

Idri Tati

Transcending Borders

As an architect, you can't make people meet, but you can remove the barriers that prevent them from meeting.

BSc Idri Tati

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers my personal experience of taking on the challenge of transcending borders. Looking beyond the human scale, this work analyses the consequences of inequality in the world.

This thesis tells of my travels to explore indeterminacy and the conditions that emerge from the extreme inequality. The pragmatic solution so far has been to enclave ourselves behind walls and protect from the outside world. The unequal scenes from South African photographer Johnny Miller, served as an incentive for this thesis. As an architect, I find these scenes disturbing and that is why I decided to educate myself in order to understand how inequality affects our society. While I refuse to reduce architecture in just the design or form, this thesis tries to approach the problem by including social-economical and political factors. A significant part of this thesis is based on fieldwork conducted between summer and autumn, during the pre-election season in Cape Town, South Africa. A number of organizations and individuals supported me through this journey by introducing and helping me to understand the issues related to this particular environment.

During my two-month stay in Cape Town, South Africa I spent the first half living in the Cape Town city center learning about the Capetonian urban culture.

The second half I moved in the southern suburbs where two unequal communities live 300 meters away from each other. In between there is a relatively empty land that currently serves as a buffer zone and which is also the site this thesis is based on. During the time in Cape Town, I analyzed the relevant social structure and the forces that produce this space. Having understood the historical, social, and political contexts of South Africa, I have been able to see potentials in the complex situation, and to assess and think of the opportunities presented by such obstacles. This thesis presents the question of how do we deal with the true process of integration? How to reconfigure the urban context to make it work from an urban point of view? The focus of this thesis is to use architecture as the key mechanism for social change and help to ensure the realization of meaningful social and geographical intervention.

Jhonny Miller

Jhonny Miller is a documentary photographer, licensed drone pilot, and multimedia producer based in Cape Town, South Africa. He specializes in issues of urbanization, development, and infrastructure.

Johnny attended Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, USA, and the University of Cape Town. He is currently a News Fellow at Code For Africa and an Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity at the London School of Economics. He has had his work

featured in major publications and exhibits and speaks frequently around the world. Johnny is the co-founder of africanDRONE, a pan-African organization committed to using drones for good.

1 UNEQUAL SCENES

“Inequalities in our social fabric are oftentimes hidden, and hard to see from ground level. Visual barriers, including the structures themselves, prevent us from seeing the incredible contrasts that exist side by side in our cities.

Unequal Scenes uses a drone to illustrate the inscribed history of our world in a new way. The scars within our urban fabric, so apparent from above, can provoke a sense of surprise (“I didn’t know it looked that bad!”)...But also reveal our complicity in systematic disenfranchisement. We live within neighborhoods and participate in economies that reinforce inequality. We habituate ourselves with routines and take for granted the built environment of our cities. We’re shocked seeing tin shacks and dilapidated buildings hemmed into neat rows, bounded by the fences, roads, and parks of the wealthiest few...But it’s the very scale and unerring regularity across geographic regions which points to the systemic nature of inequality. This is not organic – this is planned and intentional disenfranchisement.

The drone distances the photographer and the viewer of the photograph, both physically and mentally, and provokes an analysis of the distant gaze. It forces us to confront the ethics of representation, and the limitations (and freedom) of using technology in image-making. How far does the drone need to be from the ground in order to reach an “ethical” altitude? Who should have access to the airspace and to the drone technology? Are drone images fundamentally different than a Google Earth image or a printed map?

Make no mistake – Unequal Scenes is an act of defiance. I defy the traditional power structures that keep these inequalities hidden so well from every direction except directly above. If the images provoke uncomfortable feelings of fear, despair, or an unsettling realization of complicity – good. They are intended to.”

Jhonny Miller, “Unequal Scene” last modified June, 2018,
<https://unequalscenes.com/about-contact>.

2 INFORMALITY

INTRO

During the 20th century the number of people living in urban areas has been increasing constantly. In the 21st century the world population living in the city surpassed 50 percent and this trend is not showing signs of slowing down. This increase of migration towards the cities has turned out to be a significance challenge to the existing urban models, and conventional urban planning tools have been failing to remediate the spatial consequences developed by inequality most often called – informality. Dealing with informality asks for new tools, but at the beginning it is important to understand informality, not as the aberration from the regular, but in its own right.

Hernando De Soto, Peruvian economist, has defined informality as “the refuge of individuals who find that the costs of abiding by existing laws in the pursuit of legitimate economic objectives exceed the benefits” (Soliman 2003, as cited in Roy and AlSayyad 2003, 179). Alan Gilbert elaborates further on this definition. He takes on the example from South American countries by pointing out that a large number of Latin Americans live, work and play in the informal sector. For the government those who are left out of the world of formality typically lack pension rights, social security cover, work contacts and environment safety. Meanwhile at home, informality manifest itself in the self-help construction that has produced most Latin American Homes. (Gilbert 2003, as cited in Roy and AlSayyad 2003, 35-36)

Often we associate the appearance of informality with poverty, low productivity, underdevelopment, and oppressive regimes. While we often associate the phenomenon of informality with the “developing” countries, during this research, it was important to acknowledge that informality is to be noticed in almost every society, though the (spatial) manifestations might vary. For example, many countries transitioning from socialism to capitalism, such as Serbia, Albania, Croatia, Romania, are struggling with various forms of what is often called “illegal construction” and are often included in the research. However, it is important to note that even countries considered as “developed” such as Austria and the Netherlands have some elements of informality. In the Netherlands the demand for flexible cheap labor, brought Polish migrants workers to come and work temporary in the country often extending their stay beyond legal regulations. (Bos-Karczewska, “Staffing agency exploitation”)

Tedy Cruz and Fonna Forman recognize in their research how informality due to the constant exchange between Mexico and the United States is shaping the space in border towns such as San Diego (USA)/Tijuana (MX). Taking in consideration the

reality, it is essential to acknowledge informality as a force that shapes our society and it is our responsibility to make an effort to understand what lays behind it.

Answering questions such as: What does informality bring to people? Who are the actors participating in informality? How did informality become a dominant force to produce space? These questions will play an important role to our ways of looking at informality and to upcoming strategies for dealing with this issue. The approach of this research is that informality cannot be fixed by top down intervention, but should be steered with incremental guidance and stewardship.

Informality is a complex concept that should not be observed just as an isolated sphere depending on the field of research but has to be understood as the entangled way of reproducing livelihood in all its aspects. It extends from informal employment to where informal workers live, how do they generate income: home enterprise, renting rooms, running small businesses. Referring to the mentioned explanation above, it is obvious that informality has strong ties to the state of economy, or, more precisely, to the state of redistribution of the society's wealth, therefore for a better understanding, we have to explore the entanglement of concepts of informal economies and urban informality.

INFORMAL ECONOMY

After post-war era development came to a close, the idea of an informal economy was born. "The 1970s were watershed between three decades of state management of the economy and the free market decades of one-world capitalism that culminated in the financial crisis of 2008." (Hart 2015, as cited in Cruz et al. 2015, 33)

It appears that the economy is free from public accountability, making it improbable for the state to regulate it. Therefore the world of money is now essentially lawless.

The informal economy started off forty years ago as a way of talking about the third world urban poor living in the cracks of a rule system that could not reach down to their level. Now the rule system itself is in question. Everyone ignores the rules, especially the people on the top." (Hart 2015, as cited in Cruz et al. 2015, 33) Hart goes further to explain that today the alliance between money and power is celebrated as a virtue and wrapped up in liberal ideology. It is in this context he says that:

"The informal economy seems to take over the world, while cloaking itself in the rhetoric of free markets. We are witnessing the world-historic collapse of the twentieth-century attempt to impose national control on the economy." (Hart 2015, as cited in Cruz et al. 2015, 33)

Following De Soto's understanding of informal economy, think that the main problem of the informal economy is that it cannot generate the capital, existence of which is, in

capitalist system, the crucial for economic growth. We see this phenomena in many developing and post communist and post socialist countries, though it is important to notice that this thesis works much more as an individual explanation why people stuck at the bottom of informal economic chain remain stuck at the bottom, although informal economic sector as a whole does generates surplus and often contributes to the growth.

According to the report “Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture” issued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2018, “Two billion people – more than 61 per cent of the world’s employed population – make their living in the informal economy.” In the report, the ILO stresses that a transition to the formal economy is a condition to realize decent work for all, although “when agriculture is excluded, half of the employed population of the world is employed within the informal sector.”

According to the report, in Africa, 85.8 per cent of employment is informal. The proportion is 68.2 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 68.6 per cent in the Arab States, 40.0 per cent in the Americas, while the lowest is in Europe and Central Asia with 25.1 per cent.

The report shows that 93 per cent of the world’s informal employment is in emerging and developing countries.

(ILO, “World’s Employed Population”)

It is not that this group does not posses the assets, as statistics show, both city and countryside has a large population which lives and works in the informal sector, “Philippines - 57% City extralegal dwellers 67% countryside Peru- 53% City extralegal dwellers 81% countryside Haiti- 68% City extralegal dwellers 97% countryside Egypt- 92% City extralegal dwellers 83% countryside.” (Soto 2001, 30) But for the accumulated assets to become active capital and put additional production in motion, they must be fixed and realized in some particular subject, which lasts for some time at least after that labor is past. De Soto names this accumulated asset, which is unable to reproduce itself into more capital – the dead capital.

“In Egypt, for instance, the wealth that the poor have accumulated is worth fifty-five times as much as the sum of all the foreign investment ever recorded there, including the Suez Canal and the Aswan Dam. In Haiti, the poorest nation in Latin America, the total asset of the poor are more than 150 times greater than all the foreign investment received since the country’s independence from France in 1804. If United States were to hike its foreign-aid budget to the level recommended by the United Nation – 0.7 per cent of national income – it would take the richest country on Earth more than 150 years to transfer to the world’s poor resource equal to those that the already posses.” (Soto 2001, 6)

But why does this huge dead capital exist?

Dead capital exists because of a very complex process is needed to convert assets to

generate capital, and a chain that connects the capital to economy, mostly through the system of ownership. Soto is often criticized on focusing too much on the private property as the missing link whose introduction is the magical solution, however, understanding of his approach, which has been shaping majority of informality mitigation projects, is important. Western countries are more developed and the most efficient in generating capital, Soto explains this advantage of Western countries with the fact that in those countries the phenomenon of integrated what he sees as the more the bases his approach on the conclusion that is the continuous existence of the phenomenon of integrated property system which exists in those countries for the last two centuries at least. As it is already explained a complex and long turn process is needed to convert a physical asset into a capital. The Western countries were the first to implement this process and constantly developing on it. In his book *Mystery of Capital*, de Soto lines six effects that allow Western citizens to generate capital. Those are

- “1. Fixing the Economic potential of Assets.
2. Integrating dispersed Information into one system.
3. Making people accountable.
4. Making assets fungible.
5. Networking People.
6. Protecting Transactions.” (Soto 2001, 47-62)

This put aside, it is important to note that the Western countries generated capital, and developed, mostly at the expenses of other countries through centuries of colonialism. As John Berger states in his book “*Seventh Man*” there are forces that under develop.

The question remains how developing and ex-communist countries would develop if it becomes possible to unleash the immense power of the so-called dead capital. Achieving this massive task would able these countries to stabilize their economy and tackle inequality.

URBAN INFORMALITY

While urban informality is present in most of the countries in the world in some form or another, in some places it is more obvious in space than in others.

Most of the countries before 1950 were agricultural societies. The cities were kept small the economy was based on markets and ports to generate capital. It was after 1950 when the Third World entered an economic revolution. The new machines reduced the demand for labor while modern medicine and public health extended the life spans of societies around the world. It was after this revolution where it was made

possible for millions of people to move and live in populated urban centers. This caused a rapid growth to our cities, and presented the society with new problems such as urbanization. Being not represented by the legal system, many communities started establishing informal social structures that are obvious today.

