Programme de recherche urbaine pour le développement

Innovation and Changing Urban Fields: Assessing Municipal Action in Inner City Johannesburg

AbdouMaliq SIMONE
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Introduction: Exceptional Urbanism

There is no definitive set of conclusions really possible to a study that has focused on the oscillating remaking of a specific urban territory itself a small but critical facet in the restructuring of Sub-Saharan Africa's major metropolitan center. For if a series of intersecting informalities—of everyday practices, economies, and governance—largely shapes the morphology and social dynamics of the Johannesburg's inner city terrain, then the charting of definitive trajectories is difficult. Rather, the study points to the very possibility of what could be considered "subterranean" urban becomings. The city need not be the city as we have been accustomed to understanding and governing it. In other words, there are urban formations not centered on the classic differentiation of clearly demarcated specialization, sectors, and subjects, but are, rather, blocks that create their own lines of invention and communication across established logics of territorial organization. Urban becomings that cross techno-ontological thresholds of urban spatial orders without any particular fidelity to specific modes of regulation.

Various development and governance regimes might attempt to discipline local economies and appropriations of space, infrastructure and resources, as well as "seal up" the circuitry that extends the inner city into various multiscalar transactions. This is an urban domain that straddles varying logics of organization, employs varying mixtures of technological capacity, and folds specific places of operation into a wide map of external territories. As such, the inner city is always difficult to get a handle on, always difficult to assess in terms of what specific visualizations of underdevelopment or development actually mean.

This is an inner city substantially articulated to the turbulent remaking of urban and rural life throughout the Africa region and even beyond. This is an inner city that combines the tenacious holding on to specific residential opportunities at all costs with a sizeable "floating population" of residents changing residential locations several times a year. This is an inner city largely choked off from official sources of investment capital but also capable of circulating substantial amounts of hard currency through the proliferation of thousands of small investments that configure conduits of importation and exchange continuously extending their reach to diverse markets. These are markets in property, consumables, unconventional financial instruments and even the markets of population movements themselves. This is an inner city that stretches a diminishing infrastructure to the limits of durability in terms of extending survivalist economies. At the same time, it consolidates a range of small technologies—from cellphones, satellite phones, networked computers, and small trucks and minibuses to exert an impact far beyond its apparent capacities.

The aim of this study was to cultivate a series of diverse vantage points from which to document a view of this inner city. These vantage points included:

1. The diversity of livelihood strategies, entrepreneurial practices, and associational life deployed by foreign Africans living and operating in the inner city, including the various strategies, tactics, and organizational structures through which various foreign Africans attempt to strengthen their residential security, livelihoods, entrepreneurial activities, and social support networks within the inner city and, by implication, within South Africa as a whole.

2. The institutional understandings about inner city everyday life at work in the design, implementation, and management an experimental precinct management projected attempted by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, with particular attention to the commercial and political factors at work in determining specific valuations of labor, land, and property, as well as prevalent modalities of association, settlement, residence, and social support.

Through these vantage points, the research has attempted to substantiate the inner city as an urban terrain that has become an anti-city, an an-urban assemblage that serves as multiple sites and portals, a disjunction more than a destination. In other words, it is the hybridized product of intersections among diverse modalities for the production of material and abstract goods, specific logics and structures for organizing cross-territorial flows of commodities, information, and control, and specific institutional ensembles for the development and regulation of space and populations. It is an exception to conventional notions of urbanization based on labor market specialization, individual self-management, and integrative material and immaterial circuits linking infrastructure, service provision, finance, and governance.

In part, such an exception becomes possible as a result of three major levels of urban technological change. At one level, technological changes induce cities to both extend their reach and to consolidate spaces of economic capacity regardless of the histories, livelihoods, and aspirations of the majority or urban residents. At the second level, the fragmentation of cities, and the unbundling of public infrastructure, service delivery systems and institutional life in general, generates a wide range of local initiatives aimed at low-cost provisioning of essential urban services through the deployment of appropriate technologies. The development of such initiatives almost exclusively takes place within very circumscribed territorial parameters that tend to reinforce notions of urban community in cities largely operating against the sustainability of community life. At the third level, the disarticulation of urban spaces and the increased inability of key state and municipal institutions to engender frameworks of governance applicable to cities as a whole generates a vast array of unconventional economies. These economies are centered on repair, the illicit or unconventional use of built and institutional environments, and piracy driven by specific amalgamations of technology that enable these economies. While remaining

largely within the realms of local survivalist orientations, these economies can also attain significant transnational reach.

