving the manoeuvring and mishmashing of symbolic, cultural, social, political and other capitals – a complex legitimacy- and recognition-seeking enterprise.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that, amongst other capitals, knowledge is simultaneously an 'instrument of power' and a 'stake in the struggle for power' (Bourdieu 1984: 315). Knowledge, situated and expert, plays a significant role in shaping the anatomy of power in the community politics field, its possession being a source of prestige and honour for community leaders and the organisations they represent.

Complementing the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of capital (Bourdieu 1986), this chapter offers theoretical resources for understanding community politics through an analysis of the significance and convertibility of knowledge capital for political, spatial and socio-economic benefits. Knowledge capital, in its various forms, is politically, symbolically, spatially and economically malleable and is an inherent component of the field of community politics. The dynamics of community politics and the everyday practices of individuals are entwined within a political economics of knowledge generation, circulation, retention and conversion.

The ability to marshal knowledge, amongst other capitals, enhances the domination of a local socio-political landscape by those community organisations, other institutions and individuals wielding this knowledge. In Bourdieu's (1999: 127) words, 'The ability to dominate space, notably by appropriating (materially and symbolically) the rare goods (public or private) distributed there, depends on the capital possessed.' Thus, possession of knowledge – expressive, experiential and intellectual – puts organisations like the YBCDT and ADF at the apex of the socio-political order of Yeoville.

Finally, this chapter shows how knowledge, marshalled in various ways that foster its conversion to diverse forms of capital, is the motor of internal community dynamics within local neighbourhood politics. The analysis of the processual and contextual implications of knowledge reveals its convertibility to valuable social, political and economic capital in urban planning and, more specifically, in neighbourhood planning and management. Neighbourhood and city governors or managers, as well as academics of the city, need to understand the role of knowledge in shaping or influencing community organisations and community politics. For the moment urban practitioners and academics get into or intervene in a community or neighbourhood, they inevitably enmesh themselves in local politics and in systems (however ad hoc) of knowledge articulation and conversion.

Notes

1   I define knowledge capital as information, experience and skills which carry value economi-cally, politically, socially, symbolically and culturally.
2   The concept of community politics, sometimes used interchangeably with local politics, refers to actions or initiatives by actors operating at the micro level, mostly of the locale, advancing a constellation of coalescing and contesting interests (see Katsaura 2012).

3   This literature often conceptualises knowledge capital as data, information or skills that are central for profit-making in the corporate sector.
4   This refers to the non-profit sector providing social services to communities.
5   Conceptualised later in this chapter.
6   See also Bénit-Gbaffou & Mkwanazi (this book).
7   YBCDT was a partner of Yeoville Studio.
8   See Bénit-Gbaffou's chapter, at the end of this book, which explores how knowledge on street trading enters the political arena and becomes contested.
9   The ability to speak (or communicate) well or to speak (communicate) *a propos* of the situation (Mander 1987).
10 Interview with the YBCDT director, Johannesburg, 28 November 2010.
11 See Mkwanazi & Pingo (this book).
12 See Bénit-Gbaffou (chapter 28, this book) for more on this story.
13 'Habitus' refers to the mental dispositions of people, influenced by routine and experiences – by history (Bourdieu 1977).
14 Common observational knowledge on neighbourhood crime and violence possessed by civilians.
15 See Didier & Roux's chapter (this book).

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27 Activists in their own words

EULENDA MKWANAZI AND NICOLETTE PINGO

Yeoville is perhaps unique in the multiplicity and diversity of local activists it gathers – reflecting specific local social structures, networks and opportunities, but also perhaps a symptom of the fragility of activism in a low-income neighbourhood. It is this paradox that the present vignette explores, presenting a kaleidoscope of types of activism, personalities and repertoires of action, united by activists' dedication to a cause over their lifetime. Never falling into romanticism, Yeoville activists also reflect on the toll their activism takes on their lives, the multi-faceted resources it requires, the constant compromise between the cause and the need to earn a living. They narrate the lost battles and the challenges as well as the victories and hopes. Together, these portraits illuminate not only Yeoville community politics, but more broadly, the conditions of local activism in South African cities today.

MAURICE SMITHERS

FIGURE 27.1: Maurice Smithers

[When I fought against apartheid], my wife's friends would say 'Why are you giving up your life for the blacks?' I said, 'I'm not doing this for the blacks, I'm doing this for me, because I don't want to live in this kind of world. Therefore I want to do something about it, and so my involvement in Yeoville is exactly the same.'

BORN: 1951, Graaff Reinet

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 1978

CURRENT JOB: Director, Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT)

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Treasurer, Yeoville Community Policing Forum (YCPF); adviser, African Diaspora Forum (ADF); Ex officio: Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF)

Vision

It is not about going back to Yeoville 'as it was'. It is about embracing what Yeoville is today: a multicultural, African area, but making it sustainable and managed.

Being an activist in Yeoville

I do community service; it's actually a service that government should be offering, but isn't. I can't charge the community for it. I am an activist. I engage in community-building activities, and in broader programmes to promote development in Yeoville so that it becomes a sustainable, viable and desirable area to live in. But you can't address all the huge array of problems in this area on a voluntary basis. You need full-time capacity. That's why I set up the YBCDT.

Fighting liquor abuse

I get the *Government Gazette* every Friday by email. I look to see if there is anything for Yeoville. You have to monitor that stuff, to identify where the people are intending to do something in the area which you might not necessarily want. When did you last look in the classifieds of a newspaper? Nobody does. There is this theoretical ability for people to be able to have a say over what's happening in their community, but in fact it doesn't happen. We have opposed about 20 liquor licences so far. Many times, we have actually succeeded.

Working with councillors

The previous councillor, for ten years, didn't see the value in working with civil society structures. She saw us as working against her when we were all working towards the same thing – a better Yeoville. Now the current councillor recognises that we've got knowledge, experience, a history. They can come into our offices and we can give them information. Which means they can do their jobs better. And they recognise that. And I think that's marvellous!

NOFUMENE MQWEBA

FIGURE 27.2: Nofumene Mqweba

I don't like fighting. Because we want to eat rather than, you know, always fight …

BORN: 1963, Eastern Cape

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 1998

CURRENT JOB: Director, Zizamele Cleaning Company

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Chair, construction cooperative; member, Johannesburg Construction Forum; Exco member, Yeoville Community Forum; Exco member, Yeoville Community Policing Forum; independent candidate in Yeoville (2011 local elections); provincial secretary, SA Women in Mining; former South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) unionist

Vision

I've formed a cooperative, with 22 members in Yeoville. From 1 October, the City is not going to sweep the streets of Yeoville without Yeoville community. We are the residents of Yeoville and we want to see Yeoville clean. Nobody must come clean my house when I can do it. People of Yeoville are getting together, to take service provision in their own hands.

Activist in Yeoville

My whole life I was in politics, for workers and now for entrepreneurs. I was a member of the ANC, but I don't want politics anymore. That is why I stood up as an independent candidate. I am a local activist, 200 per cent: everybody knows me and they know they can get help when they speak to me.

Marching for SMME rights

This is a march by SMME [small, medium and micro enterprise] subcontractors. We are sidelined by big contractors who are awarded tenders. This tenderpreneurship is not working. The municipality says that the SMMEs must be given 30 per cent of the value of tender, and it's not happening. They are always hiding by saying, 'No, I didn't know.' Right now the police station of Yeoville is going to be upgraded. I must know who is the main contractor, so that I can negotiate. I am trying to get hold of the police commissioner, before we fight.

Contested housing

I won't move from Yeoville to go to Orange Farm, hai! I can't do that … Yeoville right now is not a good place, but we are trying. Right now I'm participating in the [Yeoville] Community Policing Forum. We are trying to make it a peaceful area. Now we are facing housing hijacking. Whites left Yeoville, ne; since 1994 they locked their houses and went. Foreigners picked up when they saw this house is abandoned. It left people of Yeoville homeless at the end of the day. So the struggle that goes on in Yeoville is the struggle of housing. There is a struggle of accommodation and work.

EDMUND ELIAS

FIGURE 27.3: Edmund Elias

It's the people's economy that we are talking about! Not that economy you read about, not how much did Pick 'n Pay make. It's the ordinary people's economy. It involves about six million people. If you sit here long enough, you will see people walking past selling stuff, and they all make out.

BORN: 1945, Johannesburg

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 1992

CURRENT JOB: Street trader (books) in Johannesburg inner city

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Spokesperson, South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA)

Vision

We need to have organised street trading in Yeoville, where people pay monthly rent, and the money collected pays for services and for monitoring the street, so that things are kept orderly. If there is a profit, the profit can be shared amongst micro-traders. Once you have a more formalised structure, you will have training and opportunities and social benefits. We can create a pilot in Yeoville.

