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Jayne M. ROGERSON

## Editorial - Urban and spatial challenges in South Africa: Continuing (and extending) the conversation

During 2018 the World Bank issued an important systematic country diagnostic report on South Africa . Its central message was that whilst the country has come a long way since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has recorded “an incomplete transition”. In particular, it was argued that notwithstanding political transition to majority rule that the economic transition from a system of exclusion under segregation and apartheid remained still to be completed. Although the title is sometimes contested with Brazil, South Africa remains the world’s most unequal country. In addressing exclusion the World Bank argues that the imperative is for expanded job creation, most especially for the country’s youth. Several key constraints are identified for the reduction of poverty and inequality in South Africa. These include insufficient skills, the highly skewed distribution of land and productive assets, and low levels of competition and integration into global value chains, which impacts in particular opportunities for small enterprise development. Two further critical issues are the limited or expensive spatial connectivity associated with under-serviced historically disadvantaged settlements and the overarching threats posed to economic and social development in South Africa by the calamity of climate change (World Bank, 2018).

It is against this backdrop of the enormous policy challenges facing the country that this collection of fifteen papers seeks to provide new research and fresh policy insights concerning certain of the urban and spatial challenges that confront South Africa. Arguably, no set of papers could possibly address all the multiple and complex questions raised by the 2018 World Bank diagnostic report about South Africa’s ‘incomplete transition’. Indeed, this collection was never conceived with any such an objective in mind. The special theme issue – in preparation well before the appearance of the landmark World Bank report - has more modest goals. During 2013 the editors of *Urbani izziv* encouraged the preparation of a group of research papers which were published in July 2014 as a special issue under the broad title of “Addressing South Africa’s Urban Challenges” (Rogerson et al., 2014). Five years later the journal editors accepted a proposal for a second special South African issue. This particular collection of 15 articles is the end-product. It was prepared within the context of the stated mission of *Urbani izziv* being the dissemination of new knowledge and discussion of contemporary spatial issues through top quality scholarly articles. The collection here continues the multiple conversations about the urban and spatial challenges facing South Africa that began to be discussed in this journal five years ago (Rogerson et al., 2014). Subsequently, these conversations have been enriched also by the appearance of a number of other South African research contributions which have been published in *Urbani izziv* between 2014 and 2018 (Campbell, 2016; de Vries & Kotze, 2016; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016). In addition, the collection seeks to introduce certain new themes of growing interest to South African urban and spatial researchers and which are embedded in an appropriate international research scholarship.

Within the papers included in this special issue are represented several established themes which are of core interest to *Urban izziv*. These include policy-relevant considerations around national spatial planning, regional and local development, housing, and changing urban landscapes. Environmental concerns and gender are also critical foci for extended investigation. Beyond these issues other research foci are under scrutiny in this special issue. As Southern Africa is a region of the world that is anticipated to experience some of the worst impacts of global warming (Ziervogel et al., 2014), the theme of climate change is interrogated both as a threat and opportunity. Moreover, in respect of South Africa's policy imperative for job creation, the sector of tourism as a labour-absorptive activity is gathering increased policy attention. Accordingly, in this collection questions are raised around the role of tourism and recreation particularly in the context of the country's emerging new planning orientation towards the 'blue economy'. Finally, as the 'incomplete transition' of contemporary South Africa can never be understood without an understanding of the legacy of the past, the collection includes some historical reflections on issues around urban economic development issues, in this case surrounding the critical sector of tourism. Overall, it is submitted that this special issue contributes to further advance the body of research and scholarship about urban development, planning and the spatial challenges of South Africa.

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Richard GRANT

## E-waste challenges in Cape Town: Opportunity for the green economy?

### Abstract

E-waste research on South Africa cities is modest compared to the much larger research output on other African cities (e.g., Accra, Ghana, and Lagos, Nigeria). Synthesizing gray reports, academic literature, and findings from 25 interviews with key Cape Town stakeholders (from informal and formal firms and industry, civil society, and governmental organizations), this paper assesses the current e-waste landscape in Cape Town, bifurcated between numerous informal individuals/firms and a handful of large formal operators. E-waste activities focus on collection (with little value added), dismantling, preprocessing, and refurbishment without final processing, the latter being performed in Johannesburg and overseas. After a decade of e-waste deliberation, government, businesses, industries, consultants, and civil society organizations are coalescing around approaching e-waste as a strategic green economic opportunity, a tilt coinciding with the designation of Africa's first designated green special economic zone at Atlantis. The green economy tilt, however, is by no means guaranteed: deficiencies in data, e-waste infrastructure, capacity building, and major differences of opinion about the role of informal operators persist.

**Keywords:** e-waste, Cape Town, informal economies, green transition

### 1 Introduction

Globally, the amount of e-waste generated in 2017 was 44.7 million metric tons, an amount equivalent to 4,500 Eiffel Towers (Baldé et al., 2017: 4). E-waste presently is a US\$52 billion global industry of recycling and processing of electronic devices and of re-exporting retrievable metals (Baldé et al., 2015: 17). The growth of the global electronics market with its industry norm of planned obsolescence has spearheaded the expansion of e-waste (Daum et al., 2017). E-waste in Africa is further compounded by an uptake in second-hand and refurbished electronics (Grant, 2015; Grant & Oteng-Ababio, 2016). Products in the region's secondary electronics market have shorter life spans and enter the domestic waste stream sooner rather than later (Grant & Oteng-Ababio, 2013; Baldé et al., 2017).

In South Africa, e-waste is growing at three-times the rate of solid waste (Lydall et al., 2017). In the country's Western Cape Province, e-waste accounts for approximately 8% of total waste (GreenCape, 2018: 17), and 1%–2% of materials disposed of in Cape Town's landfills consist of e-waste (ERA, 2018: 33). Within national policy and media circles, e-waste is portrayed as providing both threats and opportunities. The former is mostly expressed as a source of environmental contamination (Finlay & Liechti, 2008; Lawhon, 2013; Ledwaba & Sosibo, 2017) arising from improper treatment of e-waste where significant quantities of less valuable fractions are routinely discarded (e.g., plastics, glass), and non-negligible amounts of potentially toxic substances (e.g., cadmium, mercury, lead, brominated flame retardants, or polychlorinated biphenyls [PCBs]) pose environmental health risks from inhalation of toxic fumes as well as from accumulations of chemicals in soil, water, and food, particularly in the vicinities of unregulated landfills (Machete, 2017). Despite the national government's

attempts to regulate landfills (2013–2016 at a cost of US\$2.44 million), the extent of compliance remains unknown and some e-waste is dumped indiscriminately (Godfrey & Oelofse, 2017: 4).

As far as its emerging opportunities (the focus of this paper), if e-waste is treated comprehensively (as opposed to an isolated problem) and properly managed with the positive integration of informal economy workers, the sector can address the triple challenges of job creation, poverty, and inequality as well as promote environmental sustainability, thereby aligning in accordance with the South African government's commitment to protect the rights of all its citizens in an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being and with the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) (DST, 2013). The national government aims to increase the waste and secondary resources sector from 0.51% to 1.0%–1.5% of GDP (DST, 2013). The development of more sophisticated processing offers potential for recovery of valuable recyclable materials such as gold and silver.

Waste is designated as a strategic policy area of the Western Cape Government's "green is smart strategy" (Western Cape Government, 2013), and opportunities exist to transform e-waste along all parts of the chain (e.g., collection, dismantling, pre-processing, final processing). Greening the South Africa economy is hotly debated (Borel-Saldin & Turok, 2013; Swilling et., al. 2016; Mohamed, 2019) in terms of its definition, scope, opportunities and challenges. A wide range of green economy discourses are employed by different actor-networks constituencies (Mohamed, 2019). In South Africa, tensions and contradictions exist between technocentric environmental managerialism, state-led or market-driven (Oelofse et. al. 2006) and citizen-led-focused green transformation with an emphasis on inclusion and/or more radical focus on post-growth, environmental/social justice and the application of non-monetary indices of the valuation of nature (Mohamed, 2019). South Africa's greening of the economy debate is far from resolved. While a green economy vision is frequently mentioned in official reports, there is a paucity of research connecting the informal economy and the green economy (Mohamed 2019; Smit & Musango, 2015a; 2015b). This paper focuses on exploring opportunities for the e-waste economy within green thinking and also reflects on some gaps and potential openings. The designation of the Atlantis Special Economic Zone (SEZ); 40 km from Cape Town as Africa's first green-tech economic zone in 2018 is a significant statement of intent and may provide opportunities to harness technologies and to develop a secondary metals facility so that more sophisticated processing can be conducted in the region.

Every country establishes its own list of consumer products considered to be e-waste (Khan, 2016). In South Africa, e-waste covers small and large household appliances; office and information and communications technology (ICT) equipment; consumer electronics and entertainment equipment; lighting; electronics/electronic tools (common to most countries); security and healthcare equipment; and mixed waste electrical and electronic equipment (ERA, 2018). Given the continually expanding scope of computerized products, commodities not traditionally digitized (e.g., running shoes, clothing, fitness bands) now often incorporate an electronic chip so the definition of e-waste needs regular updating (Khan, 2016). Particularly relevant to the Western Cape Province and its ambition to be renewable energy zone, solar panels are likely to be a future e-waste challenge. Further ambiguity exists in defining used products in South Africa. Out of warranty and the expiration of a contract between consumers and manufacturer are less critical concerns for low-income South Africans such that there is a market for factory- or store-rejected goods with packaging/material defects and partial functionality even though the same conditions might

not be acceptable in a regular market in a developed country. Moreover, South Africa's second-hand goods market is also affected by the inflow of international donations to South African organizations and institutions; such contributions regularly encompass a mix of working/nonworking devices.

E-waste research on South Africa is modest compared to the much larger research output in African cities such as Accra, Ghana (Amankwaa, 2013; Grant & Oteng-Ababio, 2013, 2016, 2019, Daum et al., 2017) and Lagos, Nigeria (Osibinjo & Nnorom, 2007; Nnorom & Osininjo, 2008; Sullivan, 2014). Research on South Africa focuses on the policy terrain and the transition toward a formal system of e-waste management (Lawhon, 2012, 2013), on possibilities for developing a green channel (Anahide, 2007), on green economy possibilities for the informal economy (Smit & Musango, 2015a, 2015b), and on the potential for applying technological solutions to valuable e-waste fractions (Ledwaba & Sosibo, 2017). Some case study research has been conducted at industrial sites in Durban (Govender, 2016), Baphalaborwa (Tshimbana, 2014), and Cape Town (Schluep et al., 2008), but there is a dearth of e-waste research on the macroeconomic geography of metropolitan and provincial districts. At the national level, an important gray literature exists (e.g., Finlay & Liechti, 2008; Lydall et al., 2017). At the provincial level, GreenCape has published data and provided a general assessment on e-waste in Western Cape Province since 2014 (e.g., (GreenCape, 2016, 2018). In addition, several industry e-waste management plans have been developed (eWasa and ITA PEG, 2014), and two competing plans (SAWEEDA, 2018; ERA, 2018) were under public discussion in July-August 2018.

My paper provides a case study of e-waste in Cape Town and assesses how the sector fits into the overall economic development strategy of Western Cape Province and the City of Cape Town and the national government's waste strategy and emerging e-waste management system. The next section sketches e-waste at the national context because management policies are being enacted at this level. The third section details the case study approach and qualitative methodology. The analysis presents a mapping of the regional circuit of e-waste. The fifth and sixth sections assess the transition to a formal management of e-waste and the development of a green e-waste channel in Western Cape Province. The concluding section provides a set of reflections and argues that if e-waste processing is to be green we must consider the incorporation of informal economy operators to avoid the e-waste discussion from becoming a mere rhetorical tool and narrative of green propaganda and technological progress for a state management system dominated by large formal firms.

## **2 The evolving E-waste landscape in South Africa**

There is a sizeable literature on waste in South Africa (Oelofse & Godfrey, 2008; Godfrey et al., 2017; Godfrey & Oelofse, 2017), and a modest but growing literature on e-waste. Godfrey & Oelofse (2017) characterize the country's waste economy as evolving, based on five stages of overlapping development: "the age of landfilling" (a stage South Africa has yet to move beyond); the "emergence of recycling" (marked by the 2001 Polokwane Declaration and a plastic bag use tax after 2003); the flood of regulations: the drive toward Environmental Producer Responsibility (EPR) (reaching a pinnacle in July–August 2018 with public discussions on competing e-waste management plans and differences of opinion about how the government management system should function); and the country is on the brink of a fifth stage of a transition toward a "circular economy." The circular economy makes an important distinction between biological and technological cycles. In the former, biologically

originating material, such as cotton, feed backs into the system via composting and anaerobic digestion processes. Technological cycles, more applicable to e-waste, recover and restore components, materials, and products through reuse, repair, remanufacture and/or (in the last resort) recycling.

Several organizations have undertaken national assessments of e-waste (Dittke, 2005; Widmer & Lombard, 2005; Advanced Tropical Environment, 2012; Africa Institute, 2013). eWASA conducted a preliminary baseline assessment of volumes, types, sizes, and roles along the e-waste value chain (Finlay & Liechti, 2008). DST and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research compiled the most comprehensive assessment of e-waste based on a survey of South Africa's 100 largest e-waste firms. The resulting report (Lydall et al., 2017) provides a detailed appraisal of the state of technology employed at various stages in the e-waste chain and provides preliminary data on the South African e-waste space economy and the respective roles of cities and provinces through elucidating e-waste collection hinterlands. Graduate theses have studied the green channel (Anahide, 2007), municipality e-waste management (Tshimbana, 2014) and industrial park management (Govender, 2016). E-waste is now receiving multifaceted media coverage and was among the features in Cape Town's 2018 Design Indaba Festival, where e-waste art installations, jewelry, and street art were exhibited (Design Indaba, 2018). Industry assessments of South Africa's cyberthreat show vulnerability due to the poor infrastructure, network gaps, and older equipment but no causal link between digital waste and cybercrimes (e.g., online romance and other scams; African Union Commission and Symantec, 2016).

Unlike Ghana and Nigeria, causal links between e-waste and cybercrime are not established (African Union Commission and Symantec, 2016) even though South Africa ranks near the top of the global list of the most exposed countries to cybercrime. South Africa's cyber-threat is largely a consequence of the poor infrastructure, network gaps, and older equipment (African Union Commission and Symantec, 2016).

A major theme in scholarly research has been the formalization of e-waste management in South Africa and the policy instruments guiding the transition toward sustainability (Lawhon, 2012). Since the late 2000s, policymakers, media, and activists (e.g., South African musician Johnny Clegg, who established New Earth E-Waste Solutions in Johannesburg) highlight the lack of a "proper recycling facility in South Africa" and the loss of potential revenues from e-waste processing of valuable fractions (Jones, 2008: 1). The impetus for a formal industry-led approach is orchestrated via one of the newly established larger e-waste umbrella organizations (e.g., E-waste Recycling Authority (ERA) and South African Waste Electrical and Electronic Enterprise Development Association (SAWEEDA)<sup>1</sup>. Lawhon (2013) surmises that policy has evolved from consultants, academics, and industry representatives collaborating to develop management plans that promote technological solutions to modernize the industry. Indeed, some suggest that management of e-waste should commence from within the public sector as stockpiling e-waste is typical and the government sector may account for 45% of all e-waste (ERA, 2018).

Approaching e-waste from an informal economy lens, scholars (Smit & Musango, 2015a, 2015b) and activists call for more attention to the integration of informal waste pickers and

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<sup>1</sup> ERA steering committee membership was drawn from HP, Dell, DESCO Recyclers, SIMMS Refurbishes, SA Precious Metal, Africa e-Waste and e-Waste Africa, and the SAEWA. The SAWEEDA think tank includes representatives from eWasa, environmental finance businesses, legal organizations, IT producers, industry, and the scientific community).

informal firms sidelined in official plans, which already perform green recycling work with considerable scope for expansion and positive integration. Early stages of recycling (collection, crude dismantling, and sorting) are dominated by informal workers, typically exploited laborers (Finlay & Liechti, 2008), and their activities affect vulnerable populations living in the vicinity of unregulated sites or backyard workshops. Despite the passing of a variety of environmental and waste-related legislation in South Africa, only formal e-recycling facilities offer degrees of worker protection.

## 2.1 E-waste in South Africa

Unlike in other African countries, hundreds of shipping containers are not openly arriving at ports and being channeled into specialized e-waste hubs. Imports of e-waste are modest: approximately 6% of the total is imported by formal firms from neighboring Southern African countries (Lydall et al., 2017: i), and informal firm imports are unknown. Fifty known producers are active in importing both new and used electronics and many of them engage in local assembly and refurbishment (ERA, 2018:21). Most activities proceed with low-mid-level technology and only a few well-established consolidator companies employ more sophisticated technology (Lydall et al., 2017:x). An important caveat is that while technology is applied to processing in South Africa (e.g., mechanized shredding), it is neither state of the art nor uniform; more advanced processing takes place outside the country (e.g., Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and China). Most valuable fractions and more problematic fractions such as batteries are exported for further processing. Since 2017, Johannesburg firms have operated pilots to experiment with more sophisticated processing of metal fractions; for example, SA Precious Metals is engaging in the extraction of precious metals, and Rand Refinery is enhancing its intake of processed e-waste to boost economies of scale in gold extraction.

Most small- and medium-sized firms (SMEs) concentrate in the early stages of the value chain, engaging in collection to processing. Organizing workers in the South African informal waste economy has proven to be particularly challenging. Godfrey and Oelofse (2017: 6) report 92% of cooperatives fail with waste workers returning to landfills and operating as independent workers. Marginalized collectors have been unable to speak with a uniform or representative voice to negotiate with municipalities and firms along the value chain. Research on collectors reveals internal divisions and hierarchies over the politics of landfill access with network and criminal syndicates also exercising influence (Lambrechts & Hector, 2016).

Estimates of the total e-waste output in South Africa vary significantly. At the upper end, Snyman et al. (2016: 2) calculate the total value of e-waste at 2 million tons per year. Government and industry associations estimate the national output to be approximately 360,000 tons (GreenCape, 2018), a sum more in line with international organizations' reports (Baldé et al., 2017) of South Africans' annual e-waste generation of 6.2 kg per inhabitant (the highest in Africa but considerably lower than the US average of 19.4 kg per person). There is a steady growth rate of IT uptake in South Africa: 52.3 million smartphones; 6 million tablets (Lydall et al. 2017: 70), and 10.5 million computers (DST, 2013) are present in 2019.<sup>2</sup>

Estimates are on shakier ground when calculating the quantity of used devices and equipment in the market and the amount of e-waste in storage. In terms of the market, Finlay and Liechti

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<sup>2</sup> This was calculated employing DEA's (2012) data and projections of 500,000 imports per year and 3–6 years life expectancy.

(2008: 22) calculated imports of 20,000–100,000 used PCs and 720,000 used mobile devices for 2007 and there are no estimates on the quantity of goods in the secondary market. Despite efforts to regulate the second-hand market by the Second-Hand Goods Bill (2008), enforcement is weak, and this market remains largely unregulated. Deloitte (2016: 22) calculate the market share for used mobile handsets is 22% of the total market. Moreover, many phones remain in storage given South Africans' tendency to hold onto old phones as spares and gifts to family and friends rather than to sell them through a formal or informal market. Imports of affordable new Chinese handsets are chipping away at this market niche except among low-income populations (Deloitte, 2016). Other second-hand markets exhibit more inertia; for example, used domestic appliances. Indeed, Lydall et al. (2017: 70) report an increasing market share for refurbished office IT as firms opt to reduce spending on new equipment following the decline of the South African rand and improvements in refurbishers' lease schemes with enhanced service contracts.

In South Africa waste recycling is low: only 11% of e-waste is recycled (Lydall et al., 2017). Proposals have been put forward to increase the recycling of e-waste to 20% within five years (eWASA, 2013). Mouton and Wichers (2016: 464) estimate that “20% of e-waste is recycled by formal firms” and “70% of South Africa's e-waste remains in storage.” eWASA (2013: 3) emphasizes that informal operators collect 25% of the total volume of e-waste recycled.

Lydall et al. (2017) highlight 100 formal firms operating at the apex of the e-waste economy with direct ties to consolidator firms that in turn aggregate the e-waste collected in the informal economy. In general, e-waste recycling is not profitable as a stand-alone business, and many firms regard it as a secondary activity (Lydall et al., 2017). Many small dismantlers combine recycling with more profitable refurbishment. Gauteng-headquartered firms dominate the e-waste economy and handled 55% of the volume in 2015 (Lydall et al., 2017: x). Many (e.g., Desco, Just PCs, SmartMatta) also maintain branch offices in Cape Town. Most of the valuable fractions processed in Johannesburg are exported for subsequent processing (e.g., PCBs to Europe, Asia, and Canada; phosphors powder to Europe; ferrous and nonferrous metals to Asia (Lydall et al., 2017: x).

### **3 Data, methods, and study area**

Most e-waste research in Africa focuses on the salient national hubs, but this research focuses on a largely undocumented secondary site. No national database exists and significant data gaps exist in documenting e-waste. A goal is to document, map, and assess the hitherto unobserved e-waste landscape in Cape Town/Western Province and its various ties to the South Africa e-waste space economy and beyond.

Table 1: Research phases

<b>1. Secondary sources</b>	<b>2. Interviews</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>3. Site reconnaissance</b>	<b>#</b>
eWASA membership list	<b>a. Government</b>		Firm locations and Atlantis SEZ	30
SAEWA membership list	Western Cape Government	2		
DST (Lydall et al., 2017, Annex pp 67)	Green Cape	2	22 firms verified;	
Web research	Westgro	2	plus 8 could not be located (of which, 4 were reported to have relocated but whereabouts could not be determined and the remainder ceased operating)	
	DTI	1		
	DEA	1		
	<b>b. Industry organizations</b>			
	eWasa	1		
	SAEWA	1		
	<b>c. Formal firms</b>			
	Cape E-waste	1		
	Desco	1		
	Just Pcs	1		
	Smartmatta	1		
	Pcs and Stuff	1		
	<b>d. Informal firms</b>			
	Waste Plan	1		
	Bizstorm 5CC	1		
	Virgin Earth	1		
	Compuscrap	1		
	Metrex	1		
	<b>e. Informal collectors</b>			
	Waste Pickers	5		

Given the lack of existing data/published research on Cape Town, this research proceeded in three steps. Step 1 involved compiling the listing of e-waste companies and their locations, data were obtained from various professional association lists (see Table 1) and also involved web research to uncover firms that are not listed with industry organizations. Step 2 involved conducting 25 semi-structured interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (5 with government officials, 2 with industry organizations and 5 each with formal firms, informal firms and waste pickers). In terms of the government interviews, some effort was spent prior with industry and professional organizations identifying the key contact or two with the agency engaged with the e-waste portfolio. Given this sector is evolving, a snowball technique was employed to identify key firms and waste collectors that engage in e-waste. Notes were taken during the interviews and they were transcribed later and key representative quotes are presented in the analysis. The analysis section also relies on the gray literature to shed light on the milieu as the interviews revealed that knowledge of the provincial/city e-waste landscape is fragmentary and incomplete especially at the firm level. The response rate was high and only two officials failed to respond to requests for interview and three informal firms declined to participate. Step 1 identified 30 establishments on the master list with 5 or more employees and in step 3 site visits were conducted to verify the addresses and existence of 22 firms that were mapped. Interviewees mentioned itinerant firms/scrap dealers, operating under the radar at the base of the e-waste economy, outside of a premise. However, documenting these actor's largely invisible geographical fields of operations is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, a mapping of fixed e-waste operators was accomplished.

#### 4 Results: Western Cape Province and Cape Town as a regional hub

Many firms participating in the e-waste economy concentrate on collection. The scale of operations varies considerably: from large firms to many micro firms to individual e-waste collectors to opportunistic collectors who occasionally gather e-waste but concentrate on other wastes. At one end of the spectrum are Cape E-Waste Recyclers and Desco. The former organizes a well-developed disposal service for redundant and obsolete equipment to government, medical facilities, educational establishments, and corporations. To augment its service, it regularly holds collection events in partnership with municipalities, churches, and businesses, accepts e-waste from retail stores, and maintains ties to many smaller firms to source sufficient quantities of e-waste to boost economies of scale. Desco operates as a consolidator for the entire Cape (Northern, Western, and Eastern), has ties to large retailers (e.g., Marko, Incredible Connection), and channels approximately 60% of e-waste collected in the province to Johannesburg for processing (Lydall et al., 2017: ii). At the other end of the continuum, a few micro firms (e.g., Harris Electronic Waste) operate with an explicit empowerment objective to provide jobs for family members, while numerous home-based survivalist enterprises operate from township backyards (e.g., Newtech Recycling).

Unobserved phenomenon such as transitions to regularization by informal firms was difficult to ascertain. It seems that many firms, particularly those on the outskirts of Cape Town, operate beyond the regulatory purview of the municipality and the DEA's requirements of the National Environmental Management Waste Act (NEWMA). Firms are supposed to be registered, get audited, and be in compliance with hazardous waste disposal regulations and international standard certificates (e.g., ISO 9001; ISO 14001; ISO 18001), respectively pertaining to reporting, administering, and operating in compliance with environmental, health and safety, and workplace regulations (GreenCape, interview, June 2018). Interviews with industry organizations report that approximately "10% of Cape Town firms are in full compliance (largest firms), some firms partially comply with existing licensing requirements, but most firms are non-compliant" (SAEWA Director, interview, June 2017). Two informal firms emphasize that they are unaware if there are requirements, and one of these firm underscored that they "are suspicious of governmental efforts at regularization, fearful of any government management" and worried that this might ruin their livelihoods. As one interviewee put it, "this country has a history of failing promises but only the connected get uplifted out of poverty" (informal firm, interview, June 2018). , wide degrees of noncompliance prevail, ranging from uncontrolled disposal (open burning and dumping) to unsafe manual dismantling and processing (low awareness of risks to safety, health, and the environment in their operating space) to poor and inadequate storage of materials and wastes (especially with nonvaluable waste fractions) to the uncontrolled transportation of materials and quasi-legal trading (unrecorded cash transactions) among firms, particularly at the collection, preprocessing, and refurbishment stages in the value chain. While some of these issues may be heightened in e-waste processing, similar challenges are evident in other sectors of informal economy manufacturing (Grant, 2006; Rogerson, 2006). Based on the interviews conducted in May 2018, it can be concluded that several firms participate in e-waste collection to assess components and models that can be refurbished. For the most part, these firms are profit-orientated, but there are firms (e.g., Virgin Earth in Somerset West) that operate with the socially responsible objective to provide computers to charitable organizations. Figure 1 shows the locations of 22 Cape Town-based e-waste firms with 5 or more employees, and indicates firms' e-waste portfolios (i.e., collection, pre-processing, refurbishment and final processing). Five national firms maintain regional establishments in the city (indicated by name on Figure 1) but most are informal firms (indicated by number

and named on the legend). Most firms engage in the beginning stages of the e-waste value chain and firms report that refurbishment is the most profitable activity (Interviews, May 2018).

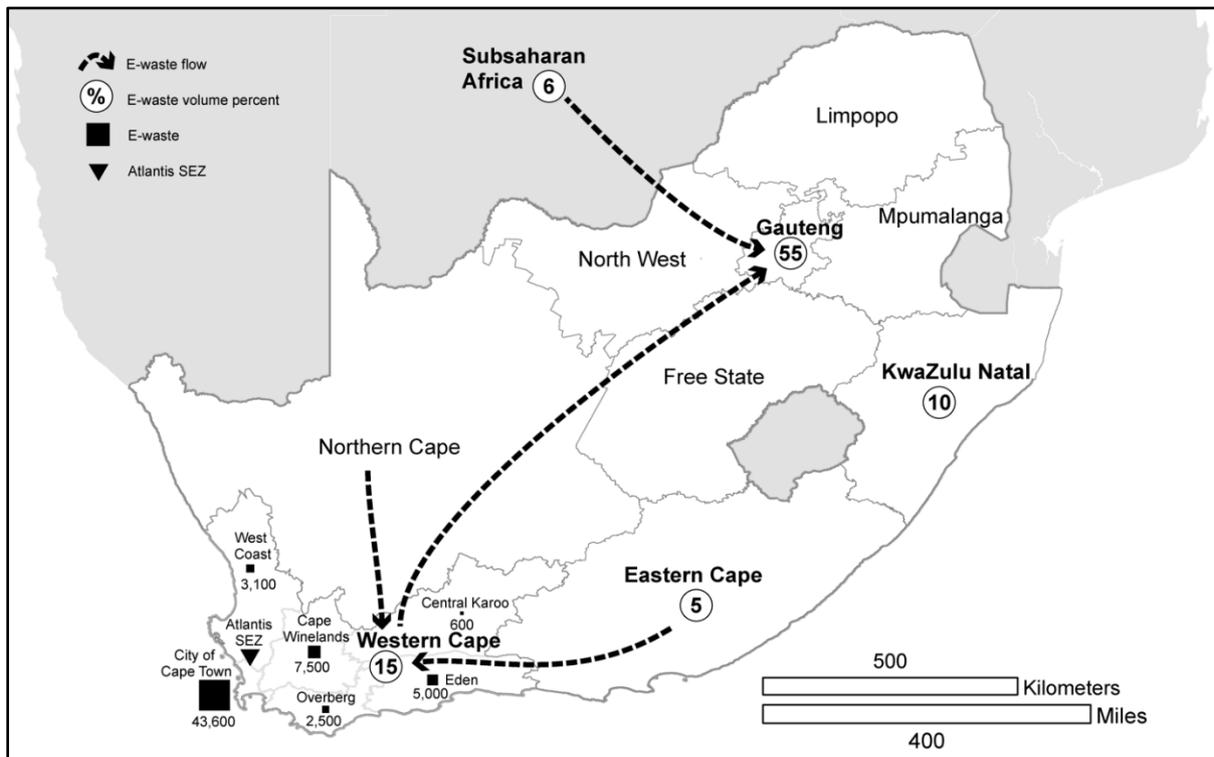


Figure 1: E-waste firms in Cape Town (illustration: Richard Grant).

Interviews with firms were not informative about the volumes of e-waste that companies handled so the secondary literature is more revealing. Business competition was given as the reason that companies did not want to reveal precise figures. GreenCape (2016: 22) notes that the Western Cape Province functions as an important provincial aggregation and sourcing node for approximately 40,000 tons of e-waste. The city of Cape Town generates 70% of provincial e-waste (Figure 2). Most e-waste firms are located in the northeast of the central business district in the airport's vicinity and in the outer suburbs (e.g., Somerset West and Kommetjie). Western Cape Province is the most important secondary site, handling 15% of the country's e-waste (see Figure 3). The province serves as a major aggregation node for Western and Northern Cape Provinces. Much of what is consolidated is either dismantled or refurbished, and/or is sent to Gauteng for preprocessing by two large formal companies: Universal Recycling Company handles 3,000 tons per year and Desco processes 5,000 tons annually (Lydall et al., 2017: 46).

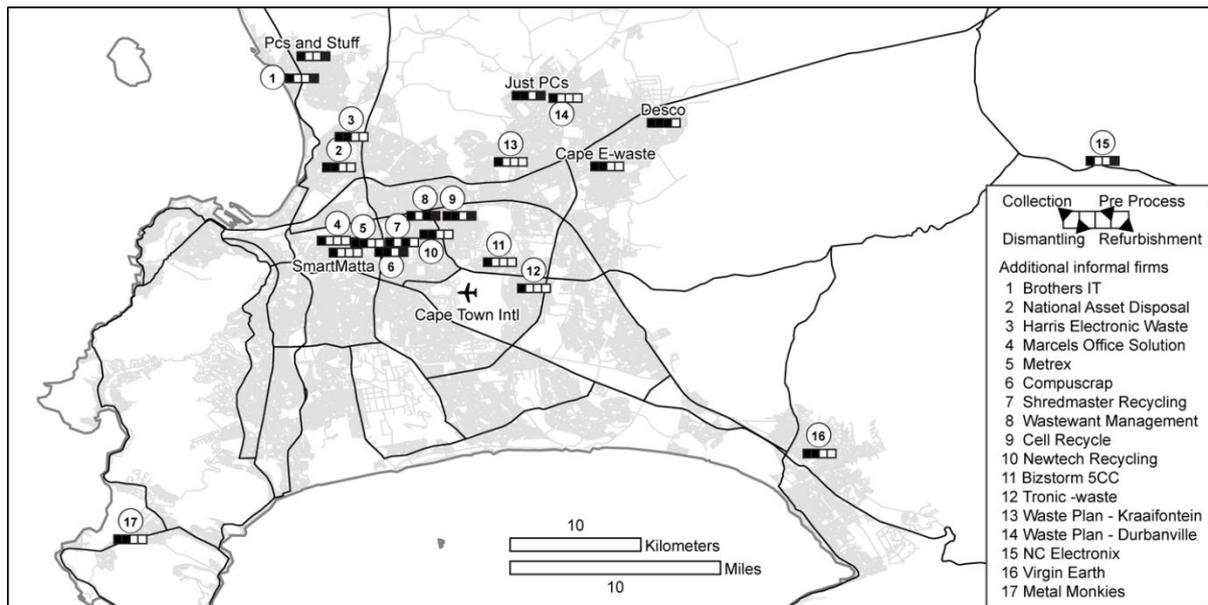


Figure 2: The space-economy of e-waste in Western Province (source: Based on Lydall et al., 2017).

Figure 2 shows that the Southern African region functions as a supplementary source of e-waste, but notice there are no discernible ties between Western Cape Province and Namibia. A Westgro official noted, however, “Cape e-waste firms are exploring extending their geographical reach into the neighboring country in light of the Atlantis designation” (GreenCape, interview, June 2018). Not surprisingly, Gauteng firms are more engaged in cross-border ties due to its proximity to urban centres (e.g., Gaborone and Lusaka) in neighboring countries. Several Cape Town firms export plastic fractions to Asia, but most exporting presently takes place from Johannesburg and Durban (Lydall et al., 2017).

Cape Town’s waste pickers report harassment from authorities, community discrimination, personal attacks, and exploitation by profiteering intermediaries across the e-waste value chain, where cash-strapped pickers report little or no bargaining power (Interviews, Waste Pickers, June 2017). Industry associations (e.g., eWasa, SAEWA) have been active in efforts to mainstream informal enterprises by getting them to register as members and involving them in dialogues about management plans, but, as noted, organizing informal e-waste workers has not yielded major successes to date (Godfrey et al., 2016). Collectors report middlemen brokers with direct contacts in municipalities that enable “their men” priority access to public facilities, and a few interviewees alleged that municipal contracts for valuable e-waste fractions “are handed out to their own gang” (without ever undergoing a legal tender process; Waste Picker, interview, June 2017). In the absence of separation at source in South African cities and towns, informal waste pickers are key to accumulating resources (Godfrey & Oelofse, 2017). Informal waste pickers are very successful in bridging the service component of the South African value chain (collection), paralleling government and private sector buy-back schemes and competing with private firms engaged in collection. Government pilot projects and producers’ take-back programs have not yet yielded much business success in competing with the informal sector in door-to-door collection. In addition, formal enterprises that have to bear environmentally sound treatment costs without economics of scale face major profitability challenges.

There are no reliable figures on the number of e-waste collectors in Cape Town. Nationally, approximately 60,000–90,000 informal recyclers/waste pickers/ reclaimers participate in related activities (Godfrey et al., 2016). Schenck et al. (2016) report that pickers tend to be

exclusively from poor black populations and for the most part are generalists, who collect various wastes (e.g., plastic, metals) and e-waste. ERA contends that 10,000 collectors at some time or another have dealt with e-waste and 2,000 engage e-waste as a core informal business (ERA, 2018: 32). Interviews with informal firms in Cape Town conducted in June 2017 reveal that “small firms each maintain direct contact with approximately 10–20 e-waste pickers engaged in activities around landfills and garden sites” plus “another 5 or so workers/family units that collect e-waste from households and businesses”. According to firms interviewed in Cape Town, approximately 200 informal firms in addition to at least 500 waste pickers focus exclusively on e-waste, while thousands of other waste pickers participate part-time and in opportunistic collection (Interviews waste pickers, June 2017, interview informal firm, June 2018). Interviewees report it is mainly men who collect e-waste, but women are well represented at the Stellenbosch landfill (Interview Stellenbosch waste picker, June 2017).

There are consequences for the uncontrolled ways in which e-waste is amassed. Much of e-waste is channeled into landfills, where a good portion of it remains. Low volumes advance through the e-waste chain, system, undermining the business potential of sorting and preprocessing, compared to other African contexts where large volumes of imports are channeled into specialized e-waste hubs. Informal collectors typically sell their e-waste to small scrap dealers who in turn sell to larger scrap metal businesses such as SA Metal, Reclaim, and Universal Recycling. These fully-compliant businesses are registered as buy-in services of e-waste and other metals and operate according to market prices. However, most smaller firms operate informally, not according to market principles, often leading to financial exploitation (ERA, 2018: 32) with some engaging in risky and environmentally unsound behaviors by cable burning to extract copper and/or smashing formerly untampered e-waste to extract the value fractions. In Cape Town, a few locally known applications exist: waste-to-art projects and bumper and pole manufactures are utilizing processed waste. A good example is the work of South African artist Ralph Borland (2018), who creates interactive digital street art with typical handicraft objects and e-waste.

## **5 Legal and institutional framework and transition to green economy**

The e-waste policy and management apparatus emerging in South Africa has been strongly influenced by the European experience (Godfrey & Oelofse, 2017). South Africa’s first legal definition of waste was provided by its Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989) in the context of managing disposal sites and limiting the negative environmental impacts associated with improperly managed landfills. A 2009 Waste Act obliges manufacturers and South African importers to define an Industrial Waste Management Plan (IWMP) before approval is granted to sell products in the country. DEA has declared that an E-Waste Industry Management Plan (IndWMP) is a necessity.

An initial South African E-Waste Management Plan draft was prepared in 2014 (eWASA & ITA PEG, 2014), but a wave of criticism and subsequent intransigence resulted in the DEA withdrawing its Section 28 notice in August 2016. Broader stakeholder discussions have since proceeded including wider representation from industry (e.g., South African Domestic Waste Appliance Association (SADA), academia, civil society, and international recycling epistemic communities. Two issues remain especially contentious: (A) the functioning of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme, wherein manufacturers and importers of products should bear a significant degree of responsibility for the environmental impacts of

their products throughout the products' life cycle (government administered or industry administered and how responsibility might be shared among players in the chain), and (B) how the informal system might be integrated and which informals might be involved.

Earlier public sector and private sector initiatives (e.g., buy-back schemes led by Fujitsu-Siemens and Nokia and other pilot projects such as secondary metals processing) have been only modestly successful in improving the management of e-waste. The largest vendor in the country, Hewlett Packard (with a 45% market share of PCs and printers), and various partner organizations<sup>3</sup> operated a pilot materials recovery recycling facility (2008–2009) in Maitland, Cape Town. This start-up facility combined low-technology and high labor-intensive material dismantling and recovery for preprocessing e-waste and tested the feasibility of an integrated valued-added local e-waste management system designed to maximize the potential of refurbishment, repair, reuse, recycling, waste-to-art and environmentally responsible disposal as a last resort (Schlupe et al., 2008). While the pilot registered some successes, particularly in job creation, formidable challenges involving transport cost and adequate storage for e-waste were not overcome, and the site was closed once the funding period ended.

IT vendors have supported the national drive to develop an industry-led solution to e-waste, working in collaboration with eWASA. Retailers (e.g., Woolworth, Pick n Pay, Incredible Connection) and municipalities have participated in collection drives, and although 600 drop-off points and buy-back centres are reportedly in operation throughout the country (Lydall et al., 2017: 12), the number of fully working centres in Cape Town is lower than expected (SAEWA Director, interview, June 2018). Lack of standardization of points/centres (they range from 120-liter wheelie bins to large industrial containers to open spaces) has not helped in building community awareness about this recycling infrastructure. Interviewees report considerable theft of materials, particularly valuable e-waste fractions, from unprotected facilities lacking surveillance (informal firm, interview, June 2018).

The elevation of waste as a priority area in policy is recent. Operation Phakisa (meaning “hurry up” in the Sesotho language) is a novel South African planning intervention approach since 2014 designed to bring stakeholders from government, public/private sectors, academia, and civil society together to consult and formulate solutions to this critical policy area so that they can be delivered in a prioritized, focused effort within five years. Motivated by a realization that “waste management was not sufficiently developed, leading to both missed opportunities and unnecessary environmental impact,” a chemical and waste Phakisa conference was convened July 27–August 25, 2017 (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017).

Although South Africa has enacted legislation (e.g., National Environmental Management Waste Act 59 from 2008 and the National Environmental Management Act from 1998) to provide basic guidelines on the management of e-waste, adherence is voluntary and unmonitored. Given this considerable gap, the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa, issued a section 28 notice in 2017, calling on industries to submit waste management plans. This notice also indicated that manufacturers will be responsible for managing a product from the beginning to the end of products' life.

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<sup>3</sup> Swiss organizations such as Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research, the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, and local Cape Town partners such as EnviroSense and Recycling IT.

## 6 Discussion: A green channel in E-waste?

Western Cape Government's Green Is Smart Roadmap aims for the province to be a pioneer and an early developer of green technologies and diversified green economic activities. This strategy promotes more investment in green-tech firms and fosters deeper linkages among green economy entities. Remarkably "South Africa is the world's fastest growing green economy," with the Western Cape "home to 60% of the country's green project developers and two thirds of South Africa's green manufacturing" (FTWonline, 2017: 1). At the same time, it is by no means evident if greening the economy will incorporate e-waste and extend its focus beyond energy, transport, human settlements and agriculture and/or transition toward a fully inclusive green economy.

GreenCape and Westrgo officials contend that a green channel can be created that embraces the entire Western Cape e-waste ecosystem. Sustainable recycling operations will contribute to reducing carbon emissions by mining e-waste to recover valuable metals, thereby using only a fraction of the energy required to mine virgin ores in nature (Grant & Oteng-Ababio, 2016). The pioneering Atlantis SEZ offers the potential to become a catalyst for green tech. DTI views the development of the sustainable management of secondary metals and better local utilization of recovered materials as a potential area for green growth that can be embedded in the Atlantis SEZ (DTI, 2017). Efforts are underway to entice a secondary metals facility to locate in the Atlantis SEZ to link to small collectors and to the Atlantis metal foundry. Western Cape Province aims to benefit from offering value-added services and regional solutions for various aspects of e-waste (repair, refurbishment, processing) and from serving as an exporter to the rest of Africa. Western Cape could also benefit from regional cross-border shipments of e-waste that comply with international and national regulations to increase volumes for local recycling solutions, but it remains to be seen if such an initiative will materialize. It may depend on the successes of embedding green tech as a national development reality. Interviews with policy officials were informative about a consensus to manage e-waste in the context of green growth potential. Major differences of opinion are evident between government and SAEWA about the necessity of redistributive measures to reduce inequality and poverty and whether an inclusive green channel can also contribute to economic growth.

Critical policy questions involving the proactive integration of informal operators are unresolved. Both management plans under consideration call for integrating and supporting them, and areas of agreement exist between the two management plans: (1) incentivize informal collectors to sell upstream by offering prices higher than if they only sold valuable fractions; (2) establish cooperatives among informals; (3) establish dedicated transporters and vehicles for both the long and the short haul of e-waste to buy-back centres/cooperative collection points; and (4) set up an e-waste call centre to provide information facilitating new enterprise development and to offer public service information about e-waste. However, a key difference is whether the integration of the informal sector is facilitated by the government (SAWEEDA, 2018) or via a nonprofit company that is responsible for and/or contracts a private sector provider (ERA, 2018). In the former, the government supports the integration of the informal sector through the establishment of SMEs and through training conducted by universities and technical colleges (SAWEEDA 2018: 40–42). In the latter, the new ERA entity is the facilitator of informal integration and provides training and equipment support to entities from the informal economy with fixed addresses and proper accreditations (ERA, 2018: 32–36).

A multipronged approach seems preferable, but important decisions will have to be made as to who will regulate informal operators: government, a nonprofit entity, municipalities, the informal operators themselves, or various domains in combination. Smit and Musango (2015a: 9) made valuable suggestions regarding support mechanisms for connecting a green formal economy and a green informal economy (e.g., skills transfers, infrastructure support, incubation support, partnerships in value chain development, employment of best practices, and assurance that informal suppliers adhere to decent work criteria). The approach to engage informal firms may depend on whether these entities are viewed from discourse of resilience and innovation or from a diverging perspective of survivalism and nuisance and/or from vectors of value to formal economy or value to society (Millington & Lawhon, 2018). An approach that would address all of these matters is not being discussed.

There are lessons from other developing countries in facilitating a green channel for informal economy operators in waste (Lines et al., 2016). Lines et al. (2016) underscore that the best functioning systems are those embracing an open strategy by including both informal recycling and existing formal value chain enterprises. Hybrid recycling e-waste models in India and China have built upon the public benefits of informal activities, retained and enhanced livelihoods, and reduced major negative aspects of the informal economy by enhancing environmental protection and health standards (Lines et al., 2016). A supportive rather than a direct competition approach has shown to be more beneficial as formal firms cannot operate a collection system as efficiently and affordably, and it also lessens possible sabotage of new formal collection and sorting arrangements (Godfrey et al., 2016). However, the process of making informal operators both legible and official and of creating a hybrid e-waste management system will require informals to be incentivized to undertake lengthy, necessary consultations (no work entails a loss of revenue for pickers; Godfrey et al., 2016).

Several policy initiatives can help shape a more inclusive green channel. Identity cards and a jacket and uniform with a “green force” insignia was a constructive step in a Bengaluru (India) pilot that improved security, proof of legal activities, protection against harassment and bribe-seeking behavior; facilitated business development; and enhanced respect of green entrepreneurs by improving recognition and elevated personal pride in work. In India and the Philippines, waste collectors and dismantlers established a cooperative agency that provided aggregation and auction services whose success led to them securing access to finance and credit as well as profit-sharing to the extent that they were competitive with formal firms (Lines et al., 2016). Collectors’ deepening alliances with NGOs can also improve their bargaining power when approaching government, companies, and households for waste, and NGO collaboration and mentorship can facilitate access to small grants for capacity building, training, and collection equipment purchase (Lines et al., 2016). Lessons from China also indicate that policy supports are needed for the informal sector to improve recycling rates, working conditions, and efficiency of informal players (Chi et al., 2011).

Manual processing can also be advanced to improve recycling rates. Chi et al. (2011) note that shredding technology, while efficient, cannot separate some of the components of electronic products, and it produces recyclates of varying quality. Hand sorting by humans is probably still most efficient for the separation of components, and well-trained and managed human sorters produce better recyclates for optimal material recovery. Low-cost improvements can be implemented, such as upgrading apparatus (e.g., density separation tables for shredded cables, shredders for copper-plated boards, and sorting machinery for plastics and copper mixtures (Chi et al., 2011), and allocating assigned handling and storage space thereby improving safety and working environments and upgrading outputs. Such

initiatives may go some way towards improving operating spaces so pressure is lessened to dispose of/or sell e-waste quickly fearing risks of it been stolen or operations being halted due to illegality so that more green market mechanisms can function. Fixed establishments will also go some way in announcing that lower order activities are also integral components of green e-waste infrastructure.

## 7 Conclusions

Cape Town has an emerging e-waste economy, linking many under-the-radar informals with formal firms that perform most of the aggregation and processing. Disorganization, personal and business ties, lack of visibility, and weak management are features of Western Cape Province's e-waste space economy. The drive to implement a formal management system, collect data, improve the knowledge base, build capacity, harness green tech, and promote South Africa's role in global and regional e-waste value chains is a new transition pathway but a key question is whether it can evolve into a more transformational development intervention premised on social dialogue, inclusion and upliftment of the poor.

Greening e-waste requires a long-term, patient, and well-supported (in terms of finance, scientific knowledge, and internal/external encouragement and the development of green skills (core jobs and jobs with sustainability-orientated changes in workplaces and communities) strategy and full collaboration among stakeholders (e.g., government, scientific community, chemical manufactures, e-product designers, e-waste industry organizations, NGOs retailers, formal e-recycler firms, an array of informal actors [collectors, dismantlers and recyclers, scrap dealers, and part-time workers], and consumers). For a green channel to work connections between the green economy and the informal economy will have to be improved, enabled and better supported (Smit and Musango, 2015a; 2015b). Perhaps, a persuasive case can be made that greening e-waste will have localized environmental benefits and broader socio-economic transformational advances. In South Africa, broad lines of agreement have coalesced about incorporating the informal sector and promoting its participation as respectable and recognized members of the e-waste management landscape. As a senior Westgro official put it, "all stakeholders realize that the green e-waste economy has to be a black economy also" (i.e., positively incorporate poor black informal workers; Interview, June 2018).

Formal management of e-waste will reconfigure chain dynamics, and the various management plans favor the development of technological solutions for upgrading at the processing stage but fail to acknowledge that there will likely be mixed outcomes in applying technological solutions that will include some informals but exclude others. It is far from clear how many and which informals will be incorporated (or excluded from the new systems). Assuming the sector could access all e-waste in Western Cape, potentially 1,500–1,800 new jobs (assuming 35–50 jobs per 1,000 tons of e-waste) would be created (GreenCape, 2018: 40).

No doubt, green employment, better work opportunities, improved measurable standards (e.g., wages and conditions) and human and civil rights (freedom of nondiscrimination and increased bargaining power via cooperatives) are highly desirable. Low-skilled casual workers and unorganized workers, however, face exclusion pressures. The heterogeneity among informal firms is not adequately addressed: different policy supports and training programs will be required for different informal firms. The literature points to mixed

successes of business training programs in the informal economy (Benjamin, et al., 2014) but also highlights useful initiatives: awareness-raising programs related to all aspects of e-waste; a sound spatial distribution of recycling facilities to avoid sites becoming too dense or too scattered; ample storage space and optimal layouts of new facilities; and establishment of information platforms to foster better communication and familiarity among all stakeholders. Moreover, the e-waste management system also needs to give more consideration to second-hand electronics and appliances and to establish standards via a certification system. Developing Atlantis so that it can operate as a green-tech park where SMEs and larger formal firms can co-locate is a new development for Africa, and similar efforts have already proven to be highly successful in several Chinese cities, for example, Zhangzhou (Chi et al., 2011).

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## Emergent planning for South Africa's blue economy: Evidence from coastal and marine tourism

### Abstract

Ocean-based industries are in focus in terms of expanding debates and planning around the blue economy. Against this backdrop the objective in this paper is to examine contemporary directions in South Africa concerning planning for the blue economy as a whole and more specifically for the sector of coastal and marine tourism. Using documentary analysis of official planning and strategic documents, South Africa's blue economy strategy, which is titled 'Operation Phakisa', is unpacked and critiqued. Attention shifts to examine current directions and challenges of unfolding planning for the expanded development of coastal and marine tourism in South Africa. It is shown that uneven spatial development characterises the existing coastal tourism economy. Arguably, tourism planning is linked to Operation Phakisa which is being challenged for a number of shortcomings, most importantly for prioritising investment attraction and economic growth stimulation over issues about the conservation of maritime resources.

**Keywords:** blue economy, special planning, Operation Phakisa, coastal and marine tourism, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

Ocean-based industries are acknowledged as making up a substantial contribution of world economic output and employment (Orams & Lück, 2014; Dwyer, 2018). The concept of the oceans economy is defined by Walker (2018: 6) as that "portion of the economy that relies on the ocean as an input to the production process or which by virtue of geographic location, takes place on or under the ocean". Among several scholars Dwyer (2018) identifies the global significance of the ocean economy as the sum of the economic activities of ocean-based industries, and the assets, goods and services of marine ecosystems. Essentially, this ocean economy is a cluster of interconnected industries that incorporates a mix of established as well as newer activities. These include offshore oil gas exploration, shipping, shipbuilding and marine equipment, fisheries and fish processing, aquaculture, as well as coastal and marine tourism. Internationally, there is an emerging consensus that attempts to exploit ocean resources must be counterbalanced by the protection of vulnerable ecosystems and against harmful, unprincipled or illegal practices. This principle is embedded globally in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 which commits member states to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and maritime resources for purposes of development. Overall, this thinking about the sustainable economic use of ocean resources coalesces around the term 'blue economy' (Dwyer, 2017; Walker, 2018). Although little clear agreement exists about the definition of the blue economy, in policy terms it is argued that "at the core of the concept is the awareness of maritime resources and their capacity to contribute to poverty reduction, human welfare and economic opportunity" (Doyle, 2018: 1). Furthermore, it is stressed that ocean resources always should be used in a sustainable, stable and inclusive manner (Masie & Bond, 2018).

Blue economy debates and planning are of special significance in the global South. In Africa as well as the broader arc of countries adjoining the Indian Ocean there is considerable contemporary policy interest in the development of the oceans economy. Africa has 38 coastal and island states, 13 million sq. km of collective economic zones and a 47 000 km coastline which offers considerable potential for individual African countries, and for the continent as a whole, to develop those sectors typically associated with the blue economy (Engel, 2018). Benkenstein (2015: 2) records that, despite a wealth of potential assets, until recently the continent's institutions and policy-makers have suffered a "high degree of *sea-blindness*". During 2014, however, the African Union in recognition of the ocean's economic potential, extensive coastline and opportunities surrounding maritime resources, endorsed the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy which is a long-term vision for the development of Africa's blue economy (Engel, 2018; Rustomjee, 2018).

A major awakening to the blue economy also has occurred across the 21 states of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA; Colgan, 2017; Attri, 2017, 2018). Blue economy debates are especially relevant for this region as in geopolitical terms the Indian Ocean Rim shifts away "from being identified as the *Ocean of the South* to the *Ocean of the Centre*, and the *Ocean of the Future*" (Doyle, 2018: 1). The Jakarta Declaration on the Blue Economy, issued in May 2017, provides a total of 26 recommendations as well as principles for developing and applying blue economy approaches to sustainable development and enhancement of socio-economic benefits, particularly for coastal communities in the IORA region (Indian Ocean Rim Association, 2017). However, even prior to the Jakarta declaration it must be acknowledged that several IORA states engaged in developing aspects of the blue economy, albeit with varying levels of success and commitment (Llewellyn et al., 2016; Doyle, 2018). What is new is the greater policy acknowledgement of the importance and potential of the blue economy among certain IORA states (Rahman, 2015; Hussain et al., 2018). Illustratively, Mitra (2017: 1) records that the blue economy "presents a unique and unprecedented opportunity for India to reframe its approach in managing the ocean".

Although offshore oil and gas exploitation is the leading sector of ocean industries (contributing one-third of total value-added), the second most significant sector is that of the economy of coastal and marine tourism (Dwyer, 2018). The definition of coastal tourism includes the full array of tourism leisure and recreational activities that occur in coastal zones and offshore coastal waters; marine tourism is closely related to coastal tourism but includes also such activities in the marine environment as scuba diving, fishing, the observing of marine mammals and so on (Hall, 2001; Orams, 2002). As a whole coastal and marine tourism is viewed as "one of the fastest growing areas of contemporary tourism" (Hall, 2001: 601). For blue economy debates coastal and marine tourism represents a critical 'new frontier'. Now, tourism is identified as part of the diversification strategies of several African states as well as source of valuable income for coastal communities (Leijzer & Denman, 2014; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2018).

Until as late as the 1990s Miller (1993: 182-183) argues that tourism "in the ocean and shoreline settings received far less attention than, for example, problems linked to coastal zone management, living marine resources, offshore oil and gas exploration, ocean shipping, port management and wetlands restoration". As an academic focus of enquiry Orams and Lück (2014) confirm that major research initiatives about coastal and marine tourism began around 1990. Currently, international scholarship on policy and planning for coastal and marine tourism is rising in significance (Hall, 2001; Orams, 2002; Gössling et al., 2018). Among highly influential scholarly contributions must be noted those on opportunities and

problems in coastal tourism zone management (Miller & Auyong, 1991; Lee, 2010), the imperative for integrated approaches to coastal and marine management (Wonga, 1998; Hall, 2001), a cluster of studies on policy implications of global climate change for coastal tourism (Moreno & Amelung, 2009; Moreno & Becken, 2009), effective governance systems (Caffyn & Jobbins, 2003; Leijzer & Denman, 2014), marine spatial planning (Papageorgiou, 2016) and, sustainability issues (Garrod & Gössling, 2008; Gössling et al. 2018). The limited existing scholarship around coastal and marine tourism in South Africa points to both opportunities for its expansion for job creation as well as addressing poverty but also to several critical structural challenges around coastal area management, governance, sustainability and the ramifications of climate change (Glavovic, 2006; Glavovic & Boonzeier, 2007; Myles, 2013; Van Wyk, 2015; University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017; Giddy & Rogerson, 2018; Ndlovu et al., 2018; Pandey & Rogerson, 2018; Potgieter, 2018).

It is against a backdrop of the international importance of enhanced planning for coastal and marine tourism that the objective in this article is to analyse contemporary directions in South Africa concerning planning for blue economy as a whole and specifically for the sector of coastal and marine tourism. Arguably, Rustomjee (2018) isolates South Africa – along with Mauritius and Seychelles – as the leading countries in Africa in terms of policy development and implementation of national blue economy strategies. The following discussion reviews unfolding policy developments on these issues in three further sections of material. First, using documentary analysis of official planning and strategic documents, an overview is given of South Africa's blue economy strategy which is entitled 'Operation Phakisa' (meaning 'hurry up' in Sesotho dialect). The next section highlights aspects of an emerging trenchant critique of Operation Phakisa's methodology, its underpinnings and current planning directions. The final section narrows to focus on coastal and marine tourism and dissects current directions and challenges of planning for its expanded development in South Africa by analysing national tourism planning documents. In addition, the results are presented concerning analysis of the spatial distribution of coastal tourism. The research uses local level data extracted from the IHS Global Insight data base which provides information disaggregated at the local and district municipal scale for coastal destination total trips, purpose and origin of trip as well as estimates of total spend (Rogerson, 2018).

## **2 The blue economy and Operation Phakisa**

South Africa has a long maritime history, a coastline of 3924 kilometres and with access to an Exclusive Economic Zone of oceans that covers 1.54 million square kilometres (Potgieter, 2018). It is stated that the Operation Phakisa initiative (with its focus on the oceans economy) originated from a state visit made by former President Zuma to Malaysia in August 2013 (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a, 2017). During that visit the President was introduced to the so-termed 'Big Fast Results' methodology which had been applied in Malaysia in a highly effective manner to achieve significant government and economic transformation within a short period of time in the areas of poverty, crime and unemployment. Engel et al. (2018) consider that the Big Fast Methodology evolved as a response to the new public management approach developed in the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries during the 1980s. With the assistance of the Malaysian government the Big Fast Results methodology was adapted to South Africa and restyled as Operation Phakisa (Akhilwanya, 2015).

National government in South Africa stresses that this is a results-driven methodology which draws together key stakeholders from the public and private sector, universities and civil society organisations in collaborative sessions called ‘laboratories’ in order to design strategic interventions for particular sectors (Akhawaya, 2015). In terms of economic development for South Africa the critical application of this methodology has been to the country’s ocean economy. This focus on the ocean economy is viewed more broadly as part of and closely aligned to South Africa’s 2030 National Development Plan (Rustomjee, 2018; Satgar, 2018). The actual planning phase of Operation Phakisa for the oceans economy took place in mid-2014 (Invest South Africa, 2016: 2). On 15 October 2014 the launch of this initiative took place (Republic of South Africa, 2015a). According to October (2015) over a period of 6 weeks a variety of stakeholders from the public and private sectors had gathered together to develop, plan and fast-track a suite of integrated programmes in order to unlock delivery in the country’s oceans or blue economy.

The potential of tapping the oceans economy as a basis for economic and social development is evidenced by the observation that South Africa has more ocean space, including its exclusive economic zone, than land area (Republic of South Africa, 2014; Van Wyk, 2015). An audit of the socioeconomic value of goods and services provided by the ocean recently produced by the World Wild Life Fund, South Africa (2016) underscores the direct potential for asset development for fishing, aquaculture, coastal development, marine mining, oil and gas as well as tourism. In his 2016 State of the Nation address (former) President Zuma identified the significance of the oceans economy for boosting economic growth and job creation as well as for addressing the triple scourges of poverty, inequality and unemployment (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a). As South Africa is characterised by major imbalances in terms of spatial development Operation Phakisa is viewed as an initiative which will also impact spatial development imbalances as it will be used as a lever to assist development of rural economies through a number of planned interventions (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016b).

Currently, the oceans economy initiative is in implementation phase with government claiming that it has unlocked investments amounting to US \$ 1.1 billion and as a result 4500 jobs have been created (Invest South Africa, 2016: 2). Long term projections are highly optimistic that by 2033 South Africa’s oceans economy could contribute up to R177 billion to GDP with the creation of one million jobs. The estimate of 1 million jobs should be compared to approximations of 316 000 jobs existing in 2010. In the immediate short term, once again much is expected from the oceans economy initiative; by 2019 it is projected that the oceans economy initiative will expand the national GDP by R20 million and with the accompanying establishment of 22 000 direct new jobs (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a).

At the core of these optimistic economic projections is the ongoing implementation of Operation Phakisa to unlock the economic potential of the country’s ocean economy through six ‘focus areas’ in which at least 47 detailed initiatives are at various stages of roll out (Republic of South Africa, 2015a; Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a; Republic of South Africa, 2016a, 2016b). The six ‘focus’ or ‘priority growth areas’ are to be supported by two enablers, namely (1) expansion of skills and capacity building under the responsibility of South Africa’s International Maritime Institute and (2) research, technology and innovation with the country’s Department of Science and Technology as the key driver (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a; Republic of South Africa, 2016a). The priority growth areas are as follows: (1) marine transport and manufacturing, (2) offshore oil and gas exploration,

(3) aquaculture, (4) marine protection services and governance, (5) small harbours, and (6) coastal and marine tourism. In terms of the evolution of planning for Operation Phakisa the four initial focus areas were maritime transport and manufacturing; offshore oil and gas exploration, aquaculture; and, marine protection services and governance. Small harbours as well as coastal and marine tourism were later additions (Potgieter, 2018). A brief description of each of these six focus areas of South Africa's blue economy initiative now follows.

The marine transport and manufacturing focus essentially is about maximising potential around South Africa's nine major ports and enhancing port infrastructure to unlock potential opportunities around the growth of cargo handling, sea and coastal shipping and supporting transport/logistic activities including storage and warehousing (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a). Against this backdrop, a variety of initiatives are taking place including new port infrastructure (at Saldanha Bay, Richards Bay and East London) and improvement of ship repair facilities and dock expansion which is occurring at several commercial ports (Republic of South Africa, 2016a). In terms of manufacturing there is much attention to support for growing a competitive ship and boat building sector both in respect of commercial and military customers. Further manufacturing possibilities may arise around marine and subsea engineering and fabrication (Invest South Africa, 2016: 13). Strengthening of local supply chains allied to these maritime manufacturing activities is an essential additional planning focus (Invest South Africa, 2016).

Offshore oil and gas exploration is viewed as a second priority growth area in the Oceans Economy initiative. Much uncertainty surrounds the extent of South Africa's possible resources with one government document citing a potential for around 9 billion barrels of oil and around 60 tcf. of offshore gas (Republic of South Africa, 2016a: 20). Overall the goal is "to create an environment that promotes exploration while simultaneously maximising the benefits for South Africa" (Republic of South Africa, 2016a: 20). The shaping of an appropriate enabling environment for exploration of oil and gas wells is projected both to increase the number of oil wells drilled while simultaneously maximising the country's value capture (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a). Among an array of initiatives – ongoing and planned – are the development of a phased pipeline network, issuance of exploration licences, the launch of the South African Marine Research and Exploration Forum and skills development. The planning and projects around oil and gas exploration is projected to result in an expansion of 130 000 jobs and add \$2.2 billion to annual GDP as well as reducing South Africa's dependence on oil and gas imports (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a).

A third focus area in the Oceans Economy is the further development of aquaculture which is currently viewed as a young undeveloped industry with a low scale of production (Republic of South Africa, 2016a: 32). The best estimates are that aquaculture contributes only 0.8% of total fish and fish products and has approximately 2800 jobs with 50 percent of aquaculture farms located in Western Cape province. Promotion of the aquaculture sector is seen as having several advantages, *inter alia*, satisfying local demand for fish products, contributing to food and nutritional security, creating sustainable job opportunities, offering opportunities for small, medium and micro-enterprise development as well as stimulating rural local economic development options. Nine new aquaculture projects have been launched with others in a project pipeline. Overall, according to the Department of Environmental Affairs (2016a) these initiatives are geared to increase the value contribution of all segments across the aquaculture value chain. The specific focus is upon high value fast growing species,

labour intensive sectors, and supporting a transformation agenda to include the involvement of Black entrepreneurs.

Marine protection services and governance is a critical focus area in respect of the long-term sustainability of blue economy initiatives in South Africa. The challenge of developing effective governance is starkly clear from the fact that South Africa is responsible for managing an oceans space greater than the country's land territory and should its extended continental shelf claim be successful there would occur a doubling in size of South Africa's ocean geography (Van Wyk, 2015). Issues around developing an institutional framework to manage multiple users (such as mining, shipping, fisheries etc) of the same ocean space, ocean protection, marine spatial planning and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas are vital for a sustainable ocean economy (Walker, 2018). The immediate goal is to develop an incremental and integrated approach to the planning, monitoring and execution of ocean governance and its enforcement in future (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a).

Improvement in infrastructure and economic opportunities that surround South Africa's network of small harbours is a fifth focus area and seen as critical support for rural development and small town revitalisation which are essential to address spatially uneven development in the country (Rogerson and Nel, 2016). The essential task is to "energise the growth of small harbours towards an inclusive small harbours-focused ocean economy" (Republic of South Africa, 2016a: 71). This vision is founded on the acknowledgement of clear opportunities for leveraging small harbours in order to unlock local economic and social potential (Republic of South Africa, 2015b). Among new opportunities opened up by the redevelopment and improvement of small harbours are those linked to fishing and the empowerment of coastal communities for enterprise development (Republic of South Africa, 2016a: 77). In addition to existing small harbours the initiative includes also the proclamation and development of three new small harbours variously in Northern Cape (at Boegoebaai), KwaZulu-Natal (at Hibberdene) and Eastern Cape (at Port St Johns) provinces. From estimates provided by the Department of Environmental Affairs (2016a) the cluster of small harbour improvement initiatives potentially could create 12 000 new jobs and contribute R6 billion to GGP by 2019.

The final – and currently least advanced set of initiatives – relate to expanding opportunities around marine and coastal tourism in South Africa. It is significant that the country's tourism policy historically has accorded little attention to coastal and marine tourism. This oversight has prompted certain observers to speak of coastal and marine tourism development as a missed opportunity for the tourism economy (Saayman, 2014). Despite having the assets of a number of spectacular beaches South Africa has not developed the type of mass sea-sun-and sand international tourism resorts that is represented for example by Cancun in Mexico or Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. The major current development benefits of coastal and marine tourism accrue to the leading city tourism destinations of Cape Town and Durban with well-developed infrastructures (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017). It is argued that other coastal areas have not benefited as much because of lack of basic and tourism infrastructure. The emerging focus area around coastal and marine tourism is geared to improvement of coastal infrastructure for tourism and also to spread the benefits away from the existing traditional ('business as usual') coastal tourism hubs (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016a). As a whole it is considered that South Africa's long coast and pristine coastal environments offer a number of untapped opportunities for growing the tourism base around coastal and marine tourism and thereby boosting local economic development opportunities. For this to take-off

in a meaningful way it is stressed that what is needed is the innovation of the product base which can be energised by infrastructural improvements.

### 3 Operation Phakisa under critique

Five years after its conceptualisation a roll out of implementation initiatives is in progress around South Africa's blue economy initiative for maximising benefits from the country's ocean resources. Progress is more advanced in some focus areas, such as marine transport, than in others, most notably coastal and marine tourism. Arguably, because of the recent nature of these initiatives a case might be made that the jury be still out on the long-term prospects for Operation Phakisa and South African blue economy planning. This said, a number of critical voices already have been raised about the planning approach as well as the current directions pursued by Operation Phakisa. These concerns are summarised here.

Engel (2018) considers that Operation Phakisa constitutes a method for planning developmental state interventions as well as a set of concrete activities targeted to boost the country's economy. Emphasis is upon planning the ocean space that has been styled, perhaps euphemistically, as South Africa's 'tenth province' (Van Wyk, 2015). Several aspects of the planning methodology used in Operation Phakisa have attracted criticism. The actual planning process involved more than 650 officials and so-termed experts who brainstormed on the commodification of South Africa's ocean resources Masie and Bond (2018: 320) reflect that the near two-month planning process "was a helter-skelter, non-consultative, elite navel-gazing and ultimately unrealistic exercise, devoid of awareness of the capitalist crisis bearing down on South Africa's two oceans". Potgieter (2018: 51) points out the focus is primarily around economic gain rather than the ocean's health. Indeed, Masie and Bond (2018) maintain that the gathered cohort of officials and 'experts' overlooked or were blind to the broader crises evident in the political economy of oil and shipping which reduce the prospects of major opportunities for South Africa.