The Inner City in the urban system of Johannesburg

The inner city is embedded in an overall urban system subject to substantial transition over the past several years. Johannesburg is moving markedly away from a city primarily centered on the management of extraction economies within its borders. It increasingly provides quality infotech and financial services required for expanding and introducing new efficiencies into the primary production processes of extraction at a regional level and the articulation of gold, oil, diamonds, platinum, and agricultural products to financial infrastructures through which other forms of capital value can be derived. Given the mix of economic advantages and distortions affected by the apartheid state and the subsequent insulation of South Africa's manufacturing sector, with its captured labor force, critical changes have ensued. These changes relate to how the accommodation of increased interactions between multinational and domestic actors and production processes are to be spatialized within the city.[i] These changes are reflected in the reconstitution of a central business district to the north of the city, and to the availability of land for expansion, enclaving, and agglomeration. As industrial manufacturing continues to decline, and thus the need for miners and factory workers, Johannesburg is being physically reshaped to cultivate new intersections among finance, telecommunications, energy, engineering, construction, informatics, and tourism, as well as the subsequent new compositions of labor and habitation.

What is clear is that the engagement of Johannesburg, as the countries primary commercial center, by a wide range of African actors—migrants, businesspersons, academics, sojourners, NGOs—has substantially increased as the South African presence in the rest of the region has itself broadened.[ii] Additionally, the speed through which South African predominance in the larger African region was institutionalized drew upon substantial amounts of capital flight and that occurred in the years preceding the political transition, as well as the networks through which this capital flight was organized. Operating under official regulatory radar, highly sophisticated conduits have been pieced together through which money and goods have circulated with great scope across territories whose varying banking and trade regimes would have otherwise impeded such flows. [iii]

Through a combination of increased centralization of regional services, the domination of regional inward investment, and the continued elaboration of unconventional circuits of resource flows, South Africa has maintained a strong comparative advantage in terms of the costs of moving money, goods and people across enlarged spaces of operation.[iv] This makes Johannesburg a center not only for a formal regional economy, but also for a variety of other "real"

economies at different scales and degrees of legality. The elaboration of a more sophisticated formal trading, service and financial infrastructure has its counterpart in a more invisible, "informalized" one. The latter is composed of highly diverse economic activities and actors at widely divergent scales and capacities, often drawing upon either illegal goods, the illicit exchange of conventional goods or services, and the mobilization of diverse actors, some of whom are marginalized from more formal activities.

Until the advent of the dissipation of racilialized residential and occupational segregation in the mid-1980s, Johannesburg retained a clear geographical separation of black working class communities in the southern domains of the city and a white middle class in the northern suburbs. The combination of deindustrialization in the areas immediately south of the central business district and the reorganization of existing residual manufacturing processes shifted investment and jobs to the north. The preference for more secure, campus-style, and automobile accessible office developments, as well as increasing emphasis on sub-contracting work to informal enterprises, results in a structural circumvention of the central business district. [v] This relocation of economy has also led to a shift of commercial and residential investment to suburban-type shopping malls and gated communities.

While an emerging black, educated middle class has been able to follow the trajectories of this economic shift, the vast majority of black urban residents face escalating unemployment and a seemingly immutable entrenchment in residential areas experiencing increasing impoverishment. An increased disjunction in the relationship between the skill levels of the black majority, the skill requirements of available employment, the location of job opportunities, and the location of affordable residential opportunities contributes to a highly differentiated and skewed housing market. Here, there are few transitional opportunities whereby residents can incrementally graduate to improved livelihoods. In light of this situation, the character of the inner city as a transitional space has only been intensified.

Perhaps some ninety percent of the inner city's present residents were not living here ten years ago.[vi] Foreign African and Asian immigrants and black South Africans coming from across the country are all vying to establish some foothold.[vii] All attempt to do so without substantive institutional support and with an urban infrastructure in severe decline.[viii] It also appears that most residents are also living in ways highly dissimilar to those to which they have been accustomed in the past.[ix] Elaborate relationships are configured among hawkers, those with some form of formal employment, social networks organized around their patronage of specific bars and hotels, taxi drivers and passengers, railway workers, and the clients of the large number of hotels in the area.[x] There are also large numbers of people operating in the innerl city, both residents and non-residents, who simply wait for something to happen, or aggressively pursue

an opportunity to steal, work in somebody's else scheme or live off of someone else's income.

Thus, survivalist activities undertaken in highly provisional ways and with limited scope seem to be appropriated by "entrepreneurial" networks operating at larger scales. These scales would include in ascending order: the level of the specific quarter, e.g. Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville; the translocal scale, e.g. flows between Hillbrow and Soweto; Yeoville and Alexandra; Berea and the central business district; and transurban scales, e.g., flows between Johannesburg and Durban; Johannesburg and Maputo. A great difficulty in assessing the character, composition and scale of such activities is the high degree to which these activities are illegal and are protected by various affiliations with legal institutions and transactions.[xi] Within the density of activities and population numbers, information itself becomes an important resource—who is going where, who comes and goes at what time, who guards what, who knows whom—for all of this can be converted into a potential "income-generating" activity. Concomitantly, there is an intricate economy of managing impressions and the visibility of actions that accompany these broadly informal economic activities.

Economies of Piracy

The inner city is place of high "combustion"—in that highly diverse populations are "thrown together" in limited territories, subjecting it to a wide range of different practices, cognition and maneuvers. Its precariousness has also made the inner city a convenient context in which the more renegade facets of South Africa's transition process find expression—e.g. criminalized policing and rampant speculation. A climate has been created where very few residents and economic operators feel that they have recourse to the enforcement of law, municipal codes, or viable legitimate authority.

