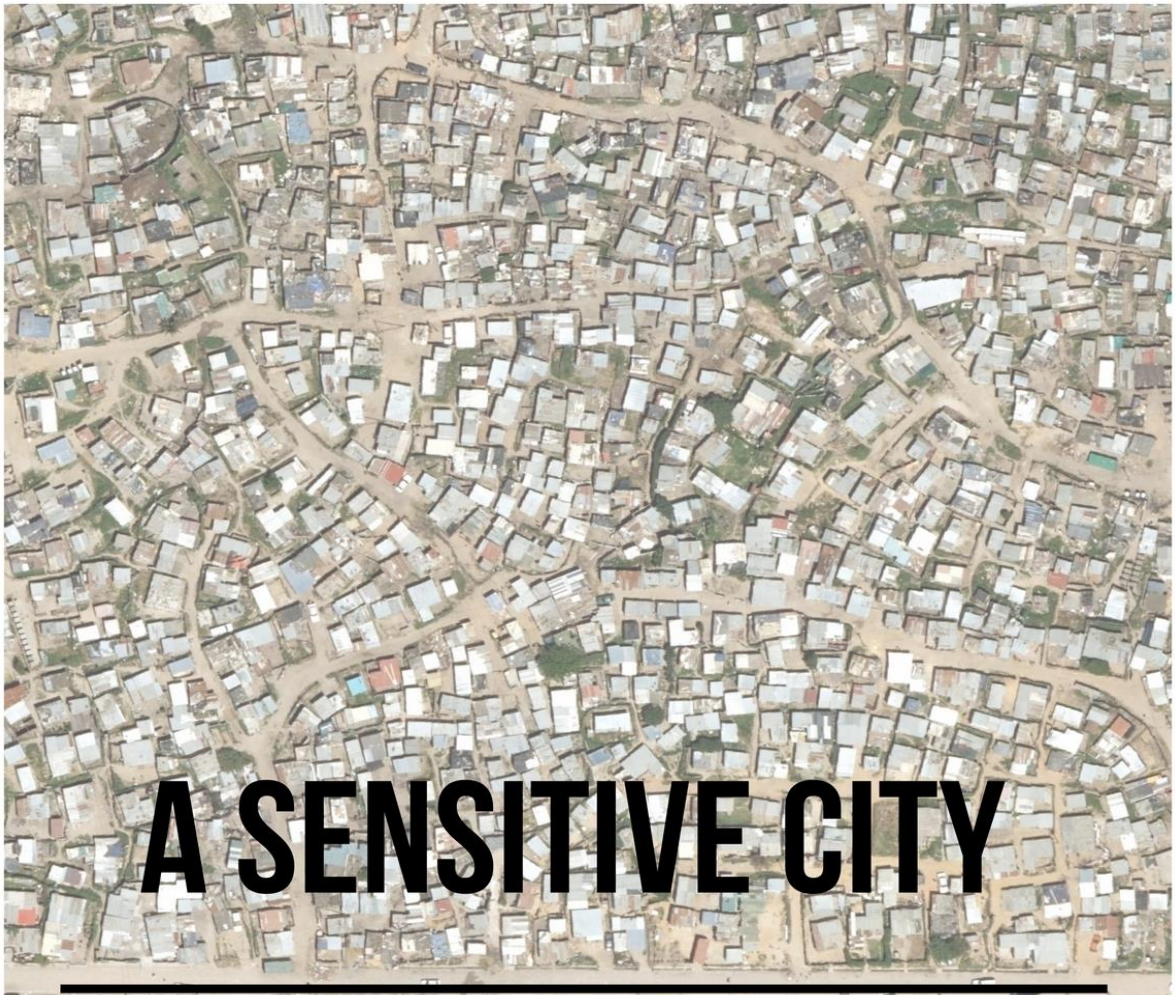
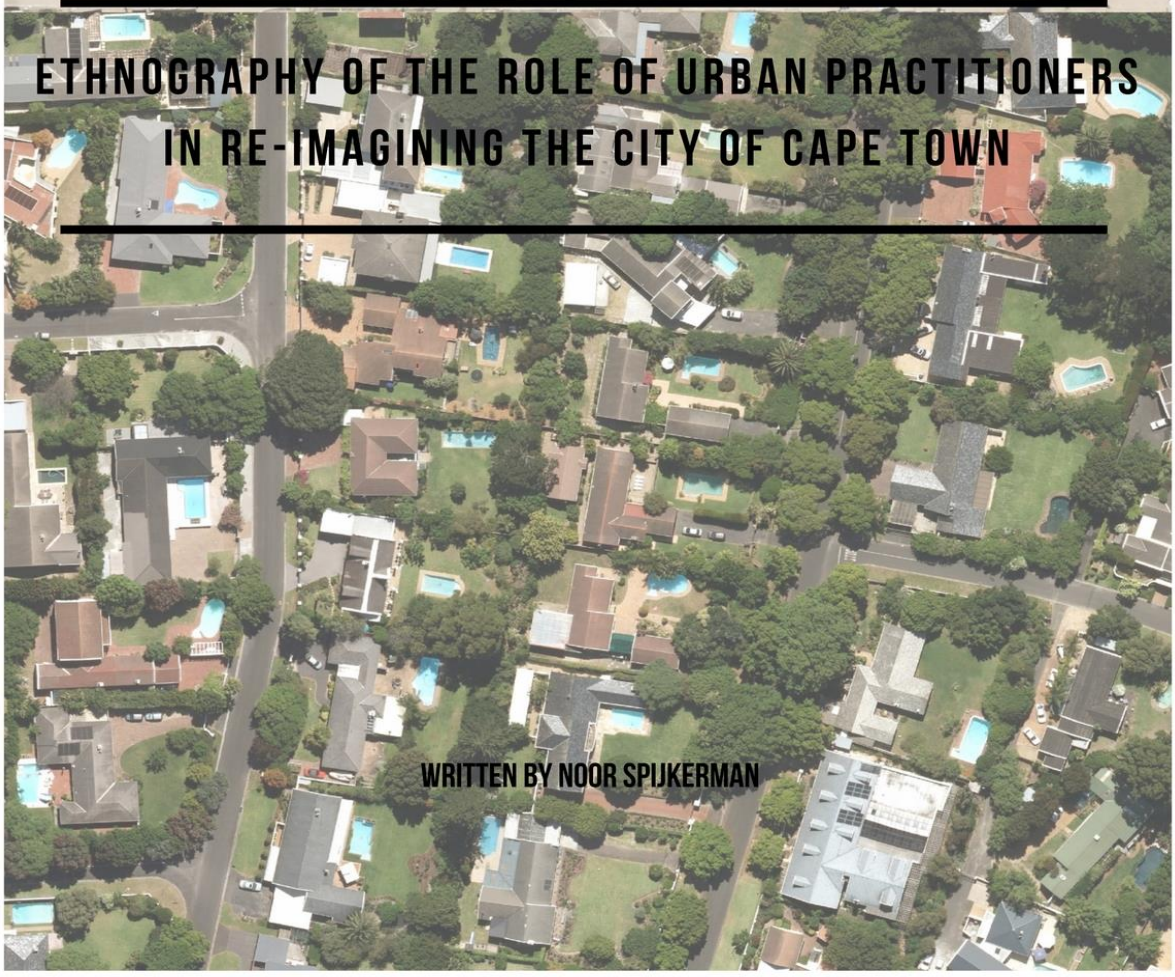


A SENSITIVE CITY

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE ROLE OF URBAN PRACTITIONERS IN RE-IMAGINING THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN



WRITTEN BY NOOR SPIJKERMAN

MASTER THESIS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY: SUSTAINABLE CITIZENSHIP

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY - 15 AUGUST 2017

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ABSTRACT

More than two decades into changing apartheid spatial planning, the promise of a more inclusive city is still palpable in the growing interest to “re-imagine” the city of Cape Town. This process is not an easy one as the often-diverging interests and opinions with regards to urban developments are repeatedly further polarized by the consensus-seeking procedures of public participation. This ethnographic account, based on three months of fieldwork in the Cape Town, explores the process or “re-imagining” the city. Yet, historical trajectories determine current conditions and constraints in establishing better alternatives when it comes to controversies regarding the ability to intervene, shape and participate in the unfolding idea of the city. Dealing with conflict as inherent to society, democracy and thus also public participation seems a requisite in finding a common ground. The urban landscape in Cape Town can be characterized as highly political and sensitive and demonstrates that it isn’t just the physical form of the city that asks to be re-imagined, but rather highlight the demand of the city to come to terms with one self and re-imagining past and emerging relationships. The urban practitioner has come to play a key role in this process as the facilitator of the imagination whilst also being concerned with reassessing their own practices.

Key words: urban practitioner, public participation, imagination, conflict, de-politicization, sensitivity, possible/impossible, Apartheid

CONTENTS

PREFACE

During the three months of doing fieldwork in Cape Town my view on the city has changed considerably. I used to live in Cape Town and, over the past five years or so, took multiple leisure trips to see friends. Yet, this was a completely different experience. I have explored an entirely different side of the city and met people I would normally not meet. The assumed end of Apartheid appeared to be omnipresent and my own privileged position has continuously been emphasized. It might not be the most 'pleasant' experience compared to previous stays but it has definitely been instructive and has enriched me as a person.

The following thesis is a result of months of preparing, doing fieldwork, discussing and thinking, even over-thinking at times. Marike van Gijsel, thank you for guiding me in this process and for being a sparring partner. I want to thank all those individuals who took the time to share their stories with me, drank coffee with me, showed me around town and simply invested their time. You have all added to my passion about urban planning and Cape Town in particular.

Riana, I want to thank you in particular, for sharing your stories, but especially for providing guidance in my first month. Giving me access to your personal network as well as making sure I was fine/safe. Our lasagne was one of the best I've had even though it was a complete failure! Despite our apparent differences you have showed me how we are all humans, sharing fundamental insecurities about life as well as a need to have meaningful relationships. Besides, I want to thank the Development Action Group (DAG). Regardless of your busy schedules you invested time in speaking to me and allowed me to be part of your workshops. Furthermore, you trusted me in being there. By now I know that the sensitivity around urban issues in Cape Town could have elicited a different attitude towards me.

Moreover, I want to thank Gerben, first of all for putting up with my moods the past couple of months. But also for helping me to think about my structure and argument, giving me instructive feedback whenever needed and for just stimulating me intellectually. Without your support and endless patience this thesis wouldn't be what it is now. And last but not least, thanks goes to my mam and dad. Not just for this particular thesis, but for your unconditional support throughout my entire studies. You have always encouraged me to believe in myself. I can't thank you enough for that!

THE CITY
EXPOSING THE GRITTY

TOO COMPLEX
UNCLEAR EFFECTS

FEELING PARALYZED
ALWAYS UNREALIZED

THE IMAGINATION
SO MUCH HESITATION

ROOTED IN APARTHEID
NEVER JUSTIFIED

A NEW DIRECTION
REAR REFLECTION

- Noor Spijkerman -

Figure 1. Public Meeting organized by Commune Habitat – own archive

INTRODUCTION

It's getting dark and we are driving in an old Volkswagen Chico towards the Kalkfontein area, which is located between the city of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, meaning that we need to pass various townships or informal settlements. I keep gazing out of the window to the shacks with roofs made of corrugated iron; other materials like wood and plastic complement the dwellings whereby the new, shiny, dstv-dishes somehow seem out of place. There are so many people on the streets, walking in all different directions, and when we stop at a traffic light I can't help but notice the "smash and grab" sign. To me it is a symbol for the violent nature so often associated with the informal settlements. What a different feeling this is compared to the Observatory neighbourhood where we just came from, which is regularly referred to as hippy town; addressing the carefree look and feel of the area. The contrast is more than remarkable and illustrates some of the profound gaps that the city of Cape Town faces in terms of urban development. We are on our way to a public meeting of Commune Habitat, a community based organization concerned with the development of a vacant piece of land in the Kalkfontein area. No information has been coming to the community from the City of Cape Town on future use or development options for about 20 years. As we turn left, I know we are at the right place because the whole crowd is wearing the green t-shirts that I know so well by now. We got warmly welcomed by auntie Lena. As we are a bit late she immediately takes us by the hand, forces us through the crowd and settles us on stage (yes on stage!). Mr. Markgraaf, the founder of Commune Habitat, takes the microphone and vigorously introduces the different attendees. The women sitting next to us gets introduces as "the highest in government', while the guy next to her appears to be working for Telkom, a South African telecom company. Then two Standard Bank managers get introduced, followed by Gaarith from the Development Action Group (DAG). Last but not least Dr. Nell is introduced as the funder of the project, his ability to attract foreign sponsors yields a warm applause from the community.

The public meeting is organized in response to a series of workshops hosted by the Development Action Group (DAG) that assists Commune Habitat towards the development on the land proposal by offering socio-technical support. The Development Action Group (DAG), is a leading NGO in the urban sector that addresses urban challenges in Cape Town and "Since 2010 DAG has been aligning its programmes, projects and interventions around the theme of "re-imagining the city" and looking

towards a “new urban order in the South African context” [1]. Because, first of all the presence of seemingly disintegrated actors symbolizes a highly contemporary urban field and has profound implications for urban planning.

Based on thirteen weeks of ethnographic fieldwork in Cape Town, the following ethnographic account engages in this ’new urban order in a South African context’. More than two decades into changing apartheid spatial planning, the promise of a more inclusive city is still palpable in the growing interest to “re-imagine” the city. Whereas before the planning and governance of the city was mainly a task of government and planners, nowadays multiple actors take stage and new relationships are formed, which also means that responsibilities are redistributed. Due to new planning styles coming into fashion the domain of urban planning has increasingly become a shared domain between urban practitioner, citizens, City as well as other actors. Public participation, as an example of such a new style, is seen as an attractive response to (social) exclusion and government inefficiency and depicted as the solution to create a more inclusive city. Yet, the process of re-imagining the city is not easy as questions about who is able to participate in the unfolding idea of the city arise, consequently reminding of Cape Town’s Apartheid past. Conflict as a common denominator of the shared domain of public participation has to be dealt with accordingly. In this light, the urban practitioner has come to play a key role in facilitating the imagination and creating common ground. In other words, the central research question reads:

“How can the role of the urban practitioner be understood in participatory processes of Re-Imagining the city of Cape Town and how does this interrelate with historical and contemporary conditions?”