A key support for Yeoville traders

The City chased Yeoville street traders away, in 2005. We took action. We got 5 000 signatures in one morning on the streets of Yeoville, from the public. The bulldozers were there, demolishing the spaza shops. And our argument was, why are they forbidden in Yeoville, but they are allowed in the townships? And what we discovered was that Johannesburg has still two laws, one for the surburbs and one for the townships. We petitioned the president, Thabo Mbeki. And the ban on street traders and spaza shops was ended. And [they are] still there today because of that action.

MBUYISENI KHOZA

FIGURE 27.4: Mbuyiseni Khoza

If you are not doing what needs to be done, then who is going to do it? Somebody has to take responsibility. You don't even know where to start to address the challenges, but you are learning every day.

BORN: 1977, KwaZulu-Natal

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 2006

CURRENT JOB: Unemployed

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Chair, YCPF; member, ANC Youth League: Yeoville Branch

Vision

People are frustrated with housing. The issue of housing is not something that has to do with CPF [community policing forum], but people don't know where to go to ... So we provide as much help as we can.

Being a local activist

If you are sitting at home doing nothing, it won't help you at the end of the day. At least if you are doing something, you can say, okay, today I achieved one-two-three. The most fascinating thing is that you can see what is happening. If you are planning something and you try to implement it, you are able to see, okay, this is the progress. It's not like you are being given like a report; you have tangible proof that it used to be a problematic street and now it is free, everyone can walk on that street. It used to be a dark place and now there is light.

Why Yeoville?

I started working for the Sisonke project, a project from Pikitup [the municipal cleaning agency], for two years. We were working as block prefects, educating people about the environment. We used to walk block to block, each corner of the area. So I got to know Yeoville. By working for Pikitup, it also gave me a lot of information, like where to get an application, the department, deeds office, civic centre, and stuff … People got used to coming to me for help, and I became famous in the community. So I felt, okay, I can carry on working for the community. That is whereby I was elected in Yeoville CPF.

Becoming legitimate

At the ANC Youth League, we had this patrolling project in Yeoville. The project was not yet registered with the MEC of Community Safety. And we wanted to engage with our [police] station commander, and that he considers us and what we are doing. It's not like we were taking the law into our own hands, but we were trying to deal with the issues in the area, as the youth. So that is why we said, okay, let us take over the CPF.

AURA MSIMANG

FIGURE 27.5: Aura Msimang

I believe in cultural activism. Some people are artistic and need to express themselves in this way. Our education system still does not facilitate that.

BORN: 1947, Johannesburg

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 2000

CURRENT JOB: Performer, producer, writer

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Organiser, community cultural events and activities in Yeoville

Vision

My big dream for Yeoville is this African village. It would be located at the water tower, on that open land where religious groups congregate. There would be a hut for each of the countries represented in Yeoville, showcasing its history, its culture … Then on the hut side would be the cuisine, you know, the food. This will be for schools, for youth, for women's organisations to visit. You choose a country, each one of them is a full educational, interactive experience, and at the end you get a snack from that country … Then afterwards you meet all together, there are questions for each trip, you discuss with us before you leave. I don't see any other neighbourhood anywhere in South Africa that could have that, which is why I love Yeoville.

Investing in the youth

We started 'Busy Kids', where we worked with children after school – children from other parts of Africa: many needed help with English. But even the others had nowhere to go, so they end up just coming at the park the whole day. We'd keep them occupied, with homework, yoga, swimming, sports, with friends who'd volunteer and donations from the shops.

Africa Week, 2010–2011

Africa Week 2010 was incredible. I was called in because of my experience and my work. In 2011 there was no funding, so most of them decided they were not going to do it. I said no way, *no way!* Even without funding we can get Yeovillites to come on board. I went to Alliance Française for films and got them to give us the films from the Burkina Faso film festival. I went to the market: it was important to expose to the general public the kind of tropical African foods that are sold in Yeoville, what those foods are, how they are cooked. So part of it is the atrium of the Recreation Centre we turned into an African market where these women set up all their different wares. It was beautiful.

PASTOR HUMPHREY MOGASHOA
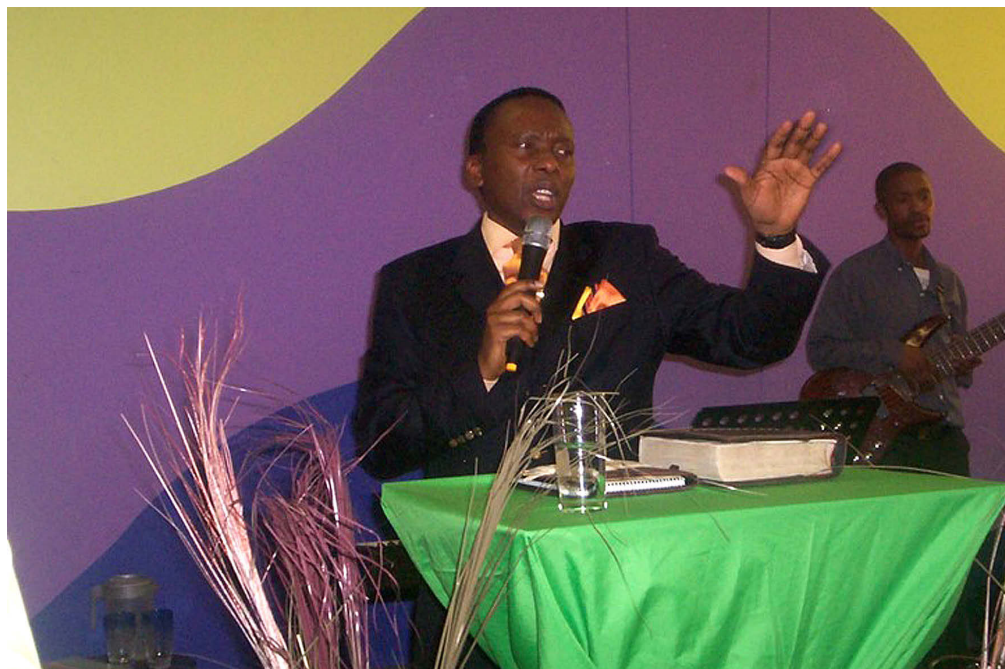
FIGURE 27.6: Pastor Humphrey Mogashoa

> I've always believed that the church must interface with the community. I don't think it is possible to disintegrate life, especially the political, the spiritual and the economic, because they all go together.

BORN: 1972, Atteridgeville

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: Since 2004

CURRENT JOB: Unisa quality assurance practitioner

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Pastor, Yeoville Baptist Tabernacle; former chair, Yeoville Community Policing Forum

Being an activist

I believe you have to be earthly useful, because heaven is too far. While we are still waiting for it, we'd better be busy with something useful. Issues of justice, the oppressed and the marginalised are in the Bible. At the University of Natal School of Theology, I learnt about liberation theology and black theology. Activism is the livingness of effecting impact in the community, that's what it is!

Building the church and the community

It was the youth from the church who helped start the Youth Desk for Yeoville. And then, as the Youth Desk was working so hard, the ANC asked, can it become the ANC Youth League? And then, in January 2007, the station commander of Yeoville approached me: 'Could you help revive the community policing forum?' That's how we started.

I became concerned about other nationalities in Yeoville, and their sense of isolation. Us South Africans, we need to reach out to them. I told the church we don't call them *makwerekwere*; we say 'brothers and sisters outside South Africa', or 'fellow Africans'. In May 2008, Yeoville fortunately managed to prevent xenophobic attacks. People were marching with spears, to target all those shops on Raleigh. But within the CPF, we had started a business forum, linking with all businesses in Yeoville. So immediately the police contacted shop owners and instructed them to close shops, and they guarded the entrance of the street. Two days later we called an urgent community meeting, and, really there is no doubt, this meeting struck a chord.

Creating jobs

Many people are unemployed here. We needed to be creative. We approached the MEC for safety: 'Can't we have street patrollers?' to get people off the street. They would be given R1 000 as a stipend, food coupons from Checkers, sponsors from all those businesspeople in Time Square. The target number was 400 people to employ, within three to six months. But then some ANC Youth League guys started plotting; they wanted the positions and the connections. So I left office in September 2009, then a number of businesspeople also left, and everything fell apart.

FIGURE 27.7: Marc Gbaffou (right)

We like to work locally, with local communities, because violence often starts with local leaders using xenophobia to win over their constituencies. But we also need to work nationally, as many things cannot be solved locally.

BORN: 1972, Côte d'Ivoire

LIVED IN YEOVILLE: 1999–2004

CURRENT JOB: Chemical engineer

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Chair, African Diaspora Forum (ADF); chair, Ivorian Community in South Africa

Vision

We understand the realities of living together. People have differences, but at the end of the day we share a common humanity: common concerns for our families, raising our kids in a safe environment, aspiring for better lives. We have to unite to achieve these dreams.

Why Yeoville?