The main research finding so far concerns the proliferation, elaboration, and entrenchment of what we call "economies of piracy." While this notion strongly conveys economies centered on theft and looting, we have much more in mind. The inner city was a place of substantial infrastructure development—large apartment blocks, with some buildings containing hundreds of units; hotels with swimming pools and sophisticated communications facilities; entertainment complexes; large underground parking garages. This infrastructure has largely either been overextended beyond its intended capacity or converted in uses never intended. These systems of unconventional usage are both informed by and are structuring of modalities of habitation, entrepreneurship and social collaboration that do not coincide with the prevailing normative conceptions of households, social networks and so forth.

For example, it is well known that Nigerians, mostly from Southeast, are major economic players in the inner city—with interests in narcotics, money-laundering, computer fraud, mobile phones, real estate , and beauty products and hair care.

Every mid-afternoon, on a block in the center of Hillbrow, several thousand Nigerians mill publicly in the street. While a common assumption is that they are plying their drug trade, this is only incidentally the case. Most Nigerians involved in the array of provisional and frequently illicit trades have taken over the majority of the areas hotels as residential centers and thus usually purchase their meals from women who sell cooked food in the streets. Yet this purchase of the main mid-afternoon meal serves many different purposes.

First, it is a way for the Nigerians to demonstrate their capacity to mobilize a public presence. This space, Quartz Street between Kotze and Pretoria streets, becomes one of the few places where public life attains such density—thus iterating the Nigerians as a distinct sociality within the city; with distinct capacities for mobilization and coherence. This display becomes a display of impunity, pointing to the insufficiency of South Africans to not only effectively deal with them, but also pointing out of their own deficit of public action. Second, this publicity becomes a means of mutual witnessing. In other words, it is a means of Nigerians from many different walks of life, with different skills, patrons, trades, allegiances, and aspirations to circulate, to exchange information. They also watch the various meetings of patrons—who arrive in luxury cars—with their respective "lieutenants" that take place on the balconies of several bars that overhang the street.

For the most part, the businesses in which Nigerians are involved—while sometimes driven by wealthy Igbo politicians and businessman back in Nigeria—are not structured as tightly-knit mafias or syndicates. Although several former trade union leaders play significant "supervisory" roles in the various commercial activities, these activities are, for the most part, loosely structured. They provide a rubric for very diverse actors to see what they can make of a circumscribed series of opportunities, with mostly limited resources. Although structures of command, resource distribution, and tributary payments are worked out, Nigerian driven commerce depends more on the recombination of different actors and activities, with a particular emphasis on the shifting of different personnel and finance through different regions and sectors. In this way, there is a great deal of ambiguity as to what is legal and what is not, as well as keeping money and goods mobile, and thus under-regulated. Working alliances that are always in the process of being remade also enables new uses to ensue from existent materials, holdings and interests. Nigerian entrepreneurship demonstrates an astute capacity to shift gears and to renovate itself when placed under undo threat or scrutiny.

While the Nigerian example may be the most obvious example of an economy of piracy, this economy extends across the inner city—from the use of underground parking garages as sites of new mega-churches; the use of hotel kitchens as day care centers; and even indoor swimming pools as butcheries. If production possibilities are limited, then existent materials of all kinds are to be appropriated—sometimes through theft and looting; sometimes through the

"heretical" uses made of infrastructures, languages, objects and spaces; sometimes through social practices that ensure that available materials pass through many hands. The key is to multiply the uses that can be made of documents, automobiles, houses, wood, whatever, and this means the ability to put different kinds of combinations of people with different skills, perspectives, linkages, identities, and aspirations. For this multiplexity of social organization constitutes a kind of perceptual system, a way of seeing that then engages the urban environment in such a way that single items, objects, and experiences are put to many, otherwise, unanticipated uses.

Within the vacuum of regulatory authority, there has been the proliferation of a wide array of tenancy and subtenancy arrangements. An increasingly preponderance of households are composed of highly provisional arrangements among unrelated individuals, with often complicated informal financial arrangements among them. In addition, residential buildings increasingly house informal businesses—on of which is the provision of short-term accommodation itself. The sheer diversity of the quality of housing stock, its ownership and regulatory structures, and its availability to distinct populations constitutes a field of intricate interplay. Despite the volatility of the inner city, this interplay still manages to stabilize different kinds of residents, from different backgrounds and with very different occupations in face of each other. The middle class is availed a substantial informal economy through which to hedge its consumption expenses and even its access to investment resources. While the poor are availed to the maintenance of some, albeit limited, functioning zones of security and formal provisioning systems from which they can secure some parasitical arrangement.