[1] http://dag.org.za/about-dag.html Accessed 18 July 2017

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The next section provides some important concepts characteristic for the new urban order. This theoretical framework consists of three parts: 'urban governance', 'public participation' and 'the urban practitioner'. The urban governance part sketches a background in terms of how contemporary urban issues involve an increasing number of stakeholders. In doing so a highly complex and political field has emerged wherein conflict has become a common denominator. The next section then focuses on public participation as a political process concerned with consensus-seeking. The changing role of the urban practitioner as imagineer of what tomorrows' city *could be* is outlined in the last section.

1.1 URBAN GOVERNANCE

As we move into the twenty-first century cities "have re-emerged as strategic places for a wide range of projects and dynamics (Sassen 2006, 27), spanning from playing an economic role and providing infrastructure to functioning as knowledge hubs. These dynamics, often global in nature, create an increasingly complex urban field and raises questions about the challenges cities will be facing in the future. Bock (2006, 325) explains how "changed underlying conditions, such as globalization, the loss of control by the nation state, economic and social structural change, as well as public disaffection with politics and increasing criticism of the existing forms of representative democracy have reoriented and reshaped the formal and informal organization of cities and urban regions".

Urban planning and policy know a long history in Cape Town. Dictated by Apartheid spatial planning, and critiques thereof, the city's urban environment can now be characterised by on the one hand using urban design to create a more inclusive city whereas on the other hand separation is still highly visible; gated communities are recreated[2] and informal settlements are the order of the day. African cities are changing and growing rapidly, pressuring urban practitioners with a profound, complex and extremely difficult, even daunting task; planning more sustainable cities in an urban landscape that can be characterised as problematic. Simultaneously, there seems to be an increasing recognition that no single actor has the capacity or power to fully understand, and deal with, the multidimensionality of urban problems. The scope and speed of changes demands the involvement of a variety of stakeholders as urban challenges such as resources constraints, poverty, climate change and "social

[2] https://nextcity.org/features/view/cape-towns-anti-apartheid-urban-plan Accessed 21 July 2017

tensions exceed the boundaries of the current compartmentalization of policy-making, planning, administration and academic knowledge production" (Polk and Kain 2015, 2).

This does not only mean that urban space is becoming more political as "powerful global actors are making increasing demands on urban space and thereby displacing less-powerful users" (Sassen 2006, 29), but also brings to light the hope that new networks, cooperative relationships and alliances could be a good alternative to traditional management of urban areas (Bock 2006, 325). The more traditional type of urban control by government alone is challenged and an emphasis on 'urban governance' has emerged. Minnery (2007, 328) demonstrates that defining urban governance is not an easy task due to a lack of common agreement about its definition. He, however, shows that a widely accepted understanding of governance is that it transcends the notion of government or of the state "by incorporating the private sector and civil society into policy making and implementation" (2007, 328).

The abovementioned ethnographic example of the public meeting highlights this general trend in urban planning processes. Government, a commercial company, private entities and civil society all come together in the development of a vacant piece of land in an informal settlement in Cape Town. The presence of a multiplicity of actors raise questions about power relations, accountability, legitimacy and the redistribution of responsibilities among them. In that sense, this thesis is located in a political field of action as "historically, the politics of the city became played out around questions of distribution and redistribution" (Paddison 2009, 9). All parties have specific interests, whereby conflict and disagreement seem to be the common denominator when it comes to the redistribution of responsibilities. Paddison explains the conflictual nature as follows: "the visions of what we have of how our cities should be, how they should accommodate the diversity of political demand, be planned, what should be the boundary between the public and the private – all define the nature of city living for its citizens, and are inevitably the subject of contestation" (2009, 9). This thesis contributes to the debate about urban governance, not in terms of stressing the partnerships as a central element but rather focuses on the inevitability of conflict due to the multiplicity of actors involved in the urban field.

1.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Directly related to the transformative processes of urban governance is public participation, depicted as essential for successive urban governance. Watson & Agbola (2013) describe how conventional urban planning practices are not sufficient anymore in dealing with contemporary urban problems and countering threats such as climate change. They explain how urban planning is depicted as a disengaged, technical and apolitical profession, whereas a critical view demonstrates how it often furthers the interest of political and economic elites who show little enthusiasm for reform from within. A different perspective shows that "in the best of scenarios, the very 20thcentury relics that were designed by the old regime to keep people apart are now being reimagined to bring those same people together"[3] . Even though this re-imagination process is not without setbacks and difficulties, co-creation projects between urban practitioners, citizens and other actors seem to gain interest.

Currently, participation is *the* buzzword in (urban) planning and seen as an attractive response to issues such as (social) exclusion and government efficiency whilst strengthening democracy. However, criticism is expressed abundantly. For instance, Quick and Feldman emphasize how participation and inclusion are often conflated into the overarching term of 'participation', what causes a muddling of both theory and practice of organizing democratic engagement. They view participation practices as "efforts to increase public input oriented primarily to the content of programs and policies [while] inclusion practices entail continuously creating a community involved in coproducing processes, policies, and programs for defining and addressing public issues"(Quick and Feldman 2011, 272). Furthermore, they argue that "while public participation is often a mandated part of decision-making processes, how public participation is implemented can exacerbate tensions between government organizations and members of the public" (Quick and Feldman 2011, 272). Likewise, Innes and Booher demonstrate how the idea of participation itself is dominated by ambivalence by arguing that "legally required participation methods in the US not only do not meet most basic goals for public participation, but they are also counterproductive causing anger and mistrust" (2004, 419).

Silver et al., (2010) dedicate the ambivalence when it comes to public participation to the normativity regarding the debate, meaning that the concerns are rather about the ideal form of participatory democracy. They show how "there is polarization between those seeking consensus through deliberation, decision making and collective action for the public good, and those who maintain that democracy is about political contestation, clashes of interest and control over governance itself"(2010, 454). For this research I connect their line of reasoning to the idea of post-politicisation, which

[3] https://nextcity.org/features/view/cape-towns-anti-apartheid-urban-plan, Accessed 21 July 2017

Swyngedouw (2017, 57) describes as "like other forms of de-politicisation, post-politicisation signals the continuous and highly politicised struggle and conflict over the institutionalisation of post-democratic regimes of governance, articulated around rendering governing to a techno-managerial and bio-political practice of arranging life without changing the common sense and everyday routines of the existing socio-political configuration and its constitutive power relations". On the basis of various examples, ranging from Greece to the political party Podemos in Spain[4], he demonstrates how attempts are made at "suturing the political field and rendering mute the voice of those who disagree"(Swyngedouw 2017,57). Public participation, in my opinion, can be seen as *the* example of such a post-political condition. By means of public participation the political element is attempted to be taken out of the equation. The consensus-seeking nature (taking shape in participation processes) inherent to the idea of the inclusive city becomes a powerful way of communicating a vision of the city that leaves little room for disagreement. Whereas Poddison argues that constructs such as 'the inclusive city' are empty signifiers whereby "their apparent inclusiveness – directly reflecting their ambiguity – defies the legitimacy of their being challenged" (2009, 23), this ethnographic account of urban practitioners practices in Cape Town shows a different story whereby the post-political condition of the city is relentlessly questioned, creating an ever more political and highly sensitive new urban order.

1.3 URBAN PRACTITIONER

The ambiguity of participation highlights the increasing focus on new forms of organization and shows how planning has become a more contextual kind of work. Herein, the involvement of 'the public' has become a requisite nowadays and changes the work of urban planners considerably. Many opinions, interests and emotions *within* public participation are evident, as much as attitudes *about* the process. To that end, Pløger (2004, 72) emphasizes how today "planners must move into a field of reason, interests, norms and ways of thinking about planning, plans and public participation; their actions are shaped by this field".

In urban theory the participation debate often takes shape as 'the right to the city', whereby Chatterton (2010, 235) analyses the debate as concerning "not just a movement for material rights, although of course these are crucial, but the right to shape, intervene and participate in the unfolding idea of the city". As the debate is gaining more and more ground, the role of the urban professional is

[4] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/31/podemos-revolution-radical-academics-changed-european-politics, Accessed 22 July 2017

changing. New visions of urban futures are expressed where, in light of the 'Inclusive City' city idea gaining momentum, urban planners are challenged to re-imagine their work practices. Munthe-Kaas illustrates how a new approach to urban development, like co-design interventions, arise and move "the development of urban spaces from the domain of urban planners to a shared domain between professional and citizens who use them"(2015, 218). It is this shared domain, and how the imagination plays a role therein, that is of interest for this research.

To see how, and in what ways the imagination plays a role in this shared domain it is helpful to turn to the concept of utopia as herein values, ideas, critiques and desires are expressed. For instance, Ganjavie notes that "Utopians throughout the ages, knowing that the problems of their time were growing, tried to propose a functional and universal panacea named "utopia" in order to present a better alternative for their citizens". Related to the urban field, Ganjavie explains its relevance by means of pointing out "its function as an urban laboratory, its role to generate critical citizens debate, and its function to summon hope"(2015, 90). Similarly, when Pinder explores the potential significance of the concept for urban theory, he argues that utopian thinking should be seen as " [that] what *could be*: the potentialities for more socially just, democratic and emancipatory urban spaces and ways of living" (2013, 30). At the same time, utopia contains an allegory translated as a 'not place', indicating that Thomas More considered the ideal society he described in his novel Utopia, as not attainable. Authors like Pinder (2013) and Chatterton (2010) use this line of thought to explore the idea of the urban 'possible-impossible' dialogue. For this research, the value of this approach lies in the use of the imagination by opening up to peoples desires, dreams and what they consider possible or not. By focussing on the urban impossible as a place for expressing dreams regarding the urban future, we can explore how different future-oriented visions interact and shape the direction of change. Through public participation urban practitioners are currently concerned with facilitating these re-imagining processes while at the same time re-imagining their own practices.

The role of the urban practitioner in managing the evolving idea of the city comes to the fore, as "individuals, groups and coalitions often with very different values strive to intervene, improve and determine their [urban] futures [whereby we should not forget that] while many people are involved in shaping the city, some or more successful (and powerful) than others "(Chatterton 2010, 236). Simultaneously, the practices of urban professionals as facilitators of the imagination need to be explored in relation to the idea of the inclusive city. This can be translated into the question how urban professionals reconfigure themselves somewhere between acting as innovators and planning authority (Munthe-Kaas 2015). In conclusion, following Chatterton' line of thought, this research

scrutinizes how the urban imagineer has come to play a key role in making today's impossibility into tomorrow's possibility.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. IMAGINATION

I decided to use the imagination as a social practice a guiding principle of my research. First of all because I believe that the imagination is increasingly gaining importance in the transition towards a more sustainable future. In most sustainability debates it comes down to confronting entrenched regimes and using the imagination to formulate a different future. Guiding questions in such debates are regularly formulated as where do we want to go and how can we get there? Yet, the imagination, and the future, as elusive concepts have not been eagerly addressed in anthropological research. Despite this lack of research, popularity of terms like 'the inclusive city' and 'the smart city' point in another direction, as they are fundamentally future-oriented and appeal to the imagination. Besides, public participation processes engage multiple stakeholders (to varying degrees), to generate knowledge from various imaginations of a place in order to rethink and challenge current notions. Building towards a more just urban environment is all about changing mindsets and therein the imagination of different actors plays a major part. It is not only applicable to how informants imagine or reimagine their urban environment and future but also relates to me as a researcher, adopting the imagination as a central method it allows the ethnographer to become immersed in "a space of play in which the world can be imagined as something not yet or in emergence, rather than as it is" (Hayes et al., 2014, 36).

2.2 ASSEMBLAGES

The elusiveness of the imagination resonates with my perspective of cities in general. Three months of ethnographic research supported an assemblages point of view on cities. Following McCann, this means that I have explored the city of Cape Town as "assemblages of materials and resources, knowledge and understandings form close by and far way, from the present and the past" (McCann 2012, 43). The city then becomes an ever-emerging process that is not to be seen as an intact culture or society in itself. It is multiple contingencies that shape the city environment wherein urban

practitioners and citizens, as much as me – the researcher –, represent a temporal positioning of "the material and sensory realities we experience" (Pink 2014, 413). Compared to a few years ago (when I lived in Cape Town) I did not only experience the city completely different in terms of sensing inequalities more often, but also its ephemerality struck me. In all its simplicity, this became clear when 'materials', like my favourite restaurant, as part of my urban experience had disappeared.

Moreover, carrying out fieldwork - with the city of Cape Town as my playground – I , as well as this ethnographic account as a manifestation thereof, embody an assemblage methodology. Provided that McCann speaks about urban policies instead of cities in general (or the role of the researcher as assembler), he makes its usefulness for this research clear by stating that "[…] it encourages and rewards a methodological openness and flexibility which accommodates the tension between the need to carefully design research projects, on the one hand, and the reality of unexpected connections, mutations, and research sites emerging during the projects, on the other" (McCann and Ward 2012, 43). It is specifically this tension that has informed my research methodology. Because, my research site firstly defined in my proposal as ''the city of Cape Town" has in fact been assembled by the unexpected connections I made with all the individuals and organizations, the referrals arising from them and the places I visited.

2.3 METHODS

McCann and Ward (2012, 43) further argue that in fact: "cities are made coherent through the work of their inhabitants, through the efforts of actors located elsewhere, and through the power-laden and uneven relation amongst these various actors, all set within larger social and material contexts […]". Like a city, as well as being situated in a city, this research is made coherent through the following efforts.