Informal communities are groups of people living on extra-legal dwellings, often concentrated near formally urbanized areas, with little or no infrastructure and are not regulated by the law. This condition is often influenced by the mass migration of people in search of opportunities and better life. Without proper support from Government, and due to increasing inequality, most of the people have little choice than to start occupying land and building their own extra-legal dwellings. With no support from the state, these individuals start on relying on each-others, and collaboration to construct and build their basic human needs such as shelter, electricity, and water. And by building their own units, they also build a community, due to these negotiations of how to organize a common life in a place, which has little support for it.

“Most in-migration is now taking place in rural, peri-urban and metropolitan fringe dense settlements, despite paucity of formal jobs. These settlements are often poorly integrated in the mainstream urban life. In the context of SA traditional cultural ties between rural and urban areas continue to exist. It may be the cause that kinship ties are more important determination of migration than the likelihood of getting a job. Many towns have experienced economic decline but simultaneously continue to experience population growth.” (Pillay, Tomlinson, and Toit 2006, 38)

In the undeveloped society it appears that unemployment does not consist in slowing migration toward the cities. This creates a heavy burden for the urban centers often being unable to provide services and adequate living conditions.

Many of these communities have no private access to water, electricity or toilette. The resources are so limited that even basic facilities often need to be shared. While it is compelling to witness the creative intelligence and entrepreneurship embedded in these informal communities, we must ensure not to romanticize them and their ability to adjust to the life in such circumstances, and to elevating the resourcefulness to the point that it is thought that any intervention and support is not needed. Even economically, this system is often not capable of being self-sustaining itself without connection to the formalized economy, or some form of government support. More importantly the question is how to give this communities the right to the city by providing them with social protection.

Because they have no social protection and the system is too complicated to incorporate them, they relay on each-others help and social relations in between their community.

“While the asset of the poor maybe outside the official law, their rights to those assets are nevertheless governed by the social contracts of their own making.” (Soto 2001,

180-181)

According to Soto, the built extra-legal housing should be seen as the accumulated asset that can be transformed into a capital, especially in the relation to the land on which these settlements are built. The concentration of extra-legal houses into a settlement is often called urban informality.

“This phenomenon is a surface expression of the unsolved tensions between three main “engines” of the urban order.

- the logic of capital accumulation
- the evolution of modern governance
- the drive for ethnic and national control.” (Yiftachel and Yakobi, as cited in Roy and AlSayyad 2003, 209)

FROM INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS TO PROPER CITY

Professor Alan Gilbert from Department of Geography, University College London, argues that if liberalization does not explain the shift towards greater formality, it is because tight planning regulations are often counterproductive. These government regulations are rarely applied in low-income areas anyway. “Indeed few governments today remove illegal settlements, and most try to upgrade them into the “city proper”. Today the argument coming from both political right and left is similar: Poor settlements need to be left in place, serviced, and legalized.” (Alan Gilbert, as cited in Roy and AlSayyad 2003, 57)

One element of this integration process has been to provide illegal settlers with the title deeds.

In his book *The Mystery of Capital*, Hernando de Soto argues that the reason for giving the title deeds is to provide security for low-income people so that they will improve their homes, and so they can use their legalized home as collateral to take out loan. “This is why the policy is so popular with the right. Legalized self-help housing permits people to become proper citizens; they can borrow money against their homes and build businesses and improve their lives. Ironically, you are not recognized as a full citizen in modern society until you have been in debt and have a credit rating.” (Alan Gilbert, as cited in Roy and AlSayyad 2003, 57) While this proposal of de Soto, has been for the last two decades still considered the best course of action of re-mediating the problem of the informal settlements, the failure for it to ensure the permanent change, with inhabitants losing their property and becoming informal settlers again due to their debt accumulation or gentrification, has been critiqued by other academics and practitioners, especially if they are coming from fields of architecture, urbanism and geography. Fonna Forman and Tedy Cruz explain well the sequence of

problems that property titles can trigger. “But it is not enough simply to give property titles to slums dwellers to incorporate them into the official economy without the social protection mechanisms that can guarantee environmental and social justice. Otherwise, we risk perpetuating these environment as laboratories of neoliberal economic tinkering, based on individual improving and selling their own parcels as commodities, without any social protection mechanisms that can avoid exploration by the neoliberal machine that neglect local communities and their social and economic well-being.” (Cruz and Forman 2015, 215)

Urban sustainability can be developed through learning form bottom-up strategies of local socio-economic production. By focusing on neighborhoods as sites of environmental, cultural, and economic productivity, it is possible to develop strategies to rethink urbanity.

From Cruz and Forman argument, it is fundamental to mobilize other economic pro-formas of development that are neighborhood-led and whose profits benefit the community and not private developers only. (Cruz and Forman 2015, 215)

RETHINKING INFORMALITY

We often determine informality weather or not the formal market processes do comprehend it. “This is certainty one way of thinking about informality, a view propagated by the Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto and others. There is obviously great importance to these issues, particularly their relation to the maintenance of a healthy welfare state, so this debate is important from the perspective of social equity.” (Cruz et al. 2015, 215) The increasing inequality has been seen as the crucial contributing factor to the informality flourishing in the recent few decades, together with the governmental disinvestment from the equal urban development.

“The neoliberal political economy of urban growth has widened the gap between rich and poor, and has produced dramatic marginalization and expansion of slums surrounding major urban centers. This uneven urbanization is at the heart of today’s socio-economic crises and urban conflicts, and has resulted in the incremental erosion of public imagination, as many government around the world welcomed the encroachment of the private into the public. Since the early 1980s, with the ascendance of neoliberal economic policies based on the deregulation and privatization of public resources, we have witnessed how an unchecked culture of individual and corporate greed has deepened income inequality and social disparity.” (Cruz et al. 2015, 212-13) Albania, my home country has experienced this phenomenon in the last three decades. Since the democracy in 1990s, conflicting

private interests, while bringing development and growth, has had a devastating effect on our cities. The public space was vandalized and stolen from the society only to be replaced with concrete cubes to fulfill the wishes of the market and profit making reasons. The little opposition faced by citizens had no chance whatsoever against the cooperation between private business interests and the state legislation. Privatization of public resources, deprived our cities form parks, open spaces and social interactive space, decreasing substantially the life quality in the urban areas. While private interest were satisfied though economical profits, the general public was left to live the rest of their life stripped of their “the right to the city” as French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, would call the ability of people to influence and shape the city to benefit their everyday livelihood and not profit making. “In essence, neoliberal hegemony has turned the city into a site of consumption and display. At the same time, informal neighborhoods at the margin of these centers of economic power were growing, and sustaining themselves with their own resources and the logic of local productivity.” (Cruz and Forman 2015, 214) Furthermore, Cruz and Forman insist that it is important to understand urban informality in connection with the economic informality. They stress that: “once understood as marginal phenomenon, informal economies are rapidly becoming a primary focus of effort to direct the future developments, and the attempt of competing politico-economic power constellations the integrate these emerging markets are now a significant source of conflict. But informality is not just an economic issue. Informal markets are also places of intense social interaction, fostering cultures of different values and alternate relations. They are not only site of circulation of money values but also places where questions of resource sustainability, cooperative decision making, and social cohesion come into play.” (Cruz et al. 2015, 7) Following this logic, it is from these informal settlements where the policies of urban development are being shaped, often without the attention of the institution that are in charge of urban development.

Moreover it is fascinating to witness the entrepreneurship and creative intelligence in these informal communities and we must insure that by supporting and elevating this creativity. These does not by any means suggest, because these communities are sustaining themselves, they are to be left without public support and that government should not intervene by creating opportunities. In my opinion these is a great opportunity for the governing bodies to use bottom-up strategies to create incentives so these communities could improve their quality of life.

WHAT IS A HOUSE?

In this context, it is important to contextualize the “house” as the main unit by whose repetition in space characterizes both the production of the most formalized form of urbanization (urban sprawl) and informal urbanization. “A house is a place where people and ideas gather and find shelter. In this sense it is social enclosure, not without its repressions, competitions, and eradications, but a place where sociability is rehearsed and produced. A house is also an engine of display and accumulation, a capital commodity, a private desire.” (Phillips and Erdemci 2012, 17-18) Architect Jean-Philipp Vassal stresses the connection between the house and the city. “Housing involves taking care of people living inside a space. Housing is not only about house, flats, or villas. Housing involves the entire city. The city is your house. We push the definition of housing because it places inhabitant in the middle of the question.” (Vassal 2015, as cited in Cruz et al. 2015, 242) Phillips and Erdemci stress how “to want to own a house it is not a natural impulse, but one produced through the deep sedimentation of liberal cultures of personal freedom and the right to private space, holding sway historically, and now geographically, over increasing area of the globe.” (Phillips and Erdemci 2012, 144) While a question of a house is crucial for urban informality, and has to be seen in the context of the right to housing which is even officially part of the urban agenda of the United Nations, the focus of my thesis will not be on the housing.

REFERENCE OF SUCCESS

Therefore, it became important for me to search for references where the problem of spatial and social inequality were targeted not by the intervention on the level of individual unit, house, either changing its legal status, or providing infrastructure, but on the level of the settlement by the infusion of other types of urbanity and public facilities. The important case study to understand in this context is Medellin in Colombia, and its transformation from mid 2000s onwards. “Medellin was the most violent city in the world in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A series of visionary mayors were determined to reduce the poverty and violence in the city, constructing a more democratic urbanization. Medellin’s determination to reduce poverty and violence was activated through experiments in collaborative municipal governments and planning, the coordination of massive cross-sector investments in public infrastructure and social service in the poorest and most violent comunas in the city, and the

cultivation of a vibrant, participatory civic culture. Medellín was remarkable not only for its renowned public architecture and infrastructural interventions, but primarily for the egalitarian vision that inspired them and the innovative political and civic processes that enabled them. Among the most salient ideas behind the Medellín project were the rethinking and validation of transparent public management, a new role of government in curating cross-institutional collaborations to transform public spaces as places of education. This project was emblemized by the famous Library parks, which were built in the most marginalized zone of the city, as a way to fight the root of violence- poverty- through education and public investment.” (Cruz and Forman 2015, 217)

The Medellín diagram, developed by Cruz and Forman, captures the most inspiring aspect of the Medellín’s transformation.

“The Medellín diagram demonstrate that the most effective urban interventions in the city today are not achieved by top-down logics of urban renewal, but by engaging the complexity of the existing real, mobilizing strategies of alternation and adaptation the benefit layered as opposed to tabula rasa approaches. This also involves intervening into critical proximities, exposing urban and community borders as sites of engagement, and operating at various scales simultaneously, while infiltrating existing institutional protocols. Negotiating modest alterations, and being compelling enough to transform top- down urban policy and economic. A particular lesson here is the advancement of new forms of public communication, urban pedagogical processes that use art and culture as cognitive system to enable communities access the complexity of urban policy, activating the capacities of the bottom-up for political action.”(Cruz and Forman 2015, 220-221)

3 FORMALITY

INTRO

Formality is an established order or method of proceeding. Countries have been establishing a formal institutionalized system for years and still, today keep doing so. We call this institutionalized state. These are no more than sets of laws and processes, which every citizen of the state must obey in order to benefit from the organized state of society. Developed countries have been establishing formal systems for a long time making the collaboration between the individuals, groups, and state more effective. For example, to build a house, in legal terms, it is required the cooperation of individual or group with the state institution. If the process is completed, the individual will have the allowance to build the house, and the state will acknowledge/ensure the rights of this property. Sure, this is a simplified example; however, formality means that the claim is acknowledged and protected by a governing body, which conforms to the predetermined laws.

Formality is being interpreted in different ways sometimes undermining the inclusive processes, exclusive for a certain group of people. Gated communities are formal settlements approved by governing bodies and introduced to the market for an exclusive target group. This chapter will elaborate on why gated communities exist and their impact in our cities. Later in this thesis, I describe my own experience living in one of the gated communities in South Africa suburbia. In this thesis it was important to understand the phenomenon of the gated communities as they are often immediate neighbors of the informal settlements, and while type of life and amenities in the two are often diametrically different, they are actually comprised of the same building blocks – a house to which usually one family (of various structure) claims (either formally recognized or not) ownership. These building blocks together form mostly mono-functional aggregations with little to none infrastructure for the public.