From a political economy perspective Satgar (2018: 24) sees the planning of the blue or ocean economy in South Africa as a scramble for "a new spatial fix for capital accumulation" which is taking place in a wider context of growing 'resource nationalism'. The envisaged big and fast results from Operation Phakisa are underpinned by a methodology "that evangelises growth and foreign direct investment" (Satgar, 2018: 24). At the heart of planning is "the commodification of ecology" and the extension of planning around what Fine and Rustomjee (1996) call South Africa's 'mineral-energy complex'. This extension is now to include offshore extraction of oil, gas and other minerals and is allied to massive port infrastructure investments which are designed "to boost the outward movement of commodities, like coal and increase massive imports" (Satgar, 2018: 25). In scathing commentary, Satgar (2018: 25) asserts that this "drumbeat, fastened to a fast-track methodology, has undermined the efficiency of environmental impact assessments, prompted deregulatory thrusts in key legislation and failed to appreciate serious (environmental) risks". Arguably, the numerous environmental costs of South Africa's blue economy strategy have been either downplayed or simply ignored. Moreover, as Masie and Bond (2018) point out, the project's "overhyped GDP-led evaluation of the ocean's potential did not sufficiently balance short-term economic and political gains – which are mainly grabbed by multinationals corporations (in oil and shipping), political oligarchs and well-connected entrepreneurs – against Phakisa's massive eco-social destruction".

Certain negative issues already have already emerged and must be noted. It is observed that some of the major growth and job creation roadblocks have not so far been unblocked. In some cases engagement of stakeholders has lost momentum, effectiveness of institutional arrangements is uneven and, as a consequence, “outcomes are still far away from 2033 aspirations” (Republic of South Africa, 2015a: 5). Overall, in critical vein, Masie and Bond (2018:315) speak of the big fast methodology as characterised “in reality, by *small, slow failures* in planning and implementation, with miserable overall outcomes for the economy, polity, society and ecology”. In particular, they write from a political economy perspective that whilst the scale of planned projects are impressive “as is the case with so many of South Africa’s hastily assembled mega projects, the underlying imperatives are bedevilled by capital’s overaccumulation crisis and accelerating climate change” (Masie & Bond, 2018: 325).

#### 4 New directions for planning coastal and marine tourism

Coastal tourism is an established phenomenon in South Africa with a history that dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bickford-Smith, 2009). Although the city of Cape Town was an early focus for international tourists arriving by sea voyage from Europe, the major expansion of coastal tourism in South Africa was linked to the growth of domestic tourism (particularly from the 1930s) which itself was prompted by improved rail infrastructure linkages and the subsequent growth of automobilities (Rogerson, 2015).

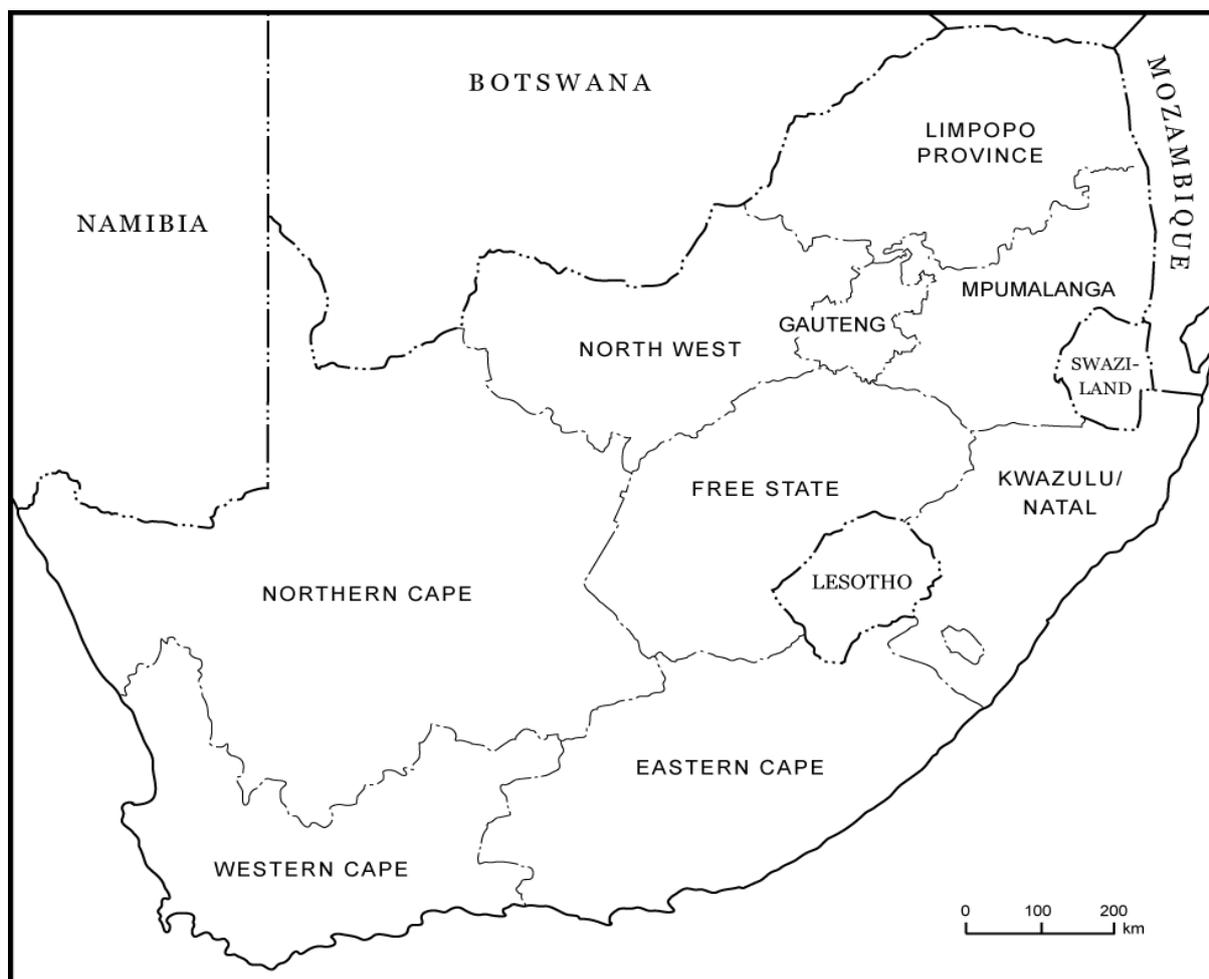


Figure 1: South Africa’s nine provinces (illustration: Christian M. Rogerson and Jayne M. Rogerson).

As a result of data inadequacies the contemporary monetary contribution of coastal and marine tourism to South Africa's tourism economy is difficult to calculate (Bob et al., 2018). Nevertheless, a good estimate of the size of coastal tourism across South Africa's four coastal provinces of Northern Cape, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (Figure 1) can be obtained from analysis of the municipal level data which can be extracted from the IHS Global Insight data base. In this analysis tourism data was aggregated for the four South African coastal metropolitan municipalities (Cape Town, eThekweni, Nelson Mandela Bay, Buffalo City) as well as 11 coastal district municipalities.

The key findings of the analysis for 2015 are as follows. First, that coastal destinations account for 28% total tourism trips, 33% bednights but 40% total tourism spend in South Africa. Overall, coastal destinations are dominated substantially by domestic as opposed to international tourists; in 2015 estimated domestic tourism trips were 9.8 million as compared to 1.6 million for international trips. In terms of geography there is a major spatial unevenness in the development of the coastal tourism economy. Contemporary South Africa's coastal tourism economy is dominated by the two metropolitan areas of Cape Town in Western Cape province and eThekweni (includes Durban) in KwaZulu-Natal. These two centres are major urban tourism destinations which together account for 75 percent of total tourism spend in coastal areas of South Africa in 2015. (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017). Cape Town is the leading centre nationally and accounts for 41% total spend in coastal destinations with eThekweni (Durban) a further 24% of total spend. Other notable coastal destinations as defined by total tourism spend are the district municipalities of Garden Route (8.0%) in Eastern Cape, Overberg (4.9%) in Western Cape, and Ugu (4.4%) in KwaZulu-Natal province. These five leading destinations together account for 82% total spend recorded for South African coastal areas during 2015, a finding which shows the geographically uneven character of the tourism space economy. South Africa's fourth coastal province - Northern Cape (Figure 1) - attracts few coastal visitors as its major tourism products are desert scenery, wildlife based attractions and the heritage products of Kimberley, all inland rather than coastal attractions.

Overall, of total trips to South African coastal destinations the major purpose of travel is recorded for visiting friends and relatives (VFR, estimated total 6.4 million) followed by leisure (2.9 million), business (1.3 million) and 'other' (0.3 million). In all categories of tourism Cape Town and eThekweni are the leading destinations; for VFR eThekweni is clearly most important (eThekweni 2.0 million, Cape Town 0.9 million); for leisure and business the most significant is marginally Cape Town (for leisure Cape Town 0.776 million trips vs eThekweni 0.751 million and for business Cape Town 0.4 million trips vs eThekweni 0.3 million). This said, in terms of all tourism trips eThekweni is the leading coastal destination accounting for 27.0% as opposed to 15.6% for Cape Town. Finally, the analysis of the IHS Global Insight data indicates that share of coastal tourism in total tourism in South Africa appears to be in relative decline mainly because of the post-2010 demise/stagnation in tourism and especially of the downturn in domestic tourism because of poor economic conditions (Rogerson, 2015). This downturn of tourism in coastal areas of South Africa reinforces the relevance of interrogating current planning initiatives which were developed post-2015 by South Africa's national Department of Tourism after the sectors of coastal and marine tourism as well as small harbour development were incorporated into Operation Phakisa.

According to Potgieter (2018: 61) after 2015 South Africa's national Department of Tourism began an engagement process with the four coastal provinces in order to establish a set of

planning initiatives towards “stimulating coastal tourism”. The planning for South Africa’s coastal and marine tourism sector followed closely the Operation Phakisa methodology of convening the Coastal and Tourism ‘laboratory’ for a period of five weeks during April and May 2016 in order to prioritise issues and develop solutions and action plans (Department of Tourism, 2016a). A total of 40 people from more than 20 different organisations engaged with the laboratory. Representatives came from several departments of national government, all four coastal provinces, local and community government organisations and a wide array of environmental and tourism organisations. The overarching vision of this planning laboratory was “to grow a world-class and sustainable coastal and marine destination that directly benefits South Africans” (Department of Tourism, 2016b: 3).

Five cross-cutting enabling initiatives were identified to unlock the opportunities in South Africa’s coastal tourism economy (Department of Tourism, 2016a). These relate to marketing, safety and security, a review of regulations and permits, the enhancement of skills for transformation as well as for building entrepreneurship in coastal areas, and sustainability planning in terms of improved data repository with socio-economic and environmental information to guide spatial planning. Four further planned sets of initiatives were announced. First, is to identify and elevate events/festivals that would attract both domestic and international visitors especially in the off-peak season. Second, is to promote a set of tourism routes along coastal areas in order to market together certain attractions and a variety of experiences (cf. Myles, 2013). A potential impact of tourism route planning is addressing the existing observed uneven spatial impacts of coastal tourism which are concentrated at present particularly upon the cities of Cape Town and Durban. Third, is to tackle the challenges of infrastructural issues and shortcomings that constrain the growth of coastal and marine tourism particularly in non-metropolitan spaces. Last, is to seek to market coastal attractions that currently are not well known albeit are considered to offer future potential as tourism products (Department of Tourism, 2016b). During 2017 Cabinet approved the Coastal and Marine Tourism Implementation Plan. The plan is currently (end-2018) moving towards a phase of implementation and reportedly will include a commitment to strengthen the linkages of tourism with other areas of Operation Phakisa (Department of Tourism, 2016a).

## 5 Conclusion

The sustainable use of ocean resources is captured by the concept of the ‘blue economy’, which is gaining considerable importance across several countries in the global South. Coastal and marine tourism is one of the most significant sectors of the blue economy and arguably of critical importance for many African countries. This paper has analysed emerging planning for coastal and marine tourism in South Africa as part of blue economy planning which is conducted under the rubric of Operation Phakisa. Within international existing scholarship on coastal planning the unfolding South African experience is of considerable interest. The broad planning framework of Operation Phakisa is challenged about a number of shortcomings, most importantly for prioritising investment attraction and economic growth stimulation over issues about the conservation of maritime resources. The specific implementation of initiatives for coastal tourism is still in the process of being identified for roll out. One clear focus is, however, to plan for spreading more widely the spatial impacts from tourism development. Given the environmental sensitivity of South African coastal areas it is critical that careful monitoring of these initiatives be undertaken by researchers in

order to determine whether these initiatives for unlocking the potential of coastal and marine tourism conflict with sustainability issues.

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## In bodies and homes: Gendering citizenship in Southern African cities

### Abstract

How do the everyday contexts in which ordinary women struggle to access and maintain a place on the peripheries of the city shape experiences of citizenship? This paper explores this question in George, a peri-urban Lusaka neighbourhood in Zambia and through experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women's negotiation of a place on the peri-urban edges of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa. In the logics of citizen-subjects, the experiences of these groups of women should be poles apart, the first with rights imbued in citizenship, the second migrants without. Here instead, we demonstrate the ways in which gendered political subjectivities embed in the hard, lived realities of home. In placing gender and everyday body politics at the forefront of our analysis, the paper makes visible the micro-realities of making home. We demonstrate that an assumed recursive relationship between citizenship and home, as a physical and social place in the city, is problematic. Building on debates on citizenship and its gendering in post-colonial African urban contexts, we demonstrate instead that citizenship and its gendered contestations and emergent forms in Southern African are crafted in quotidian activities in homes and everyday city contexts.

**Keywords:** gender, citizenship, cities, urban peripheries, Southern Africa

### 1 Introduction

Despite formal citizenship and rights in urban Southern Africa, the lived experience of citizenship and its benefits remain fraught and uneven, particularly for women. As Manicom demonstrates, rights-based citizenship projects produce “a fragmented and contingent subject,” (Manicom, 2005: 24), which equivocally position and construct women as subjects in citizenship projects and processes. In this light, she asks us “to render visible and contestable the different makings of gendered political subjects, and the ways these inform and are integrated within policy, rights and political practices” (2005: 47). In doing so, we might disentangle “different forms of agency and moral grounds for participation that are available within different constructions of citizenship” (2005: 47). This paper takes up this challenge, examining agency in the everyday contexts in which ordinary women struggle to access and maintain a place on the peripheries of the city.

Our analysis explores women's making and sustaining of homes in two urban peripheries, the first in Lusaka and the second in Cape Town. We first examine the case of women living in George, a peri-urban Lusaka neighbourhood. In the re-telling of one woman's life history, we trace experiences over forty years, and across shifting post-colonial regimes. Second, we explore contemporary experiences of Zimbabwean women migrants, ‘foreign citizen-bodies’, in their trials to seek new lives, to negotiate home and a place on the peri-urban edges of

Khayelitsha on the margins of Cape Town, South Africa. In the logics of citizen-subjects, these two groups of women should be poles apart, the first with rights imbued in citizenship, the second migrants without. Our comparative approach demonstrates however the parallel ways in which gendered political subjectivities embed in the lived hard realities of home, in the limits of women's access to the city, articulated in struggles to substantiate citizenship at multiple scales.

In placing gender and everyday body politics at the forefront of our analysis of citizenship, we make visible the micro-realities of making home, arguing that claims to the city can be read in relation to projects of citizenship and rights-based development in post-colonial southern African (McEwan, 2005). We build on Holston and Appadurai's (1996) argument that citizenship is a particularly urban phenomenon. Although "one of the essential projects of nation-building has been to dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and to replace it with the national, [they argue] cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship" (1996: 188). This significance relates to "concentrations of the nonlocal, the strange, the mixed, and the public" which allow cities to "engage most palpably the tumult of citizenship" and in which ordinary urbanites can "expand and erode the rules, meanings, and practices of citizenship" (Holston & Appadurai, 1996: 188). We build on this framing of urban citizenship and its contestations, to interrogate the uncertainties and contestations, the emergent and diverse forms (Simone, 2004; Pieterse, 2013), the diverse meanings of citizenship in lived city spaces. Here, we demonstrate that an assumed recursive relationship between citizenship and home, as a physical and social place in the city, is problematic. Building on debates on citizenship and its gendering in post-colonial African urban contexts, we demonstrate instead that citizenship and its gendered contestations and emergent forms in Southern African are crafted in quotidian activities in homes and everyday city context.

## **2 Citizenship in post-colonial Africa**

In Africa, as elsewhere, scholarly work on citizenship has been, until recently, the focus of political science and legal studies, with only minor consideration in other social science disciplines. Much of this work has debated the implicit assumption that formal citizenship rights are necessarily recursive and translate meaningfully into practice (see Young, 1989, 1997). Instead, the focus has shifted so that increasingly the everyday meanings of citizenship have been taken up by a variety of fields, such as, for instance, critical anthropology (Comaroff & Commaroff, 1999), feminism, (Manicom, 2005), and transnational and migration studies (Sichone, 2008); and cultural studies (such as Mbembe & Nutall, 2004). McEwan (2000) highlights ways feminist theorists have also "explored alternative notions of radical and substantive democracy contributing to shifting notions of citizenship", with a growing interest among political and feminist geographers in the scales and spaces of citizenship.

### **2.1 Gender and citizenship in the African context**

In post-colonial Africa, "women are citizens according to national constitutions and they usually have the right to vote" (Schlyter, 2009: 11). However, the literature points to manifold challenges in African women's efforts to access or fully exercise their citizen rights (Gouws, 2005; Hames, 2006; Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Schlyter, 2009). Women's movements for peace (Gbowee, 2011) for national liberation (Hassim 2006; Tripp et al., 2008), for suffrage (Ramtohul, 2015), and against homophobia (Salo & Gqola, 2006) have drawn from

feminist theorising during the 1990s that has analysed citizenship “as plural and multi-layered, embodying the recognition of multiple identities and associated new claims for distributing and redistributing the rights and practices linked with citizenship” (Young, 1990, cited in Perreira, 2005: 1). Despite this proliferation of research, what Perreira (2005) has described as “useful for providing a general framework for understanding citizenship,” she stresses that “there is a need to understand the realities of women’s lives in specific African contexts”. Through this focus on everyday lived experience she argues we can develop grounded theory on citizenship. More recently hate crimes targeting lesbians in South Africa (Salo & Gqola, 2006) and gay communities in Zimbabwe (Epprecht, 2005) have highlighted the necessity of examining the gendered meanings of citizenship through women’s and marginal men’s lived experiences. In this paper we take forward this dual impetus to ground notions of citizenship and its inclusions and exclusions in the everyday and to consider how the gendered crafting of citizenship shapes and is informed by women’s actions and their experiences.

Part of the character of the sub-Saharan African post-colonial state are the dilemmas and social complexities of dealing with African traditions and Western modernities (Halisi et al., 1998) and the tensions between communitarian and the modernist ideas of citizenship. In her introduction to the volume *Gender Justice, Citizenship and Development*, Mukhopadhyay (2007) explains that post-colonial dilemmas “have had and continue to have a profound effect on the way women’s rights, equality and citizenship are conceived and fought for” on the African continent and elsewhere (Mukhopadhyay, 2007: 8). In discussing the exclusion of women from full citizenship status, Nyamu-Musembi (2007) differentiates between formal and explicit exclusions, pointing to how women may have formal citizenship but are often unable to enjoy substantive citizenship. “Here, formal citizenship is understood as the relationship between the state and the citizen, whereas substantive citizenship is that which goes beyond the confines of formal politics and law to encompass the economic, social and political relationship between social groups and structures of power that mediate the standing of individuals in the polity” (Mukhopadhyay, 2007: 7). Nyamu-Musembi (2007) draws on examples of women’s inability to pass on their national citizenship to their spouses or children after marrying foreign nationals from across the continent, to suggest that the denial of full citizen status to women appears the norm in practice despite legal amendments that expand women’s formal rights (Nyamu-Musembi, 2007; Mukhopadhyay, 2007: 7). Importantly, they highlight the ‘covert and unacknowledged gendered asymmetry in citizenship’ (McEwan, 2001: 53, cited in Nyamu-Musembi, 2007: 176) that leads to failure to implement rights where they exist or to a lack of acknowledgment of women’s contributions to nation building and social cohesion more generally (2007: 176). These issues are made more complicated when merged with customary and religious law and practice.

Post-colonial African states have introduced legal reforms to improve the citizenship status of women (Halisi et al., 1998: 337) especially in the aftermath of independent nationalist struggles such as in Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia. However, the formal recognition of women’s citizenship is the first step in an uneven, unpredictable often contradictory process towards gender equitable citizenship (McEwan, 2001: 53; Naggita-Musoke, 2001). Nyamu-Musembi concludes that in general “domestic relations still do not come under state scrutiny and within the domestic sphere ‘private patriarchies’ continue to pose practical hurdles to the realization of full citizenship by women” (2007: 177).

## 2.2 Negotiating gendered citizenship in Southern African cities and towns

We bring this scale of analysis and sensibility to our analysis of the everyday gendered negotiation of citizenship in Southern Africa cities. We build particularly on a body of work from the Southern African Gender Research on Urbanization, Planning, Housing and Everyday Life (GRUPHEL) research programme, conducted between 1995 and 2005 on housing as shelter and home. This work highlights the material and intangible social aspects of human settlement in peri-urban areas, including features such as housing structures and access, provision of services, as well as use of space and living conditions. The research findings clearly illustrate that women's citizenship cannot be analyzed by focusing on women public activities alone. Women's crafting of their citizenship begins in the process of negotiating their own and their more vulnerable dependents' statuses in the home. The home, *par excellence*, is the space associated with the biological and social reproduction of self, through family, and inter-generational continuity. It is, as well, the place from which both men and women 'imagine' their links to a wider collectivity such as 'the community' and 'the nation'. Women embody and perpetuate these links in a tangible material sense through marriage and reproduction that should locate them in potentially powerful positions. Yet customary and formal juridical rules of marriage reduce women to perpetual minors and dependents upon men in the home, so that women cannot be recognized as agentive persons in their own right. For example, wives often have to ask for permission from husbands and sometimes sons at home if they want to participate in public activities. Women are often the ones who dominate neighbourhood groups fighting for housing and related services (Ismail, 2015). As importantly, intimate familial relationships enacted and negotiated in the domestic sphere take primacy in delineating women's activities, circumscribing their experiences of citizenship in relational, material ways. These restrictions occur despite women's principal contributions to the households' economic and social wellbeing (Schlyter, 1999, Chipeta, 2005; Schlyter, 2006). Women have to negotiate their place in the home with a male head of household or with male landlords (Sithole-Fundire, 1995). In the Zambian context, Munalula (1998: 263) argues that "gendered home ownership is a critical economic factor in disempowering women". Home ownership affects power relations within a marriage and a household; and, denial of property rights "perpetuates social injustice and has created a powerful system in which gender and generational inequalities are reinforced and institutionalized by the state, society and family" (Mapetla et al, 2007: 13).

In much of the research on the meanings of home in Southern Africa emphasis tends to be placed upon home as a site of memory, work that tracks histories of belonging (see, for instance, Rassool & Prosalendis, 2001). Others focus on the home as a site through which we can understand systems of social networks and already constituted gendered respectability (see Salo, 2003, 2018; Ross, 2009). In this literature, home spaces are conceptualised at various scales, informed as much by the social and cultural meanings imbued in the physical space, as by the materials used to construct them. The gendered character of home making through women's quotidian actions are, however, less explored. Moreover, the contemporary canon on home, citizenship and belonging rarely examines the quotidian embodied practices of negotiating 'home' as a central process that both shapes and constrains the crafting of citizenship.

Spaces of home, as well as the wider neighbourhood and city, are not only physical and material but also constructed, negotiated and reproduced, key elements that constitute the gendered character of citizenship (see Birdwell-Pheasant & Lawrence-Zuniga, 1999; Oldfield et al, 2009). They can also be sites of violence. The literature on gender-based violence and

queer struggles for acceptance at home (see Wieringa et al., 2007) thus question the implied assumptions of the safety associated with home. This work asks us to consider the ways a politics of intimacy at home is tied up with the claims to and the struggle for substantive gendered citizenship. Lastly, for a significant portion of the population in the continent's growing urban centres, migration forms part of their experience and of their relations extended across space, reflecting inter alia, increasing transnationalism due to annulment of citizenship, failing economies and conflict due to repression and militarism (Landau et al., 2010). Migration is often motivated primarily by the search for sustainable livelihoods; and migrants' identification of host countries are informed by assumptions about the possibility of negotiating home and community in the new spaces they relocate to. Migrants' experiences and imaginings of making a new home as they move from one geographical context to another is an important arena for exploring the meanings of urban citizenship as these are formed in quotidian activities and are gendered in the process of locating and negotiating home.

We build on this literature by exploring the micro politics of space, and space making as these inform subjective interpretations, contestations over, and constraints of citizenship and identity in everyday practice in Southern Africa (Oldfield et al, 2009: 3). How do women negotiate experiences and processes of making home, with limited resources and infrastructure, as well as in contexts of intimate gendered politics in households in Southern African urban peripheries? In such contexts the challenge of substantiating citizenship is immense; it underlines the importance of exploring and documenting the gendered everyday ways in which women negotiate and craft citizenship in practice.

In the case studies below, we track the ways women craft their citizenship, contingent upon the range of opportunities that are presented to them by existing socio-economic and cultural factors, as well as their efforts to work around and through similarly structured constraints. We reflect on dynamics in the context of women's experiences of and claims for substantive formal citizenship over forty years in George Compound, a peri-urban area of Lusaka, and, second, in Zimbabwean women's negotiations of home making and the expansion of claims to substantive citizenship rights to homes despite national exclusion as formal extra-national migrants in Khayelitsha, Cape Town.

### **3 Gendered citizenship: Navigating peri-urban Lusaka and Cape Town George<sup>1</sup>**

Lusaka the capital city of Zambia dates back to its colonial origins as a railway siding established in the early 1900s on the railway line transporting copper from Northern Zambia to South African ports (Mulenga, 2003). The city's population has increased incrementally since its founding but expanded rapidly after Zambian independence in 1964. The demands for housing in Lusaka have always been greater than the provision of formal dwellings. The growth in informal housing during the colonial period was driven by the colonial authorities attempts to curb permanent African residents in Lusaka prior to 1948 because the latter were not considered full citizens of the empire. Legislative reform in the post war colonial period recognised the presence of Africans in the city without the requirement of the colonial state to provide formal housing for them. The African Housing Ordinance Act provided African workers the right to live permanently in the urban centre, whilst the Self Help Housing Act

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<sup>1</sup> We draw here on Schlyter's research undertaken in George Compound, Lusaka, from 1968 to 2015 and Matshaka's research on Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town in the post-2000 period.

did not require formal building standards in the informal settlements. By the 1950s informal settlements expanded to consist of authorised and unauthorised informal housing areas, due to the post-war economic boom in the country. Matero and Chilenje were the first informal settlements to be established followed by Chalama and George compound. The colonial state did not provide basic services to these settlements and provision of basic services such as a safe water was only addressed by the independent state together with international development agencies in the 1970s and 1980s (Mulenga, 2003; Schlyter, 2009). These attempts at improvements were perceived as and branded by the ruling party the United National Independence Party as the fruits of post independence development.

In the 1970s, the squatter area George compound was dominated by the United National Independence Party, UNIP. Party leaders who allocated plots to the migrants who sought work and newcomers from all over the country as they migrated into the city. The process of allocation was tied up with the nation-building project as plots were allocated to male heads of households regardless of ethnic affiliation. The slogan associated with this process was: *One Zambia – One Nation*. Families that Anne Schlyter interviewed in 1968 were, with a few exceptions, apolitical and inactive in party politics, but accepted party leaders as “urban headmen”. The women took an active role in creating the new home. While the men were in wage work they made the mud bricks and supervised bricklayers. They purchased and carried roof sheets on their head from town. Many of them engaged in petty trading outside their home, but they defined themselves as dependents and not working.

The area was legalised and upgraded during the second half of the nineteen seventies with support by the World Bank and with an impressive degree of participation organized by the local party organization. Women were active and demanded water, schools and clinics. The men’s concerns were somewhat different, reflecting their everyday life of work outside the neighbourhood; they prioritized roads and transport. The possibility to deliver improvements strengthened the local party organization. Zambia was now a one party state and the party came to fill a role in the urban governance as the lowest level of local authorities.

The party supported women’s participation by having a chairlady elected in each section of the compound. It is true that the women were supposed to support the male leaders and take care of social issues. Never the less, the party supported women’s active citizenship by providing a space where they could voice their concerns and speak up in public. However, few men appreciated or supported the women’s public activities and wives were pressured to limit participation in local authorities. Therefore, most chairladies were women who were heading their own households. Although they had the burden of both breadwinning and care for their families they took on a lot of community work. From the national women’s organisation the UNIP party members in the peri-urban areas were urged to safeguard morality and women’s role primarily as mothers - they were the mothers of the nation.

Until the early eighties the growing economy, based primarily on the export of Zambian copper, provided employment mainly for men and made it possible for most families to improve their living standards. There was food in the pots in most Georgetown households, and many houses were rebuilt in concrete blocks, extended, and gradually furnished. Many women seized the opportunities to craft their citizenship as active participants in party and community activities, not only in the role of submissive, hard working mothers of the nation.

In the early nineties with the introduction of structural adjustment and the contraction of the economy, most households had seen their hopes for a better quality of life in Georgetown

fade. The neighbourhood was impoverished and services were not maintained. In the election the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, MMD, won a landslide victory. Many residents were enthusiastic over the new window of freedom. But already a few years later the celebration of democracy had silenced. There was no change towards a better living standard. A few of the informants, especially the male street vendors, appreciated the freedom from local party leaders who previously had put restrictions on their activities. Street vending had not been allowed, but women's small businesses had been tolerated. Now, the women could not compete with young "businessmen", who introduced new types of goods and had a more aggressive way of selling.

Other residents of all ages blamed the MMD for not building a local organisation. They would certainly vote but saw no other way to engage in an active citizenship. Youth in secondary school (a minority as most children only get a few years of schooling) in George compound understood the change of political system and did not expect a local organisation, but they were ambivalent in their views. The same young girls could first express despise against all politics and politicians and then talk with great engagement about the need for women politicians. This feminist view of young girls was not shared by most women and men in George compound, who felt that peri-urban areas and poor people needed a strong leader: "A strong leader is a man. Non one listens to a woman" (see Schlyter, 2009).

Most young people felt that they lived in an area excluded from society. They did not know any politicians or any way to make their concerns visible. They knew that they were allowed to vote, but they found it was too complicated to get a voter registration card, so many did not even try. In this multi-party society there is no invited space for residents of George compound to actively contribute in the political arena. The exception is the Residential Development Committee, invented by the City Council, but there is only one committee for the huge residential area of at least 60 000 inhabitants. The sub-committee for water appoints tap leaders to control the water taps. Women dominate as tap leaders as they do whenever there is voluntary work to do.

Women in George compound certainly have some agency to craft citizenship through their struggle for home and community. They form informal networks within which a high degree of mutual solidarity is practiced. But increasing overcrowding with additional rooms and houses filled with multi-generational families or renters, and numerous cases of too early deaths also create conflicts sometimes channelled into accusations of witchcraft. Over a long period, residents of George compound have experienced increasing poverty. Strikingly, though, the upward swings in the national economy, for instance, as China's demand for copper spurs a revival in the copper mining industry, has not made any tangible changes to them. Many old women have seen their dream of a comfortable life of retirement fail in their old age. They continue to work long and hard, as their children have passed away leaving them with dependent grandchildren. With the disaster of AIDS the old people continue to work and carry on in the community as leading citizens.

Zambian women have been made symbols of the nation – however that symbolism has been confined to and centred on women citizens as mothers and wives alone. Like other postcolonial nationalist discourse elsewhere on the continent (McClintock, 1995) women's roles as the nurturers and mothers of the Zambian nation. This discourse remains symbolic as the economic and social value of women's home making activities are ignored. The substantive meanings of citizenship with regards to women's quotidian activities in the home and their attempts to suture together the formal and practical claims to citizenship, to knit

together their own and their dependents' well-being in the home to the well-being of the nation is overlooked by the state. Consequently, they have been offered a limited form of citizenship by the state, constitutionally, in customary law and in real material ways.

Women who have tried to penetrate the political arena have, in many ways, been reminded that they are inappropriate citizens because of their gender. Many restrictions to women's active citizenship are rooted in the private sphere, shaped by patriarchal household relations, and the practical ways in which neighbourhood, city and national politics are organised. Women were active in Georgetown informal settlement as members of the UNIP initiated upgrading committees in the aftermath of independence in the 1960s – however these women often participated in the face of male relatives' censure. We draw on the life history of one woman Mrs. Mwanza, a single head of a Georgetown household because her narrative remains emblematic of ordinary Zambian women's lives in the informal settlements in the peri-urban periphery of Lusaka.

Mrs. Mwanza and her then husband built a small mud house in Georgetown compound on the back of independence and the rise of the United National Independence Party that ruled Zambia between 1964 and 1991. She and her then husband became active in the local UNIP branch. However despite UNIP discourse encouraging women's active political participation, most Georgetown men censured their wives participation because of the injunction that prevented respectable wives from addressing men directly. Mrs. Mwanza like other wives, were active from the backstage, providing support for the meetings in which men were the main actors. She only accepted the position of chairperson once her husband left her for another woman. During the 1970s when Georgetown was identified alongside other informal settlements for upgrading, the women mobilised the settlement population to attend the planning meetings. Here decisions were made about the type of upgrading that would occur. Here too the gendered divide in the decision-making was evident. While women wanted improvements in water infrastructure and a health clinic, the men wanted tarred roads and public lighting (personal communication, see Schlyter, 2009).

During the 1980s the economic downturn in the lives of ordinary Zambians cut deep as structural adjustment took hold. The UNIP local structures continued to exist in the local context but increasingly the decisions taken in these for a were not, or could not be taken up by more powerful politicians and policy makers at the municipal or national level. Consequently, local membership dropped to precipitous levels and Mrs Mwanza elected to leave the organisation. In the classic actions associated with structural adjustment state subsidies on services such as health and education were eliminated, and the Zambian Kwacha was devalued She like other women, sought to increase household incomes through informal economic activities such as selling fresh produce from small stalls in the compound even as she strived to meet her domestic responsibilities at home. At this time her marriage broke down and she was left with the added insecurity of supporting a household with minor dependents who were still at school. In addition, the meanings of home had acquired precarity. The state only recognised men as formal property owners, so her husband remained the owner of the home she occupied under precarious conditions.

In impoverished contexts such as Georgetown, women's embodied citizenship in the everyday link up with their right to be recognised as political agents actively claiming citizenship rights independent of their relationship to men as wives, and daughters. The Georgetown women have attempted to claim citizenship in the context of the constraining nationalist discourse of motherhood by taking their nurturing roles from the private into the

public sphere. In the afterglow of independence during the 1960s the Georgetown women were active participants in the political institutions available in the local context. This was especially apparent during the years of structural adjustment and economic decline in the 1980s. During this time they expanded the passive, respectable connotations of motherhood through their activities in the economic sphere as informal traders and through their claims to safe shelter and sanitation. Although women's unpaid work providing support for their own dependents as well as child orphans in the family, or the elderly and their social networking cements and develops their community, their work remains unrecognised as of immediate political, economic or social value by the state, the men in the women's households or even by women themselves. So in their crafting of citizenship women in George are not primarily claiming for rights or participating in political structures. They are contributing to the community in their everyday life. Old women looking back at their lives in George put great pride in having contributed to their community as honest and decent citizens. They have developed a sense of contributory citizenship.

Crafted in community and in everyday experience across much of a lifetime living in George Compound, this set of experiences sits in interesting contrast with the contemporary experiences of Zimbabwean women migrants, the focus of the following discussion.

### **3.1 Migrant women's struggles for body and home**

Migration forms a key part of the urban experience of a portion of women and men in African cities. It offers some key insights into the micro politics of space, access, identities and citizenship on the continent because migrants are often rendered marginal and vulnerable by the uncertain citizenship status within the spaces they migrate to. Migrants' experiences as they relocate to 'new' spaces contribute to understanding urban realities and citizenship through nuanced exploration of strategies and everyday practice (see Matshaka 2009, 2010, 2018). This section of the paper draws from research in the South African city of Cape Town with young migrant Zimbabwean women on how the body and identities are negotiated in the micro spaces of home and community in the context of migration. Looking at the material and social realities of the young women who are part of the current wave of Zimbabweans who since the year 2000 are migrating and resettling in the geographically socio-economically marginalised areas of South African cities widens our exploration of micro experiences at the level of the gendered body and provides a critical insight into 'citizenship' and, in the case of transnational regional migrants, its everyday crafting of exclusion in particular (Lefko-Everett, 2007). In this section we consider how women, who in the context of transnational migration are marginalised by their legal or economic status, negotiate the microstructures of home and community.

Due to multiple motivations, a woman leaves Zimbabwe, arrives in Cape Town under varying circumstances and finds home in the peripheral spaces of the host city. Not only do these circumstances determine the situations the women find themselves, but they also shape the options open to them in responding to their new and often changing living situations. This is in the context of scant decent low-priced housing as well as the migrant's own often limited and precarious financial resources linked to either unemployment or job insecurity and the necessity to stretch the often-poor remuneration to meet living costs in the migration context while remitting back to Zimbabwe. The physical and material condition of the dwellings that the migrant women occupy in the less affluent township neighbourhoods on the Cape Flats, often limited shared formal or informal rented spaces which are not designed or adequate for occupation by multiple people, shapes the negotiation of day-to-day practices

and arrangements such as how a mixed group of women and men sleep in a single room.

Nonetheless, as pointed out earlier women craft their citizenship in different ways depending on what opportunities their environment offers them. In order to relocate in the urban peripheral spaces of Cape Town, the current wave of the young Zimbabwean migrant woman makes use of varied relationships, which are utilised in varied ways. Beyond the more traditional support networks such as ‘close’ family members and spouses, in this context, migrant women’s support base and networks of access are expanded to include other pre-existing social relationships which were previously considered casual acquaintance or ‘distant’ kin relationships but are now activated, rekindled and redefined to include new expectations and obligations. Narratives of access demonstrate that women rely on networks, including friends, ‘extended’ family members, acquaintances from their home neighbourhoods or whom they share some history or background such as former school mates or people from the same rural home. In the absence of networks based on close kinship or friendship ties or in cases where reliance on these is not possible or desirable, a migrant woman is able to access shelter through connection with the cross border trader from her home neighbourhood or a friend of a friend for example. In addition, the expansion of informal networks for access and support also comes to include new contacts or relationships established in the migration context based on shared nationality or shared networks. The redefined and newly established networks that migrants draw on are not only useful in finding lodging but continue to be a platform of support, cooperation and collectiveness beyond the early days of migration, playing a central role in meeting their general day-to-day needs with women sharing lodgings and other resources with other migrants. These Zimbabwean migrant women create, adopt and reinforce diverse networking strategies, which allow them to access accommodation and survive.

The experiences of young Zimbabwean migrant women confirm, in line with existing studies the role of social networks in the everyday life of different groups of women and men and their bearing on living situations and well-being (Schlyter, 1996). Literature on urban experiences has demonstrated that for women in particular, networking and solidarity in everyday life are important assets which are mobilised for their survival in urban areas, and to help them meet expected gender roles such as being homemakers (Beyene, 2005). Muzondidya (2008) has argued that among Zimbabwean migrants the extension and solidification of social networks and emphasis on collectiveness are important aspects of their culture of survival in South Africa, an aspect illustrated by the experiences of the women who were part of this research. This research revealed how, although social networks and the “accumulation and consolidation of social capital” (Beyene, 2005: 3) through collectiveness and communality with these varied and extended networks is key to the migration experience, these networks are also complex, involving multi-faceted, gendered negotiations. The migrant women’s accounts of their experiences within the homes where they are located as dependent or hostess, junior in-law or distant relative, reveal how, while they open up possibility to find a home, to maximize agency through shared information and cooperation (such as sharing household costs), the diverse relationships which migrant women draw and rely on within these spaces of home also have constraints.

Whether with kin or non-kin, pre-existing or new, these relationships are neither simple nor straightforward, but instead are demanding, gendered and linked to markers of status in relation to other members of the household, such as being a recognised spouse versus a ‘temporary’ live in girlfriend. In addition to never being perfect or straightforward, these relationships with networks of support or cooperation are also precarious often due to the

strains which emerge as a result of the new material and social demands on these relationships in the migration context, with individuals who previously did not share households or resources now adopting this practice in response to changed circumstances. For example, young women often are forced to share the limited space of home with a mix of male and female kin and strangers. Gendered social norms such as those surrounding domestic roles as well as definitions of female respectability, length of tenure, ability to contribute to material costs also have bearing on the ways in which these relations and everyday interactions are negotiated in this migration context.

The young women's experiences also demonstrated the work that is involved in the day-to-day interactions in maintaining the gendered reciprocal relationships that exist within these households where migrants share or contribute to each other's costs and domestic labour. This work takes different forms such as having to adopt conciliatory stances or having to bear with uncomfortable situations such as bearing with a 'romantic' relationship which you perceive as morally unacceptable such as an extra-marital affair, in order to maintain one's access to a roof. The patterns of reciprocity demanded by the relationships women draw on are costly to their personal comfort and often require compromising of community as well as individual values similar to the example above. As a result, the situations some of the women live in are not only physically uncomfortable but also socially undesirable. The negotiation of complex day-to-day living situations and relationships that they negotiate require the women, to some extent, to re-evaluate, re-negotiate, compromise and re-work different aspects of their customs, sensitivities and identities. For example, with migrants sharing whatever limited space is available, the women have often had to re-evaluate aspects of their upbringing by sleeping in same space as adult male kin or even male strangers. The multifaceted negotiations involved complicate any simple reading of reciprocal relationships among migrants in the home and the community spaces they occupy.

As they move from their home country eventually finding and maintaining home (for varying periods) in peri-urban areas of Cape Town, migrant Zimbabwean women negotiate multiplex conditions and relationships. The material and social expectations, concerns and discourses that shape the young women's realities are not only about negotiations around documentation that regulates their stay in the country, relationships with ordinary citizens in relation to broad issues such as competition over scarce jobs, or ensuring they send remittances home. Also central to migrants' everyday gendered concerns, negotiations and everyday crafting of residency are questions about where will I sleep tonight, how will I get my kin to contribute to electricity costs, or is my partner being faithful, the everyday material and relational micro-politics in homes.

### **3.2 Crafting gendered citizenship**

Although a woman's right to her body should be the absolute foundation on which citizenship is built, it has seldom been included in analyses of citizenship. Yet, in increasingly impoverished peri-urban areas, negotiations for citizenship start with women's bodies and are forged in the private sphere in homes. By having homes and women's bodies as starting point in our analysis we reveal how women struggle for agency through everyday negotiations within their families. With poverty, a heavy workload and duties of nurturing and nursing, women's citizenship is constrained. In line with Borges (2006), our approach pays attention to how women, in George Compound, Zambia and as migrants in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, negotiate everyday categories, formulas and processes to meet their visceral needs. Moreover, the everyday negotiation of the domestic and immediate community space

presents an interesting site for understanding gendered negotiations of limited material conditions as well as norms, identities and relationships which form part of local subjectivities and everyday crafting of citizenship.

Women in George and migrant women in townships on Cape Town's 'Cape Flats' have remade their social networks, to craft a place and a way to live. Through community work in George, women have developed a strong sense of citizenship that emphasizes contribution to the common good rather than claims on the state. Migrant Zimbabwean women have marginal rights as non-citizens, yet they have forged community, nonetheless, remaking themselves in this challenging context. Certainly, in light of women's long-term experiences in George compound in Lusaka and as migrants in the townships of Cape Town, Sassen's (2002) argument that globalisation produces spaces with new de-nationalised possibilities for citizenship for women appears surreal. To a degree the middle-class women's movements have been emboldened. Their objects are both non-state institutions such as donors and international organisations and the state, to which they continuously and sometimes successfully make claims. Their claims and campaigns may meet a positive resonance among the peri-urban women, for example the protests against destitution of widows in Zambia. But normally township women are not included in the campaigns and their view of themselves, as citizens, have not much to do with claim making. Instead they put their pride as citizens in what they contribute to their community. They are in their struggle for home crafting a contributory form of citizenship, practices that gender citizenship in relation to critical everyday needs, resources, and practices and politics in and from which women build and negotiate their citizenship intimately, publicly and politically (Manicom, 2005; Gouws, 2005).

#### **4 Conclusion**

In our examination of the crafting of citizenship in contemporary urban Southern Africa, we argue that citizenship and its body politics are informed by the contested interplay between women and men as they imagine, inhabit and gender space, strive to access scarce material resources, and negotiate relationships within households and communities located in broader political and social urban and national economies. We conceptualise 'body politics' as the negotiation of power via the body, processes that operate sometimes directly (for instance, violently), but also processes that work at a symbolic and representational scale. At the same time, we analyse body politics in its materiality, played out in homes and neighbourhoods, in the depravity and possibility of material conditions on the margins and peri-urban edges of our cities. Body politics are also constituted relationally: within households and families, community processes and in neighbourhood and civic politics, through access or a lack thereof to state resources, or through interventions by the state. In these processes, power relations are constantly negotiated through everyday acts on, in and through the body.

The focus on everyday experiences of so-called marginal women and their bodies on the edges of Lusaka and Cape Town grounds our understanding of urban citizenship and the discourses, practices and contestations about belonging that emerge through gendered tropes of home and being at home. The comparative discussion in this paper engages intentionally with particular places and times to examine the micro-relations and politics of women's everyday lives. Built on ethnographic theorisation across the region, we draw together varied tactics and strategies that women enact and perform in their everyday lives in peripheral urban places. A gendered analysis of citizenship built in material and political experiences of

belonging on the edges in Southern African cities counterbalances discursive strategies of universal development and globalization that too often write out and efface gendered negotiations that situate women's lived experience and shape agency.

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## Re-creating slum tourism: Perspectives from South Africa

### Abstract

Slum tourism is a growing phenomenon in several cities in the global South. The objective in this conceptual paper is to analyse the development and critical challenges around slum tourism in the urban global South and to argue a case for 're-creating' slum tourism by building upon the potential for creative tourism. The focus is upon the 'townships' of South Africa. It is argued that South Africa provides an instructive case study in the international phenomenon of slum tourism and of its potential to be reimagined and developed in a responsible manner, including through an important role for creative tourism. Recommendations are offered for a research agenda on creative slum tourism.

**Keywords:** slum tourism, creativity, townships, creative tourism, economic and physical slum upgrading, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

One critical theme in global scholarship around tourism and poverty, especially in urban areas, is the intensified relationship between tourism and socio-economically marginalized people which can frame the poor as tourist attractions (Frenzel et al., 2015; Rogerson & Saarinen, 2018). Dovey and King (2012) observe that international tourists have evolved 'a taste for slums' and that urban poverty tours are a tourism product with visits to slums increasingly a 'must do' item on the bucket list of Northern tourists travelling to destinations such as Brazil, India, Kenya, or South Africa (Rogerson, 2004; Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Diekmann & Hannam, 2012; Magio, 2012; Kieti & Magio, 2013; Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Nisbett, 2017; Holst, 2018). Newer destinations for slum tours include Egypt, Namibia, Philippines and Zimbabwe among others. Among others Ma (2010) argues that the international spread of slum tourism has been given considerable impetus by the mass media and the appearance of several hit films which depict slum life such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (Mumbai), *District 9* (Johannesburg) and *City of God* (Rio de Janeiro). Over the past 20 years there has been a surge of scholarship around what has been variously styled as 'poverty tourism' and more recently also as 'slum tourism' (Meschkank, 2011; Frenzel & Koens, 2012; Mekawy, 2012; Frenzel et al., 2012, 2015; Frenzel, 2016; Mkono, 2016; Frenzel, 2017; Nisbett, 2017; Holst, 2018). For one of the earliest academic writers on this topic, Scheyvens (2001: 55), the term *poverty tourism* describes "forms of travel to impoverished areas which adhere to the principles of alternative tourism". A decade later, Rolfes (2010) styled the growth of poverty tourism as an 'extraordinary' form of tourism.

Several observers point out, however, that the practice of visitations to areas of poverty is not a new phenomenon in cities of the global North, isolating its roots in Victorian London where tours were undertaken around the city's squalid East End by members of the upper class as well as by social reformers and clergymen (Steinbrink, 2012; Frenzel et al., 2015; Frenzel & Blakeman, 2015; Frenzel, 2016). In contemporary scholarship, the major focus is on cities of

the global South where slum tours have become highly organized and marketed to visit areas which were previously hidden from the tourist gaze (O'Brien, 2011; Frenzel, 2017; Nisbett, 2017; Holst, 2018). In an ideal sense, Scheyvens (2001) identifies that poverty tourism should be a form of tourism which is both equitable and ethical and which would have several benefits to both tourists and residents *inter alia*, forge bonds of solidarity between visitors and those visited, promote mutual understanding, enhance the self-sufficiency and self-determination of local communities, and maximize local economic, cultural, and social impacts. In addition, the practice of poverty tourism should seek to elevate the awareness of people from privileged backgrounds in the global North about the negative impacts of capitalism, colonialism, and economic inequality which have scarred the well-being and everyday lives of the majority of ordinary citizens of cities in the global South (Scheyvens, 2001).

The task in this paper is to analyse the development and critical challenges around slum tourism in the urban global South and to argue a case for 're-creating' slum tourism by building upon the potential for creative tourism. Turok and Borel-Saladin (2018) observe that extant literature on urban slums emphasises their physical and social problems rather the income trajectories of residents and how this can be improved. Against this backdrop this research seeks to interrogate the possibilities around stimulating economic opportunities accrued to local residents, catalysing physical upgrading in slums, and enhancing representations of slum residents through the promotion of creative forms of tourism. Our lens for developing an agenda for creative slum tourism will be the so-called 'townships' of South Africa, which are one of the major global destinations for slum tourism (Rogerson, 2008; Booyens, 2010; George & Booyens, 2014; Frenzel et al., 2015; Frenzel, 2016; Muldoon, 2018; Booyens & Rogerson, in press). Indeed, South Africa provides an instructive case study in the international phenomenon of slum tourism and its potential to be reimaged and developed in a responsible manner, including through an important role for creative tourism. Debates about 'responsible slum tourism' were earlier raised in a useful contribution on the Egyptian experience (Mekawy, 2012). The concept of creative tourism emphasizes active participation in learning experiences on the part of visitors, in addition to creative spectacles and creative spaces or precincts (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Richards, 2011). Creative spectacles are associated with events and creative spaces with urban development and creative place making (Richards, 2014). In creative economy debates, culture is regarded as a resource for urban livelihoods (Richards, 2014; Duxbury et al., 2016). This paper investigates how culture can be employed to create economic opportunities and stimulate physical upgrading in slum areas which is linked to the concept of resilience gaining tracking in the tourism scholarship (Lew & Cheer, 2017). Arguably, a focus on creative forms of culture is significant for opening potential economic opportunities and pathways out of poverty for persons living in slums via the diversification of current slum tourism offerings.

The following discussion is organized into three sections. First, a brief contextual overview is given on international scholarship and debates about 'slum tourism'. Second, attention turns to tourism as one element in the changing economic and social character of South Africa's townships. Finally, the third section presents a reflection on 'creativity' in township spaces and then outlines several research issues that merit further investigation in order to solidify the nexus between slum tourism and creative tourism.

## 2 International slum tourism debates

At its heart, slum tourism is understood as the touristic valorization of poverty-stricken urban areas of the global South (Steinbrink, 2012, 2013; Frenzel, 2016; Nisbett, 2017; Holst, 2018). Essentially, the activity of slum tourism simply describes organized tours to deprived areas (Frenzel, 2016). Within international slum tourism destinations, the relationship between tourism and poverty is re-configured as tourism is no longer simply a vehicle to combat poverty but poverty now becomes an attraction for tourists (Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Frenzel et al., 2015; Frenzel, 2016; Rogerson & Saarinen, 2018). This said, for its most optimistic observers slum tourism can be an important contributor to the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and now the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (O'Brien, 2011; Rogerson & Saarinen, 2018).

The roots of slum tourism in the global South are generally attributed to several social justice movements which appeared in Brazil and South Africa during the 1990s and began to promote tours, respectively, to the favelas and to townships associated with the anti-apartheid struggle (Frenzel et al., 2015). According to current estimates, as many as one million international tourists incorporate in their itinerary a visit either to a township, a favela, or a slum in some destination of the global South in seeking to observe and 'experience' people living in situations of poverty (Frenzel, 2016, 2017). In addition to guided tours of slums, tourists are offered opportunities to stay overnight in a range of small-scale accommodation service establishments (homestays, bed and breakfasts, backpacker hostels); to experience local restaurants, bars, and hospitality 'drinkertainment'; and occasionally to engage in local festivals or concerts (Bell, 2007; Rogerson, 2008; Booyens, 2010; Koens & Thomas, 2015; Rogerson & Mthombeni, 2015; Frenzel, 2016). The widening of product offerings to slum tourists is well-illustrated by the possibility in Soweto even to imbibe 'Soweto Gold' at one of the locality's recently established craft breweries. Globally, the largest numbers of slum tourists flock to the favelas of Brazil, South Africa's townships, or Dharavi, Mumbai, which is reportedly Asia's largest slum (Meschkank, 2011; Nisbett, 2017). Overall, slum tourism is considered "a mass tourism phenomenon occurring only in few destinations and a niche form in a growing number of other destinations" (Frenzel et al., 2015: 237–238).

The phenomenon of slum tourism is galvanizing an international literature across an array of different urban tourism destinations (Rogerson, 2008; Rolfes, 2010; O'Brien, 2011; Dovey & King, 2012; Dyson, 2012; Frenzel & Koens, 2012; Magio, 2012; Steinbrink, 2012; Frenzel, 2013, 2016, 2017; Frenzel & Blakeman, 2015; Frenzel et al., 2015; Holst, 2018). In the expanding scholarship around the topic, the practice of visiting slum areas is not only viewed as a specific type of tourism "but as empirical phenomena that bridge a number of interdisciplinary concerns ranging from international development, political activism, mobility studies to urban regeneration" (Holst et al., 2017: 1). Much controversy surrounds the ethical dimensions of slum tourism with some observers pointing to its voyeuristic appeal "reflecting on why people want to visit slums, what pleasure could be derived from it and whether they should be allowed" (Nisbett, 2017: 38). Holst et al. (2017: 1) maintain that slum tourism is "sometimes cast as a laboratory where the relationships and interactions between the global North and South appear as micro-sociological encounters framed by the apparent concern over inequality". Muldoon (2018) stresses that 'encountering' poverty in slum tourism is a morally fraught experience. Steinbrink (2012) and Frenzel (2016) demonstrate that slum tourism is embedded in post-colonial patterns of discourse in which 'North' and 'South' are specifically reproduced in practices of 'othering'. Different narratives are attached to slum tourism variously as either philanthropic travel or as the organized

exploitation of poverty. From the latter perspective, it is suggested that by turning people's lives and miseries into a spectacle, slum tours are inherently exploitative and morally questionable at best (Magio, 2012; Frenzel, 2016, 2017; Von Schuckmann & Barros, 2017). Equally, Sanyal (2015) raises parallel concerns about the 'aestheticization of poverty'. This said, Von Schuckmann and Barros (2017) allude to certain slum tourism practices which are clearly voyeuristic, while others are considered less so depending on how the activities are 'styled'.

For Nisbett (2017: 44) the "normalization, romanticisation, and depoliticization of poverty legitimizes social inequality and diverts attention away from the state and its responsibility for poverty reduction". Accordingly, it is argued that tour operators in slum tourism destinations should seek to nurture a political literacy and assist "tourists to understand poverty by situating it within a politics of place, and in the context of neoliberalism" (Nisbett, 2017: 44). In view of this, the authors observe that slum tourism debates often are dominated by the perceptions of researchers mainly based in global North and analysing Southern slums through 'Western' academic and politicized lenses. Accordingly, there is a disconnect with the 'real' and lived experiences of slum residents, and also a dearth in the literature on how slum residents see themselves and how they wish to be represented. Indeed, Pieterse (2011: 5) argues for a "break with the reductionist tendencies in African urban studies to derive observation and explanation from a materialist reading of difficult living conditions, to foreground instead other ways of understanding the density and spatiality of urban becomings". Therefore, we contend that a danger exists in over-politicizing slum tourism and drawing the attention away from 'people' and their experiences and perceptions - those visiting and those living in slums. Mkono (2016: 208) suggests "what hope does tourism have to transform and better itself towards more human praxis, if its participants are not self-critical-that is, if they do not continually reflect on their assumptions, worldviews, attitudes and behaviours?". Consequently, a case is made for the practice of reflexivity on the part of slum tourists which entails "interrogating personal misconceptions and allowing self-transformation; embracing ambivalence, complexity and uncertainty; and, critiquing own and others' tourism behaviours" (Mkono, 2016: 217). In addition, it is observed that the "imposition of a negative label of *pitiableness*" on slum dwellers is inconsistent with and undermines the views that certain residents have of their own existence (Mkono, 2016: 213).

The commodification and commercialization of poverty inevitably has triggered research around who benefits from slum tourism. Indeed, whether slum tourism exerts pro-poor impacts on destinations is deemed a vital issue, not least as its advantages to local communities can offset the dangers of voyeurism. As Frenzel (2013: 117) observes "slum tourism promoters, tour providers as well as tourists claim that this form of tourism contributes to development in slums by creating a variety of potential sources of income and other non-material benefits". For many researchers, the anticipated pro-poor local impacts of developing slum tourism have been elusive for impacted communities. As Kieti and Magio (2013) highlight in the case of Kibera slum, Nairobi the major beneficiaries of slum tourism are non-residents. Likewise, Booyens (2010) observes that most tour operators who take visitors to Soweto are non-locals who capture most of the tourist revenue as part of organised day trips (package tours) taken from Johannesburg or Pretoria. Accordingly, local residents derive little benefit from tourist flows to townships. Essentially, the limited local benefits relate to underlying structures and external control of slum tourism which cause high levels of economic leakage (Frenzel et al., 2015). From an examination of the record of slum tourism development in Kibera and Dharavi, Frenzel and Blakeman (2015) advocate a greater role for informal tour guiding, not least for producing the creation of more intimate and

authentic encounters. Nevertheless, in cases of local entrepreneurs having initiated small businesses to enter the slum tourism value chain, recorded successes are limited (Koens & Thomas, 2015, 2016). A lack of access to capital, associated with historical economic exclusion, is underscored as a constraining factor for black female entrepreneurs in Cape Town townships (Hikido, 2017). Nisbett (2017: 39) concludes: “there is currently little evidence to support the economic development argument on a local level other than what appears to be a handful of small-scale and individual cases of entrepreneurship”.

### 3 South Africa – Township tourism and slum tourism

One of South Africa’s essential contributions to the nomenclature of international human settlements is the locally distinctive phenomenon of the ‘township’. The evolution of townships is anchored in South Africa’s colonial and apartheid past. Most observers attribute their origins to the drafting of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act which took the view that the urban areas of South Africa should be regarded as ‘European’ spaces in which there was no place for ‘Natives’ (Beavon & Rogerson, 1990). The 1923 Act entrenched the premise that Black African people would be merely ‘temporary sojourners’ living in segregated spaces adjacent to urban areas that required their labour (Beavon & Rogerson, 1990). From its origins in the colonial era, the planning of townships was refined further during the apartheid period as part of wider structures of political and economic subordination of the Black population (Mahajan, 2014).

As a consequence of the logic of townships as dormitory settlements, with minimal infrastructure and comprising only ‘temporary people’ in urban areas, business development in these spaces was limited by legislation. From 1945, municipal authorities in South African urban areas controlled the allocation of formal trading sites within township areas. Indeed, the legislation constrained the development of formal trading businesses to only “those businesses that would provide nothing more than the daily essentials of living” (Beavon & Rogerson, 1990: 267). Until 1977 formal businesses in townships were limited to general dealers, butchers, milk shops, and fruit and vegetable shops. The implementation and continued enforcement of this legislation into the apartheid period severely constrained formal business growth in the townships.

Following democratic transition, in 1994 the spatial legacy of apartheid proved difficult to transcend. The segregation of townships was exacerbated by post-apartheid urban development policy. As Philip (2014) points out, for the first decade of South Africa’s new democracy the free public housing programme became the *de facto* urban development strategy of the country. The consequence has been to entrench urban spatial divides with the massive development of housing in post-apartheid townships which “have benefited from only limited spatial planning to enable local economic development—except to support the taxi industry which often provides the only form of transport linking these new-generation townships to city hubs and economic opportunities” (Philip, 2014: 41). Overall, with post-1994 democratic changes, although scope existed for the elevation of township economies and the growth of new business development, “many features of the townships’ spatial design continued to militate against this” (Philip, 2014: 45). Inevitably, under democracy the essential character of townships as dormitory settlements remained little altered. Local economic development prospects were militated against by either the absence or poor quality of economic infrastructure, locational disadvantages in terms of distance from major

economic hubs and places of work, and the continued essential subordination of most internal economic activities in townships to an economy outside their boundaries.

It is against this background of townships as economic deserts that considerable interest was aroused in the 1990s by the potential for tourism development in townships as opportunities linked to urban tourism were formerly confined to so-termed 'White spaces' (Rogerson, 2004, 2008). Following political transition, the dropping of economic sanctions, and South Africa's re-entry into the global tourism economy, the townships became more accessible for tourists. With the new 'taste' of international tourists for 'poverty', the niche of township tourism was opened for tourism entrepreneurs (especially in accommodation services) while also allowing black South Africans to recount their stories of the struggles against apartheid to a receptive audience after decades of having their voices suppressed by a hostile government (Scheyvens, 2002). The nature of tourism in Soweto, with its focus the struggle against apartheid, has a strong heritage tourism character even though elements of poverty tourism is also present (Booyens, 2010; Frenzel, 2016). Township tourism as a form of urban heritage tourism has expanded greatly since the 1990s with the most rapid developments occurring in the townships of Soweto, which is part of metropolitan Johannesburg, Khayelitsha and Langa in Cape Town, and Inanda in Durban. Koens and Thomas (2015) maintain that while the expanding economy of township tourism is still viewed as an alternative form of tourism, an estimated 20 to 25 percent of all international tourists to Cape Town now book a township tour which means that the townships are one of the city's most popular tourism attractions.

Township tourism has become recognised as part of a wider scholarship on slum tourism. It should be understood that the formation of townships in South Africa is the result of segregationist planning and politics which grouped people by race and therefore differs from slums elsewhere in cases where these might have developed organically in an unplanned, albeit complex socially-embedded fashion, as the urbanising poor congregates in peri-urban spaces (see Lejano & Del Bianco, 2018). Accordingly, class differentiation is evident in South Africa's townships. The existence of middle-class neighbourhoods and gentrified tourism precincts in Soweto is inconsistent with the representation of Soweto overall as a 'slum' (Frenzel et al., 2015; Hoogendoorn & Giddy, 2017). This said, informal settlements within broader township areas of Soweto can be regarded as slums (Turok et al., 2017).

In recent years, Charman (2017) observes that the idea that the economies of townships need to be revitalized has begun to garner significant political traction. Across South Africa, the promotion of 'slum' tourism is incorporated into programmes for tourism-driven local economic development in most of the country's major cities (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Tourism so far has received little policy focus within a host of new strategic initiatives (taking place particularly in Gauteng province) for township economic regeneration which centre mostly upon industrial development (Rogerson, in press). The new vision for Gauteng province, which is South Africa's economic heartland oriented around Johannesburg, is for encouraging "vibrant and sustainable township enterprises as part of building an inclusive, labour absorbing and growing economy" (Gauteng Province, 2014: 5). Here, strong emphasis is given to transforming townships into sites for productive activities in alignment with South Africa's national goals for 're-industrialization'. Questions about boosting townships as sites for consumption, including for expanded tourism development, are not addressed.

#### 4 Re-creating slum tourism

Product innovation is an essential element for long-term sustainability of tourism destinations. The critical importance of innovation as a whole for tourism development in South Africa has been demonstrated in a number of recent investigations (Booyens, 2016; Booyens & Rogerson, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017a, 2017b). It is argued that one basis for expanding township tourism in South Africa is through maximizing the potential for creativity and the development of new innovative creative tourism products. The limited existing research on creative tourism in South Africa suggests that it is mainly concentrated outside of the townships, at least in the documented cases of Johannesburg and Cape Town (Rogerson, 2006; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015; Gregory & Rogerson, 2018). This said, there is a historical record on the cultural vibrancy of township life and its importance, especially for arts, music, and entertainment in South Africa (Coplan, 2008). In particular, South Africa's townships have long embodied a creative consumption-focused economy within which a central role has been played by alcohol and drinking venues (*shebeens*) in a night-time leisure economy (Rogerson & Hart, 1986).

Culture has become an important component of local and regional development, and also tourism placemaking policies especially in urban areas (Richards, 2014; Lew, 2017). The basis of creative tourism is culture which is regarded as a resource in creative economy debates (Richards, 2014; Duxbury et al., 2016). It should be mentioned that cultural and creative policies are associated with neo-liberal urban change and intensified uneven economic development as also is witnessed in the South African context (McGuigan, 2005; Booyens, 2012; Florida, 2017). In addition, it is argued that slum formation is strongly linked to neo-liberal urban policies (Linke, 2012; Nisbett, 2017). However, Frenzel (2016) suggests that there are alternatives to Fordist urban planning and that a case can be made for the stimulation of economic opportunities through tourism as an avenue to address pressing socio-economic challenges. Cultural resources are significant for opening potential pathways for spreading the benefits of urban tourism, which has exhibited strong growth over the past three decades, to peripheral township areas in South Africa (see George & Booyens, 2014; Booyens & Rogerson, 2019). The emphasis of creative tourism is on creative expressions of culture which include:

1. Active learning experiences, based on culture, whereby tourists become active participants and co-creators of the experiences they consume;
2. Creative precincts linked to cultural and tourism consumption, placemaking and urban development;
3. Creative spectacles and events centred on culture.

The observations presented below focus on townships around Johannesburg and Cape Town, which are South Africa's leading urban tourism destinations (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017). As has been demonstrated for Johannesburg the townships of Soweto mainly are visited by domestic tourists primarily engaged in visiting friends and relatives (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016). In light of the growing number of international visitors to townships in South Africa and a number of investigations which observe that visitors to townships are interested in culture and heritage activities and attractions (see Rolfes et al., 2009; Booyens, 2010; City of Cape Town, 2013; Steinbrink, 2013), George and Booyens (2014) argue that there is a latent demand for culture-led, experience-based tourism in townships. However, culture and heritage resources in townships are typically underdeveloped for tourism purposes (Booyens, 2010; George & Booyens, 2014). In addition, locals benefit little from current configurations of township tourism which mostly take the form of bus tours which

afford visitors only limited opportunities to interact with local residents (Rolfes et al., 2009; Booyens, 2010; Frenzel et al., 2015; Koens & Thomas, 2016).

Accordingly, it is suggested that more first-hand experiences between visitors and locals, with a focus on culture and learning, holds the potential for augmenting the township tourism product in a responsible manner (Booyens, 2010; George & Booyens, 2014; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015). Booyens (2010) suggests that first-hand experiences should not only enhance the authenticity of visitor experiences to townships, but also create more opportunities for locals to benefit directly. Booyens and Rogerson (2015) observe an emerging form of creative experience-based tourism in Cape Town which is focused on music, arts and crafts, food cuisine, and history and township realities. For instance, visitors are taken to the homes of hosts, often but not exclusively in townships, for experiences *vis-à-vis* local cuisines, art, and music, such as jazz or drumming sessions. Recent developments include the emergence of pop-up dinners and bicycle or walking tours in certain townships. One example is a walking art tour in Langa (Cape Town) as part of the Maboneng Township Art Experience, which also operates in the Alexandra (Johannesburg). Visitors are taken on a walking tour of street art which celebrates local figures (musicians, sport stars, or historical persons) from or associated with Langa, in addition to depictions related to ‘struggle’ history. Visitors are also taken to home galleries to view art works, interact with some of the hosts, and participate in art making. The initiative is a social enterprise which emphasizes that locals who participate in the initiative benefit directly.

The cultural focus of creative spectacles is performing arts, which are, in most cases, passively consumed by visitors (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Culture-related events identified in Soweto include book festivals, food festivals, and markets, various music performances, theatre and performance art products, and art and craft markets. One example of a creative spectacle is also organized by the Maboneng Township Art Experience initiative, which hosts an annual cultural festival in both Alexandra and Langa involving the opening of home galleries to visitors for art exhibitions, performances, or storytelling about family histories. Cultural events identified in Cape Town’s townships are mostly occasional music concerts and performance art productions, and events associated with food and drink. Examples include the Fringe Festival (performance art festival) in Cape Town, which uses venues in both Langa and Gugulethu for performances, and the Gugulethu Beer and Whisky Festival.