The African Diaspora Forum is not created for Yeoville or Johannesburg CBD. Even if ADF was born in Yeoville, and we used to meet in St Francis Church, our first intervention was in Alexandra. We are active in several parts of Johannesburg and trying to reach townships and informal settlements. But our main constituency is in the CBD, and in Yeoville in particular. That is where we have our offices, thanks to the support of the YBCDT.

I have been living in Yeoville for a while, and the Ivorian community has two houses in Yeoville: it is home to me. I was the deputy chair of the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum for three years. But I confronted the councillor, as she made xenophobic statements in public, in May 2008. One year later, she took revenge on fellow YSF members, so I withdrew from the YSF to avoid putting them in a difficult position. And now, I found out that I cannot be part of the community policing forum executive, as you have to be a permanent resident or a South African citizen to do so. With such discrimination, how can you serve people, especially in Yeoville?

Yeoville Africa Week

The ADF trademark is the work we conducted in Alexandra in 2008, and then in Jeppestown in 2009, working with schools, making them adopt an African country to open minds through education and culture. In Yeoville, for the moment we have not done that, due to lack of funding. But we have been co-organising, with YBCDT, the Yeoville Africa Week Festival, since 2010. In 2011, we organised a pan-African concert around the theme 'migrant rights are human rights', in the Yeoville Recreation Centre. It brought different communities together. And beyond migrants' rights, some South Africans discovered that there are many rights they were not aware of. [There] was also wonderfully diverse African music; it was fun, in a very mixed crowd.

28 Knowledge production and the politics of community engagement: Working with informal traders in Yeoville and beyond

CLAIRE BÉNIT-GBAFFOU

This chapter interrogates the politics of knowledge production and communication: how knowledge can be used as a political instrument; how knowledge production is a competitive field; how political battles translate into battles on local knowledge. It is about the process of trial and error we went through (as the collective of Yeoville Studio, but also I, as its individual director), in particular in the rising debate on the place of street trading in Yeoville's main street: Rockey-Raleigh.

Trading was indeed a key area of research within the Studio: it had been jointly identified and selected as a central arena of local political debate by Yeoville Studio academics and its three community partners. From the outset, in various public encounters with communities, we made it clear that we were not to become a local stakeholder in Yeoville; we were to produce research and make it available for public use in their own political endeavours. However, in retrospect it was naïve of us to think this position would be easy to hold or even to define clearly in complex, fuzzy and dynamic situations.

Few authors engaging in action research lift the veil on their own shortcomings, errors of judgement, imperfect or disappointing results. Few enter the complicated field of local politics in which their research unfolds. Not only is it a difficult exercise on its own. Reflections on action research are also often framed by the necessities of reporting to funders, new fundraising

perspectives, the fear of losing credibility through revealing one's own mistakes and limitations and the need to protect participants' anonymity, as well as the relationship established with them that too harsh or too direct a critique could jeopardise. As a consequence, the various fields of academia interested in university–community engagement seldom expose the intricate complexities of local politics and the real challenges of attempting to support or influence change from this local scale of urban governance. This is what motivates this chapter: to tell a story and to reflect on it, as honestly as possible, with the limited distance I have, as both a witness and an agent in several interconnected but different arenas.

To facilitate meaningful analysis, I tell the story in detail; I do not, therefore, theorise on issues such as the politics of knowledge or the place and politics of informal trading in contemporary cities, engaged with elsewhere. Telling the story in this way also requires adopting what is for me an unusual and rather uncomfortable position: writing about myself, exposing my own actions, positions, mistakes, reflections, doubts and prejudices, with a degree of reflexivity as well as with a number of biases. Whilst knowledge production and community engagement on trading in Yeoville was a collective effort, I feel I have to express my own perspective.[1] As Yeoville Studio director, I was in a position to bring the variety of research initiatives together, see their intersection and grasp the most vividly their joint, real and potential political significance. As a coordinator, as an academic with a passion for politics and community participation, and as a former local activist in Yeoville, I was driving the interface between Wits School of Architecture and Yeoville communities, each with their own internal political dynamics. The chapter is written in this individual capacity – views and biases are my own.

The first section presents Yeoville Studio research initiatives on informal trading and how some of its results challenged existing local political discourses. The second section narrates how Yeoville Studio entered the arena of politics, as we became part of a participatory process on trading in Yeoville. In the third section I analyse my understanding of the situation at the time and how I attempted, with my colleagues and partners, to address it. The conclusion reflects on knowledge, local politics and the conditions needed for action research to have some effect on urban change.

Researching informal trading in Yeoville: Challenging dominant discourses

In the first year of Yeoville Studio (2010), at least three research projects on informal trading in Yeoville were undertaken as class assignments. A survey of perceptions about street trading in Rockey-Raleigh Street, a photographic portrait of Muller Street and a survey on the governance of the Yeoville market were of particular significance, as they led to unexpected results in terms of research findings as well as research process.

The survey of perceptions about street trading (Daya et al. 2010) included pedestrians, formal shopkeepers and street traders along Rockey-Raleigh Street.[2] The survey highlighted the respondents' ambiguous feelings about street trading, most of them raising *simultaneously* issues of congestion, litter and illegality related to it, as well as a good deal of sympathy for the traders, and enjoyment of the vibe, friendliness and business they brought onto the street.

One formal shop trader, for instance, asserted that he could not work with street traders 'as they are illegal', but that 'without them, Yeoville is a ghost town' (Mathabatha et al. 2011).[3] We interpreted the ambiguity of these responses as an implicit call for *managed* street trading – street trading was seen as part of the city, but residents and users called for its regulation. It was its lack of legalisation and management, its 'illegalisation', that created most of the ills denounced by respondents. This finding challenged usual City discourses discarding street trading as a mere nuisance, ideas repeated consistently by City officials and local councillors in Yeoville public meetings: 'Nobody wants street traders in Yeoville.'[4]

Photographs of Muller Street representing spaza shops, shot by students and exhibited in a street leader's front yard, triggered active debates amongst residents.[5] Most cast an overwhelming and immediate discredit on spaza shops, using terms echoing dominant municipal phraseology: spazas were 'unfair competition with formal shops' and 'downgrading our neighbourhood'. When prompted further, residents told stories of their daily shopping at the corner spaza and their friendly chats with spaza traders, whose shops were considered as convenient, helpful and bringing safety to the street. This contradiction between discourses on the (dreamed) formal city and the expression of daily (informal) living conditions and practices led us to wonder how people reconciled the dominant representation of the city, shaping their individual aspirations to middle-class status, and their representation of their own popular, everyday practices.

In both cases, contradictory experiences and representations of informal trading in the city were at the core of our findings, without being accompanied by any articulated discourse. Rather, residents' daily practices were denied and subsumed under modernist discourses about a desired formal city. No counter-discourse that explicitly valorised or valued their popular, neighbourly, street culture emerged. Yet, such discourses on popular practices do come up in other contexts: in the City and the police campaigns around safety: 'knowing one's neighbours', 'sharing information', 'watching the street'; in the mythology of popular resistance against apartheid in townships: 'organising at street level', 'showing support and solidarity to one's neighbours'; and in their legacy today in township everyday social networks and active street life. Why, in Yeoville, were these discourses on the city so disconnected from actual practices? Were they the legacy of the apartheid modernist city, where the 'real' city, the one all aspire to – the 'white' one – is formal and highly controlled? Were they the sign of a socially transforming society, where aspirations to middle-class status require the negation of, or distance from, one's popular origins? Or did popular countercultures and discourses emanate mostly from more grounded social groups (such as in townships with local civics, or workers' trade unions), or more socially mixed groups (such as in gentrified areas[6]) than currently exist in Yeoville?

These counter-discourses were articulated in our respondents' answers. They were not present in any public arena, or carried by any local leader, or present in public debates. Amongst our community partners, it was Edmund Elias, vocal spokesperson of the South African National Traders and Retailers Alliance (SANTRA), who had the most explicit and constructed counter-discourse on informal trading, framing it as 'the people's economy' (Mathabatha et al. 2011). But he seldom expressed this in local meetings in Yeoville, carrying that message rather in other, metropolitan or provincial political platforms, in the media and in private discussions

with Yeoville street trader leaders he tried to train and mobilise. Maurice Smithers, the chair of Yeoville Bellevue Community Development Trust (YBCDT), was more directly involved in reflecting on local development solutions for Yeoville, but he had no strong or explicit view on trading beyond the need to build a local social contract between all stakeholders, in order to manage informal practices whose unregulated development was becoming detrimental to the area. George Lebone, the chair of Yeoville Stakeholders Forum (YSF), had a personal sympathy for the plight of street traders, sensitive to the sufferings created by constant police harassment. But, be it because of his ANC loyalty or his more personal approaches to policy issues, he never publicly expressed strong views on the issue of trading.[7]

A third stream of research, on market governance (Bakwa et al. 2010), led to other findings that were to have significance in local political debates. Carried through a number of interviews with traders, trader leaders and the Yeoville market manager, the research illuminated the internal hierarchy of market stalls: street-facing stalls were much better sales sites than internal stalls – a classic feature in markets that is, however, not explicitly addressed in the design and governance of South African markets. The research further highlighted a real problem with pedestrian circulation across the market, because of its physical darkness as well as an irrelevant articulation between market alleys and street pedestrian paths.[8] Interestingly, traders selling fruits and vegetables from street-facing market stalls did not complain about competition from street traders (some remarked that 'they are our customers'). Specialised traders (selling Central African goods) located inside the market were also satisfied with their business. Those complaining the most about lack of business were the traders located inside the market and selling basic, everyday goods (sweets, beauty creams, fruits and vegetables).[9] This finding directly challenged market-trader leaders' and the City's discourses asserting that street traders competed unfairly with market traders and that their presence in the street was the direct and main cause of the market's business challenges.