GATED COMMUNITIES

During my research, I encountered the phenomenon of gated communities is spreading around the world. Thought the analyses, I was surprised to learn how these private exclusive developments affect our surroundings, our neighborhoods, our cities, and eventually our lives. As most of us might know, gated communities are territories that are separated from the surroundings by a wall or fence, which have controlled

access by a gate and often security personnel. Depending on the context and society, people relate to them in different ways.

Referring to the urban geographer Charlotte Lemanski (2006) describing the impact of gated communities in the South African context shows a completely different reality. Lemanski argues that, "the phenomenon of a gated community is seen as a factor in this continuation of Apartheid-esque geographies. The proximity of difference and fear of crime have encouraged residential enclave. Erecting walls and restricting access to facilities social exclusion, contribute towards social fragmentation." (Lemanski 2006, 400) Many of the residents express their decision to live in a gated community in order to re-create an old fashioned upbringing for their children, but security remains the salient motive behind the argument. (Low 2003, 231) Urban policies in South Africa has been unsuccessful in creating an integrated non-racial city because residents are responding independently creating boundaries and divisions that oppose such inclusive goals and instead produce 'new Apartheid.' (Lemanski 2004a) "Furthermore, David Simon's analysis of South Africa's urban future argues that processes of densification ultimately fail to facilitate residential integration and instead serve to institutionalize residential segregation, albeit based on class rather than race." (Simon 2001, 294-295, as cited in Lemanski 2006, 401) Aware of the continuous segregation that is happening due to the development of gated communities, South African government has developed the new housing strategy in September 2004, whose focus was on the pace of housing delivery would be increased by locating low-cost housing in wealthy areas in order to integrate rich and poor communities." (Boyle and Philp, 2004, as cited in Lemanski 2006, 402) These strategies South African government has tried to implement in order to promote equality and integration has been very superficial and naïve. Without a social structure that supports integration these top-down strategies are often doomed to fail.

Oliver Bakewell analyzing the factors that facilitate the "self-integration" of Angolan refugees into Zambian villages are based on significant social mixing and solid friendship. He argues, "diverse groups are most likely to integrate if three criteria exist: first, a common livelihood (for example, professionals or manual laborers); secondly, sharing neighborhood resources (such as schools); and, thirdly, for both groups to perceive benefits from relationships."(Bakewell 2002, as cited in Lemanski 2006, 409) Examples of gated communities in Chile indicate similar results.

From the empirical research done by sociologist Rodrigo Salcedo and Alvaro Torres (2004) about gated communities in Santiago de Chile, has shown a tendency for gated communities to be located near the more impoverished neighborhoods. In their work, they emphasize that neither of these communities identifies closely with their neighbor within or between the two areas. However what I found surprising in this research, regarding the work done by Salcedo and Torres, is that poor communities expressed gratefulness towards gated communities by arguing that it brings modernity

and improvement to the area, meanwhile gated community inhabitant are happy to employ people from the more impoverished neighborhood and have a positive image for them. (Salcedo and Torre, 2004, 39-40) Therefore, it is important that, despite the walls, gated communities and informal settlements are often more entangled than initially thought and read out of the map of the city.

“However, evidence from gated communities adjacent to poor settlements in Chile indicates that both functional integration and positive images of one another are possible (Salcedo and Torres, 2004) and thus future mixed land-use developments incorporating low- and high-income housing in South Africa should be encouraged to design more inclusive spaces.” (Lemanski 2006, 415) More importantly, encouraging collaboration, top down and bottom up, and social programs will lead to integration amongst different social groups. “Therefore, two key recommendations are offered for future mixed land use developments, now heavily promoted by the government: first, to ensure a more inclusive design for the housing development as a whole (for example, more accessibility between different land uses); and, secondly, to strive towards creating symbiotic functional integration between residential zones of differing income (and in South Africa that also means differing races).” (Lemanski 2006, 417)

FEAR OF OTHERS

As described in the text above, gated communities are usually commodities for people who can afford to live there. Using the fear of crime as a motive to live in these exclusive communities, gives them “the rights” to erect walls and create exclusionary spatial designs. However, is there fear of crime justified and what is the impact it has on the social scale. “In South Africa, while whites manifest the highest levels of fear of crime, it is poor non-whites who suffer the most real crime.” (Shaw & Gastrow 2001, 236, as cited in Spinks 2001, 13) Creating enclaves does not appear to have much of a positive impact on long turn in the opposite it only serves to replace spatial Apartheid with social Apartheid. As shown in the project “Unequal Scenes” by South African photographer Jhonny Miller, different groups may live in spatial proximity from each other but function in an utterly different sphere and socially separated from one another. “The assumption that every perceived risk demands a security response produces a fortress city of uneven development. Davis’ “ecology of fear” model identifies containment and exclusion zones, which only serve to create additional fear, isolation, and social exclusion; benefiting the rich at the expense of marginalizing the

poor.” (Davis 1992, 1998, as cited in Spinks 2001, 14) It is interesting to note here that Mike Davis develops this concept of the ecology of fear on the basis of his research into a racial and class segregation that exists in Los Angeles, therefore challenging the dominant opinion that same concepts do not operate in both developing and developed countries, but that they just take different form. Unfortunately, often fear of crime is linked to a social group or a spatial place. This shifts the attention from crime towards undesirable “others.” Generalizing crime and blaming the unknown, makes the problem seem uncontrollable often resulting in increased fear amongst the communities. “Fear of crime further excludes already marginalized groups by labeling them as dangerous ‘other,’ in order to legitimize ‘their’ exclusion, for ‘our’ safety. This symbolic exclusionism is South Africa’s fundamental development obstacle.” (Spinks 2001, 14)

From these arguments, it is shown that our perception of others and how we interpret the reality decide how we live our lives.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXCLUSION

To understand the consequences generated by exclusion, we have to look at the history of what happened in America or Brazil. “The long-term negative consequences of residential enclosures are severe: in America and Brazil ‘walls and gates’ reinforce a vicious circle of poverty and exclusion, by concentrating the most deprived social groups in spaces with minimal economic and political leverage.” (America: Massey & Denton, 1993:iix; Saff 1993,72, Brazil: Caldeira 1999, 115, as cited in Spinks 2001, 10) The laws shaped by the institutional racism that have created the inequality for centuries left the marks which are difficult to remediate, especially in South Africa where “the pervasive and resilient nature of Apartheid’s physical and symbolic socio-spatial exclusion and domination indicates a strong potential for emulating these experiences. Previously segregated racial groups now face a “new [visibility] of extremes” mirroring post-industrial western transformation, where the sudden proximity and visibility of material difference induced socio- spatial unequal, concentrations of wealth and poverty.” (Massey 1996, 359 & 409; Vanderscheuren 1996, 99, as cited in Spinks 2001, 10-11) However, what is happening in South Africa today is not only based on segregation on the racial line, but also on the class line, as the new, post-Apartheid black elites have adopted the Afrikaans tactics of enclaving. “Urban exclusion is driven by economic (e.g., fortified enclaves have higher property values), political (e.g., Haussman fragmented a perceived revolutionary threat), and social (e.g., fear of ‘other’) considerations. This analysis principally addresses the latter as the over-arching motivation, generating a new urban ecology based on the

perceived dangerousness of 'other'." (Spinks 2001, 13)

4 SOUTH AFRICA

INTRO

South Africa, the so-called "the Rainbow nation" is a country of 57 million people. Known for its diverse population (79.2% Black, 8.9% Coloureds, 8.9% White, 2.5% Asian) (described as the most developed of sub-Saharan countries. (Census 2011, "People of South Africa")

They are founded in the mid 17th century by Jan van Riebeeck member of Dutch East India Company (VOC) stopping in Cape of Good Hope (later become Cape Town) for supplies on their route to India.

Throughout the centuries wars were fought between Boer (Dutch descendants colonials), British colonials, and native population such as Xhosa and Zulu. In 1910 the Union of South Africa was formed. The Union was a dominion of British crown gaining its full independence by 1931 when the United Party was formed as a reconciliation between Afrikaner and English, the two colonialist descendants populations who were in a proxy conflict in relation to their respective empires, and who found a common understanding in economic interest and continuing with racist segregation laws.

In 1948 the National Party came into power, strengthening the racial segregation developed under Dutch and British colonial rule, marking the beginning of an area of institutionalized racial segregation called the Apartheid, which lasted for 46 years. In 1994 the first democratic elections were held, entering the democratic area in South African history, led by Nelson Mandela. The democratic process has turned to be a challenging process for the Republic of South Africa suffering from issues such as inequality, lack of housing, and corruption. With democracy came the freedom of movement. Massive migration towards the urban centers did not have positive effects on democratic South Africa. Inherited problems such as fragmentation segregation and spatial injustice took a different form but continued to exist still to this day. During this research, I spent one month living in the city center and one month living in the southern suburbs of Cape Town to experience the reality of living in such a diverse country.

During these two months I had the chance to visit other places such as Stellenbosch, Port Elizabeth, Jeffreys Bay, Plettenberg, Knysna, Mossel Bay, Yzerfontain. Throughout

this time, I would create a network of people who shared with me their knowledge, talk to different individuals from different background, and put myself out there to experience it first hand. My attitude throughout this journey has been very open-minded, listening carefully to people I encountered and analyzing their thought regarding circumstances.

After going through this process, I would create my own opinion and draw conclusions, which are documented in this thesis.

INSTITUTIONALIZED INEQUALITY

When we discuss inequality, we have to understand that I have a direct relationship with economic income. “Despite official ‘middle-income’ classification, South Africa hosts (at least) two countries, displaying an advanced white economy alongside wastelands of black poverty. “This extreme inequality is traced to South Africa’s long history of racial segregation, particularly Apartheid. Although typically explained using the ‘apart-ness’ literal translation, Apartheid is better defined as a social system founded upon the ‘setting apart’ in the space of different race groups.” (Robinson 1996, 1, as cited in Spinks 2001, 15) A lot of the problems that exist in South Africa today are directly related to the continuing effects of the Apartheid, which could not be abolished when the laws were repealed. “Apartheid manipulated both society and space, in that the spatial distancing of blacks on urban peripheries reflected and facilitated social distancing from whites. In order to assess post-Apartheid socio-spatial citizen urban-forms and state planning, it is first necessary to analyze Apartheid City construction.” (Spinks 2001, 15) It is also important to understand that Apartheid, while being a government strategy had an effect across scales of organization of the society “Apartheid projected racial discrimination onto three levels of spatial structure. ‘Grand’ Apartheid partitioned national space to create ten ‘homelands’ for the Black population, leaving 87% of national land for whites, Coloureds, and Asians (24% of the population). This legitimized Black disenfranchisement, as they became citizens of their (supposedly one-day independent) homelands, rather than of South Africa. ‘Petty’ Apartheid segregated public spaces and facilities between whites and non-whites; while ‘urban’ Apartheid established race-based residential segregation. This analysis principally addresses the following Apartheid level (although petty and grand receive assessment by inference), as a residential socio-spatial solution to negotiating urban difference. The Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948, introducing a barrage of legislation to preserve white supremacy. All South Africans were officially classified according to skin color, history, and language by the 1950 ‘Population Registration Act.’ The ‘Group Area Acts’ (1950 and 1966) projected these population groups into specific urban spaces, separated by buffer-zones of open land.

This urban re-design sought to minimize racial interaction, allocating preferential urban space to mirror socio-political positions (i.e., an enforced Chicagoan ecology).” (Spinks 2001, 16) The aggression with which the Apartheid politics were implemented lead to almost to the total levels of segregation, and “surprisingly (given it is integrated past) Cape Town was South Africa’s most segregated metropolis. Nationally, only 8% of the 1991 urban population lived outside designated areas (5.7% in Cape Town), mostly constituting migrant workers resident in hostels, or domestic servants resident in white employee homes.” (Christopher 2001,123-5, as cited in Spinks 2001, 16) It would be wrong to see Apartheid as the static and monolithic model even though it was implemented as the strong and overarching top down policy. On the contrary, “although urban segregation was achieved, Apartheid was not a static model translated directly from theory into urban-form, but ultimately forced to respond to internal (e.g. Black urbanization and resistance) and external (e.g. international sanctions and investment) pressures.” (Spinks 2001, 17) The Apartheid regime was committed to keep people separated based on the color of their skin.