Tourism precincts are the spatial clustering of tourism services such as accommodation establishments, restaurants, shopping facilities (including markets), and other activities and services. Lew (2017) draws attention the ‘planned placemaking’ approach where urban planning and design feature in tourism placemaking processes. With the creative tourism discourse, the focus is on creating ‘more interesting and vibrant places’ often in areas where creative firms cluster and intersect with cultural and tourism consumption (Richards, 2014; Lew, 2017). In the case of Soweto, tourism precinct development has expanded in recent years. The most developed precinct is the area around Vilakazi Street in which a house of Nelson Mandela is situated and the nearby Hector Pieterse Museum and Memorial commemorating that tragic events of the 1976 youth uprising, which marked a watershed moment in the struggle against apartheid. Although township tourism product in Soweto centres on struggle attractions, the Vilakazi precinct has been upgraded in the last decade (i.e., improved public spaces, facilities, and facades) and expanded to include a vast array of shops, stalls, and restaurants. Another example of precinct development in Soweto is Kliptown. Although this area has a heritage memorial, a hotel, and a museum, it is poorly developed for tourism overall and mostly operates as a taxi rank and space for informal

traders. In Cape Town's townships, there are a few heritage monuments and sites as well as some restaurants and coffee shops that are popular among tourists. However, evidence of tourism and/or cultural precinct development is minimal. The best example is the Langa Heritage Precinct. The multi-purpose Guga S'Thebe Arts and Cultural Centre is the anchor of the precinct with a civic centre, the Old Pass Court Museum, several heritage sites, and the emerging Langa Quarter (a township redevelopment project with a focus on culture and tourism) in the vicinity. Arguably, this precinct holds considerable potential for further creative development.

## 5 Conclusion

In reshaping slum tourism in South Africa, there is an important potential role for creative tourism. A re-imagining is needed whereby the emphasis shifts from a narrow focus on struggle heritage and 'viewing poverty' to include contemporary urban cultural heritage more broadly. In other words, less slum tourism and more creative tourism. The implication is that the understanding of cultural heritage in townships needs to be expanded and repackaged as creative tourism, which entails hosting more creative experiences, creating and/or expanding cultural tourism precincts, and promoting cultural events with an emphasis on creativity. It is argued that diversity in the township tourism offering should enable more persons to participate in the tourism economy, offer opportunities for the physical upgrading of townships, and stimulate more domestic visitor consumption and use of leisure spaces. More specifically, creative experiences enable hosts to benefit directly from interactions with visitors, which also enhances the authenticity of visitor experiences. Multi-purpose cultural centres and upgraded precincts should benefit township residents and cultural events, which mostly target local day visitors, domestic tourists as well as local residents, can also be marketed to international visitors to expand the existing creative township tourism offering. Such a re-creation of township tourism not only increases the potential for a variety of opportunities to stimulate economic activities and upgrade tourism spaces, but also negates the view of visits to townships as voyeuristic since the emphasis is no longer on visitors simply viewing slums and poverty, but instead on visitors participating in cultural heritage with locals.

In the light of the observations concerning emerging examples of creative tourism in townships presented in this paper, we argue that creative slum tourism is a topic which is ripe for further investigation. There is a need to embed creative slum tourism in creative tourism debates. Suggested academic and policy related research challenges include:

- Determining the nature and scale of creative tourism activities in slum areas;
- Investigating visitor demand in relation to creative slum tourism offerings;
- Considering how the current slum tourism offerings can be creatively diversified in a responsible manner with an emphasis on accruing benefits to locals, expanding economic opportunities and upgrading slum spaces;
- Determining the nature of cultural representations of people and townships through creative forms of tourism (i.e. how do township residents see themselves, are traditionalist images portrayed or is there evidence of an emerging contemporary urban township culture?); and,
- Interrogating appropriate policy responses to creative slum tourism and creative entrepreneurship in specific contexts.

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## Stellenbosch coffee society: Societal and locational preferences

### Abstract

Stellenbosch is a university town boasting knowledge-intensive economic sectors with a variety of ‘new economy’ occupations and activities. The presence of a professional and creative class, as well as university students has changed the economy, the retail landscape and the social spaces of the town. This paper reports on an investigation of the geography of coffee shops (third places) in downtown Stellenbosch and describes the social and physical factors which influence customer preferences for certain coffee shops. A brief review of the literature on the evolution of coffee shop and café cultures, the functioning as third places and the siting of coffee shops in inner cities (or specific neighbourhoods) is presented. A mixed-methods research approach consisting of transect walks, a questionnaire survey and three in-depth-interviews with coffee shop owners (or managers) is explained. The study area in the historical precinct of the town is contextualised. The bigger picture of coffee consumption in Stellenbosch – social and locational preferences, place attachments of consumers and the relative location of coffee shops – is sketched. The findings of three in-depth case studies (selected speciality coffee shops) are discussed. The paper concludes by pointing out some implications for the planning of consumption spaces in secondary cities in developing world contexts.

**Keywords:** coffee shops, third places, new economy, locational preferences, place attachment

### 1 Introduction

Visiting coffee shops is now commonplace and this phenomenon has resulted in an urban geography of consumption spaces. Ever since the early eighteenth century, social gathering places – the so-called third places – gained importance in cities. Coffee shops are often prevalent in these spaces (Oldenburg, 1999; Trugman, 2016). These familiar coffee shops in certain urban neighbourhoods are daily rituals and influence the routines of people (Waxman, 2006). Customers frequent coffee shops for many more reasons than just satiating hunger or quenching thirst. There is the escape from a stressful office, the chance to maintain or grow a relationship, a place to get away for some reflective work, a chance to engage with friendly coffee shop staff at a particularly lonely time or as a place to do business and reach agreements (Baskerville, 2015). Coffee shops are a singularly important feature of a vast network of gathering spaces that make up our urban areas (Topik 2009). A coffee shop is a place where coffee is only a pretext to obtain other experiences. Patrons know “that there is more than coffee, eating and drinking in coffee shops: different kinds of sense, feeling, experience, culture and globalisation” (Sohrabi, 2016: 1). For long coffee shops have been places of social interaction and given that coffee is the most widely consumed beverage in the world<sup>1</sup>, it is vital to understand the geography of these spaces of consumption (Oldenburg, 1999; Elliott, 2001; Cowan, 2005; Topik, 2009; Trugman, 2016).

Stellenbosch is a University town that prides itself with knowledge-intensive economic sectors and a variety of ‘new economy’ occupations and activities. The presence of a professional and creative class, as well as students, has changed the economy, the retail

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<sup>1</sup> Large transnational companies like Starbucks are amplifying the spread of a coffee culture.

landscape and the social spaces of the town. Stellenbosch is the location of head offices of prominent private investment, auditing and legal companies and a popular tourist- and leisure destination. Although Stellenbosch is well known for its quality wines, it also enjoys a thriving coffee consumption culture. In this research, a coffee shop is defined as a public gathering place, privately owned and locally managed, where coffee is served from a wide list of coffee blends as part of the establishment's food and beverage list. A specialised coffee shop – is a coffee shop where coffee sales make up at least 60% of the establishment's revenue and where “specialty coffees” are available. Coffee are marketed as organic coffees, Fair Trade coffees, and other seemingly socially responsible coffees (West, 2010; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). This investigation aims to shed light on the local coffee culture and to capture the social and physical factors that influence the consumer preferences for certain coffee shops. To understand the siting of the town's coffee shops, who they cater for and the reasons for their success, the opinions of the owners (or managers) of three speciality coffee shops were investigated. The paper has six-sections of review and analysis. First, a brief review of the literature on the evolution of coffee shop and café cultures, the functioning as third places and the locations of coffee shops in certain urban precincts is presented. Second, a mix-methods research approach consisting of transect walks, a questionnaire survey and three in-depth interviews with the owners or managers of speciality coffee shops is explained. Third, the study area in historic central Stellenbosch is contextualised. Fourth, the bigger picture of coffee consumption in Stellenbosch downtown – the social and locational preferences, place attachments of consumers and the relative location of coffee shops – is sketched. Fifth, the findings of three case studies of selected speciality coffee shops are discussed and conclusions are drawn. Last, recommendations are made to the local municipality regarding the licensing of new coffee shops and the siting of these new shops.

## **2 Coffee shops: Origins, social functions, physical factors and locations**

There has been a variety of studies on the social nature of cafés and coffee shops over the past decades (Tjora, 2013). These include amongst others: coffee shops and political culture (Pincus, 1995); café culture (Montgomery, 1997); coffee shops as third places (Oldenburg, 1999); coffee shops and reduced levels of crime (Papachristos et al., 2011); coffee culture (Tucker, 2017); coffee shops and social movements (Sohrabi, 2016); and cappuccino cities (Austin & Whitehead, 1998; Laurier & Philo 2005; Hyra, 2017). This paper concentrates on the origins of coffee shops and café culture in urban spaces, coffee shops as third places and the geography of coffee shops.

### **2.1 Origins of coffee shops and café culture**

The drinking of coffee in the world has been an integral part of social life for a long time. In the early 1500s, there were already coffee shops established in Cairo and Damascus (Kafadar, 2014). By the end of the sixteenth century, there were hundreds of coffeehouses in Istanbul and many more hundreds spread across the Ottoman Empire (Örs, 2002). The emergence and spread of coffeehouses in Istanbul coincided with various other dynamics and processes of the early modern era (changing night-time practices, including the emergence of certain new forms of art and public entertainment) (Kafadar, 2014). The first coffeehouse in the United Kingdom was established in Oxford (university town) in 1650. While the first coffeehouse in London opened its doors to the public in 1652. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, London had 3,000 coffeehouses, each with a core group of regulars (Lillywhite, 1963). Coffeehouses were the “prime information centres ... at this time. It was here that the

newspapers were read, that tracts and leaflets were published, that insurance was invented, that all manner of business was transacted” (Sennett, 1974: 82). Since the 1950s coffee has become a favourite drink in most western societies with countless North Americans consuming coffee daily (Elliott, 2001). Coffee shops and the popularity of consuming coffee have come a long way since the early work of Harbermas<sup>2</sup> (1989) which described ‘English coffeehouses’ as contained and egalitarian spaces for calm, rational-critical debates. The historical role of coffee shops has been one of venues for social intercourse, conversation and political debate.

To improve and re-create the urban public realm – a number of UK cities have tried to create a certain level of café culture – as part of a wider drive to earmark investment for the redesign of plazas, streets and parks (Landry & Bianchini, 1995; Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995; Kjeldgaard & Ostberg, 2007). These designs were intended to encourage a more active social life in urban public space (Montgomery, 1997). In Utrecht, Oosterman (1992: 161) has argued that the “sidewalk café is an excellent example of ... individual pleasure derived from the public realm”. The entertaining force of the street is the main attraction of the sidewalk café (Oosterman, 1992: 161). Oosterman's (1992) research has revealed that the 'best' cafés were those where the street life around them is heterogeneous, but that each café can be distinguished by special characteristics such as the age and consumption patterns and lifestyles of its clientele. Within countries, some cities have more vibrant public social lives than others do. This means that the “cultural influences on public social life exist at the 'macro' level – but they are also partly a reflection of micro-conditions, customs and traditions” (Montgomery, 1997: 89). Coffeehouses in Austria are something of an institution and act as traditional meeting places. A café (Ger. *Kaffeehaus*) is the best place to relax, read the newspaper and to enjoy the good things in life. In Vienna – a city ranked with the highest quality of life for the ninth year in a row (Shea, 2018) – the drinking of coffee is a way of life, and a distinct and essential part of local culture. UNESCO added Viennese coffee house culture to their list of intangible cultural heritage, saying that the coffeehouses have a ‘very specific atmosphere’ and are places where coffee, time and space are consumed (Hoeller, 2015). Concomitant with urbanisation processes, the coffee shop today epitomises a society with less time for long lunches, on the lookout for a place to socialise, multitask, catch up on work or do other related tasks (Elliott, 2001).

## 2.2 Coffee shops as third places

Ray Oldenburg (1999) coined the term ‘third place’ in his book *The Great Good Place*. Cafés are quintessential third places, ‘homes away from home’, where unrelated people relate. These local, accessible and inclusive ‘great, good places’ act as staging grounds for cultivating the vital informal public life fundamental to all cultures. Third places are characteristically places that help people get through the day and they differ from the usual gathering places such as home or work in our modern societies. They are social gathering places serving as a middle ground, as a third place between home and work. Third places are those public places that “host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals” (Oldenburg, 1999: 16). Coffee shops had become places where people would gather, speak freely and mingle with others from their community, disregarding rank and social status (Sennet, 1974; Oldenburg, 1999; Pendergrast, 1999). These third places act as conductors in society, providing neutral ground where one is easily able to connect

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<sup>2</sup> Harbermas’ 1962 book on English coffee houses was originally published in German and translated into English in 1989.

with people as well as exchange news and ideas (Waxman, 2006). Third places have been integral in facilitating communication while their “significance has increased during specific historic periods, providing a petri dish for social action, cultural shifts and political change” (Trugman, 2016: 1). Although beyond the scope of this investigation, fourth places are closely related to ‘third places’ in terms of social and behavioural characteristics, involving a radical departure from the routines of home and work, inclusivity and social comfort (Franck & Stevens, 2007). However, the activities, users, locations and spatial conditions that support them are very different. While in ‘third places’ conversation is the primary activity, in ‘fourth places’ it is all activities in-between the necessary activities: people-watching, walking, waiting, or killing-time. What distinguishes ‘fourth places’ the most are their location and character as well as their sense of publicness (e.g. broad spectrum of users; socially open; Aelbrecht, 2016).

### **2.3 Geography of coffee shops, consumption spaces and retail landscapes**

The shift from Fordism to post-Fordism with its strong bearing on learning, creativity and innovation has led to the emergence of new socio-economic arrangements in cities. The new economic order depends on flexible, specialised and skilled urban labour as well as occupations requiring significant levels of human capital (Scott, 2014). Occupational categories and knowledge-intensive economic sectors such as managers, professional workers, business and financial analysts, scientific researchers, technicians, skilled crafts workers, designers and artists comprise the top tiers of the new economy (Scott, 2008; Kloosterman, 2010). People involved in the new economy have changed the retail landscape of cities and contributed to a renaissance of interest in urban culture. Certain types of restaurants, cafés, bars and shops have emerged in certain neighbourhoods as highly visible signs of gentrification (Zukin et al., 2009) and also as the “critical infrastructure of new urban culture” (Zukin & Kosta, 2004: 102). Coffee shops typify urban regeneration (Bell, 2007) and the development of habitable and hospitable cities (Thrift, 2005). Murphy (2016) has correlated the prevalence of coffee shops with deprivation and crime, noting that more coffee shops in a certain precinct coincided with less crime – strongly suggestive of gentrification. Consumption spaces, such as coffee shops, have a powerful influence on attracting new residents while also leading to a subtle gentrification of inner city social spaces (Bell, 2007).

### **2.4 Place attachment, interior and exterior attributes of coffee shops**

Consumers evaluate a design scape to understand a locale’s place meaning or identity. By doing so, they are able to answer internal questions, such as “what is this place?” and “will I be able to fulfil my goals in this locale?” (Hall, 2008: 1). Another factor that influences human behaviour regarding choice of third places (coffee shops, wine bars, and craft beer boutiques) is place attachment. This involves the creation of positively experienced bonds over time from the behavioural, affective and cognitive ties between individuals and/or groups and their socio-physical environments (Brown & Perkins, 1992; Waxman, 2006). Waxman (2006) has even made a comprehensive assessment, from an architect’s point of view, of social spaces, especially coffee shops. According to Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983) the experience of place is unique to each individual and is directly related to his or her lived experiences. Attachment to place comes about through a set of related phenomena rather than a singular phenomenon (Low & Altman, 1992). In a study, exploring the characteristics that encourage gathering behaviour and contribute to place attachment in selected coffee shops Waxman (2006) found that the top five design considerations included cleanliness, appealing aroma, adequate lighting, comfortable furniture, and a view to the

outside. Lukito and Xenia (2018) aver that contemporary cafés need to meet at least ‘middle-class standards’ for cleanliness and interior in order to brand themselves and compete with other cafés. The Viennese cafés set the standard when the exterior and interior of coffee consumption spaces are considered. Waiters wore tailcoats, and cafés featured marble tables, plush velvet couches, and elegant chandeliers (Hoeller, 2015). Modern cafés like Starbucks offers modern designscapes, free Wifi and sockets to charge smartphones and laptops as well as a comfortable seating for social interaction; a remarkable thing that Starbucks does besides marketing modern lifestyles and technology driven by globalization is local adjustment to particular places (Lukito & Xenia, 2018).

### 3 Research methodology

A mixed-methods approach was followed to collect primary and secondary data and information. Primary data was collected by undertaking transect walks; and conducting a questionnaire survey among coffee drinkers in Stellenbosch. Moreover, in-depth interviews were held with the owners or managers of three speciality coffee shops and the activities and interactions of the coffee drinkers were observed at these selected consumption spaces. Data collection commenced with an exploratory walk through the historical part of Stellenbosch to grasp the sense of place of the precincts which host concentrations of coffee shops or ribbon developments along the main streets in the historical town centre. This orientation walk assisted the selection of three speciality coffee shops for in-depth case study. Transect walks were conducted street by street in the downtown area of Stellenbosch to capture physical and relative locations<sup>3</sup> of coffee shops in a geographical information system (GIS). A questionnaire survey comprising 25 questions was conducted among Stellenbosch residents and coffee shop clientele to establish a demographic profile of the coffee consumers and their consumption patterns. Some of the questions required participants to rank the importance of the physical, social and environmental characteristics of coffee shops. Most of the questions were based on those posed in previous research on third places and attachment to places in coffee environments (Waxman, 2006; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). In total 133 questionnaires were completed. Figure 1 (a), (b) and (c) provides the demographic profile of the respondents.

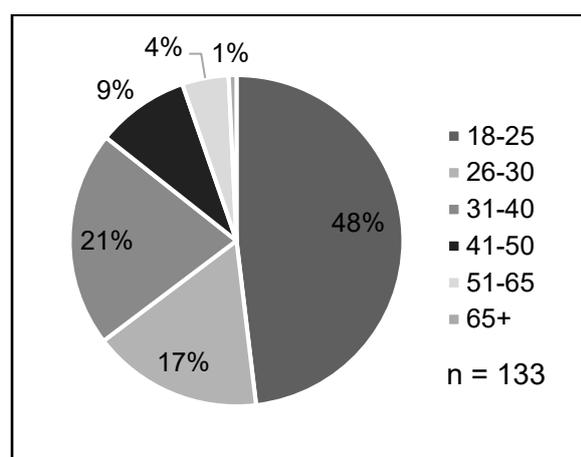


Figure 1a): Age of respondents

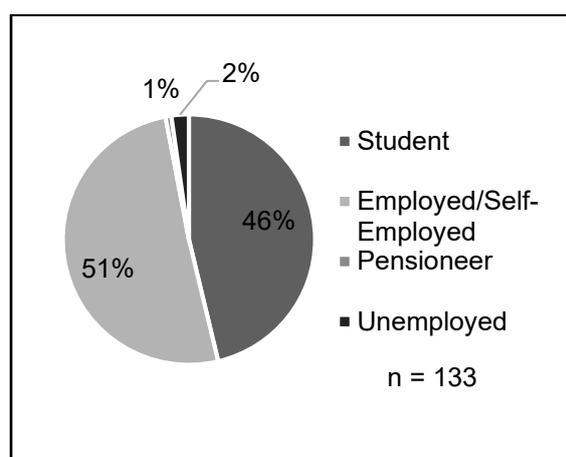


Figure 1b: Occupation of respondents

<sup>3</sup> This involved the coffee shops' location relative to other superstructures, such as historical buildings, educational facilities, tourist facilities, legal and financial offices.

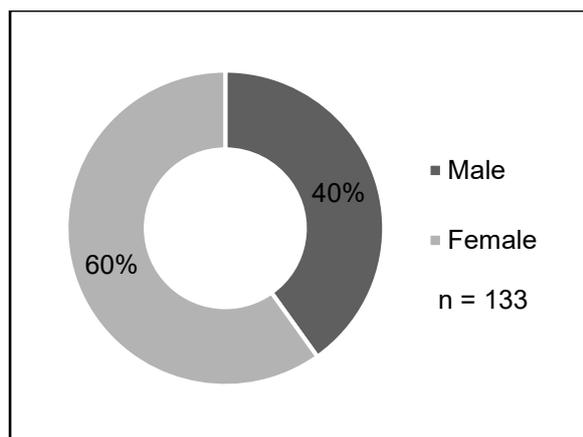


Figure 1c: Gender of respondents

Figure 1: Demographic structure of respondents (illustration: Lukas Beuster).

In each case study, notes were made about external and internal design features such as furniture, artificial and natural lighting, placement and availability of electrical socket outlets, views and the presence of music. Part of a visual documentation process was the photographing of the exterior and interior of each coffee shop. To capture the demographic profiles, the consumption and behavioural patterns of the customers of the three selected coffee shops, undisclosed participant observation was done. Patrons in each coffee shop were observed over at least a two-week period during different times of the day and week. After the data collection process was completed, all data and information gathered underwent qualitative and quantitative analyses. The quantitative analysis was completed using SPSS-Software. Three qualitative information assisted in explaining the geography of preferred coffee shops, and how these social spaces contribute a hospitable town and vibrant café culture.

In the following subsection the study area is introduced as context for the investigation of the geography of coffee shops (third places); their location is examined; and results of the questionnaire survey on the social and physical factors which influence the preferences for certain coffee consumption spaces and the three speciality coffee shops are presented.

#### **4 The geography of coffee shops in Stellenbosch: A case study**

Stellenbosch – a university city – of about 160 000 residents. It is a major tourism node in the Cape Winelands district (Ferreira & Hunter, 2017). A substantial part of the town's population is made up of students of Stellenbosch University (32 000 in 2018) (Stellenbosch University 2018). Stellenbosch has an affluent business society and hosts the headquarters of a number of large corporations spanning the finance, agribusiness and health care sectors.

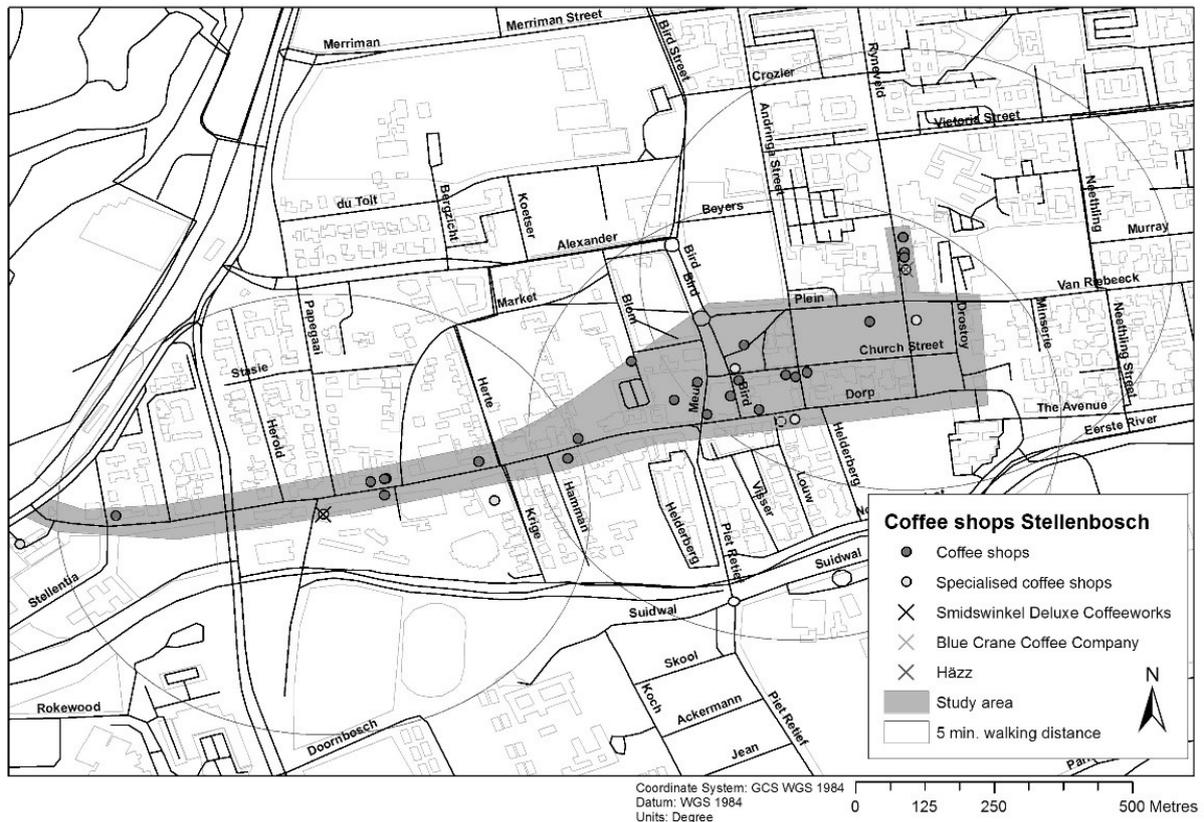


Figure 2: The distribution of coffee shops in central Stellenbosch (illustration: Lukas Beuster).

#### 4.1 Study area

The study area (Figure 2) covers the historic downtown area of Stellenbosch, which is a popular walkthrough for tourists along streets lined with outdoor sculptures, galleries, eateries, coffee shops and souvenir shops. Church Street is the centre of the precinct where the ‘cappuccino society meets’, an area possessing a variety of consumption spaces amid an historic Cape Dutch townscape (Stellenbosch 360, 2018). Church Street is located in the corporate and social centre of town in close proximity of the university campus, many office buildings and retail shops. Another popular consumption space is along the lower part of Dorp Street with its ambience of Cape Dutch heritage and lined with a variety of eateries, bars and coffee shops with office-filled streets branching off it. This area is also close to residential buildings. These consumption spaces are ideally situated for entertaining tourists, students and office workers so that they are very popular and convenient destinations for an early-morning coffee, but especially over lunchtime and after work hours.

The findings of this study are presented following in three parts. First, the geography of the coffee shops is described. Second, the general consumer preferences for the coffee spaces in Stellenbosch are discussed. Third, insights gained from the case studies of the three speciality coffee shops are presented.

#### 4.2 Location of coffee shops in Stellenbosch

The study area includes 22 coffee shops and nine speciality coffee shops (Figure 1). Some of these shops are part of national franchise networks and others are individually owned. The distribution pattern of the coffee shops reveals three clusters in the study area. The three case

studies were purposively selected to ensure that one speciality coffee shop from each cluster was investigated. The Ryneveld Street-Van Riebeeck Street ‘incipient cluster’ is composed of six coffee shops, two of which are categorised as speciality coffee shops. One of the case studied speciality coffee shops, Häzz which belongs to a national coffee chain, is located in this cluster. These six shops are located within a five-minute walking zone from the south-western end of the university campus, the surrounding residential area and the social hub (defined in the next paragraph) of the town. Ryneveld Street is one of the popular walkthroughs or corridor streets between the university campus and the centre of town. The coffee shops form part of a ribbon of social gathering spaces and retail shops. Students are the dominant clientele of these coffee shops and owing to the venues proximity to the centre of town, their other patrons originate from the nearby offices and retail buildings as well as visitors to Stellenbosch. During days parking opportunities in this area are extremely hard to find. The second cluster is in Church Street, the southern part of Bird Street and the central part of Dorp Street where it comprises eleven coffee shops, two of which are speciality shops. Blue Crane Coffee Company, a case study, occurs in this aggregation. This group of coffee shops is situated in the town centre – the old water wheel precinct<sup>4</sup> – that constitutes the social hub of the city and main touristic area. Interspersed between these coffee shops are eateries, galleries and wine bars so that these consumption spaces are well frequented during the day, but especially just after work. The patrons of these coffee shops represent a diverse population due to the areas central location and accessibility by foot. Paid parking in this area is scarce but available. The lower Dorp Street aggregation – third incipient cluster – between Market Road and Herold Street comprises five coffee shops, two of which are specialty. Dorp Street, the main access road into the centre of town, is extremely busy with vehicle traffic during rush hours. This cluster is within a five-minute walking zone to a variety of corporate offices and apartment blocks so that it is highly frequented by the working population of Stellenbosch. It is more than five minutes walking distance from the town centre and even farther from the university campus, so limiting the number of student patrons during the day. However, this distance does not prevent them from flocking there ‘en masse’ during the early evenings. The case studied Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks is located in this area.

### **4.3 Preferences of the coffee society of Stellenbosch**

This subsection furnishes an account of the responses given in the questionnaire survey regarding consumer preferences for coffee shops in Stellenbosch. The main reasons for visiting a coffee shop (in descending order of importance) are to drink coffee; to socialise; to work or study; to relax; and to eat. According to an assessment on a five point Likert-scale of the importance of the social and physical factors which influence preferences for certain coffee shops, were quality of the coffee (4.7), cleanliness (4.5), the quality of service (4.4), staff friendliness and expertise (4.3) and ambience (4.1) (Figure 3).

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<sup>4</sup> The derelict historic waterwheel was reinstalled in April 2018.

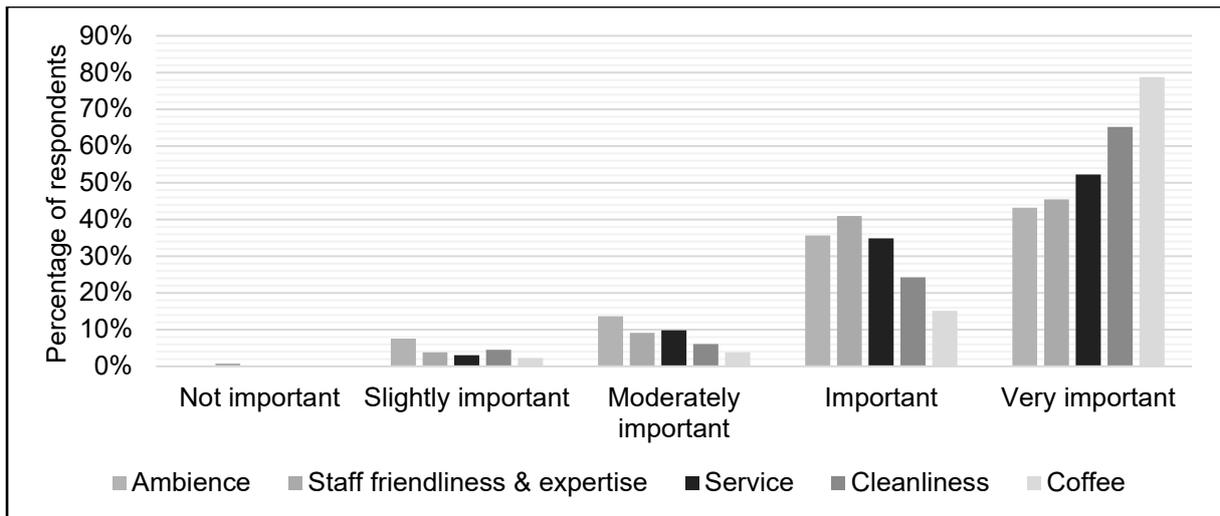


Figure 3: Factors influencing respondents' preferences for coffee shops in Stellenbosch (illustration: Lukas Beuster).

The survey also revealed differences between certain preferences of men and women. Women rated comfortable seating, exterior and interior design, menu options, Wi-Fi, safety and parking higher than men did. The greatest difference was for comfortable seating where the women respondents' average rating was 4.0 as opposed to that of men (3.5). Furthermore, differences were found between the preferences of students and the working population (Figure 4). The latter rated staff-visitor interaction, comfortable seating and availability of parking their most important factors, while for students the primary consideration were ambience, comfortable seating and staff visitor interaction. A noteworthy difference between the two groups was their rating of parking availability. The working population's average rating for the importance of available parking is 3.5, while the students rating were 3.0.

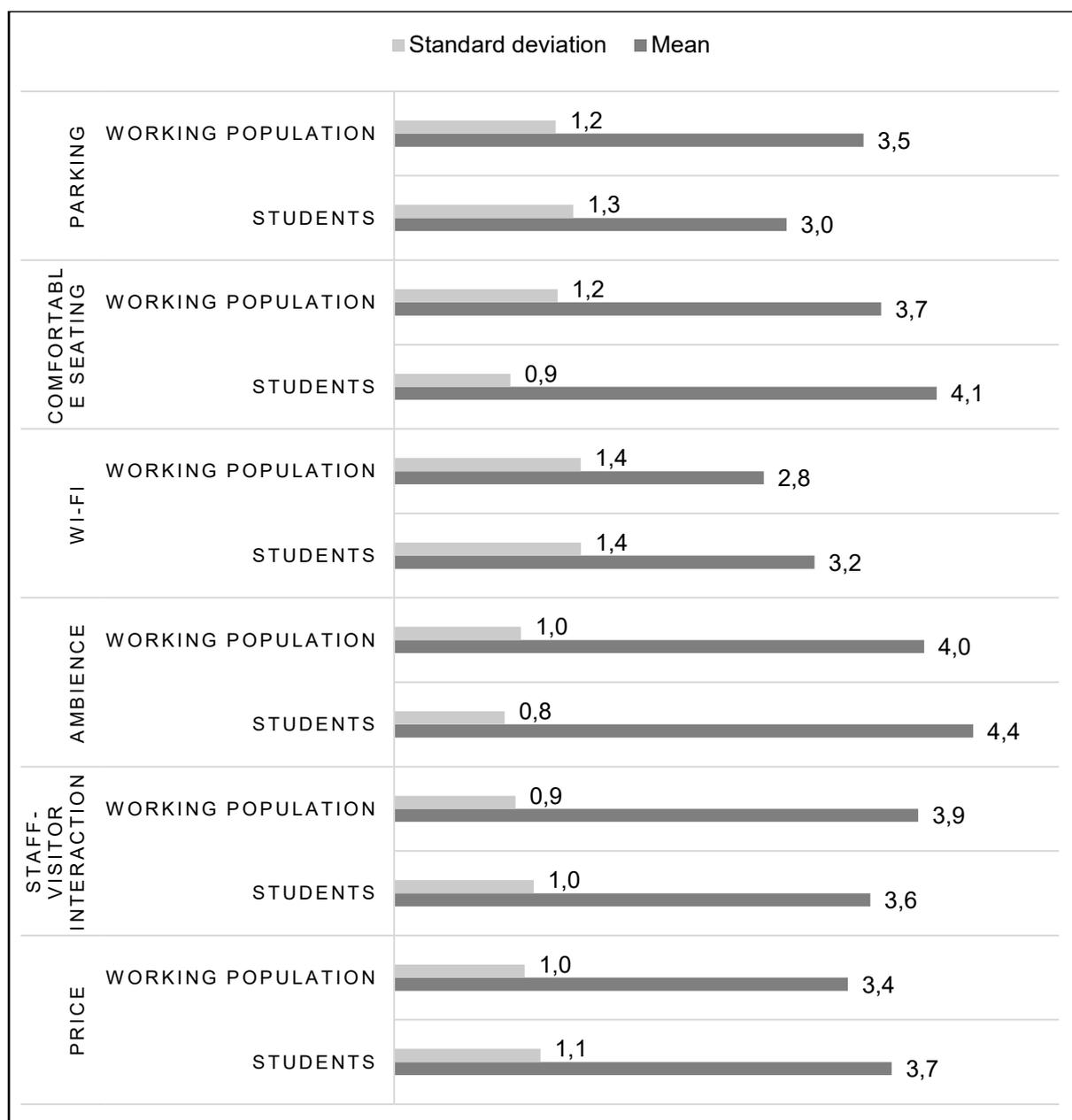


Figure 4: Working population versus university student's preferences on certain factors influencing their patronising of coffee shop (illustration: Lukas Beuster).

### 5 Case Studies: Three speciality coffee shops

The following section presents the insights from the three speciality coffee shops. The drawbacks of the three selected coffee shops – Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks, Häzz and Blue Crane Coffee Company are good quality coffee, their relative locations, their individual exterior architectures, special interior ambiences and the availability of parking. The *Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks* case is a member of a regional specialty coffee shop chain with four shops in Cape Town and two in Stellenbosch. The case study speciality coffee shop was established in 2014, is privately owned and locally managed. It is located on the periphery of the study area, in easy walking distance from the Blitzbokke's<sup>5</sup> accommodation

<sup>5</sup> Blitzbokke is the name of the South African national rugby sevens team.

facility and training grounds as well as near to a concentration of professional services housed in adjacent office buildings, but relatively far from the university campus and the social hub of the town. The coffee shop is housed in an historic Cape Dutch building and is located at the corner of a three-way intersection on Dorp Street, the busy arterial street. There are no other coffee shops in its immediate vicinity. The exterior (Figure 5) features of the building gives no indication of the look and feel of the interior (Figure 6). There is ample parking nearby which is a considerable advantage in a parking deficient town. Regular consumers can park right in front of the shop for takeaway coffees or short visits.

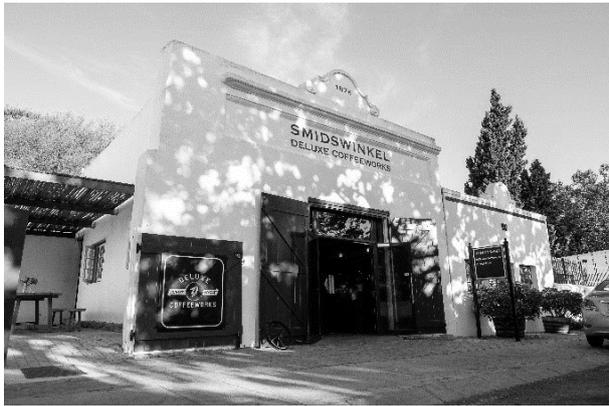


Figure 5: Exterior view Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks (photo: Lukas Beuster).



Figure 6: Interior view Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks (photo: Lukas Beuster).

According to the manager of Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks, the Shop's location was mainly chosen for the availability of parking and the proximity to legal, financial, an architects and agribusiness related office environments. The interior of Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks comprises a large service counter with a black tiled floor and ample seating. The seating arrangement features three large tables inside and four on the outside, the latter doubling the seating capacity. The tables are at both sitting and standing height with reasonably comfortable barstools and benches to create a casual seating arrangement. Most of the furniture is custom designed for this shop and features much exposed wood and painted steel to give an industrial but clean look (Figure 6). Background music is a mix but mostly rock music, which compliments the ambience, is audible inside the shop but fades outside. The shop is designed for quality-conscious customers. Service quality, customer interaction and the creation of a friendly atmosphere are managements' most important considerations along with the promotion of a certain lifestyle and the offering of high-quality coffees, juices, alcoholic beverages and snacks. The targeted consumer group is not age specific, rather personality related (Wijnbeek, 2017, pers.com). Personal observation revealed that members of the new economy working population of Stellenbosch primarily frequent the shop during

their free time, scheduled meetings or to socialise and relax after work. The coffee shop invites a lingering behaviour and more patrons consume their coffee in-house than as takeaways or coffee on the go. The size of the tables enables people to share the space without sacrificing individual privacy while facilitating interaction between visitors. Few students frequent the shop during the morning, but their numbers increase during the afternoons. In the afternoons, the shop is frequented by a variety of people from different age groups who socialise, work, study or relax with a drink. Most of the clients appear to be regulars. No visible menu is available and the customers engage actively with the staff so increasing staff visitor interaction. Service is generally quick with queues only forming during rush hours and they usually remain short.



Figure 7: Exterior view Blue Crane Coffee Company coffee shop (photo: Lukas Beuster).



Figure 8: Interior view Blue Crane Coffee Company coffee shop (photo: Lukas Beuster).

The Blue Crane Coffee Company is a speciality coffee shop and part of a local coffee shop brand.<sup>6</sup> The shop is privately owned, locally managed and opened at the beginning of 2017. It is located on a busy arterial route lined with various restaurants, cafés, offices and shops. It is located on the outer edge of the social hub of the town as part of a ribbon of retail shops, offices and eateries in upper Dorp Street (recall Figure 2). The coffee shop is housed inside of an historic Cape Dutch building and necessarily has little branding or advertising on the exterior of the building (Figure 7). The owners previously used the building as office space, the venue was chosen owing to its availability and proximity to the family's other business. It is the first of their shops to focus on the coffee experience by serving as a roaster and as a

<sup>6</sup> There are two Blue Crane Coffee shops in Stellenbosch – both family owned – only one of them is case studied.

coffee shop with a small point of sale, a dedicated takeaway window and limited seating capacity (Joubert, 2017). The Blue Crane Coffee Company has the smallest physical space of the three case studied coffee shops. The main room features four wooden tables at standing height with barstools for seating. There is also a lounge with a sofa and armchairs. Because space is at a premium, the tables in the main room are quite narrow and there is little space between the reasonably comfortable stools and the tables. Glass doors are fitted as partitions between the rooms to create an illusion of space in a small area. The coffee shops' interior is an open design and the visitors can see the roasting machine and the coffee laboratory through glass doors. Its minimalist interior design, in conjunction with the exposed wood creates a warm and peaceful atmosphere, amplified by subtle background music, which is changed regularly (Figure 8).

Due to the limited availability of space in the shop, it was purposely designed to appeal to quality-conscious customers for quick takeaways and short coffee breaks throughout the day. Given the shop's location in close proximity to offices, the target customers are high-end professionals, specifically from the investment, legal, auditing and private banking sectors. The shop is managed with an emphasis on excellent quality coffee, a professional mind-set and personalised service to the extent that staff memorise regular customers tastes and preferences so that they do not need to vocalise their orders (Joubert, 2017). Due to the shop's location on the edge of the social hub, the professionals or the so-called creative class of Stellenbosch frequent it daily. Observations confirmed other consumers too – university students and tourists. The shop's main business is take away coffees and these customers do not linger. The limited space inside attracts people who want to work and ample socket outlets allow for long work sessions. The lounge is a veritable social space used by small groups for relaxing and socialising.



Figure 9: Exterior view of the Häzz coffee shop (photo: Lukas Beuster).



Figure 10: Interior view of the Häzz coffee shop (photo: Lukas Beuster).

Häzz is a specialised coffee shop and part of a regional chain that is privately owned and locally managed. The shop opened in 2009 and has changed owners since then. It is the longest established of the three case studies and is located on the periphery of the social hub of town but in close proximity to the university campus. It is located with other coffee shops, galleries and retail stores along the main walkway from campus to town. Although it is located near a large paid-parking lot, the acute shortage of parking near the university campus and the town centre, customers must park at some distance and walk to the shop. The shop's exterior is plain and there are tables on the sidewalk in front of the shop so increasing visibility (Figure 9). On busy days, there is a dedicated takeaway station outside the coffee shop, so reducing the number of people queueing inside for sit-down service. The interior is fitted with a large service counter and nine tables, two high-standing tables, one coffee table with an adjacent sofa, one large conference table and five tables of normal height (Figure 10). Additionally, most of the tables are equipped with socket outlets for recharging devices during long work sessions. The whole shop feels a little outdated. The location was chosen to be close to the university campus and the interior was purposefully designed to appeal to female students. A new, smoother and lighter coffee blend of high quality was created to satisfy especially the palettes of women coffee drinkers. The availability of ample sweets, snacks and lunch options is intended to attract students. Its interior was designed to cater for a large number of people and to allow for a wide range of customers by purposely creating variety and different levels of tables to enlarge the perceived space so enabling individuals and groups of different sizes to find appropriate spots to sit (Freeman, 2017). The proximity to campus is clearly reflected in the demographics of customers in the shop, namely mostly the young female students. Although located away from the social hub of the town as opposed to Blue Crane Coffee Company's location, Häzz is well situated to cater for the working population and tourists. Häzz is nearly always crowded and it is rare to find a place to sit inside during busy hours and after lunch so that many customers take their coffees to go. Despite the shop being very noisy during peak times, many patrons spend their time working and socialising with friends. Service is relatively slow and often-long queues result from the great number of customers who arrive at once during class break times at university.

## 6 Discussion and conclusion

The three speciality coffee shops share certain characteristics that are attributable to an attachment to a preference for a specific place (relative location, historical buildings; Zukin, 1987). All three shops serve high-quality coffee, are attractive spaces and are well maintained, each one an important factor influencing consumer preferences for a coffee shop regardless of gender or current occupation. All three coffee shops have free access to Wifi, provide a safe environment and have plain and unobtrusive exteriors. The latter feature attests to local building regulations regarding the preservation of the look and feel of the historical core. Although, the interiors of the three shops are unlike for, attracting particular kinds of clientele all three provide a hospitable ambiances. Opposed to these similarities, the shops have their individual foci and features that influence coffee lovers' choices and preferences (Hall, 2008). Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks concentrates on service quality, friendly staff and staff visitor interaction, all of which are favoured by the professional working population. Blue Crane Coffee Company pays attention on service quality and friendly staff, both being preferred factors by professionals who are their main target market (Laurier and Philo, 2007). Although, this coffee shop has an appealing interior design, which the survey found to be more attractive to women, its relative location near to the office-buildings housing professional services appears to attract mainly male customers. Häzz gives prominence to

comfortable seating and provides a variety of competitively-priced menu options, including lunch and snacks, which are important attractions for students and women, the shops' main target groups.

The primary factor found to influence most respondents' preference for certain coffee shops was a shop's convenient location in easy walking distance from places of study or work. This attribute is clearly observable in the customer base in each shop: students comprise the majority at Häzz close to the campus, a considerable quota at Blue Crane Coffee Company and only a minority at Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks during the regular hours of the day. Similarly, for the working population proximity is the common denominator in coffee shop preference. Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks is near offices whose occupants use the shop for coffee breaks, meetings and socialising. The coffee shops in Stellenbosch are illuminating examples of how locations catering for different target markets because preferences cannot be equally distributed among various locational choices (Turhan et al., 2013). Both Blue Crane Coffee Company and Smidswinkel Deluxe Coffeeworks are located primarily in high-turnover environments and secondarily in spaces for longer lingering. Häzz, while having to adhere to a high-turnover strategy, must also offer optional extras to students looking for a hospitable and convenient venue to work in.

The coffee shops in Stellenbosch are third places which people frequent for a variety of activities like drinking coffee, working (away from formal office environments), having meetings, socialising and relaxing (Oldenburg, 1999). Stellenbosch's coffee shops offer the convenience of a quick break from the office and much needed social interaction. This interaction mainly happens in existing social groups, the coffee shop being a fitting meeting point. Moreover, the coffee shops are also platforms for establishing new connections among regulars. This was specifically observed at Blue Crane Coffee Company where regulars have begun to form bonds while socialising in the congenial environment of the shop. The town's coffee shops are also venues for transacting business, conducting meetings and displaying one is being part of a community. The coffee shops have become an integral part of both the working and professional culture as well as student culture in Stellenbosch, with members of these groups visiting the coffee shops almost daily. In the town's vibrant centre – the Church Street precinct – the choice of commercial space is extremely limited. The three selected coffee shops were originally located in available commercial space as close as possible to their respective target markets (Freeman, 2017; Joubert, 2017; Wijnbeek, 2017) as an extra bonus gave the three historical buildings – who house them – new functions and thus longer shelf-lives.

Given the growth in the knowledge-based industries, the presence of professional services and affluent student and resident communities Stellenbosch shows all the signs of a thriving town or a secondary city<sup>7</sup>. The café culture is evident in the coffee shops, bistros, restaurants and wine bars so that Stellenbosch's town centre has developed into a 'gastro-tourism' precinct or a commercial hospitality hub as coined by Bell (2007). These consumption spaces, which include coffee shops, have played a role in the gentrification of these areas where crime is reported to be lower in relation to other areas in the town centre. The interviewed managers of the case studied coffee shops contend that the coffee market is showing early signs of saturation. This poses questions about the viability of certain coffee shops and raises the issue of the wise placement of new entrants. A lack of retail space, competition from other social gathering spaces and very high rentals will inevitably curtail

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<sup>7</sup> According to Marais, Nell and Donaldson (2016) is Stellenbosch a secondary city.

the establishment of more coffee shops. The issuing of licences by the local municipality can turn a good location for a coffee shop into an undesirable and unprofitable one. Through the ages, people have altered their surroundings in various ways to better suit their perceived needs. Through this process, we become focused on change and the evolution of our built environment, discarding outdated spaces or converting them in new functional spaces, places where society can form new bonds that can contribute to cohesion in urban societies.

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Christian M. ROGERSON

## Business tourism under apartheid: The historical development of South Africa's conference industry

### Abstract

Conference tourism as part of MICE tourism has attracted a growing international literature. It is argued existing scholarship is overwhelmingly 'present-minded' and that historical issues relating to the conference industry often are overlooked. Using historical documentary sources and industry press, this paper examines the evolution of conference tourism in South Africa from the early 1960s to the period of the country's democratic transition in 1994. Under apartheid, conference tourism was primarily a domestic affair, lacked professionalism and quality infrastructure in terms of dedicated proposed built conference venues. By 1994 whilst the country's conference industry did not have any global standard facilities, the planning for such convention centres was in process in the country's three major cities.

**Keywords:** business tourism, MICE tourism, conferences, historical tourism, apartheid, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

Conference tourism is a component of international scholarship on business tourism. Although its definition is contested the concept of business tourism is applied usually to encompass mobilities for independent business trips and travelling for purposes of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions – MICE tourism (Davidson, 1994; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Davidson & Rogers, 2006; Ladkin, 2006; Beaverstock et al., 2010; Rogers, 2013; Willis et al., 2017). Conference tourism is seen as a high-yield area of the tourism industry and a significant generator of tourism expenditure, foreign exchange and employment generation (Horvath, 2011; Iacuone & Zarrilli, 2018). Both Weber and Chon (2002) and Locke (2012) stress that because of the high quality, high-yield nature of these business travellers, tourism marketing organisations are keen to attract conference or convention visitors. Accordingly, the competition for MICE tourists, both domestically and internationally, is extremely intense (Weber & Chon, 2002; Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Marques & Santos, 2017a). For destinations there are several advantages of encouraging MICE tourism, including employment and income contributions, increased foreign exchange earnings, and local development impacts (Oppermann, 1996a; Dwyer & Mistilis, 1997; Mistilis & Dwyer, 1999; Weber, 2005; Horvath, 2011; Jones & Li, 2015; Marques & Santos, 2017a, 2017b). In addition, as Abdullah (2011: 16) points out the rise of MICE tourism “has the potential to lead to increased use of the destination for leisure tourism, with delegates possibly being motivated to return to the country, or extend their business trips, and to recommend it to others”. It is observed that an increasing number of countries and cities are building conference centres and bidding for events in order to capitalize on this sector of tourism and leverage opportunities for local economic development (Law, 1987, 1993; Campiranon & Arcodia, 2008; Monge & Brandimarte, 2011). Lau (2004: 1) states “MICE properties now form an important component of local economic development strategies and are often supported by significant public spending in the set-up and development phases”. Overall, convention centres can attract business to urban centres and catalyse substantial

returns for local economies in the form of spending on accommodation, local transportation and other tourism products in the value chain of MICE tourism (Law, 1987; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Lau, 2004; Iacuone & Zarrilli, 2018).

The decision-making processes, satisfaction and the destination images of association meeting planners as well as of MICE tourists are vibrant research themes (Oppermann, 1996a, 1996b; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Oppermann, 1998; Go & Govers, 1999; Weber, 2001; Weber & Chon, 2002; Hankinson, 2005; Casanova et al., 2006; Ladkin, 2006; Monge & Brandimarte, 2011; Chiang et al. 2012a, 2012b; Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012; Elston & Draper 2012; Fenich et al., 2014; Kuznetsova & Silcheva, 2014; Park et al., 2014). Often the results of such research, including the application of choice modelling exercises, are used to strengthen the competitive positioning and branding of individual destinations for MICE tourism (Oppermann, 1996a; Weber & Ladkin, 2003; Hankinson, 2005). The capacity of conference facilities, quality of service, accessibility as well as cost considerations are determining factors for the competitive dominance of certain cities as MICE destinations and correspondingly areas for improvement for enhancing the position of others (Go & Govers, 1999; Lew & Chang, 1999; Qu et al., 2000; Lee & Josiam, 2004). Emerging research issues in the international literature on MICE tourism encompass local policy development towards MICE tourism (Locke, 2012; Wu & Xiao, 2012; Marques & Santos, 2017a), accommodation products for business travellers (Greenberg & Rogerson, 2015, 2018), and the environmental impacts of conferences (Lee et al., 2013; Whitfield et al., 2014).

The progress made in international scholarship about conference tourism is acknowledged (Weber, 2005). This said, one notable gap in existing writings relates to historical studies of the evolution of conference tourism. Against the backdrop of the limited scope of historical research this paper analyses the evolution of conference tourism in South Africa from the early 1960s to the period of democratic transition in 1994. A range of historical documentary sources are drawn upon including national government reports, industry press, local newspapers and consultancy reports on business tourism in order to analyse the challenges of establishing a competitive conference industry sector in South Africa. Within the existing body of international and local scholarship the historical focus of this investigation is original as it represents a counter-balance to the overwhelming ‘present-mindedness’ of business tourism scholarship in general and of MICE tourism writings in particular. The unique historical context of apartheid and the making of segregated spaces impacts the unfolding development of South Africa’s conference industry.

## **2 MICE tourism in Africa**

In recent years the global meetings industry has begun to acknowledge Africa as a preferred destination for conferences. Major international convention centres have been constructed in several countries, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and most recently in Malawi as anchors for building competitiveness for conference tourism (Rogerson, 2015a, Magombo et al., 2017). This said, in terms of tourism scholarship on Africa, business tourism has been somewhat neglected in comparison to the large amount of research devoted to leisure tourism (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011; Rogerson, 2012). The relative oversight of business tourism in African tourism writings is unfortunate in view of the considerable weight of business tourism within Africa as a whole and especially for the tourism economies of certain African countries (particularly those in West and Central Africa) which have undeveloped leisure tourism economies. At present the largest volume of

existing literature relates to South Africa (Rogerson, 2005; Reynolds, 2007; Fenich et al., 2012; Thomas, 2012; Donaldson, 2013; Tiflin & Balkaran, 2014; Rogerson, 2015b; Marais et al., 2017). Among the most well-developed research issues are the growth of new accommodation services for business travellers in terms of networks of business hotels and of the contribution of business tourists to total commercial bednights (Rogerson, 2011a, 2011b, 2013a, 2013b, 2016a, 2018a; Magombo et al., 2017) and serviced apartments (Greenberg & Rogerson, 2015, 2018). Outside of South Africa an analysis of African tourism scholarship undertaken for the past decade uncovers only a handful of research studies which shed light on the formal economy of business tourism as a whole and on the organisation of MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) tourism more specifically (Coles & Mitchell, 2009; Fawzy, 2010; Fenich et al., 2012; Rogerson, 2014a, 2014b; Schroeder et al., 2014; Rogerson, 2015a; Seebaluck et al., 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016; Kodi, 2017; Tichaawa, 2017).

Information on the spatial distribution of conferences in Africa by international associations discloses a high degree of clustering with South Africa one of the leading destinations (Davidson, 2012). South Africa's international tourism marketing arm, South African Tourism, has stated that it seeks to expand the country's share of the international market for MICE tourism, including for conferences. The Department of Tourism's National Tourism Sector Strategy is committed to boosting the competitiveness of South Africa as a preferred MICE tourism destination (Republic of South Africa, 2017). Accordingly, over recent years, a number of strategic initiatives have been launched in order to enhance South Africa's attractiveness as a business tourism destination and particularly for conference tourism. In addition to the attraction of international conferences, the significance for tourism expansion of hosting domestic conferences has not gone unnoticed by South African cities (Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Several major South African cities now incorporate the boosting of business tourism, including the attraction of domestic conferences, as part of strategies for urban economic development (Rogerson, 2013; Nel & Rogerson, 2016). Conference tourism is a vital facet of tourism growth in South Africa's leading cities (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2016, 2017). A number of local destination marketing organisations in South Africa have a mandate for business tourism promotion, including for conference development, and support of bids for various conventions/conferences as well as assisting local organizations to host successful meetings with maximum advantage to local economies. Among key challenges for the contemporary development of South Africa for international business meetings are the maintenance of international standards of convention centre facilities, marketing the country for business tourism, international air accessibility, and visa regulations. In addition, for the growth of both international and domestic conferences it is critical also to manage the challenges around the effectiveness and suitability of conference centres and destinations, including from the perspectives of conference organisers and delegates (Tiflin & Balkaran, 2014). These multiple challenges confronting the modern conference tourism sector of South Africa can best be understood in relation to an understanding of the historical evolution of the country's conference industry.

### 3 The conference tourism industry under apartheid

Tourism history in South Africa has been largely an uncharted terrain with only a few exceptions (eg. Ferrario, 1978; Saunders & Barben, 2007; Pirie, 2011, 2013; Rogerson, 2013c; 2016b, 2017, 2018b; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2018). Given that tourism emerged as a major research theme with South Africa's re-entry into the global economy (post-1994) and the withdrawal of international sanctions imposed on the country, the neglect of tourism studies for the apartheid era is remarkable. For the apartheid period, in a review of research for the period 1948-1990, it was observed that tourism scholarship was "meagre" (Grundlingh, 2006: 104). This finding should be set against the fact that during the apartheid years South Africa recorded a major upturn of international tourism arrivals as well as witnessing the consolidation of a strong sector of domestic tourism, albeit restricted to the market offered by white South Africans because of racial segregation planning (Rogerson, 2015c).

Arguably, in the opening decade of the new apartheid government, tourism was a low priority sector and during the 1950s international tourism arrivals were mostly regional visitors from surrounding southern African countries (Ferrario, 1978; Saunders & Barben, 2007). This said, from a sector of the economy of little policy interest, tourism emerged by the early 1970s to be South Africa's fifth largest earner of foreign revenue (Grundlingh, 2006). From 1963, amidst technological advances of the growth of commercial jet travel, national government showed heightened awareness of the importance of the tourism sector as indexed by the establishment of a Department dedicated (in part) to tourism (Rogerson, 2011). As argued by Saunders and Barben (2007: 30) at least until 1976 "few overseas tourists had qualms about visiting the country and South Africa's tourist arrivals for the period 1963 to 1970 outstripped the rate of tourist arrivals worldwide". The impact of international sanctions on South Africa's international tourism arrivals was felt most strongly only in the period after the 1976 Soweto riots. With falling international arrivals this meant a corresponding rise in the significance of domestic tourism for the tourism economy under apartheid (Rogerson, 2015c). As Grundlingh (2006: 107) asserts as a whole "it would be wrong to assume that apartheid meant that tourism was historically a stagnant" enterprise.

From the early 1960s national government's emerging policy interest and initiatives for tourism promotion centred firmly on nurturing the international market of leisure tourists (Saunders & Barben 2007). Little consideration at this time was accorded to issues around supporting business tourism as a whole or to the requirements of conference tourism in particular. Nevertheless, the decade of the 1960s saw an awakening interest by private sector providers to the economic prospects of a developing conference sector. In particular, hotels in the country's major cities sought to cater for meetings of various sizes. In addition to hotels other venues for hosting conferences were civic halls, theatres and other multi-purpose buildings; many South African universities also began to offer their venues for occasional use for the running of conferences (Rogerson, 2005). The conference sector of South Africa throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s experienced haphazard development. Arguably, at this time it was evident that South Africa lagged international standards for conference tourism in terms of a lack of professionalism, absence of dedicated conference facilities and very importantly the quality of the majority of the country's existing stock of hotels. Overall, the general standard of existing conference facilities was poor in terms of how they were run and the equipment and services they offered to delegates which often included makeshift structures in banquet rooms (City of Cape Town, 1990). As late as the early 1970s it was observed that many hotel managers "have got into the habit of regarding

conventions as requiring no more management sophistication than the local Chamber of Commerce banquet or a plush wedding reception” (Property Mail, 1972). Indeed, in another industry press commentary it was seen as not surprising that many so called convention facilities ”look as if somebody has just swept up the confetti” (Property Mail, 1972). In Johannesburg, South Africa’s major economic and commercial hub, it was reported that conference facilities “are pretty grim” and that “public relations men hardly leap at the chance of organising prestige conventions and conferences in the Golden City” (Financial Mail, 1967). Although the provision of quality conference facilities in coastal centres was not always an improvement on those in Johannesburg, their beach and nightlife attractions often were viewed more positively for conference attendees. But, with the generally dismal state of local conference facilities, many organisers instead turned to the occasional possibility of using one of the Union Castle ocean mail ships which offered quality accommodation and facilities for conference trips between Durban and Cape Town (Financial Mail, 1967).

One of the central structural weaknesses of South Africa’s evolving conference industry during the 1960s related to the weak state of the country’s hotel sector. Historically, the growth and development of hotels in South Africa was tied to the liquor trade (Rogerson, 2011). During the 1940s and 1950s the national hotel industry became liquor-dominated in its revenues as well as increasingly liquor-dominated in relation to patterns of ownership. In terms of tourism development there was a distinct shortage of quality accommodation which was in part also the consequence of price controls introduced by national government which reduced private returns on hotel investment. New hotel investment was discouraged and in several of South Africa’s major cities, especially Johannesburg and Cape Town, shortages of hotel accommodation were further exacerbated by the conversion of many hotels into flats or the razing of hotels and replacement by office developments. The poor quality standards of the majority of the country’s hotels was inseparable also from the absence of a national classification system or grading of hotel establishments. By 1962 it was evident that the hotel industry was in crisis with critical shortfalls of accommodation in the country’s major business centres as well as holiday resorts (Rogerson, 2011; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2018).

In restructuring the foundations of the hotel industry national government confronted the legacy and impact of the country’s liquor legislation by first abolishing the ‘tied house’ system which served the interests of the alcohol sector at a cost of reducing the hotel sector’s commitment to providing accommodation services. It was argued that the hotel industry of South Africa consisted of two different sets of establishments. The first was a group of liquor dominated hotels – approximately 70 percent of all South African hotels - which mainly had less than 50 beds, low occupancy rates and with 77 percent of their profits from liquor functioned essentially as an important retail channel within the alcohol trade. For these hotels the provision of accommodation services was ignored, of inferior quality and maintained only to a minimal extent in order to ensure the annual renewal of a liquor licence. The second group of hotels were accommodation-dominant hotels, mostly with more than 50 beds and with a revenue stream that was more balanced between liquor and accommodation services (Rogerson, 2011). A radical restructuring of the South African hotel industry was launched in 1965 which required that all hotels be ‘classified’ by the department responsible for liquor control and in this process hotels had to meet certain minimum standards in terms of accommodation for the reward of an automatic on-consumption liquor licence. This set the stage for the introduction of a grading classification of tourist hotels to ensure for the first time quality standards in line with international benchmarks. These legislative changes alongside the introduction of Government financial support for the modernization of tourist hotels represented a turning point for the South African hotel industry. Alongside the

closure of large numbers of those 'hotels' that were little more than thinly-veiled liquor outlets, the legislative changes encouraged new investors into the South African hotel industry as well as a wave of reinvestment by traditional hotel investors. Beginning in the late 1960s this set the stage for a wave of new hotel construction supported by concessionary loans and tax depreciation allowances that would form the basis of a set of high quality leisure hotels as well as the provision of hotel accommodation services specifically to the business market (Rogerson, 2011).

Overall, these new hotel developments served to enhance the infrastructure for the South African conference industry. By the early 1970s it was recorded that conventions or conferences held by business or professional organisations "have become an important source of revenue for some South African hotels" (Rushburne et al., 1972: 219). Although the precise value of the conference business was unknown, it was estimated that for the country's large hotel groups, which provided the major share of conference functions, "the figure is usually placed at 5-10% of total revenue" (Rushburne et al., 1972). The motivation for hotels to compete aggressively in the conference market was to sell additional room nights "from delegates staying in the hotel, as well as to generate incremental food and beverage business" (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1991: 104). At the base of the South African conference industry was the hosting of domestic meetings and conventions. It was estimated for the period of the late 1960s that domestic conferences represented as much as 95 percent of all the country's conference tourism market (Rushburne et al., 1972: 219). As Ferrario (1978) pointed out South Africa was geographically not well located to attract international conventions. Any major extension of international convention markets would be dependent on the availability of reduced air fares for groups of a minimum size.

During the mid-1970s national government made its first serious policy interventions to support explicitly the further development of conference tourism. In 1975 the South African Congress Bureau was established within the framework of the Department of Tourism. The decision to establish this bureau followed a conference on congress promotion which took place at Kempton Park in November 1974 which "underlined the necessity for concerted action in the marketing of congress facilities abroad as well as the establishment of an organisation to co-ordinate such action at the national level" (Bester, 1977: 33). The designated aims of this congress bureau were, *inter alia*, the collection and dissemination of information on congress facilities and services in South Africa; the production and distribution of publications to support the marketing of South Africa for international congresses; and the initiation of contacts between local congress promotion companies and user organisations abroad. It was made clear that the bureau itself did not function such as to arrange congresses or related events but that "it gladly assists as far as possible with any preplanning investigations and with the planning of events to be staged in South Africa" (Bester, 1977: 33).

With its launch occurring only 18 months prior to the Soweto uprisings which precipitated South Africa's pariah status in the global tourism economy, the achievements of the South African Congress Bureau were inevitably modest. Nevertheless, in the 1976 report of the Department of Tourism it was stated optimistically despite the (understated) 'internal unrest' in the country that South Africa was targeting at securing more international meetings for the country and "now for the first time seeking to penetrate meaningfully into this sector of tourism" (Republic of South Africa, 1977: 5). The challenges facing South Africa in building itself as an international conference tourism destination were viewed at this time as mainly in terms of addressing the competition from established destinations in Europe and North

America. During 1976, however, it was recorded hopefully that the national Congress Bureau had "completed the necessary preparatory work in order to enter meaningfully and with coordinated marketing efforts into this challenging sector of the tourism market abroad" (Republic of South Africa, 1977: 6). Its first achievement was gathering information and material for the launch of a "prestige congress marketing brochure during 1977, by means of which South Africa's congress facilities will be introduced and marketed abroad" (Republic of South Africa, 1977: 6).

Further optimism was expressed in the 1977 report produced by the Department of Tourism of "a positive and hopeful climate and atmosphere for increasing congress activities and for obtaining new international congress business for South Africa as well as for the stimulation of such activities in the country" (Republic of South Africa, 1978: 6). The release took place in October 1977 of the promised 'prestige congress marketing brochure'. This proclaimed South Africa to be "a new, exciting venue for International Congresses, Association Conventions, Corporate Meetings, Scientific and Technical Seminars, Fairs and Exhibitions and Incentive Travel Programmes" (Republic of South Africa, 1978: 7). The opening of two new potential conference centres respectively at Cape Town (the Good Hope Centre) and Pretoria (the CSIR Conference Centre) was welcomed and interpreted as a positive signal of progress in building a more competitive infrastructure for conference tourism. With continued political turbulence and South Africa's worsening international image, however, the 1978 Annual Report could offer little concrete evidence of substantive achievements (Republic of South Africa, 1979). The following year's report was even forced to concede that "1979 could be regarded as a relatively quiet year for South Africa from the point of view of holding large international congresses" (Republic of South Africa, 1980: 6). Confronted by a hostile environment for attracting international conferences and meetings to South Africa the bureau admitted that its activities were focussing now on encouraging incentive travel (Republic of South Africa, 1980: 7).

With limited prospects for marketing South Africa for international conferences the domestic conference industry again became the central focus for the country's MICE tourism economy. Of significance during the closing years of the 1970s and early 1980s was the establishment of several large conference venues outside of the country's major metropolitan areas. Geographically, the supply of these new conference facilities occurred within the territories of the group of so-termed 'independent' Black Homelands created by apartheid planning. In the four Homelands that acceded to 'independence' under apartheid gambling resort developments were allowed to operate in contrast to the space of so-termed 'white' South Africa where casinos were not permitted. The potential for hosting conferences at gambling venues plus the extensive profits that flowed from the casinos situated in the Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda made possible the construction of new conference facilities as part of these casino resorts. By far the most significant of these conference developments in the Homelands was a large multi-purpose facility that opened to attract conferences at the Sun City resort in Bophuthatswana which is situated about two hours drive away from Johannesburg or Pretoria (Rogerson, 2005).

These facility developments occurring outside the metropolitan areas were matched by the continued addition to the supply of conference venues in and around the country's cities. In 1986 a booklet titled 'Johannesburg Conference City' produced for the city listed a total of 248 convention or meeting venues, the majority of which could accommodate no more than 300 delegates (Appleton, 1987). The momentum of hotel project developments linked to conference centres was stemmed, however, by the withdrawal in 1988 of government income

tax incentives which formerly had supported new investments. This action served “to inhibit new hotel development, and almost certainly prevent those that are developed from building large conference facilities” (Kessel Feinstein Consulting 1991: iii). Instead of hotel conference venues there appeared a number of specialised independent conference venues some of which were linked to accommodation services but others without. Nevertheless, an observed trend by 1990 was for the expansion of a number of non-hotel conference centres. These were adjuncts to some other primary core business or activity of the owners, which often were large corporates such as Volkswagen (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1994). Another observed trend in the early 1990s was the establishment on the periphery of major cities of small conference centres with accommodation facilities and designed to attract executive -level conferences with capacities for an average of 50 delegates (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1994).

It was only during the early 1990s, the closing years of apartheid, that South Africa began to recognise and subsequently follow long-established international trends for the construction of purpose-designed and publicly funded conference centres (City of Cape Town, 1990). The first such development occurred not in the major cities but at Mmabatho, the so-called capital of ‘independent’ Bophuthatswana. The financing of this convention centre, which included a 3000 seater auditorium, was provided by the Government of Bophuthatswana with the underlying motivation to lend some veil of legitimacy to the territory’s sham independence. The management of the Mmabatho conference centre was to be undertaken by Sun International, South Africa’s major enterprise for casino resort development. The drive towards the building of purpose-built conference or convention centres in South Africa’s major cities was inseparable from the rise of local economic development planning in the early 1990s. All the country’s major cities identified the growth and employment-generation potential of conference tourism (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1991) and a growing inter-city competition for meetings began to occur. Early initiatives centred upon the upgrading of existing facilities in order to enhance their competitiveness for conference tourism (Kessel Feinstein Consulting 1994). This said, a major infrastructural supply gap was the absence of international standard sophisticated convention centres that could accommodate a minimum of 1000 delegates.

In Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban the municipal authorities engaged in energetic planning for new convention centre development as part of broader initiatives for urban economic development. Investigations about the construction of a convention centre in Johannesburg were linked to the city’s aspirations to be recognised as a ‘world city’ (Rogerson, 1996). It was considered that “one of the impediments to Johannesburg’s growth as a major centre for foreign visitors is its lack of a convention centre near the CBD on the scale of those in other first world cities” (City of Johannesburg, 1992: 11). As part of its ‘top-ten projects’ released for consideration to enhance the city’s image as an investment destination the boldest, perhaps, was the proposed Johannesburg Trade and Investment Centre which was to accommodate 2500 delegates and to be situated in the inner city. But, with the parallel planning of competing business convention centres or proposed centres in both Cape Town and Durban, the feasibility studies around this planned convention centre showed that project was “likely to be a ‘loss leader’, albeit one with potentially significant catalytic spin-offs for growth in the CBD” (Rogerson, 1996: 151). In Durban the promotion of business tourism by the local state has been a consistent theme for the City Council in terms of diversifying the city’s tourism base as far back as the 1970s (Freund and Padayachee, 2002). Detailed investigations were pursued during the 1980s and in 1991 the decision was taken for the city to leverage public funding for the construction of a dedicated

conference centre (Ridsdale, 1997). In Cape Town a major investigation was completed in 1991 to support the city's vision of Cape Town becoming a national and international conference destination (City of Cape Town, 1990; Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1991). This study argued that municipal financing of a new convention centre was essential. It was stated: "We see no realistic alternative than for the City to finance the proposed new conference centre" (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1991: 107).

#### 4 Conclusion

International scholarship on conference tourism is expanding albeit it mainly is concentrated on contemporary challenges that face industry development. This article sought to examine through an historical lens the challenges of the evolution of the conference industry in one country. In terms of the establishment of South Africa as a competitive destination for MICE tourism at the period of democratic transition arguably the country had an adequate supply of conference venues, particularly in the small and medium sized category, to meet current and projected demands. This said, it was evident that "professionalism and recognition of the industry as an important component of the economy" were lacking (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1994: 105). Question marks remained also about the quality of certain facilities and services which were viewed as "constraints on conference industry development" (Kessel Feinstein Consulting, 1994: 105). Another shortcoming for the future expansion of conference tourism related to the limited assistance offered by municipal governments to support conference tourism. Of South Africa's four major conference cities – Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth – only Durban provided any marketing support. It was striking that Johannesburg and Cape Town offered no specific marketing expenditure for the conference industry and in the case of Johannesburg the publication of a conference guide had been discontinued in 1993 because of budgetary constraints (Kessel Feinstein Consulting 1994: xvii).

Overall, notwithstanding signs of an improving environment for the conference industry in South Africa by 1994 business tourism remained the poor relation of the national tourism sector (Rawana, 1995). Significantly, the first draft national documents for developing the tourism industry in the post-apartheid era made no mention at all of conference tourism. It was argued by local representatives of the conference sector that South Africa remained "blind to the earning potential of the conference industry" (Rawana, 1995). Furthermore, it was stressed that "we need to convince those in power to invest money in physical structures and infrastructures" in respect of dedicated convention centres (Rawana, 1995). For South Africa to be able to attract major international conferences it was acknowledged that the major issue was the country lacked international standard purpose-built convention centres with the capacity to handle at least 1000 delegates. By the early 1990s, however, preliminary investigations and project planning was under way in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg for the construction of such infrastructural facilities. The successive openings of Durban's International Convention Centre in 1997, the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg during 2000 and the Cape Town Convention Centre in 2003 began a new chapter in the development of conference tourism in terms of building South Africa as a competitive destination in the global meetings industry.

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## Architecture in Southern African informal settlements: A contextually appropriate intervention

### Abstract

Architectural professionals can contribute to efforts at achieving sustainable urbanism. However, the realm of professional discourse is extremely limited. Grounded architectural practice (GAP) is developed as a conceptual framework to explore an emergent form of contextually appropriate architectural practice in the context of a resident-driven *in situ* informal settlement upgrading project. The exploration takes the form of a descriptive narrative. Each challenge that arose during the descriptive narrative was mapped according to Engeström's activity system model, an analytical tool emanating from cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). By participating in live projects in informal settlements and analysing these projects by means of CHAT, the authors explored the highly improvising and generative everyday practices of the urban majority. Architectural practice in such a context requires a multi-disciplinary approach which extends beyond conventional professional boundaries, and attention must be paid to building the capacity of all participants to function in such uncharted territory.

**Keywords:** sustainable urbanism, informal settlements, *in situ* upgradings, architectural practices, live projects, activity theory

### 1 Introduction

As is the case in the collapse of communism (Mariotti & KoZelf, 2016) the collapse of apartheid which occurred more or less at the same time in history had direct consequences for the structure and form of these cities. According to Osman, racially segregated *apartheid* planning perpetuates today because there has never been a major rethink about how cities and housing are planned. This lack of imagination is further exacerbated by unequal funding patterns that entrench the *status quo*. Standalone, monofunctional housing models result in residential environments that remain poorly located, poorly serviced and highly segregated (2015).

During the first decade of democracy (1994-2003) the South African national housing policy was primarily geared towards meeting low-cost housing delivery targets. During this time an estimated 1.4 million houses were built (Tissington 2010), whilst millions are still in search for alternative housing opportunities, such as squatting and renting (Gunter, 2014). With the introduction of the "Breaking New Ground: A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements" policy in 2004 informal settlement eradication through phased in-situ upgrading featured as one of the key aspects of spatial restructuring (Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2010; Huchzermeyer, 2011, 2010; Cirolia, Smit & Duminy 2015; Tissington, 2010; Royston, 2009). However, since then, possibility of implementing the BNG's Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme seems to have dissipated (Cooke, 2014; Fieuw, 2014). In reality the method through which *in situ* upgrading is implemented is nothing less than *de facto* forced removals. Such relocation results in sharp increases in transportation costs, disrupting fragile livelihood networks and income generating activities.

When existing informal settlements are eventually redeveloped, implementation takes place over extended periods of time and at much lower densities (Chenwi, 2008; Huchzermeyer, 2010, 2011; Ziblim, 2013) and standard of housing units are questionable (Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2014). Not surprisingly, informal settlement residents view relocation with deep scepticism, as temporary relocation areas (TRAs) often become *de facto* permanent settlements (Jordhus-Lier, 2015).

Urban upgrading projects – whether formal or informal – are complex and multidisciplinary. In interventions such as these, the architectural profession as member of the built environment profession, along with planning and engineering, has an important role to play (Osman, 2015). Aravena notes the challenge which the complexity of dealing with and planning for informality poses to professionals who engage in *in situ* upgrading. He states that “battles need to be won and frontiers need to be expanded” (2015) in order to improve the quality of the built environment and thus the urban majority’s quality of life. The battles he referred to require collaborative action and shared knowledge. Datta (2008: 250) claims that it is important to examine architecture within the developmental context of the global South – particularly in circumstances when it is being transformed through the politicized practices of its users – in order to fully understand its role in civil society.

As is the case with urban planners, dealing with informality means “confronting how the apparatus of planning produces the unplanned and unplannable” (Roy, 2005: 156). Evermore architectural professionals engage with grassroots level, resident-driven projects (Miles, 2013). However, the dearth of professionals with the capacity to support such projects poses a substantial challenge (Ziblim, 2013). Such engagement generally occurs in collaboration with or as a member of a locally-based NGO (see for example the role of Development Action Group (DAG) in the case study of Freedom Park – Mah & Rivers 2013), contributing to the sustainability of the project by tapping into pre-existing relationships with informal settlement residents. Brown-Luthango *et al.* (2016) state that interventions in the built form through the provision of physical infrastructure have been proposed as a strategy to improve economic, social and health outcomes for informal settlement dwellers and are also suggested as tools to address violence and insecurity, which have reached unprecedented levels in many cities of the South.

The paper proposes that *in situ* upgrading projects facilitated by NGOs provide the opportunity to explore an emergent form of contextually appropriate and sustainable architectural practice. The paper begins by contextualising *in situ* upgrading as a transition towards sustainable urbanism. The inability of the architectural profession to deal with informality and to support *in situ* upgrading is discussed next with grounded architectural practice (GAP) posited as an emerging mode of practice. In the remaining sections of the paper insight is gained into a more informed and grounded architectural practice by drawing on empirical research conducted in the informal settlement of Lotus Park in Cape Town.

## **2 Architectural professionals: A history of entrenched exclusivity**

Urban informality has been on the research agenda for decades (Roy, 2005; Varley, 2013). In the discourse of informality there has been a resurgence of interest from architecture. Varley (2013: 4) describes this interest “as the product of a renewed social and environmental activism”. Town planners are the urban practitioners mostly involved in informality, but according to Roy (2005) this relationship is complicated. Whilst on the one side of the coin

informal spaces are perceived to be unplannable, on the other side of the coin a range of attempts have been made to improve and integrate such spaces. She further states that informality “must be understood not as the object of state regulation but rather as produced by the state itself” (2005: 149) and furthermore suggests that “to deal with informality therefore partly means confronting how the apparatus of planning produces the unplanned and unplannable” (2005: 156). After all, informality can only occur where governments tend to turn a blind eye to such developments (Ley, 2012). According to Watson (2014: 102) planning theory in global south regions is poorly developed and planning practitioners have very little of relevance to draw on for inspiration in dealing with the complex problems of southern cities. According to her the strategies of poorer urban dwellers as they manoeuvre to gain access to well-located and affordable land and living environments, usually through informal and sometimes violent means – planning theory has had relatively little to offer to counter Euro-American interpretations of urban problems or alternatives to put in their place (Watson, 2014: 102).

As people with specialised abstract knowledge, and trained within strategic fields of responsibility, architectural professionals occupy a central role in society (Sverrisdóttir, 2014). Just as Roy (2005: 155) proclaims that engagement with informality is in many ways quite difficult for planners because informal spaces “seem to be the exception to planning, lying outside its realm of control” so too is it true for architectural professionals. To engage with the architecture of informality is to undertake the task of informalising architectural practice and a rethinking of professional ideology, architectural theory and education (Dovey, 2013: 87). The realm of professional discourse is therefore extremely limited and lacks the “ability to reach an appropriate collective discussion field of the various stakeholders” (Sverrisdóttir, 2014: 106). Osman (2015) agrees, stating that the profession has the potential to offer spatial, technical and social expertise, yet remains relatively disengaged, isolated and elitist. As early as two decades ago, Mayet appealed to the profession to “change course from a history of entrenched exclusivity” (1995: 49) and addresses the needs of our changing society, not only to regain its relevance but to ensure its survival. To support informal settlement residents in their stubborn appropriation of the city is viewed by some as an ethical obligation (Pieterse, 2008). Reflecting on this, Combrinck posits that the profession’s dilemma is a result of “the (in)ability to engage meaningfully in an [informal] context that fundamentally challenges the construct of professional architectural service” (2015: 3-4).

Despite calls from the profession itself for participation and ongoing engagement with informal settlement communities, alternative approaches are not yet the norm. Neither have the architectural professionals strongly influenced how the discipline is taught and practised nor how professional institutes and councils operate (Osman, 2015). The profession still focuses on wealthy clients and on the architect as ‘creative individual’. When working in complex, low-income, politically polarised contexts, approaches privileging the role of the architectural professional as designer – in direct opposition to a user centred approach – is highly problematic and irrelevant (Osman, 2015). Ideally architectural professionals have to engage with informal settlement residents in a participatory design process as co-designers, rather than clients or beneficiaries (Newton, 2013; Gianotti & Mathiesen, 2014). Informal urbanism is a global concern which challenges formal systems of governance, economy and social justice. However, the architectural profession remains marginal to this discourse, with “recognised contributions seen as intermittent, exceptional and once off” (Combrinck, 2015: iv).

### 3 Grounded architectural practice (GAP)

Davis (2006) homogenises informal settlement residents' attempts at leading an urban life and describes them as an undifferentiated and apolitical global mass of urban squatters. Similarly, Jack (cited in Pieterse, 2008) describes the 'urban poor' as a 'blank figure', without making reference to the conditions they face every day. Such impoverished thinking locates informal settlements in a theoretical context that is blind to the agency, skill, endurance and effort that constitute the livelihood strategies of the urban majority (*ibid.*). Yet, Aravena (2015) states that we want to learn from architectures that, despite (or perhaps because of) a scarcity of means, intensify what is available instead of complaining about what is missing. We want to understand what design tools are needed to subvert the forces that privilege individual gain over collective benefit.

This statement is supported by scholars who recognise the potential, and persistence, of grassroots practices. Bayat refers to "combined and continuous processes of informalisation, integration and re-informalisation" (1997: 61), and Murray characterises informal settlements as "incubators for inventive survival strategies where inhabitants have begun to ... develop their own specific forms of collaboration and cooperation" (2008: 33). The city can be described as a fundamentally emergent and therefore open-ended reality (Byrne, 2001). This perspective facilitates the undoing of the artificial boundary that separates the formal from the informal (Schoon & Altröck, 2014). GAP can be interpreted as occupying the space where this boundary has been removed (Figure 1). GAP enables the architectural profession to achieve meaningful transformation by embedding practice in the continually changing, complex and dynamic systems of informal urbanism, where the highly improvising and generative everyday practices of the urban majority can be explored (Pieterse, 2008; Kakembo & Van Niekerk, 2014). In this context, the technical and theoretical skills associated with architectural practice – and the tendency to 'default into design' when confronted with complex issues (Combrinck, 2015) – yield a deeper appreciation and openness towards different ways of seeing and responding to problems. To facilitate this, Cooke (2014) encourages architectural professionals to engage in local level partnerships and practices, such as enumerations and reblocking (Enumerations are resident-driven censuses to generate socio-economic and demographic settlement profiles, including tenure status, services levels and development aspirations. Reblocking is the spatial reconfiguration of dwellings to allow for vehicular access and installation of service infrastructure). He further describes *in situ* upgrading as a collaborative project where leadership continually shifts between different disciplines and stakeholders: in essence, a multi-disciplinary approach that extends beyond conventional professional boundaries. Transforming spaces through GAP can lead to a transformation of place identity through architectural awards for upgrading projects (changing negative perceptions of informal areas to positive perceptions; Dovey & King, 2011).

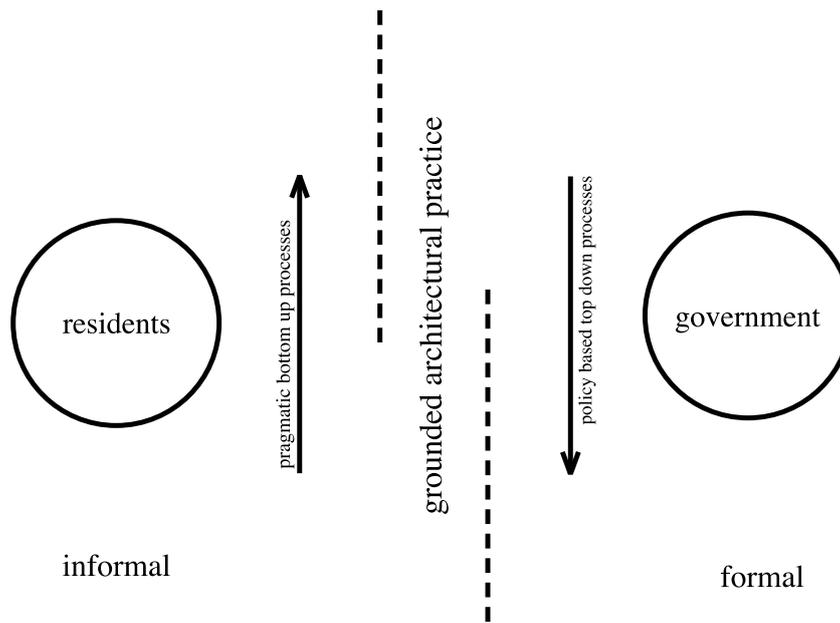


Figure 1: Grounded architectural practice (GAP) in the context of undoing of the artificial boundary between formal and informal (illustration: Rudolf Perold).

The conceptual framework of GAP employed in the paper derives from two perspectives. Firstly, Goonewardena: “being grounded in reality ... overcoming existing relations – separations – between abstract processes and concrete life” (2008: 118). Secondly, morally engaged work that is constructive through critiquing existing ideas and reconstructing alternatives ... [and involving] processes of conceptual deconstruction and reconstruction [which] build from grounded engagement with empirical realities and political imperatives (Oldfield et al., 2004: 295).

The remainder of the paper will explore GAP as field of mediation between the pragmatic bottom-up strategies of informal settlement residents and their supporting NGOs, and the top-down, policy-driven strategies of government. Combrinck’s (2015) critique that beyond reporting on individual cases, very little knowledge is generated about contextually appropriate and sustainable modes of architectural practice. The mode of architectural practice which this paper sets out to explore takes place in a contested setting.

#### 4 Research method

The research method employed explores GAP by utilising a number of phenomenological methods (Kleining & Witt, 2000; Seamon, 2000; Hiles, 2001; Yaneva, 2011). This approach also draws on action research, a subjective, collaborative, reflective and experiential method (Abdel-Fattah, 2015) which turns all participants – both residents and architectural professionals – into researchers whose capacities are enhanced in the process. The exploration of GAP is facilitated by engaging in an *in situ* informal settlement upgrading project in Cape Town in order to gather empirical data for qualitative analysis. The project was embedded within an existing long-term NGO intervention, where an effective working relationship has been established with the residents of Lotus Park.

The exploration takes the form of a descriptive narrative, which will be drawn on in the subsequent analysis. Each challenge which arose during the descriptive narrative was mapped according to Engeström's activity system model (Figure 2), an analytical tool emanating from cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). CHAT comprises five principles (Engeström, 1999a): activity system as unit of analysis; multi-voicedness and different perspectives; historicity; contradictions as source of change; and, expansive transformation. The unit of analysis in CHAT is a historically evolving collective activity system, such as architectural practice, observed in its network relations to other activity systems (Engeström, 2000). CHAT is concerned with "doing in order to transform something" and considers the contextualised activity of the system as a whole as the "minimum meaningful context" for understanding human actions (Engeström, 1993: 67).

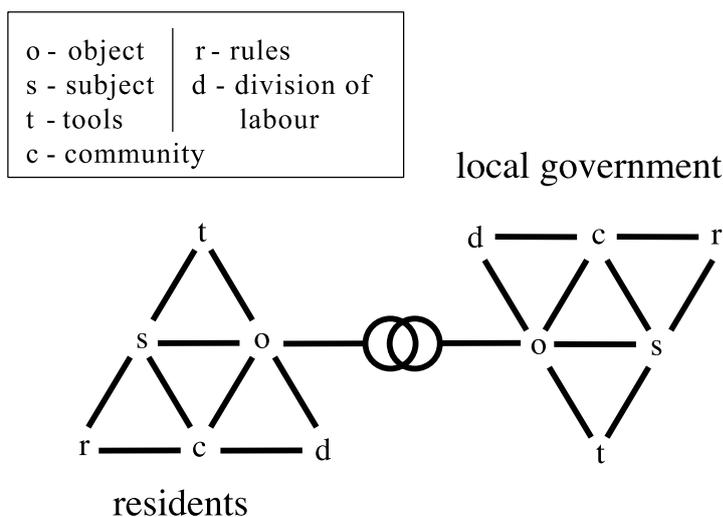


Figure 2: Engeström's model of two activity systems with a potentially shared object (source: Engeström, 2009: 305).

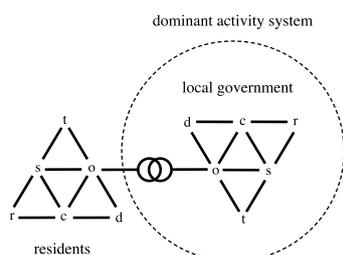
The participants are placed in the position of *subject*, and their agency is the point of view employed in the analysis. The aspect of agency makes places and spaces part of the 'practice of interrelation' which are continuously shifting and multiplying. If architecture is the site of active and embodied spatial practice, then like space, architecture too is tied up with the 'entanglements of power' that shape and are shaped by productive acts of agency (Datta, 2008: 233).

The 'acted upon' – in the case of this paper, the *in situ* upgrading – is placed in the position of *object*, and defined as problem spaces at which activity is directed and which is moulded or transformed into outcomes with the help of physical and symbolic, external and internal tools (Engeström, 1987: 79). *Tools*, together with *community*, *rules* and *division of labour*, mediate the relationship between *subject* and *object* in order to achieve an outcome. When challenges arise during the activity, they are conceptualised as contradictions either within or between the nodes of the activity system model (CRADLE, 2016). Contradictions can be overcome by means of knotworking, described as the construction of constantly changing combinations of people and artefacts over lengthy trajectories of time and widely distributed in space, and characterised by a pulsating movement of tying, untying and retying otherwise separate threads of activity (Engeström, 1999a: 345-346). The unstable knot itself is the focus of analysis. By analysing these contradiction and how they are resolved through knotworking,

insight can be gained into the capacity building which occurs when architectural professionals engage in contextually appropriate and sustainable modes of practice. The analytical framework (Figure 3) summarises how CHAT was used in the case study analysis.

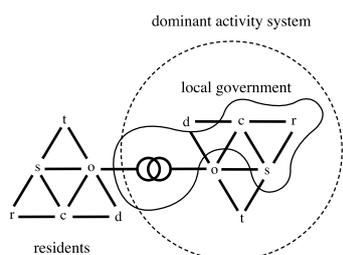
### 1. Written description of contradiction and how it was overcome

Contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems, consequently causing a change (breakdown or development) in people's activities or in themselves. Contradictions often manifest themselves as problems, ruptures, breakdowns, clashes, or as disturbances that interrupt the flow of work (Ekundayo, Wang & Andrade 2012: 2).



### 2. Dominant activity system

The dotted circle indicates in which activity system (residents, local government, or a both) the locus of activity (GAP) is located (i.e. which system is more prominent at the moment when the contradiction arises).



### 3. Knotworking

The curvilinear knot device shows where the unstable knot between two activity networks is located (i.e. which nodes of the activity systems are most prominent in resolving the contradiction).

### 4. Twin principles of expansive learning

Expansive learning is a historically new type of learning that emerges as practitioners struggle through developmental transformations in their activity systems and move across collective zones of proximal development (Engeström 1999b: 7). Accordingly, expansive learning occurs in the construction and resolution of successive contradictions in the activity system (Engeström 1999b: 12), and is informed by two related principles:

#### Double stimulation:

This entails the introduction and collaborative application of new tools (potentially useful mediating artefacts) with the capacity to reveal potential capabilities and emerging new psychological formations. Subjects are placed in a situation in which a *problem* is identified and they are also provided with *tools* (or the means to construct *tools*) with which to solve the problem (Daniels 2011: 361). Double stimulation leads to a concept of formative interventions, which aim to generate intermediate concepts and solutions to be used in other settings in the design of locally appropriate solutions (Engeström 2009: 321).

#### Ascending from the abstract to the concrete:

This dialectical method is a central tool for mastering cycles of expansive learning. Dialectical logic starts from the assumption that development is driven through contradictions, and entails the analysis of the development trajectory of the *object*. Starting with an initial undeveloped form (*germ cell*) is critically important for understanding how the

*object* has come to be what it is, and what contradictions can be expected to drive its further development (Kaptelinin, 2013).

Figure 3: Analytical framework based on Engeström's model of two activity systems and the principles of CHAT (source: Engeström, 2009: 305).

## 5 Case description

During the 1980s Lotus Park, an area located in the impoverished black township of Gugulethu in Cape Town (Figure 4), was a forested area between the Metrorail Central Line and the Lotus River Canal, with footpaths from Nyanga Station to Gugulethu which were subject to frequent robberies, especially during early mornings and late evenings (VPUU, 2011). By the mid-1990s the area had gradually become deforested by residents collecting firewood and the resultant open field soon became a dumping ground for household refuse. To relocate flooding victims living in Waterfront, on the opposite side of the canal, a local steering committee was elected to manage the allocation of sites, and during late 2003 the first residents from Waterfront moved into Lotus Park. They were followed by flooding victims from Gxagxa the next year, as well as backyard dwellers from the Khikhi Hostel. Conflicts subsequently arose as now three groups of people were competing for the same area. These conflicts were exacerbated by corruption, where committee members tasked to allocate sites instead sold them in a disorganised manner (VPUU, 2011).

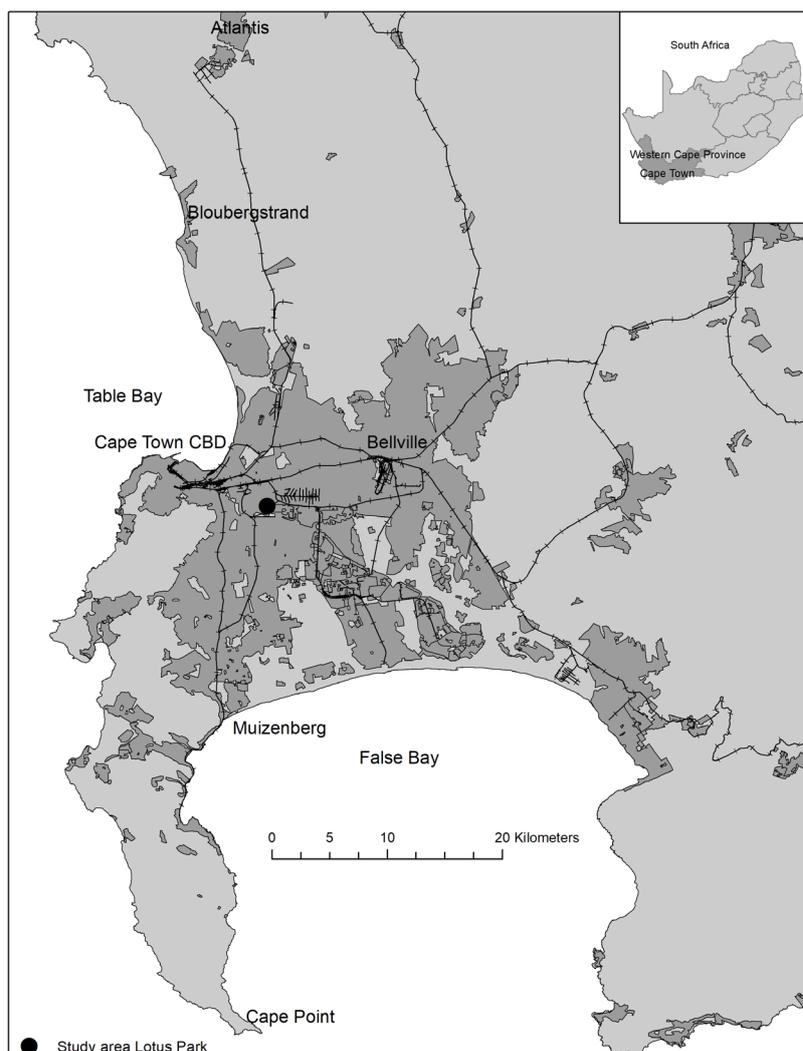


Figure 4: Case study of Lotus Park location in Cape Town Metropolitan Region (illustration: Rudolf Perold).

During 2009, despite continued conflict (now the result of division along party political lines) the residents embarked on service delivery protests, with the bucket system sanitation and the dangerous environment as key issues. In response to the protests, the City of Cape Town (CoCT) requested VPUU to adapt their methodology within an “Informal Settlement Transformation Programme”, using an *in situ* developmental approach. Lotus Park was one of three pilot sites identified (VPUU, 2014a). In 2010, VPUU (and their implementation agent SUN Development) were introduced to the local steering committee as an agency that would facilitate the infrastructure development of the settlement. VPUU were to act as an intermediary between the Lotus Park residents, the CoCT, Western Cape Government and other stakeholders. A baseline survey (VPUU, 2011) was conducted which informed the Community Action Plan (CAP) - a local area development plan identifying projects and interventions by all stakeholders. The CAP consists of a combination of spatial layers and work streams and guided the development of the spatial reconfiguration plan which included a subdivision plan to enable incremental tenure and a precinct plan for a neighbourhood centre (VPUU, 2014b), the focus in the paper.

The area indicated for the Lotus Park Neighbourhood Centre (NHC) belongs to the CoCT, and was used as a dumping ground for household refuse. As Lotus Park is not recognised as a formal settlement, the building had to be temporary in nature in order to be approved by the

Building Control Department, which resulted in some initial resistance from the Lotus Park residents. The NHC was designed by VPUU's in-house architectural professionals and the project brief was developed collaboratively with a committee of residents. Rough models were used throughout the design process. The building process commenced in July 2013, and although planned for six to nine months, it took a year. Employing local residents as labourers involved a mentoring process by the contractor's skilled craftspeople, resulting in the sandbag wall construction of the hall having had to be rebuilt three times. Problems relating to the use of non-standard size shipping containers for the rest of the NHC also involved a redesign of certain parts of the building while construction was underway.

The project reached practical completion during July 2014, but the architectural professionals remained involved in the process of the local committee and when residents started using the building prior to the official opening in November. This extended involvement was crucial in addressing problems resulting from the use of a non-conventional greywater recycling system, in lieu of a municipal sewer connection. The NHC functions as a safety catalyst and provides desperately needed community facilities, including offices for local organisations, meeting rooms and a hall, early childhood development (ECD) facilities and an *emthonjeni* - a multifunctional space with a selection of utilities (e.g. water points), places for gathering, playing, washing and conducting business (Ewing, 2015). An existing kickabout space adjacent to the NHC was upgraded into a hard court soon after completion of the NHC and a walkway from the main road (NY3) to the NHC was completed in 2015.

## 6 Case analysis and findings

The three contradictions of the Lotus Park NHC project that will be discussed are represented in Figure 5.

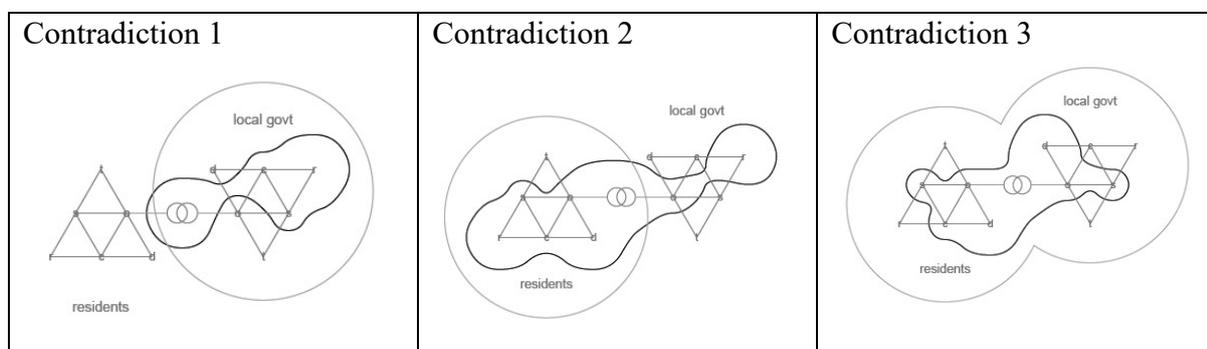


Figure 5: Three contradictions of the Lotus Park NHC project are mapped onto the analytical framework (illustration: Rudolf Perold).

### 6.1 Contradiction 1

As Lotus Park is an informal settlement located on land zoned for infrastructure use, approval for a permanent community structure is not provided for in the statutory framework of the local government (the dominant activity system). In the context of the activity theory, the activity system nodes concerned for the first contradiction are the *subject* (VPUU architectural professionals), the *object* (construction of NHC – approval of design), the *rules* (no permanent structure allowed on land due to current zoning) and the *community* (COCT official who allowed for approval of temporary building subject to yearly review). Thus there

is a contradiction between the *rules* and the *object*: the *rules* do not allow for a permanent building, but the *object* is to design and construct a NHC. This contradiction is overcome by a street-level bureaucrat – a member of the *community*, in this case a CoCT’s Planning and Building Development Department staff member - which allowed a temporary building (subject to yearly review) to be approved, thereby making use of a different *rule* than is the norm. In the street-level bureaucracy seminal work of Lipsky (1969: 2) his theory intends to explain the role played by street-level bureaucrats in the policy implementation and service delivery, their interaction with the public during public service delivery, exercise of discretion in decision making and the impact they make on how they deliver the said. According to him, despite the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures within which, in this case the *community* (bureaucrat) operates, such employee does however possess a degree of independence in the execution of their duties. Having been in a position of understanding the context of the case study holistically, the bureaucrat weighed up different concerns regarding the nature of the building. She (CoCT’s Planning and Building Development Department staff member) argued that a NHC would add value to the informal settlement. Due to zoning not permitting a permanent public building such as the NHC to be developed on this site she ruled that approval for a temporary building should be applied for. In the context of Lipsky (1969) it is evident that the need for the centre overruled the importance of strictly adhering to the regulations. Bureaucratic independence should therefore not be reduced to decision-making within the confines of their given role within an agency, as their attitude and approach to executing policy are just as important in how an agency's clientele views the agency and their government's responsiveness to their particular needs (Holland, 2017: 123).

This independence is discretion in the decision-making process of a street-level bureaucrat. Discretion is defined as “perceived freedom of street-level bureaucrats in making choices concerning the sort, quantity and quality of sanction and reward when implementing” public policy and regulations (Tummers & Bekkers, 2014: 529). As a consequence of independence and discretion the street-level bureaucrats’ decision-making did not only have a significant direct impact on VPUU’s intervention in enabling the NHC to be constructed prior to rezoning, but also directly on future users. The *subject’s* experience with the local government in this case can thus be viewed as fair (Lipsky, 1969).

In the context of expansive learning the two core principles are double simulation (*problem* and *tools*) and ascending from the abstract to the concrete (*germ cell*) (Engeström, 2009). In terms of double stimulation, the *problem* was identified as the inability to obtain approval for a permanent building, whereas alternative rules (temporary building) to obtain approval for design, with support by CoCT official were utilised as *tools*. Insofar as ascending from the abstract to the concrete is concerned, the *germ cell* is in fact that not all buildings need to be permanent (perhaps a lesson derived from informality).

## 6.2 Contradiction 2

As the building had to be temporary, sandbag wall construction was used to build the hall, and local residents without any relevant experience had to be employed during the construction of the NHC. In this contradiction, the residents are the dominant activity system. In this activity system the nodes are as follows: the *subject* (local labourers, VPUU architectural professionals), the *object* (construction of NHC – construction of sandbag walls for hall), the *rules* (local residents had to be employed; no permanent structure allowed by the local government), and the *community* (contractor who proposed mentoring programme).

Here was a contradiction between the *subject* (local resident labourers) and the *rules*: due to the temporary nature of the building and the resultant choice of wall construction, the local resident labourers did not know how to build the wall. This had an impact on the *division of labour*, as the contractor overcame the contradiction by means of a mentoring process where specialist subcontractors with the required skills assisted the local resident labourers. Local labourers not able to build with sandbags is interpreted as the *problem* with the mentoring programme as the *tool* with which the problem was addressed. The *germ cell* is that lack of relevant construction skills can be addresses by mentoring programme while work is ongoing. As has been the case in a different case study elsewhere one of the key facets of resourcefulness was the capacity of residents to enlist all kinds of people in their initiatives, and for residents to be enlisted in diverse roles, which in turn gave rise to different skills and capacities (Simone, 2014: 324). The contractual obligation agreed upon between VPUU and the contractor (that local residents be employed), based on residents' insistence for local ownership and participation in the project, was a way of ensuring continuous participatory engagement. There was therefore no need for concern about the extent of support provided by the contractor in the participatory engagement process with the residents, as it was stipulated in the contract.

### 6.3 Contradiction 3

In the third contradiction the dominant activity includes both residents and local government. The nodes of the activity system are as follows:

- Subject: VPUU architectural professionals (residents); CoCT water and sanitation line department (local government)
- Object: Implementing a sewerage system
- Community: Volunteers who maintain the sewerage system (residents)
- Division of labour: VPUU architectural professionals remained involved after practical completion date (residents); cleaning of portable toilet by external contractor (residents); installation of sewer line (local government)

The use of a non-conventional greywater recycling system resulted in challenges which were too complex for the local committee and residents to address on their own. This is a contradiction between the *rules* and the *community*; the fact that the NHC had to be a temporary building and use a non-conventional greywater recycling system resulted in the residents who use the building could not maintain it on their own. The contradiction was overcome by the architectural professionals remaining involved in the process long after the practical completion date. Thus expanding the role of the architectural professional by it being embedded in a multi-disciplinary programme that extends beyond the construction of a building alone, but also its operation and maintenance. They arranged for portable toilets until such time as the CoCT could install a sewer line to the NHC, thereby impacting on the *division of labour*. A complex sewerage system to be maintained by residents emerged as a key *problem*, with the *tools* used to address the problem entailed the temporary replacement thereof with portable toilets, until a permanent sewer connection becomes available. Accordingly, the *germ cell* is that problems relating to temporary nature of building (having to rely on alternative technologies) can be overcome by temporary interventions until permanent solutions are implemented by local government.

## 7 Conclusion

It is widely stated that future urban development in the global south will take place in a context of poverty and inequality (UN-Habitat, 2009; Parnell & Oldfield, 2014). In view of this, to develop realistic notions of sustainable urbanism for low-income informal settlements in Southern Africa, it is necessary to establish a normative position. In the case study, GAP was developed as a conceptual framework to explore an emergent form of contextually appropriate architectural practice in the context of grassroots, resident-driven *in situ* upgrading projects. By drawing on the work of Engeström (1999b, 2009), it was determined that GAP has characteristics of pragmatic bottom-up and top-down policy-driven strategies, and occupies the conceptual space between these two types of strategies. Architectural practice in such a context requires a multi-disciplinary approach which extends beyond conventional professional boundaries and attention must be paid to building the capacity of all participants to function in such uncharted territory.

The case analysis presented in the paper offers a view into the capacities required to engage in contextually appropriate and architectural practice. We have seen operating at an interface between formal and informal requires the architectural professional to engage in activities that is beyond the scope of standard architectural practice. Attention must be paid to building the capacity of all participants to function in such uncharted territory and residents with the requisite skills to contribute to the project must be given the necessary encouragement to recognise and develop their own capacities (Jack, 2014). For example, the extended involvement of the professional (long after practical completion of the building) and having to employ non-conventional construction materials (such as sandbags). These findings have the potential to support informal settlement residents' transitions toward sustainable urbanism, and unsettle established practice by embracing the contingency which is inherent in engagements with *in situ* informal settlement upgrading. In doing so, this research in a small way contributes to the evolution of architectural practice in Southern Africa.

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## Historical urban tourism: Developmental challenges in Johannesburg 1920-1950

### Abstract

Over the past decade there has been considerable growth and maturation of research concerning contemporary urban tourism. Tourism in major cities is not a new phenomenon rather it has existed from the earliest times of civilization following the birth of cities. The historical development of cities as tourist destinations has remained little investigated as urban tourism research is overwhelmingly 'present-minded'. This paper addresses the neglect of historical studies in urban tourism. Using archival sources an investigation is undertaken of the early development of tourism in Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, which evolved from a gold mining camp established in 1886. The analysis focuses on the period from 1920 when the first tourism promotional activities were initiated to 1950 when national government enacted the Group Areas Act which began the radical reshaping of tourism in South Africa under the influence of apartheid legislation. In the formative years of urban tourism in Johannesburg between 1920 and 1950 two key overarching challenges are identified. These are the challenges of identifying and promoting the city's tourism assets and of the building of a competitive infrastructure for tourism development, most notably in terms of the hotel accommodation sector.

**Keywords:** urban tourism, historical urban tourism, tourism infrastructure, Johannesburg, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

The nexus of tourism and history is well-established, albeit sometimes contested in tourism scholarship (Towner & Wall, 1991; Towner, 1995; Walton, 2005a, 2005b; Cirer-Costa, 2012). Among others Timothy (2012: 157) reminds us that people "have undertaken travel away from home for millennia as they mobilised from villages and tribal units to hunt, trade and explore" and that "historical accounts highlight the ancient Egyptians and Romans travelling for pleasure and sightseeing to the far corners of their empires". In a seminal article Towner and Wall (1991: 73) review the potential for the further development of historical approaches in tourism studies reflecting that this potential "has yet to be realized". Over 20 years ago Walton (1997: 564) re-issued the challenge that scholars should take the history of tourism 'seriously' and argued that the "burgeoning field of tourism studies has remained essentially present-minded". In a further critical commentary Walton (2005a: 3) maintains "tourism studies should pay serious attention to the relevance of historical research and writing to its concerns". Cirer-Costa (2012) re-affirms the value of historical analysis in tourism scholarship. For tourism research there are multiple reasons that it needs an historical awareness "not least to inform the ways in which tourism itself tries to use history, through the marking, marketing and exploitation of traces, stories, heritage, authenticity, and, ultimately distinctiveness" (Walton 2005b: 115). In another more recent contribution Walton (2009) undertook a survey of tourism's history and concludes positively that there was now a remarkable amount of activity but with research neglect of certain geographical regions, most notably Africa. For geographers, one of the major disciplinary contributors to tourism scholarship, it was stressed that the historical dimension of tourism development and planning "cries out" for further exploration and analysis (Saarinen et al. 2017: 312).

The underdevelopment of historical studies in tourism literature is particularly evident in terms of urban tourism writings. Until the 1980s the volume of scholarly writings on urban tourism was limited. Nevertheless, as shown by Pasquinelli (2015) there has been a substantial international upturn in interest on urban tourism research. This awakening of research is inseparable from the impact of deindustrialization on the economies of North America and European cities and correspondingly of tourism's important role in 'reinventing' them as post-Fordist urban centres (Law, 1992, 1993). Several reviews have appeared on the expanding literature and maturation of research concerning urban tourism; collectively, these emphasize a range of research themes which are under academic scrutiny (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Pasquinelli, 2015; Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2016; Pasquinelli & Bellini, 2017; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Arguably, the dominant focus of most literature on urban tourism "has been on contemporary developments in urban tourism rather than its history" (Bickford-Smith, 2009: 1765). Indeed, it is stressed by Saarinen et al. (2017: 311) that "amidst a swelling and rich body of international writings around geographies of urban tourism, planning and development, mainstream debate is almost entirely concentrated upon present-day developments around tourism in cities which bypasses any substantive concern for past or inherited geographies of city tourism".

Tourism in major cities is not a new phenomenon rather it has existed from the earliest times of civilization following the birth of cities (Cohen & Cohen, 2015). Nevertheless, the historical development of cities as tourist destinations has remained little investigated as urban tourism research remains overwhelmingly 'present-minded'. The most notable contribution is, perhaps, the work of Cocks (2001) on the rise of urban tourism in American cities at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other exceptions include two South African studies. Bickford-Smith (2009: 1765) examines how different tourism sites and particular tourism gazes were constructed in Cape Town, South Africa's iconic destination for international travel, and situates "contemporary developments in urban tourism within a historical analysis of the place-selling of this city from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards". Focused on the apartheid era Rogerson (2016, 2017) records the implementation and struggles against the racial segregation of beaches across South Africa's major coastal leisure destinations. Building upon these foundations the aim in this paper is to address further the oversight of historical studies in urban tourism research. Using an array of archival sources an investigation is undertaken of the early development of tourism in Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, which evolved from a gold mining camp established in 1886. Sources include material accessed from variously the national archives depot (Pretoria); the historical papers collections held both at Johannesburg Public Library (Harold Strange Collection) and the University of the Witwatersrand (William Cullen Historical Papers); tourism business directories, industry press and local newspapers; and, material extracted from the collection of the South African Railways and Harbours (hereafter SAR&H).

The analysis centres on the period from 1920 when the first notable tourism promotional activities were initiated for South Africa as a whole and began to impact on the growing city of Johannesburg. The closing date of 1950 is a landmark year in South African urban history for it marked the enactment by national government of the Group Areas Act which (together with the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953) began the radical reshaping of tourism in South Africa under the influence of apartheid legislation. It will be shown that during the formative years of tourism in Johannesburg between 1920 and 1950 a number of constraints upon tourism expansion can be recognised.

## 2 Early tourism promotion of South Africa

An understanding of Johannesburg's emergence as a tourism destination is inseparable from the broad contours of initial tourism expansion and promotion for South Africa as a whole (Norval, 1936; Saunders & Barben, 2007). According to Bickford-Smith (2009: 1767) the growth in the country of "a substantial tourism market, as elsewhere in the world, accompanied the transport revolution associated with railways and steamships". During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the development of faster, larger and more luxurious steamships as well as the expansion of railways into South Africa's interior, including links between Cape Town and Johannesburg, were significant for facilitating tourist travel to and around South Africa. The Union of South Africa came into existence only in 1910. Pirie (2011: 74) argues that concerted promotion of international tourism to South Africa began soon thereafter when the newly established government-owned SAR&H "created a Publicity and Travel Department". The promotional activities of SAR&H are seen by van Eeden (2011: 602) as one of "the key moments in tourism" for South Africa. Early discussions around international tourism promotion took place in 1911 aimed at "advertising South Africa as a tourist resort" (SAR&H, 1920a: 8). Following this, in 1914 funds were voted of an amount of £25 000 as an initial contribution towards enhancing awareness of the country to potential visitors from Great Britain, USA, Europe and (later) Australia. For the SAR&H the core purpose of its advertising campaign was to generate additional commercial traffic, increasing rail network use with the aim "to supplement domestic holiday traffic by enticing summer holidaymakers away from coastal resorts" (Pirie, 2011: 75). The timing of the advertising campaign was inauspicious, however, and with the outbreak of World War 1 these activities ceased; it was only with the restoration of peace in 1919 that the scheme was revived.

In its implementation as the Oversea Advertising Scheme from 1919-20 emphasis was upon making South Africa's attractions known not only for tourists but also now for potential settlers and investors. Foster (2003) stresses that the role and activities of the SAR&H were critical for building the modern South African nation as the organisation emerges as the state's "sole agency for promoting tourism, settlement and investment". It was argued that conditions had changed since 1914 and that with a greater knowledge of the resources of South Africa it is "desirable to consider the possibility of broadening the overseas advertising scheme to take cognisance of, not only the travel attractions, but the farming, manufacturing, mining and usually general industrial possibilities of the Union" (SAR&H, 1919: 1). The linkages of SAR&H tourism publicity to encourage white settlement in the country represents a continuous thread throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Alongside the distribution of an official handbook of South Africa and pamphlets related to farming and industry, the publicity campaign included the production of touring booklets targeted to "attract tourists to South Africa" (SAR&H, 1920b: 1). It was made clear that tourism was seen as significant for the operations of SAR&H. Indeed, it was stated that "much paine (sic) has been taken, in writing up, photographing and bioscoping the country, to bring out adequately the historic, scenic, climatic and general travel attractions"(SAR&H, 1919: 2). During 1921 the SAR&H commissioned a pamphlet aimed at "attracting the English-speaking middle class tourists" (Wolf, 1991: 104). This covered the main cities, the Cape Peninsula, Victoria Falls and 'the Natives' (Zachariah, 1921). The campaign focus was to present "the broad impressionistic picture of the Union interests sufficiently to induce visitors from overseas" (SAR&H, 1920a: 9). Much emphasis was given to "the untouched and primitive attractions" to be enjoyed of South Africa which could be experienced in conditions of modern comfort (Wolf, 1991: 105).

Overall, Pirie (2011: 73) maintains that SAR&H was the “arch promoter of overseas tourism” to South Africa for almost 30 years after Union in 1910. Equally, for both Foster (2003) and van Eeden (2014) the activities of SAR&H assumed a strategic role in nurturing the early development of tourism in South Africa. The practices of SAR&H transformed the possibilities for tourism as railways “not only brought distant places into the national economy, they also made it possible for citizens to travel and visit those places” (Foster, 2003: 664). In addition, as van Eeden (2011: 602) points out, prior to the advent of mass air travel “all travellers to and from South Africa had to pass through either the harbour in Cape Town or Park Railway Station in Johannesburg”.

### 3 Johannesburg as an incipient tourism destination

SAR&H marketing was vital in shaping the emerging tourism landscape of South Africa (Foster, 2003; van Eeden, 2014). Nevertheless, despite the enormous volume of advertising and pamphlets issued by SAR&H, complaints were raised by many South African towns that in its selection of visual imagery certain potential tourism destinations were given prominence by SAR&H advertising “whilst others are scarcely mentioned” for international travellers (SAR&H, 1927). The growing commercial and industrial centre of Johannesburg, which was anchored upon the wealth of gold, was perhaps, not surprisingly one of those less prominent destinations for overseas tourists. During the 1920s groups of American cruiseship passengers arriving from Cape Town visited Johannesburg as part of their tourism itinerary often en route either to Victoria Falls or Lourenco Marques (Pirie, 2011). Although the city’s gold mines garnered some attention it was considered by many “that Johannesburg was too similar to American cities to keep the tourist interested” (Wolf, 1991: 109). Other international visitors to Johannesburg during the 1920s, however, were impressed more especially as the city’s image outside South Africa was unpromising. For example, accompanying the HRH Prince of Wales on his visit to South Africa, in 1925 Ward Price (1927: 7) wrote:

... millions of people throughout the British Empire undoubtedly visualise Johannesburg as erroneously as I did. The picture which that name had always raised before my eyes was of a glaringly new city, laid out in rectangular monotony on a flat and dusty plain. Its outward appearance I expected to be characterized by opulence aggressive to the verge of vulgarity... The inhabitants of this imaginary city of the commonplace I had supposed would be a hard-faced soulless lot with minds centred solely on money-making... As for the lighter side of the city’s life, except for a sordid ‘new-rich’ sort of gaiety, I foresaw none of the cultured amenities or the broad outlook on life that exists in older centres of civilisation. Ward Price (1927: 7)

These images and preconceptions of Johannesburg were overturned by his sojourn in the city from which he sees Johannesburg as a holiday centre with potential.

My first twenty-four hours in the real Johannesburg was enough to make every one of these expectations seem like the figments of a fantastic dream. Nothing could be more different from the impressions which I came with than those with which I go away... Instead of a city without a soul. I have found reproduced here that indefinable but unmistakable metropolitan atmosphere which, in my experience at least, I have never felt so strongly anywhere else but the world’s great capitals...Excellent shops; attractive entertainments; surroundings of great natural variety, embellished by villas of quite unusual quality of design, standing in gardens that are models of skill and taste in exploiting the physical beauty of the site – these are circumstances which, if Johannesburg could be transported bodily, would make her one of the show cities of Europe or America. (Ward Price, 1927: 7)

Early promotional advertising produced in 1924 marketed Johannesburg mainly to investors or settlers as ‘the commercial heart of South Africa’ and the ‘Empire’s great gold centre’ with the ‘biggest mines and equipment in the Universe, now or ever’! But, its potential for tourism

was not overlooked as visitors were encouraged to travel ‘to Johannesburg for health, business and enjoyment’ with the city described as the ‘most interesting place in a country of fascinations’. Particular mention was given to the city’s large show grounds which at Easter was the venue for a week long ‘pastoral, agricultural, industrial and implement exhibition’. The 1924 Illustrated Guide to South Africa projected the city’s attractions for domestic visitors as follows:

Johannesburg, the city of gold, the hub of South Africa, is modern in all that it attempts, and there is no more enjoyable and interesting way of spending a week or month than to visit the Rand and explore the Reef in that period of the year when summer is merging into winter. The atmosphere of the Rand, despite the mining operations that are proceeding even in the pulsating heart of the city, is so pure and rarified that it acts as a tonic to those coming from the coast belt, and it is remarkable, considering the many and diversified attractions that it possesses, that Johannesburg has not organized a gala or holiday season and specially laid itself out to cater for the enjoyment of visitors. (The Union Publishing Agency, 1924: 149)

Further acknowledgement of the city’s tourism potential occurred in 1925 with the establishment of the Johannesburg Publicity Association. This organisation was founded to serve as “the ‘guide, philosopher and friend’ of everyone, whether correspondent or visitor, business man or tourist, who needs reliable information concerning the Golden City” (City of Johannesburg, 1951: 49). With its trained staff and a bureau situated in the city’s downtown, the “traveller is cared for, made to feel welcome, assisted along the way and introduced to the business or professional contacts he desires to make; his tastes and wishes are studied, his time is turned to the best account and there is no need for him to wander aimlessly around Johannesburg”(City of Johannesburg, 1951: 49). One of the major challenges facing the Johannesburg Publicity Association was to counter the widespread images of the city as “some half developed mining town”; instead it “set itself the necessary task of exhibiting a truer picture of the city” (*Municipal Magazine*, 1927, February: 5). In this respect a vital task for the association was to isolate the city’s unique tourism assets and to begin marketing them to visitors.

#### **4 Defining Johannesburg’s tourism assets**

In 1931 and 1933 the Johannesburg Publicity Association worked with the publicity department of the SAR&H to produce two widely circulated booklets which intended to introduce the city and its attractions to tourists (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931; South African Railways and Harbours, 1933). ‘Á sunshine city built on gold’ was the theme of the first booklet produced in 1931 (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931). As the hub of the world’s greatest goldfield, it asserted boldly that “Johannesburg is perhaps the chief attraction of Southern Africa” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 7). Moreover, Johannesburg “through its very youth is structurally modern” was styled as “a miracle of empire” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 3). The pamphlet was aimed at potential investors, settlers as well as tourists and catalogued the city’s residential attractions, social clubs, educational centres and, above all, its climatic advantages of “abundant sunshine, pure and exhilarating air” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 24). The city’s public buildings and parks were highlighted and said to “give mute though solid testimony to the march of progress of this metropolis of South Africa” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931: 3). Among the civic buildings the following were noted as of special interest: Johannesburg City Hall and within it the city hall organ; the law courts, the public library and geological museum, the city art gallery and the Union Observatory where on Wednesday evenings visitors could enjoy “some of the wonders of the heavens through the ‘Reunert’

Telescope, a 9-inch refractor” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931: 20). Much attention was given also to Johannesburg as South Africa’s pre-eminent sporting centre, to the important horse races hosted by the Johannesburg Turf Club, and to Ellis Park as the permanent venue of the National Lawn Tennis Championships. Finally, the options were applauded of ‘going round and about’ Johannesburg to enjoy ‘delightful drives’ by tram or private motor car through the city’s avenues and expanding suburbs to visit the Zoological Gardens, various parks as well as to “a fine rifle range the ‘Bisley’ of South Africa” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1931: 33). The 1933 booklet affirms the roles of Johannesburg variously “as the metropolitan city of Southern Africa, the largest European City in Africa”, “the seat of the greatest gold-mining industry in the world” and now “the pivot of the South African transportation system by rail, road and air”(Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 3 and 5). It assured potential visitors that “all the amenities of modern civilisation are to be found in Johannesburg”; in addition to its public buildings and municipal market hall attention is given to its entertainment economy – theatre cinema and music “the most elaborate in South Africa” featuring “names famous in Europe and America” with “the latest releases from oversea studios” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 11). Recommendations for leisure and recreation include the city-council organised weekend picnic tours by motor omnibus to a range of lake resorts close to the city as well as slightly further to accessible river and stream resorts (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1933: 13).

Throughout the 1930s the expanding city of Johannesburg experienced a steady growth of tourists for business, visits to friends and relatives, and for leisure. In terms of leisure travel the SAR&H viewed Johannesburg as the country’s major national source market; since the 1920s it had introduced a system of regular excursion fares and special trains to transport ‘inland’ residents to popular coastal centres, most importantly Durban, Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth. In 1935, however, the Johannesburg Publicity Association criticised the SAR&H excursion policy for the ‘inequality’ of facilities granted for travel opportunities to inland as opposed to coastal destinations. The complaint was lodged that as there were “some 192 excursion days being given from inland to coast as contrasted with only 69 excursion days from coast to inland” that the SAR&H was failing “to popularise general travel by rail by means of a serious, sustained effort for the encouragement of travel to the inland parts of the Union” especially to Johannesburg (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1935: 7). The SAR&H argued in response the limited demand for its coast to inland excursion offerings. The most popular times for domestic travel to Johannesburg were at Christmas and at Easter, the latter to coincide with the week-long agricultural show and exhibition. Visitor flows were boosted for special events in Johannesburg such as the 1936 Empire Exhibition held to celebrate the city’s golden jubilee (Rand Daily Mail, 15 September 1936). The Empire Exhibition gave a considerable boost to international tourist travel to Johannesburg with further growth continuing in 1937 and 1938 according to reports of the Johannesburg Publicity Association. The expansion of tourism was credited to both favourable conditions overseas as well as to the work of the association in making Johannesburg a touring and vacation centre (Rand Daily Mail, 7 October 1938). It was considered Johannesburg was “at last becoming tourism conscious” with many improvements occurring that enhanced the city’s visitor appeal.

The Art Gallery (now being extended), the magnificent Africana Museum, the Public Library, the Rand Airport, the view sites at de Korte Street and Primrose Terrace, the development of wide arterial and link roads, the introduction of modern omnibus services, the seasonal programmes of music, the development of “the Wilds” off Kloof Road and of scenic drives such as the Sylvia Pass, the improvement of the Zoological Gardens, and most generous expenditure on facilities for sport and recreation were civic enterprises which contributed much to the interest and enjoyment of visitors”. (Rand Daily Mail, 7 October 1938)

Advertisements sponsored by the Johannesburg Publicity Association appearing in 1938 underscore the growing tourism awareness of the association as they demonstrate multiple reasons to visit the city (Figure 1). By 1939 it was reported by hoteliers that each month between 1500 and 2000 business visitors or international tourists came to Johannesburg and that the benefit of tourism to the city, albeit not easy to determine, “might well be over £1,000,000 a year”(Rand Daily Mail, 19 July 1939).

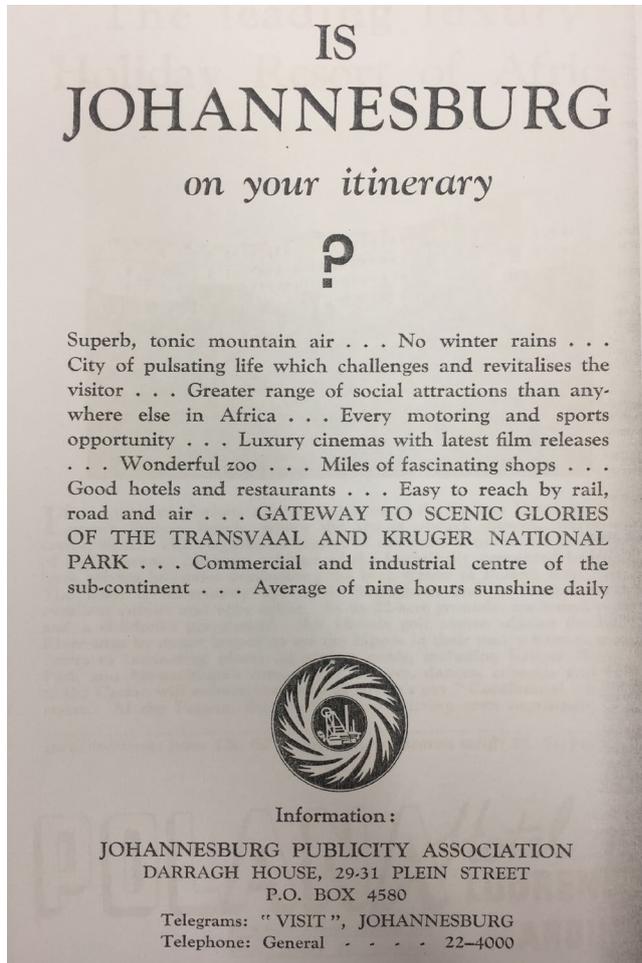


Figure 1: Place Marketing for Johannesburg in 1938 (Source: South African Railways and Harbours, 1938).

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe during 1939 markedly changed the macro-environment for tourism development in South Africa as a whole, and for Johannesburg in particular. World War II disrupted the flows of international tourists to the country from Europe as well as South Africans travelling overseas. Nevertheless, the wartime disruptions of travel from Africa to Europe also opened up new opportunities for South Africa to benefit from the diversion of tourist flows from colonial territories in Central and East Africa (Cape Times, 22 Nov. 1939; Rand Daily Mail, 17 February 1940). In colonial settler territories extended leave for periods of three to six months was granted every three or four years for people to go to a temperate climate for ‘recuperation’ (Rand Daily Mail, 10 October 1940). In normal circumstances these European residents of colonies such as Belgian Congo, Uganda or Tanganyika would travel to Europe but with war conditions large flows of these regional tourists chose South Africa (Rand Daily Mail, 28 June 1940). Travel to South Africa was overland for most of these European settlers such that in 1940 it was reported that “the texture of incoming visitors has changed”, including for Johannesburg (Rand Daily Mail, 10 October 1940). The Johannesburg Publicity Association issued pamphlets and special advise to assist visitors from the Belgian Congo (The

Star, 12 December 1939). In 1940 it was reported that there had been “a substantially increased number of visitors to Johannesburg” from colonial African territories to which the local publicity association now paid special attention (Rand Daily Mail, 2 Nov. 1940). In 1942 Johannesburg recorded more international visitors than in any year since the 1936 Empire Exhibition.

Even after the 1945 close of hostilities in Europe, South Africa saw further opportunities for continued tourism expansion because of shortages and continued rationing in Europe (Cape Times, 21 Nov. 1945). The Johannesburg Publicity Association (1945: 2) issued a special pamphlet to call for extended marketing of South Africa arguing that “there are few if any activities which offer such promise of handsome returns to costs of promotion as the tourist industry”. The post-war activities of the Association continued with support for the production of a number of handbooks and guides for visitors to the city. These continued to recommend visits to the city’s “fine collection” of European paintings in the Art Gallery, to the Public Library, Africana Museum, the Observatory, city parks (including Zoo), geological museum, City Hall, conducted tours of underground and surface workings of gold mines, day trips to lake resorts, and to view the city from its highest building, Escom House, described as “an outstanding landmark in the City” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1949: 10). The city’s night-time economy was deemed special for its “blaze of coloured lights spelling out a multitude of messages and attractions” and in particular its “palatial cinemas” and the annual opera season in March-April (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1948). For both domestic and international visitors the advantages of Johannesburg tourism at Easter were highlighted to coincide with the Rand Agricultural Show and several sporting events (especially tennis) which were “organized to synchronize with the show” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1948) Of note is the opportunity now advertised to visit one of the 50 diamond cutting establishments in Johannesburg and encouragement to go to Northcliff, described as South Africa’s ‘premier inland pleasure resort’ (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1949: 15).

No visit to Johannesburg is complete without a day spent at Northcliff, from whose commanding heights a 60-mile-arc panorama of the central Transvaal – city, reef, mountain and veld – is unfolded...Northcliff is open to visitors daily, with a luncheon, dinner and light refreshment service within its elegant plastic walls, and the delightful garden terraces or direct to your car in the spacious parking area. On Sunday afternoons from 3 to 5.15 o’clock the Northcliff All Star Band provides orchestral music, including vocal items – and your favourite tunes on request. Dancing Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1949: 15)

Finally, with a clear eye on the entertainment of tourists to the city from Europe or USA there was the considerable promotion of the spectacle of ‘tribal’ or ‘native dancing’. This was likened to experiencing “the very soul of aboriginal Africa” and assuring that “the spectacle of these native ‘warriors’, prancing, leaping, shouting and singing to the accompaniment of strange music from primitive ‘kaffir pianos’ is one which rarely fails to make a vivid impression upon the onlooker” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1948). The 1947 visitor handbook reflected as follows:

The native mine worker is a most picturesque human type in the great gold mining industry of Johannesburg. While the more advanced of his tribesmen may play association football in teams called “Eleven Experienced”, “Winter Swallows”, or “Moonlight Stars” which may be matched against such awesome opponents as “Hungry Lions”, “Crocodiles”, “Dangerous Darkies” or “Naughty Boys” it is often the native mine labourer who clings to his age-old customs of his forefathers and spends his leisure hours in true tribal fashion by participating in a war dance. (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1947: 25)

The terminology of ‘war dance’ was, however, corrected in subsequent publicity material. In the 1949 handbook it was stressed that such dances often represented adaptations of the original village dances “which would be graced by the presence of women and children who would provide the music and singing for the dancers” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1949: 14).

In an important caveat it was argued that despite popular opinion “none of the dances are war dances, and in South Africa, few, if any, have a secondary significance beyond the clear and immediate appeal of the rhythmic performance in perfect co-ordination of action” (Johannesburg Publicity Association, 1949: 14). By 1950, two years into the rule of the apartheid government, the spectacle of native dances held at mine compounds on Sunday mornings was described as akin to “folk dances” and, characterised now, for the most part, as simply “the natural expression of high spirits in traditional rhythmic movements”. (City of Johannesburg, 1951: 136)

## **5 Developing critical infrastructure for urban tourism**

Arguably, throughout the study period of 1920 to 1950, considerable progress was made in terms of establishing certain critical infrastructure to support tourism growth in Johannesburg. In particular, accessibility of the city was greatly enhanced by several advances made in transportation infrastructure.

Foremost was, perhaps, the improvement which occurred in automobility. Until 1923 when the Ford Motor Company was established in South Africa, followed by General Motors in 1926, car ownership was a luxury and only from the mid-1920s did cars become affordable by the middle-class (Van Eeden, 2012). By the 1930s, as Pirie (2013: 75) points out, the railways “no longer monopolized overland tourism”. Nevertheless, an essential requirement for improved automobility was a network of navigable roads. In this respect South Africa was challenged as for many years national government had invested considerably in SAR&H as an efficient long distance transport medium (Foster, 2003). Van Eeden (2012) argues that roads were considered to be only for short distances and the responsibility of the four provinces rather than of national government; as late as the 1920s all weather roads extended only 60 kms beyond Johannesburg, South Africa’s economic centre. During the 1930s a set of national roads to link the country’s main urban centres was proposed in part to address the needs of overseas tourists (Floor, 1985). Domestic self-drive tourists also benefitted from such infrastructural improvements. Indeed, the bituminisation of the national roads enhanced accessibility to Johannesburg from throughout the country and thereby contributed to the expansion of all forms of city tourism, including business, leisure and VFR travel. Further strengthening tourism in the city was the considerable improvements done to roads within the city. One national tourism guidebook in 1932 commended Johannesburg “as a holiday centre” in particular for those in search of “pleasure, motoring on good roads” (South African Railways and Harbours, 1932: 85).

By 1938 marketing for Johannesburg could applaud the ease of access to the city both by road as well as rail (South African Railways and Harbours, 1938). In addition, already by 1935 Johannesburg assumed the role as the most significant centre in South Africa’s air network. The first regular commercial air service by the private company, Union Airways, commenced operations in 1929 based from Port Elizabeth. In 1931 permission was given to SAR&H to operate a separate department for the transport of passengers and in 1934 they assumed control of Union Airways. With the birth of South African Airways services in 1934, Johannesburg became the hub for domestic air and (subsequently international) travel for South Africa. By 1938 there were daily services operating between Johannesburg and Durban and four flights per week between Johannesburg and Cape Town (South African Railways and Harbours, 1950). The first non-stop services between Johannesburg and Cape Town commenced in 1946.

International flights from Johannesburg to London began in a partnership of South African Airways with British Overseas Airways Corporation in 1945; the Skymaster service could transport travellers from Johannesburg to London in a total elapsed time of 40 hours. Between 1945 and 1950 a gradual extension occurred in the network of serviced international destinations from Johannesburg, including by 1950 flights to Israel with stops in Nairobi and Khartoum (South African Railways and Harbours, 1950). Until the opening in April 1952 of the international standard Jan Smuts Airport flight operations took place from interim or temporary airport facilities at Palmietfontein (South African Railways and Harbours, 1945).

The major shortcoming for Johannesburg as an incipient tourism destination between 1920 and 1950 relates to the generally unsatisfactory state of the city's accommodation services, and especially of the hotel industry. In many respects the state of the Johannesburg's hotel sector was a mirror of the broader problems experienced concerning the hotel industry in South Africa as a whole. The 1920s promotional advertising by SAR&H targeted at potential American or European visitors suggested that the allure of South Africa as a destination included that tourists might enjoy 'the primitive' in absolute comfort because of the country's standards of accommodation. Visitors were assured that hotel accommodations in cities were "first class... with up to date sanitation and lighted by electricity" (Wolf, 1991: 105). This said, in terms of expanding international tourism traffic to South Africa as early as 1925 it was recognised that the country needed to have "decent hotel accommodation" but that "from Cape Point to Rhodesia there was room for improvement" (Rand Daily Mail, 12 February 1925). During 1925 it was recommended that the South African Publicity Association be responsible for developing a process of registration for approved hotels which "should bear a distinctive mark, an enamel plate" as a sign of its recommendation to visitors" (Kroonstad Times, 10 February 1925). No such process moved forward, not least because it might threaten the vested interests of the leading liquor companies that were dominating and shaping the hotel sector.