The first month I have predominantly spent time in the Woodstock neighbourhood, having daily informal conversations as well as semi-structured and open interviews, mostly with citizens. Observations of the built environment profoundly informed this part of the research. Besides, I have visited various 'urban' events in town and seminars at the African Centre for Cities. Even though these events and seminars are not addressed directly in this thesis they are part of the assemblage.

During the second month I focussed on getting access to urban practitioners by means of directly approaching organizations in the urban field, like architectural firms. I conducted semi-structured and open interviews and had informal conversations. I joined one of the urban practitioners to a meeting with the representative body of the entire Observatory community, which gave me the opportunity to observe him in a conflict situation. Besides, I have used so-called projective techniques, which proved able to identify how urban practitioners perceive and attach meaning to a particular phenomenon like the city of Cape Town. "Projective techniques are strategies used to access presumably hidden content and emotions using visual stimuli and imagery" (Porr et al., 2011, 31). This technique has the ability to explore perceptions, feelings and desires by the facilitation of neutral or ambiguous imagery. I have asked urban practitioner the following question: "If Cape Town would be an animal it would be a …. because …? So, I have used 'projective techniques', which are often used in market research, to tap into the subconscious mind of my informants to further investigate their imaginations. Unfortunately the mind maps I made with two urban practitioners have not been used in this research but did inform further questioning in later interviews. I consider the background documents that I have been given regarding urban projects discussed in interviews as part of the material side of the assemblage methodology.

After contacting various NGO's active in the urban field in Cape Town I was granted access to the Development Action Group (DAG). Here I was able to participate and observe the shared domain between urban practitioners and citizens. I did this by means of attending a number of workshops, accompanying the DAG and its related community organizations to a site visit and a public meeting. Being there and actually participating gave valuable insights and acquainted me with the subtleties of relationships when it comes to public participation. I have been given a number of documents describing the approaches the DAG takes . Moreover, I was also asked to provide feedback to the urban practitioners about the workshops and discussed their responsibilities on a personal level. In conclusion, all together the abovementioned efforts, materials, knowledges and understandings that arose are what constitutes this research.

3. STRUCTURE

This thesis aims to show how the new urban order in Cape Town is increasingly concerned with re-imagining the city as well as existing and emerging relationships. One of such emerging relationships is that between the urban practitioner and citizen, moving from an official planning approach to urban

development to a shared domain between professionals and the people who use the urban spaces. In this process urban practitioners are confronted with a wide variety of opinions and interest, making the shared domain, as a fundamental measure of the new urban order, inherently conflictual and political in nature. Through portraits of urban practitioners, different approaches to conflict are outlined. The changing role of the urban practitioner is explored whereby the facilitation of the imagination is emphasized.

Moreover, I will argue that Cape Town needs to come to terms with its Apartheid past in order to be able to re-imagine the city. Herein, re-imagining relationships seems to find more emphasis than the city in its physical form. Collective change as a result of an awakened imagination, facilitated by urban practitioners, should be based on finding common ground, not by means of consensus-seeking. Embracing conflict as constitutive of democracy and corresponding emotions is key here. Individually, each chapter illustrates existing and rising tensions between the different actors involved in the urban field.

The first chapter aims to contextualize urban developments in Cape Town and highlights my search for interactions. Through the concept of gentrification I demonstrate how the City has adopted a neoliberal stance to urban development and in doing so a post-political condition has emerged. Contrary to common held believe, I will show that this does not entail a disappearance of politics but how it rather reinforces images of Apartheid past and thence creates a highly political and sensitive urban field.

In the second chapter, based on two portraits of urban practitioners, I investigate how the public participation process is approached and how these urban professionals re-imagine their practices. Highlighted is how urban practitioners question the redistribution of responsibilities as this often appears to be a source for conflict. Here, I indicate how the urban practitioner, willingly or not, has become a part of inclusion processes and has to deal with conflict situations. Analysing their approaches in terms of antagonism and agonism highlights how the imagination plays a profound role in obstructing or facilitating collective change.

The third chapter describes how the Development Action Group (DAG) – a leading NGO in the urban sector – is trying to awake the socio-material imagination of people (and members of community organizations in particular). In this chapter I will bring to light how they practice their mediator role and try to create a 'common ground', which is necessary for agonism to work. Based on a site visit and various workshops organized by the DAG the importance of the urban impossible is highlighted.

Lastly, the conclusion will summarize the key findings and interpretations whilst also discussing its broader implications. Also, limitations and direction for future research are presented here.

Note: Throughout this thesis I will make the distinction between the City (with a capital letter) and the city (small letter). When referring to local government concerned with the management of the city I will use 'the City", whereas when I am talking about the built environment or 'place'/'space' for that matter, I will use 'the city'.

1 PAST PATTERNS CONTINUE

[Observation: 20-02-17]

Gazing through the window of the café where I am having coffee, the other side of the road shows a deteriorated building; it is just a front façade with a lot of broken windows and the few dirty windows left have dingy curtains, exposing nothing more than rubble. While I am sitting in a hip and happening coffee shop - in the relatively new Woodstock Exchange building - I can't help but notice the remarkable contrast; at such a small distance the difference in character of couldn't be more radical. The Woodstock Exchange contains cafes, creative studios and boutique shops. It has a vibrant look and feel to it that mostly attracts people in their' 20's and 30's as well as tourists, looking all flashy. This also counts for the Biscuit Mill a trendy tourism hotspot; hosting various (craft) shops, restaurants and a popular food market on Saturday's. The Biscuit Mill is seen as the instigator behind the growing popularity of the Woodstock neighbourhood and its influences are evident in the built environment that almost breathes emergence. Old buildings with rusty gates take turn with freshly painted bright-coloured shop fronts and the many sophisticated art galleries in the area sometimes seem a bit

misplaced in the grittiness of their surroundings. Security gates are the order of the day, while for-sale posters dominate the scenery and reveal the latest interest and investments in the area. But it is precisely the investments and developments that cause working class people who have been living in Woodstock for decades are now being displaced to isolated places 40km out of the city with no basic services at all.

INTRO

Walking through the area of Woodstock reignites that initial feeling of why I started this research and makes me wonder how urban development is planned in Cape Town, how the future of the city is imagined and who participates in shaping the city. Due to previous stays in Cape Town and a growing media attention for the area, I knew that Woodstock is undergoing major transformations, not only to be observed in the built environment but also in the composition of residents. The neighbourhood has become *the* example of gentrification in South Africa, which I assumed would evoke interactions between different stakeholders as they have different understandings of the city. At the same time gentrification, or often referred to as urban regeneration, has the ability to reveal local government understandings and approaches to urban development.

This chapter aims to contextualize urban developments in Cape Town and outline citizens' experiences. Through the concept of gentrification I will demonstrate how the City has adopted a neoliberal stance to urban development. Gentrification is often defined in terms of an influx of yuppies and private capital as well as rising rents. However, as Cahill (2007, 217) states; "gentrification needs to be understood as a comprehensive process of neighborhood change which cannot *only* be understood in terms of real estate value'' [own emphasizes]. For instance, negative consequences like (racial) displacement of long-term residents is often a threat when it comes to gentrification (Boyd 2005) and allows for exploring urbanites' experiences and imaginations of citywide developments. Moreover, Boyd (2005, 268) demonstrates that gentrification can be seen as a "reflection[s] of political economic arrangements that have consequences for the quality of urban life". In this light, the chapter utilizes the concept of gentrification to examine larger political and or economic transformations of the public realm and explores the idea of the emergence of a post-political condition. It is frequently thought that a post-political condition entails the disappearance of politics, but contrary to common held believe, I will show how gentrification (as a symbolic representation of the City's neoliberal stance) rather reinforces images of Apartheid past and thence creates a highly political and sensitive city.

1. WHEN MONEY SPEAKS

The door of mr Levy's office is open and once he sees me he is like "come in, come in", asking me to sit down and wait for a bit until he is done. I set foot towards the hallway where there is a small 'waiting' bench, to which he responds by asking me to sit down in one of the fauteuils right in front of his desk, very close to an elder women who apparently has problems with her landlord about a place that she rents. A look around the office shows three desks, two fauteuils, piles of paper all over the place and a wall completely covered with articles stuck to it. They have become yellowish due to ageing and feature pictures of Mr. Levy with his sons but also with Nelson Mandela. While he walks the women to the door he hands over a document with the remarks "read this so long". It is a letter that reads:

26 February 2017

RE: 37 and 39 Oxford Street , Woodstock

Dear Owner,

My partner and I have recently sold a number of properties in the area and have achieved exceptional prices per square meter. We have a number of buyers who would be interested in purchasing properties in the vicinity.

We have just listed #37 and #39 Oxford Street. If you are considering selling or would just like a valuation to ascertain the market value of your property, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Mr. Levy is an 82-year old well-respected social worker in the Woodstock area and received the letter from a real estate agency. Something which makes him very angry. "How dare they put this in my mailbox!" he exclaims.

To me, the letter signifies some of the fundamental characteristics of gentrification, which Cahill (2007, 218) describes as a state of affairs where "ownership is constrained by an inflated market which outprices everyone but the wealthy" and relates to the City of Cape Town's five-year Integrated Development Plan. In the plan the executive mayor of Cape Town describes rapid urbanisation, often coupled with a phenomenal boom in the property market, as one of the biggest challenges that Cape Town is facing. It is such a big challenge as it confronts the City with finding a balance between attracting investment and business in innovative ways while (also/foremost) meeting people' needs

(City of Cape Town 2012). Currently, a commonly held understanding in Cape Town is that City government, because of the economy, is projecting facilitation of development 'at all costs' (Todeschini 2017, 14).

The facilitation of development at all costs can be explained as the City taking a neoliberal stance towards urban development. Bayat (2012, 111) describes the neoliberal city as "a market-driven urbanity; it is a city shaped more by the logic of the Market than the needs of its inhabitants; responding more to individual or corporate interest than public concerns". It is particularly such a situation that numerous Woodstock residents describe to me when asking about the transformations taking place in the neighbourhood. For instance, Rhys a 53-year old Jewish Capetonian who runs a second-hand store in the 'Woodstock Co-op' building, emphasized the dominance of an inflated market as we speak about the contested eviction of people in Bromwell Street[5]. Bromwell street is around the corner from the Woodstock Co-op and located just behind the Biscuit Mill. Rhys has heard that the people living in Bromwell street are evicted just for parking; the developers want to empty the street to provide parking space for visitors of the Biscuit Mill. Moreover, Rhys clarifies the situation as follows: "Developments like the Biscuit Mill attract the big economy, the people that have interest in the area and all these developments are going to benefit them. They only looking after their own back". It clearly shows how public needs are not taken in consideration and how ownership is constrained, underlining the exclusionary nature that seems inherent to a neoliberal city.

Furthermore, Mr. Levy explains how property prices and rents are rising while more affluent locals and foreigners like Brits, Germans and French are moving into the area. Various billion Rand developments like the WEX[6] are making the scene, and are visual signs of how the 'exceptional prices' and buyers interest in the properties in the area appear as more important than long-term Woodstock residents' needs and interest. As a (poorer) local urban resident, Mr Levy rightly so asks, "Who on earth with a working class background can afford it?" During my visit to his office together we identify that he, and his assistant, know a lot of people that cannot afford the rent anymore, or have been offered prices for their properties which are difficult to reject, consequently further constraining ownership. People move out of the area and thus, apart from real estate value, gentrification also effects neighbourhood composition. Whereas in 2012 Wenz wrote that "though [historically] Woodstock was heavily industrialized, it also retained a significant share of housing, mainly inhabited by working-class families of all racial categories with the largest number being families classified as

[5] http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/bromwell-street-tenants-fear-relocation-to-outskirts-of-cape-town-20170127 Accessed 14 June 2017

[6] https://woodstockexchange.co.za/ Accessed 14 June 2017

'Coloured' "(Wenz 2012, 23), now the inhabitation of working-class families seems to be under heavy pressure. What do the dramatic transformations in working-class composition tell us about the politics of gentrification and urban development in general?

Figure 2. Clockwise: Mr Levy in his office, article about District 6 that Mr Levy wrote, Building site District 6, an article about Mr Levy himself – own archive

2. ITS SO ISOLATED

We are sitting on the kitschy white leather couch that I got to know so well by now. Rhys and I are having coffee in the back of the shop at the Woodstock co-op when I ask him what he thinks about the biscuit Mill. He hesitantly answers: "It is a very difficult thing, I mean I think it has drawn a lot of interest [to the area, which is good for business] but the thing is, it is so isolated, too removed from the people and the area".

As stated before, gentrification is often thought of in terms of real estate value whereas the neighbourhood composition also undergoes profound changes. Social relations transform and physical surroundings are altered in the process. Informants express their concerns about the rapid transformations the neighbourhood is undergoing in relation to the market-driven urbanity. Their experiences are mostly focussed on the few visible signifiers of gentrification, namely urban developments like the Biscuit Mill and the WEX. However, as Davidson (2011, 1990) demonstrates "the problem is that this focus upon the exemplar, the excessive manifestation, often acts to render acceptable more 'moderate' forms of displacement. This blocks the asking of fundamental questions about the constitutive violence of any displacement". Scrutinizing the built environment of Woodstock highlights the more 'moderate' forms of displacement Davidson is talking about. Through the exploration of the built environment, the following section reveals several exclusionary features when it comes to the urban experiences of my informants. Highlighting the notions of public and private spaces provides valuable information about the different types of access people have, informing about democratic ideals and civic responsibilities and thus touches upon the politics of gentrification.

2.1 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As a gentrifying neighbourhood, Woodstock and its built environment, illustrates how instead of finding exchange and dialogue, something that public space ideally promotes, gentrification in the area actually further polarizes and constraints interactions and the emergence of a shared domain. Apart from the few exemplary 'forced evictions' or large developments it is the subtle forms of displacement, often related to consumption patterns and socio-economic status, that make the scene. Pirie (2007, 139) scrutinized various gentrifying inner-city areas and found that: "In the new democratic South Africa there is inevitably dismay about centrally sited residential development from which the mass of daily downtown workers and shoppers are excluded by virtue of their poverty".