This strict policy came to a point where it was not anymore sustainable, indicating the beginning of the end for the Apartheid area. “Black urban presence was necessary to sustain white hegemony but was not matched by adequate accommodation. Recognition of the inevitability of Black urbanization alongside housing shortages generated the 1988 ‘Free Settlement Act’ of ‘orderly urbanization’. Although important in recognizing the permanence of urban Blacks, the periphery locations of subsequently established townships (e.g. ‘Khayelitsha’, southeast Cape Town) continued expensive commuting and racial segregation, accompanied by zero-tolerance against squatting in central areas.” (Spinks 2001, 18)

CITY OF CONTRAST

If I would be asked to describe Cape Town in one sentence would say: “Cape Town is the city of contrasts.”

“Located on Africa’s south-western tip, Cape Town is South Africa’s oldest urban settlement (founded in 1652 by the Dutch East India Company, and third largest city (after Johannesburg and Durban). Cape Town’s demographics are radically different to South Africa in not accommodating a Black majority (only 25% of Cape Town’s population), but an almost colored majority (48%), and relatively dominant white minority (21%). This demographic anomaly is a consequence of the Coloured Labour Preference Act (which artificially constrained Black urbanization), and Cape Town’s heritage as the birthplace of colored people (descendants of mixed unions between Dutch settlers and Malay slaves).” (Spinks 2001, 19)

“Although Cape Town witnessed South Africa’s first Black segregation (1901, to avert spreading bubonic plague), it was the least segregated city inherited by the 1948

National Party. Cape Town's liberal municipality initially boycotted the implementation of the Group Areas Act" (Spinks 2001, 19). "The Apartheid strategy of resettling households (rather than entire communities), destroyed socio-spatial roots, entrenched the spatial distancing of social groups, and encouraged black fear of immediate yet unknown surroundings (as opposed to white fears of distant unknown spaces). Apartheid Cape Town emphasized the 'containment' (of colored laborers, to periphery spaces) and 'abolition' (of Blacks, to distant homelands) of 'other,' to provide security and improve race relations (to benefit whites). The manipulation of space served only to increase fear and worsen race relations, as Capetonians became increasingly spatially and socially distant." (Spinks 2001, 20) During my stay in South Africa, I spent one month living in Cape Town city.

At the beginning of my stay, I was feeling anxious to be in such an environment. Freeing myself from expectations of Cape Town, I will try to describe what I was seeing and feeling.

The city center is basically a grid, build up to 20 floors with commercial buildings surrounded from one side by the ocean and the other side by the mountains. From the perspective of the visitor walking around the city does not feel safe. The streets are intensively used, especially in the rush hour and occupied both by formal and informal vendors (fruits, cosmetics, artisan products, food stands), people eating, homeless by the side of the road and workers rushing to their destination. Street people would approach and follow you while asking for money or food. I was advised to not give them money and not wear any jewelry and to walk confidently.

From the City center to the Waterfront is about 15 min walking distance. Here you can find a completely different atmosphere. Right on the side of Atlantic Ocean with a breathtaking view of the Table Mountain it has become the most touristic part of the city. Developed for mixed-use, with both residential and commercial real estate, Waterfront is one of the most famous areas of Cape Town with exclusive restaurants and hotels.

Further west, along the ocean side, areas like Greenpoint and Seapoint were developed. These areas have a relatively high density (up to 12 stories building) and are safe compared to the other parts of the city. Seapoint is mainly residential and single apartment renting prices starting from 8000 Rand/month (about 600€/month) and up. To put this in perspective, the average salary in South Africa is 21190 Rand/month (about 1300€/month). (Businesstech, "Average salary in South Africa") Commercial facilities were easy to spot, especially on the main road. I found Seapoint from an urban perspective functional and to be working quite well.

Following the ocean south from Seapoint you would end up in Clifton and Camps Bay. This area was 15-20 min drive from the center, and the feeling was as being transported to another area in the future. Beautiful modern villas build in steep terrain facing the ocean. Small bays would open creating small little beaches, making this part

of town very attractive to high-class population. Although these beaches were public, I could notice a sense of exclusiveness in them.

Property values are between 9 mil-60 mil Rand (0.7 mil – 4 mil €).

Although these properties were exclusive and for a specific target group, they also were exposed to the fear of being vandalized. Because of that the majority of these houses are equipped by at least one system of security, and often, more than one. Signs showing to the public the protection system in place like electric fences, sound alarm, armed responders, were to be seen in almost every house in various parts of Cape Town. From my later discussion with developers and businessmen, it was pointed out to me that the third largest economic sector in South Africa is the security industry.

In the east side of the city center, you would find neighborhoods like Woodstock, Observatory, and Rondebosch. This part is much more a mix of the middle class population living in the low-rise private housing. The next chapter will focus on these neighborhoods in more in detail.

WOODSTOCK THE MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD

I arrived in Cape Town on the 13th of Feb 2019. With an opened mindset, I was ready to experience the city and Capetonian mentality. The first advice given to me was: "Do not trust anyone." Obviously, the people I had contact with, were mainly concerned about my safety. They regarded Cape Town as a dangerous city where I should pay attention to where I was going. The area I was living is called Woodstock (15 min walk from city center), which I could describe as mixed residential area (29.1% Black African 50.9% Coloured 2.8% Indian/Asian 11.6% White 5.6% Other) while becoming more and more preferred by the young professionals opening trendy restaurants, innovative media, and other businesses, offices. (Census 2011, "Woodstock") This turned out to be a perfect place for me to quickly dive in and experience the diversity that Cape Town has to offer. While I was out exploring Woodstock, apart from the Victoria road where the main traffic and shops were located, the other areas of the neighborhood were not busy. The houses were almost all protected by electrical fences and secured by steel bars giving me psychological a sense of uneasiness while walking around by myself. However, to be able to walk alone in an area like Woodstock one has to overcome this uneasy feeling. The sense of insecurity and being afraid of others would leave the streets with a very mono-dimensional function where most of the activities would happen behind the fences. Although with small businesses and workshops opening up were having an impact on revitalizing the area and making it feel more secure.

Talking to the shop owner in Woodstock, I mainly received positive feedback of what was happening and they were pleased how the thing was going with their business. The area was developing its own identity, and the entrepreneurship was growing.

The social life in the neighborhood from what I experienced was mostly unfolding inside safety areas inside bars/restaurants and private properties. There was no communal center that I could come to; some religious institutions were present; however, no inclusive facilities that I could identify. The public places and parks were considered not safe for inhabitants to enjoy freely and the street was mostly used as a transition zone while commuting from A to B.

As Woodstock becomes more welcoming and popular, I find it safe to say that incentives such as The Boulevard office park serves as a meeting point and open space to hang out. "The Boulevard is a unique office park development providing 38,000m² of prestigious offices on the periphery of the Cape Town CBD. Fronting onto Eastern Boulevard with direct access from Searle Street, this landmark development has excellent access and egress, visibility and image to meet the requirements of office users looking for secure, quality accommodation." (The Boulevard Office Park, "Welcome")

TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTERS

-Meeting with Xhosa chief.

From the network I had established, it was offered to me to meet the Chief of Xhosa for the township of Khayelitsha. Xhosa are an ethnic group of people of Southern Africa. Khayelitsha (which in Xhosa means "Our new home") is the largest informal settlement in South Africa, and from my sources, more than 1 million people live in this settlement now. Located 30 km southeast of Cape Town city center, Khayelitsha was predominantly Xhosa, 96,7% and was established from the Apartheid regime as the strategy directed from "Group Areas Act." Driving through the township to pick up the chief, the area was more developed than I expected. A lot of RDP¹ houses built in 40qm dwellings, the street being quite organized and asphalted, electricity poles and cables hanging, there was left spaces in between. The heart of Khayelitsha was, as far as I could describe, a semi-informal settlement. Even in the peripheral areas where the majority were shacks², it surprised me that they were built with some distance from one another. I have to admit that after experiencing "overcome heights" this area seems much more developed. What also took my attention was that people were staring at us much more than in other places I have been. Someone shouted Umlungu, which means white people, referring to us. Looking in retrospect, the fact that we were driving a modern car on the roads of the township would draw extra attention, especially in this area of town. The roadside was again dense in businesses offering a variety of services, people hanging out and playing football sometimes in the middle of the road. From what I could see were communal toilets in groups of ten placed by the side of the road. From what I could experience and see during this visit, I can say that

Khayelitsha has at least some characteristics of an urban area regarding density and services, however public investments were very rare. On this occasion, it was pointed out to me the new Bus terminal of Khayelitsha. This public investment is quite modern and well build, offering Office space, a place for buses to park public and commercial possibilities. The controversial fact was that this space was left unused because of political disagreement between political institutions, which would go in the expense of the community.

We then drive to the chiefs place to pick him up for lunch. He lived in an RDP house very modest place from outside indeed. After introducing myself to the chief who seems very calm and caring, we would engage in conversation about different topics to understand his position in the community. The chief implied that apartheid is still there because people where labeling each other by political parties and race which created a great mistrust between the community.

He went further on to say that he had 90% support from the community and that the meeting was a “mess” (meaning very crowded). People would talk to him before government bodies, which sparked the next question. When we asked the chief why doesn't he run as the mayor of Khayelitsha, he mentioned his age, but also he said: “When you are in that position it means that someone has the remote to control you³.” Obviously, why should the chief enter the sketchy politics that could vote him out of the office or control him, when by running this tribal governing structure, although not democratically elected, he could exercise his chief inherited power.

From what I experienced, I could describe “The chief” as a wise calm and responsible leader, it is to acknowledge that the tribal mentality was present in his way of running things.

From this first-hand experience, I could learn how reality unfolds in these communities, what are the differentiations and how democracy was perceived.

¹ Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a socio-economic policy framework developed by the African National Congress to address the immense socioeconomic problems such as housing, social services and infrastructure.

² A small primitive form of housing, often build with corrugated metal and wooden pols.

³ In conversation with the author March 14, 2019.

-Talking to UCT Economist

One of the people, I appreciate talking to, was a professor of economics from the University of Cape Town (UCT). He was very keen to engage on the topic I am working on and share his knowledge with me.

He mentioned the grand plan of Cape Town was meant to be with satellite cities around to avoid the urban sprawl. However this plan was not considered an option since it came from the old government, (meaning Apartheid area) but recently there has been discussion to take it in consideration again, as a strategy that might be valuable.

Another topic we discussed was densification strategies that have been implemented in Cape Town. In his experience, densification is related to the culture and mentality, unlike China in SA densification have not resulted in significant impact. His input was that there had been issues and social conflicts among the densely populated areas. While the attempts to densify has not given the expected results, I asked his opinion on mixing different social classes (meaning rich-middle class and poor) together as a strategy to social integration. He responded by saying that it could be socially speaking more comprehensive, but it made economically not so much sense. Living in separated areas had the advantage that property prices would go up, and the government would have more income from taxes; however, this potentially could lead to social consequences, in which the poor get ghettoised by the downward spiral in which the less income from taxes diminishes the investment in their areas, which results in the even lower tax base. A problem which often exists in dominantly African American neighborhoods in the US.

So there is a contradiction, at least economically speaking, between following a comprehensive mixed urban planning strategy or a separate well-defined urban structure. In my opinion, the ideal configuration would a gradual transition eliminating the urban boundaries that might appear.

-Talking to Developers

Having the possibility to talk to developers was of great value in understanding the South African reality. Always working with the governing bodies and other actors involved in the development, they had very objective views of reality. Engaging in general conversation, the most significant difficulties throughout their careers had been dealing with bureaucracy. It was a painful process to go through all the governing bodies to gain permission to develop a property. A lot of time and resources were dedicated to applying for permission, sometimes waiting for years, until the institution

would come up with a decision.