While the authority vacuum has given rise to various combinations of social actors and the concomitant generation of creative entrepreneurship, it fosters an overall lack of commitment to a series of progressive and discernible steps through which the inner city can be developed. One result is that many individuals and households are actively trying to secure footholds in residential neighborhoods beyond the inner city. As these individuals and households more often than not tend to have greater access to economic resources, these movements out act to further impoverish the inner city. At the same time, these economic differences are not substantially greater, and thus the inner city, in some sense, extends itself across larger territories.

One of the major findings of the research so far is the extent of the diversity of non-formal economies attempting to remain operational within the narrow confines of sub-neighborhoods, all "rubbing up" against each other in ways that can sometimes be complementary, but more often are conflicting. Such conflict tends to reinforce the highly segregated zones in which residents conduct their lives according to common ethnicity and nationality. Even here, the social attributions of common nationality, ethnicity, or place of origin are often not sufficient to ensure workable collaborations. This is particularly the case

amongst the African Diaspora since the composition of political refugees from the same country varies according the shifting political regimes. The research has also found that the operation of various national security and intelligence agencies in Africa introduces a fairly recent and significant dimension to the overall economy and security of the inner city. As such agencies are ostensibly concerned with the activities of their respective nationals within perhaps Africa's most significant urban center, they have, themselves, invested heavily in wide range of nefarious activities, using the capacities incumbent in their agencies to consolidate new forms of illegal and uncoventional transnational trade.

How Key Municipal Actors Understand the Inner City

Taking the diasporic economies of foreign immigrants together with the highly circumscribed movements of inner city residents attempting to navigate open-ended games of chance, deception and trickery, the inner city is the intersection of narrow spaces of operation with porous vectors of external connectivity. Such an intersection poses many challenges to conventional paradigms of urban governance, particularly if municipal institutions lack the policy instruments to engage it, let alone the analytical instruments to develop some functional understanding of the economic and social dynamics involved. It was, then, particularly important for the research to investigate how key municipal actors understood the inner city, and what they thought was possible to do or not do.

The municipality of Johannesburg has been going through extensive structural changes over the past few years, with the result that many of the agencies are still relatively new and developing their mandates. This was true of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the Corporate Planning Unit, the Region 8 offices, and the Metro Trading Company (MTC)—all of which, in addition to the City Council, constitute the key institutional municipal actors.
Yet, municipal actors in Johannesburg have built up a strong policy narrative about the economic and social decline of the Inner City region. This narrative has been instrumental in shaping recent policy and planning interventions in the region. In brief, the story goes something like this:

Johannesburg's Inner City region (which includes the Central Business District (CBD), Newtown, Braamfontein, Jeppestown, Joubert Park, Bertrams, Hillbrow, Berea, and Yeoville as well as other in-lying suburbs) has suffered an extended period of social and economic decline since before the end of apartheid. During apartheid, the Inner City region was designated as a whites-only area. The CBD was home to most of the larger business headquarters, including financial services, and hosted South Africa's stock exchange. During the mid-1980s, according to those I interviewed, many companies began to move their offices to the northern suburb of Sandton, which is now considered the financial capital of South Africa. The stock exchange also moved to Sandton.

As the real estate market in the region fell onto hard times, some housing landlords began to rent apartments to black tenants in contravention of the Group Areas Act. This in turn caused a steadily increasing flow of whites to flee to the northern suburbs, further depressing the rental housing market. At the same time, the common assumption is that the municipal government had become ineffective at enforcing its own laws and bylaws. From 1990 to 1994, this was due to a nervous bureaucracy eyeing the eventual end of apartheid and move to black rule. Municipal agents and officials were afraid to enforce rules because they might be seen as anti-black and thereby jeopardize their jobs in the near future. The first post-apartheid administration, which governed from 1994 to 1999, was much more concerned with the transition to post-apartheid democratic structures and largely neglected issues of urban management, again not enforcing laws and bylaws.

As a result, the Inner City region became economically gutted. Professionals and businesspeople, and the businesses that service them, almost completely left. Poor and working class black South Africans, as well as a large number of immigrants from other African countries, often in South Africa illegally, moved into the area. Buildings that once accommodated offices were "converted" into residential blocks often housing 100 to 150 residents per floor. There existed no real kitchen facilities, and only the communal bathrooms that had originally been installed for the offices, which are clearly inadequate for residential purposes and whose sewage systems, along with the structure and infrastructure of the buildings, quickly become overwhelmed.

Along with the social and economic decline and the lack of enforcement came a dramatic increase in the area of "crime and grime". Drugs, prostitution, thefts, carjackings, and the like became common. Certain hotels in areas such as Hillbrow became centers for prostitution and drug dealing. "Hawkers"— basically, informal vendors—became fixtures on many of the streets in the area, often clogging the sidewalks. Litter levels increased. Buildings deteriorated. Minibus taxis took over streets and empty lots in an unruly fashion. People, especially professionals and businesspeople, began to feel unsafe and stayed out of the region even more. The city became economically and socially gutted.

This narrative is embodied in *Joburg 2030*, adopted in early 2002, as the city of Johannesburg's official long-term strategy for how to develop the city over the next thirty years. According to various municipal officers it was, in effect, cobbled together from two reports done by outside agencies—the World Bank and a Washington-based consultancy firm. The document was created without community input, though it was presented to various communities before it was finally adopted by the City Council.