In 1928 landmark legislation was enacted which subordinated the hotel industry to the traffic in liquor (Norval 1936). In terms of what Walker (1977: 9) describes as this 'ill-considered' Act the licensees of existing bars in urban areas were required to provide a minimum of 10 bedrooms to have a liquor licence. Overall, it was clear that "the conditions that the licensees had to meet were largely physical, with little regard being given to the service aspect, and all new licensees carried the obligation to build an 'hotel'" (Walker, 1977: 9). As argued elsewhere the consequence was the inevitable further takeover of the hotel industry by the major alcohol companies, especially brewing enterprises (Rogerson, 2011). Essentially, the 1928 legislation created a basic change in the character of South African hotels with the accent on liquor-selling rather than the provision of accommodation services, a situation that prevailed at least until the mid-1960s (Rogerson, 2013a). In return for financial support from the alcohol sector there occurred the acceleration of the hotel industry towards liquor provision and sales with scant concern for accommodation issues. In common with the situation nationally a substantial share of Johannesburg hotels by the 1930s "are in reality nothing but bars" (Norval, 1936: 250). Overall, during the mid-1930s "the relative backwardness" of Johannesburg hotels was apparent (Norval, 1936: 227). Indeed, it was recorded that the largest number of the city's hotel stock "have been in existence for the past 30 to 40 years without any substantial alteration being made to the buildings" (Norval, 1936: 249). With growing flows of international tourism in the 1930s and into the post-war period the degraded state of the accommodation sector became a matter of deepening national concern. In 1943 the Report of the National Hotel Investigative Committee concluded that whilst there had been certain recent improvements in the standards of accommodation offered in South Africa, no grounds existed for complacency and that the "hotels in South Africa were far from being ideal" (Rand Daily Mail, 1 Mar. 1944).

Indeed, it reflected that there were “far too many complaints” in particular from overseas visitors (Rand Daily Mail, 1 Mar. 1944).

The concerns about hotel standards spanned a range of issues including management, accommodation, service, food and hygiene (University of Cape Town, 1949; Crocker, 1950). In terms of management it was complained that proprietors were not ‘experts’ and many seemed more interested in the bar trade than issues of accommodation or food services. One observer commented that “so many South African hotels do not take their job seriously” (Gibbs, 1949: 17). Unsurprisingly, therefore, it was argued that the hotel-keeper often was regarded “as a suspicious and even predatory character” (Rand Daily Mail, 27 October 1944). With respect to accommodation, criticisms were directed at shortages of single rooms, private bathrooms, lavatories and of private rooms with suites. Hotel lounges were seen as too small and often overcrowded by non-residents. The harshest complaints surrounded service standards and lack of awareness that “so much can be done to attract visitors through closely attentive services at all times” (Rand Daily Mail, 1 Mar. 1944). Contributing to the poor quality of services often endured by tourists was the difficulties that hotels experienced in obtaining trained staff (Vynne, 1947; Walker, 1977). Food preparation standards and services and the “almost entire absence of good wholesome fruit from the average menu” were another theme of concern (Rand Daily Mail, 1 Mar. 1944). Accordingly, in order to facilitate the anticipated post-1945 boom in international tourism arrivals it was recommended hotels “must be overhauled and cleaned up” (Cape Times, 21 Nov. 1945).

The national Minister of Transport observed that in South Africa’s major centres “our hotel accommodation, which is so limited that we cannot even accommodate the present trickle of visitors, while many South Africans are often unable to obtain hotel reservations” (South African Railways and Harbours, 1946: 328). The Chairman of the South African Tourist Corporation opined that tourists were “entitled to an honest standard of hotel accommodation” (Maggs, 1949: 17).

By this I mean that the man or woman who books in at an hotel charging 15s a day cannot possibly expect the stylish accommodation nor the imposing array of food dishes appearing on the menu of 25s or 30s a day establishments nor the special services and little extras. But he is entitled to well-cooked fare, a clean tablecloth and napkin and an efficient table service. In addition, there is no reason why his room should not be thoroughly clean, airy and comfortable, and that adequate bathing and toilet facilities be available. (Maggs, 1949: 17)

Overall, the lack of quality accommodation services was conceded by national government representatives as a critical constraint for tourism development across the country (Maggs, 1949; University of Cape Town, 1949). This national challenge, however, needed to be set against the hard fact “that without the liquor side of the business, 90 per cent of the hotels in South Africa could not make ends meet” (Vynne, 1947: 15). Indeed, a 1949 survey on the state of hotels in South Africa confirmed that the standard of accommodation services was relatively low because the business of furnishing accommodation was far less profitable than the selling of liquor (University of Cape Town, 1949).

Several aspects of the contemporary development of Johannesburg’s hotel industry are well-documented (Rogerson, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e, 2014). Nevertheless, the history of hotel development in the city remains largely unexplored. What is known, however, is that at the apex of the city’s hotel economy were a small handful of luxury establishments, the genesis of which goes back to the early period of Johannesburg as a fast-growing settlement anchored upon the bounty of gold (Rosenthal, 1972; Hughes, 1983; Cole, 1988). The most famous and iconic establishment was the fashionable *Carlton Hotel* which opened in 1906. This luxury

establishment could in many respects “be described as the forerunner of the modern Five-Star hotel” (Cole, 1988: 14). Built from the wealth of mining magnates the glamorous hotel “was an oasis of sheer luxury on the raw Highveld” with superior appointments and at the time was the largest building in South Africa (Benjamin, 1979: 10). With every item from the hotel specially imported the *Carlton* became “the rendezvous of discriminating people” (Rosenthal, 1972). It was reported that the “public marvelled at the building’s inner-mechanics, all of the very latest – air conditioning and central heating, waterborne sewerage, its own supply of water and emergency power; even a central plug-in vacuum-cleaning service that had been invented in America only a couple of years before. Down in the basement there was a full-scale Turkish bath and massage establishment, with a marble swimming pool” (Benjamin, 1979: 10). Throughout the period of Johannesburg as an incipient tourism destination the quality accommodation and service standards of the *Carlton* were unrivalled (Fig. 2). The ground floor was occupied by several shops targeted to satisfy the requirements of the visitors, many of whom came from overseas who stayed at the hotel; the most colourful was Sieradzki’s which sold ostrich plumes (Rosenthal, 1972; Hughes 1983). More than three decades after its initial opening marketing material proclaimed the *Carlton* to be “the hub of Africa” and offered to demonstrate to its discriminating clientele “what real hotel service means” (South African Railways and Harbours, 1939: 72). Although continually graced by visits of international celebrities, royalty and the rich and famous, the hotel’s finest moment came in 1947 when the British Royal Family were guests of the *Carlton* while visiting Johannesburg (Rosenthal, 1972; Cole, 1988).

Let Johannesburg's mighty  
**CARLTON** show you  
 what real hotel service  
 means . . . .

**T**HE CARLTON'S friendly service to its guests begins with the helpfulness of the porter who meets you at the train or the commissionaire who greets you as you drive up to the door. From then till we've seen you safely on your way, your comfort, your enjoyment and your convenience are the special care of the best trained hotel staff in Africa.

**T**HE INTELLIGENCE and helpfulness of its staff is just one item in the service of the Carlton to its guests, a standard of service you cannot have experienced anywhere else in this country. Here are some of the things which the Carlton offers to those wise travellers who select it as their hotel:—

- 450 rooms all with telephones, luxuriously restful beds, lounge chairs, writing desks and commodious wardrobes.
- 200 of these rooms also have private bathrooms and entrance halls while 25 de luxe suites offer private sitting rooms as well.
- The Restaurant (service table d'hote or à la grande carte, the finest cuisine and service in Africa).
- The New and Greater Grill Room (inexpensive à la carte service).
- The magnificent Palm Court.
- The distinguished Ballroom.
- Drawing Room and quiet writing room for residents.
- Resplendently modern Hairdressing Saloons for Ladies and Gentlemen.
- The Men's Outfitting Shop.
- Theatre Booking Office.
- Travel Bureau.

**THE CARLTON'S "ROOM ONLY" SYSTEM WORKS OUT EXTREMELY REASONABLY**

You pay 10s. 6d. up for your room (from 17s. 6d. with private bathroom and entrance hall). You are then free to use the Restaurant and Grill Room as and when you like. You do not have to pay for meals not taken in the hotel. The "inclusive terms" system is also available and the rates are surprisingly inexpensive. Fully detailed tariff on request. Write—The Manager, Carlton Hotel, Johannesburg. Telegrams: "Carltonia".

THE  
 HUB OF  
 AFRICA

**CARLTON HOTEL**  
 JOHANNESBURG

Figure 2: Carlton Hotel advertising 1939 (Source: South African Railways and Harbours, 1939).

The *Carlton Hotel* was an exceptional establishment in the Johannesburg hotelscape. Most Johannesburg hotels refracted the national problems in terms of limited quantity of international tourist facilities and existing establishments often exhibiting poor quality standards, especially of accommodation services, because of the economics of liquor domination. In 1944 the Chairman of the Johannesburg Publicity Association stated that the city's accommodation resources were "severely tried", a condition not assisted by the fact that the national government treated the hotel industry "as an outcast" (Rand Daily Mail, 27 October 1944). The poor levels of service offered in city hotels were flagged in speeches made by H.J. Crocker, the director of Johannesburg's publicity association. He stated in 1947 that "We must improve our manners, or, at least, learn to show a cheerful face to visitors" (cited in Vynne, 1947: 17). In 1950 widespread reports surfaced about conditions endured by tourists in the city's so-called 'best' hotels. From scathing comments made by both local and international visitors the following unpromising picture was painted.

Visitors complain that because accommodation is at a premium hoteliers say: "Take it or leave it" and provide poor services....They point to the insanitary state of public conveniences off the lounges of many of the hotels. The Johannesburg Health Department recently served notices on a number of city hotels in this connection....One hotel is notorious for its poor service of meals in rooms. Trays are sent with leaden cutlery and a pile up collection of foodstuffs – at an extra charge. Sheets, blankets and towels in a bad state of repair are used, the guests allege,

and extra 'beds' crowded into rooms during peak seasons are stretchers – but no reduction in tariff is made. Other annoyances to guests are the itinerant vendors or charity collectors who are allowed within the lounges of a number of hotels. (Sunday Express, 9 April 1950)

The above descriptions confirm that by 1950 the critical infrastructural issues about hotel accommodation in Johannesburg remained unresolved.

## 6 Conclusion

Existing urban tourism research offers only limited glimpses into the emergence and challenges of localities in becoming tourist destinations. It is argued here that the adoption of an historical lens is useful to offer fresh insight on urban tourism. In the case of Johannesburg during the period 1920-1950 the city can be characterised at best as an incipient tourism destination. In building the tourism economy a number of challenges arose some of which were inseparable from the growth of tourism in South Africa as a whole and contingent for their resolution upon strategic interventions driven by national government. Major improvements in road, rail and air service accessibility served well the expansion of all forms of tourism in Johannesburg. Nevertheless, the role of local agency in developing the city tourism economy also must be acknowledged. From 1925 an important role was assumed by the Johannesburg Publicity Association in identifying and subsequently promoting the city's tourism assets for both domestic and international audiences. By 1950 the major shortcoming for tourism growth remained the unsatisfactory state of hotel accommodation services, which would only be comprehensively addressed during the 1960s by national government interventions. This said, from 1950 the tourism economy of Johannesburg would increasingly feel the impress of apartheid legislation which opened up a host of new challenges for urban tourism because of the requirements for separate and segregated facilities for people of different race groups.

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## Black middle-income housing and asset building in Mangaung, South Africa

### Abstract

Asset-building policies are used worldwide to reduce state welfare commitments. In the Global South, including South Africa, asset-based housing development is thought to help reduce poverty. This study investigated asset building and homeownership in a sample of South Africa's emerging black middle class. Interviews with 244 black middle-class households in Mangaung revealed asset value creation and heavy dependence on mortgage finance. Levels of mortgage default were low, although households with recently secured mortgages struggled to pay them off. We found little evidence that property-owning is helping these households to move out of poverty. Their ability to afford mortgage loans appeared to be directly related to their own efforts and human capital. Very few had considered downsizing as an option, possibly because ownership of a house has social value, for passing on to the next generation. Asset building was still in its early stages and, because these households had been denied equal opportunities and barred from homeownership by the apartheid regime, very few intergenerational transfers had yet occurred.

**Keywords:** asset building, black middle class, housing, inheritance, poverty alleviation

### 1 Introduction

Asset-based welfare has become common practice worldwide because governments want households to become less dependent on them by being more self-reliant. Asset-based welfare programmes support large-scale housing privatisation and homeownership-support projects in the Global North. In the Global South, land-titling programmes dominate asset-based development programmes. Many policy makers view land titling as the best way to lift the poor out of poverty. In South Africa, the Housing Subsidy Programme pursues the same objective. Since 2004 there has been an increased emphasis on the role of property in reducing poverty. Current policy envisages that the poor will use these housing subsidies to climb the housing ladder, trade in the property sector and use their houses to help them escape from poverty (Department of Human Settlements, 2014).

Although South African housing policy has always focused on the lower-income groups, a secondary objective has been to deal with the housing problems of the emerging black middle class, particularly the lower black middle class. This secondary focus on a higher-income group was evident in the way the policy was originally structured. In 1994, a monthly income of between R2,500 and R3,500 (R - South African Rand) would have attracted a subsidy of R5,000, and below R800 a subsidy of R15,000. Effectively, therefore, higher incomes meant smaller subsidies. Higher-income households therefore had to supplement the subsidy with

mortgage finance. The post-apartheid government has consequently attempted to simplify the process of accessing mortgage finance.

However, despite the policy's focus on lower-middle-class housing, research has focused largely on housing for the poor. A search of the housing literature of the first 20 years after democracy (1994–2014) found only two studies of the lower-middle-class household (Tomlinson, 1997, 2007). But recently there has been a revival of academic interest in this topic (Marais & Cloete, 2015, 2017; Lemanski, 2017; Marais et al., 2018). Generally, attention has been devoted to the rising black middle class (Southall, 2016), and a special edition of *Development Southern Africa* (Volume 32, Issue 1, 2015) was dedicated to this topic. But despite this upswing in the literature, we still do not know much about black middle-income use of houses as assets. In this paper we attempt to improve understanding of how the black middle class use housing within the broader asset-building approach. Taking into account the historical deprivation of black people as regards socio-economic development and housing, we investigated three black middle class housing issues: the role of housing in asset generation, the extent to which housing helps reduce poverty, and the risks associated with asset building.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 classified South Africans in terms of race: black (then referred to as “native”), coloured and white, and later Indian, as a separate group. The Group Areas Act meant suburbs were racially designated. Both Acts were repealed in 1991. We concede that, more than two decades into democracy, many households cannot be defined by these historical racial categories. We use the term “black” in this paper as used in the historical context. Democracy in South Africa has brought economic and social freedom to black households, giving rise to a black middle class. For convenience, we use the term “middle class” in this paper, while acknowledging that it is difficult to define “middle class” and that the definition should go beyond income to include access to good education and housing.

## **2 Review of asset-based welfare literature**

### **2.1 Asset-based welfare in the Global North**

The idea of asset-based welfare is that people with sufficient assets can organise their own welfare. Asset-based policies provide needy households with both the means and the opportunities to accumulate assets and thus have greater control over their livelihoods. Asset-based welfare policies are particularly important in Europe, where trust funds are common practice. According to Sherraden (2003), asset-based policies have more profound implications for individuals than do welfare policies that focus on income transfers. Asset-based strategies empower people to act strategically and proactively. For instance, they may use their assets to invest in training in order to avoid possible redundancy.

The asset-based welfare literature is mainly concerned with financial assets and does not discuss housing in depth. However, in the field of housing, a completely new strand of literature on asset-based welfare has emerged, particularly since the global financial crisis. This strand borrows key ideas from the asset-based welfare literature and adapts them to the specific capital-intensive and investment-oriented features of the housing field (see Prabhakar, 2018, for further details).

In the literature dealing with asset-based welfare in housing, housing assets are often seen as a lever for welfare state restructuring (Groves et al., 2007; Malpass, 2008; Doling & Ronald, 2010), the general idea being that homeowners can use their accumulated housing assets as a personal safety net. These assets can act as a supplement to (or even a substitute for) other state welfare provisions. Governments may therefore use principles of housing-related asset-based welfare to justify a reduction in their spending in key areas of the welfare state, notably pension and healthcare provision (Hoekstra, 2010). This may make sense on a macro level but can lead to inequalities on a micro level (Elsinga & Hoekstra, 2015). For example, inequality can be created between a homeowner and a tenant (who does not accumulate housing assets) or between a homeowner living in a “good” location and another living in a deprived neighbourhood. Intergenerational transfers may also reproduce inequality in housing asset holding across generations (Deng et al., 2017).

The asset-based welfare research on housing tends to be conceptual and theoretical. There is a dearth of research on the practical aspects of releasing housing equity (the difference between the market value and the outstanding debt on the house) and the strategies of households wanting to release housing equity, particularly after a crisis. A notable exception is a recently published research report for the European Union produced by a consortium of European universities (Al-Umaray, 2018). Based on focus-group research, this report provides insight into the strategies and perceptions of older homeowners in six European countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy and Hungary. The report says housing equity can be released in five different ways: selling the house and buying a smaller one (downsizing), selling the house and moving to a rental house, selling the house and then renting it back (sale and leaseback), staying in the house and using a financial product to extract the housing equity, and letting part of the house.

In most countries, downsizing is the option preferred by older homeowners when they want to release housing equity. This option allows households to extract housing equity while continuing to be homeowners (homeownership being highly valued in many countries). However, there are caveats: downsizing forces people to leave their current house, which some may find difficult, and they may struggle to find an affordable alternative. And in many countries, houses or apartments that older people may find both suitable and attractive (for example, situated on the ground floor, close to facilities) are in short supply. The second option, selling the house and moving to a rental house, is a good way to release a large amount of housing equity at any given time. However, on a macro level it may also lead to high and rising housing costs for those releasing their assets, as they will have to pay rent. In contrast to the costs of owning a house, rents tend to increase over time. In addition, renting is stigmatised in some countries (for example in Italy and Ireland). On the other hand, in countries with well-developed rental markets (for example Germany and the Netherlands) many older homeowners consider this option to be a serious alternative. In the third option, sale and leaseback, the homeowner sells the house to a commercial company and then rents it back at a market-related price. This puts the homeowner in a position to release a large amount of equity while staying in the house and getting rid of maintenance obligations. In practice, however, the conditions of the sale and leaseback option are often not very advantageous. The prices that are paid for these houses are often considerably lower than market prices while the commercial rents tend to be high.

The fourth option, using a financial product to release housing equity, is the housing equity-release strategy that has attracted most attention in the literature. The most commonly used equity-release products are reversed mortgages and home-reversion schemes. In a reversed

mortgage, older homeowners take out an extra loan on their house (paid out in a lump sum or in monthly payments) that needs neither monthly loan repayments nor monthly interest payments. Interest due is added to the total amount of the loan. The loan is only repaid when the house is sold, after the homeowner has died or moved to institutional care. Though reversed mortgages – also referred to as lifetime mortgages – are common in the United Kingdom (the most developed European market for equity-release products), they also feature in a number of other countries like Italy, the Netherlands and Ireland. A second financial product that allows older homeowners to release housing equity is the home-reversion scheme in terms of which the homeowner sells all or part of the property to a financial institution that will pay a lump sum for it. This lump sum is considerably lower than the market value but the seller (the homeowner) has the lifelong right to remain in the house. When the property is eventually sold after the homeowner has died or moved to institutional care, the financial institution will receive a sum of money equivalent to the value of the house or part of the house that it owns. Home-reversion plans are the most common equity-release product in Germany but they feature less prominently in the rest of Europe. Although there is increasing interest in financial equity-release products, consumers tend to view them with suspicion and distrust. Not only are many of these products complex but the financial sector has also generally lacked confidence in them since the global financial crisis. Finally, homeowners can let part of the house to increase their income (an option that, strictly speaking, has little to do with equity release). Though it has the disadvantage of possible loss of privacy, this option is increasingly popular in cities with tight housing markets and plenty of potential for letting tourist accommodation (known as “AirBnB”).

## 2.2 Asset-based welfare in the Global South

In the Global South, asset-based welfare is often associated with the work done by De Soto (2000). He pinpointed lack of titling as the main reason why the poor have not been able to release the inherent value of their properties. Lack of titling not only prevents the poor from accessing housing finance, it also prevents them from trading their properties. De Soto’s solution lay in formalising informal tenure (by providing title deeds). Land titling has since become a common policy in developing countries. De Soto’s ideas did not, however, escape criticism (Gilbert, 2002; Royston, 2006; Payne et al., 2008). Among other things, he was criticised for assuming that the poor prefer to borrow from financial institutions, for oversimplifying reality, for a lack of theoretical depth and for producing little empirical evidence to support his thinking.

Moser’s work (1998, 2006) launched a second body of asset-building literature. Her work built on research by Sen (1992) and by Nussbaum (2003), both of whom tried to de-economise development thinking by introducing the idea of capabilities. In practice, this led to the livelihoods approach, which contributed to the idea of asset-accumulation for the poor. Moser (1998: 14) says an asset-based approach focuses on identifying “what the poor have, rather than what they do not have”. She defines assets as “a stock of financial, human, natural or social resources that can be acquired, developed, improved and transferred across generations. It generates flows or consumption, as well as additional stock” (2006: 9). Moser (2006) applies Bourdieu’s (1986) notion of capitals (one of the first researchers to use these terms) in her research, identifying five types: *physical capital* (factories, equipment, infrastructure and other productive resources owned by individuals, the business sector or the country); *financial capital* (financial resources such as savings and credit); *human capital* (investments in education, skills and health); *social capital* (an intangible asset defined as the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures

and institutional arrangements); and *natural capital*: (environmental assets such as soil, air, forests, minerals, water and wetlands). The identification and application of these assets have laid the foundation for an asset-based development approach and have moreover emphasised the relationship between assets rather than focusing solely on assets. The original development practitioners applied the livelihoods approach in rural settings. By the late 1990s, the livelihoods approach and asset-based development had also gained an urban foothold (Rakodi, 1999).

### 2.3 Asset-based welfare, housing and the black middle class in South Africa

The notion of asset-based development has featured in post-apartheid policy since 1994. It was apparent in the emphasis on homeownership and the structure of the housing subsidy. But asset-based welfare rose to prominence only with the introduction of “Breaking New Ground: A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlement” (Department of Housing, 2004). Breaking New Ground introduced terms like *housing assets* and *climbing the housing ladder* and emphasised the importance of the *secondary housing market*.

In its programme theory, the Department of Human Settlements (2014) acknowledges a number of problems that hamper asset building: racially skewed participation in the property market, biased distribution of resources and wealth, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and limited investment by the private sector in low-income areas. Two further institutional factors also cause problems: low-income earners’ inadequate understanding of the housing market, and municipalities’ inability to include new properties developed by means of the Housing Subsidy Programme in their rates rolls. Irrespective of these factors, the programme theory envisages that both subsidy-stock housing and old-stock housing will grow in value, that the property market will incorporate stock, that low-income housing will enter the rates roll and that all of these factors will help the poor to increase their share of the property market and move up the housing ladder.

There is a large body of work that either supports or is related to asset building and it mostly deals with low-income households. Because homeownership was not available to black people under apartheid, some researchers have chosen to refer to its availability now as “restorative justice” (Gunter, 2013). Black urban homeownership again became available in the mid-1980s, having been banned by the apartheid government since 1948. Since 1994, the post-apartheid political and economic dispensation has been providing equal opportunities to the black population. Homeownership and the easing of access to housing finance have been among the factors that have helped to produce a black middle class. The post-apartheid government has introduced initiatives to make housing finance more accessible. These include the 1994 Record of Understanding, which aimed to provide 150,000 mortgage loans to the lower middle class; the 1996 National Housing Finance Corporation, which created a state-owned enterprise to promote housing finance access; the 2003 Financial Sector Charter, signed between government and the banks, which provided for an additional 350,000 mortgages for lower-middle-income households; and the 2010 restructuring of the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme, which provides mortgage finance in addition to a large state subsidy.

One attribute of middle-class households is that they hold assets (Southall, 2016). The main house is often the most prominent asset that households transfer between generations in the modern capitalist system (Piketty, 2014). Black households’ historical inability either to

accumulate assets (because of restrictions on homeownership) or to transfer them to the next generation means that their asset ownership (mortgage bonds, houses, shares, etc.) is much smaller than that of white households (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2012). In 2011 the net private asset ownership per capita for black South Africans was R73,712, while that for whites was nearly 13 times higher at R952,511 (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2012). The historical deprivation created by apartheid means that “today’s black middle class has had to start from scratch” and the post-apartheid black middle class is “genuinely new and ... largely a product of post-1994 government policies” (Southall, 2016, pp. 165–166). Musyoka (2015) confirms that the black middle class’s asset building is largely facilitated by its own efforts. Inheritance plays only a small part. The most important contributing factor to asset building among black middle-class households is the human capital provided by education (Southall, 2016).

Two further points to note are the importance of homeownership for asset building and the potential for residential desegregation of middle-class households since the repeal of the Group Areas Act in 1991. The literature shows that homeownership has become an important component of being middle class (Crankshaw, 2012). In a case study of young black middle-class people, Krige (2015: 114) found that homeownership was “a decisive threshold ... in the process of ‘growing up’ and ‘moving up’” and boosted a person’s social status. New economic opportunities have also allowed middle-class families to jump the racial divide and settle in former white suburbs (Harrison & Zack, 2014). Although affordability is key to this decision, Donaldson et al. (2013) argue that the decision to move is complicated and not only about affordability. Many black middle-class households who have moved to the former white suburbs maintain their social networks in the townships (Southall, 2016).

### **3 Methods and study area**

This is an exploratory study, based on a cross-sectional questionnaire survey in Mangaung, one of eight metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. Its main city is Bloemfontein and its historically black township is also called Mangaung. Mangaung Metro also includes Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, a former “homeland” town. Despite its status as a metropolitan area, Mangaung has few international economic links and largely serves its regional hinterland.

The survey comprised 244 household interviews, the interviewee in each case being the person who knew the household finances. We used a systematic sampling method and sampled erven from cadastral information on available maps. We had a refusal rate of 12.5%, the highest having been in Mandela View, Race Way Park and Vista Park. This also meant that these households had the lowest percentage of completed interviews. We interviewed middle-income households who owned houses they had bought on the open market. We spread our sample over eight suburbs (see Figure 1) occupied mainly by black households (see Table 1). As we wished to focus on the less affluent end of the black middle class, we excluded black middle-class households living in the formerly white suburbs of Bloemfontein. We mostly used descriptive statistics

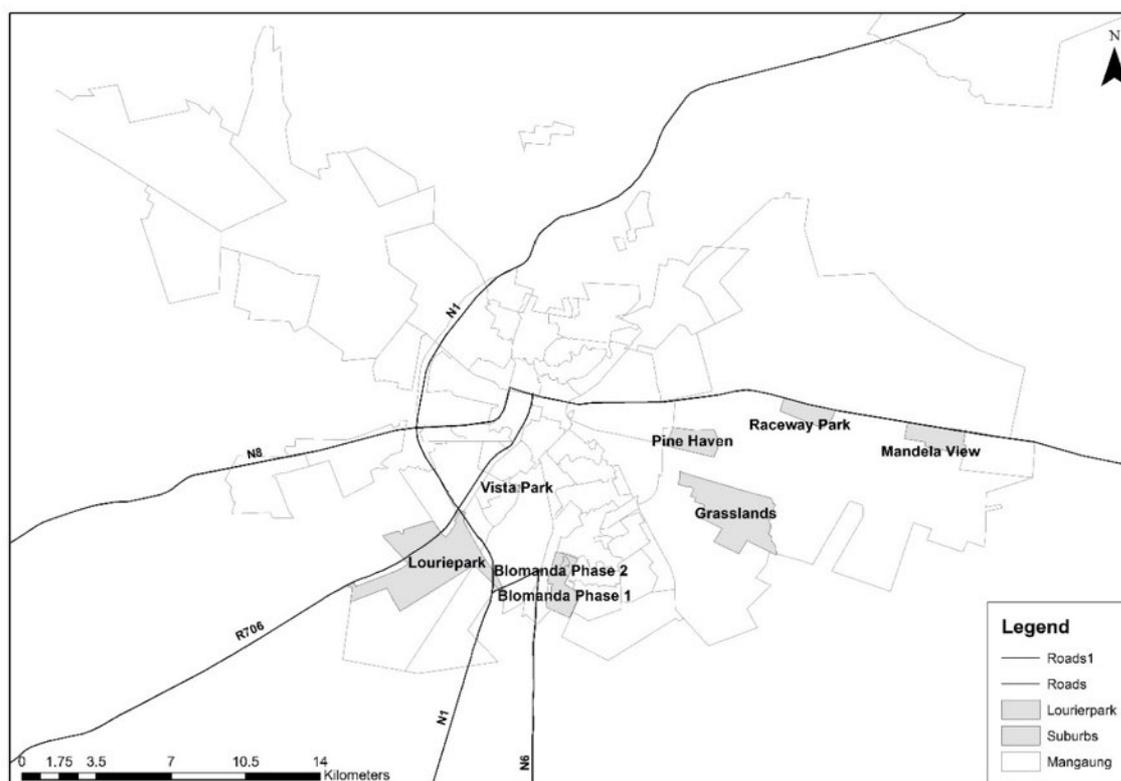


Figure 1: Location of case study areas in Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality (source: Marais et al., 2018).

Table 1: Samples per suburb in Mangaung

Suburb	Estimated no. of houses	Questionnaires completed no.	%	% of pop. white (2011 census)
Bloemanda Phase 1	5,594	40	16.4	0.3
Bloemanda Phase 2		28	11.5	0.1
Grasslands	10,399	46	18.9	0.1
Lourier Park	876	38	15.6	0.7
Mandela View	281	24	9.8	1.7
Pine Haven	500	25	10.2	Unable to determine
Raceway Park	250	22	9.0	Unable to determine
Vista Park	305	21	8.6	Unable to determine
Total	18,205	244	100.0	

Source: StatsSA (2013).

The oldest of these eight suburbs is Bloemanda Phase 1, established in 1985, in the historically black group area as planned under apartheid. Bloemanda Phase 2 was added to this area in response to the increased demand for housing by the growing black middle class. In the mid-1980s the apartheid government abolished influx control and replaced it with orderly urbanisation. Bloemanda Phase 2 gave black households their first chance of homeownership and is typical of housing developments established since 1990. Grasslands, located next to the historically black township, was established in the early 1990s. Lourier Park, originally developed as a lower-income white suburb, was desegregated in 1991 when the government repealed the Group Areas Act. Raceway Park, Mandela View and Pine Haven, located east of the original black township of Mangaung, were developed by the private sector in the past 15 years. Vista Park, established in 2010 in one of the municipality's recent restructuring zones, is a good example of infill development.

## 4 The black middle class and assets in Mangaung

### 4.1 Households' asset profile

Homeownership and housing being so important to the black middle class, there is a danger they may be tempted to overinvest in their housing. This would make them vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the housing market. Table 2 shows that the current housing value of the households in our sample amounts to nearly 53% of their total asset value as estimated by our respondents. This high percentage points to heavy dependence specifically on the housing asset in their asset portfolio. These households are thus vulnerable to house price shocks and those with new mortgages are vulnerable to interest rate hikes. It is striking that only about 37% of the households have a pension fund or a provident fund, amounting to 31% of asset value for all households. This means that the households without these assets are even more dependent on their housing assets. Just over a quarter of the respondents said that a member of their household had life insurance, worth on average 14% of the total asset value, and available only upon the decease of the insured. The literature on asset building emphasises the importance of savings for education. Only 5.3% of the sample had savings schemes for education. Only 2% owned a business and not even 1% owned shares. Overall, our data indicate an overemphasis on the housing asset, making these households vulnerable to shocks in the housing system.

Table 2: Assets profile of black middle-class households in Mangaung (n=244).

Asset	Number of households with specific assets	% of households with specific assets	% of households with more than one of these specific assets	Average asset value for those who have a specific asset (in South African rand)	Average value for all respondents (in South African rand)	% of total asset value
Pension fund	64	26.3	10.3	808,099	212,833	20.5
Retirement annuity	25	10.3	2.9	1,039,499	106,944	10.3
Savings in the bank	36	14.8	3.7	73,555	10,897	1.0
Life insurance policy	63	25.9	13.2	579,473	150,234	14.4
Savings for education	13	5.3	0.8	63,426	3,393	0.3
Shares	2	0.8	0.8	173,466	1,428	0.1
Other property	1	0.4	0.4	118,571	488	0.0
Business ownership	5	2.1	0	180,600	3,716	0.4
Other investments	5	2.1	0	17,200	354	0.0
Current housing value	244	100	-	549,815	549,815	52.9
Total				3,603,704	1,040,101	100.0

Source: Author's survey.

### 4.2 Mortgage finance

The sample had generally been able to build housing assets by obtaining a mortgage, as 84% of the households had a mortgage. Table 3 shows the amounts currently owed on the mortgages. It also shows the following trends: the houses are worth much more than when they were purchased, the outstanding amount owed on mortgages is smaller than the amount originally borrowed to purchase the houses (true also of those in the second section of the

table, which shows only those who have who have an amount currently owing on mortgages), and generally good progress has been made in paying off the mortgages.

Table 3: Key indicators of housing and mortgage value, in South African rand (n=244).

Indicator	Value
<b>All respondents (with no mortgage, or a paid-up or current mortgage)</b>	
Original value of house when bought	299,373
2015 value of original house	453,559
Current value estimated by owner	549,815
Original amount of mortgage	308,022
Current amount of mortgage	217,808
<b>Only respondents with current mortgages</b>	
Original value of house when bought	307,559
2015 value of original house	431,926
Current value estimated by owner	576,305
Original amount of mortgage	308,023
Current amount of mortgage	*303,487
Original house value as % of 2015 value	71.2
Original house value as % of house value estimated by owner	53.4
Original mortgage amount as % of original house value	100.2
Current mortgage amount as % of 2015 house value	71.3
Current mortgage amount as % of house value estimated by owner	53.5
Current mortgage amount as % of original mortgage amount	98.5

Source: own survey

Notes: Of the total of 244 houses, 84% were bought by means of a mortgage.

\* The fact that the current amount of the mortgage here is higher than the original amount could indicate re-mortgaging or that some owners are struggling to repay their mortgage.

We investigated whether the growth in the value of our sample's housing assets had beaten inflation (between 1991 and 2015 annual inflation in SA was 7.1%). In line with international trends, house prices rose sharply in South Africa between 2000 and 2007. Figure 2 compares the purchase price of our sample's housing assets with the 2015 value (adjusted for inflation but based on the original price). The figure highlights two important points. First, despite some minor deviations, the original purchase price and the original amount of the mortgage largely correspond. This indicates just how dependent our sample are on a mortgage. Of our sample of homeowners, 84% were mortgagors (65% of properties in South Africa are bond free according to BusinessTech, 2015). Second, the relationship between the purchase price, adjusted for inflation, and the value estimated by the owner indicates that in peak years (2001 and 2008) owners generally tended to undervalue their houses. In general, the owners' estimates are marginally higher than the purchase prices (in 2015 values). This indicates that they have generally failed to sell their house at an inflation-beating price. In the South African housing market as a whole, however, house prices outstripped inflation by a wide margin between 2000 and 2007.

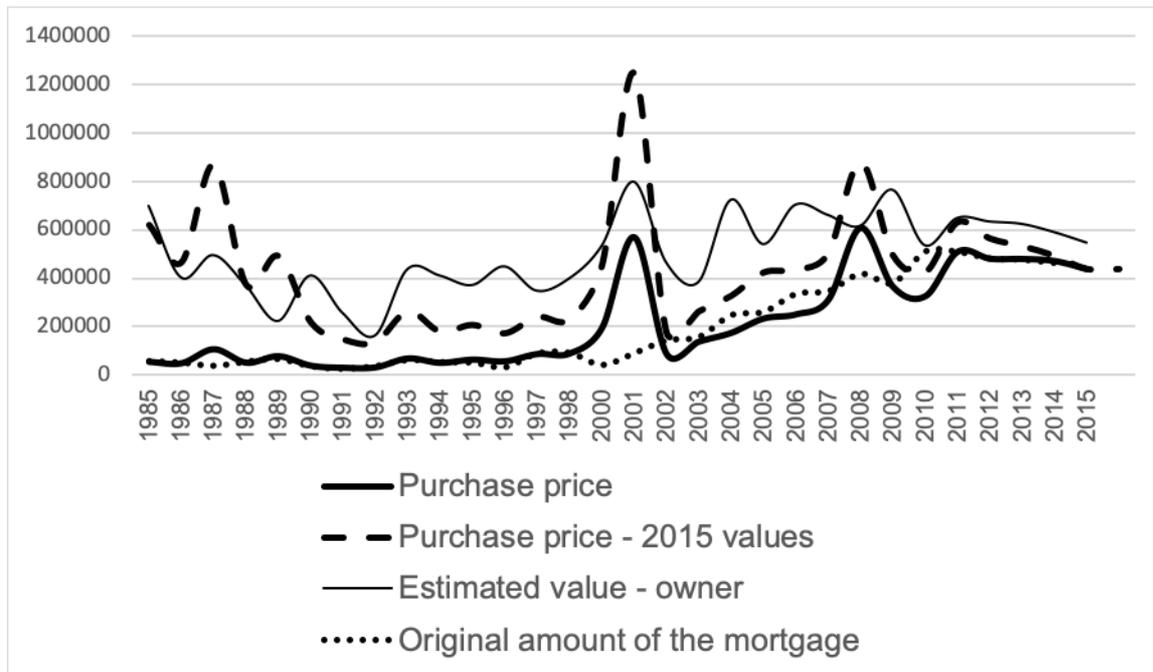


Figure 2: Key aspects of asset value of houses owned, 1985–2015 (source: Author's survey).

The real value of the housing asset also depends on the homeowners' ability to repay the mortgage on time. Figure 3 shows the original mortgage amount in the years in which the respondents bought their houses as a percentage of their current mortgage amount. As could be expected, the figure shows an increase in the percentage between 1988 and 2015, and since 2012 it has been more than 100%, which could indicate that homeowners who have recently acquired a mortgage are struggling to repay them. However, we found very little evidence of this. Our evidence shows that very few respondents have defaulted on their mortgages. Only six respondents (2.5%) reported that they had missed a monthly instalment, a percentage that is somewhat lower than the national figure of about 3% being in arrears for three months (National Credit Regulator, 2016). This low percentage could be because some respondents did not admit to having defaulted. Reasons given for having defaulted included financial problems such as having lost a job and financial commitments such as car repairs. One respondent said he did not know he had to deposit money to repay the mortgage.

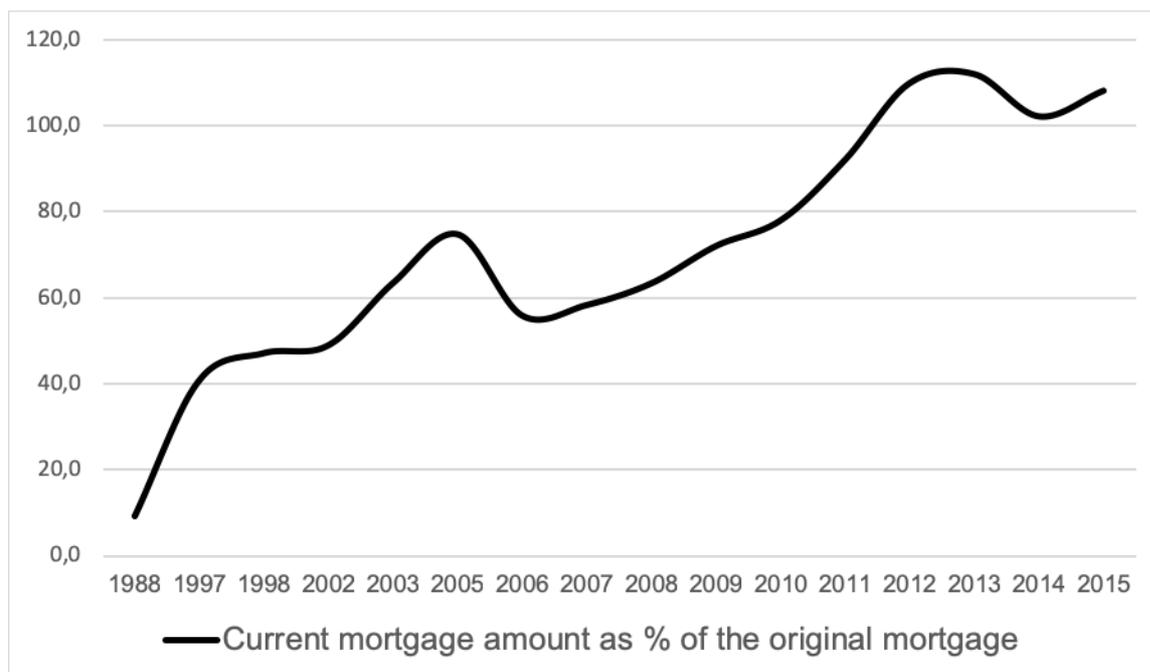


Figure 3: Current mortgage amount as a percentage of the original mortgage amount (source: Author's survey).

Overall, mortgage finance thus appeared to be an important contributor to housing asset building for our sample. It was clear that housing asset creation was indeed taking place and that most of our sample were managing to repay their mortgages, although more recent owners were finding it difficult.

### 4.3 The role of education and access to employment

We mentioned earlier how equal opportunities that became available under the post-apartheid dispensation have helped to create a black middle class. Having obtained a good education, i.e. building human capital, was an important enabling mechanism. Consequently, we assessed our respondents' educational attainments and employment profiles. As regards education, 76.1% of the respondents had completed Grade 12 and a further 46.1% had completed some form of tertiary education (diploma, certificate or degree). The higher levels of educational attainment were mostly among interviewees in our sample who had become homeowners in the past ten years. Nearly 75% of our respondents were employed by the state or by parastatals, both of these indicating good job security. A more important point is that in 91% of the households at least two people contributed to the household income.

### 4.4 Using the house as an asset

A house can be used as an asset by letting part of it or by selling it and buying or renting a smaller house, or by using it, or part of it, for business premises. Just under 15% of the respondents said they had extended their houses since first occupying them. On average they had added two extensions, among which were lounges (33%), bedrooms (30%), garages (11%) and bathrooms (5%) or back rooms, the latter usually for letting (3%). A small percentage either accommodated lodgers or used their house for a home-based business. At least one respondent had added rooms to be used as a shebeen. It was noteworthy that half of the 15% of the respondents who had made extensions had financed them with their own savings. Approximately a third of the 15% had had to increase their mortgages, 5% had used

the reserve funds on their mortgages and about 3% had received funding from family members.

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Bloemanda, the first areas to make commercial housing available to black households, there are larger numbers of older residents than in the other six suburbs. The responses to a question about their willingness to sell indicated that downsizing was not high on the agenda. Only 9.5% of the respondents said they would sell their house in two years' time, 9.1% would do so in three to seven years and only 2.1% would do so in eight to ten years. There was a general unwillingness to sell, either because of reluctance to downsize and the difficulty of finding an appropriate alternative or because of a desire to leave something substantial to the children. This unwillingness is also understandable given the large place the housing asset occupied in our respondents' asset portfolios.

The low percentage of respondents willing to sell their houses contrasts with the large percentage intending to expand them. Almost a third said they would do so within the next two years and another third in three to seven years. Family and household structure and also life cycles drive the need for expansion and not asset-building intentions. We also found that our respondents' housing assets played a large social role. Approximately 28% of the respondents had extended households (meaning that at least one person not directly related to the main household also lived in the house). Approximately 35% of this 28% said their grandchildren lived with them. This indicates intergenerational value that is not always considered in the literature on asset building.

#### **4.5 Housing careers and poverty**

Marais et al. (2018) have recently made a detailed study of black middle-class housing careers in South Africa. In the present study we were interested in determining the extent to which housing has been used as a springboard to further housing assets and also the extent of intergenerational transfer. Only 3% of the respondents had inherited the houses they were living in at the time of the survey. Mortgage finance had been used to finance the purchase in 84% of the cases. In contrast, as mentioned earlier, only 35% of the sales of houses in South Africa are financed by a mortgage. Our survey showed that, to create housing assets, members of the black middle class depend heavily on mortgage finance and have little chance of inheriting a house. We found very little evidence that climbing the housing ladder has reduced poverty. The human capital obtained through education has been far more important in this respect (Southall, 2016).

#### **4.6 Building municipal assets**

Besides providing the black middle class with an opportunity to accumulate further assets, houses are also municipal assets. At the time of the survey, our respondents paid on average 189 ZAR per month for water, 451 ZAR for electricity and 492 ZAR in rates (land-tax levy). However, a large percentage of respondents (about 45%) did not want to answer the question about rates, though there was less reluctance to answer the questions about payments for water and electricity. We suspect that the municipality does not fully benefit from these housing developments and that there are shortfalls in rates payments. To establish this, more information is required.

## 5 Conclusion

Our review of the literature on asset-based welfare programmes, which promote homeownership, revealed policy differences between the Global North and the Global South: the former largely emphasises using housing assets to reduce the state's long-term welfare liabilities; the latter is often narrowly focused on titling initiatives and poverty reduction. Our study was intended to link two separate sets of literature: on financial assets and on housing assets.

Apartheid policy encouraged homeownership for whites but banned it for blacks. Homeownership again became available to blacks in South Africa only in the mid-1980s. However, current government policy focuses on the lower end of the black housing market. To date the government Housing Subsidy Programme has enabled about four million families lower-income black families to become homeowners. This achievement is seen as restorative justice after more than 40 years of exclusion from homeownership. For the black middle class there is also an element of restorative justice in owning a house, but more importantly it is social and economic milestone.

Our study investigated three black middle-class housing issues: the role of housing in asset generation, the extent to which housing helps reduce poverty, and the risks associated with asset building. The findings of this exploratory study, using descriptive statistics, largely support the findings of other research (for example Southall, 2016) on the relationship between homeownership, asset building and the black middle class. We found, however, virtually no evidence that black households have indeed used housing as way to escape from poverty. Their housing assets are rather the result of equal opportunities in employment and education. For the black middle class, creating housing assets has been accompanied by risks. Accessing housing finance has been key to purchasing a house. The large percentage of houses in our sample that were bought with a mortgage shows that the black middle class is far more dependent on housing finance than the average South African for property transactions in the market. There had been very few intergenerational transfers. This shows that these households are in an early phase of asset building, one that involves considerable risks. Our research further revealed that, compared with other assets, there is an unhealthy emphasis on housing assets. The more important point here is that asset building should not only have a housing focus. The challenge remains to develop a wider range of assets. But this might only occur over generations.

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## Local economic development agencies and peripheral small town development: Evidence from Somerset East, South Africa

### Abstract

The activities of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) represent a channel for place-based development. In South Africa national government has supported the expansion of LEDAs to improve the weak performance of local economic development planning, one of the cornerstones of the developmental state. This article investigates the evolution and operations of a small town LEDA which is situated in one of South Africa's peripheral regions. The local development facilitation and project work undertaken by the Blue Crane Development Agency (BCDA) in the small town of Somerset East in Eastern Cape Province is discussed. It is shown that this LEDA was innovative in development initiatives which were launched during the period 2004-2014 for Somerset East and its surrounds. In terms of the projects and operations of BCDA considerable effort was made to identify catalytic opportunities and to support the unlocking of projects in this small town through development facilitation and project management. Nevertheless, the evidence from this case study demonstrates that despite successes, development agencies in South Africa have a strong dependence on parent municipalities which can determine the future direction and sustainability of LEDAs.

**Keywords:** place-based development, local economic development, local economic development agencies, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

One of the most intractable challenges faced by national government in South Africa remains that of addressing geographically uneven patterns of development (Nel & Rogerson, 2016a; Rogerson & Nel, 2016b). South Africa is acknowledged as one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of recorded levels of income and wealth (Turok & Visagie, 2018). Its space economy reflects historically entrenched inequalities with large areas deliberately under-developed (Todes & Turok, 2018). Currently, major differences exist in the development landscape between the country's core regions – mainly the major metropolitan centres - and the peripheral underdeveloped regions which are collectively styled as 'the distressed areas' (Rogerson & Nel, 2016b; Rogerson, 2019). The distressed areas correspond closely to those regions of South Africa which were designated under apartheid as the Bantustans or Homelands. In terms of the settlement hierarchy the severest levels of poverty, unemployment and marginalization are evidenced in small town and rural South Africa (Nel & Rogerson, 2005, 2007). The works of Rogerson and Nel (2016a) and of Todes and Turok (2018) provide overviews of a range of spatially targeted interventions which are designed by national government to upgrade economic development and livelihoods in peripheral regions. Alongside national government interventions seeking to achieve spatial re-balancing there are a number of 'place-based' policy interventions which are attracting an international focus (Barca et al., 2012; Rodriguez-Pose & Wilkie, 2017). Arguably, place-based approaches "are founded on the belief that there is a need to tailor policies and strategies to

address unique contextual conditions and reflect the opportunities, challenges and resources that characterise a given territory's ability to induce growth and development that benefits its residents" (Rodriguez-Pose & Wilkie, 2015: 20).

In South Africa the most widespread form of place-based intervention that exists is the encouragement of local economic development planning (Rogerson, 2014). Planning for LED was applied soon after the democratic transition and represents a more localised 'place-based' intervention than the spatially targeted strategies such as those for infrastructure development (Nel & Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson, 2014; Rogerson & Nel, 2016a). Since the release in 1996 of the first post-apartheid National Constitution all local authorities in South Africa are obliged to engage in social and economic interventions (Nel & Rogerson, 2005). This responsibility was reinforced and codified in the mandate for 'developmental local government' introduced in 1998 which incorporated the requirement that LED be a core component of decentralized local government planning processes. Nevertheless, it is apparent that whilst LED enjoys a high profile in development planning in South Africa its actual developmental contribution is assessed as 'sub-optimal' or 'disappointing' particularly outside of the confines of the country's well-resourced and capacitated large urban centres (Nel et al., 2009; Rogerson, 2010; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2012; Nel & Rogerson, 2016a, 2016b). Notwithstanding the concerted efforts put into LED interventions, several factors have undermined the general performance of LED initiatives. These include often a poor awareness of what is LED, lack of understanding of local economies, human resource capacity and budget constraints, widespread corruption linked to state capture, the targeting of unsustainable community-based interventions, weak business environments for the private sector, and the challenge of attempting to coerce market-based forces to function in spaces with the limited prospects of profitability (Nel et al., 2009; Rogerson, 2010; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2011, 2012; Nel & Rogerson, 2016b).

Overall, whilst South Africa is sometimes regarded as a leader within the global South concerning its establishment of LED policy and strategy, it is difficult to make the argument convincingly that its outcomes have made a significant difference in all local communities (Nel et al., 2009; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010; Rogerson & Nel, 2016a, 2016b). Undoubtedly, these disappointments have been greatest in the peripheral regions and many small towns of South Africa which are the least well-capacitated and, in many cases, with limited local funding available to support LED interventions (Nel & Rogerson, 2005, 2007; Rogerson, 2011). National government has acknowledged these shortcomings in its efforts to support LED initiatives across the country. In response it launched in 2017 a (revised draft) National Framework for Local Economic Development which is targeted to support the work of local municipalities towards attainment of the vision of "innovative, competitive, sustainable, inclusive local economies that maximize local opportunities, address local needs, and contribute to national economic development" (Walaza, 2017: 6). Innovation is a new focus in the revamping of LED policy frameworks in South Africa (Ndabeni et al., 2016; Rogerson, 2018). With a general low level of confidence surrounding local government and in particular that the practices of local government are not matching policy intent, one aspect of that revised policy framework is the role accorded to Local Economic Development Agencies or LEDAs to support enhanced economic and social development prospects particularly in the country's peripheral regions. The introduction of LEDAs into the South African development landscape as part of the developmental state as well as aspects of the unfolding operations of LEDAs are documented in a number of recent research contributions (Malefane & Khalo, 2010; Malefane, 2011; Lawrence, 2013; Venter, 2014; Lawrence, 2016; Khambule, 2018; Lawrence & Rogerson, 2018)

In terms of international scholarship LEDAs are acknowledged as an institutional vehicle which potentially can be a significant contributor to place-based development (UNDP et al., 2003; Muguira, 2006; Meyer-Stamer, 2007; Canzanelli, 2008, 2009; International Link and Services for Local Economic Development Agencies, 2009; Mountford, 2009; Blakely & Leigh, 2010; Clark et al., 2010; Canzanelli, 2011a, 2011b; Bateman, 2012; Ferrannini & Canzanelli, 2013). Traditionally LEDAs are associated with local governments and closely aligned with locality development agendas as a key stakeholder both linked to local government as well as operating independently of it (Venter, 2014; Lawrence, 2018). The international experience shows that, irrespective of differing operational contexts, certain common objectives exist for LEDAs (International Link and Services for Local Economic Development Agencies, 2009). These include to address the challenges of marginalisation, territorial inclusion, innovation, collaborative partnerships, as well as the development of tailor-made strategies and the implementation of approaches that complement the unique context of a particular local area. As a whole, LEDAs are considered delivery agents for LED and highlighted for their strategic role in territorial development (UNDP et al. 2003; Meyer-Stamer, 2007; Canzanelli, 2008). The varying organisational forms of LEDAs are geared towards addressing the context of local businesses in an ever-changing LED policy environment, whilst at the same time seeking to respond to the dynamics of a complex interface between the business environment requirements on the one hand and the need to understand and appreciate the vital role and contribution of sound governance in locality development on the other. This ability to navigate between these two contexts of the private and public sector contributes to the unique features of LEDAs as well as embedding their contributions into the system of local governance (Meyer-Stamer, 2007; Canzanelli, 2008; International Link and Services for Local Economic Development Agencies, 2009; Mountford, 2009; Clark et al., 2010; Canzanelli, 2011a, 2011b; Ferrannini & Canzanelli, 2013; Nel, 2017)

It is against a backdrop of international debates about the role of LEDAs in place-based development that the objective in this paper is to investigate the operations of one small town-based LEDA in a peripheral region of South Africa. The analysis is of the local development facilitation and project work undertaken by the Blue Crane Development Agency (BCDA) in the small town of Somerset East in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province during the period of 2004 and 2014. The BCDA operated in the Blue Crane Route Municipality (BCRM) which is one of nine local municipalities within the (mainly) rural Sarah Baartman District Municipality (formerly titled the Cacadu District Municipality). According to the 2011 census, 36 002 people resided in the Blue Crane Route municipality which covers an area of 11,068 sq. km. The economic base of this small town and rural locality is commercial farming with some recent growth in tourism and creative industries. The area is distinguished by a long history of socio-economic challenges and with a 31 percent unemployment rate is largely characteristic of many small towns of rural South Africa which are outside of the former Homelands. Given the rural nature of the municipality, high levels of poverty are recorded and reflected in dependency of households on government social grants as well as increased out-migration from the district. In this discussion an analysis is undertaken of the operational context of BCDA, the type of projects, how these related to the local environment, and BCDA's relationships with the parent municipality. Finally, the focus shifts to investigate the consolidation and merger of BCDA into the Cacadu District Municipality Development Agency (CDA). Source material for this research derives from documentary sources in terms of agency annual reports and internal documents from the local

municipality; these are triangulated with detailed key stakeholder interviews which were undertaken with LEDA personnel (Mvoko, 2016a, 2016b; Wilkins & Beech, 2016).

## **2 The Blue Crane Development Agency: Establishment and planning**

In order to address economic development challenges and opportunities of the area in a structured way, the BCDA “was first registered in 2004 as a Section 21 Company and then became a municipal entity in 2006” (LED Network, 2011: 3). The BCRM approved the establishment of a local economic development agency in 2006, with the intention that this agency would serve as an invaluable resource that would assist with the unlocking of economic potential in the area and contribute to improving the socio-economic conditions across the municipality (BCDA, 2008a, 2008b). At inception of the BCDA it was linked to a long standing partnership forum of developers called the “Blue Crane Planners and Developers” who operated across the municipality as individual project implementers and partners in development (BCDA, 2011:12). This forum was supported by the municipality and tasked with the responsibility to expand its scope to include other sectors such as agriculture and tourism. It was agreed that the outcomes of this work would then be integrated into the municipality’s formal Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process. In order to capture the scope of this work project feasibility studies needed to be pursued. This did, however, have a significant cost implication for an already financially challenged municipality. At this time South Africa’s Industrial Development Corporation was supporting the wider roll out of development agencies in South Africa (Lawrence, 2013, 2018). It was suggested by the forum that the BCRM explore the possibility of establishing a development agency that would serve as the official platform through which these projects would be channelled and implemented. The BCDA was then introduced as a Section 21 Company in 2004 and in 2006 it became fully integrated into the formal structures of the municipality (BCDA, 2011: 12).

The IDC supported the establishment of development agencies on a number of grounds. Nel (2017) points out that local communities often do not recognize their development assets and often inappropriate strategies in local planning processes are copies from elsewhere. In small town areas municipalities often are not focused on economic potential simply because of the overwhelming problems such as addressing basic needs which leads to a (misguided) focus on poverty alleviation projects rather than sustainable and viable business opportunities (Nel, 2017). As an IDC funded and supported agency BCDA was regarded as a ‘best practice’ model by the IDC’s Agency Development and Support Unit (ADS). The intention was that lessons could be drawn from the project context of the Somerset East based agency and later taken up by other similarly capacitated agencies as well as policy makers interested in the role and contribution of agencies to the local development landscape in South Africa. The formal integration of the BCDA into the local governance landscape meant that strategic facilitation and economic development expertise that was not necessarily present in the municipal structures before, could now be strategically channelled to achieve municipal development priorities in an institutionally structured way. The BCDA’s aim was to support the municipality with the unlocking of development potential in the area as well as contribute towards the realisation of its economic development vision (LED Network, 2011: 3). The agency was explicit with regard to its area of focus and this was reflected in its organisational mandate which was stated as follows: “To conceptualise opportunities and facilitate macro sustainable developmental projects related to agriculture, business, renewable energy, tourism and social responsibility to the benefit of all citizens with special emphasis on job creation

and BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] opportunities.” (BCDA, 2014: 5). In addition, the BCDA vision was “to be an internationally recognised model Agency for the delivery of sustainable developmental projects in a rural context” (BCDA, 2014: 5). From its establishment the BCDA placed a strong emphasis on its role as facilitator as opposed to implementer of development projects.

At the time of the foundation of BCDA, the municipality had an operating LED unit. It is observed that the role of this LED unit was different to that of the agency in that its focus was predominantly on social projects for the youth or skills development (LED Network, 2011: 2). By contrast the vision of the BCDA was that it would serve as a special purpose vehicle that would add further depth to the mandate of this functional LED unit through the support of “bigger LED projects with a macro-economic long term approach” (LED Network, 2011: 2). Combined with the work of the LED unit it was envisaged that their efforts would spur significant economic development and sector-specific growth. The intention behind this distinction was that funding for these ‘bigger LED projects’ would be sourced independently of traditional municipal budgetary processes. This funding source would ideally come from external partners who saw value in these catalytic projects. The specific roles and contributions of both the LED unit and the LEDA for the municipality are shown on Table 1.

Table 1: The Operational Distinctions Between the LEDA and the LED Office in Blue Crane Route Municipality.

<b>BCDA as a LEGAL ENTITY</b>	<b>LED as a MUNICIPAL FUNCTION</b>
Agency is not part of the LED/IDP position BCDA is a separate legal entity of the BCRM.	LED component of LED/IDP position could be outsourced to the BCDA for effective functioning. LED/IDP is a municipal office
BCDA is IDC funded.	LED/IDP is BCRM funded.
BCDA is primarily responsible for macro projects	LED/IDP is primarily responsible for IDP and LED smaller projects
BCDA falls directly under the Mayor and council, Board of directors	LED/IDP falls directly under the municipal manager

Source: Adapted after BCDA, 2011.

With the dominance of commercial farming in the municipal area, the intention was to concentrate on unlocking economic potential by exploring value addition to locally produced products. Accordingly, the municipality noted that they were keen to support local cluster development so as to attract external investors and in so doing add value to the municipal economic development opportunities. The growth of industrial clusters in the municipal area was also seen as one of the main objectives of BCDA and was further endorsed in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) in which it was stated that the BCRM sought to broaden the local economy through the establishment of a strong industrial sector (BCDA, 2015). It was also further noted that this expansion of the industrial sector would contribute towards the long-term sustainability of the rural economy. The strategic focus of the implementation team was therefore to look at unlocking potential economic development in the tourism, aviation, business, agriculture, renewable energy and cultural sectors (LED Network, 2011: 3). These sectors were deemed relevant given the local attributes of the area as well as the potential for local innovation that could be derived.

### 3 BCDA partnerships and projects

From its inception in 2004 the IDC was a key partner in the work of the BCDA in terms of primary funding as well as technical assistance for the design and planning of strategic projects. Overall, the IDC provided BCDA with R20 million towards its establishment and operationalisation as per its project funding cycle. This was supplemented by the municipality in the form of operational funding amounting to R12 million (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). Throughout its lifespan BCDA continued to function with a lean organisational structure with the aim of unlocking economic development potential in a project-focused and targeted way (LED Network, 2011). The LEDA acknowledged its rural context as both an opportunity and constraint and sought to capitalise on locational factors in the interest of income generation and strategic local economic investment. Further, mindful of the limited availability of technical skills that would be needed to facilitate high level projects, management sought to establish a small specialised team. This team would serve as core project managers who in turn would source technical expertise based on the nature of projects. Functionally, the structure of the operational team was lean with a start-up group of four people. The Chief Executive Officer was responsible for BCDA oversight and performed a project management function in addition to overall management duties. Since the vision of the agency was to be facilitators of economic development, the team focused on enhancing this role by establishing strong networks with key experts and specialists, including government departments, international stakeholders and the private sector. Technical advisory committees comprising of key experts complemented this lean structure and ensured that targeted efforts were put in place to unlock the potential of identified projects. This proved to be a successful operational approach for BCDA (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). A formal Board of Directors oversaw the work the agency. In recognising its rural nature, the agency also saw provincial and local government departments as implementing partners.

Besides the IDC linkages, there was also a clear recognition on the side of the parent municipality that the BCDA was the economic development agency of the municipality. This was evident in the recognition that its projects received in the formal municipal IDP. It could be argued that the projects were conceptualised in two ways. First, as an innovation linked to contextual factors in the BCRM and second through the municipality's independent community consultation processes in which participatory methods were used to elicit relevant community projects that would address the socio-economic needs of the municipality. In the latter context, projects were then passed onto the agency through municipal consultation processes for realisation and execution (LED Network, 2011; BCDA, 2014). The BCDA team conceded that while this municipal recognition of its role and contribution to local development was positive, support in its area of operations was not necessarily forthcoming from the municipality. This particular lack of support was seen to have impeded the ability of the agency to unlock the potential of its large scale projects (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). Limited operational funding from the BCRM made it particularly difficult for BCDA to support fully the realisation of high impact projects and it was this funding challenge which perhaps proved to be one of the agency's biggest hurdles. This occurred in spite of the significant leverage that could be garnered by politicians and officials who were associated with these projects. Indeed, the scale and impact of these large scale projects could provide significant benefits, especially much needed jobs for the local communities.

The BCDA team regarded planning alignment with its parent municipality as an important and necessary operational step. As such, they engaged in a conscious process of project and

planning alignment with key local, district, provincial and national policies in order to ensure strategic alignment beyond local municipality priorities towards a more regional and national government perspective. It was noted that development “in the BCRM cannot be a standalone function of the BCDA; it needs to be aligned to the broader governmental planning” (BCDA, 2011: 11). From a strategic regional development perspective this planning alignment could be regarded as a positive shift because it recognised the wide-ranging spatial impact of projects beyond the territorial boundary of this local municipality.

As a development agency operating in rural South Africa, considerable implementation and institutional challenges emerged. As the agency was owned by the municipality, its governance arrangements were irrevocably tied to the five year cycle of municipal governance. This meant that municipal leadership, governance and institutional memory were closely linked to the prevailing council of the municipality during that political tenure. With the various shifts in the municipal cycles, the agency was impacted by changes in municipal leadership and councillors which in turn affected perceptions of value addition and strategic role of the agency to achieve the municipality’s economic vision (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). The continuity of projects presented another challenge as certain projects that were conceptualised, endorsed and started by one council were not necessarily a priority for new council members. Furthermore, it was not unusual for additional projects to be introduced with the tenure of a new BCRM council (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). Wilkins and Beech (2016) noted that during the lifespan of the agency, it experienced at least three councils with the first being the most supportive to a large extent because of the comprehensive understanding that it had of the role and value of a municipal owned development agency. Besides political influences, BCDA also experienced shifts in support from senior municipal officials as municipal-agency relationships fluctuated and often were dependent on personal connections and the appreciation of the developmental role and economic development contribution of the agency.

From the onset, BCDA played a number of strategic roles in the local municipal space. These roles included facilitator of change, promoter of local innovation, catalyst for change and strategic networker. As facilitator of change, BCDA saw itself as the initiator of mega-LED projects in particular. This activity distinguished the agency from the more social development focus of the municipal LED unit (Table 1). The facilitation of ‘mega-LED projects’ was seen as a key area of activity for BCDA and a distinguishing feature in its relationship with the parent municipality. Through targeted catalytic interventions, the agency in collaboration with BCRM agreed that its focus would be on exploring the potential of different economic sectors across the municipality. However, in the same vein, it would also attempt to feed into supporting the wider District’s socio-economic development challenges, as well as the much broader vision of the municipality in order to expand its value addition to the tourism, services and manufacturing sectors (LED Network, 2011). It was observed that “in order to facilitate future growth in the sector and tackle the unemployment and out-migration challenges, the local skills base needs to be raised and accessibility challenges tackled” (LED Network, 2011: 2). This meant that skills development and facilitation needed to be on the LEDA’s agenda since it remained a key inhibiting factor for the further advancement of the area.

As agent for local innovation, BCDA played an important role in the promotion of local innovation. Ferrannini and Canzanelli (2013: 7) emphasise the explicit connection between LEDAs and innovation and argued that LEDAs are well placed to elaborate on innovation. Within the national context the topic of local innovation was starting to emerge as an

important contributor to the discourse on LED, with considerable effort being placed on how these two fields interlink and how best to further harness potential (Ndabeni et al., 2016). Local innovation was seen as an important opportunity for the promotion of local knowledge products but also as a key factor in local industry development, where LEDAs were potentially seen as a possible conduit for support and partnership. It could be argued that one of the most striking features of the BCDA was its ability to foster innovative thinking within a context of small town and rural development. At the outset of project work the BCDA faced the challenge of the municipality's remote location in the Eastern Cape and identified strategic projects that built on local comparative advantages such as its clean air, agricultural potential and the location of the town in relation to Port Elizabeth, the major city in Eastern Cape. Innovative projects that were identified for this small town municipal area focussed around aviation, solar energy, waste recycling and agriculture. Innovation manifested itself in not only how project conceptualisation took place (e.g. waste to energy recycling ideas to the airfield precinct idea) but also in the creative approach of the team to work within a context of limited capacity and resources.

The aviation project was the BCDA flagship and regarded as an innovative best practice example for a remote small town. This project was conceptualised by capitalising on the unique features of the town and its location. The aviation project was constructed, licensed and endorsed by the national Civil Aviation Authority as a commercial airport in Somerset East and located on the old airfield base in the town (LED Network, 2011: 3). The intention was that the site would be used as a landing strip for commercial planes seeking to connect tourists to local tourism products, most notably the Addo National Park which was 64km away. Another initiative was to use this functioning landing strip for an aviation school. Beyond aviation BCDA was instrumental in promoting renewable energy schemes in the area as well as a waste recycling project. Other projects extended to the agriculture sector where the agency played a connecting role through linking commercial partners with local stakeholders. This involved business plan support and technical advisory skills/support, especially for beneficiaries of government's land reform programme (LED Network, 2011: 3). Supported projects included an agriculture park, which involved tunnel farming and the growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables; and a farm project aimed at beneficiaries of land redistribution. Finally, BCDA provided technical advisory and strategic infrastructure support where appropriate and linked the various opportunities with relevant beneficiaries (Okunlola, 2012). The extensive list of projects and innovation by BCDA is notable given the small population size of the local municipality as well as the small project management team at BCDA. The agency enjoyed a range of project funding support from national ministries such as the Department of Trade and Industry, Economic Development Department as well as the IDC. In terms of development facilitation BCDA performed impressively as indexed by estimates that it leveraged investments worth R120 million for a remote area of South Africa. The BCDA team recognised that throughout its operations, they were mindful of the fact that the agency's core task was not necessarily to run a project, but rather to secure the project asset and to ensure that the project asset could then be transferred to the local municipality. Once the project had been transferred to the municipality it was at this stage that the agency would then need to 'walk away'. The handover of projects to the municipality was considered to be a crucial step in the development process.

Arguably, a number of important lessons were learned concerning networks and strategic linkages, especially with regard to provincial and national stakeholders. It was observed that considerable links existed with national partners, albeit similar relations were not necessarily enjoyed across the provincial and political spectrum. In particular, it was felt that strong

provincial links would have been advantageous especially in the operational context of the Eastern Cape. These provincial linkages were considered to be one of the performance areas that were not a strength of the BCDA management team. Wilkins and Beech (2016) disclosed that these networks were very important given the highly politicised nature of the Eastern Cape Province. They suggest that the absence of provincial support may have contributed towards the lack of funding from the different provincial structures into the local area and specifically through to the development agency. By contrast, the team reflected that they enjoyed considerable success with their own national networks and it was this relationship fact which enabled several development opportunities. Another outstanding attribute of the BCDA team was its ability to establish strategic partnerships, particularly with national and research institutions as well as the private sector (BCDA, 2015). Overall, it was evidenced that since its inception BCDA leveraged significant funding and investment in the area which creating a total of 3 250 jobs (Wilkins & Beech, 2016). Indeed, over a period of three different municipal councils, the agency contributed to R120 million worth of assets that could taken up into municipal assets.