A further unexpected effect of our research was that, in spite of numerous attempts to communicate the aims of Yeoville Studio, the process of surveying street traders was misunderstood, and generated disquiet amongst market traders. According to one street trader leader, the sight of students surveying street traders in Rockey-Raleigh Street triggered a rumour amongst market traders: that the City was about to legalise street traders. This rumour grew in a context of ongoing tension between street and market traders, where the latter accused the former of unfair competition.[10] Market traders also wanted street traders expelled from the street on the basis of a collective memory of injustice, where, in the late 1990s, street traders had been removed from the street and forcibly relocated into the market. Whilst this collective memory was seldom based on direct experience (only a minority of the current market traders were those initial street traders chased away from the street into the market), this collective history was regularly referred to in public debates.[11]

This rumour, and the fear and anger it generated amongst market traders, is reported to have led some of them to threaten, not to violently chase street traders away (another threat that emerged regularly, with xenophobic undertones as most street traders are foreigners[12]), but to put their own stalls in the street. This crisis reportedly led the City Department of Economic Development, responsible for market and street-trading management, to call for an

urgent meeting of all Yeoville traders (street and market), in early December 2010. During this meeting, held in a packed Recreation Centre (an estimated 400 traders were in attendance), the City officially started a process of consultation between Yeoville street and market traders to find a solution to trading issues. The City Department of Economic Development had also asked the Metro Trading Company (MTC)[13] Yeoville market manager and the YBCDT leader to participate in this endeavour. Our other partner organisation's leader, Edmund Elias (SANTRA spokesperson), could not make it to the meeting, organised at short notice and that he heard about only through a conversation with me. This had consequences as, at this very meeting, the presiding City official proceeded with the election of a task team (hereafter the Yeoville Trading Task Team) to drive the consultation process. The team comprised himself as the chair, the MTC Yeoville market manager, the leader of YBCDT (Maurice Smithers), five representatives from the market (chosen from amongst the market leadership), and five representatives of street traders. For the latter, a public nomination process selected four South African female block leaders, and Jeremy Ramphele,*[14] the leader of One Voice, a street traders' organisation working closely (and suspected of collusion) with this particular City official.[15]

Initially unaware of what had precipitated the meeting, and thinking that several Yeoville Studio research findings could illuminate some alternatives for trading management, I welcomed what appeared to be an opportunity for our research to be actually useful in a real and current local decision-making process. I thus publicly proposed Yeoville Studio's support in the consultation process. The City official reluctantly accepted the offer, provided that Yeoville Studio 'keeps an observer status' – which was a reasonable request in theory, but in practice proved difficult to honour. In retrospect, partaking in this process on our own account, without explicitly being asked by our Studio partners, was indeed going beyond our initial mandate. In a way I was caught in the enthusiasm of Yeoville Studio's findings and the possibilities they opened. But I also knew that possibilities for change could not be carried solely or decisively by the street trading representatives nominated in this Yeoville Trading Task Team, in the absence of the more vocal, empowered and articulate Edmund. The politics of the situation (domination of City-aligned stakeholders and weak representation of the most marginalised group, the street traders) dominated my judgement and I acted, in this situation, politically rather than academically.

The challenges of bringing research into public arenas

What followed was a series of meetings, held between March and mid-April 2011, in which a team from Yeoville Studio[16] tried to find a place that was right (rather than 'the right place', which probably does not exist) in Yeoville's contested local politics. This complex process, involving collective and ad hoc meetings, private negotiations and public conflicts, overt and covert agendas, must be told at a certain level of detail. I have chosen to include extracts of my fieldwork notes, alternating with broader analyses of the politics of knowledge in which Abdul Abed, Joseph Myoya (two honours students) and I, representing the Studio in this process, became – not always intentionally and without control over the process – local political actors.

Yeoville Trading Task Team meeting, 18 March 2011
(Edited notes from fieldwork diary)

Thanks to Maurice's intercession, we are invited to the second trading committee meeting (we had not been invited to the first one: conveniently forgotten?), organised around a tour of Yeoville so that each group could show possible spaces where street traders could be relocated.

During the tour, it is clear that the market traders and the YBCDT have both prepared constructed proposals, whilst the street traders have not. Mario* [the most vocal market-traders representative: he is white, has formal education, is articulate, has a good relationship with the City official and the market manager] shows two possible sites, at the periphery of Greater Yeoville, that market traders have earmarked for the construction of another market especially for the street traders. Maurice has different plans, envisaging street trading as a way to foster the regeneration of Raymond Street, a too quiet and drug-ridden street perpendicular to Rockey-Raleigh. Listening to these relocation proposals, the four (female) street traders' representatives are silent, but anger shows in their gaze and attitude.

Thabang* [City official, Department of Economic Development] starts complaining violently about street traders' silence. He screams at them, pointing his finger: 'You are never happy with anything! You are unable to make any proposal! You can only criticise others! You don't know what you want! It is unbearable …' And when Jeremy* [One Voice leader, one of the five street traders' representatives] sides with the City and further shouts at the four female street traders instead of questioning the whole process of relocation, I can't help but to step in: 'As an observer, it seems obvious that not all groups have the same resources. YBCDT and market traders are well equipped to construct a proposal, but it is more difficult for street traders. Yeoville Studio would be happy to help and facilitate a workshop, to support street traders in putting together their own ideas.'

Maurice supports the idea, and Thabang eventually gives one week for all stakeholders to meet on their own, and discuss a compromise. Then they will all reconvene with him again. He is determined to have a solution by the 15 April, just before the local elections. Maurice expresses his surprise as 'there is no quick fix for the issue, even if there can be short-term plans'. But market traders threaten to use violence if something is not done quickly. Street traders are also calling for a quick solution as metro police raids are happening daily. One is under way as we discuss, and as we walk back to Rockey Street, we see street traders running all over, in panic, tears on their faces, to try to escape the police.

I then discussed the interaction with the four female street traders, and we debated on how to frame the street-trading workshop. Angelina suggested we invite Edmund Elias as 'he always has good ideas' – all agreed. There was some debate on whether we should or should not include Jeremy from One Voice; traders decided we should not, as he was too close to the City official. The workshop took place a few days later. Edmund dominated the meeting, putting forward key principles for the street traders' position, which were applauded by the Yeoville traders in a friendly and focused atmosphere. I saw my role in the meeting as facilitating the (shy, with no formal education and limited English literacy) female traders' input, and consolidating a one-page, manifesto-like document that would be easy to communicate. It was on the wording of this short written document that more of a debate between the female traders occurred: on what they wanted for themselves, what could be compromised upon, what needed to be included.

The Wits trading group and the leaders of our three Yeoville Studio partners (Edmund, George and Maurice) subsequently met to discuss the process ahead and the role Yeoville

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BOX 28.2: Research versus political rationality

Yeoville Trading Task Team meeting, 22 March 2011
(Edited notes from fieldwork diary)

A meeting is called on 22 March 2011 by Maurice, with street traders, market traders and Yeoville Studio (Abdul, Joseph and I) – without Thabang, as was agreed. Street traders present their manifesto-proposal, which asserts that traders want to remain on Rockey-Raleigh Street, where business is concentrated, but proposes a number of principles for trading regulation that they would be happy to comply with, to better respond to other stakeholders' concerns. Market traders present a counter-proposal. They accept the fact that the core business node is around Rockey-Raleigh, but request that street traders are banned between Kenmere and Cavendish (the three blocks surrounding the market). This proposal is not accepted by street traders.

I present, as relevant for the discussion, Yeoville Studio's findings on street-trading perceptions and market governance. I stress in particular the fact that market problems are linked not only to street traders' competition, but also, significantly, to internal market design, not conducive to attracting pedestrians; the abandonment of all marketing and activation efforts; and the possibly insufficient specialisation of the products sold. I propose a participatory workshop in the market to discuss these issues.