The city's Corporate Planning Unit has been designated as the "keeper of the document", and while it was unclear even to CPU staff during the summer of 2002 exactly what this would mean, it is probable that CPU will be expected to

take on some coordinating functions between municipal agencies using *Joburg 2030* as the organizing principle, and to actively work with the various agencies to make sure that they are on board with the vision and that their projects fit in with the strategies that the document lays out. Even less clear is what sort of enforcement or at least encouragement mechanisms will be used to ensure that municipal agencies are hewing to the spirit of *Joburg 2030*. What is clear is that the municipal government and even the Gauteng provincial government are taking *Joburg 2030* seriously.

Despite the substantial, seemingly overwhelming problems the Inner City faces, there was a universal feeling that things had gotten as bad as they could and that the area was on the upswing. Much of this upswing can be attributed to the concerted energies that are being spent on turning the region around. Most key actors feel that the Inner City holds various inherent advantages over other areas of the city and that the regeneration of the Inner City is critical to the future of Johannesburg as a whole.

Among the advantages the Inner City possesses is a still-robust basic infrastructure (albeit one that needs attention to keep from deteriorating). Its status as a central location within the municipal boundaries, combined with its status as a transportation hub not only for local commutes, but also the movement of goods and people nationally and internationally, has meant that many companies that might have their headquarters in Sandton have kept their back-office functions in the CBD because it is easy for their workers to get to. In addition, a cheap and plentiful supply of office space with shorter commute times than places in the northern suburbs is beginning to attract young professionals such as lawyers, engineers, and architects. When the Constitutional Court takes its place on Constitution Hill, this will provide many of these local lawyers the opportunity to branch into constitutional law and expand their clientele nationally.

These and other advantages have helped to spur the visions most municipal players have for the Inner City. They imagine a rejuvenated downtown, a twenty-four hour city that not only includes offices but also housing for people of all income levels, with restaurants and clubs that cater both to those in the area and people who will come in from outside. They envision a place where people can walk along unobstructed sidewalks with a sense of security and can look into attractive shop windows offering a plethora of goods and services. They see attractive buildings and clean streets, with orderly traffic flows that get people to their destinations quickly and efficiently. They see plenty of parking for people driving into the area, preferably tucked away underneath buildings. They see markets housing informal traders in discreet areas, offering their own diverse array of products and services. They picture, in short, an urban, urbane place that looks a great deal like an idealized New York, London, or Paris (these cities were often mentioned during my interviews). An urban middle-class paradise.

Regeneration of the Inner City

These visions are being carried out in concrete ways. The city, with the Johannesburg Development Agency (and the Gauteng Provincial Government's development agency, BlueIQ), is pursuing what the JDA's Graeme Reid refers to as "shrinking the core". The footprint of the CBD is too large for its purpose. There is an overabundance of office space in the city center, much of which is low-grade. Active business offices are scattered around the city center, leading to a sense of fragmentation. The idea is to consolidate various economic, social, and cultural activities within discrete areas of the city center, giving each precinct its own independent, unique features that will serve as a better draw than a large area where functions are scattered. At the same time, these precincts should be logically connected to one another so that it is easy to get from one type of activity to another. It is unclear how this is being pursued in terms of the financial sector. But other nodes of activity are being actively generated.

The clearest example of this is the Cultural Arc that the JDA is pursuing, which will eventually incorporate Newtown, Braamfontein, and Constitution Hill into an unbroken arc of cultural production and exhibition, with museums, historical sites, performance spaces, clubs, and the like. Newtown is the farthest along in this vision, with the construction of Mary Fitzgerald Square (a large open plaza that is frankly not very humane in its feel but which has hosted outdoor concerts as well as jumbo-screen live presentations of World Cup sports); the conversion of Electric Workshop and Turbine Hall into large, flexible event spaces; and the opening of the Market Theatre and Museum Africa, along with craft shops, artist live-work spaces, and the like.

Another activity node grew up on its own: the Fashion District, sometimes also known as the Garment District. This district grew up along President and contiguous streets in buildings where rents have been extremely cheap. For the most part, it is made up of independent garment workers, working at piece rate in their homes. Sweatshops have also been endemic to the area, and this has led to numerous raids. It has also increasingly become home to young fashion designers looking for cheap workspaces and who see the advantage of working near the people who will actually put their clothes together. Though this node is "home-grown", the JDA is actively aiding in its development, both through helping to promote designers who work in the area and working with small garment manufacturers to locate appropriate spaces to set up shop. These activities demonstrate a new role the JDA is taking on—that of a facilitator of connections and an economic enabler. Thus far, the JDA has no physical plant projects in the area.

These initiatives fit well within the rubric of *Joburg 2030*, which calls for the establishment of economic nodes throughout the city, including the CBD and its surrounds. Future initiatives, some of which will be targeted for the Inner City area, will focus on building up infotech and biotech industries.