#### **4 BCDA closure and absorption into the Cacadu District Development Agency**

Notwithstanding the above positive contributions to the local economy of the BCRM the decision was made to close down the local agency and instead to integrate its key projects into the work of the development agency of the District Municipality, which at the time was known as the Cacadu Development Agency (CDA). By January 2016 the BCDA was fully merged into the CDA. This was seen to be part of a broader District process wherein the District Municipality decided to focus on targeting strategic local economic projects across the district. An interview with the CDA in March 2016 revealed that this process formed part of a longer term decision taken in 2012 where the District resolved to engage with the BCRM on absorbing the agency into the district LED platform (Mvoko, 2016a). After consideration of its budgetary responsibilities, the BCRM decided that it would continue its budgetary allocation for the period 2014/2015, but after this period they envisaged changes within its contribution and support to its local agency. It was agreed that while the role of an agency made sense, it was better placed to support a District-wide agency, namely the CDA. In this way, strategic projects in Somerset East would still receive municipal support and attention but as part of a broader mandate of work through the implementation modality of CDA (BCRM, 2016; Mvoko, 2016a, 2016b).

Besides the strategic location of the agency at District level it was argued that the local municipality could no longer afford the agency and therefore would only be in a position to fund the agency for the final six months period, namely July to December 2014. This was deemed unfortunate and raises the issue of value addition for the local municipality since the agency was closed in spite of its substantial contribution to the local development context of this rural municipality. This value addition was recognised by the District LED team as more in line with where the District agency was going with its project implementation strategy. Hence, in January 2015 when the BCDA “ceased to exist”, their strategic projects and strong project management team became incorporated as part of the implementation team of the District municipality.

In respect of the closure of the BCDA, Mvoko (2016a) commented that the challenge of the closure of a development agency raises another often overlooked procedural issue namely the actual procedure for agency close down. According to Mvoko (2016a, 2016b) the existing

law did not allow for a six month closing down period of a development agency. Procedurally this process involved a considerable administrative challenge for the local municipality. Since the greater part of BCDA's work involved development facilitation as opposed to project implementation the benefit to the municipality in terms of multi-million rand external investment into the area was not necessarily visible in the form of returns to the local municipality. The unintended consequence of this decision on the side of the municipality also meant that in some cases projects could not run their full cycle and instead had to be ended midway (Mvoko, 2016a). In order to ensure a smooth transition into the District agency, a process was undertaken to determine the scale of its agency operations. It was also decided that CDA would address catalytic project development across all the local municipalities, including Blue Crane Local Municipality. Recognising the experience of the BCDA team, it was agreed that the former Acting CEO and Project Manager would be integrated into the District agency. The reason for this decision was to ensure that the District Agency would benefit from the extensive experience of the BCDA team. In doing so, it would also ensure that they would be easily able to apply highly specialised project facilitation skills to catalytic interventions across the District. With the above in mind, the expertise and knowledge sharing was to be of benefit to more than one local municipality as additional local municipalities stood to gain from this extensive expertise. From a District perspective, CDA was established to look at catalytic projects that would have a district wide impact. It also meant that development projects could also potentially cut across boundaries of local municipalities (Mvoko, 2016a).

The political support of key economic development players in the province was viewed as instrumental to the success of CDA and these linkages were well established and proved beneficial from the onset. These linkages also impacted on further developments taking place in selected projects which initially were part of the project package of BCDA. With the political support behind the CDA, one of the first projects that were funded through the efforts of the District was the completion of the airfield project in Somerset East. Not only was relevant funding secured for this but also ancillary projects were supported. Additional projects included the tarring of the road between the airfield and the tourist town of Addo. This decision not only ensured better connectivity for communities in Addo and Somerset East, but also for the surrounding tourism industry which could benefit. Another project that received support was the promotion of historical monuments as potential heritage tourism assets. To further capitalise on the airfield project, an industrial park was zoned within the airport precinct. The District was in the process of seeking funding from different national stakeholders for the bulk infrastructure needed to operationalise this industrial park. It was observed that a 'precinct approach' was explored together with the National Treasury. Funding was sourced from international companies for energy and waste projects that could potentially be located within the same industrial park (Mvoko, 2016b).

According to District officials the process of the dissolution of development agencies was not without institutional and legal challenges. In the case of the BCDA, the process was met with considerable delays. Partly this challenge was attributed to the fact that the BCDA was established in terms of a by-law and in order to repeal this, due legal process was needed, which required considerable effort and time (Mvoko, 2016a). While this legal process was underway, the District and its experienced implementation team were concerned with unlocking development project potential across the district on a range of projects.

## 5 Conclusion

Place-based development interventions are gaining increasing attention by a community of urban planners, economic geographers, and LED practitioners (Rogerson, 2014; Rodriguez-Pose & Wilkie, 2017). In the international context there is mounting interest in the role and potential of LEDAs in place-based development. One focus for LEDAs has been in peripheral regions in order to support improved economic development futures (Lawrence & Rogerson, 2018). In South Africa LEDAs have moved strongly onto the policy radar as existing LED interventions have proven disappointing and not least in terms of their impacts for redressing massive spatial inequalities. The poor performance of LED in South Africa has been especially so in the context of less well-resourced municipalities in small towns. In order to support struggling local governments seeking to improve prospects for local development the national government, through the activities of the Industrial Development Corporation, supported the growth of LEDAs in South Africa (Lawrence, 2013; Khambule, 2018). LEDAs operate as entities with public interest and accountability but apply private sector tools and strategies. In the South African context they are considered a specialized institution which is required to fill a gap between the crafting and implementation of development plans and so function as a delivery tool which is “owned by the municipality to coordinate and manage public resources, potential investors and regional investment opportunities in accordance with the identified development objectives” (Nel, 2017: 6).

The objective in this study was to investigate the evolution and operational challenges of a small town LEDA in South Africa. Using documentary sources in terms of annual reports and internal documents as well as rich stakeholder interviews an analysis was undertaken of the BCDA and its activities in Somerset East and surrounds in Eastern Cape. It was shown that the BCDA has been innovative in its development initiatives undertaken during the period 2004-2014 for this small town and its surrounding rural area. In analysing the projects and activities of BCDA it is evident considerable effort was put in place to identify catalytic opportunities and to support the unlocking of these projects through development facilitation, feasibility and project management. The evidence from this case study demonstrates that despite many successes, development agencies in South Africa have a strong dependence on the parent municipality which often determine the future direction and sustainability of LEDAs. Arguably, these decisions on future directions may not necessarily be optimal for the leadership of a LEDA as they often are taken outside of the organisation. In addition, it was disclosed that LEDAs often have a particular life cycle, interconnected to local government and that their future is interwoven with the political and administrative context of local government and the environment within which the LEDA operates. Indeed, the BCDA experience highlights the potential lifespan limits of a development agency. It might be argued that the dissolution and merger of BCDA was the consequence of it outliving its contribution to the local municipality’s economic development vision. This said, the closure of BCDA, in spite of its many successes, reveals the importance of not only ensuring the visibility of projects but also the perceived ownership and benefits accrued to the municipality and the value placed on these projects. The experience of BCDA discloses that political support provided a vital catalyst for development and at times proved to be invaluable in unlocking the necessary blockages faced by the project implementation teams as was demonstrated by the airfield project.

In the final analysis, this LEDA case study highlights a number of important key policy-related issues that impact development agencies specifically in a small town context (Lawrence, 2018). Of note are the importance of networks for securing support and resources

for projects, the critical role of securing upfront funding of projects and securing political buy-in. Indeed, the strong impress of the political context within which agencies operate – at least in South Africa - cannot be underestimated. In the example of Somerset East the political context was shown to exert a direct bearing on the support received at municipal level for BCDA as well as unfolding project implementation progress. Arguably, a balance is needed between political support and project implementation progress that may take place outside of political support process. Another issue is that project ownership and handover must be clearly outlined and agreed upon prior to the development of a project. This should not be a once off agreement but rather be continuously reinforced during the conceptualisation, design and implementation of projects. Finally, the experience of Somerset East confirms that the success of any development agency is contingent upon the establishment of partnerships amongst stakeholders, a committed and visionary leadership, an entrepreneurial approach undertaken with the maintenance of public interest, a clear strategic vision for local development, and the appropriate mobilisation and valorisation of local development assets (Nel, 2017).

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Dene KISTING

## Studentification in Stellenbosch, South Africa

### Abstract

Globally, studentification has emerged as a prominent urban process, fast becoming entrenched in geographical discourse. Since the early 1990s, in both developed and developing world countries, an expansion in student enrolment has outstripped the ability of higher education institutions to provide adequate accommodation. These trends have been noted in South Africa too. The extent and impact of studentification on the urban geography of those places in which it has taken root is still poorly understood in both South Africa and the global South at large. This paper investigates studentification as experienced in one of South Africa's secondary cities – Stellenbosch. An overview of generic studentification impacts is provided and the development of this process tracked. Thereafter, the motivation for living in these developments and the impacts of this process comes into view. It is argued that the areas affected by studentification have fundamentally changed in their physical and social character. Interestingly, a range of findings in the academic record were not present in the Stellenbosch context. Finally, it is suggested that studentification in South Africa requires greater research attention in a range of other urban settings in which this process has emerged. This is particularly urgent as it would appear that studentification can radically and very rapidly transform the geography of the areas in which it takes hold.

**Keywords:** studentification, Stellenbosch, South Africa, urban morphology

### 1 Introduction

Globally, there has been a dramatic increase in students enrolled at higher education institutions (HEIs) (Council for Higher Education, 2016: 9). These institutions have not been able to respond at a similar tempo in providing student accommodation, which resulted in an undersupply of student accommodation (Smith, 2009; Donaldson, 2014; Donaldson et al., 2014). While studying at HEIs, students, especially those studying at institutions that are far from their parental homes, are in need of accommodation (Ackermann & Visser, 2016). As HEIs cannot currently provide all students with on-campus accommodation, alternative accommodation in the private sector have appeared in various formats (Benn, 2010; Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). Initially, single residential housing units were converted into houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), often along the periphery and surrounding neighbourhoods of the HEIs, and more recently, purpose-built student accommodation was created (PBSA) (Benn, 2010; Donaldson et al., 2014). These changes in land-use have had profound implications for the locations in which such developments have occurred (Hubbard, 2008; 2009).

The establishment of private student accommodation in the surrounding neighbourhoods is a phenomenon called studentification (Benn, 2010; Hubbard, 2009). In Sage et al.'s (2012a, 2012b) view, studentification is used to describe both the migration of university students into established residential neighbourhoods and the associated impacts this holds. These impacts include cultural, economic, physical and social transformations. Studentification is associated with changes in household structures, local age profiles, facilities and services, local cultures and lifestyles, and differences in social class positions (Sage et al., 2012a). Donaldson et al. (2014) argue that spatial dysfunctionality is often the result of

studentification and that the students' subculture is catered for over time, resulting in the exclusion of permanent residents. Fear of and social protest against the development of student accommodation in local residents' suburbs have been recorded as consequences of planning policies either initiating these developments or not regulating them (Donaldson et al., 2014).

Echoing international trends, South Africa has experienced dramatic expansion of students at HEIs since the early 1990s (Council of Higher Education, 2016). Most of these institutions are unable to house all their students. Despite the prevalence of this challenge, very little scholarship has focused on the impacts of the studentification process on both small and large urban areas (rare exceptions are Ackermann & Visser, 2016; Benn, 2010; Donaldson et al., 2014). The aim of this investigation is to contribute towards addressing this paucity in scholarship through the empirical realities of Stellenbosch – arguably the urban context in which the process of studentification has had its most extensive impact in South Africa and indeed the African continent. The investigation unfolds in a number of sections of review and analysis. First, an overview of definitions and key issues in the current discourse is presented. Second, a general framing of the genesis of studentification in Stellenbosch and methodological issues are considered. Third, the investigation then sets out to establish the basic spatial expression of studentification in Stellenbosch. The central focus is on how studentification is spatially expressed in this setting. Fourth, an analysis of the students inhabiting this housing type and why they live there come into view. Finally, brief consideration is given to the various impacts studentification holds for those particular locales. In the concluding section, the main findings of the investigation are extrapolated to a broader canvas of studentification in urban South Africa and its implications considered.

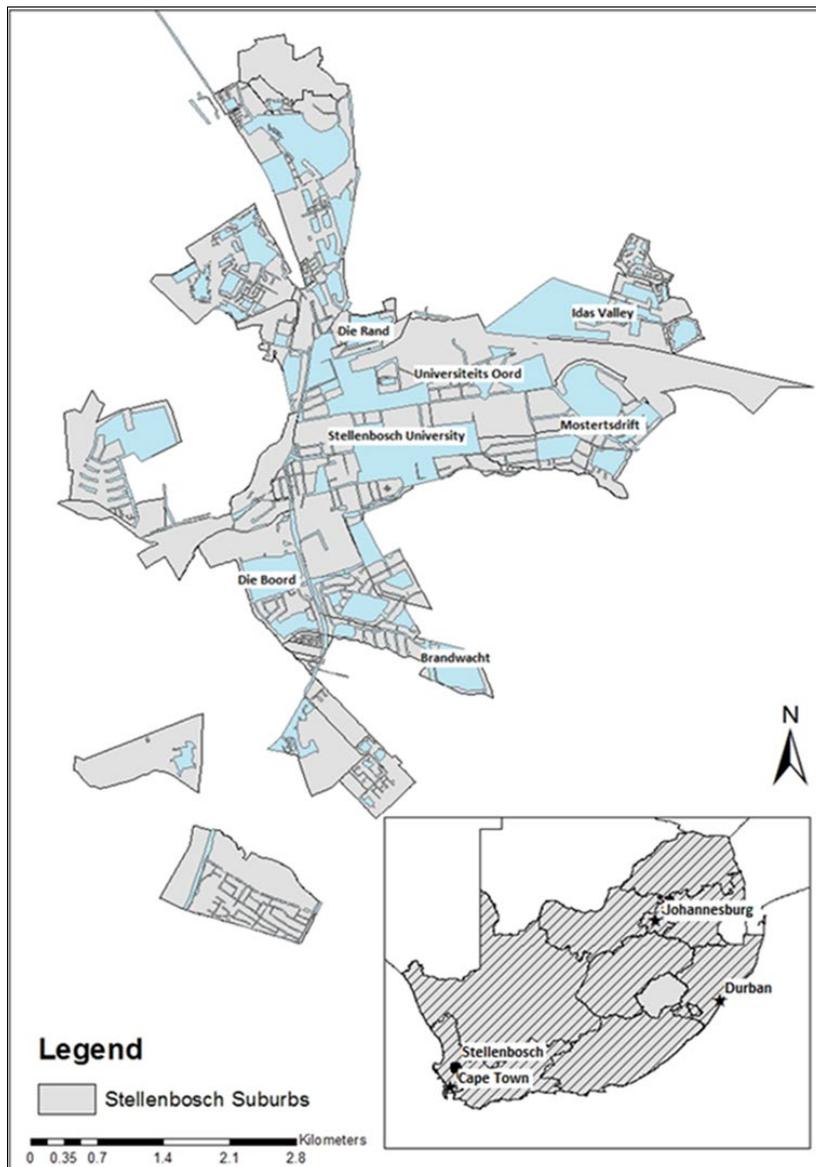


Figure 1: Location of Stellenbosch in South Africa (illustration: Gustav Visser and Dene Kisting).

## 2 Current studentification discourses

Sage et al. (2012a) argue that studentification became a phenomenon requiring academic reflection since the early 2000s. When students migrate to universities, they have two options: they can either live in accommodation provided by the university or in private sector housing (Garmendia et al., 2012; Smith & Hubbard, 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). The increase in student enrolment at HEIs has made student accommodation provision unmanageable for most universities as they lacked adequate resources to satisfy the demand (Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). In the British context (the location of much of the geographical investigations), this has led to studentification (Rugg et al., 2002; Cochrane & Williams, 2013). In most cases, studentification resulted in an influx of young, middle- and upper-class people into established, relatively inexpensive residential neighbourhoods, although the opposite has also been recorded. This process has sometimes been linked to gentrification (Smith, 2005; Sage et al., 2012a: 598; Boersma et al., 2013;

Smith & Hubbard, 2014). Either way, the concentration of students has been shown to have various geographical consequences (Macintyre, 2003; Steinacker, 2005).

Allison (2006: 80) mentions that cities contain concentrations of students, which leads to student enclaves. These enclaves or clusters of students create communities that are spatially and temporally linked to the academic calendar and campus lifestyle and that are usually in close proximity to the campus (Chatterton, 1999; Allison, 2006; Munro et al., 2009). These areas transform owing to the presence of student communities and this transformation is called studentification. There are two different private sector student accommodation types that affect residential neighbourhoods differently, namely home in multiple occupancy (HMOs) and purpose built student accommodation (PBSAs) (Ackermann & Visser, 2016). The process of studentification does not only refer to the influx of students into residential neighbourhoods (Sage et al., 2012a; Smith & Hubbard, 2014), but implies an activation of a range of social, cultural, economic and physical transformations (Fincher & Shaw, 2011; Sage et al., 2012a; Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). Table 1 provides a summary of different studentification effects, categorised into four impact categories.

Table 1: Categorised effects of studentification.

Social	Economic	Cultural	Physical
Demographic structure of the local population	Supply and demand for housing	Supply and demand for specific leisure, recreational and retail facilities	Levels of private vehicle use and cycling and walking
Level of population density	Buoyancy of housing market	Levels of antisocial behaviour	Levels of traffic congestion
Levels of stability/transience	Portfolio of housing market	Levels of noise nuisance from households, pedestrians, taxis, private vehicles	Levels of visual pollutions (to-let signs)
Turnover of residents/property	Flexibility of housing stock	(In)compatibility of lifestyles	Levels of litter and rubbish
Cohesion of local community and community interactions	Condition of housing stock	Supply of and demand for levels of policing and emergency services	Upkeep of gardens and driveways
Levels of neighbourliness	Spending levels within local economy		Upkeep of external environment
Meaning and symbolism of location	Levels of inward capital investment		Levels of graffiti and vandalism
Supply of and demand for schools, GPs, dentists and other health services	Supply of and demand for local retail, leisure and recreational services		
Supply of and demand for public transport	Seasonality of local economy and services		
Effectiveness of crime prevention strategies and self-policing	Levels of housing abandonment		
Trends of criminal activity	Supply of and demand for domestic services		
Levels of electoral voting and political affiliations	Supply of and demand for childcare services		
Effectiveness of car parking schemes and provision	Levels of council tax revenue		
Strength of local voluntary schemes/sector	Local workforce		

As the need for student accommodation increases, so does the number of landlords and property developers who recognise the opportunity for renting out HMOs in specific areas, mostly those areas surrounding HEIs (Smith & Hubbard, 2014). Subsequently, the increase in the demand for student accommodation eventually led to the development of PBSAs. Smith and Hubbard (2014) argues that the establishment of PBSAs is considered a coping mechanism for local authorities as PBSA development helped to control the growth of HMOs in residential neighbourhoods.

In the South African context, Ackermann and Visser (2016) and Donaldson et al. (2014) demonstrated that HMOs tend to have a greater impact on residential dynamics than PBSAs do. In HMOs, students tend to have gardens and refuse that is not well managed, accompanied by noise, vandalism and antisocial behaviour. The benefit of PBSAs, which makes them attractive to students, is that they are exclusive and students can still live off-campus but not in residential neighbourhoods. This separation between residential neighbourhoods and PBSA ensures that students (and their particular lifestyle and noise) are contained in a particular area (Sage et al., 2012a; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). There is also the implication that there is a developmental path in studentification, setting out as a 'first wave' that marks the transition from family homes to HMOs, while the 'second wave' refers to the development of PBSAs (Sage et al., 2012a) and near deliberate student enclave development.

Students can impact the physical environment of the neighbourhoods and indirectly affect the way these neighbourhoods are controlled, planned and regulated (Donaldson et al., 2014). These impacts can be negative or positive e.g. students can contribute to both the environmental degradation of a neighbourhood and its wealth (Ackermann & Visser, 2016). According to Ordor et al. (2010), the physical environment is upgraded when single-family homes are converted to HMOs, which in turn raises the property and rental prices. Benn (2010), however, is of the opinion that students can also contribute to physical and environmental decay such as weak electricity supply, vandalism, insufficient facilities, littering and overcrowding.

According to Smith and Hubbard (2014), university students unavoidably contribute to the trend of socio-spatial segregation. The social impact of studentification stems from the movement of students into residential neighbourhoods (Benn, 2010). Their entrance can disrupt a sense of cohesion, belonging and identity in a community as they tend to show a lack of interest when it comes to interacting with non-student residents, thereby contributing to the segregation (Benn, 2010; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). Students moving into a neighbourhood affects population density (higher concentration of people) and diversity (greater variety of people) in an area (Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). When students live in university residences, they supposedly learn the rules and regulations of studenthood because they are naturally segregated into institutional spaces. They also form friendships and build relationships with fellow students. In private student accommodation, students become more independent and mature when they move into established residential neighbourhoods and participate in shared-home living where they are not obliged to follow

any formalised institutional rules or regulations (Donaldson et al., 2014; Smith & Hubbard, 2014).

Students' lifestyle, of which drunkenness and noise is often a part, is considered one of the most frequently mentioned negative impacts of studentification. As students continue to move into established residential neighbourhoods, many of the residents may become resentful when they realise that they are outnumbered by students (Smith & Hubbard, 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). Thus, studentification influences the migration into and out of neighbourhoods, particularly the outward migration of established residents who are displaced, thereby affecting the demographics and related characteristics of the area. This results in the depopulation of non-student residents in neighbourhoods, causing these areas to become temporarily inhabited and resulting in 'ghost towns' during academic breaks (Sage et al., 2012a), which may ultimately lead to the closure of schools in the area due to an absence of families with young children (Sage et al., 2012a). It has also been observed that the immigration of students is associated with an increase in crime within the neighbourhood (Munro et al., 2009). Crime rates tend to increase during university holidays, when the majority of students are not in the area, with the most common crime being cars that are broken into (Benn, 2010; Donaldson et al., 2014). The targets of crime tend to be students because they own expensive items but do not have security that would be deemed a sufficient form of protection (Munro et al., 2009). However, non-student residents are also affected by these crimes (Benn, 2010).

The transformation of local shops (take away restaurants, copyshops) and services (bars, nightclubs) and the contestation among residents and students, usually due to noise, littering and parking, are visible signs of studentification (Smith & Hubbard, 2014). According to Donaldson et al. (2014) and Benn (2010), students change the lifestyle and consumer patterns of residents. Their presence, followed by visibly different cultures, consumer patterns and lifestyles, create unique product and service provisions (Ordor et al., 2010). With more students in the area, local businesses realise that students are their main clientele and that they should cater to their needs. This changes and diversifies the local culture where "traditional restaurants and bars are replaced by fast food restaurants and outlets" (Donaldson et al., 2014: 178). Students can be considered cultural investors as they might contribute to the diversity and urban revival of the neighbourhood and surrounding areas (Benn, 2010).

Taken as a whole, both the characteristics of the social groups and the area within which studentification manifests will determine whether its impacts are positive or negative (Ordor et al., 2010). There are various factors that contribute to students living in private accommodation such as property investors or letting agents, but other factors (including the distinct student lifestyle or culture) should also be considered (Donaldson et al., 2014). The possibility to convert, build or invest in HMOs and PBSAs depend not only on the demand for student housing, but also on the national legislation, i.e. policies, that regulate the development of student accommodation and whether the houses are suitable for conversion (Smith & Hubbard, 2014). According to Smith and Hubbard (2014), there is a deficiency of knowledge and data regarding the scale of studentification.

### **3 Stellenbosch in context and methodological notes**

Stellenbosch is home to a number of educational institutions such as Boland College, Isa Carstens Academy, Institute for Culinary Arts, Elizabeth Galloway Academy of Fashion

Design and Stellenbosch Academy of Photography and Design, as well as Stellenbosch University (SU). The student population of these institutions have increased to such an extent that the provision of accommodation has become challenging for both these institutions and the private marketplace.

The largest HEI is SU. In 2016, SU enrolled a total of 30,854 students (Stellenbosch University, 2017a). This is 19,475 more than the 11,379 recorded in 1990 (which was the starting point of an era of higher education massification in South Africa) (Council for Higher Education, 2016). Over 26,000 of the enrolled students study on the main campus in Stellenbosch (it is a multi-campus university with specialist campuses in Cape Town, Saldanha, Wellington and Worcester). Of the 32 university residences, 26 are located in Stellenbosch, providing female, male, senior, co-ed and private, affiliated university accommodation. SU has the capacity to accommodate approximately 6,500 students within these residence formats, resulting in over 20,000 students seeking private accommodation. This makes it more difficult for students to find university accommodation placement. The university receives over 35,000 first-year applications but can only accommodate 5,000 new entrants annually. Of these, there are fewer than 2,000 places for newcomer students available in the SU student accommodation system (Stellenbosch University, 2017b). Therefore, receiving university-provided accommodation placement at SU is considered a “privilege and not a right”. Applicants are generally required to have attained very high academic achievements, along with other accomplishments on cultural, leadership and sports levels.

Historically, HMOs in Stellenbosch were small relative to the total number of enrolled students. During the 1990s, HMOs became more popular (particularly for more senior students) and as university accommodation became increasingly scarce, academic achievement became a prerequisite for remaining in institutionally-provided accommodation. This presented an investment opportunity and resulted in private property investors acquiring former family homes (three to four bedrooms) to accommodate students who either wished to or had to leave university-provided accommodation. These properties were systematically expanded over time. A typical HMO in the 2010s could accommodate between 10 and 20 students.<sup>1</sup>

It was probably only a matter of time before larger property investment firms would see an opportunity in a more formalised approach to student housing provision. The entry of PBSAs, as opposed to family residences being converted and expanded (HMOs), as a property investment class came with the establishment of, among others, CampusKey in Stellenbosch (which now has a national footprint in a number of other cities in which HEIs are located) and Unilofts in Gauteng and the Free State. These investments have mainly been made at historically white Afrikaans universities (Free State, Johannesburg, North West, and Pretoria). The six PBSAs in Stellenbosch managed by CampusKey specifically vary dramatically in size (ranging between 55–250 bedrooms). Viewed at a national level, there are various providers that are even larger, some accommodating more than 400 students in different rooms, flats, studios and shared flat configurations.

Methodologically, this investigation draws primary on data collected over several months in 2017. A listing of all properties relevant to the study drew on 105 students’ knowledge of

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<sup>1</sup> As will be shown later, there is currently not much difference between HMOs and PBSAs in terms of facilities and services beyond the number of rooms available.

existing HMOs and PBSAs they either lived in or knew of, informing the baseline location data-set (these were not on the whole the survey participants reported in the study – only a means by which to identify student housing). This was then augmented and vetted by five, well-established estate agents working in the central Stellenbosch student rental market. It also has to be noted that only neighbourhoods within walking distance of the university's main campus were included. Coordinates for the different student accommodation types were collected manually (using a GPS handheld device) and mapped. The student accommodation included HMOs and PBSAs; however, it should be noted that apartment buildings not exclusively used by students were not included. The maps were then created using the ArcMap 10.4.1. The coordinates for Stellenbosch University student accommodation were collected online using a map of SU's main campus to identify the residences.

In this study, three self-administered questionnaires, focused on three different target groups, namely students residing in HMOs and PBSAs and non-student residents, were used. Convenience sampling was deployed due to the density of the study area. Collectively, 117 HMO students, 131 PBSA students and 71 non-student residents participated in the study. In total there were 319 survey participants. On the whole, the investigation views studentification mainly through the lens of the students and not the owners and managers of the student housing units. These perspectives could be investigated in another study.

#### **4 Studentification: location, motivation, product and impact**

Figure 2 displays the three main types of accommodation used by students at SU. In total, 125 HMOs, 87 PBSAs and 26 university residences were identified. A number of student housing clusters can be identified. Cluster one maps the traditional university-provided accommodation that has been in these locations for at least 50 years (some of them for over a century), along with the HMOs and PBSAs in clusters two to six. Each cluster has a unique developmental history (not discussed here). According to Garmendia et al. (2012), the conversion of single-family homes to HMOs represents horizontal studentification, while the occupation of flats instead of HMOs represents vertical studentification. On the whole, clusters two and three are good examples of previous horizontal studentification morphing into vertical studentification. These clusters are located in areas that were white, middle-class, family-focused residential neighbourhoods up to the late 1980s. It should be noted that although there is no historical record<sup>2</sup> of off-campus student accommodation, a number of properties did have garden cottages that were rented to students, as were flats, mostly to married or postgraduate students. Over time, these properties were first transformed into HMOs, with many of them subsequently demolished and replaced by PBSAs (clusters three and four). The noticeable exception is that of cluster five, which has remained in tact over the past two decades.

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<sup>2</sup> As a consequence, this analysis is somewhat static as it only really considers the present.

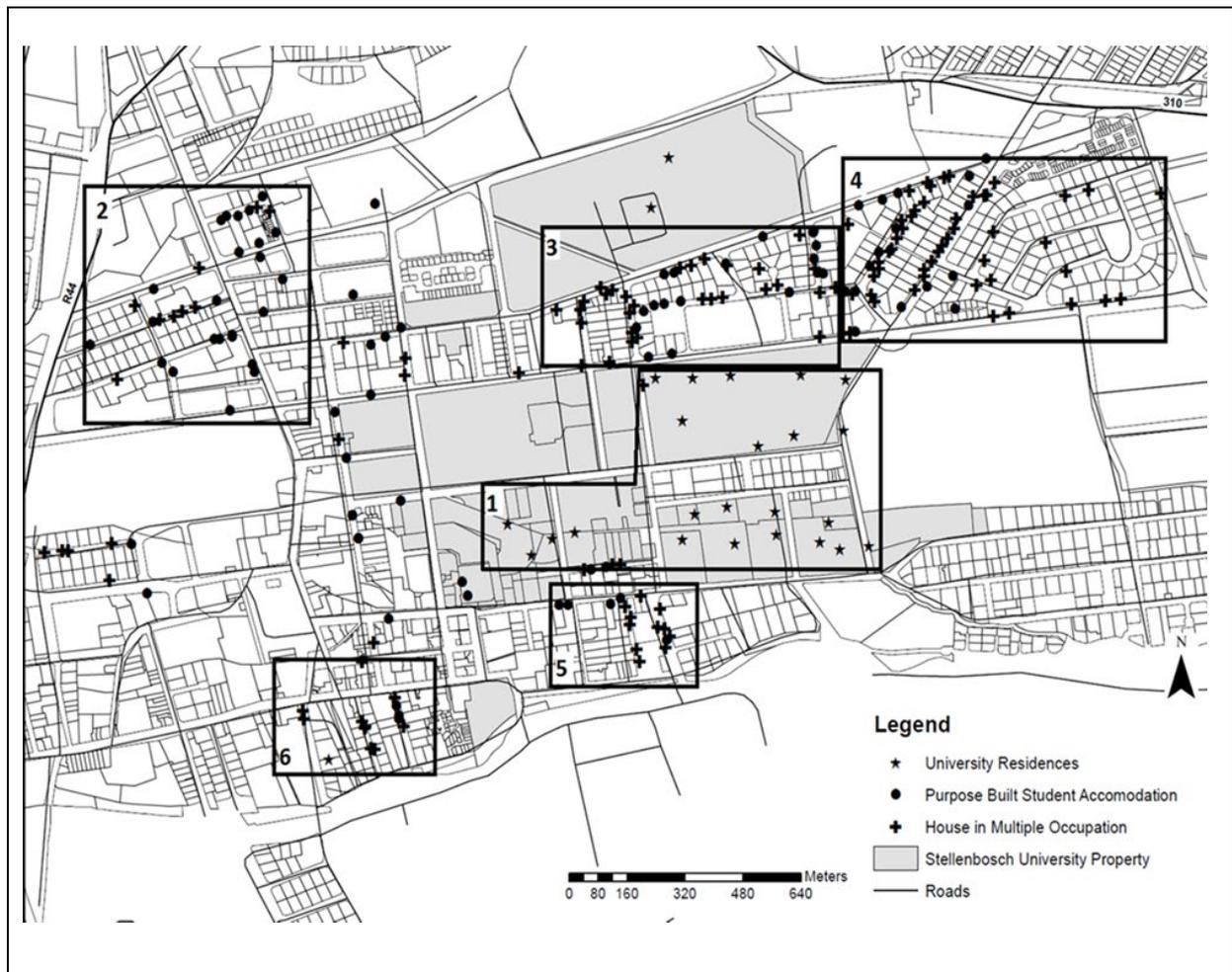


Figure 2: Spatial distribution of the main student accommodation types in Stellenbosch (source: Authors survey).

With the exception of cluster two and six, it is clear that HMOs and PBSAs are mainly clustered adjacent to the campus, yet they are relatively distant from any of Stellenbosch's entertainment zones. In fact, in contrast to the international literature, proximity to the campus stands central and no entertainment nodes of any kind were registered. In addition, no new entertainment nodes have been established owing to studentification. The neighbourhoods where most of the accommodation are found – Universiteits Oord, Die Weides and Simonswyk – are located in clusters three and four and account for more than half of HMOs and PBSAs. According to Benn (2010), this is the result of a number of high density housing complexes that were converted from single-family homes to student housing in these areas. De Weides and Simonswyk are two of the residential areas with the largest student population, which has increased markedly from when Benn's (2010) initial investigation was undertaken. The question then arises as to why students choose to live in these student accommodation clusters.

Figure 3 and 4 indicate the key factors students consider when choosing their accommodation location. The respondents were given a list of six factors that they may or may not consider when choosing a location. For both HMO and PBSA students, safety (69% and 73% respectively) was indicated as a very important consideration. This is followed by distance from campus for PBSA students, and friends who live in the area (58%) by HMO students. Then again, given the compact nature of Stellenbosch's urban form, this was not really

surprising. Affordability (59%) for PBSA students and distance from campus (48%) for HMO students came in third as a key consideration. What is important is that cost was not the central concern. In a sense, this reflects the fact that the students themselves in many cases do not directly pay, but also that students choosing PBSA accommodation are from middle to high-income backgrounds (see monthly allowance expenditure in Table 4).

Figure 4 indicates the importance of other role-players who influence student's accommodation choice. From the results it is clear that PBSA students found parents (31%) and friends (28%) to be the most important role-players, whereas HMO students were mostly influenced by friends (60%).

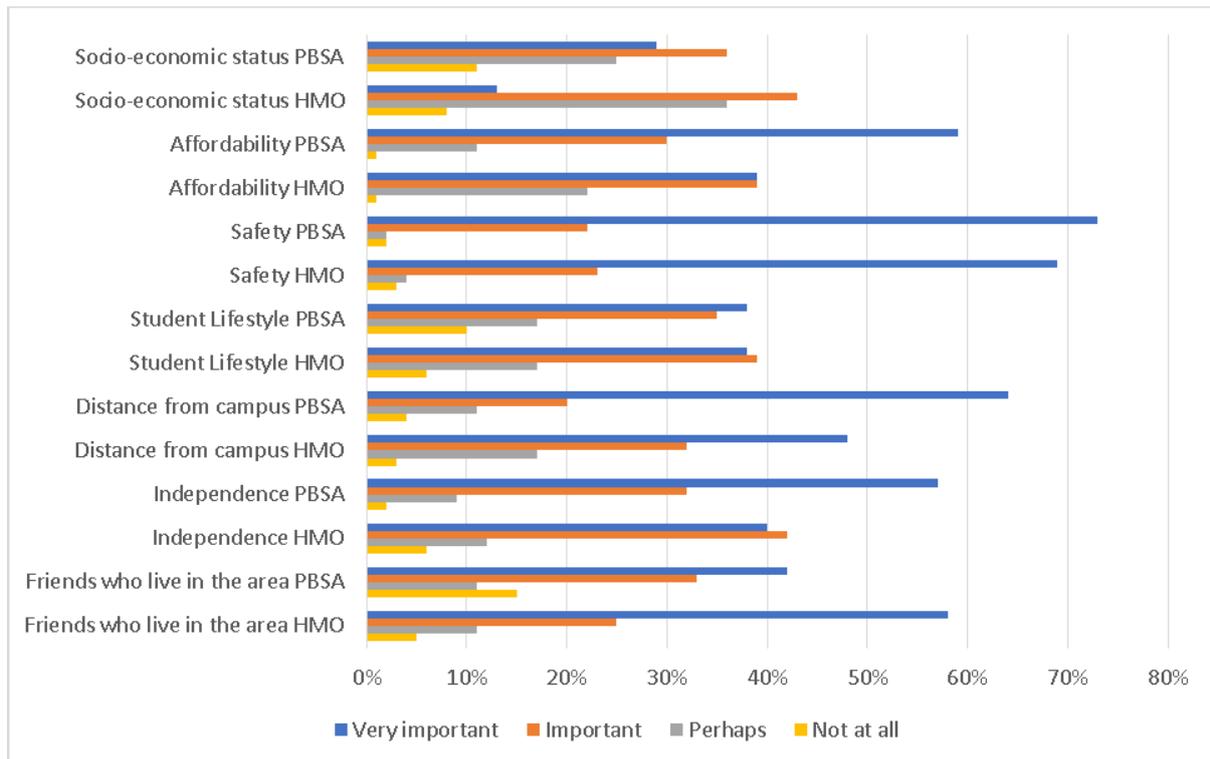


Figure 3: Factors influencing location choice for HMO and PBSA students (source: Authors survey).

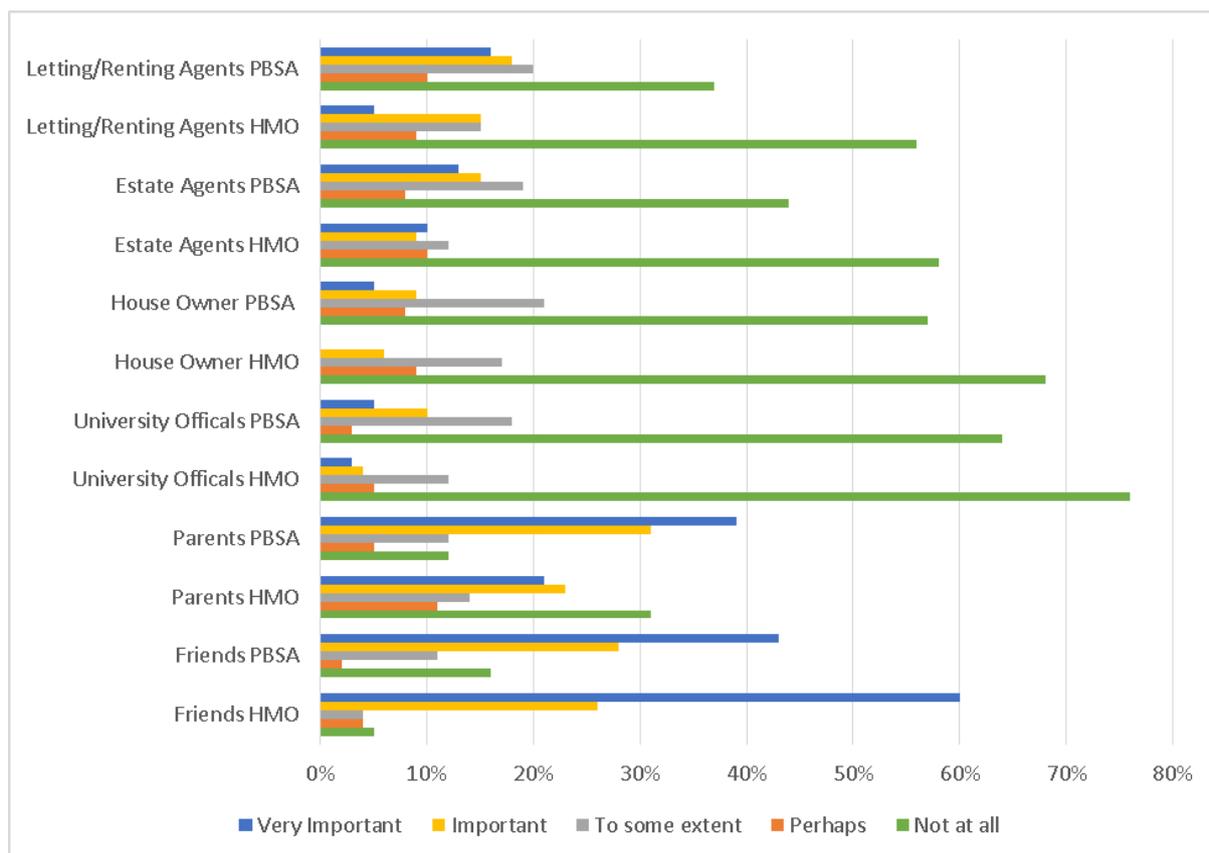


Figure 4: Important role-players influencing access to HMOs and PBSAs (source: Authors survey).

## 5 The emergence of HMOs and PBSAs and their characteristics

The characteristics of HMO and PBSA accommodation in Stellenbosch vary greatly, although it can be argued that the two housing types are becoming increasingly similar in terms of facilities and services. There is also the issue of how individual investors in this property class have migrated from, historically, an individual home owner providing accommodation (having spare space in or on his or her property), to seeing student housing as a property investment class through to large-scale developers, such as CampusKey, becoming involved. Ownership of student accommodation was, however, not part of this investigation, merely its spatial expression and role in urban morphological change.

As argued, there is, however, increasing similarity between HMOs and PBSAs in terms of the facilities and services on offer. The key difference is that of size. This point is supported by the following analysis.

Table 2 profiles the standard facilities and services offered in HMO and PBSA accommodation. In these terms it is recorded that there are no distinct differences between the two student accommodation types. The facilities and services range from basic amenities to “other facilities”, which include a gym, laundry room, pool, braai area, security and a garden/patio. Some HMO and PBSA services are paid for separately such as electricity and Internet access.

Table 2: Facilities and services included in rental accommodation.

Facilities	HMO	PBSA
Kitchen	100%	100%
Bathroom	100%	100%
Lounge/TV room	97%	92%
Parking	96%	95%
Stove	93%	84%
Microwave	96%	88%
Lounge furniture	93%	70%
Bed	81%	82%
Desk	83%	84%
Electricity	94%	84%
Water	97%	99%
Internet (uncapped)	89%	75%
Other	13%	17%

Source: Authors survey.

The costs of HMO and PBSA accommodation, per room, mainly range from R3,000 to R6,000 per month (Table 3). By South African standards the HMOs and PBSAs are expensive for the accommodation provided. The accommodation ranges from a bed in a bachelor flat with en-suite unit to a room with shared communal facilities. To put this in perspective: a three-bedroomed family home can be rented in many cities and towns for R6000.

Table 3: Monthly cost of accommodation.

Cost of accommodation	HMO	PBSA
<R3,000	2%	8%
R3,000–R6,000	52%	71%
R6,000–R,8000	46%	15%
>R8,000	0%	6%

Source: Authors survey.

Table 4 displays the amount of the students' monthly allowance. The majority of the students in both HMO and PBSA receive between R2,000 to R4,000 a month. Although it cannot be established where these funds are spent, it would be reasonable to argue that it ends up in various businesses ranging food to entertainment and clothing within Stellenbosch. Collectively, HMO and PBSA student accommodation in total amounts to around R10,000 a month. The over-arching point, however, is that these students' broader monthly lodging is substantial and require parents or guardians with significant financial means. Table 4 implies that the students participating in the survey are the children of upper-middle and high-income earners.

Table 4: Students' monthly allowance.

Monthly Allowance	HMO	PBSA
<R2000	22%	36%
R2000–R4000	40%	36%
R4000–R6000	35%	24%
>R6000	3%	4%

Source: Author Survey.

According to Allison (2006), Smith (2009) and Chatterton (2010), the migration of students away from their parents is considered a tradition, as seen, for example in the UK and USA,

and forms part of the higher education experience. Although there might be HEIs in close proximity to the student's parental home, the idea of leaving home continues to be associated with the idea of leaving for university (Chatterton, 2010). In the context of SU, it has to be stressed that the vast majority of students will have to move to this city, as the city's population itself could never sustain a university based on its permanent residential population. As a consequence, choosing SU in itself implies significant cost. This begs the questions: which socio-economic cohorts can afford to send their child there and where do these students come from?

Figure 5 indicates the different provinces the student respondents living in HMOs and PBSAs originate from. The majority of the students living in both HMOs and PBSAs are student migrants from the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. A large number of respondents indicated that they are from the Western Cape, mostly from the City of Cape Town (see Table 5). The overall representation of HMO and PBSA students by province broadly reflects the feeder regions of the university in general. Reasons for differences between the relationship between HMOs and PBSAs by region could not be established.

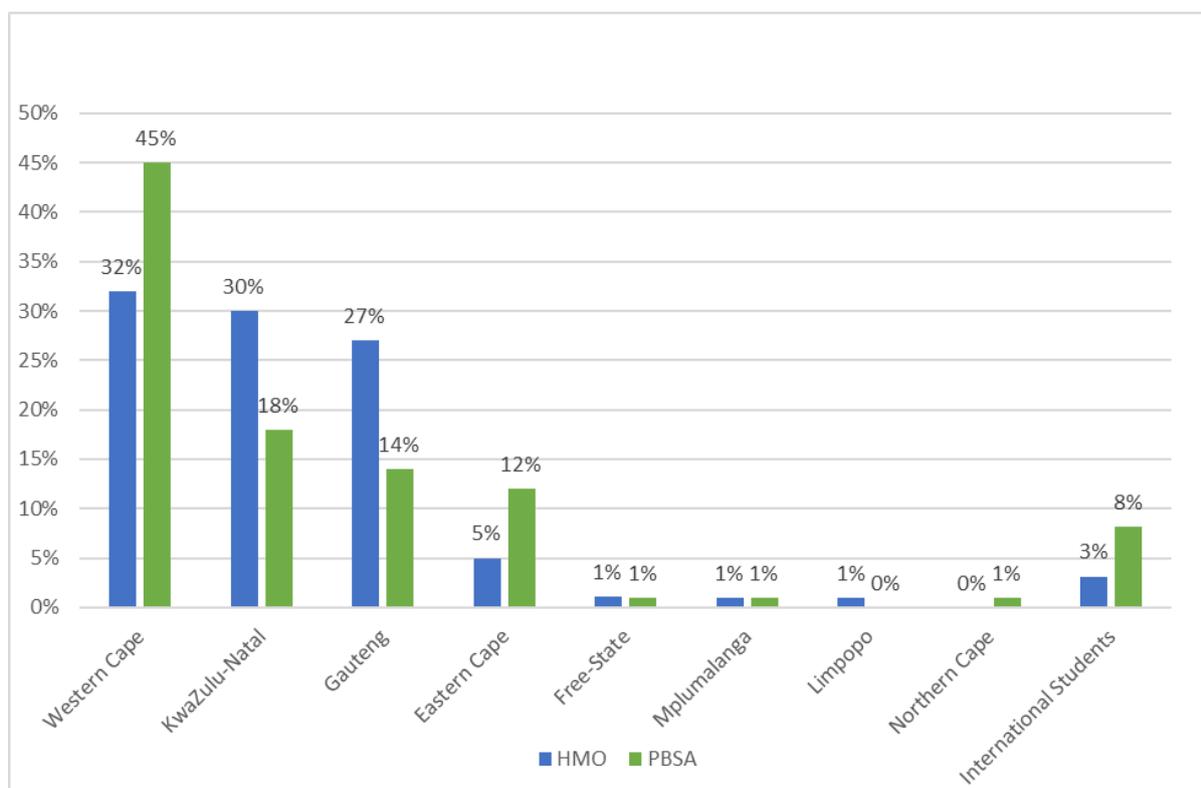


Figure 5: Survey participants by province of origin (source: Authors survey).

Table 5: Main cities from which students originate.

Student hometowns	HMO	PBSA
Cape Town	15%	20%
Johannesburg	22%	9%
Durban	19%	8%
Pretoria	1%	4%
Other	43%	59%

Source: Authors Survey.

Table 6 provides some insight into a number of demographic characteristics of HMO and PBSA residents. Not surprising, in the SU context the overwhelming majority of the residents are white, and between 18–23 year of age, with more females living in PBSAs, and more males living in HMOs. The higher incidence of women in PBSAs can be ascribed to the fact that this accommodation type typically includes very high levels of on-site security, including security guards. Confirming Benn's (2010) findings, the majority of the students who live in HMOs are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year, followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, whereas students living in PBSAs are spread out across 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Table 6: Student Profile.

	HMO	PBSA
<b>Race</b>		
White	97%	78%
Black	3%	8%
Coloured	0%	12%
Indian	0%	1%
Other	0%	1%
<b>Age</b>		
18–20	51%	51%
21–23	46%	44%
24–26	2%	2%
26>	1%	2%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	38%	53%
Male	63%	47%
<b>Year at SU</b>		
1st	5%	25%
2nd	21%	21%
3rd	61%	33%
4th	7%	14%
>4th	5%	7%

Source: Authors Survey.

On the whole, the vast majority of students are undergraduates. In terms of HMOs, two observations can be made: first, most often, these students started their university careers in

university-provided accommodation and then moved out after their first or second year of study. This is explained by the notion that HMOs are usually populated by students who have come to know one another in their previous years of study. Second, the male dominance in HMOs was ascribed by respondents to be related to fewer and less stringent house rules. PBSA students tend to have been resident in that type of accommodation from the outset of their studies.

## 6 Selected impacts of studentification

Table 7 provides a list of positive and negative impacts of students' presence, as identified by non-student residents. It is clear that a range of positive and negative impacts were recorded. On the positive side, the increase in property value and improved infrastructure were noted. Interviews with estate agents also suggest that since the development of PBSAs, the attractiveness of those areas have improved, particularly relative to when these areas previously hosted many HMOs. On the negative side, the noise and traffic congestion were highlighted. As suggested in the literature (see Table 1), these impacts can be grouped into four broad categories (Table 8).

Table 7: Most frequently mentioned impacts of students.

Positive	Negative
1. Property value	1. Noise
2. Improved infrastructure	2. Traffic congestion
3. Attractiveness	3. Decreased availability of parking
4. Diversity	4. Changes in the environment
5. Vibrancy	5. Decreased privacy
6. Safer	6. Lack of family homes
7. Business opportunity	7. Drunkenness
8. Social atmosphere	8. Changes the lifestyle and quality
9. Overcrowding	9. Crime
10. Pro-education	10. Property neglect
	11. Pollution
	12. Decrease in property value
	13. Lack of open areas
	14. Messy
	15. Students become majority
	16. Busy shops

Source: Authors Survey.

Table 8: Most frequently mentioned impacts of students (classified).

Social	Cultural	Economic	Physical
Diversity	Noise	Property value increase	Traffic congestion
Overcrowding	Drunkenness	Business opportunity	Decreased availability of parking
Social atmosphere	Changes in lifestyle and quality	Lack of family housing	Pollution
Crime	Vibrancy	Busy shops	Changes in the environment
Decreased privacy			Property neglect
Students become the majority			Lack of open areas
Pro-education			Attractiveness

Source: Authors Survey.

The majority (72%) of the non-student residents would not want to move out of their current neighbourhood. Relatively few non-student residents who did want to leave preferred neighbourhoods in middle and higher income areas such as Welgevonden, Mostersdrift and Die Boord. Their experience of studentification, however, could not have been extremely negative, because despite two decades of studentification, they still stayed in these neighbourhoods.

Although students and non-student residents can peacefully co-exist, problems arise when non-students residents feel outnumbered (Smith & Hubbard, 2014). When there are high levels of a minor annoyance, such as noise owing to the presence of a large number of students, it can create animosity between students and non-student residents (Allison, 2006). Other studentification impacts, such as the cultural differences and antisocial behaviour of students, cause unavoidable conflict between these two groups (Benn, 2010). Nearly a third (30%) of non-student residents stated that they have had disputes with HMO and PBSA students, usually due to noise and more than once. They were also questioned whether they have reported students to the police or the university, and not many (10%) have done so. Few of those who reported the students mentioned that they did it more than once; however, one resident claimed he did so more than 20 times. On the other hand, the majority of the students stated that they got along with the non-student residents. It should be noted that a fair number of student respondents stated that there are no non-student residents in their immediate location, which can be related back to the out-migration of non-student residents years ago. On the whole, students and non-students greeted one another daily (92%) and knew their neighbours well enough to visit or call them (45%). Confirming Ackermann and Visser (2016) and Benn's (2010) observation, in general, students had no interest in forming relationships with (the few) non-student residents.

## 7 Conclusion and some future research avenues

Studentification in Stellenbosch is certainly not new. Until the 1980s, students were, for the most part, housed in formal SU university residential accommodation. The need for the provision of larger-scale student accommodation became more pronounced during the late 1980s and started to play a key role in residential neighbourhoods in close proximity to the main campus during the 1990s leading into the 2000s. There has been a consolidation of HMOs and PBSAs into clusters in a number of neighbourhoods. The complete transformation of certain parts of Stellenbosch (Die Weides/Universteits Oord – cluster three and four) led to

homogenous student neighbourhoods. There is also a reconfiguration of HMOs into PBSAs – supporting the notion of a first wave of studentification (HMOs) to a second wave thereof (PBSAs). In terms of South Africa, Stellenbosch provides an extreme example of the impact of studentification on neighbourhoods in which it has taken root and evolved. The impact is perhaps disproportionate in large part as this is a matter of the proportion of student numbers to the permanent non-student population. Current discourse in the popular press does not support the idea of studentification being a national issue yet. As a consequence, this investigation might have limited traction for urban places in South Africa as a whole at this time. Yet, PBSA providers such as CampusKey and Unilofts are now well-established in most large urban places hosting HEIs. It is against this backdrop that one needs to consider this descriptive investigation against a broader backdrop, i.e. why does it matter? Broader urban morphological issues have to be highlighted, some which are perhaps more relevant to the South African context, while others might have greater international resonance.

The first issue relates to the willingness, as opposed to the ability, of HEIs to provide student accommodation. Given other spending pressures, the fact that private investment capital can relieve HEIs of this responsibility needs to be acknowledged and critically examined. For HEIs, in the end, not having to provide student accommodation is simply one less expenditure financially overstretched university-authorities have to consider. Within the South African context, this holds particular pertinence against the backdrop of the national student body who is increasingly insisting on free higher education, which includes accommodation and living expenses. The rise of HMO and PBSA accommodation in particular can serve as a foil against such demands, as HEIs are not involved and the students enter into private contracts with these providers of accommodation. However, affordability issues immediately come to the fore. Irrespective of tuition fees being differentially scrapped for certain income cohorts, the vast majority of South African students simply cannot afford the cost of HMO and PBSA accommodation, if not at SU, then certainly elsewhere. This investigation has been placed in a particular locale – one that is privileged on many fronts – that leads to the question of how this study translates to other HEIs in South Africa.

A second set of questions then informs future investigations, not only in Stellenbosch, but in all urban spaces with large or multiple HEIs in South Africa. HMO transformation to PBSAs is evident in Bloemfontein's Universitas and Willows, Cape Town's Observatory and Rondebosch, Johannesburg's Braamfontein and Auckland Park, and Hatfield in Pretoria, where the areas involved are fundamentally being reworked. These locations are all, however, in the metropolitan, large city contexts and concerns historically "white" institutions. The question immediately arises as to the relevance of this investigation to rural or smaller urban contexts and the impacts of HEIs' accommodation shortfalls on the surrounding communities generally, but also on the spatial occurrence and form, in particular. What is the impact of studentification in places like Alice (University of Fort Hare), Umtata (Walter Sisulu University) or Polokwane (University of Limpopo), to name a few locations?

Drawing on the Stellenbosch experience, there is the issue of market saturation being reached. All South African universities have now capped the number of students it can accommodate. This situation in national higher education funding constraints is highly unlikely to change in the next decade or so. Given that HMO properties are often cheaply converted to student use, those properties lose their desirability to prospective home buyers who generally will have to invest heavily if converting the property to more traditional residential accommodation. This investigation joins Donaldson et al. (2014) who noted that there are challenges regarding the regulation of student housing. In Stellenbosch,

studentification has, in large part, taken place without much planning or intervention from the local authority planning department, nor is there seemingly any policing of how building regulations are being ignored. The impact of purpose-built student accommodation, as opposed to general family homes being reworked as student accommodation, requires careful consideration. At the broader level, similar investigations should be undertaken into how this process might have (or might not have) resonance in other developing countries, not least in African urban places.

In terms of linking this investigation to a broader studentification discourse, a few further observations can be made.

The development of HMOs had a negative effect on the physical form of neighbourhoods in which they initially developed. However, the transitioning of HMOs to PBSAs has improved the physical appearance of the affected areas. Unlike indicated in the international literature, none of the Stellenbosch studentified clusters have led to the establishment of entertainment nodes, nor student focused retailers or service providers in the relevant areas. A key comparative research question could be how and why this is the case. In addition, there has been very little general public outcry concerning either these students' presence or the process of studentification. This process has not so far seen local government regulatory responses at all beyond keeping residential areas "residential" and not allowing other land uses in the relevant areas. Socio-culturally, the "historic/past" permanent middle/upper-middle class was replaced by students coming from similar backgrounds. What has changed is the age profile of the affected areas and the housing profile – single-family residences became horizontally studentified HMOs, which are now becoming larger and higher structures through vertical studentification. The process of studentification has not been explored in the HEIs base in rural areas and the potential for studentification in smaller towns with HEIs require attention, particularly as they are poorly resourced and cater to overwhelmingly financially marginalised student populations. It also needs to be kept in mind that HEIs' modes of education delivery is in flux and the role of the traditional residential university is very likely to change. Perhaps larger numbers of students might be a continuing trend going forwards, but whether it will do so in the current mode of delivery is highly unlikely. This will challenge the constant addition of student housing and its longer-term sustainability. The plus side might be that student housing that have not been converted in the central parts of Stellenbosch might be increasingly released either as rental or owned housing stock for non-students. This in turn can also aid in tempering constant rental and property value increase. Finally, an investigation into who invests in student accommodation, and why, is needed. Taken together, the process of studentification in South African urban change is in its infancy and requires extensive scholarly attention.

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## Studentification and commodification of student lifestyle in Braamfontein, Johannesburg

### Abstract

The process of studentification has emerged as a new form of neighbourhood change in the global North over the past 16 years and often situated within broader debates on gentrification. The growth of private student housing across cities globally has been linked to the increased neoliberalisation and massification of higher education and the lack of universities to keep up with the supply of student housing. Limited scholarship, however, exists on studentification in the global South. Notwithstanding that, in South Africa there has been growing recognition of the impact of studentification on urban environments. Despite some recognition in smaller cities, studentification has been neglected in large urban contexts. Using interviews with key informants and focus groups with students, this paper explores the impact of studentification in the urban neighbourhood of Braamfontein in Johannesburg. Over the past decade and a half there has been evidence of the concentration of student geographies and the commodification of student lifestyle in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

**Keywords:** studentification, student lifestyle, commodification, Johannesburg

### 1 Introduction

Student geographies and their impact on the urban environment has become popular within debates on neighbourhood change over the past two decades (Smith & Holt, 2007; Nakazawa, 2017). This coincides with the global massification of higher education, which has seen the exponential growth of student numbers since the 1980s. In 2002 the term ‘studentification’, was coined by Darren Smith who examined the impact of student housing on neighbourhood change in the United Kingdom. Studentification can be defined as the process of social, cultural, economic and physical changes that occur resulting from the influx of students, usually within privately rented accommodation in neighbourhoods close to higher education institutions (Smith, 2002; 2005). For many authors the process of studentification links with new ways in which capital is circulating through the urban environment, seeking new markets or lifestyles for commodification (Christie et al., 2002; Allison, 2006; Russo & Tatjer, 2007; Holdsworth, 2009; Munro et al., 2009; Chatterton, 2010; Nakazawa, 2017). Overall, research on studentification aims to extend the conceptual boundaries of gentrification to include emerging processes of urban change.

The neoliberalisation and massification of higher education globally has seen universities becoming focused on profitability and many institutions have started to follow a ‘business-like model’ or what Clark (1998) terms ‘entrepreneurial university’. In search of increased profitability universities have embarked on outsourcing various student services, including housing (Clark, 1998; Maassen & Cloete, 2004; Chatterton, 2010). Similar trends have been recorded in South Africa’s higher education system. During the 1990s and after the demise of apartheid, the government embarked on a process of transforming and providing increased access to previously excluded and disadvantaged South Africans (Jansen, 2004; Akoojee &

Nkomo, 2007). Since then, higher education institutions across South Africa have experienced a rapid intake of students (Bunting, 2004; Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). Despite this growth in student numbers, university supplied accommodation could not keep up with the growing demand and the private sector has responded by providing student accommodation in the form of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) and purpose-built student accommodation suppliers (PBSA) (Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016).

Limited research, however, explores the impact of studentification and role of private suppliers of student accommodation on neighbourhood change within the South African context. The exception are case studies in Bloemfontein and Stellenbosch, where both the University of the Free State and Stellenbosch University were historically white Afrikaner universities. The process of studentification in Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein has largely affected former middle-class low-density residential suburbs (Benn, 2010; Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016). On the larger metropolitan scale, the process of studentification is completely neglected in South Africa. It is against this backdrop that this paper will seek to investigate the economic and social impact of private student housing in the urban neighbourhood of Braamfontein in Johannesburg. An audit was conducted to document the number of student accommodation suppliers and other stakeholders in Braamfontein. The audit informed the sample of interviews. An interview was conducted with the biggest supplier of student accommodation in Braamfontein (and South Africa), namely South Point Properties. An interview with the Braamfontein Improvement District manager provides additional information on the impact of students on the area. Additionally, to gain a better understanding of students lived experiences in Braamfontein two focus groups were conducted – one group with students from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the second group of students from the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Furthermore, considerable time was spent at the study location and observations were documented through field notes which have aided in the analysis of this paper.

## **2 Current debates on studentification**

Students have been noted to be agents of change in various geographical contexts, particularly in urban areas (Holton, 2016; Nakazawa, 2017). It is, however, only by the early 2000s that the term studentification entered urban academic discourse. Studentification is often seen as a new form of gentrification and some authors argue for an extension of the conceptual meaning of gentrification to include emerging processes of neighbourhood change, such as studentification (Lees, 2003; Smith & Butler, 2007; Smith & Holt, 2007). The process of studentification is characterised by the in-migration of a student population that settles in privately rented accommodation in neighbourhoods close to higher education institutions (Smith, 2002, 2005). Students would either reside in privately rented houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) or in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) (Smith, 2002, 2005; Smith & Holt, 2007). Since the early 2000s studentification has enjoyed growing research interest mostly within the context of the United Kingdom (see Smith, 2002, 2005; Smith & Holt, 2007; Hubbard, 2008; Smith, 2008; Hubbard, 2009; Munro et al., 2009; Smith, 2009; Sage et al., 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Smith & Hubbard, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Holton, 2016). Limited research is available on the process of studentification beyond the UK, albeit there is growing recognition of this phenomenon elsewhere (Smith & Holt, 2007; Nakazawa, 2017). Over the past decade there have been studies across Europe (Garmendia et al., 2012; Boersma et al., 2013; Grabkowska & Frankowski, 2016; Fubula et al., 2017; Malet-Calvo,

2017), Australia (Davison, 2009; Fincher & Shaw, 2009) and the United States of America (Pickren, 2012; Laidley, 2014; Foote, 2017). The process of studentification has received very little attention in the global South, with exceptions of studies in China (He, 2015), Kenya (Fedha, et al., 2017) and growing research interest in South Africa (Donaldson et al., 2014; Ackermann & Visser, 2016).

Within studentification literature a theme examined by several authors is the interconnections between gentrification and studentification. Smith's (2005) definition on studentification outlines four dimensions that closely link with the process of gentrification. First, studentification has an economic impact, which can lead to revalorisation and inflation of rent. Second, the social impact of studentification can lead to the displacement of former residents. Third, the rise of student culture and lifestyle can cause conflict and disruption within communities. Fourth, the physical environment – investment in student housing can lead to the initial upgrade of properties but followed by downgrading of the physical environment. The latter contradicts certain debates within gentrification, which highlights it as a process of upgrading the physical environment (Smith & Holt, 2007).

It has been argued that studentification follows similar outcomes as gentrification. The immigration of students into a neighbourhood could cause changes in the property market. If a rent-gap exist homeowners or developers can realise greater rental returns from a student sub-market, which in turn can displace long term residents (Smith, 2009; Smith et al 2014). The concentration of students and their associated lifestyle can also cause conflict within communities and lead to the disruption, exclusion and displacement of 'well balanced' communities (Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2014). Allen (2008) and Nakazawa (2017) agree that studentification can deepen segregation and concentration of social groups leading to geographies of exclusion within cities. Both processes of studentification and gentrification can stimulate social segregation, concentration of a particular population group and the widening of socio-spatial polarisation within cities that can lead to geographies of exclusion (see Smith, 2008, 2009; Munro et al., 2009; Boersma et al., 2013; Smith & Hubbard, 2014; Nakazawa, 2017). Sage et al. (2013) argues that two types of displacement accompany studentification, these include exclusionary and socio-cultural displacement.

Early accounts of students acting as marginal gentrifiers have been documented by Ley (1996), Mills (1988) and Rose (1984). Ley (1996) states that youth culture is often viewed as the early recruits of gentrification. Spaces of higher education and student lifestyle are linked with acquiring cultural capital, which is essential for gentrification to occur (Ley, 2003). Thus Smith (2005) and Hubbard (2009) contends that students act as 'apprentice gentrifiers'. Smith and Holt (2007) argues that studentified spaces act as 'gentrification factories' – where students accumulate cultural capital and consume goods and services linked to middle-class aspirations. Hubbard (2009), however, argues that 'studenthood' or student lifestyle itself is being gentrified and that institutions and private investors are producing distinctive student districts or enclaves. Hubbard (2009) further posits that students are soon-to-be young professionals who are middle-class or are aspiring middle-class and seek an urban environment that caters to these aspirations.

Another important theme within the studentification scholarship is the cultural preferences or habitus of the student lifestyle, which affects neighbourhood change and can cause social and cultural conflict within the existing community (Smith & Holt, 2007; Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2014). The latter closely links with gentrification as student lifestyle can lead to exclusion of original residents. The concentration of student geographies and their lifestyle can

contribute to conflict within communities and Chatterton (2000) contends that because of this potential conflict the geographies of students have become increasingly politicised and contested. Various authors point out that conflict between students and communities arise from some of the characteristics that are associated with a student lifestyle, one example includes partying and subsequent noise pollution (see Hubbard, 2008; Sage et al., 2012a, 2012b; Sage et al., 2013).

The commodification of student lifestyle is a further vibrant theme in extant literature and it is argued by Chatterton (1999, 2010) that it is linked to the neoliberalisation of higher education and student lifestyle. In the late 1990s Chatterton (1999) argued that the temporal and spatial framework of universities creates a student population who act as a distinctive group with a culture and lifestyle demanding specific sites of consumption. It is within this student space or habitus where student lifestyle and group associations are developed and maintained (Chatterton, 1999). It is this student space that have become increasingly commodified over the past two decades (Hubbard, 2008; Chatterton, 2010). For Chatterton (2010: 509) private student housing “represents new heights in the reformulation, upgrading and commodification of the student experience”. Chatterton (2010) summarises what he believes is crucial for understanding the relationship between students and the urban environment. First, the creation of studentified areas is an extension of the neoliberalisation of student lifestyle. Second, the latter has stimulated the growth of a student urban service sector (which includes private student housing, retail and leisure services). Third, studentification as commodification has seen new investment opportunities and profit maximisation by property owners and developers and other retail and service providers that cater to a student market. Fourth, universities are not isolated from the urban context but do contribute to urban and neighbourhood change through processes of renewal and gentrification.

Chatterton (1999, 2010) Chatterton and Hollands (2002) and Hollands (2002) documented the growth of the student service sector, which includes private accommodation, retail and services. The student lifestyle has become a lucrative sector for corporate investors and seen as a stable niche market for rental income and the additional services students require (Hubbard, 2008). Hubbard (2009) draws attention to the economic opportunity of students who have increasingly gained purchasing power. Smith and Holt (2007) maintain that the ‘manufacturing’ of student areas are linked to capitalising on this niche student sub-market. Smith and Hubbard (2014) note that the production of ‘student enclaves’ and the commodification of student housing, is seen in the rise of purpose-built student accommodation and a plethora of retail and service offerings geared towards students (Smith & Hubbard, 2014). Chatterton (2010: 511) summarises the growth of the student urban service sector as “whole swathes of city centres become dedicated to servicing students, especially in terms of retail, entertainment and leisure. Pubs, bars, nightclubs and fast-food and other retail outlets all pitch themselves at this lucrative, sizable and dependable consumer population”. Part of the student service sector is the concept of what has been termed the night-time economy (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002; Hollands, 2002). The night-time economy can be seen as urban playscapes where youthful night life is produced and consumed. The growth of the night-time economy poses certain challenges linked to public disorder and anti-social behaviour such as drunkenness, violence and vandalism (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002; Hollands, 2002). Chatterton (2010) and Nakazawa (2017) focuses on sites of student consumption, linking it back to the conceptual issues surrounding gentrification as these sites of student consumption can lead to exclusion, segregation and conflict. Chatterton (2010) cautions that commodifying student lifestyle may exclude not only non-students, but different groups of students, along lines of social class and income.