According to Holston (2009, 246) public spaces embody “an idea of centrality and its sovereignties, its architectural design, institutional organization and use represents the hierarchies, legalities, segregations, and inequalities of the entrenched regime”. In that sense they thus inform about democratic ideals. Nevertheless, contemporary understandings of urban spaces hint at a declining public realm as public spaces become ‘privatized’ and secured (Banerjee 2001, 10-12). What once were public spaces now see new residential developments and tourism hotspots arising, setting in motion the privatization of those spaces. Because, as Nemeth (2012, 2) argues, when privatization happens, public space “ceases to exist as a truly public form, characterized by (relatively) open access, unmediated deliberation, and shared participation”. Moreover, Zhang (2001, 179) describes privatization as “a process in which private individuals and groups come to acquire control over spatial organization and social-economic order in a given locality”.

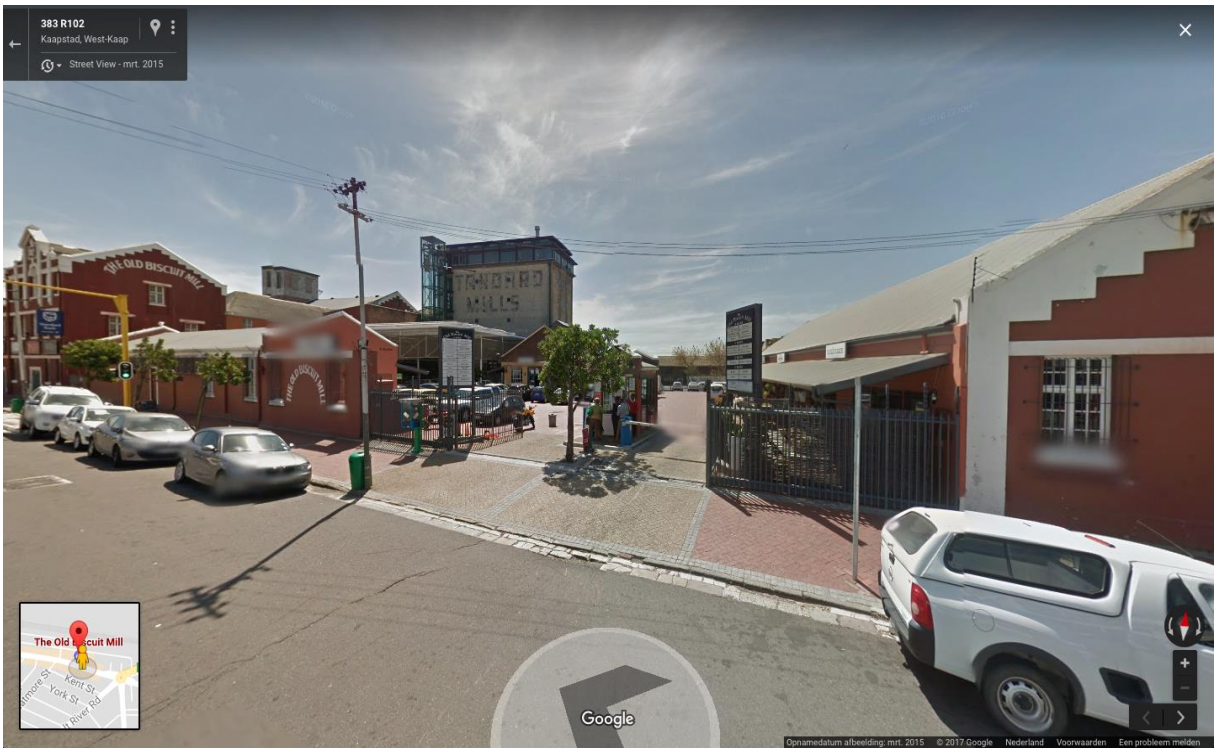

Figure 3. Entrance of the Biscuit Mill – screenshot of Google Maps

It is precisely an increase in control of spatial organization and social-economic order that the Biscuit Mill has established. Having one main entrance, a lot of parking guards in close proximity and security guards at the site, the privatization is tangible. It resonates with Banerjees argument that “seemingly unbounded public space is not boundaryless after all” (2001, 12). The spaces like sidewalks and parking lots surrounding the Biscuit Mill might appear as public but often have subtle of invisible

property boundaries and are thus in reality private. Eddy, a 56-year old Coloured guy who has set-up shop across the Biscuit Mill about 25 years ago, also illustrates this. Pointing across the road he explains that he had a fight with the security people of the Biscuit Mill and even got removed from the property. He had been parking his car in front of his shop for many years and now the security crew, hired by the developers, are telling him he can't park his car there anymore. After a kind of muddled story about the fight that I can't follow completely he concludes by stating that "they might own the building but I own the streets here". This anecdote shows how the boundaries raised by privatization are experienced and contested, whilst highlighting a more moderate (and more invisible and indirect perhaps) form of displacement. Moreover, when Rhys is talking about the Biscuit Mill being too removed from the people and the area he is not speaking in terms of distance but rather about these observable and sometimes very subtle boundaries at play. Having access to and using spaces such as the Biscuit Mill and the Woodstock Exchange becomes a privilege instead of a given. In the minds of my informants these spaces are for tourists and a local elite, not for them to enjoy. At the same time, their space is restricted and certain people are excluded. And it is certainly not me who is excluded! Personally, I sensed the exclusionary mechanisms evident in Woodstock (and the city in general), as the opposite. I wrote the following in my journal:

Apart from a few stand-alone developments, the freshly renovated buildings all seem so be clustered around a few bigger developments like the Biscuit Mill, The Bromwell and the Woodstock Exchange, which are places not accessible for my informants. First of all because they can't afford to buy anything there while the buildings also seem to have a kind of natural barrier. They feel like 'safe havens' to me in an otherwise still rough environment and do not seem to slightly hint at any interactions.

These safe havens can be linked to what Wenz describes as a "sociospatial polarization that separates 'insiders (those with access to desirable spaces) from outsiders (on the margin, looking in)' and essentially perpetuates the social divisions that were inherent during the apartheid" (Wenz 2012, 25). My fieldnote implies my insider role, where I have access to a desirable space like the Woodstock Exchange while my informants can be seen as those on the margin, looking in. It feels strange to be given an insider role in a foreign country, ostensible solely based on consumption patterns. The privatized spaces created by urban developers are focused on a specific group of people that Rhys defines as 'hipster' and are often related to consumption patterns. Zukin examines these consumption patterns and states that: "Entrepreneurs who cater to the new residents create consumption spaces that, to old residents, are […] unwelcoming" (Zukin 2008, 731). Developments like the Woodstock Exchange and the Biscuit Mill as well as its immediate surroundings are very unwelcoming to old residents, which Rhys vividly describes when I ask him how the local community could be involved:

Oh my goodness. Personally, you will have to get them to achieve something and not see each other as the enemy, because I mean, am sure that you can create a community market where, even if it is to create something, to get people to become part of that , a sort of Muslim area selling their wares. The problem with a lot of that is, that it doesn't fit into the whole hipster vibe. The whole development, and the people that developed that and the Exchange (Woodstock Exchange), it is this whole hipster crowd and it is very cliquey and they don't incorporate the people. It is very hard edge.

Within this description the exclusionary feature of consumption patterns related to urban developments in Woodstock become clear. In everyday situations social divisions are performed, establishing urban experiences informed by what Mr Levy phrases as a class struggle between the haves and the have-nots. The following situations illustrate a further emphasis on class-differences as related to socio-economic status and how they inform everyday (urban) experiences.

Riana, is a 42-year-old Coloured women living in Woodstock for about 30 years and faces subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, socio-spatial polarization on a daily basis. I know Riana from the coffee shop in the Woodstock Co-op and we kind of have become friends by now, regularly having chats, making jokes and sharing gossip, whilst smoking cigarettes on the doorstep of the store. A lot of these informal conversations are informed by a desire of acquiring more status and becoming more upper class. Several times Riana starts telling a story about one of her friends that has a rich husband living in Dubai. It becomes a story about expensive cars and big houses with swimming pools. But also expensive sneakers and brands in general receive much attention. Being surrounded with restaurants, shops and cafes that one cannot afford, and probably will never be able to afford, results in trying to hide her outsider role and aiming for more status. This is done, for example, by taking a Woolworths plastic bag (a desirable and expensive supermarket according to Riana) when doing groceries because she doesn't want people to see that she actually shop at Shoprite (a supermarket associated with 'the poor').

Also Eddy explains such inequalities to me. We are sitting in his workshop, the black maid comes in again and asks for a bit of money. Eddy takes his time, searching his pockets and then takes money from a small pocket in a pouch that is hidden underneath his shirt. He gives her a R100, remarking "if I had a little bit of money…." Not finishing his sentence. When the maid is gone I ask him what he would do with a bit of money. " If I would have about R25000 I would turn this workplace into a shop, and put this workshop at the back" he tells me. As I saw a poster hanging around Woodstock earlier today

about getting a loan I ask him if he could get a loan to do so. He laughs wryly as he remarks "we black and coloured people do not get loans".

It is the self-evident nature of Eddy's remark that underlines the relationship between gentrification, class difference and socio-economic status. Sharp et al., (2014, 16) argue that "Inequality is intrinsic to the functioning of the modern economy at all levels from the global to the local. The rich and poor are separated physically, kept apart in areas that differ greatly in their standards of living". Even though I am inclined to concur with the interpretation that inequality is an inevitable feature of our current society, by relating such a view to gentrification it de facto shows how such a stance denies its inherently unjust nature. For instance, Davidson argues that there is a kind of convenience in viewing displacements, as core element of gentrification, as replacements. Because, as he illustrates, gentrification and the class-based process of neighborhood change are often depicted "in the context of a narration of post-industrial transformation"(Davidson 2011, 1990). Meaning, that class-based changes and the corresponding displacements are clarified according to occupational shifts, implying that the displacements are a consequence of wider economic transformations rather than an intentional (policy) process of urban regeneration that expresses certain values, intentions and democratic ideals. Davidson further argues that in presenting "replacement as devoid of displacement's politics is to naturalize it unduly" (Davidson 2011, 1990). It denotes that its unjust nature is diminished and dedicated to outside forces, where responsibility can thus be avoided. But what happens when the politics of gentrification are naturalized?

3. SOCIAL APARTHEID

It is not transformation, it is gentrification! Gentrification doesn't need a certain colour it is a certain class. Black, white, pink, it is upper-upper class that is moving in now. And the people that live in this area for decades are being pushed out by the big capitalist system. These people is going to be moved out *as* in District Six. What is happening here is that the lower middle class is going down and the working class, they will disappear because of the capitalist situation stipulating us. It is like anywhere in the world when money speaks. It is ungodly, inhumane and totally immoral!

– Mr. Levy –

The abovementioned statement by Mr. Levy was informed by my question what he thought of all the urban transformation taking place in the area. Through making the 'mistake' of asking about

transformations instead of *gentrification* I unintentionally (and actually well-meant as to cover more ground) touched upon the depoliticised status of Woodstock as well as the urban landscape in more general terms. Phrasing my question like that thus set the tone to explore what happens when the politics of gentrification are naturalized. First of all, what Mr. Levy implies by convincingly stating that 'it is not transformation, it is gentrification!, is the fact that "the replacement and/or transformation of working-class populations in post-industrial cities did not occur naturally"(*cf* Davidson 2011,1990). It is this simple yet very significant distinction Mr. Levy makes that informs the next section about de-politicization and a post-political condition. Through the exploration of this post-political condition the sensitivity of urban developments in Cape Town emerge.

3.1 DE-POLITICIZATION

At first glance, Mr. Levy (see statement) gives an almost 'textbook-like' definition of gentrification where class differences are evident, feared evictions are happening and powerful global actors make demands on the urban area in terms of capital for example. This seemingly general statement however holds a uniquely South African perspective that hints at a citizen' awareness of post-politicization processes. Swyngedouw explains post-politicisation as a form of de-politicisation as signalling "the continuous and highly politicised struggle and conflict over the institutionalisation of post-democratic regimes of governance, articulated around rendering governing to a techno-managerial and bio-political practice of arranging life without changing the common sense and everyday routines of the existing socio-political configuration and its constitutive power relations" (Swyngedouw 2017, 57).

Mr. Levy remarks that, even though they [South Africa] are a young democracy, they are faced with neoliberal ideologies that in essence constitute resemblances with Apartheid past and its corresponding power relations, which is in line with Swyngedouws' line of thought. Foremost, he makes a distinction (see statement previous page) between previously social organizing features based on colour and race, and contemporary institutionalization of class differences. Gentrification (and urban development planning as a practice that constitutes it) can be seen as a signifier of contemporary ideologies of social organization, illustrating a highly politicised conflict in a South African context characterised by a history set apart along racial segregation and discrimination.
Mabin and Smit (1997) outline aspects of urban planning, as a tool to reconstruct society, at several stages in South African history. They state that: "one of the founding sources of urban planning in South Africa lay in continual efforts to dictate (and often restrict) the pattern of black settlement in

urban environments […] The towns were conceived as primarily white places. While cheaper rented housing areas, at least in the Cape Colony, might tend to evidence a strong correlation between darker skin colour and lower incomes, the indigenous population whose lack of money excluded them from the property market were left to fend largely for themselves on the periphery of more formal settlements […]". In this light, Mr. Levy' resemblances of gentrification with Apartheid urban planning are striking, especially when viewing gentrification as a civilizing process like Boyd (2005, 268) argues. Whereas historically ideologies of European colonialism were focussed on keeping "wild Africans" out, as they were seen as "obstacle to maintaining social order. [Because] The wild is untamed, undomesticated, uncultivated, unrestrained, and dangerous" (Chidester 2012, 3). According to Boyd, gentrification nowadays shows the same kind of approach where long-term residents are regulated or removed as to domesticate certain urban areas. In that sense, long-term residents are implicitly labelled as "socially disorganized, unmanageable populations likely to benefit from the presence of middle-class, white urban pioneers" (Boyd 2005, 268). This is a view also expressed in the experience of Eddy, a 56-year-old coloured shop owner from Woodstock:

They think we are uneducated and segregation is only growing wider, whereas before here in Woodstock white, black and colored lived in harmony together it is now not only a segregation between black and white but between rich and poor and nothing in-between.