When the meeting ends, every group has stated their view but no agreement has been reached. I have an informal discussion with Mario,* a market-traders' representative. He agrees that most issues are about the market itself, but states that the discussions with the City on this matter have always failed, and it seems easier for market traders to take away street traders as this is in line with existing City policies, rather than to attempt to redesign or reframe the market itself.

Informal discussion with market-trader leader continues, 5 April 2011
(Edited notes from fieldwork diary)

I go to the market to meet Mario,* and discuss with him about organising a workshop with market traders, to collectively debate on possible market designs to make it more user-friendly, and also to respond to the market traders' desire to grow the market. Maurice had said he would come with me, as also part of the Trading Task Team, but at the last minute he could not make it.

Mario* greets me in a friendly way, but warns that he has something to tell me: that he will 'attack me' (as the Studio) in the Trading Task Team meeting the following day. I say I won't make it to the meeting, unfortunately, and enquire what this attack is about. He tells me he has reported back on the presentation I gave at the previous Trading Task Team meeting (22 March 2011) and that market traders were angry about the presentation. 'This lady should not set a foot in the market anymore!' said one, he reports, to which he jokingly replied, 'Yes, and bring the guillotine!' (referring to my French-ness), to try to relax the atmosphere. Eventually the committee decided, he said, that Mario* should publicly require the report to be withdrawn. I reply that I am not ready to withdraw the report, but that I am more than happy to present Yeoville Studio's findings to the market traders and debate it with them. Mario* says he can organise a workshop with the market traders but that he still wants to raise the issue the following day.

He then enquires about the workshop, which I present. He seems enthusiastic, says it echoes an encounter he had with an artist a few days before, and is thrilled about possibilities of resuming cultural events in the market. He adds, 'No matter what happens tomorrow, it is important that we keep a good relation with Yeoville Studio and that these workshops happen.' I say, 'It is up to you, but you know well that words matter – don't slam the door in our face.' He replies, smiling, 'No, I'll be mild; I'll just present it as an opinion.'

I give him the written workshop proposal letter (providing him with several copies in case he wishes to discuss it amongst traders). I also try to give a copy to the MTC Yeoville market manager, who says he cannot take it without the City's formal approval – a disappointment, but not a surprise. At least he has been informed. I leave wondering how far we can go without the City, but if Mario* is keen, I am confident we can make progress.

Studio could play in it. We jointly defined a number of directions to take Yeoville Studio forward. First, supported by Maurice Smithers, who consistently called for a broad debate on trading in Yeoville to build local consensus, Yeoville Studio needed to publicise its

findings in *Yeovue News*, the local newspaper edited by Maurice and distributed door to door in the neighbourhood (see *Yeovue News* 2011a, 2011b), and through workshops and further presentations.

Second, we agreed that the Studio needed to consolidate and deepen its findings on trading, and start imagining solutions. Several research directions were discussed, as well as a joint tour with the Yeoville Trading Task Team to explore existing and successful practices integrating informal and formal trading in Johannesburg, which Edmund was to organise. The tour was scheduled for 23 April 2011, and all members of the task team invited, but only the Wits trading team participated alongside Edmund. As a political process it was disappointing, but as a research one it was illuminating, showcasing an unexpected diversity of urban, design and planning solutions to issues of integrating street trading into the dense urban fabric of the inner city. Abdul consolidated the cases of managed street trading and successful trading synergies in a document (Abed 2011) that was publicised through Yeoville Studio's website and multiple public presentations.

A third outcome of our brainstorming was the decision to balance our approach, working not only with street traders (based on their more urgent need for resources), but also with market traders. I therefore approached Mario* with a formal offer: a participatory design workshop, corresponding to market traders' desire, expressed in public meetings, to expand the market in line with City plans. The Studio had identified a variety of skills, networks and resources to facilitate market traders' engagement with and collective definition of their own needs. A member of Yeoville Studio, Mpho Matsipa, put me in touch with an NGO she was part of, Architects for Humanity, who were keen to use participatory methods to rebuild the market. Abdul Abed was framing his future master's research on participatory design, and was willing to focus it on the market. I had also approached the African Diaspora Forum who were interested in linking some of its cultural projects to the market to revive the forgotten legacy of organising cultural events in the market. These, I thought, could bring exciting and fruitful synergies.

The workshop never happened, as the market traders – or rather Mario,* their most vocal leader – never came back to me or to Yeoville Studio. The Trading Task Team meeting the following day[17] was difficult – and it was also the last one organised by the City, marking the end of the discussion process on this matter.

As the Yeoville Studio team, we felt the need to defend the Studio against this accusation. I and a few colleagues crafted a letter sent to all stakeholders, clarifying Yeoville Studio's actions, retracing processes (including those misrepresented or omitted by market traders), and still opening the path for a market workshop, if it was wished for. The offer was not taken.

The meeting had ended on the need to be more inclusive, but no further meetings were organised. Thabang continued to meet some of the stakeholders but on a one-to-one basis, which led to a series of rumours and little possibility for debate. For instance, Maurice asked Abdul for his data on street pavement dimensions, to evaluate, together with Thabang, how many and where street stalls could be allowed, given the narrowness of Rockey-Raleigh Street's pavements.[18] Later, Mario* also reported, in an informal discussion with me, that

Yeoville Trading Task Team meeting, 6 April 2011
(Edited notes from fieldwork diary)

Abdul reported that the meeting was chaotic. Yeoville Studio was vigorously attacked by the market traders. Mario* accused Yeoville Studio of having 'manipulated street traders' in the position document elaborated in the workshop. He said it was obvious, as 'street traders visibly did not understand what they were reading'. This accusation was cast after Thabang* had asked the street traders what kind of empowerment company they were thinking of (an element mentioned at the end of the street traders' manifesto to manage street trading). How would the company ensure that the money collected would not be stolen? And so on. As it was a pilot project proposed by Edmund, not yet elaborated in its details, the street traders were unable to answer. But instead of saying that it was a draft model to be further constructed, the two street trader representatives, Angelina and Ma Lina, bowed their heads and kept quiet. Abdul tried to tell Mario,* 'You were not at the meeting, how can you know what happened?' But the accusation remained.

Maurice and George reportedly calmed the situation. Then market traders attacked Yeoville Studio on a second issue: the validity of its research findings. They claimed, without flinching, that they had not been approached about the research by Yeoville Studio, that they were not aware of it. They did not mention Yeoville Studio's offer of workshops in the market to discuss research findings, and to redesign the market.

When I asked Angelina what had happened in the meeting, she said, 'We were raising our hands, raising our hands, and Thabang would not let us speak, so we could not say what we wanted to say.' Then, while they were asked about the position paper, 'Ma Lina tried to talk, she mentioned bringing the [SERI] lawyer in the conversation,[19] but Thabang cut her, saying it was out of order.'

George Lebone (YSF), our third Yeoville Studio partner, was present. He did not talk to the Yeoville Studio issues directly, but strongly attacked Thabang for not driving an inclusive process, for being judge and party, and for making decisions on his own. He asked for serious restructuring of the process if it was to continue.

Thabang* was proposing the creation of 50 stalls on Rockey-Raleigh Street, to be allocated to an estimated 250 traders. The trader leader was worried about the potential xenophobic violence this could trigger.

The limits of community building for change in an inner-city neighbourhood

What did Yeoville Studio do in this context? Without it being explicitly strategised at the time, through a number of informal discussions with colleagues and community partners, I

developed three directions. First, it seemed crucial to reinforce the partnership with our three partner leaders. Second, the Studio had to abandon some of its intended research projects – those involving the market, such as participatory research in urban design of the market, and a survey of customer practices – and focus rather on working with street traders who were requesting Yeoville Studio's assistance. Third, we should attempt to present and discuss Yeoville Studio's findings with different departments and agents from the City, although we felt this was outside the limit of Yeoville Studio's mandate.

Facilitating the emergence of the Yeoville Bellevue Coalition for Integrated Trading

Yeoville Studio's activities on trading seemed to be blocked by the absence of a strong local coalition lobbying for what we called 'integrated trading' – a conjunction of diverse trading modes, from informal to formal, as already existed but was denied legitimacy in the vision of City officials, in public discourses and in private representations of the city.

 After the market traders' accusation against Yeoville Studio in the Trading Task Team meeting, and its weak defence by those of our community partners who were present at the meeting, it became clear that the Yeoville Studio partnership as a whole lacked sufficient strength and consistency to participate in, let alone influence, the local battle for integrated

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BOX 28.5: Partnerships, research and politics

Challenges around the publication of Yeoville Studio findings in Yeovue News
(Edited notes from fieldwork diary, April 2011)

In our later discussion about the Trading Task Team meeting (6 April 2011), Maurice told me that he had published the Studio findings (street-trading perceptions, market design and governance issues) in *Yeovue News*, dated 8 April 2011, before the meeting happened, and that he was regretting it. Had he known about the contention around the findings, he would not have published them. But it was too late, the printing process was already engaged. On his blog too, he stated this regret twice and gave a lot of technical details on why it was too late to withdraw the report.