While discussing how the Apartheid used space as a tool to segregate and marginalize black people, I wanted to know what the integrative strategies have been developed and implemented in the post-Apartheid era? From our conversation, it came out that the government has been committed to dismantle and demolish every idea or strategy related to the Apartheid. The post-Apartheid governments, have been actively encouragement for people to go and live in so-called “white areas,” as a strategy to bring more balance in the community. However, from personal discussion asking people where do you like to stay, what do you like to do? Invariable you find they are not unhappy living in “this space” (meaning informal settlements) or in this geography. They are bothered to move and live in the “white area.” What they seem to want is the chances to own a piece of property, have services, and live a decent life. These are the number one criteria. From this point of view, the politician is misreading it by thinking the way to break down “this thing” is to change the geography of it. We can look at the example in other countries such as the US, who had a democratic system in place where people were free to live where they wished. Also, in such a culture, Ghettos, China towns, the Jewish neighborhood, etc. were formed naturally. This is what makes me think that tribal mentality is a factor that keeps creating homogeneous communities and plays a role in structuring our society today. Apartheid was a system that institutionalized this idea, selected and segregated society by force meanwhile benefiting a specific “tribe,” defined by the skin color.

The reality about South African democracy today is fare more complex. From what I understood in my encounter with the Xhosa chief of Khayelitsha, he was running a parallel governing structure ruled by tribal traditions which are far from how democracy works. The chief, as I already described, seems a reasonable leader, but the problem with the tribal structure rises when lunatics become chiefs and abuse their power. Without any democratic institution to “vote them out,” they could be very damaging to modern society. On the other side, given how the government framework favors one type of class (property developers and property owners) who have majority of political influence, while people from the informal settlements lack proper political representation, one has to wonder as well, what kind of democracy that is even if it seems democratic.

The developers I had the chance to discuss with were convinced that the strategy forward should not be moving people to more affluent areas to create inclusiveness but rather living them in the place they want to live and bringing public services (meaning municipalities, city halls, police stations, public offices) right where the people are living.

-Visiting Stellenbosch

Stellenbosch is famous for the tourism of wine and beautiful landscape. A satellite city 50 km drive out of Cape Town; it is a famous day trip destination. I visited Stellenbosch right at the beginning of my arrival in South Africa. I did not know much about the place, but I was told that upper-middle-class white people mostly populate it. The vibe of the city was very different from what I had seen in Cape Town. It felt like another country more than another city. It was a quiet area, very well organized, beautiful university, public spaces, green spaces, shadow, and lots of coffee shops. It gave me the vibe of a small university city in Western Europe. However, this short visit did not go without incidents. While driving around without clear direction where to go, the police stopped us and accused the driver of irresponsible driving. They were particularly annoyed by the way my friend was driving and tried to escalate the situation. The police ordered the driver to get out of the car to show him the road signals. It was a critical moment, but my friend remained calm, and the officers backed up. I turned to him intending to calm down the situation by apologizing and letting him know that we are new in town. He was still irritated, and on the way back to his car, he said to me with an arrogant tone. Your friend cannot drive this way in my country, and he is putting you in danger. Disagreeing in silence, I thanked him for his suggestion and we continued further. I wondered what the reaction of the police was because of the skin color of my friend, but I kept a positive attitude towards it.

After visiting one of the vineyards, we decided to spend the night in Stellenbosch. My other friend from Nigeria booked on AirBnB a night stay in a modern looking house, but the request got rejected. She tried another place where it was possible to book without a request. Shortly after the AirBnB called us to say that has been an overbooking and the house was not available for us. At that point, we decided it is not worth staying over, and we will head back to Cape Town. On the way back, I and my friend were both thinking if this had to do with the fact that she was black. However, it could just as well have been a coincidence.

Two weeks later, I was talking to the Uber driver who claimed was living in Stellenbosch. From what he told me, his house was a shelter for neighborhood kids who would come and play with his kids. He even had raised and taken care of a baby who had been abandoned. A great story of how he had raised this baby among his kids, with love and no difference from his own. Now the boy was nine years old, attending school. This nobleman had been living in Cape Flats (infamous area for violence and crime) before and slowly built his life towards where he was now. When I asked him how did he do it, he answered: working hard through the day and reading through the night. This man was proof that regardless of the difficulties, hard working, and education pays the reward.

When I asked him about the Stellenbosch culture, he mentioned that there are racist people who live in an old way and do not want others there. Even his neighbor had asked him to sell his house and move somewhere else because he was different skin color. Confidently speaking he seemed to be unfazed by it and mentioned this is the old generation, the youngster they do not care the play with each other without any prejudice.

CONCLUSION

During my stay in Cape Town, I had the chance to meet and learn from local people who were familiar with South African culture. From my early experiences, the sense of insecurity makes people hesitant to exchanging openly with one another. It is only when one transcends that border, where the relationships and connections are established. From my personal experience, being non-judgmental, open-minded, patient and listening to people, helps to create a brought spectrum of friends and therefore break the stigmas. Communicating and confronting ideas is often challenging because of the diversity of culture but in my opinion it is the way forward to create an inclusive society. Erecting walls, installing electric fences and creating enclaves, have the tendency to create more insecurity. This in the long run will have a negative impact on the society. Although Apartheid is over for more than two decades now, the consequences are still prominent and visible, and it will take a lot of time, dedication, effort and investment in order to erase the effects of the Apartheid. The freedom brought by the democracy has often been misunderstood and abused, causing mayor division among the society. Transitioning from a dictatorship system has proven, not only for South Africa but also for many post communist countries, to be challenging and long lasting.

5 LIVING IN BETWEEN

INTRO

During this research, I decided that it would be beneficial to educate myself on this topic by experiencing how the suburban life unfolds. The area I choose to study is located in the southern part of Cape Town near the popular surfer village named Muizenberg. The specific Settlement named “Vryground” (Afrikaans meaning for free ground) is a semi-informal residential area neighboring with the squatters’ settlement “Overcome Height”, completely informal settlements where most of the people are squatters. I choose this particular location because of its geographical particularity. Located west just 250m, in between relatively empty land and a big road driving through, there is a vast exclusive private estate development build in proximity with the natural reserve of Sandvlei. My connection to this place was facilitated through an NGO called “Where the Rainbow meets” that works with the surrounding communities to improve their life. This opened me the door to establish a personal connection to the people living in the Township, talk to the community leader about the challenges they were facing and analyze the factors that play a role in the formation of the Township.

During my schedule dedicated to the NGO (Mo-Fr 09.00-16:30 during one month), I was free to initiate conversations with the locals and participate in activities and programs offered by the organization oriented towards development of life skills and education. This was an opportunity for me to understand the life of the common inhabitants which in the future I would use as an incentive to come up with ideas or strategies to tackle the conditions they are living in. I believe for a strategy to work, it is essential to be comprehensive and has a top-bottom as well as bottom-up influence included.

What I was up to find out during one month of working for the “Rainbows” was valuable beyond my initial expectations.

CAPE TOWN - THE FRAGMENTED SUBURBAN CITY

In developing countries, suburbs are often associated with higher delinquency and social problems. This economically distressed areas are characterized by higher

proportions of migrants and even refer to people in real misery. These people are often segregated and kept at the limit of the city borders for social, economical and sometimes ethnic reasons. This phenomenon is present in developed countries as well, such as the Banlieues of France, or the concrete suburbs of Sweden. However, in developed countries, well established infrastructure and direct access to the city, has made suburbs more desirable.

With the improvement of transportation, it became possible and in some places and at sometimes more affordable to live in the suburbs than in the city. Since the beginning of the 1990s, due to industrialization, many African cities as experienced a grown of the middle-class suburbs. In case of South Africa dealing with the immense need for housing, political action was taken to house the population, mostly focusing on the provision of the privately owned single-family house. The state provided many of these houses and build in suburban areas, through special development programs. The so-called RDP houses were the state subsidized houses that are relatively small in size and consist in with two or three bedrooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Often remote and provided with limited services, these areas tend to have a higher rate of violence, poor public transport, and lack of urban planning and landscape. The commercial facilities often delay opening services, until a large number of residents have moved in the area. This often results in building housing estates rather than urban centers with sustainable infrastructure and communities. After widely reading about this topic, studying examples from around the world, this thesis would be focusing on the southern suburb of Cape Town. On the most southern part shown in the map 2 is located in an area called Muizenberg. A small urban center became famous for sports activities such as surfing. Muizenberg has developed its character; many small commercial facilities are to be found. The beach and surfing attract many tourists making this part of the town developed in different aspects, giving it the image of a small urban center. With a population of about 40000 habitants, Muizenberg has a small train station right in the beach-front, making it the leading destination for visitors of southern suburbs. Mainly with a residential character, Muizenberg has religious institutions, community centers a volatile market and many little shops hidden in the small alleys of the village. On the east side, Muizenberg is separated by the road from Costa da Gama and Capricorn Estate. This part is mainly residential (prices for 200 sqm house about 1,5 mil Rand about 100000 €) with few commercial possibilities (bars and restaurants along the coast) however from my point of view very much residential oriented and mono-dimensional compared to Muizenberg. Separated from Muizenberg cemetery, there is a Capricorn Square shopping center where most of the commercial is located.

Marked in Yellow and Green is respectively Marina da Gama and Vrygrond, which will be analyzed in details in the following section as well as the space in-between. On the northeast part of the graphic the are called Laveder Hill is situated. This is where the

infamous Cape flats were placed, and this community is suffering from high crime, gang violence, and drug issues. While I was driving through this area, they showed me this football field in front of the school. It was nicknamed the “battlefield” because often gangs would shoot at each other, and innocent people would be caught in the crossfire. On the west side of the M5 Prince George drive, marked in orange, there is an area called Steenberg. It has a population of about 4000, belonging mainly to the Cape Coloured community. The military road is the most significant road where most of the small businesses are located.

Overall the area is characterized by low-density townhouses with insignificant urban centers. The terrain is relatively flat bordered from the mountain in the west and by the ocean in the south as well as by the natural reserve from the east. This urban sprawl continues up north for about 20 km till the city center.

LIFE IN TOWNSHIP

My first visit to the Township of Vrygrond was an extraordinary experience leaving me with a mixed feeling. I was angry and inspired at the same time. Seeing the condition, the people were living filled me with anger and responsibility of how he could be a reality in the 21st century. On the other side, talking to individuals was an inspiring experience. The hope and stoic attitude in the people narrative, when asked how they feel, was mind-blowing. The acceptance of living conditions and faith made them look forward in hope for opportunities to appear to improve their living conditions.

One of the community members I met was living in a shack in the middle of a landfill. Joseph was in his thirties and has been living there with his wife for years. No electricity, no water, no toilette there was nothing there other than garbage. He had a dog who would protect him at night when he was completely exposed to the surrounding.

When did I ask him how did he feel about the future? He replied to me in the most magnificent way that I could never expect. He said: “There is hope for the future and I know you guys are trying to help, but it needs to be from both sides. I too have to try harder”. Living in the condition, he was living in and still being strict with himself was a sign of how stoic minded he was. His words were a life lesson for me, which I will never forget.

During the drive through Vrygrond (semi-informal settlement), I was surprised by the shops and services oriented to the street. Approximately I would say every 10 m some shop or commerce is to be seen, offering particular services and selling a few products. Temporary vendors on the side of the road, braaing (the term for South African grilling) and selling meet outside, wooden structure builds to serve as shops or the

accessible containers adapted to serve different commerce functions.

There were some recycling facilities in the perimeter of the Township, where people found employment, as well as many religious institutions. Schools, kindergartens, community centers, NGOs focused on improving the lives of the community were also present. It is safe to say that the social life in the community was active and mostly unfolding in the streets.

Most of the streets in Vrygrond are asphalted, and the houses are mainly brick buildings up to two stories high often extended by structure build with light materials. It was pointed out to me that many of these houses were built by the owners to be rented out to immigrants for a price range between 1000-1500 Rand/month (70-100 €/month).

It was pointed out to me that there are a high percentage of immigrants living in this community. Majority coming from the other provinces but also from the neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi, etc.