Building Demolition and Renovation
The Better Buildings Programme is the centerpiece initiative for dealing with the large number of dilapidated buildings and buildings that are illegally occupied or house illegal activities. The programme in one way or another involves several agencies, nonprofits, and private corporations. As mentioned earlier, about 30% of the buildings in the Inner City have arrears owed to the city that exceed the value of the buildings themselves. Coupled with the requirement that all arrears be paid before any legal transfer of ownership is possible, this has resulted in the simple abandonment—and often the illegal takeover—of these buildings. The Better Buildings Programme aims to break this market bottleneck. Under the program, the city identifies especially bad buildings that are in arrears and takes possession of them. Depending on the condition of the building, it will then be torn down or will be sold for a nominal fee (often ten rand) to a developer who agrees to renovate the building and take over active management. In many of the places where buildings are torn down, rather than rebuild the city will establish small parks or even areas for informal vendors. This begins to address the severe lack of open space in the city center.

The Johannesburg Housing Company is a substantial participant in the Better Buildings Programme, with an aim to obtain and renovate around ten buildings with a total of 600 housing units per year. Many private developers have also bought buildings and renovated them under this program. In both cases, these units are then rented out to low- and moderate-income residents (with more leeway to rent to higher income brackets for private developers, who do not share JHC's mandate), though the rates are substantially higher than those paid by the previous, now evicted residents.

What happens to the displaced residents of these buildings? There was uniform sympathy for these them. Interviewees viewed them as honest people just trying to get by in an exploitative situation. But the discussions about these residents largely ended there. While there was an acknowledgement that many residents lived in the original conditions because that was what they could afford, there was no talk about how these same people might be able to afford the new type of housing. Instead, it was asserted that there was a larger need to take control of the environment and to transform it into one that is safe and secure. The lives of residents themselves are also upgraded, as they are able to live in a secure, relatively predictable environment that includes security of tenure. This security of tenure also acts as an incentive for people to upkeep their apartments. With the securing and upgrading of these buildings, the removal of any illegal activities associated with them, and the insertion of people who "know how to live in apartments," the entire surrounding area is thus seen to be upgraded to an extent.

In addition, if a building is targeted for takeover or demolition due to illegal activities there, other property owners will be less likely to allow those activities to take place in their own buildings, viewing the demolished building as an example

of what could happen to them. In fact, one interviewee claimed that after a number of buildings housing child prostitution were demolished, child prostitution vanished from the inner city.

Taxi Ranks and Informal Markets

Taxi ranks and informal markets are addressed in this same section because they are often built together, they are built with similar aims, and some of the same dynamics take place in the development of both.

The major impetus for building taxi ranks and informal markets seems to be the drive to decongest and unclutter the streets and sidewalks of Johannesburg, and to control what is seen as a chaotic element in the city. To make the city seem friendlier to those who want (or need) to walk and drive through the area. In addition, those who are charged with planning and executing these facilities are also concerned that the experience of commuters and shoppers be one that is safe, pleasant, comfortable, and fruitful. As Paul Arnott-Job of the JDA put it, he designs taxi ranks not for the taxis, but for the people who use the taxis.[xii]

Between the ICO and the JDA, those involved with developing these facilities now have several years of experience. This is most relevant in terms of dealing with the taxi drivers and informal traders who will be housed in the new facilities. With the experience gleaned from many successes and a few missteps, it seems that the JDA has worked out a fairly successful process for making sure that drivers and vendors are part of the decision making process and feel ownership in the final outcome. Take the example of a meeting held between the JDA, the Metro Trading Company, and a group of muti traders who were to be moved from under a freeway overpass to a new facility at Faraday that would also include a multimodal transport hub. During the meeting, the muti traders expressed a strong desire for partitions between their respective selling spaces, something the architects had not drawn into the building's plans. They wanted these partitions so that clients could feel comfortable coming and consulting with the traders, who often act as traditional health counselors. They felt strongly enough about it that they were willing to put their own money toward the partitions, which they knew were vital to the survival of their business.

This consultative process is important, because there is often a great deal of resistance to being housed in these facilities. For taxi drivers, one great fear is the (quite relevant) notion that if they move from their street spot to a taxi rank, another taxi will simply take over that street spot and its customers. Another point of resistance is to the idea that drivers have to pay a fee for the upkeep of taxi ranks, whereas the streets were free.

Informal vendors have a more complex set of issues when it comes to being moved into markets. There is indeed the issue of someone else simply taking a vendor's spot on the street once that vendor has moved to a market. This is a concern that was acknowledged by several of my sources. The solution, as they

saw it, was strict and constant enforcement of the bylaws, so that once a sidewalk spot has been cleared, it remains clear. This will require a boost in policing. A large proportion of sidewalk vendors operate on even smaller margins than do taxis, and they do not see how they could survive the rates a market would charge them. While the facilities provided (including secure cages for their goods, water taps, electric outlets, dedicated garbage receptacles, and the like) would probably be welcomed, they also cost money to run and upkeep. Since the Metro Trading Company, which is charged with running these markets, has to break even (though possibly with some city subsidies), this means that vendors would have to pay for these services.