### 3 Context of Braamfontein

The inner-city area of Braamfontein is located north of Johannesburg's central business district. Before the 1950s it was largely characterised as a white working-class suburb. In 1946 the area was rezoned and gained full business rights, which stimulated commercial development from the 1950s. Braamfontein was considered as Johannesburg's first decentralised commercial node and seen as an extension of the central business district (Hart, 1969). The type of businesses that established themselves in Braamfontein were commercial office-based activities and had very little retail and residential concern. The construction of office space continued throughout the 1960s to the early 1980s (Hart, 1969; Beavon, 2004; Murray, 2011).

Johannesburg's central business district along with Braamfontein began to show early signs of stagnation and decline caused by widespread capital flight in the 1980s and 1990s (Rogerson, 1996). The latter was partly due to the crumbling apartheid regime and the rapid "greying" of many inner-city neighbourhoods – as well as continued decentralisation of businesses to commercial nodes such as Rosebank and Sandton, located further north of the city. It is, however, important to note that Braamfontein did not experience the same level of decline as the rest of the central business district. Despite this it failed to retain major corporates except for a few companies such as Liberty and Sappi. During the 1990s much of Braamfontein was characterised by low-end office activities who made use of the cheaper available office space (Rogerson & Rogerson, 1995; Rogerson, 1996; Visser, 2002; Beavon, 2004; Murray, 2011; Todes, 2012).

During the mid to late 1990s the city of Johannesburg recognised the need for policy intervention to promote urban regeneration. It is, however, only by the early 2000s with the establishment of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) that some progress was made with investments in various urban renewal projects. A watershed for promoting property investment in the city was the introduction of the Urban Development Zone (UDZ) tax incentive in 2004. From the late 2000s onwards, the policy environment of the city became more favourable to support private property investors. Throughout the early 2000s the JDA upgraded various pavements, introduced public art and improved lighting in Braamfontein. The construction of the iconic Nelson Mandela Bridge linked Braamfontein with Newtown. In 2004 the Braamfontein Improvement District (BID) was established. The BID was one of the first legislated City Improvement Districts (CID) in Johannesburg where additional levies are charged on private property owners to fund the private urban management of the area (Beavon, 2004; Garner, 2011; Murray, 2011).

### 4 Studentification in Braamfontein

The growth of the student housing market in Braamfontein can be linked to the massification of higher education and the rapid growth of student numbers at both the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Wits university is located on the North Western edge of Braamfontein (see Figure 1) and has doubled in its student numbers over the past two decades, from around 17 000 students in the early 2000s to a capacity of over 36 000 students by 2018 (Masinga, 2018). The University of Johannesburg has a student population of over 50 000 students across its five campuses – the largest being the Auckland Park Kingsway campus, which is located about 3.5km West from Braamfontein. The massive growth in student numbers and lack of university investment in

providing on-campus housing has resulted in increased demand for private student housing. According to the Department of Higher Education (2011) there is massive demand for student accommodation. Braamfontein has emerged as an important district for student housing, capturing particularly the Wits student market, and to lesser extent students from the University of Johannesburg.

South Point Properties are the pioneers of student housing development in Braamfontein. Owned by the Public Investment Corporation, South Point Property Investments is the biggest supplier of student housing in Braamfontein (and in South Africa). The company was established in 2003 and initially acquired a few buildings which were redeveloped into student housing. South Point has grown their property portfolio to over 40 buildings nationally, the majority of which are concentrated in Braamfontein. An interview with a representative of South Point disclosed that in the early 2000s property in the area was relatively affordable and that the city provided incentives to lure private property developers to invest and upgrade the area. South Point recognised that there was a gap for private student housing with the increased student numbers at Wits. South Point invested in converting and retrofitting mid-rise office blocks into dormitory style student housing and residential apartments for graduates and young professionals. A representative at South Point explains that, “we were the pioneers of the industry, our approach is more than provision of accommodation, but to offer a student lifestyle”. In 2018, South Point properties had 13 buildings in Braamfontein, which had been converted into student housing supplying accommodation for over 5000 students.

Student Digz is the second largest supplier of student housing in Braamfontein and is a division of International Housing Solutions (IHS), a global private equity investor, focusing on the affordable housing market in South Africa. Currently Student Digz has a property portfolio of six buildings in Braamfontein, housing, 1326 students in self-contained apartments. Amongst other smaller suppliers of student accommodation there is University Gate and J-One, which predominantly focus on luxury student accommodation. Overall, an audit conducted of student housing suppliers in Braamfontein revealed there is a population of over 6700 students living in Braamfontein.

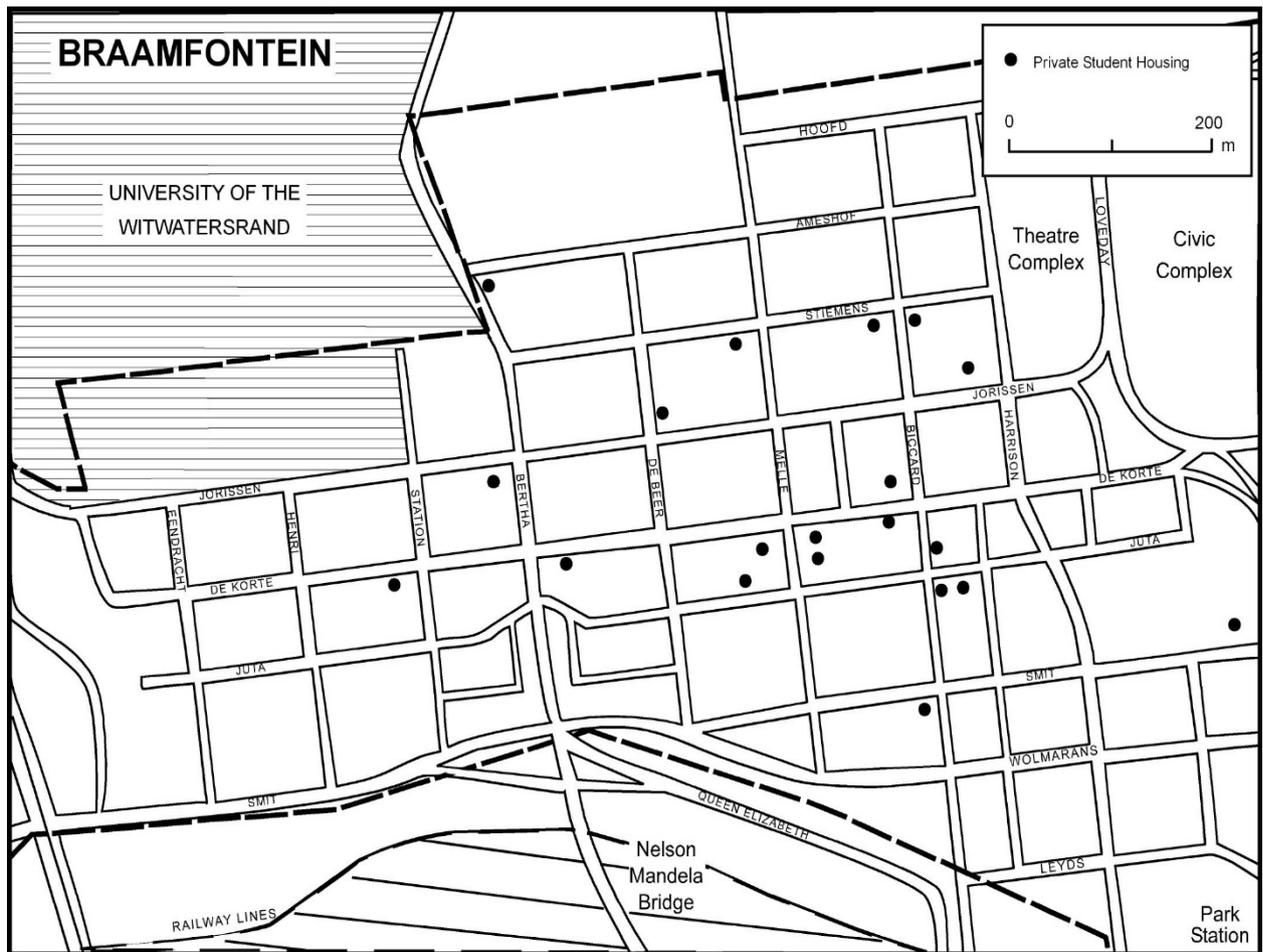


Figure 1: Private student accommodation in Braamfontein (illustration: James J. Gregory).

The various suppliers of student accommodation in Braamfontein has concentrated the student population and created a student district. The process of studentification over the past 15 years has changed the functional use of Braamfontein from a predominantly commercial node to a student district. Attention now shifts to understand the impact of a large student population on public space, retail and service offerings and the night-time economy in Braamfontein.

Braamfontein was developed as a commercial node and its infrastructure was never intended for a residential population. Due to the rise of a more permanent residential population the area is currently lacking public space for students and other residents. According to the BID manager the area has experienced a demographic shift with the introduction of a large student population. The BID in collaboration with Wits university and suppliers of student accommodation are seeking innovative ways to address the lack of and management of public space in Braamfontein. There is growing support from the university and private property owners in the area to view public space as an extension of private and institutional space. The influence of a small group of influential property owners and the subsequent establishment of the BID has led to the private management of public space in Braamfontein. The BID manager points out that the lack of public space in the area has contributed to various challenges. One of the biggest challenges are that students tend to congregate on pavements and social problems such as public drinking has emerged.

The BID manager explains that “we have this influx of a student population that has nowhere to go. There is no public space for them, there is no communal space for them to go recreate. So those are some of the challenges that we now must find solutions to, if we don’t want them on the street – where do we find those spaces for them and where do they go? Public space is currently a shortfall in the environment, but it is one of the challenges that we are dealing with.” One example of public space intervention was the development of the Grove piazza. South Point properties demolished a building to create an open-air piazza, with various cafés, restaurants and a hotel facing the space. Despite creating much needed public space in Braamfontein, it can be argued that the creation of this public space has become privatised.

Apart from challenges linked to public space, the retail and service offerings in the area have also undergone change over the past 15 recent years. Despite their focus on student accommodation, South Point properties also has a significant concentration of retail and commercial space in Braamfontein. They have taken a curatorial approach to secure retail and commercial tenants that complements the student lifestyle. South Point’s retail strategy is both inspirational and aspirational retail brands catering to a predominantly youth market. Examples include an array of trendy footwear and clothing stores, as well as coffee shops and restaurants. South Point’s property portfolio in Braamfontein also consists of some commercial office space, which is predominantly focused on the NGO sector. They have recently completed the renovation of a commercial building focused on attracting NGOs.

It was reported by the interviewed representative of South Point Properties that, “five years ago, in [one] building there were two schools, a church, and small-scale entrepreneurs. If you go there now, there is Corruption Watch, Section 27, Swiss Art Council, Right-to-Know Campaign, etc. What this means is that the calibre of office workers has improved, which leads into an ecosystem, they are the kind of tenants that will come out and have a cappuccino and have lunch as they do have disposable income and more purchasing power, they could support an Apple store for example”.

It can be argued that an element of retail and commercial gentrification has occurred in Braamfontein as many buildings have been renovated and higher rental rates can be achieved. Mid-level and higher-end retailers are attracted to the area as the student population and higher-end office workers have more purchasing power, thus displacing lower-end commercial and retail activities. Most of the higher-end retail brands are clustered along Juta and Melle streets (see Figure 1). Despite the growth of higher-end retail brands in Braamfontein there is still a large number of mid-range and lower-end activities. Various national chains and fast food outlets are located along Jorissen and De Korte streets, which are the main thoroughfares through Braamfontein. There are also examples of low-end and informal retailing scattered throughout the district, and these are mostly convenience stores or tuck shops and hairdressers. Many of the low-end offerings are clustered along Biccard street, one of the main thoroughfares linking Braamfontein with Johannesburg’s central business district (see Figure 1).

The influx of a student population has stimulated the growth of the entertainment and night-time economy in Braamfontein. Over the past 15 years different markets have emerged that are attracted to Braamfontein’s entertainment facilities. There are curated spaces such as the Neighbourgoods market (a food and design market) and other trendy bars, shops and restaurants that mostly draws visitors on weekends (see Naicker & Rogerson, 2017). These visitors include middle-class suburbanites, creatives and tourists. The students do frequent

bars and restaurants but also support more spontaneous parties that often spill out onto the streets. Additionally, there are also visitors that are attracted to the area to socialise with students. Various bars and night clubs have opened, and the trend of public drinking has grown significantly over the past few years. South Point and the BID are aware of the social problems that have emerged because of the growth of the night time economy and various issues surrounding public drinking, fighting and substance abuse have been noted. Of great concern is the emergence of ‘car-bars’ or ‘boot-parties’, where people drink alcohol and party from their cars parked on the streets of Braamfontein.

The BID manager explains that, “the student population has produced a spontaneous night life that have predominantly spilled out onto the streets, the boot bar culture has become a very extensive and common character [on] the streets of Braamfontein. Although it’s great to have this spontaneous night life it is also a challenge, the spaces are then not safe, we don’t want fights or people to get hurt or young female students being unaware of the environment they are in and vulnerable within the space”

South Point states that the risk involved with unregulated public drinking is that it has the potential to destabilise other commercial and retailing offerings in the area, as it becomes a threat to security. The BID is aware of this and trying to manage the various social problems that have emerged as a result of the night-time economy. The BID manager, however, does highlight a lack of commitment from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) as an obstacle in dealing with issues surrounding public drinking and safety. It is evident that investment in student housing in Braamfontein has produced a distinctive student district. The introduction of a student population into an area that was developed as a commercial node has created challenges in dealing with public space management, stimulated the growth of retail, services and entertainment facilities that cater to a student market. It has, however, also stimulated the growth of the night-time economy, contributing to socially disruptive problems such as public drinking posing a risk to safety in the area. Inferences drawn from two focus groups explores the students lived experiences in Braamfontein.

## **5 Student lifestyle in Braamfontein**

The majority of the students that participated in the focus groups were black South African students, most of whom were the first in their families to attend university. Majority of the students indicated that they do not live near Wits or UJ and need to seek accommodation closer to the institutions. The students are attracted to Braamfontein because of the proximity it offers to Wits university. They also felt that Braamfontein is safer compared to downtown Johannesburg and it offers access to an attractive student lifestyle. Many of the students state that there is an array of student services, retail and entertainment facilities within walking distance from accommodation suppliers and campus.

The affordability of higher education in South Africa has become a contentious issue, which reached a critical point with the eruption of the Fees Must Fall protests in 2015 and 2016. Students from Wits were at the forefront of this movement and the protest action spilled out onto the streets of Braamfontein (Booyesen, 2016). The focus group with Wits students revealed that many students face financial difficulties. A lot of students that attend Wits are self-funded which puts a lot of pressure on families to fund tuition, especially for poor and working-class students. Students that indicated that they have bursaries noted that most

bursaries do not fully cover tuition fees, cost of accommodation and other living expenses, thus many students experience a financial shortfall.

One Wits student explains; “I mean the R4500 per month (R – South African Rand) that South Point charges, means you must be paying around R45 000 per year and then if you must pay another R60 000 in [tuition] fees... bursaries don’t really give over a R100 000 per year, especially in undergrad. So, you will have to top-up somehow, somewhere. And that basically is just you sleeping and going to class, it does not include what you wear, eat and drink, your devices...”.

In terms of affordability, UJ students have a different perspective. UJ’s tuition fees are much lower compared to Wits and many students receive funding from schemes such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Coupled with lower tuition fees and government funding, UJ students do have more spending power for accommodation. Many UJ students receive NSFAS which is enough to cover both tuition fees and accommodation costs and they do not encounter the same excessive financial shortfall as many students from Wits do. The majority of UJ students in the focus group felt that Braamfontein is relatively affordable. As one UJ student recounts “It’s affordable as a NSFAS student. So, we can stay at accredited buildings and they don’t charge us anything. So, we just sign up the lease and once you are a NSFAS student, automatically they will fund you to stay there”.

It is important to note that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has played a key role in the setting the price for the cost of private accommodation across the country and they largely control the rates of the student housing market. The NSFAS is a government organisation that provides financial aid to students from poor and working-class families. The scheme pays a set fee of around R3000 per month for students in shared rooms. The majority of accredited accommodation suppliers offers shared rooms at the rate as set up by the NSFAS scheme. Suppliers of accommodation receives payment directly from NSFAS and often are inspected by universities and NSFAS, thus their pricing needs to adhere to the strict guidelines as set out by the scheme. Students who prefer single rooms (at around R4000 per month), however, must top up and pay an additional R1000 or more through privately funded means.

The affordability for students stretches beyond the cost of accommodation but also the cost of retail and services that are on offer in Braamfontein. The majority of the students do feel that there is a diverse mix of retail and services in the area that cater to different income levels. When asked about some of the higher-end retail offerings in the area that sell expensive clothing and footwear the students felt that these brands are overpriced and do not fit with a student budget, but they do recognise that this is what the youth market wants. One student notes, “I think some of those shops are way too expensive, they need to understand that we are students. You need to wait for a ‘blesser’ to buy you those things”. Another student indicates that, “it’s unethical of them to have those kind of shops in a student district”. Many students feel that these higher-end brands contribute to the student lifestyle or culture of Braamfontein, but that it is not necessarily affordable for many students. One student points out, “yes, brands are using student lifestyle and culture to make money, that is their aim. They know as students we are attracted to their products. They are selling a lifestyle”.

The majority of students in both focus groups pointed out that a distinctive sub-culture or student lifestyle has emerged in Braamfontein. Students who conform to this particular lifestyle are referred to as “Braam kids”. This particular sub-culture is focused on a certain

lifestyle, achieving social status through the way they dress, the type of music they listen to and the places they hang out. Most of the students in both groups indicated that there is social and peer pressure to conform to the “Braam kids” lifestyle. The introduction of inspirational and aspirational lifestyle brands in the area is influencing student culture. As one student pointed out, “these brands add to that aspiring lifestyle. The brands come here, knowing there is a market and that students dress in a certain style”. The social pressures of conforming to a lifestyle and achieving social status has contributed to social problems such as the “blesser phenomenon”, where many wealthier older men visit Braamfontein and some young female students resort to relationships with them for financial reward.

One student explains, “these first-year students come here, and when they come here, there is already a way of living that already exists. More often than not these students don’t have enough money. There is a lot of peer pressure, you have to do something outside the class and find a way to have fun or whatever and many don’t really have the means to do that. The means to buy themselves nice clothes or fit in with the aesthetics of the city so they then turn to those blessers and it’s something that happens quite a lot”. The role of social media in promoting aspirational brands and achieving social status is very common amongst students. Social media applications such as Instagram and Facebook are constantly used by students to portray an aspirational lifestyle through the consumption of various lifestyle brands. One student points out that “there are that many girls who are desperate to fit in with the whole ‘slay queen’ image. I think social media also has a lot to do with it. In South Africa right now there is this trend to be more materialistic, to be more popular... Instagram life. So, there are these social pressures from social media to be cool and look nice or whatever, so they don’t have the means to do it. So they turn to blessers”.

Another important aspect of student lifestyle is entertainment and partying. Students living in Braamfontein feel that there is a lot of freedom to party. Some students do point out issues of alcohol and substance abuse, which tends to spill out onto the streets. Most students agree that street parties and car boot parties have become popular, as it is more affordable than going to bars or clubs. One student recalls, “on the street people simply blast music from their cars and drink from their cars”. Another student notes “there is a lot of public drinking and boot bars. Most people don’t even get into these clubs, they just park their cars there and drink. Most student accommodation suppliers don’t allow alcohol on the premises and this pushes it out onto the streets. There are a lot of foreigners as well that sell alcohol on the street.” Students have noted issues surrounding public drinking have led to crime, fights and vulnerability of drunk students, particularly female students with increased risk of sexual assault.

## **6 Discussion and conclusion**

Overall, there is growing research interest on the impact of studentification in urban South Africa. The majority of research focus, however, has been on the impact of private student housing (mostly HMOs) in residential areas in Bloemfontein and Stellenbosch (see Benn, 2010; Ackermann & Visser, 2016; Donaldson et al., 2014). This paper adds to debates on studentification in South Africa and offers new insight on the impact of studentification in a larger urban context in South Africa.

Over the past 15 years re-investment in student housing has transformed Braamfontein as a student district and produced concentrated student geographies. The production of

Braamfontein as a student district stretches beyond the supply of accommodation, but includes retail, services and entertainment – producing a distinctive area for student lifestyle consumption. It can be argued that with the introduction of a large student population in Braamfontein the area has shifted from a stagnating commercial node to a growing student district, which has stimulated investment and contributed to urban renewal. This links with international studies that draw linkages between studentification and urban regeneration, particularly with PBSA developments in brownfields in inner-city areas (Macintyre, 2003; Nakazawa, 2017; Smith et al., 2014). Furthermore, the case of Braamfontein contributes to the limited international literature where commercial office space has been retrofitted into student housing. Similar cases have been investigated in Australia and New Zealand (Collins, 2010; Fincher & Costello, 2005; Tsutsumi & O'Connor, 2011). The retrofitting of commercial office space into student housing is not unique to Johannesburg, but there is evidence of this in city centres across South Africa. More research is needed to explore the impact of this phenomenon on declining commercial nodes and its potential for urban regeneration in South Africa.

Chatterton (1999, 2010) argues that the development of student housing and the curation of retail and services to capture the student market represents the ongoing commodification of the student experience. It can be argued that the neoliberalisation of higher education and the private provision of student accommodation and other student services contributes to the increased commodification of student lifestyle. There is some evidence of this in Braamfontein where the creation of a student district through the supply of accommodation and retail and services catered to a student market has attracted private sector investment and is seen as a lucrative sub-market to invest in. Like many other aspects of urban life, the private sector can realise profit from student lifestyle.

In Braamfontein, South Point Properties have recognised that the student population are aspiring middle-class, and they have positioned brands in the area that meet those aspirations. There is, however, as many students have pointed out the issue of actual affordability of the student market. The latter links with Chatterton and Hollands (2002) who have noted in their research that some groups of students will be excluded based on income and the rising cost of the student lifestyle. This is of concern in South Africa where the majority of students come from poor and working-class families, thus feeling extreme pressures to conform to an aspiring middle-class lifestyle that is being promoted. The use of inspirational or aspirational branding is not new, and often used in marketing brands to youth culture (Saviolo & Maraszza, 2012). This raises the question about how ethical this type of brand positioning is in Braamfontein for a student market who do not necessarily have the means to buy these brands, who are highly impressionable and under peer pressure to conform to a particular student lifestyle. Many students in this research revealed that they feel extreme social pressures to conform to the student lifestyle that has been created and evolved in Braamfontein over the past few years. The latter has contributed to various social problems such as the *blesser* phenomenon, impacting particularly on young female students in exploitative sexual relationships. The growth of a concentrated student population in Braamfontein has also stimulated the growth of a night-time economy. The spontaneous nightlife that spills out onto the streets have been noted to be a destabilising factor in the district. More research is needed to explore the interconnections between studentification and the night-time economy in urban South Africa.

Despite the growth of higher-end lifestyle brands in certain parts of Braamfontein, the area still offers a mix of retail and service offerings for different income levels and can be

considered a diverse space, bringing together a mix of cultures, races and classes. It can be argued that this form racial and class intersection is much needed in urban South Africa with a tainted history of racial segregation and post-apartheid class-based segregation. As one property developer notes; “what I think is interesting about these new spaces is it is figuratively and literally where Sandton can meet Soweto”. There is, however, the risk that with continued investment and concentration of student geographies the diversity of the area will be lost. Retail and commercial gentrification might make the space less diverse and a space for student and aspiring middle-class consumption. Hubbard (2009) asserts that the creation of concentrated student geographies can lead to the same effects as gentrification, there is the social concentration of one group, which contributes to social segregation and the subsequent displacement of residents or other economic activities that do not fit into ‘studenthood’. There are elements of commercial gentrification noted in Braamfontein, where retail and services catering to a student sub-market are becoming increasingly concentrated. Smith (2005) and Hubbard (2009) calls students living in commodified student districts ‘apprentice gentrifiers’ or a ‘gentrification factory’. Braamfontein could be labeled as an incubator for apprentice gentrifiers, where the presence of certain brands and the student lifestyle that has emerged is cultivating a taste for middle-class consumption. Nakazawa (2017) cautions against this and states that the concentration of student geographies can lead to geographies of exclusion in cities.

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## Towards regional economic development in South Africa: Conceptualising the 'region' associated with economic development through the Durban Aerotropolis

### Abstract

This paper critically considers the conceptualization of the 'region' in regional economic development. It utilizes the Durban Aerotropolis in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa as a case of reference through which the conceptualization and underpinnings of 'region' associated with economic development are understood. This exercise is prompted by the nomenclatural shifts in local government from local economic development to regional economic development which is causing shifts in approaches to the implementation of economic development projects. The findings presented in this paper show that in the conceptualisation of the region in the instance of the Durban Aerotropolis, understanding the function, form and scale of a regional economic development project becomes pertinent to the social construction of the region with consequences for the project focus and implementation. In the discussion, function is examined as the purpose of a regional economic development project, form refers to the kind of economic development mechanism or strategy which could assist in fulfilling that purpose and scale speaks to the extent, reach and magnitude of the project, without which the implications are challenging practical enactment or implementation of regional economic development projects. The social constructions of region outlined in this paper thereby attest to the multiplicity of definitions which are typically based on the context in which the concept is being used and thus shows the 'region' inherent in regional economic development as produced through, and for, an assemblage of economic activity in space. From this we understand the region in regional economic development to be a social construct which presents itself as an assemblage of economic activity in space. Although we understand regions as spatially contingent, the theoretical and empirical conceptualisation of regions within regional economic development planning, policy-making and practice must draw on the specifics of contextuality to ensure its utility to economic development.

**Keywords:** region, regional economic development, aerotropolis, airport city, Durban

### 1 Introduction

Because of the high levels of poverty and the decentralisation of government, local governments in South Africa, as the key agents of Local Economic Development (LED), are faced with the responsibility of both improving the formal market economy and fostering and supporting the informal or lower end of the economic spectrum (Nel & Rogerson, 2005). Thus, in the South African context, LED is expected to pursue both socio-economic redress and economic development (Nel & Rogerson, 2016). Competition between these agendas,

compounded by the absence of a uniform central state policy, complicates LED practice as practitioners are unclear about whether they should prioritise pro-poor or pro-growth, market-led LED (Nel & Rogerson, 2016). This often leads to local governments tending to revert to pro-poor, government-driven projects rather than economically-driven interventions through their LED units (Rogerson, 2010; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2012; Nel & Rogerson, 2016). Consequently, local understanding, resource allocation, project delivery, and the sustainability of LED outcomes has been weak (Nel & Rogerson, 2016).

Recently, these ongoing challenges and the limited success of LED have led policy makers to consider the need for a regional focus for economic development in addition to the local scale. Regional Economic Development (RED) is seen to offer a more strategic economic development approach which supersedes community-focussed endeavour. Furthermore, RED is believed to create opportunities for a more cooperative development approach for inter-local relations (i.e. relations between neighbouring local governments), in contrast to the LED approach in which local governments are inward looking and often compete with each other in seeking to attract resources and investment into local communities (Olberding, 2002). Stemming from these shifts, projects which are intended to be catalytic of regional economic development have begun to emerge in South Africa (Luthuli, 2013). For example, the invoking of Special Economic Zone policy to promote foreign investment into South Africa and the popularity of aerotropolis developments to leverage growth associated with airports in cities. In its 2015 Aerotropolis Strategy for the province, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) promoted the Durban Aerotropolis as a powerhouse for regional economic development with the role of stimulating regional economic interconnectivity, job creation and growth.

While the practice of Regional Economic Development begins to unfold in South Africa, theorists, such as Van Langenhove (2013), assert that the concept of the region is polysemous i.e. that there is uncertainty in its meaning because it is understood variably by different actors and across disciplines. Conceptual vagueness, although it provides for flexibility, has theoretical and empirical consequences, including implications for policy implementation (Van Longenhove, 2013) and, in this particular case, for the enactment of RED as a driver of change. This study thus examines the Durban Aerotropolis as a regional economic development project with the intention of more fully understanding the conceptualisation of the 'region' as a core component of RED as it is emerging in South Africa. An understanding of the region is seen as especially important given the ongoing need for sustainable economic transformation in the wake of the challenges associated with LED and the limited experience of implementing RED within South Africa. Furthermore, a stronger understanding of the region will limit the potential pitfalls which may emerge if RED projects are based on fuzzy conceptualisations of what the region entails.

## **2 Theoretical conceptualisations of 'region'**

As a basis for examining the conceptualisation of the 'region' associated with the Durban Aerotropolis, the following discussion presents a brief overview of the numerous ways in which regions have been theorised as social constructions.

While every geographical surface can potentially be called a region, Van Langenhove (2013) contends that regions are much more than just geographical realities and that they should not be defined only by their surface or boundaries since they are "institutional facts". By this he

means that regions should be those geographical surfaces that are only ‘facts’ by human agreement because they are geographical areas whose existence is impossible without social construction. From this social constructionist point of view, regions come to exist because they are being talked about and because of the way they are talked about (Van Langenhove, 2013). Thus, a region is constructed through discourses such as those related to governance, politics, culture and economics (Paasi, 2011). Equally a region can be constructed through discourses which articulate several conceptualisations of space (whether absolute, relative or relational) (Hubbard et al, 2008).

Regions have been conceptualised through disciplines such as geography, political science and economics as comprising of a geographical space, an economic interaction, an institutional or governmental jurisdiction, or as having social and cultural characteristics (Keating, 1998; Mattli, 1999; Farrell et al., 2005; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Goodwin, 2013). These notions of region have typically been constructed as fixed and bounded territories or as relationally-produced flexible territories. Thus regions can be “well defined with sharp boundaries or ... fuzzy” (Van Langenhove, 2013: 476). Furthermore, whether constructed as fixed or flexible, the scale of regions can differ. According to Van Langenhove (2013), in considering scale, the distinction between regions can be at three levels: sub-national level (within a nation as a whole), supra-national level (an integration of countries), and cross-border level (across national boundaries or across political jurisdictions). For instance, there are economic and political macro-regions and regionalisms such as the European Union and the African Union. There are also global city regions as well as polycentric urban regions (Paasi, 2011).

According to Suorsa (2014), in the traditional (fixed) view of regions there are three classifications: administrative regions, functional regions and formal regions. Administrative regions are classified by governance and political territories; functional regions by labour market areas, and formal regions by their human-made and physical features (Claval, 1998; Paasi, 2009). Those studying regions through the territorial lens emphasise that regions are discrete spaces and defined territories that are controlled by actors and can be managed as economic, political and social spaces (Goodwin, 2013; Thomas et al., 2013). Paasi (1986) stipulates that the territoriality of a region can only be achieved once the region establishes its boundaries and becomes identified as a distinct unit in the spatial structure of society. In many cases, political institutions lend themselves to the language of territory, fixity, boundaries and boundedness as elements of regionality (Paasi, 2002; Jones & Macleod, 2004; Paasi, 2004; Hudson, 2006; Allen & Cochrane, 2007). This traditional classification is reflective of a realist view of regions as it regards them as concrete and existing entities or actual ‘things’ that are ‘out there’ rather than ‘things’ dependent on observers (Suorsa, 2014).

Challenging the territorial understanding of regions is a relational view which shifts the focus from thinking of regions as bounded territories which need to be managed, protected or administered; to seeing them as ‘products’ of complex sets of social relationships whose density and variety changes in time and space (Suorsa, 2014). The relational point of view disavows the territorial view of regions and proposes instead that an adequate understanding of the region can only come about from a conception of places as “open, discontinuous, relational and internally diverse” (Allen et al., 1998: 143). From this perspective, regions cease to be whole, bounded and closed entities and instead are seen as dynamic and proactive; more like “networks of concentrations of people and places than simply uniform and bounded geographical units” (Suorsa, 2014: 208). In this vein, cities and regions are described as “sites within networks of varying geographical composition as well as spaces of

movement and circulation of goods, technologies, knowledge, people, finance, and information” (Amin et al., 2003: 25). Further to this relational argument, we find that emerging spatial configurations are no longer interpreted as territorial and bounded (Macleod & Jones, 2007) because they are made up of a web of networks and relational “connections”, which are neither fixed nor located in place but are constituted through various “circulating entities” (Latour, 1999), and which subsequently, “bring about relationality both within and between societies at multiple and varied distances” (Urry, 2007: 28).

Advancing the relational conceptualisation of regions, are those theorists which consider a region as an assemblage – as “the product of the networks, interactions, juxtapositions and articulations of the myriad of connections through which all social phenomena are lived out” (Allen et al., 1998: 50). Gregory (2000) argues that regional formations are more or less temporary concentrations of institutions, objects, people, and practices that are involved in the operation and outcome of local, trans-local and trans-regional processes. This relational view of the region as an assemblage captures what Massey (2005) refers to as a ‘throwntogetherness’ and which Hubbard et al. (2008) refer to as a coming together of diverse elements that cross categories such as the natural and social.

According to Goodwin (2013), this assemblage could also be of overlapping institutional forms such as regional offices, agencies, boards and assemblies, along with related strategies. These institutional forms are territorial entities that attempt to be the foundation that “holds down the fluid elements of global life in the interest of their regions... [in order to] generate fixity through processes of government and governance” (Goodwin et al., 2005: 423; Allen & Cochrane, 2007). In this perspective, the assemblages that make up a region can potentially be derived from aspects of the relational and territorial theorisations of regions. The coming together of the various networks and interactions may be happening simultaneously in spaces of flows and in spaces of places (Castells, 2000) such that ‘regional’ spatial assemblages are not exclusively regional, but bring together elements of central, regional and local institutions (Allen & Cochrane, 2007).

The following section presents a background to aerotropolis developments as a mechanism of economic development which is often argued to facilitate increased economic activity within a region.

### **3 From airports to airport cities: The Aerotropolis as a mechanism for regional economic development**

Traditionally, airports have served aircraft passengers and cargo. This core functionality has expanded to encompass a broader conceptualisation in which airports are seen as key nodes in global production and commercial systems and are increasingly anticipated to be engines of local economic development, attracting air-commerce-linked businesses (Kasarda, 2001a). Thus, in addition to their core aeronautical infrastructure and services, airports have developed non-aeronautical commercial facilities and services (Kasarda, 2006). Airports have incorporated a variety of commercial functions into passenger terminals as well as the landside development typically required for research parks, entertainment and conference facilities, residential developments, and district-zoned spaces for specific industrial activity such as foreign trade zones (Arend et al., 2004). Airports have thus become complex multi-functional enterprises, serving both aeronautical development (traditional airport functions) and commercial development (terminal and landside activities; Kasarda, 2006).

With the rise of airports' non-aeronautical function and activity, there has been a transformation of city airports into airport cities (Kasarda, 2006; Peneda et al., 2011). An airport city can be called an 'aerotropolis' (Kasarda, 2006), which is essentially an airport-driven urban development node (Kennedy et al., 2014). The thinking around the aerotropolis concept is that developments associated with the airport facilitate the emergence of corridors, clusters and spines of airport-related businesses that will create new urban forms as much as 100 kilometres or more from major airports (Kasarda, 2000; Arend et al., 2004). As an aerotropolis, the airport functions as "a multimodal convergent nucleus and commercial nexus of airport integrated urban complex, analogous to the function central business districts play in the traditional metropolis" in which commercial and business activity is concentrated (Kasarda, 2001a: 44).

In South Africa, there are a number of aerotropolis development programmes being rolled out, largely in relation to brownfields sites where pre-existing airports and adjacent industrial landscapes are being rethought to serve as the more integrated, efficient and productive spaces of an aerotropolis (Menon, 2014). Integral to the arguments for the development of aerotropolis in South Africa and globally, is the fostering of regional economic development (RED) (EDTEA, 2015). RED has been conceptualised as the outcome of generative economic activity through collaborative multi-stakeholder relationships, productive networks and mutually reinforcing relationships drawing on key economic assets and infrastructure that contributes to an increase in the general prosperity of a region. Bodhanya (2015) defines RED as the sustained and concerted actions of policy makers, businesses and communities that promote the economic health of a specific geographic region generally below the level of the nation state. However, when it comes to an aerotropolis being a catalyst for regional economic development in South Africa, and elsewhere, the particularities of how an aerotropolis is understood to encompass regional activities, which produce socio-economic impacts in a region, rise to the forefront of consideration. Key concerns therefore centre around what spatial forms are an aerotropolis and its associated region comprised of? How are these spatial forms being produced? What region/s will be economically developed through the growth of an aerotropolis? In what ways?

Emerging from consideration of the shifts from local to regional economic development approaches; the theorisation of regions; and the aerotropolis as a development mechanism, the discussion which follows uses the aerotropolis development in Durban as a case through which to analyse the complex notion of *region* as a core element of RED.

#### **4 Methodology**

An exploratory research design was selected for the qualitative study undertaken within a social constructivist paradigm. A purposive sampling approach with non-probability sampling was used to derive a sample from which primary data was sourced. The data was collected through 23 in-depth, face-to-face interviews and relevant documentary sources, all of which were analysed using a thematic approach

The interview sample was selected from the population of government departments, government-funded institutions or state-owned entities, and private sector companies that were involved in the Durban Aerotropolis and in driving regional economic development within KwaZulu-Natal. There was no exact number to serve as a determining factor of size of

population given that these are big organisations and vary according to sectors and in relation to project engagements. Within each of these organisations were individuals and, at times, teams that dealt directly with the various aspects of the Durban Aerotropolis. The sample therefore included first and foremost the project Aerotropolis partners, namely the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Dube TradePort, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), eThekweni Municipality, Tongaat Hulett Property Developers (THPD), Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, and Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal. Also included were members of the Economic and Strategic Infrastructure Development Cluster: iLembe Municipality, iLembe Chamber of Commerce, Department of Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Department of Transport, and Small Business Growth Enterprise. In addition, three private sector companies working within the Dube TradePort were selected.

Other primary data sources were documentary evidence from within these organisations, such as annual reports, strategy documents and factsheets. Of these documents, two critical sources provided a detailed insight to the process of planning an aerotropolis as a regional economic development mechanism, namely, and the Durban Aerotropolis Masterplan (EDTEA, 2016) and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Spatial Development Framework (KZN Planning Commission, 2011).

In this study, it is important to note that perspectives and plans emerge from the interplay between a socially constructed self and a socially constructed environment and that the self and the specific setting are lent an additional structure by their location and time (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Given the above-mentioned factors, the Miles and Huberman (1994) thematic analysis approach was used in data analysis. A transcription of interviews and field notes was produced to enable the data reduction process. The transcriptions were then coded to establish general descriptive codes for topics raised in the data and to identify clusters and hierarchies of information to identify patterns and relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994; de Wet & Erasmus, 2005). Through the coding process, patterns and themes were identified in the data and were then interpreted in the light of the conceptual framework and research questions to produce the findings of the study. Through this exercise it became apparent that the way in which interviewees from the Durban Aerotropolis spoke of the geography of the project reflected the form, function and scale of the region. These findings, which address the conceptualisation of region in the light of regional economic development, are presented below.

## **5 The Durban Aerotropolis**

The Durban Aerotropolis is envisaged as a hub of trade and business in Africa, which is “about to become South Africa’s new gateway to the Southern African region” (Dube TradePort, 2017). It is planned as a freight-oriented development with a purpose-built, world-class logistics hub incorporated into a ‘greenfield’ site near the northern boundary of the eThekweni Municipality in Durban and adjacent to areas characterised by ongoing intensive economic, residential and infrastructure development (see Figure 1). The Aerotropolis has the King Shaka International Airport and the Dube TradePort at its centre. The airport was opened in 2010 and currently serves 4,7 million passengers flights (ACSA, 2018) and 600 tonnes of cargo flights per week (Dube TradePort, 2018). Dube TradePort is a state-owned entity which is a hub of trade and business in Africa, about to become South Africa’s new gateway to the Southern African region (Dube TradePort, 2017). The role of the TradePort is

further to grow and manage the newly enacted special economic zone associated with the airport. In November 2017, the 60-year masterplan for the Durban Aerotropolis development was completed through a consultative process which included a host of stakeholder groups in the public and private sectors, led by provincial government. The masterplan highlights the anticipation of stakeholders that the airport city, together with the existing seaport infrastructure in Durban harbour, will facilitate access to numerous global destinations and linkages to countries within the Southern African Development Community region as well as positioning KwaZulu-Natal as a key business point within South Africa (Dube TradePort, 2017).

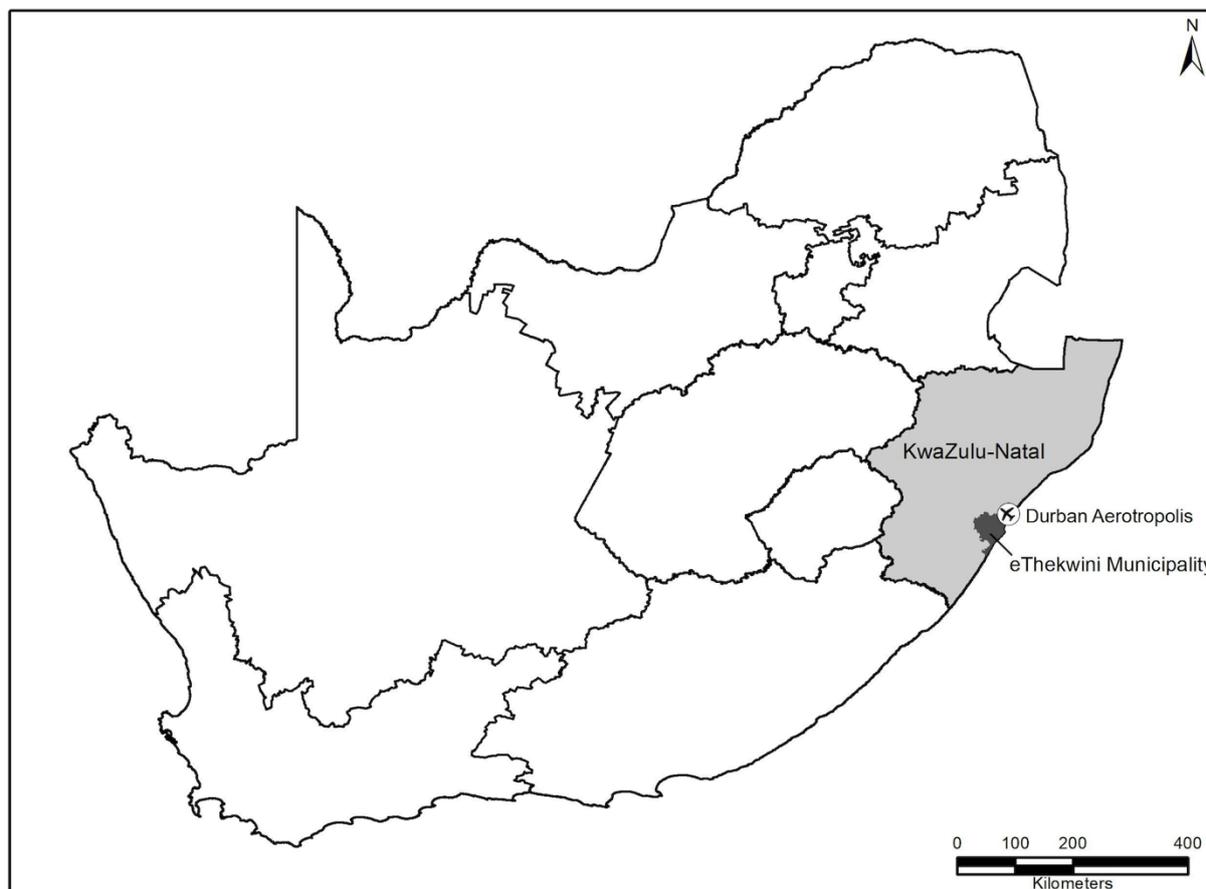


Figure 1: Location of the Durban Aerotropolis (illustration: Nomkhosi Luthuli).

## 6 Notions of 'region' associated with the Durban Aerotropolis

Thematic analysis of key informant interviews in regard to the conceptualisation of the region in relation to the Durban Aerotropolis reveals that the function, form and scale of the Aerotropolis are important elements through which a region can be understood within the framework of a regional economic development approach. Function can be understood as the purpose of an RED project; form refers to the kind of economic development mechanism or strategy which could assist in fulfilling that purpose, and scale speaks to the extent, reach and magnitude of the project activities and outcomes.

Notions of the form, function and scale of the region were cited by the interviewees as being related to the following issues:

1. The purpose that the Durban Aerotropolis seeks to serve and the requirement needed to fulfil that purpose (function)

2. The consequent thoughts that went into decisions about what kind of economic development mechanism or strategy could fulfil the identified purpose (form)
3. The extent, reach and magnitude of the project that needed to be considered (scale)

In the light of these concerns, and since form follows function (Kasarda & Appold, 2014), the findings presented here firstly capture the conceptualisation of the functions of the Durban Aerotropolis, followed by consideration of the form and scale associated with the airport city project. This then leads to an analysis of the notion of ‘region’ as it pertains to RED in the South African context.

## 7 Conceptualisations of the function of the Durban Aerotropolis

The conceptualisations of the function of the Durban Aerotropolis reveal the purpose of the project as constructed by respondents and in related strategic documents. This section therefore portrays the many ways in which the project is constructed as an integrated environment with a mixed-use function. These functions include the Durban Aerotropolis being perceived as a space to live work and play, a space for innovation, a space for basic services, a space for industry, a space for world-class logistics, and a space for food production. The presentation of the Durban Aerotropolis in this way corresponds with Kasarda’s (2006) explanation that airports have become complex multi-functional enterprises that serve both aeronautical and commercial development.

According to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Dube TradePort (interview, 12. May 2016), the Durban Aerotropolis is an integrated environment and a mixed-use space. He has aspirations for the project in which it becomes an “*integrated environment where you can actually have production as an industrial, you can have commercial office, retail, you can have educational [spaces], which is super important, and training... and then specialist things like special economic zones because the whole aerotropolis won’t be a special economic zone. So special economic zones, certain shared infrastructure, so let’s say rail, road, bulk infrastructure. Then other specialist zones would be like aviation linked.*” This understanding is in line with Hanly’s (2015:1) reference to an aerotropolis as a “sub-regional economy where the airport city is the anchoring economic hub associated with a concentrically expanding mix of clustered uses”.

Furthermore, when asked what spaces the aerotropolis encompasses, the Director for Research and Development at EDTEA (interview, 1. July 2016) said; “*it should encompass the spaces of work, the spaces of living and the spaces of recreation*”. As with the above response, the Durban Aerotropolis Masterplan also showed that stakeholders seek to create a region within which “people will enjoy a holistic quality of life... where people can be able to enjoy a convenient and healthy live, work and play lifestyle” (EDTEA, 2016). Proposals have been made for a number of housing developments, many of which have a holistic and sustainable work-live-play basis to them to ensure “*better located, better planned housing in the region*” (Director for Research and Development at EDTEA, interview, 1. July 2016). One example is the very large housing estate and neighbourhoods of Cornubia just south of the King Shaka International Airport (EDTEA, 2016). Inevitably, as the aerotropolis region grows and expands, the need for new housing will arise and if these associated housing developments are well planned and implemented there are significant opportunities to undo the legacy of racial segregation that is still evident in the northern region of Durban. The ‘live, work and play’ narrative presented by stakeholders, which encompasses mixed-use function and a good quality lifestyle, is in line with Kasarda’s (2001a) argument that need for

travelling long-distances to work within the airport city can be eliminated if housing, commercial and leisure facilities are integrated with the development of corporate headquarters, regional offices and various professional organisations that gather around the airport.

Further to being developed as a space to live, play and work, there are some interviewees that conceive of the Durban Aerotropolis as a space for basic services. According to the Deputy Director of Policy and Planning at EDTEA (interview, 20. May 2016), the Durban Aerotropolis should not just be “*limited to manufacturing, manufacturing, manufacturing*”. Here the respondent is advocating for a space where the people who work and live in the Durban Aerotropolis are able to access the basic services that they require. This includes but is not limited to schools, hospitals, police stations, fire station and many other services that are required for great living.

The Durban Aerotropolis is also functionally conceptualised as a development which produces innovation in response to global change. The masterplan identifies the following megatrends, “urbanisation, a rising, more empowered middle class, constrained, finite resources, hyper connectivity, the exponential growth of technology and innovation and the renaissance of design and innovation” (EDTEA, 2016). Innovation is prioritised within the Durban Aerotropolis masterplan as an active goal of the aerotropolis and within the flexibility built into the planning for a sustainable future through a competitive aerotropolis in Durban. According to the Director of Research and Development at EDTEA (interview, 1. July 2016), the aerotropolis provides spaces of innovation where people can do things in ways that have never been done before. The respondent further believes that within this space of innovation people should compete and set up their business ventures to avoid relying on the government to provide opportunities for employment. This innovation is also believed to result from companies working together (or coming together in space) to foster a clustered innovation and industrial environment.

According to the Durban Aerotropolis Masterplan, the project offers prime land for industrial activity within a reasonable distance to King Shaka International Airport (EDTEA, 2016). This further highlights the Durban Aerotropolis functionality as a space for industry and innovation. The space for industrial activity has been designated as the Special Economic Zone, a project managed by the Dube TradePort Corporation as an entity which forms part of the Durban Aerotropolis. Like some of the world’s best aerotropoli, for example, in Brazil and China, decisions have been taken to attract industry, foster business development and create jobs by setting up and establishing SEZs within the aerotropolis (Kasarda, 2013). In relation to integration and innovation, a small number of interviewees also speak of the Durban Aerotropolis as a space for world-class logistics. Because the aerotropolis needs to meet the crucial demand for speed, agility and reliability in fulfilment of orders, infrastructure of this kind needs to be set up around airports (Kasarda, 2001b).

The function of the Durban Aerotropolis incorporates being a space for food production. Because South Africa is a food-insecure country, the master planning team for the Durban Aerotropolis identified a need for capitalising on rich agricultural potential. Within the project, the Dube AgriZone serves as an agricultural production zone for local and export markets. According to the Dube TradePort (2017), the AgriZone is said to be Africa’s first integrated perishables supply chain and is home to the continent’s largest climate-controlled growing area under glass.

Generally speaking, an aerotropolis is a city around an airport, however its specific function can only be defined by the stakeholders entrusted with the project. In this regard, the Durban Aerotropolis has been defined as a multifunctional enterprise fulfilling both aeronautical and commercial development functions. The findings show that integration and innovation are primary elements of the conceptualisation of the Durban Aerotropolis. Integration includes spaces of living, working and playing as well as the presence of basic services. Essentially, this integration can be understood as facilitating connection and assembling of the various functions to co-exist in space. Innovation, on the other hand, is evident in the presence of a world-class logistics platform, a sophisticated industrial area designated as an SEZ, and a food and agricultural complex. This innovation highlights processes of the Durban Aerotropolis through which ‘dispersed parts’ can be connected through logistics and emergent technologies. These ‘dispersed parts’ could be individuals, goods, companies or countries. Essentially, innovation is seen to facilitate a connection beyond fixed geographical spaces and physical boundaries.

## **8 Conceptualisations of the form of the Durban Aerotropolis**

The functionality of the Durban Aerotropolis has driven the thinking on how its’ purpose and functionality can and should be fulfilled on the ground. The key themes discussed here include perceptions of the Durban Aerotropolis form as a greenfields development, a quality urban space, and a corridor of economic development.

As a point of departure for the development planning, interviewees conceived of the aerotropolis as a greenfields space because it is a project whose form had been established on a commercial development site that was previously unused and had thus required rezoning from predominantly agricultural uses (CEO of the Dube TradePort, interview, 30. June 2016; Deputy Director of Policy and Planning, interview, 20. May 2016). In this characteristic, the Durban Aerotropolis is considered to be one of the few aerotropoli around the world using a greenfields site which is tailor-made as a platform to support air logistics and associated developments in an airport city. Taking the form of a greenfield site has created the opportunity to put in place a comprehensive plan that responds to and capitalises on the location of the airport on the edge of the eThekweni Municipality. EDTEA and its stakeholders and partners are thus able to manoeuvre and implement plans without any of the obstructions created by pre-existing built-up areas, as experienced in other airports in South Africa and beyond. However, being a greenfields site requires cognisance of the considerable time and money needed in the long-term for the aerotropolis to be fully developed. In addition, the greenfields nature of the aerotropolis also means that it is a space incorporating a multitude of natural habitats which need protection (EDTEA, 2016).

Kennedy et al. (2014) explain that the aerotropolis is essentially an airport-driven urban feature thus the nature of urbanity is important in planning, constructing and using the spaces of the Durban Aerotropolis. The Durban Aerotropolis Master Plan alludes to the form of the Durban Aerotropolis as reflective of a ‘quality urban space’ (EDTEA, 2016). The CEO of TKZN (interview 12. May 2016) argued that for the Durban Aerotropolis to become one of the best in the country and in the world, it has to be a sophisticated urban space that offers world-class service. This quality of urban space is defined by interviewees as being comprised of complete streets that equally serve the pedestrian and the car; that have a mix of uses in a compact, walkable area; and that have a memorable aesthetic or ‘magnetism’

(Aerotropolis Management Unit Programme Manager, interview, 18 May 2016). It is also envisaged as an urban space which is highly attractive to people.

By virtue of its form as a quality urban space, other respondents argued that the Durban Aerotropolis form therefore reflects an “airport city” or a city built around an airport. The “airport city” is characterised by commercial functions locating on and immediately around major airport sites (EDTEA, 2015). The airport city conceptualised by stakeholders as the nucleus or epicentre of the Durban Aerotropolis takes form of all the commercial functions located on the site of, and immediately surrounding, King Shaka International Airport and the Dube TradePort.

Further to the thinking that the Durban Aerotropolis takes the form of an urban development feature and an airport city, is the claim that the development of an aerotropolis facilitates the emergence of corridors, clusters and spines of airport-related businesses that create new urban forms close to major airports (Kasarda, 2000; Arend et al., 2004). The KZN Provincial Spatial Development Strategy (PSEDS) accordingly highlights the development of nodes and corridors in the province which emerge from the Durban Aerotropolis (KZN Planning Commission, 2011). The KZN Integrated Aerotropolis Strategy (EDTEA, 2015) speaks of these nodes as places such as Howick, Pietermaritzburg, Kranskop, Eshowe, Mandeni and Port Shepstone, with the nodes of La Mercy, Umhlanga, Tongaat and Ballito located immediately adjacent to the airport city. Economic activity will ripple from the core of the project, forming corridors of development between nodes and the airport city. In addition, plans for transportation upgrades to facilitate corridor development have been devised. These plans are focussed on road and rail alignments within a northern corridor which includes the highways which extend northwards to Richards Bay and onwards to Mozambique, and southwards along the KZN coast to the Port Shepstone area (EDTEA, 2016).

The findings presented above indicate that the form of the Durban Aerotropolis reflects a greenfield urban development project which, at its core, is an airport city from which corridors of economic activity spread to nodes of economic activity.

Taking the above-mentioned factors into account, the form of economic development mechanism or strategy that is seen by interviewees as capable of fulfilling the purpose of an integrated and mixed-use environment was identified as that of a quality urban space, or what is referred to as an airport-driven ‘urban development’ feature. In this context, the Durban Aerotropolis is thus an urban space whose development facilitates the emergence of corridors, clusters and spines of airport-related businesses that create new urban forms close to major airports or which connect existing nodes to economic activity in new ways.

## **9 Conceptualisations of scale of the Durban Aerotropolis**

This section highlights two different conceptualisations of the scale of the Durban Aerotropolis that emerged from the primary data as predominant themes: (a) a scale which is fixed and bounded in space with defined size and a boundary, and (b) a scale defined by connection and looseness, and thus offering flexibility.

Size-defined, fixed and bounded conceptualisations of scale are evident in Integrated Aerotropolis Strategy references to a footprint that requires differentiation between the airport city (a zone ‘inside-the-fence’) and the aerotropolis more broadly (the catchment area)

(EDTEA, 2015). As explained earlier, the airport city form and function is characterised by commercial functions located on and immediately around the King Shaka International Airport site. The airside activity space includes shopping mall concepts merged into passenger terminals, retail (including streetscapes and upscale boutiques), restaurants (increasingly higher-end and themed), leisure (spas, fitness, recreation, cinemas and more) and culture (museums, regional art, musicians, chapels). On the landside are hotels and entertainment, office and retail complexes, convention and exhibition centres, time-sensitive goods processing facilities and industrial developments. These airside and landside activities are what is referred to as ‘inside-the-fence’ activities of the Durban Aerotropolis (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Inside the Fence spaces of the Durban Aerotropolis (illustration: Nomkhosi Lutuli).

In the KZN Integrated Aerotropolis Strategy (EDTEA, 2015) the Aerotropolis area is referred to as the catchment area. The defining criterion for the catchment area is the concept of the one-hour travel distance from King Shaka International Airport. The footprint depicted in Figure 3 shows that the catchment area is of a much larger scale than that of an ‘inside-the-fence’ conceptualisation of the Durban Aerotropolis as the area covers almost all of the eThekweni Municipality, cuts across a number of municipal boundaries and further stretches up to the Richards Bay area in northern KwaZulu-Natal. The Aerotropolis shown in Figure 3 is based on the concept of a one-hour travel radius, a standardised measure for the scale of an aerotropolis established by John Kasarda, the originator of the aerotropolis concept (Kasarda, 2001a). The aim of this scaling-up of the Durban Aerotropolis to the extent of the one hour radius is to facilitate spatial and economic development planning which ensures that people can travel with ease between the airport and various destinations (nodes) and to reduce the travel time between the airport and nodes within the Aerotropolis radius (EDTEA, 2015). These nodes include small towns and industrial nodes within KwaZulu-Natal such as Howick, Pietermaritzburg, Kranskop, Eshowe, Mandini and Port Shepstone. For this

increasing connectivity to be achieved there has to be efficient, speedy and agile ground connectivity. Government is therefore being encouraged to invest substantially in road and rail infrastructure to achieve sufficient ground connectivity and, subsequently, to widen the King Shaka International Airport catchment area yet further.

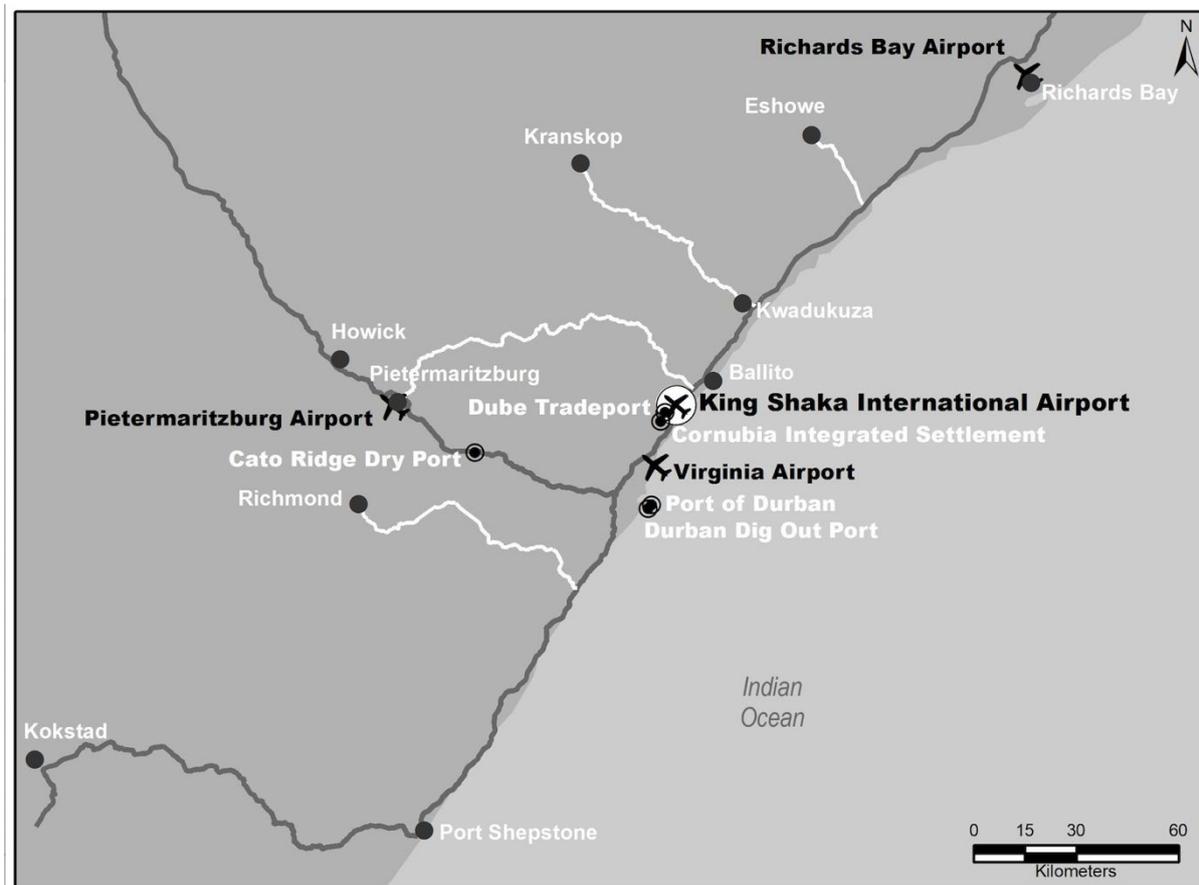


Figure 3 Durban Aerotropolis and the areas within the one-hour radius (illustration: Nomkhosi Luthuli).

The scale is also defined by the connections which are said to be loose and flexible. In relation to an unbounded sense of scale, there are specific places that are encompassed by the Durban Aerotropolis. The interviewees speak of these places in different ways. While some speak of compass points, others speak of their physical nature, as they are known colloquially, and also in terms of their political jurisdictions. In addition, places encompassed by the Durban Aerotropolis are described according to compass points, their physical nature and political jurisdictions. For example, places within the Durban Aerotropolis are described as stretching to cover areas to the “north, south and west of the airport” (Deputy Director of Research and Development, interview, 20 May 2016). This is a vague indication of the places incorporated within the area spoken of as the aerotropolis. Scale in these terms can be defined as loose and flexible.

The majority of the interviewees named the following areas as included within the Durban Aerotropolis boundary: Durban, Ballito, Ndwedwe, Tinley Manor, Stanger, Mandeni, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone and Richards Bay. Respondents also refer to ‘spillovers’ in the sense that economic activity may well reach beyond the sense of a bounded ‘in the fence’ zone to other municipal jurisdictions in an active process of ‘spreading outwards’ from the core area. Additionally, some interviewees and the Masterplan speak of the influence of the

Aerotropolis as reaching throughout the province of KwaZulu-Natal, into parts of Southern Africa and even globally (Aerotropolis Management Unit Programme Manager, interview 18 May 2016; Deputy Director of Research and Development, interview, 20 May 2016; EDTEA, 2016). They believed that the project will have an impact that reaches as far as Richards Bay, Pietermaritzburg and Port Shepstone on the South Coast. Others saw the impact stretching beyond of the borders of the country into Zimbabwe through its activities as a gateway for trade. In this perspective, although the naming of a location might be viewed as reflecting a more fixed scale, there are aspects of reach of the aerotropolis being understood as loose and flexible, more especially where interviewees refer to impact ‘stretching’ and spilling over to countries such as Zimbabwe and Nigeria. Overall, the distances between the core of the Durban Aerotropolis and these spaces is variable and the boundaries of the aerotropolis are thus viewed as loose and flexible, produced through multiple forms of connectivity rather than the designation of a specific aerotropolis space.

### **10 Conceptualising a region for economic development through understanding the function, form and scale of the Durban Aerotropolis project**

The notion of the ‘region’ associated with the Durban Aerotropolis can be conceptualised through the investigation of the Durban Aerotropolis presented above. As described, the region inherent in the Durban Aerotropolis has a clear form and function but is made up of a scale which incorporates fixed and loose boundaries at varied distances from the core of the aerotropolis. This multifaceted description is indicative of the complexities of grasping the region as a defined concept.

Collectively, the form, function and scale of the Durban Aerotropolis speaks to different kinds of ‘spaces’. These spaces are social constructs constituted through social relations and interactions in their own right (Varro & Lagendijk, 2013). Without acknowledging these spaces, it is difficult to conceptualise the region associated with the Durban Aerotropolis, even as it is envisaged as a catalyst of regional economic development. Furthermore, although we understand regions as spatially contingent, Paasi (2011) suggests that the theoretical and empirical understandings of what regions are should be based on contextuality. Beginning with a consideration of space and context speaks to the formation of regions as constructed through the projects which are designed to contribute to their development. This is a region understood as an institutional fact (Van Langenhove, 2013), defined by its surface and boundaries and also by human agreement, in particular, by stakeholders of the project.

Airport city functions, or what is referred to as the function of the Durban Aerotropolis, produce the surfaces and boundaries of the region. These are the different components which make the Durban Aerotropolis region an integrated environment with a mixed-use function. The presence of spaces where people can live, work and play attest to there being residential spaces (to live), industrial spaces (to work) and entertainment spaces (to play).

The form of the Durban Aerotropolis assumes a relational form of space. Relational space is space which allows for what is called a ‘throwntogetherness’. According to Hubbard et al. (2008), ‘throwntogetherness’ refers to the way in which diverse elements that cross categories such as the natural and social come together to foster a ‘here’ and ‘now’. The elements of the scale and function come together in a space where they are interrelated. The relationship emerges from what was previously a greenfield site which took form of a quality

urban space in which there are is a manifestation of a node and corridor of development which we ultimately refer to as the Durban Aerotropolis region.

This ‘throwntogetherness’ further assembles or brings together spaces of flows and spaces of places (Castells, 2000). The intention of the Durban Aerotropolis stakeholders to attract investors to their vicinity may potentially require interactions such as those that are facilitated through the spaces of flows. In this regard, the Durban Aerotropolis becomes a driver of air commerce and e-commerce and ensures that it meets the crucial demands for speed, agility and reliability in order fulfilment (Kasarda, 2001b). The space of flows virtually connects separate locations, and the interviewees articulate this complex process in layman terms, highlighted in the scalar concepts such as spillovers, influence, impact and reach.

The Durban Aerotropolis region as a whole can be further conceptualised in accordance with Castells’ definition (2000: 453) of place as a “locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity”. This essentially means that it is inherently characterised as specific place with a fixed purpose and bounded nature. Within this fixity of place, however, exists other spaces of places which interviewees have referred to in terms of compass points, in terms of their physical nature and in terms of their political jurisdictions.

In relation to the boundedness or unboundedness of the Durban Aerotropolis, the concepts of territoriality and relationality become important. The territorial view of region speaks to its boundedness in space. In the case of the Durban Aerotropolis, the airport city study area and the catchment area are two components of the region that can be spoken of as bounded. This is because these are the two absolute spaces of the Durban Aerotropolis, as highlighted above. The spaces of the Durban Aerotropolis are also socially constructed as bounded, relative space through the standardised scale of the one-kilometre radius provided by Kasarda. Beyond these absolute and relative spaces is a conception of the Durban Aerotropolis region as relational in that it is a complex network of concentrations of people and places incorporated in a flexible boundary or loosely connected through their related functionality (Suorsa, 2014).

Perceiving the Durban Aerotropolis region as relational means that it can be understood as an assemblage, which Allen et al. (1998: 50) define as a “product of the networks, interactions, juxtapositions and articulations of the myriad of connections through which all social phenomena are lived out”. While Goodwin (2013) sees assemblages as overlapping institutional forms such as regional offices, agencies, boards and so on, Allen and Cochrane (2007) point out that these institutional forms are the foundation that holds down the fluid elements of global life in the interest of their region. This is true for the Durban Aerotropolis region, as it is a mixed-use space with a host of functions that ultimately serve the purpose of assisting KZN province to keep up with economic development, global business and investment trends.

The conceptualisation of the region inherent in the Durban Aerotropolis in relation to RED shows a process of delineation which is reflective of project scoping. In this regard, the region is treated as an endeavour whose form, function and scale are socially produced. Before planning of economic development for this region could be embarked on, it needed to be clearly defined; this definition could only be made by the interviewees from the Durban Aerotropolis, who also played a role in pronouncing the vision of the project and formalising this vision in the strategy documents of the Durban Aerotropolis project. Also instrumental in

guiding the process of defining and delineating was the contribution made by John Kasarda as a pioneer of the aerotropolis concept.

These spaces all come together, or coalesce, in a ‘throwntogetherness’ of scale and function, coming together in a form within and through which they can have a relationship with each other. The ‘throwntogetherness’ also assembles spaces of flows and spaces of places. This is why the region in this instance can be understood as an assemblage consisting of overlapping institutional forms and the juxtaposition of connections.