As we proceeded down the road to the squatters' settlement Overcome Height, the conditions deteriorated. The entrepreneurship spirit was still present, the owner of a small shop even shared with us that she sold 800 Rand (about 50€) of products and she was thinking to expand her shop to increase her sales. The streets are unpaved, dirt roads, and the houses are shacks built chaotically next to each other with recycled materials such as corrugated zinc and wooden polls. The infrastructure was almost non-existing, and the living conditions are inferior to other neighborhoods. The biggest challenge was presented by almost complete lack of bathroom facilities, as even the communal bathroom installed by the municipality, despite not being scaled to the size of the community, was out of order and the hygiene levels were alarming. The still working toilets had continuous flushing issues, causing over spilling of the sewage to the streets creating a critical environment to live in.

The current solution was using portable offloading toilets, which would be collected from the municipality ever other day.

During this visit, I had a chance to meet Rasta (real name William Luis) an ex-gang member that turned his life around to be now one of the community leaders in the squatters' settlement Overcome Height. Rasta had been living in this community for 25 years, and he fought against the institutions for the right to live there. He named this squatters' settlement "Overcome Heights" as a symbol for overcoming the fear from the Government. Rasta even had a vision about this community of 1500 people he was leading. He said: "loving soul we born, loving soul we grow. We have to be the light for those who are in the darkness. Let the light shine inside, and the light will shine in the faces⁴."

Fires are another major issue in the squatters' settlement of Overcome Height. These tragic events have been regularly happening, having a devastating effect on the community and putting at risks both lives and livelihood. Because the shacks were

built right next to one another, the fire would spread quickly effecting tens or even hundreds of other shacks. Because of space limitation, the shacks were built there with enough space form one another, enabling the firefighter truck to drive through and help extinguish the fires.

I visited the settlement after a fire had broken out from an electric shock. About thirty shacks were affected by it, and everything was burned down. The impact was devastating. The black color and the smell of the burned materials was the only thing that what was left. All the shacks and the belongings were gone, and now they had to start from the beginning again. In this situation regarding the protocol what happens is that every family whose shack was burned had to register to the community leaders so they would get the so-called "starter pack." It contains 25 zinc metal sheets, 25 wooden polls, a bag of a nail, a door and a window. For the next 2-3 days after the fire, the families would get a portion of per-packed food. This is how far the government would intervene to help families being affected by the fire. As soon as the fire was out and they get the "starter pack," the individuals themselves would immediately start rebuilding their shacks for themselves and their families to protect them from the weather conditions. During this process, community leader like "Rasta" would walk around and talk to people making sure that the shacks would be rebuilt at the right place and also help to manage the conflicts that might appear. Short after this devastating event, life would continue its struggle like before wondering when the next fire is going to break out. There have been some attempts to widen the streets so the firefighter truck could pass through or painting the wooden surfaces with hydrated paint, there were even ideas for a fire alarm system to be put in place however with little reaction and no success, the fires would repeat regularly.

In one of the visits of the Township, we stopped to meet with the man who builds "Dream Land" the only two-story house in the squatters' settlement of Overcame Height. Mostly built in wood and materials found on the landfill nearby, as the owner (a man in his 60s) would go on to explain. He is a very dedicated, talented craftsman who had to build his own house. Dreamland was without the doubt the most beautiful house in the Township. From a while ago, the owner had gotten help to start up his gardening business, where he would take care of his plants for commercial purposes. His small garden was inspiring to see, and these beautiful plants seemed to give a pleasant atmosphere living in this particular house. Another way this dedicated man was generating some income was through renting a small space that he build separated from his home. With a lot of smiles and care, he was pleased to share his art with us, and so were we.

These people had no education, but they had the school of life. The sense of the community had educated their souls. There were man issues to complain, and most of them were toward the government. They were disappointed, and empty promises were made while during these 25 years nothing had changed. That is why the

community felt forgotten and not represented.

In the company of Rasta and the other Rainbow members, I felt a sense of security walking in the community. Although surprised to see a white person having interest in their settlement, people were opened to show the condition they were living and sharing their concern about the children in hope to get help.

This visit made me think about the potential that this self-organized community holds, how the entrepreneurship spirit could be used to generate more income and respectively improve their lifestyle.

⁴ In conversation with the author March 04, 2019.

LIFE IN GATED COMMUNITY

The idea of living in the suburbs was very appealing to me, thinking that would allow me to experience and analyze myself the quality of living in suburban Cape Town. Meanwhile, I had decided to volunteer for the NGO “Where the rainbows meet” based in the informal settlements of Vrygrond, I thought it would serve my mission to understand inequality if I would live right next to the informal settlements where an upper-middle-class private exclusive development was built. My new home would be located in Geneva Close right at the end of the Marina da Gama, which I was about to study. Geneva Close is a small-gated community with about 35 houses. The so-called townhouses are two stories building with a small yard in front sharing a communal road separated from the outside with a gate. Surrounded by greenery, the complex would serve me to be as near as I could to the site I was interested in studying.

As I moved in, the lady, who owned the house, gave me the keys with remote control with four buttons. One to open the gate, one for the house alarm, one for the electric fence and red panic button in case-armed response was needed. I remember feeling unsafely safe at that particular moment.

Any upcoming days, I would enjoy the time being away from the noise, chaos, and distraction of the city center, enjoying the lay back atmosphere and the green environment that this suburban area had to offer. During this time I was going to explore the area called “Marina da Gama.” Located 25 km from the center, this exclusive private development was build in the 1970s in five phases with a total provision for 5 000 homes Most of them build in artificial islands with direct access to water. Property costs today for a house about 500sqm would range from 2 - 5 million Rand (about 125’000€ to 300’000€). (Property24, “Marina da Gama”)

With the influence of the US model, this 600-hectare site includes waterways, parks and landscaped open spaces and provides residential and recreational facilities for a community of 15 000 to 17 000 people. Original planning concept meant that Marina da Gama would serve as an ocean harbor and contain an 18-hole golf course with

country clubs and country homes, ideas that did not put into practice for different reasons. However, this description shows the ambitions of such developments.

Although separated from the main road by walls, the inner street is public and accessible for the outsiders making Marina da Gama technically not a gated community; however, unless you have a clear destination, there is no reason for outsiders to visit the area. Another reason that makes this place not inviting for outsiders is the configuration of the islands. Because it is so fragmented into small islands that not necessarily have a direct connection to one another, it is difficult to orientate (unless you are familiar to the area) and can quickly get lost or end trespassing into someone's private property. Most noticeable Marina da Gama facilities are the Westlake shopping center located directly behind the peripheral wall to the M5 Road and the Park Island. The shopping center is relatively small with some commercial facilities and office spaces while Park Island is a big island, with walking trails and wild vegetation, located in the heart of "The Marina." From what I saw, mainly the community of Marina da Gama used the island. Some of the activities practices in this island were walking, running, bird watching, fishing etc. In the entrance to the island, protected by a gate, a sign was showing the timetables as well as rules that needed to be respected. On my way walking to Park Island, I noticed many security houses so-called "neighborhood watch" and technology place strategically on the side of the roads. It gave me the feeling that my movements were watched continuously. The houses from the outside would look very unimpressive, mostly painted in white with a small opening and a driveway as well as a bit of vegetation. As I was about to find out, they were oriented to the inside facing each other and separated by the water channel in between.

Some of the house owners I related to, were kind enough to invite me for a visit to their homes. This was an excellent opportunity for me to talk to the people who were living in a marina and understand more from the mentality of the community. The empirical and superficial opinion I gathered were mostly positive attitudes towards safety, quietness, and living in proximity to nature. It was mentioned that the community is organized by administrative structures that are known as Excom (executive comity). Excom were people from the community, elected by the community who would serve different internal tasks for the benefit of the community such as maintaining the facilities, security, community gathering, newsletters even architecture. Archcom (architecture committee) also would be responsible for the design of the houses old or new to keep them comfortable the general marina da Gama design. Excom have also its office located in East Lake shopping center where the opened to receive and hear the voice of the community. Every Household would be paying a fee to keep this structure in order while expecting the comity to provide services back to the community. In a certain extent I would describe the community of Marina da Gama as wishing to have the privacy they have but on the other hand

regarding the survey (Marina da Gama, "Survey for Marina Residents") made in December 2015 wherein the section of "building a sense of community" would be shown that 50% of respondents said that they are in favor of building a sense of community while respecting the wishes of those who wish to remain private.

During my time exploring the area, I could spot some small children playgrounds and benches in places where you have some transparency towards the water. I found these places randomly and sporadic without an offering quality to invite people. Early in the morning, I could see people (mostly people of color) walking, assuming, to their work destination and during the day working to maintain surrounding.

THE BORDER IN BETWEEN

As described in previous chapters between Marina da Gama and the informal settlement of Vryground, there is a noticeable difference in the quality of life. There are three hundred meters that serve as a border or some separation for these two controversial realities. In between right where Marina da Gama ends a significant road from north to south cuts through while further east, direction Informal Settlement, relatively empty land seem to be untouched. White tall walls separate Marina da Gama from the M5, (limited-access freeway) which is regulated by traffic light to make it possible for cars turning left or right accessing Marina da Gama on the west side and Vryground or Capricorn on the east side. The road has two lanes in each side separated with a 10-meter sand gap in between. Both sides of the road have pathways and bike laneways. No shades or public services are oriented in this section of the road, but I noticed on my every day drive to work groups of people standing by the side of the road, leaning on the white walls of Marina da Gama.

As from what I could see, all of them were people of color dressed in working clothes and equipped with tools. Assuming they were gathering there, spread along the road offering their practical skills in exchange for money. Later on, it was confirmed to me that they were temporary workers who could be hired for short turn essential work. The person I was taking to even shared with me the experience he had with one of the workers. He hired someone who claimed could do the job and brought him home to do gardening work. Soon to realize that the worker had no skills, so he had to bring him back where I took him. However, since there was some social structure placed in this environment, I am tempted to assume that this could have been an isolated cause. Apart from the workers standing by the side of the road and sporadic informal tends selling vegetable, the mayor use of this road is as a transition zone to get to the destination. The road is lightened during nighttime; however, it does not seem to be heavily frequented.

Next to it on the east side, the relatively empty looking area is a public owned territory. From what I learned, the state has been rigorous not allowing any

development taking place and making sure that there is no free housing build in this territory. Left without care, this transition zone feels like “the prohibited land.” The only structures that can be seen are the Muizenberg switching station and a temporary facility that horses are trained. Interestingly enough, in the southern part of Vrygroud Ave, some kinder garden looking facility as beginning to appear.

These initiatives might be a sign that the community frustrated and is looking for ways to put a value on this piece of leftover land. From a conversation with community leaders of Vryground, I found out that it has been protests against the city planning ideas to build housing alongside the M5 (Prince George Drive). They also said that they are kept in the dark from most of the decision regarding their community, which often encourage frustration and violence. Regardless of what it has been said, the reality shows that these area remains vacant holding the future development of the surrounding area.

It seems that there have been little or no attempts to suggest this space as an inclusive multi communal common space, for the benefit of the residents living around this area.

In one of the report surveys done in December 2015 in the section titled: “Our Neighbors” it was stated:

Vryground

“51% of respondents indicated that they would like to help in some way in Vryground but need more information. Many people are already helping. A meeting for volunteers could be advertised on the Notice Board. There were many positive ideas on this topic, which could be implemented. Anyone who would like to help organize this could leave their name at the office.” (Marina da Gama, “Survey for Marina Residents”)

CONCLUSION

In the opposite of the dynamic and chaotic city center, life in the southern suburbs of Cape Town is characterized by privacy and tranquility. Low-density residential areas and private housing make it possible for people to live distanced from one another. There is little sense of community while commercial facilities are the most frequented public spaces. As urban sprawl dominates there is an absence of urban centers affecting social life and limiting the possibilities for interaction and exchange. Therefore stigmas are created which contribute in separating the society and create exclusiveness towards others. The area between Marina da Gama and Vryground,

although 300 meters away from each other, have very different perception of the world. Although at first they are perceived very different from one another, in reality they have many similarities. Both of these communities live in an enclave environment and for variety of reasons are not willing to cross beyond the psychological borderline. Providing this area with the infrastructure needed to facilitate exchange and break the psychological barriers would contribute towards safer environment and inclusive society.