Vendors also fear that by moving to a market they will lose the foot traffic that goes along with being on a sidewalk, and that they will lose a clientele that they may have built up over time. Interviewees felt that this would be mitigated by the location of markets alongside taxi ranks, which would drive commuters to them. Finally, because markets concentrate a number of vendors who before were more geographically spread out, and many of whom sell identical items (tomatoes, for instance), the market will not be able to sustain all of them. Some of them will need to diversify (into belts, say), and others will simply not survive the competition. Part of the MTC's mandate is to train vendors both in sustainable business practices and, for many of them, how to sell something other than those rather unmythical tomatoes. It is also charged with overseeing the mix of goods and services provided and maintaining a balance. If a green grocer goes out of business at a market and there are seven others there, then the market can probably stand to bring in something else. If there is only one other green grocer, however, the priority should probably be getting another green grocer.

The Yeoville Market was pointed out as a successful model, one that is a few years old. It remains full with vendors, offers a good mix of products and services, and generates a good amount of shopping traffic. And even more ambitious project has been the Metro Mall, in the CBD. This is a huge facility, with short- and long-distance taxi ranks and extensive space for traders. Both of these facilities were quite expensive to build, especially the high-visibility Metro Mall. Most interviewees agreed that in the future less expensive facilities would have to be built. This would include simply designating spaces (such as the ones left after buildings have been demolished) where vendors could trade. These spaces could possibly "grow" facilities organically as the market site matured and vendors' needs arose.

Security Measures and By-law Enforcement

Because of the strong role crime, or the perception of it, plays in hindering the regeneration of the Inner City, methods of preventing crime and of promoting a feeling of security in the Inner City is of paramount importance to the city. Some of the ways in which the city is addressing these issues have already been

discussed, including the Better Buildings Programme and the relocation of informal traders and taxis to more controlled locations.

Business Against Crime, which was established in 1996, in response to an invitation from then-president Nelson Mandela for businesses to partner with government to fight crime, began the practice of installing closed circuit television cameras in the CBD, installing 15 of them in April 2000. Those cameras were credited with reducing crime by 48% in the area where they were installed, and led to a program to install 240 more throughout the CBD. Though they are credited with reducing crime, some people have questioned whether they really prevent crime or merely help to apprehend criminals (who, admittedly, might repeat their offenses if not caught). The cameras are also not very visible, so they do not add much to perceptions of security.

In response to this problem, both the city and various city improvement districts (CIDs, akin to the business improvement districts in many cities in the United States), have dedicated themselves to installing a substantial uniformed presence in various areas. For the city, this means hiring and putting more Metro Police on the streets, and working to build their capacity to deal with situations beyond traffic enforcement (which was their original, limited purview) and to stem corruption and the perception of corruption within the force. For the CIDs, it means putting private security guards on the streets that come under their jurisdiction. These guards do not carry weapons and have extremely limited powers, but their presence and professional appearance is seen to put people's minds at ease. This uniformed presence, along with a physical upgrade, is credited with making Gandhi Square a more inviting area to walk and work in, and a number of shops catering to middle-class tastes have opened up there.

Supplementing these efforts, the City of Johannesburg was moving ahead with a plan to establish municipal courts that would deal with infractions and by-law violations. This would speed up proceedings that now must wait to go through South Africa's normal magistrate's court system. City health inspectors, building inspectors, and emergency staff would be among those who would serve as prosecutors in the court. The court is anticipated to make it easier to prosecute by-law violations at less expense to the city, allowing the city to more effectively pursue many of the projects I have outlined in this report. The first, pilot, municipal court was to be established in Region 8, seems to be a confirmation that the court is meant to be a tool in the regeneration of the Inner City. Along with the move to establish the court was a call for city departments to step up law enforcement in their respective fields.[xiii]

Towards a Flexible Municipality?

While physical projects such as the building up of the Newtown precinct and Constitution hill, along with the recently completed Nelson Mandela Bridge, are showcase projects aimed at creating regeneration in the Inner City, there are

more fundamental ways in which this goal is being pursued. These other measures—from the taking over of "bad" buildings to the establishment of markets for informal traders and concomitant exclusion zones for trading on sidewalks in many areas to the expansion of by-laws enforcement to the installation of closed circuit television cameras—carry within them a common thread of control and enforcement. Even the various housing schemes, while providing accommodations with all the basic amenities for living, enforce a certain structured control that did not exist before, though one might argue that the violent type of control exercised in some thug-run buildings was more onerous to those residents. It is not easily clear whether this control is good or bad. Rather, the need is for operational consistency between programs. Whether the confluence of all these efforts to turn the Inner City around has yet to be seen, and what the nature of that turnaround eventually is, has yet to be seen.