Yet, Mr. Levy and Eddy are not arguing that colour is not relevant anymore; they rather explain that gentrification has a transcendent nature and reaches an even bigger group of people than Apartheid did before. Such a view correlates with Harrison et al. (2003 in Pillay 2008, 11) who argue "that there is real and growing concern that government's 'neoliberal' (market-orientated) turn may be exacerbating social and class divides and may be prioritizing South Africa's standing in the global economy at the expense of its poorest citizens". Also Sharp et al., (2014, 13) who write about South Africa in world development, hint at such a situation. They state that: "Skin pigmentation no longer restricts the way that the majority of Cape Town's people can use civic facilities, but it appears as if apartheid red-lining on racial grounds has been replaced by a financially exclusive property market that entrenches prosperity and privilege, and extends it to foreign investors, business entrepreneurs, and vacationers". As Tsing further explains "Market models assume a "level playing field" of exchange that erases the inequalities of property and the processes of labor exploitation. Market models appear to be inclusive, but they privilege social actors who, because of their economic resources, are able to participate in markets" (Tsing 2000, 336). The situations outlined above are exactly what Vento (2017, 72) considers that the post-political represents: "the reduction of the political to the economic and – ideologically – 'the end of utopia', which entails the incapacity to imagine an alternative to neoliberal

capitalism". It is the awareness of the attempts made to foreclose the political element of gentrification that Mr. Levy so vividly captures when coining the term "Social Apartheid".

It is social apartheid! During Apartheid you knew who your enemy was and now it is just about segregation based on economics. It is going to destroy us. South Africa is sitting on a time bomb. That I know. It can go off anytime, when I don't know…

The sole focus on economics and the institutionalized segregation based on it does not mean a 'less' political urban field but rather creates an even more sensitive environment. As Swyngedouw 2017, 56) states: "[post-politicization …] does not by any means suggest a disappearance of politics, but rather the transformation of politics in ways that attempt to suspend the political". Resulting from such a situation, Mr. Levy illustrates, is a sort of time bomb feeling, whereby he wants to imply the sensitivity. In Cape Town, as well as around the world, urban developments are questioned thoroughly and discontent is expressed. Because as Paddison (2009, 8) highlights: "Several decades of urban neoliberal governance have amassed a barrage of evidence demonstrating that its practice is socially divisive and that it has resulted in increasingly polarized and divided cities". In Cape Town, as well as around the world, urban developments are questioned thoroughly and discontent is expressed. Yet, "such attempts at suturing the political field and rendering mute the voices of those who disagree repress precisely what the political as a space of appearance is all about" (Swyngedouw 2017, 57).

Thus, gentrification, as a symbol of this post-political condition becomes a kind of reliving of the past in the sense that it is constitutive of oppressive processes similar to the past. Although, Apartheid might be thought of as ended it has a continued presence in people's lives and informs an awareness of this post-political condition. As seen before, Mr. Levy equals the historic forced removals of over 60.000 inhabitants of District Six under the Group Area Act to contemporary gentrification-induced evictions taking place in Bromwell Street. This direct links shows that Mr. Levy conceives this as underlying ideologies based on Apartheid; one of segregation. Contemporary gentrification processes are not only reminders of Apartheid history but become an urban experience of reliving the past. Reliving oppressive violence and feelings of injustice. (Urban) issues are not treated as separate from their highly political historical trajectories and therefore turn extremely sensitive in the process. Whereas in other situations outbursts of unarticulated violence can be seen as the direct flipside of post-politicising suture (Swyngedouw 2017, 57), the city of Cape Town seems to be characterised by a constant enunciation of social and political boundaries. Trying to eliminate, at forehand, the many opinions and emotions inherent to the development of urban sites, the political sensitivities (often

linked to past experiences) are actually emphasized further due to the disavowal of them. It creates a city that seems to be in a constant state of sensitivity.

More than two decades into changing apartheid spatial planning, the promise of a more inclusive city is still palpable in the growing interest to “re-imagine” the city. However, the sensitivity seems to obstruct real change as Apartheid history continues to shape urban experiences and the direction of change. In 2002 Bond wrote the following: “Instead, South Africa's urban problems can really only be solved by a change in politics, so that the class and bureaucratic interests that have so tirelessly promoted neoliberalism in urban development and so many other areas of South African social and economic policy, can finally be overthrown by a progressive alliance of forces that meet the needs of the broader society”. But, how to organize such changes when they are prompted by historical trajectories that particularly encompass the political ideologies of (spatial) segregation, which is exactly what needs to be re-imagined. The next chapter will scrutinize public participation as a form of such a progressive alliance Bond is speaking about. Public participation lends itself well because it reveals different approaches to conflict. The value of understanding these approaches is demonstrates throughout the next chapter.

2 ITS NOT LIKE STUFF JUST HAPPENS

[Personal Journal: 01-03-17]

It is nearly the end of the first month and my research is not going as planned. The interactions in a shared domain between urban practitioner and citizen, a fundamental element of my research are nowhere in sight. Where I was looking for interactions and (grassroots-) initiatives I actually find an urban landscape characterised by exclusion. The only 'real' interactions I have been able to identify are rather family based and do not take place in public spaces.

Kind of dispirited I walk back to my apartment in Observatory, over-thinking the past month and questioning the focus of my research when I (accidently?), stumble upon an architectural firm that is almost hidden in/behind a coffee shop. Funny how you notice these things. I can't help but think about McCann's notion of urban policies as assemblages of materials, knowledge and resources. It is especially

the things you notice and encounter that make up your research and bring you to other people and other resources that create a path through the urban practitioners' field for me. I know what I am looking for and what my mission is this coming month, but also let the circumstances kind of decide for me. In my opinion this closely resembles how I normally navigate through life. As I am not feeling very confident about the direction of my research at the moment I decide to Google the firm as to return later, also with a bit more information. On the website I find information about the firm being responsible towards the neighbouring community. A first hint at interactions and a shared domain! Over various cups of cappuccino and a nice lunch I get to know Theo from Twofivefive architects.

INTRO

So far, I have solely focussed on citizens and did not find the interactions that I was looking for; therefore the second period I focus on urban practitioners and how they interaction with citizens as well as other stakeholders. I scrutinize urban practitioners' experiences with public participation processes as to outline fields of tension that emerge when ever-diverging interests and opinions are at stake. Based on two portraits of urban practitioners I investigate how they approach public participation and how they re-imagine their practices. Highlighted is how Theo and Tali question the redistribution of responsibilities as this often appears a source for conflict. How they deal with conflict situations is analysed in terms of an antagonism and/or agonism approach in order to demonstrate how the imagination plays a role in obstructing or facilitating collective change.

Participation is a popular buzzword in contemporary urban studies and also referred to as community involvement, public engagement or inclusion. Silver et al., (2010, 453) describe participation as "the direct involvement of ordinary citizens in the initiation, formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policy". Though, the actual involvement of citizens in these four stages was not (always) evident during my research. Partly because of that I rather focus on the tensions that emerged during projects. For instance, participation informs about the public-government relationship (Quick and Feldman 2011, 272), and thus also touches upon ideal forms of democracy (Silver et al., 2010, 453). How does participation change the relationships between the public and other stakeholders?

First of all, participation is frequently seen as an attractive response to (social) exclusion and government inefficiency. Also South Africa has adopted the participation trend. A Google search on public participation in South Africa provided me with an interesting document of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC), they have written a draft version of the Western Cape Policy on Public Participation. It is stated that governments around the world realize they have to turn to public participation as to strengthen good governance and democratic ethos. The PGWC defines

public participation as “an open, accountable and inclusive process through which individual citizens, community and interest groups, and other stakeholders can exchange views, make or influence the decisions that affect their lives” (PGWC 2010, 6). It is the part about exchanging views that sparked my initial interest as these views are grounded in different (professional) experiences and thus also greatly influence desires and interests regarding the city. Frequently, these exchanges are a potential source for conflict as certain visions are considered as more legitimate than others. I will demonstrate how this works out in practice. Through the portraits of Theo and Tali I will demonstrate how responsibilities are blurring and for that reason create a lot of confusion. Moreover, procedures and policies that do not seem to fit current state of affairs cause frustration, influencing urban practitioners’ daily practices profoundly. Both portraits show a different approach to re-imagining their practices whereby conflict is the central element.

THEO

THEY DON'T SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

Figure. 4 Twofivefive Architects hidden behind charming coffee shop – via www.twofivefive.co.za

Theo is 30-year old white guy who grew up in Johannesburg and came to Cape Town after his studies, as he wanted to see "what the buzz was all about". Becoming an architect was not something Theo had considered before taking a career test. Reading about architecture sparked his curiosity, as different topics he is interested in appeared to be involved. It created the possibility of combining his interest in art, business and computers, rather than just focusing on computers and doing IT.

Theo comes across as a balanced and somewhat timid person. This is also symbolized in his answer of the animal projections I used as part of my methodology. Thereby I asked Theo what Cape Town would be if it would be an animal. Also herein I got a balanced answer. According to Theo Cape Town would be something between an elephant and a lion. Which he explained as elements of the city and its architecture are being inert and bad functioning, whereby developments are added and added without people really thinking it through. At the same time Cape Town is also quite dynamic and changing, moving to create a pleasant place to stay. Notwithstanding, he has a clear opinion on things and isn't afraid of taking an unpopular stance. This is evident in his way of speaking; always

highlighting different angels, speaking in terms of 'this' *and* 'that' whilst voicing his opinion by means of approaching topics with a certain sarcasm. And so too public participation is contemplated.

1. THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ADVERTISEMENTS

I get thrown into 'the wonderful world of advertisements' when Theo explains his daily practice as an architect and how public participation processes take shape therein. The various statutory bodies Theo deals with constitute public participation for him. Based on Theo's experiences and stories, I will outline how public participation comes to be formulated in terms of 'advertisements', 'overlay zones' and 'departures'.

The first thing exposed when asking about the process of a new project, and who is involved in such a project, is the 'zoning schemes', which Theo calls "a sort of blanket under which stuff falls". They stress the importance of location in the city when it comes to urban developments, because depending on the area there are different zoning schemes that define the process of a project and thus also the level of community involvement. In the City of Cape Town Municipal Planning By-Law (2015, 14), 'zoning' is defined as:

'zoning' includes base zoning and overlay zoning and means a land use category prescribed by the development management scheme regulating the use of and development of land and setting out –

(a) the purposes for which land may be used; and

(b) the development rules applicable to that land use category;

Theo continues: "Then you got overlay areas, overlay zones[7], like heritage protection overlays zones over certain areas, and that falls over most areas, they stick traditional loops that you need to jump to get approval for something. For instance, if it is a heritage protection overlay zone then you have 'departures', which are the differences that you applied for". And it is these differences that need to be 'advertised' to the public:

[7] '**overlay zoning**' means a zoning, in addition to the base zoning, stipulating the purposes for which land may be used and the development rule which may be more or less restrictive than the base zoning; " (City of Cape Town Municipal Planning By-Law 2015, 14).

Theo: So it needs to be advertised because it is in a protection overlay zone, where if it is not that advertising can be waved at council.

Me: But how do you mean 'advertised'?

Theo: So let's say your application lasts for 10 flats, according to the zoning scheme for each flat it needs a parking bay, and now you only providing 5 parking bays instead of 10 parking bays, that is a departure. So departures sometimes make a building better, because it is a better use of space and sometime the 'urzs' (urban zoning schemes) are so weird and odd that it doesn't make economic sense; it is not feasible to actually comply with the zoning schemes. A lot of times, then you apply for a departure and then at council they can, if it is not a protection overlay zone, they can wave the advertising. So when the advertiser advertises for 30 days to the direct neighbours and maybe in the public around somewhere.

Me: Is that just to create awareness of what is going on?

Theo: Yes, and for the people to raise questions, or to object or what they say about it.

Me: Ok. You have to make your project known?

Theo: Yes. Sometimes when it is only a minor deviation we can go ahead with it without advertising. But then if it is a heritage protection overlay zone that needs to be advertised, then it gets advertised almost automatically. So then the public needs to be involved, the advertiser and the neighbours, the area ratepayers association and stuff and then they get a change to comment on it and this is how it goes.

What the abovementioned example shows is how, for Theo, public participation is an institutionalized process, defined in terms of regulations and rituals, constitutive of professional lingo. It is particularly this side of public participation that often gets critiqued. For instance, amongst others, Innes and Booher (2004, 419) show how legally required methods of public participation often "discourage busy and thoughtful individuals from wasting their time going through what appear to be nothing more than rituals designed to satisfy legal requirements". Moreover, they argue that participation is usually justified in order to get legitimacy for public decisions. So, as Theo explains, the advertiser can say, "We advertised for 30 days to the direct neighbours and we put up posters in the public around, everyone who wanted to raise questions or object had a chance to do so". It allows planners to say

"then whatever is decided is, at least in theory, democratic and legitimate" (Inner and Booher 2004, 423).

Such a stance towards planning, whereby political questions are reduced to technical issues to be solved by urban professionals (Munthe-Kaas 2015, 221), can be seen as 'antagonism'. As Pløger (2004) demonstrates, it means that conflict situations are thought of as distrust between parties that need to be managed rationally and legally in order to be *solved* in the end. It thus contains a consensus-seeking (or should we say consensus-demanding?) principle whereby irreconcilable views and interests need to be fixed in a legal sense. The problem of such an antagonistic approach lies in the fact that it automatically limits the space for discussion whilst suspending the conflict in a way. Here, the sensitivities underlying those conflicts are not addressed, consequently reminding of the de-politicization processes as described in chapter 1. Of course, suspending these issues does not make them disappear. To demonstrate how public participation as consensus-demanding principle works out in Theo's practices, I use the simple but effective definition of Davidson (2011, 1994) who explains antagonism as "a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies wo do not share any common ground".