6 PLANNING STRATEGIES

INTRO

Looking at how design influence space and can contribute to the fragmentation of society, I would ask the question: How responsible are we as architects in the creation of spatial injustice and inequality? The facts show that the new urban political economy emerges as a collision between top-down and bottom-up planning and development. That is why we need to critically look at how to use design as a way to hinder the fragmentation and discriminatory policies and economics that have produced the collision in the first place. What is at stake at this process, it is not just the art of politics or architecture, but the construction of the political system itself. Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman analyze where new policies of urban development are formed and on the basis of that analysis argue that the architect must take responsibility beyond design by collaborating across institutions. "This opens up the idea that architects and artists, besides being researchers and designers of form, building, and objects, can be designers for political processes, urban pedagogy, alternative economic models and collaborations across institutions and jurisdiction to assure accessibility and socio-economic justice." (Cruz and Forman 2015, 210)

This statement was the guiding philosophy during my architectural approach in which I tried to develop a series of conceptual and incremental approaches that could create a more inclusive sustainable city and reconfigure the segregated urban context, so it works as the urban space and not just an aggregation of built structures.

Using my field observation as the driving force, and referring to "The Medellin diagram" by Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, this thesis provides set of strategies that can be used as a blueprint to deal with spatial-economical issues, a southern suburb in Cape Town is currently facing.

COMMON SPACE

The Greek professor at the National Technical University of Athens, Stavros Stavrides, explains in his work the definition of common space and the importance of establishing these commons in our cities.

“Common space is a set of spatial relationship produced by communing which those relations are organized. They may either be organized as a closed system which explicitly defines shared space within the definite perimeter and which corresponds to a specific community of commons, or they may take the form of an open network of passages of commoners to communicate and exchange goods and ideas.” (Stavrides 2016, 2-3)

Stavrides goes further to explain that the concept of ‘common space’ is distinct from the public as well as from private space. Indeed, it emerges in sites open to public use in which rules and forms do not depend upon and are not controlled by a prevailing authority. It is through practices of communing, practices which defined and produced goods and services to be shared, that specific city space is created as shared space.

“Commoning practices importantly, produce new relations between people. They encourage creative encounters and negotiations through which forms of sharing are organized, and common life take shape.” (Stavrides 2016, 2)

This thesis suggests that in order to make this specific site (located in between two different social groups) functional in an urban point of view, it is necessary to create common spaces. Urban transformation begins at the social and behavioral level. Encouraging bottom-up strategies in order to reinforce and create new social structures contribute towards sustainable, more inclusive urban space. This is what Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman are referring to when they talk about ‘The Informal Public.’

“The informal public is the site from which to generate “other” ways of constructing the city; and its role today is to mediate a two-way journey, between top-down and bottom-up dynamics; in one direction, how specific, bottom-up urban alternations by creating act of citizenship can have enough resolution and political agency to trickle upward to transform top-down institutional structures; and in other direction how top-down resources can reach the site of marginalization, transforming normative ideas into infrastructure by absorbing the creative intelligence embedded in informal dynamics.”(Cruz and Forman 2015, 227)

In their analyses, they define what informal public demands are (Cruz and Forman 2015, 226-7), and the role of the informal public as a force in shaping the agenda for the future of the city seeking towards a more transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency governance.

We have to abandon the idea that space is an accomplished state or concrete materiality. Instead, we have to think about space as a process. Space is an active form of social relations, an integral part of life manifestations and its events. That is why commons space cannot be fixed in the form of a product. In his work, Stavrides relates to common space as a threshold space. He offers the threshold metaphor as a counter-example of a city dominated by enclaves. "Threshold may appear as mere boundaries which separate an inside from outside such as, for example, in a door threshold, but this act of separation is always and simultaneously an act of connection. Thresholds create the condition of entrance and exit; thresholds prolong, manipulate and give the meaning to an act of passage. This is why thresholds have been marked in many societies by rituals which attempt to control the inherent potentialities of crossing." (Stavrides 2016, 56)

We have to imagine common space as a dynamic form of space which keeps reproducing new relationships, new ideas and therefore it keeps reproducing itself. These practice does not only emerges from homogeneous communities but also to attempts to enrich its exchanges with other communities as well as the exchange between its members.

USING INFORMALITY TO PRODUCE SPACE

During this journey, I have studied different strategies and listened to a broad spectrum of opinions, with the specific focus of how the relationship between informal/formal is perceived. As reality shows, marginalizing informality or catapulting it artificially to a formal sector did not have the impact that was expected. The neoliberal political economy has widened the gap while making inequality dominant, especially in slums and surrounding urban centers. This gradual process of individual taking control of public has resulted in fragmentation, urban conflicts, and socio-economical injustice that our cities are experiencing today.

As neoliberalism has oriented cities towards consumption and manifestation. At the same time, the friendly neighborhoods are growing and sustaining themselves independently creating their socio-economical structures, resulting in a different notion of "politics."

After all, it is at the intersection between formal and informal urbanization and conflict between top-down, bottom-up, where the politic of urban growth is being shaped. This is why I suggest, we except informality as a legitimate practice and move further by developing and thinking of strategies to make it into a capable force that produce quality space. I firmly believe that informality is part of the solution, rather than the problem, and should be incorporated in the process of planning and not eradicated, as

using it to produce space will increase the chances of success towards sustainable urban design. The goal for these strategies is to serve as guiding lines for the reconciliation of informal-formal practices for the benefit of the community.

Using informality to produce space is a slow process, which needs encouragement and time to give results. In order for informality to be productive, new social structure amongst the communities has to be formed. Once these social structures are in place there is a high chance that through self-regulation the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of such communities will thrive. However, in order for this to happen, it is essential to recognize that the development of space happens where there is a delicate interplay between formal and informal, and while informality is useful in producing particular type of spaces, formal aspects need to be negotiated as well, especially when shifting from punctual, objects to infrastructure.

REDISTRIBUTE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES

Redistribution of knowledge and resources is crucial in the situation where they seem to be very limited. Providing a platform to organize these limited resources with the goal of the collaboration is the starting point of extracting potential from what already exists with the community or place.

During my work with the NGO "Where the rainbows meet," I was able to identify different institutions, actively present in Vryground. Many of them are foundations and NGO, part of them are government funded and other private enterprises all based their operation in this township. Some of the organization I can identify are Vryground Community Reading Center, True North, SOZO foundation, the Communiversity of South Africa, Sunrise Educare Center, iThemba School, Capricorn Primary School, and many small religious institutions.

From my empirical experience, I concluded that management skills are practically needed in this specific environment. Although there is a general acknowledgment between the institutions operating in the township, I did not find evidence for an established collaborative structure between them. This factor plays against the redistribution of knowledge and resources that could unleash a significant potential, benefiting the community. From my personal experience working with the gardening project run by the NGO, I learned the following: There is the aspiration to transform the current private garden into a public garden, as a piece of land for the community to use. However, there were some obstacles on the way towards achieving this goal. The former gardeners, who made the garden flourish, had left without passing further their skills. The new gardeners were not skilled enough to keep the garden running and were not skilled enough to work with the community, towards developing an urban gardening project. However, from my research I discovered that there are

people who have the right skills and are living in the community. I went out to find one of the community members mentioned in the discussion. The lady worked in another organization down the road, not more than 50 m away. She was kind and passionate about gardening while explaining the economic and physical benefits of gardening to me. Being very opened to help out and share her knowledge with the community, she just needed permission from her boss to take on the task. I thanked her and went back to share this information with my NGO advising them to establish a collaboration between them and the other organization.

In the absence of an established collaborative structure, these seemingly quick and easy tasks, take endless time. Eventually, before I left, I did not see traces of collaboration on this particular occasion. This occurrence made me thinking of what could be done to facilitate interaction between organizations, and this forms the basis of my first proposal.

Vryground Organization Collaboration Center- VOCC

Following the diagram logic of redistributing knowledge and resources, design alternatives can be suggested for the establishment of “Vryground Organization Collaboration Center.” This can be imagined as the shared environment between the NGOs and foundations operating in the area, with the common goal of uniting forces for the benefit of the community. Establishing a centralized structure that is dependent form decentralized web of different organizations working in particular areas. Judging from the site specifications, it is vital for this structure to be one of the first implemented, in order to allow the new social structure to establish themselves among the NGOs, which are already existing and contributing to developing the community. The optimal place for “VOCC” to be located is along Vryground Avenue. It has easy accessibility to the community and serves as a representative institution for them.

Offering a facility for the NGOs to collaborate with each other, by providing an environment with sufficient space (indoors and outdoors) for them to coexist. The “VOCC,” can be imagined as representative of the City hall for the community.

This is an “institution” that does not come from top-down but rather through mobilizing strategies, public communication, and redistributing public knowledge. It has been shown that effective and sustainable urban intervention can only be developed as a journey from the bottom to the top. That does not by any mean implement that the top down strategies are not necessary; indeed, they are to be seen as initiator and catalyzer of the bottom up urban intervention.

Police Station

As it is mentioned in the analyses of the site, safety is a big concern in this environment. Lavender Hill, which is north to the site, is the most problematic area regarding violence. From residential opinions, a safer public area would give more

confidence and allow them to use public space more intensively. If we consider some of the factors that make public space safe, I would say: accessibility, frequency, transparency, and functionality. Naturally, by increasing these factors on the site, a safer environment will be created. Top-down strategies could be implemented to ensure this cause public safety. Placing strategic institution such as the police station in this site would drastically have an impact on the surrounding.

Regarding the habitats, the police stations are located far away from where the action takes place, and they feel vulnerable regarding their safety. Locating a police station in the area would be the first step towards safety, ensuring the road for public facilities and commercial services to open. As the development process proceeds (more facilities moving in), frequency and accessibility of the site increase, ensuring a safer environment. It is crucial to keep in consideration that design transparency will contribute in long turn in a safer environment rather than erecting fences or walls. Working towards a safer surrounding is the main challenge the site has to overcome.

That is why the police station is strategically placed in the center of the site, near "VOCC." This configuration makes this building work together as the first to be implemented, establishing the foundation of the area development. Two hundred meters away from the Prince George drive, the police station has quick access to the surrounding area and the community where it is placed. A spacious asphalted territory in front of the central police station building will provide an opportunity for the future development of the facility.

Vryground Working force forum

On my usual route to work, I could see people standing with their tools alongside the road in the hope that someone would drive by and offer them temporary work. This casual gathering of people looking of economic opportunity could be seen as an indication and potential that might be exploited. A specific study would be required to have a practical understanding of the random informal structure that is created through interaction among these individuals. Understanding the behavior and the difficulties this group of people is dealing with would mark the foundation for creating a suitable habitat for them to organize and benefit from each other. Following this logic, establishing "Working force forum" which serve to organize and empower the working labor, would be valuable not only for the workers but at the same time to the broader community. Allowing sharing of knowledge and resources will logically make them more efficient and specialized in their work. This forum could include functions such as training programs, maintenance, and sharing of equipment. At the same time, it could serve a more permanent task such as workshop and production center. This way would create a platform for collaboration, education, and job opportunities. "The Working Force Forum" should remain a community organization managed by community members focusing on the benefit of the working community while

providing services to the surrounding areas. Since most of the action is currently happening alongside Prince George drive, “Working Force Forum” should logically be located on that side of the road. Creating an adequate habitat for them means providing sitting possibilities alongside the road, shadow, or some cover from the weather conditions and maybe storage space for their equipment. In a later stage, workshop facilities could be constructed on the site near the industrial (southeast) to provide education and permanent facilities for the workers to develop themselves.

Communal Planning Alliance.