 In the *Yeovue News* issue itself, Maurice had been careful to add '*Yeovue News* does not necessarily agree with or support the findings or the views of Yeoville Studio'. This double expression of distance from the Studio's findings (the editorial caution and the multiple reiteration of regret), after we had been so violently attacked in the meeting, hurt me a bit, personally: as if ignoring the existence of the partnership, and joining our detractors in their attack on the legitimacy and value of our findings, rather than debating more directly with the normative position we took on this basis.

 This distance could be explained as the consequence of both Wits's practice within Yeoville Studio, and the heterogeneous nature of our partners, competing rather than uniting in the work for change in trading policy in Yeoville.

trading. Our community partners, of course, had their own local battles to fight and defending the Studio was not their main one. Or rather, and more importantly, at least some of our community partners did not, at this point, see Yeoville Studio as a resource to support and drive the change they were focusing on.

On the Wits side of the partnership, there was insufficient communication with our partners on our moves and interactions.[20] More importantly, the Wits trading team had its own position, which did not always match that of our partners. Our convictions that a modernist denial of informality was not only exclusionary and ill-adapted but doomed to failure, and that integrated trading management solutions could work, were shared by all three partners. But our sympathy for street traders as the most marginalised in this process and our sense of a 'mission' to support the emergence of counter-discourses on street cultures in public platforms were not shared, at least not by all. Our position could easily be caricatured as a romanticised view on informal trading, which in fact we had been careful to avoid, looking for pragmatic and sustainable 'suggestions', clearly separated from what we called 'findings'. I tried as much as I could to clarify this position in various interactions with community partners and in public meetings, stating that at Wits we did not believe in an exclusionary solution on trading in Yeoville, and also that we saw Yeoville Studio's role as opening debate and formulating new ideas rather than repeating what existed. This was, however, a difficult position to hold and a complex message to communicate.

Besides, a fundamental ambiguity about the Studio's accountability remained. Was it limited to our three partners (and it was up to them to take the ideas and use them or not), or did it include 'the community' at large? This question was all the more difficult to answer since none of our partners consistently held community meetings during the time of the Studio, and consequently were not in a position to open platforms where our research on trading could be presented and debated collectively.[21] By the end of 2010, the YSF was in crisis and stopped its meetings. The YBCDT never called for a community meeting to discuss, or build, a developmental vision for Yeoville, possibly plagued by Maurice's battle with the local councillor who saw him as a competitor and undermined his legitimacy to convene a community meeting.[22] Edmund started re-entering trading politics as SANTRA only at the end of the Studio's lifespan, and at a metropolitan and provincial scale rather than directly in Yeoville.

These difficulties were aggravated by the absence of an alliance amongst our three partners to build integrated trading in Yeoville, a consequence of their diverging views as well as different leadership styles, personalities and positions vis-à-vis the state. However, they all shared (as did the Wits trading team) a degree of frustration at the abrupt end of the Trading Task Team meetings. From collective informal discussions with them about what could be done to resume this debate, the Yeoville Bellevue Coalition for Integrated Trading was created (mid-2011), facilitated by a small group from Yeoville Studio (my colleague Aly Karam and me, together with two students, Abdul Abed and Mamokete Matjomane). Acknowledging differences in vision and priorities, the coalition agreed on common principles: a local participatory process; the necessity to take all stakeholders' needs into account; a preference for an integrated, not exclusionary, solution; and the quest for a local solution in the form of a

local management proposal (with Yeoville as pilot), that the coalition, supported by Yeoville Studio, would start developing.

It was more difficult, however, to agree on a joint political strategy. Maurice was in a cooperative relationship with the City. Edmund was more confrontational, and developing networks of cooperation at provincial level. George was entangled in local ANC politics and in his own survivalist as well as health concerns. These different attitudes, corresponding to differences in personality and in political and socio-economic position, did not lead to a coordinated, multi-faceted strategy. One of the key limitations of the coalition was that no one was legitimated to lead it: there was too much competition and divergence between the three community leaders to entrust one with such leadership and Yeoville Studio would not be an appropriate leader.[23] We attempted to invite a Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) leader (in parallel with other Cosatu engagement with street traders) to chair the coalition, but it did not work, for lack of capacity and perhaps reluctance to get entangled at this (local) scale. The coalition eventually was certainly not powerful enough to compete with the ad hoc but strong alliance of the three 'gatekeepers' working for the status quo: Thabang from the City, Jeremy from One Voice, and Mario* from the market. Beyond personal differences between the Yeoville Studio partners, the context of inner-city politics, divided between many interest groups playing opposing and shifting politics of cooperation and confrontation with the City, rendered the creation of a local coalition proposing policy alternatives extremely difficult.

Further work with street traders at stall and pavement level: A limited impact

The second direction Yeoville Studio developed after the demise of the Trading Task Team was to consolidate and deepen our work with street traders. The Wits trading team attempted to support the emergence of alternative representations of the place of street trading in the neighbourhood as something to be celebrated rather than discarded, particularly given its economic and social importance.

One initiative challenged the technical and rigid conception that 'pavements in Rockey-Raleigh are too narrow for the street to have street traders', that 'it is just impossible' to fit stalls without hindering pedestrian flows – a discourse spearheaded by the City and its one-size-fits-all norms for Johannesburg inner city, contradicted by the diversity of stalls inherited from other norms in previous policy frameworks.[24] We embarked on two exercises in this respect. First, our colleague Kirsten Dörmann organised a participatory design workshop with street traders to design alternative models for street vending stalls. Her students would sit with traders in focus groups, ask them about their needs, and then would design stalls that fitted different portions of Rockey-Raleigh Street. They then presented their models to traders for comments, in a second participatory workshop, before constructing them physically. Second, Abdul Abed (with the help of our colleague Gerald Chungu) designed a scale model of Rockey-Raleigh Street, with removable stalls of various shapes and sizes – an interactive model that was displayed in the street, where residents and users were invited to place the stalls where they thought they fitted best.

The street vending stalls, and the scale model of Rockey-Raleigh Street, were to be part of a broader public event, the final Yeoville Studio exhibition (November–December 2011),

in order to trigger discussions on the place of street trading in Rockey-Raleigh, showcasing that 'another world was possible'. They were accompanied by posters exploring different dimensions of this alternative view on street trading. Street traders' portraits told stories through photographs taken by street traders about their work and life conditions.[25] 'Tomato Stories', a photography project coordinated by our colleague Solam Mkhabela, captured passer-by attention with its strangeness and humour. The photos illustrated the fact that most traders on Rockey-Raleigh Street sell tomatoes, mostly because they are cheap to replace in case of confiscation during police raids, but also because they correspond to the low purchasing power of Yeoville residents, and are an affordable product to make gravy for the local staple food, pap. Finally, the principles agreed upon by the Yeoville Bellevue Coalition for Integrated Trading were presented, as well as some models for trading management in Rockey-Raleigh.

However, the final Yeoville Studio exhibition was an anticlimax, or a missed political opportunity. In spite of the presence of the City manager, Trevor Fowler, as a keynote speaker, the audience was scarce. The layout of our trading items in public space was ill-conceived due to failed coordination with our curators, who complained about our very tight time frames, but also possibly lacked a real understanding of, or interest in, the political aspect of the exhibition. Finally, there was little involvement of street traders themselves, linked to their lack of time but also to a lack of political organisation, both from their side and from the Yeoville Studio team and our partner leaders. Whilst limited debate happened there, we had opened other public avenues to publicise this alternative vision on trading. An issue of *Yeovue News* had been published (Yeoville Studio 2011b) about the street traders' design workshop. The design workshops themselves had been a meaningful moment where street traders felt treated with dignity and were exposed to discourses other than targeting or victimisation.

Successes in upscaling?