2. THEY DON'T SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

" I think the city a lot of the times sees a bigger picture which the people in the communities don't see. So, when people only see their small environment and what is going on around them, they don't see the bigger planning picture. And also there is a lot of planning policies in place to develop not only the economy but also the areas and the way they function and all, which most people are not even aware of. People say they want to be consulted but as soon as you consulting, you consulting people that doesn't understand the regulations in place to govern this stuff "

– Theo –

Knowledge is a component used by Quick and Feldman (2011, 272) to distinguish participation from inclusion. Looking at this distinction highlights the importance of knowledge when it comes to engaging the public in planning practices. It is precisely the knowledge component Theo emphasizes when arguing that communities often don't see a bigger planning picture.

Quick and Feldman define participation as "*efforts to increase public input oriented primarily to the content of programs and policies*", inclusive practices entail "*continuously creating a community*

involved in coproducing processes, policies, and programs for defining and addressing public issues". Furthermore they depict three features of inclusive practices, of which the first is termed 'engaging multiple ways of knowing'. This practice should ensure to encourage people to bring diverse ideas, perspectives and values to the table, remove barriers for understanding as well as to orient nonplanners and newcomers to useful planning concepts. They further explain how providing a glossary of planning terms at meetings (exploring public engagement in the creation of a Master Plan) provided citizens with the necessary information to create a space for interaction, not requiring professional lingo to actually participate. Yet, these inclusive features does not seem present in Theo's case at all. Rather, Theo emphasizes how 'the bigger planning picture' is composed of policies and planning practices that have a specific intent (often economic) and desired effect which is not understood by 'the people'. Furthermore, he explained to me that it sometimes frustrates him that projects get delayed based on peoples objections, which according to Theo are not always well-informed and rather formed on limited understandings like 'it's taking away my view'.

According to Theo, the communities do not have the necessary information to actually participate and therefore their opinions, desires, values are foreclosed and considered as not legitimate. Such a foreclosing element closely resembles de-politicization processes as described in chapter 1. Instead of creating space for dialogue and *multiple ways of knowing* the bureaucratization of public participation he deals with, in fact, reinforces polarization. People are excluded in the process due to terminologies used, often not understandable to ordinary citizens. Munthe-Kaas states that "by leaving decision making to the experts, citizens lose their capability to participate in the creation of their own futures" (2015, 221). This often results in citizens feeling as if the future is already decided as there is no room for their wishes or creative ideas. It is this expression that is of utmost importance when it comes to public participation in planning. Silver et al., (2010, 456) show how more educated or powerful groups may dismiss others just because of their style of expression. The knowledge barriers thus work exclusive and disempowering. It creates a we/they relationship, whereby Theo argues that it is this knowledge deficit that obstructs the finding of a common ground, thus inspiring antagonism.

3. YOU ARE MESSING UP OUR AREA

" It's like, as if someone in the community, if they object, the people up in government are almost too scared to make a decision against it. So, I was in at council the other day to discuss a new development we are working on and asked: "If we apply for this and this departure do you think it will be advertised?" He was like almost certainly yes. Although it is a very small departure, because of the sensitivity around all the different stuff they probably advertise it just to be careful. It is like, how can that be to the advantage of the people and the economic benefit because as soon as you go advertising you delay the project with months. It is easy to say yes let's just advertise"

– Theo –

Dissecting the abovementioned statement by Theo, following Aggestam et al.,' (2015, 1736) line of thought, this section will show how "the suppression of antagonism […] through consensus-seeking may trigger counterproductive results, such as escalation of violence, as the possibility for expressing difference and deviation is circumscribed in these consensus-making efforts".

Departures, as literal examples of deviation, come into being when an urban practitioner like Theo wants to go over official building lines to make building better. They get advertised and can thus be seen as institutionalized consensus-seeking elements. However, as Theo tells me, instead of creating real consensus they rather seem to trigger a contrary type of involvement. He explains to me that as soon as you ask for departures people think it means you trying to do something 'funny', whereby they imply corrupt behaviour. He dedicates this type of involvement to the limited understanding people have. To Theo it is clear that they (architects and developers) do not want to do any departures because first of all it prolongs the process with months, and second it sometimes just simply makes the building better. Nevertheless, to the communities involved in the process this might not be evident at all because there is, in the first place, no space to actually express their opinions about the project in general. According to Theo it triggers a negative involvement based on a hostile attitude. Which he explains as communities thinking about urban development's solely as 'you are messing up our area'.

In this hostile context (antagonistic as different parties are seen as enemies) we can further analyse Theo's abovementioned statement. The advertisements, as part of public participation policies seem to further exacerbate tensions between various actors instead of creating consensus. It is particularly these tensions that develop a sensitive atmosphere around urban developments, which in turn motivates the City of Cape Town to steer towards an even more consensus-seeking strategy whereby

even the smallest departures are advertised just to be careful. But in their carefulness they actually supress discontent with greater power relations for example. The City enters a downward spiral, because urban practitioners like Theo get frustrated as their projects take longer to finalize, effecting them from a financial point of view but also requiring more discussion to get through. Besides, as Theo explains, it creates a ridiculous uncertainty because some developments that would normally be easy can now all of a sudden turn into a raging storm (meaning that they ignite a lot of public discussion), whereas developments that used to get a lot of objections do the opposite.

Based on confusion and uncertainty the institutionalization of public participation creates a counterproductive reaction further exacerbating tensions between the various actors by means of emphasizing the we/they relationship. How to proceed then? The framing of friend/enemy relations, as inherent to antagonistic relations, may move towards more agonistic relations but this require creating a political space where these relations "can be reframed and transformed into one of legitimate adversaries" (Aggestam et al., 2015, 1738). In other words, "agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognise the legitimacy of their opponents" (Davidson 2011, 1995). The next part will elaborate on the workings of agonism through the portrait of Tali.

TALI

THEY REPORT BACK THROUGH THEIR OWN FILTER

Figure 5. Site of the Bishop Lavis project -

I get to know Tali, an urban planner working for ARG Design, as a cheerful individual, going beyond her job description to get things done. You can sense that she regularly works on projects commissioned by the City as knowledge regarding their practices and bigger development frameworks are evident. Besides, such policy knowledge comes in handy when formally submitting land-use applications to the City. She is rather intrigued by the politics involved in the public participation process than deterred. This attitude is also to be found in the outcomes of the projective animal technique. When I asked Tali what kind of animal Cape Town would be and why she replied:

" In some way it feels like a sloth. Haha. There is mould growing on it. It is moving but it is moving slowly. There are other things overtaking it. I would like to see it as a border collie, you know, kind of active, anticipating what you going to do "

This projective animal technique reveals Tali's attitude towards the city of Cape Town and especially the City. Her projection shows how her daily practices, as we will see, are characterised by trying to

slowly move in the right direction, and as Tali explains break that older generation mould. Because what she frequently encounters is people that want to make a difference are getting hammered, but she believes there are great people that do want to be the liaison person, pushing things and taking responsibility.

1. THE BISHOP LAVIS PROJECT

The Bishop Lavis project is part of a larger development framework for the sub-region of the Cape Flats. The Cape Flats comprise various township areas notorious for gangsterism and so we chat about people being far away from work opportunities, put in an area where there is nothing to do and poverty prevails. ARG Design, the company Tali works for, tended for the project and went through a public participation process in order to intervene in the environment itself, but with the ultimate goal to "hopefully create community structures that start working". Because, at present, there is a lot of people arguing, there is lots of infighting and it is kind of dysfunctional.

Tali explains to me how she assesses a site like that of the Bishop Lavis project (figure 5) and continues to describe how the public participation process was set-up. After assessing they knew the different land uses on the site and thus had an idea of who the stakeholders were. They went to visit the education department of the school on the site, the sporting bodies related to the sports field as well as cultural affairs, a hospital and the library. They spoke with the informal traders in the middle of town and the formal businesses like Shoprite supermarket. Early childhood developers (ECD's), the police, a neighbourhood watch and the community-policing forum were all involved as well.

After identifying and speaking to all the stakeholders separately they put down an aerial photograph of the area with two things in mind. First the people were asked the following questions: Who are you? What do you do? What are your biggest concerns in the area? How do you move through this space? Where would you, or/and your kids, interact? Where do they go? Then, people were asked what the biggest crime elements are they come across and to categorize them. Crime elements like shooting, mugging and drugs were mapped for each of the stakeholders, where after they sat around the table to argue about it. This 'plain' explanation of the process of public participation shows a fundamental element when trying to bring the boundaries of the inclusive city into play. Because, as Innes and Booher (2004, 422) state "today we are trapped in seeing public participation as involving citizens on the one hand and government on the other hand. This simplistic duality underlies the debates and encourages adversarial participation" (read: based on a we/they relationship as part of

antagonism). Instead, the ambiguity of the public participation process is emphasized by means of exploring Tali's practices as an urban planner, rather hinting at an agonism approach to conflict.

2. THEY REPORT BACK THROUGH THEIR OWN FILTER

Once all the information was gathered from the different sectors Tali and her team started working with a steering committee, which was composed of one or two members of each of the sectors. Tali further explains: "The idea was they would go back to them and report what had been said and then could bring back information for us on what they thought about the proposals". According to Tali, "not a perfect system". I ask her to explain why.

Tali: Because people don't always report back to their sector groupings, and they report back through their own filter

Me: Can you give me an example?

Tali: Ehm… So, we were chatting with the traders, and you know we say well we are looking at ways the traders can fit in, where they should be standing and what is the possibility for stage somewhere and toilets. Then they go and come back and say well yeah 'we will have these toilets".

Tali and me: hahah

Tali: You said you were going to give us toilets. And what about the toilets… It will be like just toilets. So it is kind of people hear what they want to hear.

The situation described above might seem simple and not really relevant in the larger participation process. However, it tells us a lot about the approach to planning in general as well as the social relations involved in the processes. First of all, it shows how promises are inherent to planning processes, which in turn can cause (unproductive) conflict. According to Abram and Weszkanys (2011, 9) promises express intention, can be seen as a performance and "produce a set of relations among promisor, promisee, and the thing or action promised that should endure through time". They furthermore explain that merely saying "I promise" is does not automatically make a promise effective. To her knowledge, Tali has not expressed a promise, she 'just mentioned' the toilets. But in the process she all of a sudden becomes a promisor that needs to fulfil the conditions of the promise

as otherwise her sincerity might be doubted. Such a thing could be detrimental to the public participation process as the social relationships could change from being perceived by either side as adversaries (agonism) to enemies (antagonism). Moreover, the conversation demonstrates how the different stakeholders involved in public participation do bring their own interests and reasoning to the process, explained by Tali as "they report back to their own filter". The fact that Tali, as well as other informants, expressed this as a central element when it comes to participation emphasizes that 'strife' – "the ongoing dispute about words, meaning, discourses, visions or 'the good life" – (Pløger 2004, 73) is profoundly inherent to public participation. In this case, it seems as if the traders use the promise, which can be disputed in itself, as an effective way of coordinating action, and achieving outcomes they desire. However, using strife and transforming it into agonistic relations is not self-evident and comes with setbacks.

3. BRING THEM ON THE PROJECT

"Obviously you get the guys that want to stop the project because they didn't initiate it. And they always going to find the project and you need to find them out quite early. You need to identify them as soon as possible, and then you need to bring them on the project. You need to do it without alienating them"

– Tali –

Tali and I speak about my assumption of the greater the number of people involved the harder it must be to get everyone satisfied. Tali questions this, as in the public participation process people are 'themed' according to the type of complaint for example. She suggests that you can find commonality between different groups. All of a sudden we come to speak about the confrontation with people that are not willing to participate and rather try to obstruct the process. The use of the word 'obviously' indicates that it is not a rarity to come across such confrontation; Tali foresaw potential discontent. This factor plays an important role when starting a project as they define the approach of the urban practitioner. As Munthe-Kaas demonstrates: "How planners view their job is a central part of the (sub)political system that highly influences the possibility for citizens to participate in the (re)development of urban spaces" (2015, 233). At first, Tali's assumption ignites images of a kind of consensus-steering whereby she wants to identify potential 'trouble-makers' and actually bring them on the project, ultimately finding a solution. It seems precisely the expected compliance that caused a confrontation as the Bishop Lavis Development Forum (BLDF) adopted an initial attitude of "Why are you doing this in *our* area?" (The group has a specific political preference contrary to that in the greater area) as well as "How dare you come in from the outside and tell us what to do?" One can

imagine, that such a confrontation could be a potential source of conflict, ultimately resulting in a failing project. Nevertheless, conflict need not always be negative. Silver at el., (2010, 469) point out the positive functions of conflict as "protest leads to the collection and diffusion of new information and promotes learning".

Likewise Tali shows the productive kind of conflict whereby the initially antagonistic and conflict-oriented anticipation was not mirrored in the actual process. The BLDF example illustrates, from an 'agonistic peacebuilding perspective', "how to envisage and transform conflict into agonistic pluralism, where diversity, conflict and peace can be expressed, explored and respected"(Aggestam et al., 2015, 1737). First, "Agonistic relations are still confrontational and conflictual, therefore, but the contestation is played out and regulated by a set of democratic procedures and norms, which are negotiated and accepted by the adversaries"(Aggestam et al., 2015, 1738). The BDLF particularly displayed a process of negotiation as by voicing their opinion they raised fundamental questions of ownership. They questioned the presence of Tali and her team in *their* area, demanding a certain degree of control over the project and thus negotiating the democratic procedures and norms related to the public participation process. For Tali this meant that she could also negotiate the responsibilities the different stakeholders take in the project and the demarcated Bishop Lavis site in general.