Taking into consideration that construction is a permanent activity in this environment and following the establishment of the “working force forum,” I suggest the creation of an organized alliance involved with the planning. This might seem unrealistic at the first look, but from what I experienced working in the township, these service is already offered by unspecialized but based on trust of community leaders. When I write about Life in the township specifically about fires. What happens directly after fire catastrophe is that, empty spaces temporary appear soon to be rebuilt by the community often with the same configuration as before. During this short period, community leaders with little knowledge about planning, take charge by orienting individuals to rebuild their shacks conform their understanding of space. This can be seen as an opportunity to upgrade the planning in informal settlements through incremental and practical knowledge. Another contribution this alliance can provide, be creating trust relationships in the community, is to generate bottom-up ideas and projects that could be suggested for implementation to top-down strategies. This way establishing a sustainable link between top down and bottom up structures. Having implemented these significant tasks, the communal planning alliance can always serve as consulting architecture office for the future single structure build in the area. Supporting these alliance will lift the chances for the design planning of the surrounding to be more organic and inclusive. It is important to emphasize that the authority of the organized structure should be based firmly on the trust of the community. Having a structure like this in place would increase the chances of collaboration and exchange beyond Vryground. Marina da Gama has already an established structure called Architecture committee (Archcom), which works exclusively for the maintenance of their community. Following their model, “The Communal Planning Alliance” would be in its early stages consulting with the community leaders until reputation and trust are established to allow them to take on planning challenges among the community.

I imagine this alliance working in close relationship with “VOCC” and slowly creating its own identity and acknowledgment.

School

If I defined the biggest lessons I learned from this experience, it would be that: Change comes through time and education. Nelson Mandela himself said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Mandela, "Lightening your way to a better future") He was convinced that education was the way forward. From my empirical field research, I noticed that there was an overcapacity of children attending an educational institution. Opening of schools and educational centers in this site would be very beneficial across communities. Using the site geography and location (in between two social classes), there could be a study to develop educational institutions that are inclusive in their approach. The strategy would be promoting reconciliation through educative system. Kids, particularly in early age, tend to socialize freely and without prejudice with one another. Using educational institutions to emphasize inclusiveness would guarantee a more tolerant, inclusive society in the future. "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love." (Mandela, 1995, 749)

Placed in proximity with the police station and "VOCC" would create a more dense area and communication between these services. Also, this location assures security and accessibility towards the street. It is crucial to providing enough space and sports facility for the children so they can practice their hobbies and socialize with each other. This investment is required to be an implementation of the governing bodies as strategic development of the area in-between two different social structures.

Religious Institution,

Having met with the community various times, I could sense the influential culture of faith and believe in them. Most of them thanked God for turning their life around and guiding them for right through the life journey. Religion and faith are impacting this community for good, and though it much social connection is established. That is why encouragement of religious institution is suggested. Promoting tolerance, they help reconcile the diversity among the community. Placing this institution strategically on the site will increase site frequency and encouraging exchange among the visitors. These institutions create a reference point for the community often serving gathering institution towards a unified hope. Today there are many of these institutions spread amongst the surrounding communities; however from, what I experienced, their facilities and resources are limited and often not being able to provide for their members.

PUBLIC SPACE AS A SPACE OF KNOWLEDGE

As the first step is defined, providing the infrastructure needed for redistribution of knowledge and resources will establish collaboration among the existing institutions around the community. The next challenge will be designing public space.

Using this network already in place will play a crucial role in future developments. Funding will be required to provide the continuity of the area development. However, the future services suggested by this thesis are meant to be, to a certain point self-sustainable and competitive toward the market. The strategy is, by using the resources listed on the left side of the diagram above, we will be heading towards creating more inclusive public space.

MEDIATE TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP

Medical Center

The people I had contact with living the surrounding area of the site, complained about not having access to medical facilities. Although there are many problems affecting the community related to diseases, drug abuse, alcoholism, and infection, the medical centers are out of reach. That is the reason why it is essential to locate specific institutions right where the problems are occurring. Opening a medical center to serve this community will increase the health of the individuals and make them appreciative towards health issues.

I also experienced a lack of knowledge about the impact of diet among the community members. I even took on the challenge of giving classes about nutrition and diet to a group of ladies working in the same NGO as I was. They seem very eager to learn and imply these practical suggestions in their lives. I was surprised to see them react quickly and implement some of the suggestions in their daily habits. When the classes were over, they would still come and ask questions related to particular issues that I could not always reply. I noticed that some of them felt intimidated by being aware of eating unhealthy food but also admitted it is hard to stay disciplined. From this occasion, the ladies taught me a lot about their mentality regarding health and showed me that given the right circumstances there is will to go forward toward improving themselves.

Slowly but surely, working towards health improvement increases people dignity and appreciation for themselves. This is why the goal of future development should be the

well-being of our species.

Game Park

Muizenberg as an urban center offers some leisure activities for kids and adults by creating real scale games facilities like, mini golf, slippers, rubber playground, etc. From what experienced these facilities were well preferred and intensively frequented. In the Vryground community, I noticed a trend of skater among the young children who were usually practicing in the streets although the terrain seemed rough to me. The same pattern I observed in the alleys of Marina da Gama but in a much less frequent scale. However, the number of kids living in the surrounding seems very significant.

This is why activity oriented leisure parks seem to make sense in order to offer their community the opportunities to socialize and practice their hobbies with one another. Often adults take part in these activities, creating a more inclusive environment, therefore safer. These facilities should be designed first with cheap, sustainable materials such as concrete, rocks, sand, or wood of the reason being not easy vandalized and destroyed. In a later stage as the game, park become more established other materials and design can be introduced. Placing them with the goal in mind in a location that are visible from the main roads and creating an inviting image of these sites as socializing space that belongs to the community. The low rise of the playground ensures transparency for the interior of the site allowing the observers to perceive the surroundings easily.

Market Square

Market Square is meant to serve as the central area for the surrounding, creating a gathering point and providing space for diverse activities. The primary function is to provide space for a food market to take place. This space will provide temporary daily use for the sellers, so identify with one place and reinforce their dignity. This social structure will create more responsibility and respect for the community. Market Square can become the center of the common space for the community to express themselves and temporarily make use of this facility. Right next to Market Square, on the other side of the road, there is an area to provide nature shadow with plants and trees.

Food Market

Meanwhile, the site becomes dense in public service, there is a higher chance that commercial services will be moving in. In the southern part of the site, there is an already existing Capricorn shopping mall.

However, standing alone and offering limited services, mainly mechanized, this small

shopping mall has very goal oriented use.

What is required in the area, are small-scale shops that offer a more diverse variety of services? Along Vryground Avenue and other roads surrounding the community, I could spot many people selling food or goods on the street. Providing them with some coverage and space in the public square to create a market environment would facilitate their service and grow their dignity towards the community.

This food market would be the first step towards creating a centralized urban environment.

Take away

Alongside the market square, a more organized shop oriented take away food shops could be implemented. This would further contribute to creating the urban feel of the surrounding by offering services where people can come and spend more time than just grocery shopping. Coffee shop, food stands, artisanal shops, hairdressers might be the first to move in and open their businesses. This opportunity increases the chances for the surrounding poor community to sell their products and gain some economic benefits.

This take away shops would lay the path for future development, considering more permanent structure serving commercial purposes as mentioned previously.

Cultural center

Social interaction is required in order for a community to be connected and live in harmony. There is no better way to promote harmony other than intense emotional activities. One of these activities is art and culture. Providing the community with a facility where the new ideas take shape and are encouraged will assure the integration process to happen. There are talent and artistic abilities amongst the communities; however, in the absence of a platform to express themselves where abilities stay hidden. Cultural center would take on the task to promote culture and traditions presented to the public in an artistic form.

Vertical Park

The surrounding terrain in this area is flat, and the houses are mostly low rise. When I visited "Dream Land," the two-story house in the township of Overcome height, I was fascinated by the view and how well I could observe the surroundings. From there, different emotions were generated and made me think of the urban fabric in this area. I came up with many questions that were hard for my companions to answer; however, they were incentives for further discussions. The idea of creating a vertical park would help to perceive the surrounding and initiate discussion towards improving the conditions of the specific areas. Providing a new perspective and different ways of looking at the reality would be beneficial. At the same time, it will serve as a leisure activity for the curious people living around this area to see their neighborhood from

above. Containers can be used to create a structure that has a vertical profile and serve as a panoramic balcony for the surrounding territory.

Providing shadow

Because the ground substance and lack of resources, there is not possible for the vegetation to grow without care big enough to provide cover. In this particular climate like Cape Town has, especially in the summertime, shade is well appreciated. Therefore it is encouraged through design to introduce some artificial shades. In his article "Shade," Sam Bloch discusses the impact that shadow has in urban areas such as Los Angeles. He elaborates on the issue that an urban forest is theoretically possible a decade from now, but the necessity for shadow is immediate. This is the reason for the suggestion that sidewalk canopies and street furniture could be mainly designed and placed in public space to provide shadow for the users. That is what he calls urban shade. (Sam Bloch, "Shade")

Having spent the summer in Cape Town, I have seen the effect that shade has in public space. Most of the places, which provided little cover from weather conditions, tended to be more occupied and preferred by visitors. For this reason, encouraging the implementation of design to provide shade will increase the utilization of public space. Contracting community organizations like "Vryground Working Force" and providing them with resources to design public shade would be ideal for the developing of this project. The way to keep it last is to make sure that people are the one who builds it because if they can build it, they are not going to let it down.

TRANSGRESS URBAN BORDERS

Working towards creating a more inclusive city means providing a platform for shared spaces to appear and new ideas to manifest themselves. Infrastructure is a vital tool to connect and establish a relationship. In suburban cities such as Cape Town, infrastructure plays a significant impact on making the city accessible to its inhabitants. Referring to the site I have studied, between Vryground and Marina da Gama, there is not much connection happening. With the implementation of different facilities in this site, it is essential to provide accessibility from one to another. In this environment, it is healthy to think that accessing routes should not be only straight lines; rather indirect ways could be introduced and become incentive of cultural interchange. Alternative routes from A to B would diversify the connection possibilities and create a more compact space. The common transportation ways in Cape suburb are Taxies (minibusses in Cape Town) or private transportation. Creating Taxi stands and space for them to provide their services is going to impact the accessibility of the site. Working towards creating alternative transportation such as skateboarding or

bicycle ways would give the youngsters an alternative other than walking.

A sustainable and inclusive urban center can be achieved between active collaboration between members of the community. The space program suggestions could serve as a blueprint for the informal public to start designing their surrounding. Implementing this plan will require time and will slowly go through different phases. It is essential to leave sufficient time for the new social structure to be established and start functioning. It has to be a bottom-up movement, which has support from top-down strategies. This means that public funds and government institution should serve as a catalyzer. Meanwhile, the community would take over and design the space, addressing their needs. Majority of the services suggested in this theses are meant to be decentralized and self-sufficient, once the plan is executed and social structures are established.

7 CONCLUSION

Inequality is a phenomenon that is dramatically affecting our society. The unequal scenes shown in the first chapter of this thesis serve as a reminder for the community we are living in. Some of the causes of inequality are associated with history, migration, and socio-economical policies. Inequality comes in different forms, sometimes more obvious than others, but more often than not has a devastating impact on our society. South Africa is the most unequal country in the world today, and it is confronted with a fragmented society that is difficult to be led forward. Enclaves, fear of others insecurity, crime, and violence are consequences of an unequal society. Democracy in South Africa is confronted with significant difficulties where tribal structures have a significant impact on, creating a higher division in the society. This thesis argues the perception of what is right or wrong in our society today by emphasizing the creation of bridges toward a common goal as a society as a country or even as humanity. Visiting a country as diverse as South Africa has helped me understand the issues we face when different cultures meet.

During my journey, I learned to take a step back and ask a lot of questions before I start judging and drawing a conclusion. Often leaving myself vulnerable to the surrounding taught me valuable lessons and broke a lot of stigma. In an architect's perspective, this experience has influenced me to look at a problem with the user's eye and acknowledging the other factors that play a role in the process of producing space. It has come to my belief that creating bridges and transcending borders take time, but more importantly, it is initiated from social interaction and understanding towards others. Using space as the medium and as a tool to promote social interaction is the ultimate has been the goal of this thesis.

Architects nowadays have to be aware of their influence on society and their impact on social structure. Working towards inclusive design and spaces will eventually result in an even and compact society. More often than not, these inclusive designs are generated, in-between the relationship between top-down and bottom-up strategies. This is why what the citizens have to take responsibility and, as the philosopher Henri Lefebvre would say, claim their "right to the city."

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