A small team of academics started presenting Yeoville Studio's findings to the City Department of Economic Development, with limited feedback – they were clearly not looking for a change in their policy. We had discussions with the newly elected local ward councillors, but both of them (DA and ANC) seemed sceptical of the possibility of *regulated* street trading, and 'just wanted the street cleaned' of its informal traders. I understood that without mobilisation by street traders themselves to put pressure on their own councillors, there was not much we could do to put street trading on the councillors' agenda (other than the usual item: eviction). However, street traders' own organisational weakness (furthered by their political division between a collaborative One Voice and a more oppositional SANTRA) made mobilisation unlikely. After a few attempts to work in that direction with our community partners, we felt Yeoville Studio had reached its limits, and moved the field of action beyond Yeoville.[26]

This change of scale was a different, complementary and perhaps more realistic opportunity for Yeoville Studio to contribute to a shift in discourse on and perceptions of the place of street trading in the city. Through my colleagues Aly Karam and Antonio Pezzano, postgraduate student Mamokete Matjomane and me, Yeoville Studio got involved

in various processes and debates on street-trading policies at metropolitan, provincial and national level. Siding with Cosatu,[27] we supported the process of crafting a position document bringing together the main street traders' organisations in Johannesburg at the time (SANTRA, One Voice and the South African Informal Traders Forum). Yeoville Studio also helped street traders to formulate their inputs in a 2012 workshop organised by the South African Local Government Organisation into a national guidelines document for street-trading policy in urban municipalities. Finally, based on its research insights and as academic support to SANTRA, Yeoville Studio participated in a number of provincial legislature workshops around economic development and informal trading. Other Wits-based initiatives followed, with the creation of a research group in support of street trader organisations within the Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies (CUBES), after the 2013 Operation Clean Sweep.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to reflect on two elements. First, on the complex relationship with our partners, that has its own politics, often underestimated in analyses of community–university relations. Second, on what it meant to drive a Studio in a context where the municipality was not keen on changing its policy and the 'community' was not strongly mobilised to confront the state or call for change.

No matter how much we wanted to do so, it was difficult for the Studio to be fully instrumental in supporting our community partners and not to defend our findings and the possible courses of action they opened to. Confronted with what research showed us were unsustainable or exclusionary solutions proposed by the City,[28] often not contested by our Studio partners, we did not manage to keep quiet and leave it to the Studio's partners to select what they deemed useful from our findings, all the more so because any debate was limited by their lack of direct consultation with their own constituencies.

This difference of political vision on trading between the Yeoville Studio team and Maurice in particular (leader of our main and initial partner) was not easy to handle. The Studio survived this tension only because of long-term personal relationships with Maurice, which provided a basis of general trust and allowed for robust, sometimes heated, but generally constructive debates. In Maurice's eyes, and not always without grounds, we were probably quite biased academic partners, pro-poor, romanticising informal activities, underestimating the challenges of living in an area where forms of collective control were vanishing. From our side, we lacked clarity on Maurice's own vision for the development of Yeoville, possibly because he was also shaping it as political opportunities arose, wary of alienating his allies in local government, who were crucial in enabling him to deliver benefits to the Yeoville community. Sometimes our arguments were in line with his vision – for instance, the necessity of a non-exclusionary solution for trading in Yeoville and a negotiated and fair process. Sometimes, they were not – when he was pushing for repressive state action against informal activities and crafting alliances with the most reactionary, even xenophobic, local partners.[29] Both this divergence in political vision and the lack of clarity

and precision in the framing of his own vision reduced the direct use his own organisation could make of the Studio's research outputs, at least at the time of the Studio.

Political visions were more aligned with the subsequent partner organisation's leader, Edmund Elias, who 'entered' the Studio later, after having been interviewed by students in their research on trading. He fully grasped the political use he could make of our 'expertise', and in the course of working in partnership with the Studio developed a friendship with several of its members. The limitation, for the Studio, was that Edmund's mobilisation was not focused on Yeoville, where he was active only in periods of crisis, or informally through the personal support he provided to local street trader leaders. But, possibly because he did not trade in Yeoville and his political involvement at higher scales of government already took a strong toll on his energies, he was not entirely focused, as was Maurice, on changing the situation in Yeoville.[30] However, the partnership between academics and Edmund's organisation appears to have worked well, as the research we undertook was directly used by Edmund in his policy engagement. We provided support in training and workshopping with street traders, helping facilitate the collective crafting of political manifestos; we helped trader organisations to formalise their inputs into policy documents and processes at metropolitan and provincial levels; we explored possible models of governance for street trading; and we critically debated political strategies to influence street-trading policies with Edmund and his organisation.

Of our three formal partners, only one had a clear political vision for street trading – and that was the basis on which a successful partnership developed. But, in our and our partners' defence, it became obvious that clarity of vision in civil society organisations is seldom realised. Firstly, because visions and activities are often framed according to opportunities, political and financial.[31] Secondly, because the vision and personality of local leaders have an important effect on their organisations' activities, which becomes apparent only through long-term personal engagement. Thirdly, because civil society organisations are often heterogeneous themselves, both in their constituency and in their objectives, especially in dense inner-city areas, where the multiplicity of contradictory needs and the diversity of social groups make it difficult to mobilise around the construction of a united sense of purpose.[32] Therefore, clarity of vision and the activities of partner organisations cannot always be a prerequisite for framing a City Studio. The clearer the partner's vision, the better, but clarity is more likely to come incrementally. Whilst the Studio engagement was more beneficial to Edmund's organisation (whose vision, focus and objectives were simpler and clearer) than to Maurice's or George's, it was later, after a couple of years of engagement, that Maurice started using the connections developed with Wits more directly for purposes useful to his organisation.[33] Edmund, too, has been building on the strong networks built in the Yeoville Studio for further partnerships, beyond Yeoville Studio.

The second concluding observation I want to make is based on this street-trading politics story, and our disappointment in its direct and short-term community outcomes: the missed opportunity of a participatory market-design process, the stagnation of the Yeoville Bellevue Coalition for Integrated Trading, the failed dynamics of efforts at a participatory process on trading and a pilot management solution for trading in Yeoville, and the superficial engagement with the City on locally adapted trading solutions. Our disappointment is

related to the challenges of contributing to social or policy change in a context where the municipality is reluctant or indifferent with respect to changing its policy, and where the local 'community' is not strongly mobilised to pressurise the municipality into doing so.

The lack of unity, both of the Yeoville 'community' itself and amongst the Yeoville Studio partners, has been highlighted. Constructing a debate (not to say consensus) around locally relevant and locally framed directions for change requires powerful leadership, which is not absent from Yeoville, but is fragmented (Katsaura 2012). In such a dense, inner-city neighbourhood, shaped by the contradictory urban dynamics of informalisation and gentrification, the heterogeneity of local 'community' views and visions is not a surprise (Harrison 2002; Simone 2004). This fragmentation was partly nurtured by City officials, to limit the power of a local civil society coalition challenging its power. It was aggravated by the institutional fragmentation of ward boundaries, splitting Yeoville into four different wards, and the systemic disempowerment of ward councillors in Johannesburg local government structures (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008). Gatekeepers finding an advantage in the status quo formed a powerful coalition: affirming loyalty to the City policies and to its specific agents, possibly seeing the permanence of informality as a source of power and money. Supporters of change were diverse – a whole range of positions in the continuum between the nostalgics of the old, formal and middle-class Yeoville (sometimes taking xenophobic accents), and those claiming acknowledgement and support for the new impoverished residents; between those expecting action from the state (cooperating with or antagonising it) and those tempted by autonomous action.

Yeoville community partners, in spite of their differences, were in agreement on the idea that a locally developed vision for Yeoville trading was needed: they agreed that existing City policies were ill-adapted, the status quo was not acceptable, and a more community-oriented governance system for trading was an exciting venture to be piloted in Yeoville, whose vibrancy as a community and business place created favourable conditions for it. Yet, they all lacked the legitimacy to call a general meeting and drive a public debate on the place of street trading in Yeoville. YSF could call its members, but the forum ceased to be functional in the middle of the Studio (end 2010); SANTRA could call a street traders' meeting, but most traders were not formally affiliated and there was a competing organisation at play; YBCDT as an NGO, in spite of its objective to build a developmental and participatory vision for Yeoville, had little scope to convene even a community meeting, without being attacked by the ward councillor on its lack of legitimacy. The Yeoville Bellevue Coalition for Integrated Trading, by bringing these three organisations together, was an attempt to overcome this challenge – but it did not really work, perhaps because each member of the coalition had other priorities.

This raises the more general issue of the legitimacy of community or civil society 'representatives' in a democratic South Africa (Bénit-Gbaffou & Katsaura 2014) and their de facto competition with ward councillors (Cherry et al. 2000), who are structurally unable to liaise successfully between communities and local government, given their general lack of power to represent their ward in council, and the lack of political interest in doing so (Bénit-Gbaffou 2008). Would it have been better for the Studio to partner with the local councillor(s)? That would possibly have defeated the whole purpose of the Studio – to build

local alternatives with civil society organisations – unless the local councillors were fully committed to a participatory project and to driving locally framed visions. This was not really the case in Yeoville at the time, although local councillors were informed about our initiative, and willingly provided the Studio with a short space in their monthly ward meetings. In other, possibly less diverse and complex urban settings, where community organisations are less fragmented, more grounded historically, and where local urgent needs are more easily identified or where a project or policy clearly triggers community mobilisation around or against it, such partnership with civil society organisations might be easier to construct, and the legitimacy of calling a community meeting to debate local issues less problematic.