Munthe-Kaas describes how a co-designed urban space in Copenhagen resulted in citizens getting involved and coming to play new roles through the process. "They were not only sources of knowledge or users, but co-designers, and this seemingly led to increased respect for and interest in the process and a feeling of responsibility"(2015, 227). The different groups in the area and its seemingly unsolvable dissimilar perspectives transformed into agonistic recognitions of different notions what the space could be. In the case of the BLDF it was not the specific space but rather about the process of becoming a type of 'co-designer' as co-design "emphasizes the inclusion of a variety of actors in the imagining and development of new urban futures" (Munthe-Kaas 2015, 221). Tali explained that they knew one of the guys from the BLDF was involved with some of the cultural things in the area while teaching music too. So they said they needed a representative of the cultural affairs and told that they expected him to inform the people. At the same time they discussed how they could help to make the BLDF as an organization stronger so that they could actually represent a bigger group of people, identify what they stand for and what they want to achieve. In that light, Tali thus recognized their disagreement and conflict but did create a type of platform to channel these relationships and gave them a legitimate form of expression. This also becomes clear in the following statement of Tali:

" They are not a 100% there, but they are now more arguing with us as much as trying to undermine things. People need to trust you so it takes a while. We could have done the process in a much shorter way but then we would have come up against a lot of affray from people. "

Contrary to Tali's way of thinking as 'they are not a 100% there', there actually is no 100% when it comes to agonism, as Aggestam et al., (2015, 1741) argue that "agonistic politics can never take on the form of complete harmony or absence of conflict". Dissecting the statement shows how the BLDF are not fully complying with the 'rules of the game' and their confrontation is not eradicated but rather transformed in an agonistic relationship based on arguing as much as trying to undermine things, thus from trying to defeat an enemy they are now adversaries that argue with each other. They not only argue about the content of the public participation process but critiquing the process itself and in doing so "destabilize the rules of the game and make demands on government" (*cf* Silver et al., 2010, 470).

Through putting up resistance they have created a platform where agonistic contestation can take place Therein, the time element is of utmost importance as "agonism demands time-consuming or 'endless' communicative processes" (Pløger 2004, 72) and touches upon to the importance of "allowing for other forms of expression and participation than is the usual practice in the technical administration"(Munthe-Kaas 2015, 227). These insights do ignite confused feelings as to what the responsibilities of the urban practitioner are because, as Tali explains they (as urban planners working for the City of Cape Town) do not always get the luxury of facilitating these endless communicative processes due to time and money constraints. Besides, it does challenge urban practitioners to re-imagine their work practices. Yet, the re-imagining of their own role in terms of dealing with conflict situation seems rather subordinate. Even though Tali deals with conflict in a different manner it is for the soul purpose of achieving the goal of the project and getting them on board. The next chapter will go into more detail about this process of re-imagining but then from a more deliberate point of view.

3 TO COME TO TERMS WITH ONESELF

[Fieldnotes: 13-04-17]

The last month of my fieldwork has arrived and I finally made a breakthrough. I gained access to the Development Action Group (DAG), an NGO in the urban sector that works together with civic communities on a daily basis. In this case they provide socio technical assistance through a series of workshops, meetings and the development of a site specific proposal for the civic organization Commune Habitat.

I am the first to arrive, entering a room where about 10 chairs are grouped around an aerial map. The rest of the equipment for the workshop constitutes a flip over whiteboard, coloured pins and several balls of string. One by one the members of Commune Habitat come in and take a seat, where after everyone introduces themselves, including me. Before we actually start Gaarith (DAG employee who gives the workshop today) asks if Mr. Markgraaf (founder of Commune Habitat) would like to say some

prayers. I get welcomed and blessed as the visitor in their midst, which does make me feel accepted surprisingly quickly and causes me to think about cultural differences, empathy and allowing different forms of expression.

After the introduction we head over to the aerial map, using the coloured pins we identify the community assets like schools, shops, churches and libraries. We assign different modes of transport to the balls of string and map the members' everyday routes from home to work every day. In doing so the members' varied experiences come to life and they start to see their own community in a different light. For me, it stresses the key role of the urban practitioner and the use of the imagination in planning.

INTRO

Imagination can be interpreted differently, here I link the imagination to emotional experiences in planning, not only from Commune Habitat members' perspective but also from that of the urban practitioner. Because, as Baum demonstrates, "planners effectiveness depends on understanding their own and constituents' emotional concerns"(Baum 2015, 501). Since, "the task of the critical urbanist is to be an advocate for different and more just urban worlds, to set up processes that can create alternatives, make them seem feasible, doable and respectable, and make what we have now seem absurd or just downright unjust"(Chatterton 2010, 236). Chatterton further argues that opportunities to intervene, build alliances and propose alternatives arise in each public space, policy document or strike. This chapter looks at the role DAG, and other individual urban practitioners, take as such a critical advocate, trying to turn the urban impossible into a reality. I will show how the DAG tries to awaken the socio-material imagination, which often comes down to practicing a mediator role and trying to find 'common ground'. Here, the link with the previous chapters is made as this common ground is not formulated in the sense of seeking consensus but rather to create a platform for dialogue. Explored is how this common ground relates to the possible/impossible debate. Because it is particularly this common ground that currently seems impossible, requiring the imagination to turn this into a fruitful dialogue. Herein, the value of acknowledging emotions comes to the fore in order to remove barriers for creating this common ground.

Figure 6. Commune Habitat mapping community assets during workshop – own archive

1. HOW ELSE?

We have gathered in front of the DAG office and are now waiting for the arranged transport. When the mini taxi stops across the road, everyone rushes towards the van to get one of the best seats. I am with Charmaine, who organized us one of the best spots; a front row seat. It is about a 15 minute drive to the eco village Oude Molen. The site visit is part of a Horizontal Learning Platform (HLP) as organized by the DAG. The idea is that different communities consolidate their learning and share lessons and ideas. Zama, the DAG employee responsible for the HLP, gives an introduction explaining the programme of the day as well as stressing the importance of partnerships, better understanding and supporting each other, better positioning the community organizations by identifying what they stand for and on what specific issues they need support from DAG. Besides, he stresses how pieces of land can be utilized better, which a walk around the eco village should demonstrate, hopefully igniting ideas in terms of utilization for the communities' own purposes. He continues to ask: "If you say there is something wrong, then what are you doing about it? Instead of invading land, how *else* can you lobby for a specific piece of land and secure it? Why wait for the City or consultants to come up with a plan?"

What we see in Zama's approach is that he tries to awaken the socio-material imagination of the community members as his questions all point to finding alternatives. This approach can be analysed in terms of the urban possible/impossible. Pinder demonstrates how the possible and impossible are part of utopianism, emphasizing to approach urban issues not only in terms of what *is, "*but also to what *could be:* the potentialities for more socially just, democratic and emancipatory urban spaces and ways of living" (Pinder 2013, 30). It is particularly this *could be,* the impossible, that Zama emphasizes when asking how *else* the communities can secure land and lobby for it. He touches upon members' imagination to think about different ways or organizing urban life, what they can do about current urbanization processes that cause issues for them, and take an active stance instead of awaiting City's action. Such a focus on finding alternatives thus "demands greater openness to questions about imagination, desire and dreams"(Pinder 2013, 31). It is exactly this openness that the HLP aims to feed, by sparking discussion, identifying strategies, tactics and key challenges related to how communities realise their right to the city, and thus exploring potentially more just forms of organizing the urban. Besides, Zama points out that the community organizations should think about their positioning in order for the DAG to help them on specific issues. This can be seen in light of Munthe-Kaas' argument that "planners have become more aware of their own role as facilitators of inclusion and development and have been inspired to work in new ways through co-creative work done with citizens"(2015, 233). DAG is aware of its role as facilitator of the imagination and with the HLP introduced a way to bring groups of people together that wouldn't be possible before whilst

generating alternatives together, emphasizing to think beyond, to imagine what could be. What is needed to turn these alternatives into reality is the overcoming or breaking through of existing barriers and obstacles that currently make it *impossible* (Pinder 2013, 34). Zama shows a current obstacle by addressing the communities' awaiting attitude. He encourages them to use their socio-material imagination and do the impossible by adopting an active stance and taking action themselves. It is often out of necessity and oppression that many strands of the urban impossible emerge as marginalised and excluded groups actively manage their own affairs and build alternatives (Chatterton 2010, 241).

2. ABOUT THE HISTORY OF A PLACE

Making the urban impossible into a reality is not an easy process, especially not in a South African context where the right to intervene, shape and participate in the unfolding idea of the city has long been, and often still is, out of reach. Nevertheless, this doesn't make the urban impossible less topical, on the contrary: the urban impossible informs about current and past conditions and constraints. For instance, the emergence of the urban impossible often faces powerful forces that limit or suppress what seems possible. Current conditions are taken as the starting point whereby everything beyond is presented as unrealistic and utopian in the derogatory sense (Pinder 2013, 34). In this light, Monno also demonstrates that "conditions and constraints of 'what is' and 'what is not' possible are placed by the past and the present. These conditions and constraints have to be questioned and challenged in the process, given the specific context of place and time" (2010, 163).

The fact that historical trajectories influence the imaging of alternatives and thus creates conditions and constraints becomes clear when a representative of Oude Molen starts to explain the transformation of the site, from a vacant piece of land to what it is now, but gets interrupted by a question from the only black guy in the room (the rest of the attendees are all Coloured). He elicits a lot of whispering and eye-rolling when he asks about the history of the place, and the piece of land in particular. At first I take this question for granted as if he is just interested in the history of the place. However, during the break I discover how his question actually instigates feelings of hostility between groups that have historically been separated. His question was used to clear the ground as to whom the land historically belonged and thus currently belongs. During the break I get to hear different versions of the history of the site, going all the way back to Pangea [8]. The Coloureds claim the land as

[8] https://www.britannica.com/place/Pangea

it belonged to their Khoi Khoi ancestors, dismissing all other claims. This situation highlights how important past experiences are when it comes to awakening the imagination. Whereas the site visit can be seen as a facilitator of the urban impossible, it also crystallized very specific conditions and constraints as raised by historical events. Here, to desire the urban impossible is limited by hostile interrelationships defined by a divisive past, bringing to light questions of ownership and the right to the city instead of showing an ability "to create [completely] new vocabularies, imaginations and strategies for action that could bring about a radically different city" (*cf* Chatterton 2010, 235). The site visit of Oude Molen stressed again the magnitude of historical trajectories that have time and again come up. And as Monno (2010, 163) illustrates: "[…] in order to imagine differently the conditions and constraints for the future, we need to deal with history and to overcome history". This seems specifically true for the city of Cape Town.

Not only DAG shows an awareness of the need to overcome history and 're-imagine the city', also

Figure 7. Horizontal Learning Platform/Site visit to Oude Molen Eco Village – own archive

Evan Blake, a freelance urban consultant stresses the importance of historical trajectories. When I ask him what animal Cape Town would be he states that:

" Something flashy but not much substance beneath it. I know it's horrible to say but shit that's just me being cynical. Yeah man, something like a peacock hey. It has this attractive flamboyance to it but ultimately it is just feathers, it is like there is not much depth beyond that kind of veil. It is not to say that Cape Town does not have depth, it does, but that flamboyance shows… It is a cover for a bird that is otherwise quite small and timid you know. It's insecurities, people are scared and don't want to reveal whereas like something like Durban[9] is like … It would be a chicken or something, taken for granted, it has a function it does, it is cool with itself. There is a confidence in that, it is not flamboyant, it knows what it does and it has a function, it is ok, there is an understanding of its purpose and like acceptance of self. Here in Cape Town, people in the city, everything is just this reluctance to come to terms with self, to face oneself, to be like okay with what's there. It is difficult to explain but it's like, there is something key there, accepting yourself "

Evans' animal projection touches upon how (re-)imagining the city is in fact all about overcoming history and can be connected to the importance of emotional understanding when it comes to planning. Because, as Even illustrates, there are insecurities and emotions that are not accepted and stand in the way of self-acceptance of the people and the city of Cape Town. When there is no self-acceptance it is difficult to move forwards and actually gives us a limited purchase on social change.

Baum demonstrates, through a series of vignettes, how "planners' effectiveness depends on understanding their own and constituents emotional concerns" (2015, 501). According to Baum, "what people call "emotions" are particular types of actions and modes of acting (including ways of thinking), related to the concerns for relationships, security, and identity". Whereby, "generally, people act positively vis-à-vis other who provide satisfying relationship, offer security, or support personal identity and negatively when others threaten relationships, security, or identity" (2015, 502). The Horizontal Learning Platform exposes these emotions; the different actors acted negatively towards each other as their relationship, security and/or identity where threatened. Yet, the DAG knowingly organizes the HLP to engage different actors, while helping them to think differently (read: *offering alternatives, or touching upon the impossible)*. Baum illustrates how it is particularly this feature that distinguishes a success story, as instead of anxiously avoiding disagreement it allows for expressing emotions. Allowing emotions is thus a key element of the impossible, because where the

[9] The third biggest city in South Africa

impossible is about desires, dreams and the imagination, it is emotions that condition the imagination. And, as Pinder argued, it is necessary to "first overcome or break through the obstacles that currently make it [a better urban form] impossible"(2013, 35).

One of the vignettes in the article by Baum is particularly striking as it describes a community "so demoralized that they could neither move ahead to look for work nor think about economic development strategies for the town. People became depressed and apathetic". As part of the planning process, a dramatic performance, re-enacting the traumatic loss of work, enabled the residents to "grieve for their losses and begin taking realistic steps to improve the local economy and find jobs for themselves" (Baum 2015, 500).

What the earlier mentioned example of the site visit to Oude Molen clearly illustrates is that due to historical events a still utterly divided citizenry has come about. Desires, dreams and the imagination are evident but they are so demoralized that they cannot move ahead. The urban impossible then, does thus not lie in a specific desired built urban form but rather in re-imagining the relationships and collaborations needed to bring about that radically different city.

The organization of the HLP is a good first start to "harvest the future in the present", as Chatterton calls it (2015, 235). It encourages people to dream and create new vocabularies. In the process the obstacles, conditions and constraints become clear, and it is precisely these concerns that need continuous contemplation if there is ever to be a common ground.