The extensiveness of the appropriation of infrastructure, services, and regulatory functions within a transnational criminalized economy is such that it is doubtful whether an approach based on generating multiplier effects from high visibility public projects will really work. If nothing else, the research has gone a long way toward identifying just how extensive this appropriation has been—from the appropriation of telephone trunk lines, water supply, control of hotels, use of public internet and telecommunications facilities, to the infiltration of banking operations. Again, this is an urban space that has placed highly diverse peoples in close proximity to each other under conditions where familiar modalities of solidarity and social support either find themselves dysfunctional or have limited basis to really work. The fluid and provisional recombination of household structures, livelihood practices, security arrangements, and social support rearrange everyday social cognition enabling people to see and engage their environment—and the people, objects, and resources within them—in different ways, and thus which become subject to different uses.

The inner city is potentially a powerful incubator of transnational medium scale trade and of new modalities of economic generation throughout the region. Yet, in this situation where vastly different modalities of existence largely operate in parallel to each other, the overall global space of the city is increasingly privatized. In other words, the space of the city beyond work and housing-related enclaves is increasingly beyond the apprehension, use and affiliation of all but those whose capacities enable them to manipulate a "bird's-eye" view of the city. Such manipulation entails intervening at the level of the city's position within the larger abstract space of inter-urban flows and transactions. The city at large, then, becomes an increasingly dangerous unknown universe, full of threats and unseen circumstances, to the majority of inhabitants.

Municipal authorities are faced with a situation where maintaining the ability to run the city requires keeping many of the trappings which excluded people from the city in the past. At the same time, they must allow the city to be radically re-arranged by very diverse populations and interests no longer forced to "stay in

place." Attempts then to make the city more livable for those who have been historically excluded often become perceived as yet another instrument to control those who have been excessively controlled in the past.

While households and communities may adamantly defend their "hold" on specific residential territories that have been informally settled, this "holding" is often mistaken as an expression of an intent to remain within that settlement over a long period of time. Such patterns are usually not the case. While rural to urban migration may have slowed, the South African labor force is increasingly mobile within and among cities, and such a defense of territory is more about defending the "right" to be in the city, to have a place in it—but without commitment to a specific place. Thus the subsidization of rudimentary housing structures, which has been the cornerstone of South Africa's response to the country's housing needs, largely misunderstands the bulk of the population's approach to settlement. For example, housing sub-markets have become increasingly murky and complex as former shack-dwellers sell off their new homes for income and return to living in shacks.[xiv]

Intensifying mobility is also reinforced by the diversity of strategies employed to secure basic needs, e.g., simultaneous participation in formal and informal economies, dispersion of dependents across different localities, and diversifying sources of borrowing and evasion. Such mobility, in turn, cultivates particular economic and social practices that can weaken customary modalities of social affiliation and supportl. Policy efforts to constrain the mobility of domestic private capital and to attract and maintain mobile external capital have had the effect of intensifying the mobility of the poor. This, of course, is not an upward but rather a lateral mobility—within and between townships and informal settlements, cities and regions, in an incessant hunt for livelihood.

In some areas, such as the inner city of Johannesburg, the extent of demographic shifts is certainly unprecedented in contemporary urban history. Also unprecedented is the degree to which social boundaries are marked by spatial arrangements in high density quarters and the ways in which the physical trappings of wealth and security can be penetrated by "roving bands" of "opportunists" taking whatever they can. The intense levels of contestation over who has the "right" to do what in South African cities produces a situation where things can happen very quickly. Urban dwellers don't, as a result, feel constrained by the sense that specific places and resources belong to only certain kinds of uses or identities. There are constant and often violent arguments in apartment blocks, on streets, in taxis, in schools, and in stores about who can do what where. Such argumentation can open up places to greater flexibility as to their use, but it also can break down the integrity of places and a sense of propriety, which in turn, makes them vulnerable to incursions and distortions of all kinds.

Drawing on urban survival strategies used during apartheid to avoid pass laws and other forms of state surveillance, populations proficient in sending the "wrong" signals can continue to do so in order to "win" spaces of autonomous action. Who is a "real" police-person, security guard, domestic, gardener, deliverer, and who isn't is not only increasingly hard to discern, but in many cases doesn't matter, as levels of complicity between the real and the "pretender" intensify. At other times, things move slowly, since urban residents know that many people are paying attention to what they do, and they then try to conform to some sense of what can pass as conventional in order not to stand out. So in South African cities, spaces can change very quickly and also not at all.

Whereas this situation may be the case for all cities, there is a fundamental unwillingness to acknowledge these parameters of urban change or stasis within the collective South African imagination. Yet for the most part, the Johannesburg metropolitan government can do little to satisfy the interests and needs of one group without estranging those of another, who are more willing than ever to assume violent means of expressing their vulnerability. Efficacy in urban governance and planning now increasingly means that no single institutional or sectoral actor is likely to exert much control over how the urban is to be remade.xv

Notes

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[xii] Though this is the case, nobody ever talked in interviews about commuters and shoppers as active stakeholders who should be actively consulted with during the establishment of each facility. On the other hand, I know of at least one document outlining the proposal for a commuter facility that documents surveys done about the needs of commuters in the area.
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