## 11 Conclusion

Understanding the aerotropolis-based spatialities as social constructions which produce a ‘region’ facilitates a better understanding of the notion of the region as it exists within the heart of RED. The region produced through the Durban Aerotropolis project can be conceptualised as incorporating a geographical area, an economic interaction and an institutional jurisdiction. This region is a geographical area because its form is principally reflective of an urban space, or what Kennedy et al. (2014) refer to as an airport-driven urban feature. The region can be viewed as an economic interaction when we consider its function in the production of nodes and corridors of economic development. It is an institutional jurisdiction when we take cognisance of how it has become territory over which multiple stakeholders and actors of government have practical ‘planning authority’ through which spaces are designated as part of the aerotropolis and therefore, of its region. It is therefore useful for the wider practice of regional economic development to conceive of a region as a geographical space consisting largely of economic interaction and incorporating an institutional jurisdiction determined by the array of stakeholders.

Furthermore, in practising RED, the region can be defined and delineated through the function, form and scale attributed to an RED project. The function relates to the purpose of the regional intervention. Form refers to the kinds of spaces, development mechanisms or strategy that could assist in fulfilling the purpose. The scale of the region highlights the physical boundaries of the region defined by the project specifics but also clarifies its reach, which serves the purpose of determining which stakeholders to involve and ultimately defines the region of impact of an RED project. Overall, the theoretical and empirical conceptualisation of regions within regional economic development planning, policy-making and practice must draw on the specifics of contextuality to ensure its utility as a mechanism of economic development is not limited by fuzzy, simplistic or misconstrued notions of what the region entails.

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## Business incubators and green technology: The Gauteng Climate Innovation Centre, South Africa

### Abstract

Business incubators are a vehicle to assist the survival prospects of start-up enterprises, many of which fail in their early years of operation. One special form of business incubator is the Climate Innovation Centre (CIC) which is part of international debates around green economies and appropriate technologies for climate-compatible development. CICs are an intervention to build innovation sites to ameliorate climate change and a highly distinctive form of business incubator in which the explicit focus is upon supporting small business start-ups allied to the application of green technologies. Using a qualitative approach the article analyses the establishment and operations of the Gauteng Climate Innovation Centre in South Africa. The CICSA in its first five years of operations has been 'learning through experience' and introduced a number of changes since its launch in 2012, including an extension of the business incubation programme and an adjusted focus to South Africa's climate change related 'green' issues around energy, water and waste. Although 5 years is too short for a conclusive evaluation of CIC operations the evidence from this research with South African clean-tech enterprises is largely positive and suggests that the assistance provided by the CIC has contributed towards enterprise development.

**Keywords:** business incubators, small enterprise development, green technology, climate innovation centre, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

The positive health of the small business economy is viewed as crucial for current and future economic development prospects in sub-Saharan Africa (Rogerson, 2018a). This said, among newly established enterprises in their early and most vulnerable stages of existence there are recorded high rates of mortality. Arguably, a host of challenges impact the growth and survival of small enterprises in Africa, most importantly lack of market opportunities, limited access to finance, severe infrastructural deficits (especially power shortages), and a weakly evolved business environment with complex regulatory processes, corruption and often minimal public sector assistance (InfoDev, 2016). From the international experience the expanded support for business incubation and the establishment of physical (as well as virtual) business incubators is advocated as one means for addressing the disappointing survival rates of newly established small enterprises and including those in Africa (Ndabeni, 2008; InfoDev, 2010a; Masutha & Rogerson, 2014a, 2014b; Albort-Morant & Ribiero-Soriano, 2016; Rogerson, 2016a).

With historical roots in North America as well as Western Europe the activity of business incubation has spread into a global phenomenon and increasingly is embedded as part of broader policy initiatives designed to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and business development both in transitional economies as well as developing countries of the global South (Akcomak, 2009; InfoDev, 2010b, 2010c; Al-Mubarak et al., 2013; Al-Mubarak & Busler, 2014; InfoDev, 2014; Theodorakopoulos et al., 2014; Rogerson, 2016a; Li & North, 2018). Business incubation is endorsed as a positive developmental approach by a number of

international development agencies. The Information for Development (InfoDev) programme of the World Bank uses the following definition of business incubation. This is “a process aimed at supporting the development and scaling of growth-oriented early-stage enterprises. The process provides entrepreneurs with an enabling environment at the start-up stage of enterprise development. This environment should help reduce the cost of launching the enterprise, increase the confidence and capacity of the entrepreneur and link the entrepreneur to resources required to start and scale a competitive enterprise” (InfoDev, 2014: 8).

Within the international literature several variants of business incubator are identified and definitions contested of what actually constitutes an incubator (Grimaldi & Grandi, 2005; InfoDev, 2010a; Bruneel et al., 2012; Rogerson, 2016a). Broad agreement exists that business incubators supply a number of targeted business and technical support services which seek to nurture emerging and small start-up business enterprises into financially and operationally independent ventures (Theodorakopoulos et al., 2014; Albort-Morant & Ribiero-Soriano, 2016). Grimaldi and Grandi (2005: 112) assert that the development of business incubators aims to reduce “the costs of doing business by offering a set of services ranging from the provision of space, infrastructure and facilities, to more elaborate services, as well as offering access to technical and managerial expertise, assistance in business plan development”. Although several international examples of business incubation programmes target what would be described as ‘survivalist enterprises’ most incubation activity concentrates upon strengthening the business survival prospects of groups of dynamic, growth-oriented early-stage enterprises (Tengeh & Choto, 2015; Rogerson, 2018a). The latter usually are innovative small enterprises which are seen as critical potential catalysts for future job creation and accompanying economic and social development (Rogerson, 2018b).

With an increasing global adoption of business incubation as a support mechanism for small enterprise development there has occurred a rise in international scholarship and debates about the operations and impacts of business incubators and their different forms (Albort-Morant & Ribiero-Soriano, 2016; Rogerson, 2016a). Relative to other regions of the world, however, business incubation is “in its infancy on the African continent” (InfoDev, 2016: 3). In one international research overview Mian et al. (2016) note the underdeveloped character of African scholarship surrounding business incubation. There have been certain advances in research to accompany the most established initiatives in Africa which occur in South Africa for applying business incubation as part of the toolkit for small enterprise support (Masutha & Rogerson, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Lose et al., 2016; Rogerson, 2018a). Another recent research focus is the impact of business incubators on women entrepreneurs in the continent (Kapinga et al., 2018).

It is against the above background of an emerging African scholarship that the objective in this paper is to contribute to extant literature and debates about business incubation in Africa. The specific focus is to investigate the establishment and progress of initiatives which build upon the potential of green technology for small enterprise development. Our study investigates the establishment of Climate Innovation Centres as business incubators and the emerging experience of the Gauteng Climate Innovation Centre in South Africa. Two further sections of material are presented. The following section reviews briefly the application of green technology and the establishment and remit of an international network of Climate Innovation Centres. Attention turns then to analyse in detail the establishment and operations of South Africa’s Climate Innovation Centre.

## 2 Green Technology and Climate Innovation Centres

At the broadest level of interpretation Climate Innovation Centres (CICs) are part of wider international discussions which are taking place around green economies and the adoption of appropriate technologies for climate-compatible development (Newell & Bulkeley, 2017; Nunan, 2017). Global interest in the green economy has heightened greatly since the financial crisis of 2008 along with a proliferation of competing discourses about its meaning (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013a; Death, 2014). For Georgeson et al. (2017: 1) the green economy represents an attractive framework to deliver more resource efficient, lower carbon and less environmentally damaging as well as more socially inclusive societies. In African debates a green economy is based on principles of sustainable development as it constitutes an economic system in which economic, environmental and social challenges are addressed holistically (Kaggwa et al., 2013). Nhamo (2013) defines a green economy as the enhancement of human-well-being and social equality while taking the environment's importance into account. Notwithstanding critiques that the green economy simply represents 'green-washing' it is argued that it "has the potential to effect substantive and transformative change towards the goal of sustainable development" (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013a: 209).

The foundation for the making of a green economy is green technology or climate technology which represent environmentally friendly innovations usually involving energy efficiency, recycling, renewable energy, and safety or health considerations (Hasper, 2009). Arguably, green technological innovation is essential for sub-Saharan Africa in order to adapt to current climate change conditions but even more so to mitigate future climate change impacts. Environmentally friendly innovations assist in reducing negative human impacts on the environment and are vital for countries to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of current climate change (Sagar & Bloomberg New Energy Finance, 2010). This said, the transition to a green economy has proven challenging across the global South and, given the significance of climate change, international development organizations recommend the application of development assistance to ease the green economy transition, including the roll out of green technologies associated with CICs. Sagar (2010) affirms that by advancing innovation processes for key climate technologies a critical contribution of these centres is to move forward the process of technology transition in the global South and thereby enable countries to meet their climate challenges both more efficiently and effectively.

As described elsewhere these centres emerged as a particular form of business incubator which is targeted to accelerate the development, deployment and transfer of locally relevant climate technologies (Sagar et al., 2009; Rogerson, 2018a). Within the Climate Technology Programme which links to InfoDev and the World Bank, climate challenges are recast into business opportunities to galvanize the establishment and expansion of innovative dynamic small enterprises (InfoDev, 2010c; Rogerson, 2018b). With appropriate support small entrepreneurs can assist emissions reduction, build climate resilience and enhance the prospects for climate compatible development. At the same time they can enable developing countries to capture greater value in the innovation value chain, establish new competitive sectors, competitive enterprises and encourage new bases for employment opportunities (InfoDev, 2016; Rogerson, 2018a). It is notable that the United Nations system task team on the post-2015 UN Development Agenda recommends that in considering the science, technology and innovation framework for post-2015 that "the global partnership for development should consider developing such centres" (ITU et al., 2015: 10).

CICs thus can be viewed as green economic initiatives and act as a stepping stone towards climate compatible development. In search of local solutions, the CICs are an intervention to build innovation sites to ameliorate climate change (InfoDev, 2015). They represent a highly distinctive form of business incubator in which the explicit focus is upon nurturing small business start-ups allied to green technologies linked to climate change issues (Rogerson, 2018b). Further CICs represent multilateral, international, national and local interventions that are formed through the cooperation between the relevant departments of the applicable countries in association with international development agencies, most especially with Britain's Department for International Development and the World Bank through InfoDev (Sagar et al., 2009; InfoDev, 2013a, 2013b). For Sagar (2010) initially they were envisaged as an umbrella organization that would have under it a collection of projects that propel the innovation process for core climate change technologies for the particular country or region where the centre is located.

Essentially three fundamental goals drive the global planning and operations of CICs. These are to achieve sustainable development by facilitating the transition to a green economy, support the innovation of green technologies, and make a positive input to climate mitigation and adaptation through contributing to implementation of climate change programmes (Sagar et al., 2009; InfoDev, 2016). In the transition towards climate compatible development the importance is acknowledged of both mitigation and adaptation measures to impact climate change and in particular to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by speeding up the shift towards environmentally friendly technologies (Sagar et al., 2009). It is acknowledged, however, that such a transition requires extensive research, development, market validation, commercialization and distribution which, in turn, demands new partnership initiatives through the activities of CICs. Necessary partnerships are formed between private and public sectors, between the global North and the global South. and between developing countries themselves within the global South.

The existing international network of CICs extends to seven developing countries (InfoDev, 2016). The pioneer CIC was established at Nairobi in Kenya (InfoDev, 2010c, 2013b). Similar centres followed in Morocco, Vietnam, Jamaica, Ghana, Ethiopia and South Africa. It is estimated that each operational CIC requires financial support of between US\$ 40-100 million per annum (Sagar et al., 2009). Every CIC is planned and developed uniquely according to the host country's requirements, opportunities and barriers (Sagar, 2010). Although each functions independently they rely on one another for assistance as required (Sagar et al., 2009). The existing CICs form a global network which assembles on an annual basis as a "learning environment" for the sharing of experiences, knowledge and information. The concept of a 'global network' of CICs arose from the position that technological and information transfer as well as motivation and support would be made more operational and successful if shared between various CICs (Sagar, 2010). Essentially the global CIC network is evolving with the objective of establishing knowledge platforms, forums, and technology exchange through deepened partnerships to assist clean-tech entrepreneurs (Sagar et al., 2009).

At one level these centres function as dedicated business incubators that operate at a country-scale and assist clean-tech entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses, to enhance employment prospects and to create cleaner energy, water, food and air with minimal resource utilisation. In terms of their operations Sagar & Bloomberg New Energy Finance (2010) stylize CICs as one-stop-shops. The centres can furnish an array of support services that encompass facilitating access to finance, business advice, policy support, education and

training as well as technical aid (InfoDev, 2013a, 2013b). Together the services and functions provided by the CIC are to avert the so-termed ‘valley of death’ in which many start-up enterprises fall prey, namely the phase between early growth and market entry when the mortality rates of small enterprises are especially high. Different categories of targeted services that afford support for clean-tech entrepreneurs are recognised across the existing network of operations of CICs. Several services, however, are not directly provided by CICs themselves rather they are sub-contracted to appropriate organizations as service providers for delivery to entrepreneurs (InfoDev, 2013a, 2013b).

Many centres engage in financial assistance for enterprises including venture capital style investments in equity or debt and or via investment facilitation through an international network of investors. Business advice and training is another critical service that usually is given with mentorship support important to enhance business success. Advice is extended to business planning, financial planning, and market information (InfoDev, 2012, 2013a). In terms of business planning this includes guidance towards business plan development, presentation skills, marketing schemes as well as human resource management. Support regarding financial planning is based on investment due-diligence and to ensure that enterprises are suitable for investment. Entrepreneurs are offered skills training applicable to budgeting, accounting, financial predictions and modelling. In addition, CICs offer technical training in the specialist skills around climate technologies. As a complementary activity they offer the latest objective information on the state of climate technologies and of new innovations thereof. Access is made available to technical experts to aid entrepreneurs and heighten their awareness of international knowledge exchange platforms which allow for mutual collaboration and new partnerships especially with the World Bank and its Climate Technology Centre & Network (InfoDev, 2013a, 2016).

InfoDev (2012) contends that CICs can be channels to facilitate access to international markets as CICs monitor markets and market barriers in order to provide enterprises with comprehensive market information about particular green economy sectors. Policy advocacy is a further contribution of CICs in collaboration with country governments. Information and policy gaps are identified and improvements encouraged through CIC-supported small enterprise feedback as well as continual identification of international best practice (InfoDev, 2012). Finally, as is conventional for physical business incubators, CICs offer shared office and operational space for small enterprise start-ups.

### **3 The Gauteng Climate Innovation Centre**

This section turns to the case study on the origins, operations and challenges of the South African CIC. The analysis draws from documentary sources as well as 24 qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted during 2017 (Gonsalves, 2018). These include with four stakeholders involved in the management and operation of the Gauteng Climate Innovation Centre and 20 interviews with enterprises attached to the business incubator. The sample of 20 interviewed entrepreneurs constitutes almost one-third of the clean-tech enterprises in the CIC’s operational portfolio at the time (2017) of the field research.

The establishment of a CIC in South Africa was highly appropriate given that the country faces major developmental challenges as a consequence of the advance of climate change (Ziervogel et al., 2014; Rogerson, 2016b). Southern Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world for climate change impacts with observed and projected temperature

changes higher than those for other world regions. Scholes et al. (2015) argue South Africa contributes 1.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions and the country lists under the top 20 worst global greenhouse gas emitters largely because of its reliance on coal-fired power stations for energy generation. Over several years green economy debates have emerged and consolidated in significance in South Africa; currently they permeate strategic planning concerning national and local economic development (Borel-Saladin & Turok, 2013b; Death, 2014; Rogerson, 2014). Of particular policy significance is the acknowledgement given to stimulating green economic development in South Africa's New Growth Path and subsequent National Development Plan as well as the Green Economy Accord, a response to climate change concerns, which established a national 'green partnership' (Rogerson, 2014).

During 2010-2011 the Department of Economic Department of Gauteng province, South Africa's economic heartland, was mandated to implement strategies for green economic development in the province. The concept of establishing a CIC in South Africa materialised in 2011 as a partnership between the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, the Innovation Hub (the innovation agency of Gauteng Province), and the World Bank InfoDev unit. During 2012 the Climate Innovation Centre of South Africa (CICSA) launched in Pretoria as a strategic green economy initiative to assist with implementation of the province's Green Growth Strategy. Its location is a science and technology park in Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital. The CICSA, the second operational CIC in the World Bank's global network, functions as a technology and business incubator committed to support South African start-ups and existing small businesses operating in the green economy. More specifically, CICSA seeks to accelerate the growth of innovative clean tech enterprises in Gauteng towards low carbon growth paths (CICSA, 2016). Its operations are funded primarily by the Gauteng Provincial Government rather than by international donors such as the World Bank. The first two years of CIC operations were financed from the Department of Environmental Affairs Green Fund but after that ceased operations in March 2017 core financial responsibility has passed to the Gauteng Department of Economic Development.

By 2017 the CICSA had 62 clean tech enterprises in their portfolio. At the outset of operations CICSA accepted entrepreneurs from a number of different sectors, including agro-processing, green building, energy, transport, water or waste. Since 2016/2017, however, the South African CIC has narrowed its focus to the three sectors of energy, waste and water. In 2017 50 percent of the CICSA portfolio comprised start-ups in the energy sector. This particular focus is the result in part of the major energy crisis that South Africa has endured since 2008 which directed attention at energy saving or renewable energy projects in order to reduce the country's dependence on coal power stations. The interviews disclosed the range of enterprises at the incubator and the application of green technologies to address climate change. Examples of clean-tech start-up enterprises in the energy sector include the innovation of retrofittable plugs that measure and record the energy use of individual household items; the manufacture of containerized modular power generation equipment fitted with solar PV equipment; the production of hydraulic hybrid transmission systems for the automotive sector that provide a secondary source of energy for vehicles; the optimization of engines with a technology that improves the synergy between the turbo charger and car engine; the development of polycarbonate tubes for the production of energy-saving LED tube lights; and, a manual washing machine that does not use electricity but is a combination of a bicycle and a stationary washing machine in which peddling the bicycle powers the laundry process as well as generating electricity for other small appliances.

The interviews revealed that green enterprises in the energy sector seek to be both environmentally-friendly as well as spread consciousness and a message about the benefits of clean technologies to the broader community. The entrepreneur specializing in engine optimization stated “climate change is therefore fundamental from a business perspective as money is saved from fuel savings but it is also fundamental from an environmental perspective”. Beyond the energy sector are other innovative start-ups engaged in the sectors of water and waste. One entrepreneur uses biogas made from animal waste in order to produce methane gas for cooking and heating in rural areas and is extending this concept to the municipal scale utilising sewage in order to generate electricity. Another clean-tech start-up applies a biotechnological process of vermicomposting to turn waste destined for dumping sites into organic fertiliser and an organic pest repellent. Road construction in an environmentally-friendly manner is another focus for an innovative entrepreneur using zero slump rather than conventional concrete or steel. Finally, in terms of the water sector, one illustration is an enterprise innovating a new technology for telemetry and water mapping which allows for leakages as well as water usage to be accurately monitored.

The recruitment process of start-ups to the CIC was investigated with both managers of the CIC and with the entrepreneurs. It was argued by the CIDS green economy manager that at the time of its launch the awareness of the CIC was low and that “*it was not visible enough*” apart from those enterprises already operational in the green economy space. Accordingly, in order to heighten awareness of its operations and opportunities, a general manager for marketing was appointed. To recruit innovative entrepreneurs the CIC issues an open call on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, as well as advertising through newspapers, radio, and electronic fliers. For responses to its invitation to apply to the CIC, an online application process is used but also ‘walk-in’ applications are allowed. Further, the CIC itself seeks to identify possible candidates which it approaches as potential candidates for incubation.

From the 20 interviews a variety of channels emerge as to how entrepreneurs became aware of the CIC and its operations. Half of the sampled interviewees were referrals or through word of mouth. Respondents stated as follows: “*Through a friend who referred us. He is in government and when the CIC call came up he knew our technology so he referred us to the CIC*” (automotive sector entrepreneur) and “*We approached the Gauteng Infrastructure Department and they directed us to the Innovation Hub*” (entrepreneur generating energy from animal waste). Three start-ups were introduced to the CIC through participating in a green competition with the winners receiving seed funding and incubation at the CIC. The entrepreneurs elaborated that: “*I won a competition for a green project and part of the prize was being incubated by the CIC*” (entrepreneur developing electric vehicles) and “*We received electronic marketing material for the opportunity to take part in the Innovation Hub Green Challenge in 2014 and as runner up we were provided with the opportunity for incubation with the CIC*” (entrepreneur in hybrid solar technology). For the remaining 7 entrepreneurs, one responded to a newspaper advertisement, two discovered the CIC through random emails that they received, two through Google internet search, and two via social media platforms. The start-up linked to engine optimization responded: “*I received an email regarding the CIC and then I contacted them*”.

Table 1: Criteria for consideration in admittance to CIC Incubator Programme

Criteria	Detail
Location	Projects must be implemented in Gauteng province
Concept	The project must be advanced beyond the idea phase to a working prototype ie proof of concept or small-scale demonstration
Competitiveness	In comparison with current technologies the project should be competitive and enhance the transition towards a green economy.
Role in climate change	Project should increase awareness of climate change in both developed and especially underdeveloped areas.
Innovative technology	Project must be a clean technology innovation that is new to South Africa
Job creation	Once commercialized the project should create various sustainable quality job opportunities
Skills development	Project implementation should include capacity and skills development
Economic growth	Contribution to economic growth
Sustainability	Indication of project sustainability and viability
Project team profile	Team competence, extent of projects involvement in the community and contribution to Black Economic Empowerment.

Source: The Innovation Hub, 2016 (adapted by Maruschka Gonsalves).

The CIC screens the various applications that it receives against a set of ten criteria for admission to the incubator as shown on Table 1. Overall for enterprises to be accepted into the incubation programme they must be aligned with the three primary goals of CIC, namely to advance the prospects of achieving sustainable development, facilitate a transition to a green economy through innovative green technologies and make a positive contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation. Shortlisted candidates from the screening process are invited to pitch their prototype in front of a board comprised of both internal and external specialists who use a six component scoreboard to evaluate the green prototypes. Among critical elements are the evaluation of the business case for the product, whether the technology addresses an existing market need and can be protected as intellectual property, the business as well as technical skills of the entrepreneur, the extent to which the entrepreneur is viewed as determined, ambitious, motivated and potentially coachable, strategic fit in terms of the project in relation to the CIC, and finally whether the services that can be offered are sufficient for the developmental needs of particular enterprises.

At inception of operations the CICSA offered only a pre-incubation programme – known as the factory programme – to enterprises which extended between 9 and 12 months. This programme began in 2013. Following completion of the factory programme enterprises graduated into the core programme – termed the Maxum revenue incubation programme - that lasts up to three years. During 2016/2017 this structure was changed as CIC introduced a full incubation programme that ‘walks the road’ with enterprises until they graduate which is deemed as occurring only once the enterprise is commercialized and makes its first sale. It was made clear by CIC managers that incubation does not end with commercialisation and that beyond the initial commercialization: *“We assist you with advanced mentoring. We try to assist you with access to market and we try to assist you with better funding if you need to expand”* (Senior Project Specialist CICSA).

According to a Senior Manager CICSA is now required to accept into its programme a total of 20 new businesses each year with a target of five enterprises to graduate from incubation

per year. Nevertheless, monitoring of the performance of enterprises through the CIC programmes has been one of organization's major challenges. The initial structure of CIC operations with only the pre-incubation programme made it difficult for accurate records to be maintained of how many businesses were successfully graduated. This changed with the move to the full programme to commercialization which permits closer monitoring and improved record keeping. From the interviews conducted with the 20 enterprises it was evident they were in various phases of the incubation process, albeit some respondents were unclear as to their actual incubation status. In terms of the 20 interviewees five were commercialized, three on the verge of commercialization, five were incubating, three graduated, one had exited the programme and three were completely unsure of their status. Of concern is the status of certain enterprises which are supposed to be still part of the incubation process but uncertain of their situation because of lack of communication about their status.

The services offered by the CICSA to potential incubator candidates are typical of those of the global network of CICs as a whole. On offer to climate technology start-ups and enterprises is so-termed "flexible stage appropriate risk capital" with resources concentrated in the early growth phase through grant, seed and scale-up financing (Climate Innovation Centre, South Africa, 2018: 1). The core aim for CICSA is to speed up the technology commercialization process. This said, the CIC stakeholders made clear that the primary function of the organisation was not funding per se: "*incubators are not funders*" (CIC Senior Manager). Enterprises are assigned to service organisations partners who can assist with securing access to funding. It was made clear by one CIC interviewee that "*those that come just for money are doomed to failure*" (CIC Project Coordinator). In addition to access to finance, entrepreneurs are offered access to modern equipment and facilities, including technical laboratories to assist with prototyping, testing and proof of concept for these innovators. Packages of business training, technical advice from experts in climate friendly, clean technology sectors, and mentorship are given in order to "equip local citizens with the necessary skills to generate and sustain an innovation pipeline" (Climate Innovation Centre, South Africa, 2018: 2). For the CIC Senior manager it was maintained "*the key service offering of the CIC is mentorship*". Incubator enterprises are assigned to applicable business and technical mentors for advice and each receives "*every month three hours of business mentoring and three hours of technical mentoring by means of training courses and workshops*" (CIC General Manager of the Green Economy Department). The final service offering from CICSA relates to networking which provides improved access to markets for enterprises through introductions made to different role players in the particular sector as well as local and national (and in some cases even international) partners.

The 20 interviewed enterprises were requested to assess the most valued service offered by CICSA. Most responded that more than one service was highly valued. The results showed that 18 enterprises identified mentoring as the most important service. One entrepreneur in renewable energy elaborated that "*the mentorship is valuable as there is someone (the mentor) who can challenge my thoughts and direction around the concepts and identify gaps in the business model*". Eight of the 20 enterprises viewed funding as the most critical service with two enterprises using the fund grant that they had obtained for filing a patent application. The comment was offered that patenting as intellectual property was crucial as it "*builds a fence that protects the idea*" (Entrepreneur in automotive sector). Networking opportunities through CICSA were acknowledged as significant by six respondents. A typical response from an entrepreneur in waste recycling was "*the contacts that they made available to me are extremely valuable*". Only three entrepreneurs identified infrastructural services, in

terms of office space, telephone lines, internet and meeting rooms, as the most valued service offering. It was reflected, however, by one respondent that the shared office spaces “*allows one to meet other entrepreneurs and to share experiences and advice*” (Entrepreneur in waste recycling).

In terms of the impact of the CICSA incubator support on the survival and growth of enterprises only preliminary assessment can be offered as the organisation has been in existence for only a period of five years. It is evident that a number of enterprises have exited the programme after the prototype of the enterprise failed and the CIC does not afford flexibility to work with failures. Moreover, as the CIC initially offered only the pre-incubation programme it did not follow up on the status of enterprises after their graduation into the Maxum programme. The four CIC interviewees all maintain that the organisation has made a positive impact to enterprise survival with the Project Coordinator asserting that if no value was added for them “*enterprises would have left the programme from as early as the first week*”. From the perspectives offered by the enterprises 15 of the 20 interviewees considered that they would have succeeded without the CIC intervention with one respondent adding “*Yes, I would have succeeded without the help from the CIC but it would have taken me longer without the help from CIC*” (Entrepreneur in energy sector). This sentiment was also expressed by a manufacturer of electric vehicles: “*Of course we would have succeeded but it definitely would have taken longer and there would have been a lot of hurdles which we could not have been able to foresee and plan for. The CIC played a pivotal role in making sure the company is successful*”. Overall, three-quarters of the interviewed enterprises considered that whilst the CIC programmes cannot be attributed as the sole factors behind their success, the assistance programmes provided by CICSA are valuable and undoubtedly reduced the time period for the transition towards commercialization.

Finally, some challenges emerged from the qualitative interviews with both CIC managers and enterprises. The issue of monitoring the progress of enterprises has earlier been flagged. Another specific monitoring issue is that currently “*the CIC does not have an instrument to monitor their impact on emission reductions*” (CIC Senior Project Specialist). The absence of a direct monitoring for emissions reduction was conceded as a shortcoming by the Senior Manager:

*Our (performance) matrix at the moment is jobs, number of companies and revenue or funding leverage. Those are the three main things along with other socio-economic factors that you have to track. We do not track CO2 reductions. We report to the World Bank quarterly and based on the type of companies we support, their products and the number of products they have sold the World Bank are able to estimate CO2 potential. However, most CIC companies are not trading yet; they are still in their pre-revenue stage. Maybe, in the long run we should be able to estimate how many tons of CO2 we have saved.*

Other critical challenges for future CIC operations emerged in the research. Capacity issues in terms of sufficient human resources and staffing were raised. Another human resource issue was the high staff turnover at CIC which, at one point, was so severe that “*managers would only stay for a year*” (CIC General Manager). The quality of certain of the mentors was an additional concern. One respondent vented that “*the assistance from the business and technical mentor was of zero value to us. The mentoring was a waste of time and money. There was no interaction, feedback or follow-up from the mentor’s side*” (Automotive entrepreneur) Finally, enterprises complained often of the difficulty of accessing funding to progress their development. It was stated that the CIC should be more pro-active in finding sources for enterprise funding particularly as start-up financing is crucial for enterprise

survival. Moreover, even for those enterprises whose applications for funding are approved complaints were raised about the slow release of funds which only “*are paid out in dribs and drabs*” (Entrepreneur in energy)

#### 4 Conclusion

The role of business incubators in reducing the high mortality rates which are experienced by start-up enterprises is a critical issue for the African development agenda (Rogerson, 2018a). One observed trend is towards the establishment of dedicated business incubator targeted at specific sectors of enterprises such as those in agribusiness, culture or tourism. It is set against the backdrop of global climate change and the reorientation towards a low-carbon, green growth pathways that Climate Innovation Centres represent a distinctive form of business incubator targeted to accelerate the development, deployment and transfer of locally relevant climate technologies in the global South.

This research is the first of its kind to analyze the establishment and operations of South Africa’s Climate Innovation Centre. Arguably, the CICSA in its first five years of operations has been ‘learning through experience’ and introduced a number of changes since its launch in 2012. The study reveals the particular character of the CIC which adjusted its focus to South Africa’s core climate change related ‘green’ issues around energy, water and waste. Important changes were made also in terms of the extension of the business incubation programme. Although it might be argued that the time period of five years in operation is too short for a full evaluation of CIC operations the evidence from this research with South African clean-tech enterprises is largely positive. In particular, the findings suggest that the assistance provided by the CIC is valuable, if not a pivotal influence, for assisting enterprises engaged with the green technologies.

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## Urban tourism and climate change: Risk perceptions of business tourism stakeholders in Johannesburg, South Africa

### Abstract

The nexus of climate change and cities is acknowledged as of growing importance for inter-disciplinary research. In this article the focus is upon the perceptions of climate change and responses by tourism stakeholders in Johannesburg, South Africa's leading city and major tourism destination. Using semi-structured qualitative interviews with 30 tourism stakeholders an analysis is undertaken of the risk perceptions of climate change. Overall the results suggest a major disconnect between the climate change threats as openly recognised by Johannesburg city authorities and of the risk perceptions as revealed by local tourism stakeholders. The predominant view articulated by tourism industry stakeholders is that climate change responses and associated sustainability initiatives are something of a 'nice to have' rather than a necessity given current the current state of awareness and of climate change risk perceptions by businesses.

**Keywords:** climate change, urban tourism, risk perceptions, tourism businesses, Johannesburg, South Africa

### 1 Introduction

Climate change is recognised as a fundamental challenge to cities in coming decades as it potentially will affect large groups of businesses and residents in what some style as "this century of urbanization" (Reckien et al., 2017: 159). Carmin et al. (2012: 18) observe that throughout the world cities "are experiencing new weather and climate patterns that are being attributed to global climate change". Accordingly, with more than half the world's population now living in cities there is "a growing resonance in considering city-scale issues in order to progress climate policy discussions" (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007: 9). In particular, it is acknowledged urban areas will need to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of global warming and cope with increased incidence of heat waves, water shortages, storm surges and natural disasters which, in turn, can impact urban infrastructure, stress services and the habitability of the built environment (Satterthwaite et al., 2007; Jones, 2017). In one recent global overview on climate change impacts in cities it was concluded significant ramifications exist most especially for those cities in coastal or riverine locations, resource-dependent regions or locations "at risk from extreme weather events, especially those undergoing rapid urbanisation" (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007: 3). Nevertheless, whilst climate change is set to impact cities in all parts of the world "scientific projections suggest that urban areas in the global south are likely to experience some of the most immediate and severe impacts" (Carmin et al., 2012: 18). Arguably, as the populations of many cities in the global South are expanding faster than physical infrastructure, it is considered that their exposure to climate change impacts is far greater than those in developed countries (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007).

In extant global surveys on climate change impacts on cities one of the most important effects is identified as that upon tourism (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007). Against the backdrop of global

economic restructuring, deindustrialization and associated employment losses in cities, during the 1980s tourism promotion emerged as an increasingly significant vehicle for urban economic regeneration and place-based development (Law, 1992, 1993). Across Europe and North America many cities had few options for economic development other than tourism and began to establish an “infrastructure of play” with new sports stadia, festival places, cultural events, museums and entertainment centres to enhance their competitiveness as tourism destinations (Cudny, 2011; Kadar, 2013; Judd, 2015; Pasquinelli, 2015). Other cities turned to support business tourism through the construction of new conference and exhibition centres. Arguably, with the rising significance of tourism for urban development the effects of climate change on tourism must be regarded “as a potentially important impact area” in research concerning climate change and cities (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007: 28). Indeed, the consequences of climate change for present-day and future urban tourism cannot be overlooked especially by tourism scholars. Only recently in Europe there has been an awakening to the need for research to explore future shifts in patterns of urban tourism in relation to global climate change (Eliasson & Thorsson, 2018). This said, Arit (2009: 12) observes urban tourism and climate change “is almost never a topic in publications and during conferences on climate change and tourism”. Further, across several international reviews of research around tourism and climate change it is recorded that minimal if any acknowledgement is given to urban issues (see eg. Hall, 2008; Becken, 2013; Pang et al., 2013; Kaján & Saarinen, 2013; Fang et al., 2018; Hall, 2018).

The aim in this article is to respond to the observation made that the nexus of climate change and urban tourism represents “a new and fruitful area of research that can and should be opened” (Arit, 2009: 12). South Africa is an appropriate setting for such research investigations for several reasons. First, in the global context, the sub-region of southern Africa is viewed as one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In South Africa climate change impacts are considered as “not a narrow environmental problem but a fundamental development challenge” (Urquhart et al., 2014: 69). An enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change and of adaptations to climate change is essential for informing strategic interventions for both tourism and local economic development futures in South Africa (Golder Associates, 2012; Rogerson, 2014, 2016; Pandey, 2017; Pandey & Rogerson, 2018). Second, as a consequence of the threats posed by climate change to many social and economic achievements made since democratic transition in 1994, national government committed “to communicate and implement an effective nationally determined climate change response, including mitigation and adaptation actions” (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2018: 7). For the tourism sector specific adaptation and mitigation plans are currently in preparation (Department of Tourism, 2012). Third, whilst as a tourism destination South Africa usually is associated most closely with nature-based tourism, there has occurred since the early 1990s a substantial expansion of city-based tourism (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2017). The growth of urban destinations for leisure and business tourism has been driven in South Africa partly by similar triggers to those in Northern cities around the imperative for economic diversification in the context of high unemployment and escalating urban poverty.

Over the past 15 years the phenomenon of urban tourism has generated a substantial literature in South Africa (Rogerson, 2002, 2011, 2013; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2016, 2017; Booyens & Rogerson, 2015; Greenberg & Rogerson, 2015; Greenberg & Rogerson, 2018; Rogerson, 2018a, 2018b). Although certain observers draw attention to the challenges posed by climate change no research so far has been undertaken relating to tourism in the country’s major cities. In terms of this knowledge gap the analysis here focuses on the risk perceptions

of tourism businesses in Johannesburg which is South Africa's major economic hub as well as a leading tourism destination (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). The character of tourism in Johannesburg is distinguished most clearly by the vital role which is assumed by business tourism within the local tourism economy (Rogerson, 2013, 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014, 2016, 2017). The analysis unfolds in terms of two further sections of material. In the next section the research is contextualised as part of broader scholarship concerning climate change perceptions and tourism. This sets the stage for investigating the Johannesburg case and the risk perceptions of business tourism stakeholders to the imminent threats of climate change for urban and economic development in South Africa's most important city.

## **2 Tourism and climate change perceptions**

In examining tourism and climate change research the importance of undertaking perception studies has long been recognised particularly for informing an understanding of the factors that encourage or constrain policy actions towards climate change mitigation and adaptation (Fronzel et al. 2017). The majority of tourism and climate change perception investigations appeared since the early 2000s and given impetus by the World Tourism Organisation's hosting in 2003 of the first conference on climate research and tourism (Becken, 2004; Scott et al., 2012). The main purpose of perception based research is to gain insight into the manner in which tourists and key tourism industry stakeholders view and understand climate change as well as the policy implications of how to better communicate, encourage and manage effective and purposeful climate change related actions (Kallstedt et al., 2008). Perception research studies continue as a critical basis for interpreting adaptation and mitigation responses (or lack thereof) of the tourism sector to climate change.

In a landmark international review Kaján and Saarinen (2013) show the degree to which existing research is both uneven geographically and across different segments of tourism. Existing scholarship is heavily weighted towards interpreting climate change perceptions in the global North and sectorally towards the segments of winter tourism and skiing as well as coastal tourism. For example, Kaján et al. (2015) consider the climate change adaptation-based perceptions of tourism businesses in Finnish Lapland. In Scotland Hopkins and Maclean (2014: 400) research the climate change perceptions of tourism businesses and decision-makers in five main ski areas to disclose the important finding that "waiting for knowledge to increase before taking adaptive action appears to be the most important business strategy". The climate change awareness and adaptation perceptions of downhill ski agents and municipal stakeholders in Germany reveal they repeatedly emphasize uncertainty about relevant scientific facts, a perception which is attributed to mass media reports about "a lack of scientific consensus on climate change issues" (Hoy et al., 2011: 459). In Northern Sweden Brouder and Lundmark (2011) examine the perceptions of winter tourism businesses and conclude venue-based businesses see climate change as a higher priority than activity-based and potentially mobile businesses regardless of location. In Australia Bicknell and McManus (2006: 386) compare perceptions and responses of resort managers and government representatives in the Australian skiing industry and reveal "that the tension between competing firms on the one hand and of industry cooperation on the other strongly influences the types of response that may develop".

The ramifications of climate change for tourism-dependent and vulnerable small island economies are another focus in tourism perceptions research. For example, in Vanuatu Klint

et al. (2012) explore perception of government climate change adaptation policies by national and local government stakeholders, the tourism industry, development organisations, NGOs and research institutes. In Samoa Wong et al. (2013) investigate the perceptions of key stakeholders involved in the policy, governance and operational aspects of tourism and Parsons et al. (2018) examine the perceptions of local tourism operators regarding climate extremes and adaptive capacity. In an influential contribution Shakeela and Becken (2015: 65) explore how tourism stakeholders in the Maldives perceive climate change risk and conclude “local stakeholders are not immediately concerned, and adaptation measures are woefully inadequate to cope with future climate risks”.

Beyond the focus on small islands other coastal destinations have come under academic scrutiny for perception studies. For Australia’s Great Barrier Reef Goldberg et al. (2018: 238) find tourism operators “recognise the threat of climate change and strongly support increased action to address it” but as yet businesses are “hesitant to engage their guests about climate change despite acknowledging an interest, expertise and responsibility to do so”. Comparing the perceptions of coastal tourism stakeholders at Zandvoort (The Netherlands) and Axarquía (Spain) Gaita and Both (2008: 182-183) disclose among local policy makers and tourism entrepreneurs is a “tendency to delegate the responsibility for defining and taking due actions to the national administrations, justified by the limited availability of resources and expertise at local level”. In a survey conducted of tourism academics across nine countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region focused on beach tourism Valls and Sarda (2009: 49) reveal “uncertainties but no serious worries”. Dive operators in the Egyptian Red Sea are the focus of Marshall et al. (2011: 514) who show that with regards to climate change, tourism enterprises “have not yet incorporated information about the climate and environmental interests of their clients into their business thinking”. Hoogendoorn et al. (2016: 59) describe the perceptions of tourism accommodation providers and tourists at two South African coastal resorts to reveal “accommodation establishments were predominantly concerned with day-to-day changes in weather”.

Rural-focussed climate change perception studies exist both in the context of the global North and South. Stewart et al. (2016) assess the risk perceptions and awareness around climate change related impacts in New Zealand’s Westland Tai Poutini National Park for glacier-based tourism. Using semi-structured interviews Roman et al. (2010) explore climate change perceptions of key tourism stakeholders in the Alpine Shire region of Australia concluding that many threats, including climate change, compete for the resources, strategy and direction of local tourism management organisations. In Spain an examination of the perceptions of rural tourism accommodation groups shows that as an outcome of poor planning by tourism stakeholders “the process of diversification that has taken place will not contribute to increasing adaptation’s capacity of tourism to climate change or consequently to reducing its level of vulnerability” (Gómez-Martin et al., 2014: 293). Coles et al. (2015: 900) show that “property age does not play a straightforward role in encouraging or hindering efforts among accommodation providers to tackle climate change”. For the global South Hambira and Saarinen (2015) determine the climate change perceptions of policy-makers in Botswana and Tervo-Kankare et al. (2018) research climate adaptation perceptions of business entrepreneurs in rural Namibia. The latter study disclosed that even though the majority of entrepreneurs believed climate change would impact the tourism industry, less than half of the respondents considered it might affect their own businesses (Tervo-Kankare et al., 2018). Mushawemhuka et al. (2018) investigate nature tourism operators’ perceptions and adaptations to climate change in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe.

Overall, across a range of tourism perception studies, it is shown that awareness of climate change is a significant factor for understanding climate change action or inaction among various individuals, groups and organisations. (Kempton, 1991; Bostrom et al., 1994; O’Connor et al., 1999; Sheppard, 2005; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010; Scruggs & Benegal, 2012; Broomell et al., 2015; Sing et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it is argued that awareness of climate change will not automatically guarantee positive and purposeful climate change related actions (Shakeela & Becken, 2015). This said, Bostrom et al. (1994: 959) contend that “the provision of information should begin with an “empirical assessment of what people already know along with a scientific determination of what missing information is most critical to their decisions”. Nicholson-Cole (2005: 257) asserts the continued relevance of climate change perceptions research as a necessary means to bridge what sociologists style as the ‘attitude-behaviour’ divide.

A significant new focus in climate change research as a whole surrounds questions about *risk perceptions*. Climate change is projected to play a role in altering risk patterns on a global scale both by enhancing the impacts and intensity of long established exposure events as well as creating new patterns of risk exposure for individuals, groups and business enterprises that formerly may not have considered themselves at risk (Dessai & Sims, 2010; Capstick et al., 2015; Helm et al., 2018; Walshe & Stancioff, 2018). Climate change based risk perceptions are significant because of the manner in which they represent a subjective element of decision-making processes and as such can stall or constrain vital actions needed to reduce risk (Leiserowitz, 2005). A core challenge in dealing with the risks and impacts of climate change relates to the complex channels through which the issue of climate change translates from global phenomenon to being viewed as an important national, regional and ultimately a local issue for concern (Becken et al., 2013; Howe, 2018). Many climate change impacts are embedded slowly in everyday life and therefore often go almost unnoticed (McCright & Dunlap, 2003; Moser & Ekstrom, 2010). Weber (2016: 127) maintains that “a major obstacle to motivating action on climate change is the fact that for many people the phenomenon appears not just abstract, but also personally distant in space and in time”. Accordingly, Lujala et al. (2015) identify the need to know more about why people have divergent attitudes and perceptions concerning climate change and its possible consequences. Van der Linden (2015: 116) maintains the critical importance of perception research within climate change because “the perception of risk is a mental construct”. Risk perception forms a critical component of any conscious and purposeful action as a tangible shift in mental cognition must occur before adaptation actions might be instituted. Indeed, Adger et al. (2009: 346) state that “in situations where no risk is perceived, little if any action to adapt is undertaken”. O’Connor et al. (1999: 461) draw attention to particular differences between general environmental beliefs on the one hand and risk perceptions on the other; they maintain that risk perceptions “are not a surrogate for general environmental beliefs, but have their own power to account for behavioural intentions”. Further, Dong et al. (2018) aver that risk perception of climate change mediates the relationship between information and climate action.

In approaching the issue of climate change and risk perceptions O’Neill and Nicholson-Cole (2009: 265) identify the need for researchers to tread carefully as dramatic representations of climate change impacts can lead to individuals seeking to “distance or disengage” because of feeling helpless or overwhelmed. Arguably, climate change related interactions are complex such that perceptions encompass a wide variety of groups and individuals’ cognitive and emotional landscapes. As Wolf and Moser (2011: 6) assert people “are not ‘blank slates’ receiving information about risks (such as climate change) and interpreting them at face

value. Rather, such information is always and inevitably filtered through pre-existing cultural worldviews". In many instances, however, several facets of climate change related risks must be regarded as 'slow creeping' because risks are not easily experienced directly and as such tend to not "activate a primal affective/associative risk response" (Van der Linden, 2014: 437). Accordingly, in trying to encourage effective and purposeful climate change related action Howe (2018: 467-468) suggests "the success of these efforts depends heavily on social factors, such as citizen policy preferences and policy support, awareness of appropriate behavioural responses and risk perceptions, among other factors". Further, in attempting interventions Findlater et al. (2018: 178) caution that "the processes of human judgment and decision making involved in harmonizing the management of climate change with weather, climate variability and other 'normal' risks are understudied and therefore poorly understood".

For urban environments whilst a number of investigations exist around climate change related risk (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007; Mosley, 2014; Hu & He, 2018; Meerow & Mitchell, 2017; Torabi et al., 2018) specific questions about climate change and risk perceptions in tourism remain unexplored. This lacuna is unfortunate as the potential benefits of tourism development in cities can be undermined by the impacts of climate change and of the subjective elements attached to the risk perceptions of individuals, groups and organisations that might constrain effective action (Kusakebe et al., 2015). It is against this background of existing scholarship on climate change perceptions and tourism that in the next section the risk perceptions of tourism stakeholders in South Africa's major business tourism destination are the focus of discussion.

### **3 The Johannesburg study and findings**

In terms of this research on urban tourism and climate change an overview is given initially of the context of the economy of Johannesburg, its tourism base and climate change assessments. Attention then shifts to the methodology before presentation of research findings concerning risk perceptions and responses of the city's business tourism sector stakeholders.

#### **3.1 Context**

Johannesburg is South Africa's most economically important city with the finance sector and its allied activities (insurance, accounting and legal services) the leading contributors to Gross Value Added (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson, 2018b). Indeed, the city must be recognised as a global service centre in terms of finance, banking and related services (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2015). Johannesburg's strength in finance and corporate decision-making makes it a gateway for international as well as national businesses for the wider economic region of sub-Saharan Africa. The city hosts Africa's largest stock exchange and is the headquarters of the largest share of corporate headquarter offices in South Africa. Until the 1980s much of the core finance and services economy was based geographically in the inner city. However, a flight of capital began and accompanied the emergence and subsequent consolidation of finance capital in decentralized property nodes and most especially in the Northern suburbs area of Sandton which assumed the status of Johannesburg's financial centre (Rogerson, 2018b). The role of the Sandton business district cannot be understated within the city of Johannesburg's broader position as "the preferred choice for business operations both in South Africa and the broader region because of several

agglomeration factors associated with the city's position as the leading economic hub, financial complex, and core market of Southern Africa" (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2015: 353).

The global, regional and national significance of Johannesburg in terms of finance, business services and corporate decision-making impacts strongly the growth and character of the city's tourism economy (Rogerson, 2002; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2017). Since democratic transition in 1994 Johannesburg has been a major beneficiary of the surge in international and domestic tourism that has occurred in South Africa (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014). According to IHS Global Insight data between 2001 and 2015 the total number of tourist trips recorded for Johannesburg expanded from 1.9 million to 3.4 million. As a typical multi-purpose urban tourism destination, the largest number of trips are for visiting friends and relatives which is mainly by domestic travellers (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016). Leisure travel is of rising significance in the city's tourism economy and since the early 1990s the city has undertaken to expand its offerings in terms of new cultural and heritage attractions as well as the hosting of important sports events. For both local and international tourists shopping is another major attraction in Johannesburg (Rogerson, 2011). Further, for international tourists the role played by Soweto in the anti-apartheid struggle has made it a popular focus for what is termed variously poverty, township or slum tourism (Frenzel, 2016).

By far the most distinguishing feature of Johannesburg's tourism economy, however, is the strength of business tourism which is particularly concentrated in the surrounds of Sandton (Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2016). The opening of an international standard convention centre in Sandton was a landmark event in consolidating Johannesburg's role as prime destination for international and local conferences. Further reinforcement for the strength of business tourism is the establishment of a cluster of high quality accommodation services sector of four and five star hotels as well as of executive service apartments (Greenberg & Rogerson, 2015; Rogerson, 2014a). The Sandton node also offers a range of other forms of accommodation hospitality services that might be used by different types of business traveller including all suite hotels, boutique hotels, guest houses, limited service hotels, bed and breakfast establishments and a range of Airbnb options.

As South Africa's most important locus for business tourism as well as the location of the largest cluster of green property developments in the country – including of green hotels - the Sandton area of Northern Johannesburg provides an instructive case study in terms of interrogating the risk perceptions and responses of tourism stakeholders concerning climate change (Rogerson, 2014b; Rogerson & Sims, 2012). Nevertheless, South Africa's national baseline assessments about vulnerability and the impact of climate change on major tourism attractions and activities in the country inevitably focus mainly on nature tourism in the country's protected areas, Cape Town and the Winelands, the Garden Route and the beach attractions of coastal Kwazulu-Natal (Golder Associates, 2012). Only brief mention is given to the potential tourism impacts of climate change in Gauteng province (with Johannesburg its apex) with concerns recorded about electricity supply and access as well as "potential unpleasant weather conditions" (Golder Associates 2012: 17). Johannesburg is already experiencing several negative consequences from climate change most notably warmer than average temperatures (Phalatse & Mbara, 2009). Climate change predictions point to far reaching impacts for the city. Among the projections of climate models for Johannesburg is for further "significant increases in temperatures over the next four to five decades, with this trend continuing into the subsequent century" (City of Johannesburg, 2014: 2). It is suggested that this warming trend will have a significant impact on average seasonal temperatures with a range of climate model projections pointing to an annualised temperature increase for

Johannesburg in the order of 2.4°C in the near future and up to 4.5°C increases in the longer term. In addition, rainfall is expected to increase moderately but significantly in future with increases in the number of rain days and especially of extreme participation events. Overall the climate model projections for Johannesburg suggest that the local climate is likely to become both significantly hotter and more humid (Phalatse, 2011). Indeed, Johannesburg faces a range of climate change impacts around warm spells/heat waves, heavy rainfall and a longer rainy season and the higher frequency of storm events (Phalatse, 2011). These climate futures potentially will impact the city's economy and residents through higher costs of living, threats to water supplies, possible impacts on power supplies and deterioration of air quality (Phalatse, 2011; City of Johannesburg, 2014).

In response to climate change the City of Johannesburg authorities recognised its impacts as “the biggest threat to sustainable development” (Phalatse & Mbara, 2009: 1). The city undertook a climate change vulnerability study in order to improve its resilience to climate change and to inform Johannesburg's adaptation plan which was to lead to the adoption of a suite of ‘no-regrets’ adaptation actions. Although the poor were identified as the group most at risk from the ramifications of climate change, policy-makers acknowledged that many sectors in the city must put in place adaptation measures to climate change (Phalatse, 2011). During 2009 the city authorities established a climate change plan with a number of adaptation activities attached to it; in 2012 it developed subsequently a climate change action strategy (City of Johannesburg, 2014). The city is a member of the global C40 cities initiative committed to taking bold actions on tackling climate change, driving urban action that reduces climate risks and thereby charting pathways towards a healthier and sustainable urban environment. Nevertheless, because of institutional changes and budgetary constraints “neither the adaptation plan nor the strategy have ever been implemented” (Hickmann & Stehle, 2017: 8). Holgate (2007) identifies a group of barriers which impede climate change mitigation implementation in major South African cities (including Johannesburg) amongst which are city internal structures, financing issues and political interventions. As a whole, it is stressed by Hickmann and Stehle (2017: 8) that with its lack of implementation the metropolitan government of Johannesburg still confronts “serious challenges in terms of taking action on climate change”, including for the expanding tourism economy.

### **3.2 Methods**

In addressing the objective of the research study to analyse the climate change perceptions of key tourism stakeholders in Johannesburg the selected approach was through qualitative interviews. These were conducted with a cross-section of business tourism stakeholders in the Sandton node. All respondents were in managerial positions variously in relation to local area planning, operations of conference centres, or directly responsible for accommodation establishments. Interview respondents were purposively sampled to capture the array of different sizes of accommodation establishment servicing the business traveller in the Sandton area. In total thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken; the majority of respondents were drawn from accommodation service establishments. Details of the respondents are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of the 30 respondents interviewed.

<b>Respondent's role</b>	<b>Business type</b>
District manager	Sandton City Improvement District Forum (1)
General manager	Limited service hotel (2)
	Large hotel (3)
	Large hotel (10)
	Large hotel (5)
	Large hotel (16)
	Limited service hotel (6)
	Limited service hotel (29)
	All suite hotel (8)
	Extended stay hotel (9)
	Serviced apartment (12)
	Serviced apartment (7)
	Serviced apartment (30)
	Boutique hotel (11)
	Boutique hotel (14)
	Guest house (17)
	Guest house (18)
	Guest house (21)
	Guest house (23)
	Guest house (27)
	Tour operator (15)
	Conference centre (13)
Head of operations	Conference centre (4)
Business owner	Guest house (19)
	Guest house (20)
	Guest house (22)
	Guest house (26)
	Bed and breakfast (24)
	Bed and breakfast (25)
	Bed and breakfast (28)

Note: The number in brackets is the respondent ID and was allocated in order of the interview schedule.

Length of interviews varied with average interview duration approximately 30 minutes. All interviews were conducted personally at the place of work of respondents, usually an accommodation service establishment. Responses were recorded in notebooks as most interviewees were uncomfortable to have interviews digitally recorded. Interviews were manually coded thematically for analysis in terms of four key overlapping themes. First, the study sought to identify stakeholders' awareness of climate change and sources of knowledge. Second, relates to individual stakeholder's perceptions of the potential risks that climate change might pose to tourism in the Sandton area. Third, the research explored the risk related hazards as perceived by respondents. Finally, the interviews interrogated the extent of actions currently undertaken or planned in relation to climate change adaptation or mitigation. In cases of no actions being undertaken to address climate change the reasons for inaction were probed. Attention now turns to the results relating to these four sets of issues.

### 3.3 Results and discussion

At the outset of analysing risk perceptions of Johannesburg business tourism stakeholders is the question of awareness of climate change. Across all the 30 interviewed respondents listed in Table 1 there was an acknowledgement that tourism stakeholders had heard of the issue and challenges surrounding climate change. Overall, there is disclosed considerable variation in the extent to which tourism stakeholders could articulate the phenomenon. Indeed, the

inability often to describe issues around climate change points to varying levels of understanding and knowledge about the complexities of climate change. It was disclosed that levels of respondent awareness and knowledge of climate change was associated with the channels through which respondents heard about and interpreted questions around climate change. Of note was variations between respondents associated with larger and corporate-owned accommodation establishments on the one hand and smaller, usually independently owned accommodation service providers on the other. For those stakeholders associated with large hotels which are part of international chains or large South African owned hotel groups, respondents highlighted awareness of climate change issues was framed by corporate discussions, internal company reports as well as access to external reports concerning climate change ramifications. By contrast, for smaller establishments, most notably independent guest houses and bed and breakfast providers the major information source for impacting their awareness levels of climate change is that of local media and standard publicly available information sources through television news, local media and radio. Of note is that no mention in the interviews was made of the internet based social media sources such as Facebook as a source of accessing information about climate change. Notwithstanding the limitations attached to access of information to impact knowledge of climate change most Sandton respondents appeared comfortable in the state of their awareness and understanding of climate change issues. Only one exception was noted by the response of one guest house manager who conceded that “*climate change is not really a subject that I know very much about*” (17).

In seeking to explore risk perceptions the 30 interviewees were asked to reflect on how they considered climate change might impact Johannesburg as a whole and Sandton in particular. In addition, respondents were probed on whether there are any particular weather- or climate related impacts or hazards that would be considered to present a risk to their tourism enterprise. The aggregated findings are presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Perceived risks associated with climate change by Sandton tourism stakeholders.

Perceived Risk	No. Respondents	% Respondents
Hail	9	30.0
Floods	3	10.0
Lightning	3	10.0
Drought	1	3.3
No impact	6	20.0
Unsure/Don't Know	8	26.7

Note: Some respondents indicated more than one perceived risk.

The results reveal a lack of consensus and understanding by tourism stakeholders of the potential future challenges that confront businesses in Johannesburg as indexed by the findings from climate science research and as acknowledged by city authorities (Phalatse & Mbara, 2009; Phalatse, 2011; City of Johannesburg, 2014). With the notable exception of the City Improvement Manager for Sandton (1) almost all other interviewees did not perceive climate change as presenting a significant risk either to the Johannesburg tourism economy or specifically to their tourism businesses. Many respondents conceded that climate change might represent a long-term issue which, at the earliest, may impact on them in 10-20 years but not in the immediate short-term (seen as 5 years). The most remarkable finding is, perhaps, that almost half of respondents either perceive no impact risk to their business or are simply unsure/unaware of the threats posed by climate change in Johannesburg. Of the 53 percent of respondents who did offer a response in terms of potential hazards, the greatest concern related to hail with a small number of respondents discussing floods, lightning and

drought. It was significant that the biggest risk was that in association with violent hailstorms. The respondents did not see even this risk as extreme enough to warrant any kind of systemic response. Indeed, the attitude of respondents is captured by the response of one hotel manager that the worst that could happen was damage to guest cars and that *“while it might cause complaints, we aren’t liable for any damage to cars so it isn’t a major issue...in the long term we might need to budget to have shade netting put up”* (29). It should be noted, however, that this lack of concern around a potential weather event is tempered by the fact that most large Sandton hotels already supply outside covered parking as well as undercover parking. Flooding was acknowledged as a risk by three respondents but none of the interviewees could articulate further how flood threats might impact their specific business. One manager of a boutique hotel pointed out that flooding was a highly localized issue which did not impact her establishment which was situated at the top of a slope and despite incidences of heavy rain had no impact on the business. Lightning strikes are a long-term hazard in Johannesburg and a number of respondents noted potential threats for further such strikes. Finally, a small number of respondents did allude to long term threats to water supplies in Johannesburg from climate change. This said, managers added even this was not likely to impact severely their business as they would simply have to ensure that guests could be supplied with bottled drinking water, the costs of which would be passed onto hotel clientele. Of interest was one respondent who discussed the potential impacts of drought conditions in South Africa more broadly as having significant impacts on the costs and availability of food supplies for Johannesburg as well as putting stress on supplies of water which was recognised as essential for the workings of tourism businesses (4).

In examining climate change as a current or future priority for Sandton tourism businesses and the specific actions which businesses undertake for adaptation and mitigation, the results disclose minimal action. Nearly all interviewees noted climate change is simply not a significant business concern at present. As one interviewee suggested: *“It’s something that we pay lip service to from time to time”* (3). A key consideration in understanding why climate change related potential impacts are not generally considered a high priority by Sandton tourism businesses is the way Johannesburg is currently perceived by tourism stakeholders as facing lesser challenges (and potential impacts) than other South African cities and regions. One respondent spoke as follows: *“I don’t see it (climate change) as a major issue. We are way more temperate weather wise than the rest of the country”* (12). Another interviewee stated that unlike many other parts of the country that might face increasing climate change related issues *“We also have infrastructure”* (5). This point was reinforced further by citing that Sandton represents not just Johannesburg’s financial hub but the financial heart of South Africa and recollecting that at the height of South Africa’s electricity crisis in 2008 the city’s former mayor promised *“Sandton will always have power, even if it means setting up generators to exclusively supply electricity to it”* (5). The particular nature of the Sandton tourism economy was observed by another respondent as minimizing the threats of climate change: *“As long as Sandton stays where it is, we’ll always have business here. It’s the companies located in Sandton that influence tourism here”* (30). Likewise, other interviewees considered the nature of business tourism markedly different to leisure-based tourism: *“We are not a resort. Weather isn’t a big issue, we are a corporate hotel”* (16) and that regardless of weather conditions *“People will still have meetings”* (13). Only one interviewee appeared concerned seriously about future climate change impacts of extreme weather events on their business in stating that if an extreme event ever took place in Sandton *“Are we prepared? I’d say we aren’t, but then we’ve never been tested”* (1). This comment aside, for the rest of the interviewed tourism stakeholders minimal concern was expressed about potential risks and responses in terms of mitigation or adaptation.

Finally, some discussion is in order about the ‘greening’ of Sandton tourism enterprises an issue identified in previous research on the environmental practices of local hotels (Ismail & Rogerson, 2016; Rogerson & Sims, 2012). Across the different kinds of accommodation establishments that were interviewed in this research widespread acknowledgement exists of the importance and need for businesses to prioritise green or environmentally friendly practices. In common with the findings of Rogerson and Sims (2012), however, it is economic motivations in terms of the significant cost savings associated with reductions in energy use, and the benefits associated with being resource efficient that is the key driver as opposed to issues of vulnerability to the risks or potential impacts associated with climate change. Indeed, because of the financial incentives attached to energy and resource efficient reductions several respondents highlighted “*greening is a big issue for business*” (5) and more specifically “*electricity and water shortages are a big issue*” (16). The most common barrier for going ‘green’ relates to costs associated with new infrastructure or technologies. One hotel manager stressed the challenge or ‘balancing act’ with going green and “*finding a balance between what is commercially viable versus responsible and environmentally viable is tough*” (10). Another respondent noted: “*It (greening) is a combo of environmental responsibility as well as having a bottom line*” (14). In understanding the extent to which environmentally friendly or ‘green’ based actions are prioritised and undertaken by tourism businesses, a distinction emerges between operational practices that attempt to encourage more environmentally responsible behaviour by staff and guests, and infrastructure-based investment which seeks to improve the physical capacity of tourism business towards greater resource efficiency. Most Sandton respondents prefer the use of operational actions for ‘greening’ over efficient capacity building because of cost considerations. One typical response is “*the current cost of construction makes things very difficult*” (9). Furthermore, construction work for greening impacts business operations; it was observed tourism businesses “*can’t have heavy construction going on while still you have guests*” (30). Furthermore, for many smaller accommodation businesses, the costs associated with extensive green infrastructure development or for retrofitting existing facilities is sometimes difficult to justify. As one respondent recalled: “*We looked into having solar panels installed because of regular load shedding and it would have cost over R2.5 million upfront*” (7). Lack of financing for greening was raised as a barrier: “*Banks don’t really finance things like solar, so it becomes impossible for small business like mine to even think about it*” described the owner of a local guest house (27). This viewpoint was confirmed by the manager of a local independently owned hotel who conceded the challenge of old or “*aging infrastructure*”, stating that the establishment’s “*infrastructure was never designed to be green*” (5) and “*it would actually be easier to knock down the entire hotel and start from scratch rather than trying to add on*” (5).

Overall, because of the financial challenges facing long-established accommodation businesses around implementing new greening infrastructure the most common responses are small-scale and non-invasive interventions such as the widespread introduction of power efficient lights or motion sensors. In newer Sandton hotel developments, many associated with South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup of soccer, greater investments were made to ‘green’ technologies with infrastructure such as grey water recycling systems described as “*a basic requirement for new hotels*” (3). Most respondents did not view the introduction of improved greening or environmental practices as translating into enhanced competitive advantage. As discussed also by Ismail and Rogerson (2016) and Rogerson and Sims (2012) the majority of Sandton tourism enterprises respondents consider that South Africa and local consumers “*are still behind Europe*” (19) in terms of environmental awareness and reiterated that environmental consciousness was inseparable from economic

considerations. One interviewee reflected that *“We’ve found that encouraging simple things like asking guests to not change their towels everyday can add up”* (3). Likewise, basic greening or climate change mitigation measures, such as training staff to be greener and actively encouraging guests to be more environmentally conscious in their use of power or water, can have significant financial returns. By contrast, the unknown risks associated with climate change and the pursuit of other climate change adaptation measures are far less inviting at present for Sandton tourism businesses. One respondent remarked: *“At this place we don’t have any huge strategy plans in place because we don’t see it (climate change) as a threat”* (8). Rather, *“we mostly stick to small scale strategies like recycling”* (8). In seeking to understand what might lead to future climate change based adaptive action by the tourism industry in Sandton two types of responses emerge. First, is that core responsibility for active climate change related action was seen to rest with national and local government and it was viewed government should take the lead in driving climate change education, policy, incentives and enforcement measures. This was made clear by one respondent: *“When government tells us what they want us to do and makes it mandatory for us to keep doing business, then we’ll follow”* (25). A second response was that the industry would take concrete action towards adaptation only *“if and when climate change became an issue”* (1). Likewise, another interviewee stated *“we haven’t really explored the option yet”* but was certain that the industry would adapt when such action is needed (9). Overall, these responses reaffirm the limited current awareness levels and risk perceptions of Sandton tourism businesses towards climate change issues.

In unpacking individual stakeholder views, significant variations are apparent between stakeholder perceptions of climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is evident that whereas most Sandton stakeholders interviewed do not view climate change related risks, impacts, or hazards as of major contemporary concern, mitigation actions are perceived positively by all interviewees. In particular, with respect to energy saving measures all stakeholders claimed to make extensive use of electricity saving devices. One interviewee responded that *“everyone has to start greening”* (21). The greater acceptance of mitigation actions is underpinning by two factors. First, that by acting environmentally conscious and undertaking certain mitigation-based actions, business operating costs are reduced: in the words of one interviewee, being green is ultimately *“good for your bottom line”* (11). Second, the impact of legislation on businesses undertaking mitigation based or ‘environmentally friendly’ actions must be recognised. Managers of new hotels stressed that planning requirements for permits for new constructions require the incorporation of greywater recycling systems and power efficient layouts. In the case of accommodation providers linked to international hospitality brands (or under management by such groups), corporate environmental policies demand the introduction of such greening practices. A long term challenge for further deepening of climate change mitigation practices relates to guest attitudes. It was highlighted that most South African guests are yet to embrace environmentally responsible behaviour. As one respondent stated: *“Some guests appear to assume that because they have paid for their accommodation that they are entitled to use as much water as they like, waste power, and demand fresh towels every day even though they would never behave like that at home. They somehow feel entitled to”* (24). By contrast to mitigation-based actions, Sandton tourism stakeholders appear only minimally concerned with climate change related adaptive actions. The consensus appears to be a wait and see attitude towards climate change before taking any actions. One respondent argued we *“would need to see it impact on us first”* (29). Another noted revealingly that *“Adaptation starts when there is a huge need because of financial loss”* (17).

#### 4 Conclusion

With more than half the world's population now resident in cities it is urgent that the agenda of climate change research be extended specifically to consider urban environments (Hunt & Watkiss, 2007). Although the growth of research is occurring across several urban impact issues it is argued here that an important investigatory void surrounds climate change and city tourism. The importance of this topic for researchers is underscored by the significance of tourism for urban development both in the contexts of Northern cities as well as the global South. Accordingly, this study adds to a mounting body of academic writings which examine both city-scale issues and climate change as well as specifically to considerations around tourism and climate change. The setting of Johannesburg – a city that in recent years has experienced considerable warming as well as changing rainfall patterns - makes the findings of this study particularly relevant to debates about Southern cities.

The overall findings point to a major disconnect between the climate change threats as openly recognised by Johannesburg city authorities and the risk perceptions as expressed by Sandton tourism stakeholders. The climate change models for Johannesburg point to potentially major changes in the city's future climate regime. As conceded by city officials the models suggest the city's temperatures may rise by around 2.3°C in the near future (2056-2065) and around 4.4° C in the far future. In addition, there is a substantial risk that Johannesburg will experience an increase in rainfall patterns characterised by a higher frequency of storm events and a longer rain season (Phalatse, 2011; City of Johannesburg, 2014). It is apparent that Sandton tourism businesses presently are woefully unprepared for the challenges from climate change. Risk perceptions about the potential projected consequences of climate change for tourism businesses are low and have not catalysed any significant systemic responses beyond small-scale greening initiatives which are driven more by economic cost saving reasons rather than as responses to climate change. In several respects the central findings from this investigation confirm those of broader research studies concerning tourism and climate change adaptation in South Africa. It is concluded in national baseline assessments variously that “climate change issues are not discussed at the various levels within the sector”, that in the context of a recent downturn in the tourism economy “the controversies regarding climate change has also led to a certain resistance to discussion and response initiatives within the sector” (Golder Associates, 2012: 20). Overall, the consensus among tourism industry stakeholders in South Africa is that climate change and associated sustainability initiatives are viewed “as something of a ‘nice to have’ rather than a necessity” (Golder Associates, 2012: 20). In final analysis these results are indicative that climate change represents a sustainability challenge that must be regarded, following Dymitrow and Halfacree (2018: 7), as illustrative of the ‘wicked problems’ or global issues that are “multidimensional, hard to pin down and consequently extremely challenging to solve”.

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