3. YOU CANT DO THINGS ALONE

Considering the importance of historical trajectories presented in the previous sections and the still inherently divided conflictual dynamics at work due to the past, the next section will outline how the DAG and other urban practitioners have been given a sort of mediator role. By means of offering alternatives and touching upon the impossible the DAG aims to create a common ground by deliberately approaching conflict situations in an agonistic manner. This role shows resemblances with that of peacebuilding practices. Aggestam et al., (2015, 1738) define agonistic peacebuilding as "creating a political space in which a friend/enemy relationship can be reframed and transformed into one of legitimate adversaries". The DAG has become a kind of 'peacebuilder' in that sense as it opens up arenas for interaction "that allow for the development, articulation and contestation of different

political alternatives that can exist in parallel" (*cf* Aggestam et al., 2015, 1738). The next section will outline how this role manifests itself in the practices of DAG.

Introducing the second half of the Horizontal Learning Platform Zama again highlights the importance of partnerships by stating that "We [as DAG] also depend on partners. You can't do things alone". He explains how the communities could partner with other stakeholders by means of identifying their needs and aspirations. Whereby he continues: "Invite them to your platforms, convince them! Say, this is what we are fighting for, this is what we are doing. We are not sitting back, this is what we are doing. How can you assist us?" In particular, when speaking about stakeholders and partnerships the City is always amongst them. After his talk, a brochure is distributed which covers the Oude Molen strategy to assessing key stakeholders needs and aspirations whilst demonstrating how they developed their proposal based on these findings.

First, what we see here is one of the fundamental features when it comes to the DAG, namely the practice of providing socio-technical support in order to minimize the 'distance' between community organizations and the City as other stakeholders. Which can be seen as a first step in the peacebuilding process as agonistic peacebuilding probes questions with reference to power relations and the transformation thereof. This socio-technical support provides possibilities for creating a common ground, the distinguishing element when it comes to an agonistic approach of conflict. Whereas in chapter 2 we saw how Theo stated that the citizens involved in the participation processes often do not see the bigger picture, it is the DAG that aims to develop a better understanding of this 'bigger picture'. This often translates into accommodating community/civic organizations with insights regarding the City's greater Integrated Development Plan. In doing so, citizens become more knowledgeable and increase their ability to level with the plans of the City or other stakeholders. Innes and Booher (2004, 430) support such a claim in stating that "[disadvantaged] groups often need technical assistance so they can have equal voice with the more experienced better funded interest groups".

Yet, the emphasis on partnerships couldn't resemble agonistic peacebuilding wouldn't it be for the allowance of different interests and claims. The DAG by means of providing what the DAG calls socio-technical support, they create a kind of common ground without seeking consensus. It is similar to collaborative participation described by Innes and Booher, where "interdependencies are uncovered and participation can discover how all may benefit from improving a resource […] It is still fraught with emotions, but these methods allow venting and then moving on. Even when issues are not fully resolved […] they become less polarized as participations find common ground"(2004, 430). The

information about the greater Integrated Development Framework of the City allows community organizations to actually employ their own individual projects by relating it to the goals of the framework. A win-win situation whereby consensus-seeking is not applicable perse, rather a common ground is created that facilitates a more 'peaceful' project, whilst still leaving space for contestation and allowing for conflicting viewpoints. In the process, DAG - as an urban practitioner - becomes a peacebuilder making sure that "citizens can place their knowledge in the larger context of what the experts and planners know" (Innes and Booher 2004, 430). This is all done whilst also making sure that communities proactively produce a better alternative futures for themselves. In teaching to think about the needs and aspirations of other stakeholders (including the City), the DAG takes the sting out of certain situations. Whereas before, the present parties would be perceived as opposite and exclusionary, they now are transformed into searching for a common ground to engage with others.

Figure 8. Commune Habitat members discussing each other's maps – own archive

4. MAPPING

Again there is an aerial map in front of us, but this time with a sheet of tracing paper. Today's workshop is all about deciding what type of houses Commune Habitat wants and needs when it comes to the vacant piece of land they are lobbying for. Everyone is asked to draw a map and indicate what type of houses they prefer, low density, medium density/'row' houses or high density (by means of an earlier site visit to another community they got acquainted with the types of affordable housing). These preferences are then used by the DAG to write a proposal that can be linked to the greater development plan of the city. After everyone has drawn their ideas on paper, Gaarith sticks the maps to the wall, we gather around them in order to discuss the maps one by one. First everyone is asked to explain the why and how's of their map whereby others can give feedback. Thereafter Gaarith discusses various details of each map and explains what, in his opinion, the strong and weak points of their plans are.

The procedures as described here proved very valuable to Commune Habitat as well as to me. Reflecting on the situation it sheds light on the role of the urban practitioner as the facilitator of the imagination and proposing different alternatives, encouraging the members of Commune Habitat to experiment with ideas.

A striking example is that one of the women actually drew a wall around the piece of land as she wanted the community to be 'safe', the wall should preclude outsiders in her opinion. Others did not agree with her at all even though they were also concerned with safety issues. I am actually surprised that she brings up the idea of a wall as over the past few weeks we have been talking about integrated communities. Even though Gaarith states that a complete wall wouldn't really fit into the idea of an integrated community/ and thus more inclusive city, he doesn't immediately knock off the idea in general. Instead, he actually allows for the exploration of this conflictual idea.

He goes beyond that and proposes alternatives where high density houses could form a sort of natural wall. The houses would face outwards as to have 'eyes' on the street, directly addressing the safety concerns Minny brought up by mentioning the wall in the first place. Despite this she was not convinced. Nevertheless, by proposing an alternative Gaarith *did* act as a facilitator of the imagination. Because, after he proposed the 'houses-as-natural-wall-idea', the rest of the group eagerly embraced the idea and started discussing it in light of the greater surrounding area, exploring how this idea could work. Besides, they tried to convince Minny to at least consider the idea. Thus, in this light, Gaarith did what Chatterton (2010, 237) deems necessary when it comes to the urban impossible, which is: " to create an appetite for thinking and acting beyond currently acknowledged frames of reference.

[And to] build the capacity to experiment and dream, create momentum and point to seemingly impossible new directions for cities".

To me, this situation clearly showed how the community became aware of the fact that everyone had different views and ideas on almost every planning decision, coming to the conclusion that they would probably never fully agree. But it is exactly this awareness that could transform antagonistic relations into agonistic ones. The facilitation of the imagination is in essence about this transformation. Because, it creates a platform for discussion where different alternative futures can be expressed and explored in all openness. The seeming coincidence that the discussion was about an enclosing wall does actually underline the value of facilitating the imagination. It could literally and metaphorically speaking lead to a more open society in this case.

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to understand the role of the urban practitioner in urban public participation processes in Cape Town and how the imagination plays a role therein. Therefore, I have sought to answer the following research question: *" How can the role of the urban practitioner be understood in participatory processes of Re-Imagining the city of Cape Town and how does this interrelate with historical and contemporary conditions? "*

Throughout various ethnographic examples I have illustrated how historical trajectories profoundly define the contemporary urban landscape in Cape Town and provide conditions and constraints for imagining alternative urban futures whilst discussing the role of the urban practitioner in public participation processes.

In the first chapter the significance of historical trajectories became clear as the spatially divided nature of the city, as inscribed by its Apartheid history, makes the urban landscape a highly contested and sensitive domain anyway. The City tries to steer away from these sensitivities and a de-politicization process is evident. Political questions regarding urban developments are naturalized and reduced to neo-liberal discussions. In doing so, the political is foreclosed while at the same time people *do* experience a (re-)occurrence of institutionalized segregation, which is not just based on race anymore but consumption patterns and economic differences, hence the term Social Apartheid as coined by one of my informants. They thus recognize the oppressive violence and feelings of injustice whilst the contemporary urban landscape is characterised by a continuous avoidance of acknowledging exactly this unscrupulousness. A paradox can be found here as the already existing sensitive and political memories of Apartheid make that the City tries to avoid conflict and contestations regarding urban developments, but in doing so it actually creates an even more sensitive urban field.

This de-politicization process also has its impact on public participation as, by its very nature, it deals with conflictual interests. Due to an increasing number of stakeholders, and thus also ever-diverging interests and beliefs conflict even seems inevitable. At the same time, public participation is frequently thought of (and managed) as a consensus-seeking process concerned with the reconciliation of such contradictory perspectives. This, at first sight logical line of thought can be

characterised as an antagonistic approach to conflict. As seen in the case of Theo it often causes a further polarization of already existing hostile attitudes. A paradox similar to that of de-politicization is identified. Through public participation, threaded in this manner, consensus is often pursued as to avoid conflict about urban development even more, but it also has an opposite effect. Not least because it almost becomes consensus-demanding where a legal, and therefore in a way fictional, validation is sought. This also leads to, both deliberately and unconsciously, minimizing the debate to certain pre-determined situations (like a technicality of crossing building lines) and thus not allowing for discussing the more substantive political questions underlying these urban developments (like inclusiveness, ownership and inherent inequalities).

A more agonistic approach, as Tali's portrait illustrates, has the power of turning contestation into more productive relations whereby the we/they relationship is still evident, but conflict is allowed to continue to exist. In an agonistic situation participants are given the opportunity to negotiate the norms and procedures of the process in itself, or even the very legitimacy of the project altogether. In that sense it concedes political questions as the process of public participation is in essence about inclusion and exclusion. In this manner groups that would previously be excluded from the process become interlocutors. Of course this poses the risk that incorporating the groups is done solely to get legitimacy for the project whereby power relations come into play again, which is an often heard critique when it comes to public participation.

Obviously there are various degrees of antagonism and agonism to be found but the common denominator that defines this degree is first of all the premise of the urban practitioner. Does he or she see conflict as inevitable or as something that needs to be fixed? The course of the proceedings are greatly defined by how the urban practitioner perceives his or her own role in the process, as well as the process itself and at the same time poses inevitable questions about integrity and legitimacy.

The significance of the role the urban practitioner takes becomes clear when looking at the practices of the Development Action Group (DAG). They take on a role as facilitator of the imagination in the sense that they aim to remove obstacles to be able to imagine in the first place. As such, they provide community based organizations (CBOs) with socio-technical support. A first obstacle they try to reduce is that of education. By means of familiarizing community based organizations with the workings of the City, giving insights into greater urban development frameworks and the professional lingo used, they appeal and facilitate the imagination. They provide citizens with a toolbox that enables them to imagine that they can shape, intervene and participate in the unfolding idea of the

city. Besides, the word '**re-**imagining' itself already stresses the importance of historical trajectories as it is about ***rethinking, reassessing*** and considering ***again*** the idea of the city.

Moreover, hostilities as imposed by Apartheid-past might even be the biggest obstacle that obstructs the imagining of a more inclusive city. Historical trajectories have created a contemporary condition that limits the imagining of a common ground, which is the fundamental part of an agonistic approach. Yet, it is exactly this common ground that distinguishes unproductive hostile relationships (antagonism) from productive contestation (agonism) wherein certain groups can co-exist and are recognized as opponents instead of enemies. After all, speaking about re-imagining the city as inclusive also means that citizens (as well as the urban practitioner) should be able to imagine the city as a common playground.

The role of the urban practitioner as facilitator of the imagination is thus first of all to believe in the urban impossible him/herself and to genuinely communicate this image as a possibility for citizens to believe in. In its ultimate form the urban practitioner becomes a sort of peace builder that allows the city to come to terms with itself. Nevertheless, one can imagine that this is not an easy process, if even possible at all. Changing the course of historical trajectories might take generations. This stresses how abundant the imagination of the urban practitioner has to be. In the transition towards a more inclusive city we should thus encourage those individuals that dare to imagine.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the emanated importance of the imagination in urban planning processes, the imagination, as well as the future as a related concept, are still mainly untapped as a field of anthropological inquiry. Therefore established (theoretical) approach are lacking, consequently creating a limitation for this research, as I had to turn to related concepts and theories for interpretation and analysis. Sometimes this caused difficulties in a truly anthropological interpretation of ethnographic situations. Yet, it also opened up the research as borrowing techniques from the field of market research proved valuable in better grasping the imagination. Accordingly, suggestions for future research are to further explore 'the imagination' and 'the future', not just as dreams and desires that haven't manifested themselves but rather as a performance of time for example (Abram and Weszkalnys 2011). As much as the city needs new vocabularies, anthropological research should also think about a concept of *embodied imaginations* for example, wherein it becomes clear that

imagining is not free of constraints and contemporary conditions. Also, I want to stress that the methodological implications of the emergence of the imagination should be investigated.

Moreover, a limitation of this research can be found in terms of the time component. Three months is quite a short time to get acquainted with a city, its rhythms, patterns and dynamics. Not to speak about understanding the hyper-complexity of Cape Town's urban field and the different roles of stakeholders herein. Nevertheless, the versatility of the research (citizens, architects, urban planners, freelance urbanists, NGO's and community organizations are all included) can be seen as strength in terms of covering a lot of ground. Despite this, a more focussed research population could have provided more in-depth knowledge about the role of the urban practitioner; generalizations are difficult in this sense. In Cape Town the sensitivities might be more evident than in other countries but in my opinion they do address more general themes. The transition towards more inclusive cities around the world is just set in motion facing similar problems. The image of this inclusive city is one where a common ground is found; making it possible for people to live without conflict. Contrary to common held believes, this research shows that instead of fixing the problem we should embrace conflict, viewing it as inevitable.

Despite the fact that it might be a slow, tense and painful process the message of this thesis however is hopeful. A growing minority of urban practitioners I have spoken to, do show that they re-imagine their work practices in terms of creating alternatives to path-dependent thinking and dominant urban development models. Whereas some urban professionals are still reluctant to use their imagination to dream of a radically different city, others do put to practice their attributed role as peacebuilder; in the process they make sure that the city of Cape Town and its citizens can come to terms with oneself. Because, part of realizing the urban impossible is to break through and overcome contemporary obstacles.

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