In Yeoville between 2010 and 2011, the City was not driving any major project, and residents were not collectively mobilised around any specific issues or claims. On the trading terrain, informal traders continued to be sporadically harassed by the metro police and there were episodic eruptions of anger against informal traders from market traders or residents, but not to the point of triggering sustained collective mobilisation. At the time, the City Department of Economic Development was not considering any change in its policy or in the situation in Yeoville. Ironically, the change of mayor in April 2011 (from Amos Masondo to Parks Tau), and the subsequent November 2013 Operation Clean Sweep, triggered other forms of trader-organisation mobilisation, where the trust built during Yeoville Studio (with SANTRA in particular) led to new partnerships between scholars and street trader organisations. But that is another story.

Notes

1 Academics and students have been diversely involved in trading research and its politics, over the two years of the Yeoville Studio. The composition of the Wits 'trading group' within Yeoville Studio therefore shifted over time, which complicates the narrative of Yeoville Studio's involvement in trading research and politics. It involved many informal conversations and mutual influences which made the Studio a great collective experience at Wits, but blurs the boundaries between individual decisions and actions, and multiple levels of collective ones (within Wits and with community partners). I will try to bring as much clarity to this matter as I can throughout the text. For other individual accounts on this issue, see the chapters by Abdul Abed, Claire Bénit-Gbaffou and Sally Gaule, Obvious Katsaura, Mamokete Matjomane, and Nicolette Pingo, in this book.

2 Market traders were missing from our survey, for reasons related to the students' workloads. We understood only later that they were a crucial group on their own, having strong discourses against street traders (even if some street traders were their customers or even occasionally employees), and that their inclusion in the survey would have altered some of its conclusions.

3 The video they produced is available online: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMyNXjOa03U (accessed 6 February 2019).

4 City official, public workshop with Yeoville traders, Yeoville Recreation Centre, December 2010.

5 See Bénit-Gbaffou and Gaule, this book.

6   Valorisation of popular street cultures is often the result of processes of gentrification, as they often mix, for short periods of time, popular practices with more self-conscious, left-leaning groups of artists, intellectuals and NGOs (see Pauline Guinard, this book). However, even during the time of such a mix in Yeoville (the 1990s), countercultures were not necessarily nor primarily *popular* cultures (see Maria Suriano et al., this book).

7   See Matjomane and Bénit-Gbaffou, this book.

8   See Abed, this book.

9   The research also uncovered the existing tensions between foreign and South African traders in the market. Whilst foreigners represented approximately 70 per cent of the market traders, the market management, under pressure from Yeoville local leaders (and the local councillor in particular), decided that the market leadership should elect only 30 per cent of foreign traders as market representatives.

10 As acknowledged in private by one market-trader leader (see below), it was simpler for political purposes to oppose street and market traders, rather than to reflect on the more complex linkages revealed by research. For instance, street traders indeed have a higher turnover than market traders, as it is easier for them to catch pedestrians' attention, but also (as noted above) as the market is not attractive (issues of design and lack of specialisation). For a similar and banal product (e.g. fruit and vegetables), having a stall facing the street (in the market or on the pavement) is a definite advantage: but it is more an issue of position in the market and access to pedestrian flow than an opposition between street and market traders. Finally, emerging research indicated that purchasing from street traders and purchasing from shops and the market can be more complementary than competing modes of purchase (buying on impulse versus planned purchase).

11 'Market traders feel that they have been put into an enclosed market and continuing to have the street traders on the street will limit business for them' (minutes of the Yeoville Trading Task Team meeting, 22 March 2011).

12 So are market traders, even if possibly in a lower proportion.

13 The MTC is responsible for the management of all markets in Johannesburg.

14 Not his real name. In the rest of the text, the use of pseudonyms will be marked by *.

15 When the Studio started, most Yeoville street traders were not affiliated to any organisation. They were organised through block leaders (who regulated trading conflicts), all South African, and mostly female, chosen for their long experience in Yeoville street trading: Angelina and Ma Lina were the most prominent (Hebandjoko 2011). Although not trading in Yeoville, Edmund Elias (SANTRA) was well known to most traders, as he regularly resolved issues for the benefit of Yeoville traders, and had started a survey of all traders in an effort to support a street traders' organisation, providing political advice and training to Angelina in particular (Matjomane & Bénit-Gbaffou, this book). Jeremy Ramphele (One Voice of All Hawkers) started mobilising Yeoville street traders later; the organisation is rumoured to offer its paying members protection from the police due to its close links to the City (Matjomane 2013). In 2011 strong divisions amongst trader leaders emerged, in particular between Angelina (aligned to SANTRA) and Ma Lina (who joined One Voice).

16 Consisting centrally of Abdul Abed (honours, and later master's, student) and me, with support from Wits colleagues Professor Aly Karam, Kirsten Dörmann, Gerald Chungu, and other honours students, Joseph Myoya and Mamokete Matjomane.

17 I could not attend as the date was announced at very short notice. I asked Abdul to participate on behalf of Yeoville Studio, warning him about the nature of the discussion held with the trader leader the day before. Would it have made a great difference if I had been present? Perhaps not.

18 See Abed, this book.

19 Edmund and the street trader leaders were in discussions with SERI, the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (an NGO specialising in litigating for the urban poor), to protect street traders from metro police harassment. However, the person they had built a relationship with left SERI, whilst SERI lawyers requested the traders to resolve their differences before they could engage them. In the meantime, the relevance of requesting SERI's support and suing the City was contested by Jeremy Ramphele and his supporters amongst Yeoville street traders.

20 The discussion with Mario* had not been reported in detail to Maurice and George (although Maurice was aware of it, and we had discussed the design workshop he was to be part of). They were therefore unable to mention it in the meeting.

21 Except during participatory research processes with street traders, supported by our three partners.

22 See Katsaura, this book.

23 We were finally asked to play that role but never felt comfortable doing so, feeling the process became artificial if it was not appropriated by the three organisations.

24 See Abed, this book.

25 See Pingo, this book.

26 SANTRA indeed started seeing how it could make use of Yeoville Studio and the legitimacy-cum-grounded-knowledge that was vested there. Edmund called on Yeoville Studio in several political processes they were engaged in, at city and provincial government levels. Yeoville seemed indeed, at this point, caught in a deadlock, with the coalition of the three gatekeepers and limited forces to challenge it.

27 Cosatu, Gauteng branch, has been quite active in Johannesburg trading policies – participating in the City-led informal traders' meetings, for instance. Their attempt to mobilise traders as workers is, however, difficult (due to lack of human resources, but also the challenges of unionising informal workers) and contested by some trader leaders.

28 To summarise: markets as exclusive alternatives to street trading instead of a diversity of trading forms; rigid norms on pavement measurement interdicting street stalls instead of sensitivity to local contexts; exclusion of street traders in spite of their providing a commercial and social service to street users.

29 See Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2014; Matjomane and Bénit-Gbaffou, this book.

30 Hence his absence from the Trading Task Team, and his lack of persistence when it came to mediation with market traders and attempts to unlock the situation.

31 Maurice's organisation underwent severe financial trouble during the course of Studio. He was constantly framing proposals according to funding opportunities – and this took a lot of his time, energy and focus, to the detriment of a clear plan of action for Yeoville.

32 This was the case for the Yeoville Stakeholders Forum, a grouping of various civil society organisations' representatives with limited direction – possibly so that this direction would emerge 'from the grassroots'. However, without a sense of purpose (internal or external), this did not happen. This lack of clarity might have been one of the reasons for the demise of the organisation.

33 See Heinz Klug and Neil Klug, this book; see also Rubin et al. 2013.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADF   African Diaspora Forum
ANC   African National Congress
ANCYL   ANC Youth League
BBP   Bad Buildings Programme/
Better Buildings Programme
CBD   central business district
CBO   community-based organisation
CE   community engagement
CLT   community land trust
COHRE   Centre on Housing
Rights and Evictions
COPE   Congress of the People
Cosatu   Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPF   community policing forum
CUBES   Centre for Urbanism and Built
Environment Studies
DA   Democratic Alliance
DRC   Democratic Republic of Congo
ICRC   Inner City Regeneration Charter
IFAS   French Institute of South Africa
JDA   Johannesburg Development Agency

MSF   Médecins Sans Frontières
MTC   Metro Trading Company
NGO   non-government organisation
NP   National Party
PAR   participatory action research
PR   participatory research
RID   Retail Improvement District
SANTRA   South African National
Traders and Retailers Alliance
SCF   sector crime forum
SERI   Socio-Economic Rights Institute
SHI   social housing institution
TUHF   Trust for Urban Housing Finance
UJ   University of Johannesburg
Wits   University of the Witwatersrand
YBCDT   Yeoville Bellevue
Community Development Trust
YCPF   Yeoville Community Policing Forum
YRA   Yeoville Ratepayers Association
YS   Yeoville Studio
YSF   Yeoville Stakeholders Forum

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