



**Building with ruins and dreams...
Exploratory thoughts on realising
integrated urban development through
crisis**

Edgar Pieterse

Dark Roast Occasional

Dark Roast Occasional

No. 19



Dark Roast Occasional Paper Series is a project of Isandla Institute. The aim of the project is to create a discursive space of interface between academic and policy communities in various fields of development policy and practice. The papers reflect ongoing research of Isandla Institute staff, associates and interested parties in the interest of debate and more informed development practice. The papers are meant to provoke passionate debate and creative aromas of thought. We welcome any comments and feedback.

Published by:

Isandla Institute, PO Box 12263 Mill Street, Gardens, 8010 – Cape Town, SA. Email: isandla@icon.co.za

Managing Editor:

Mirjam van Donk

Editorial Collective:

Edgar Pieterse, AbdouMaliq Simone, Mirjam van Donk

© Copyright rests with the author(s) of the paper

ISSN 1810-8202

ISBN 0-9584751-5-6

The views in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Isandla Institute or its Board Members.

Building with ruins and dreams... Exploratory thoughts on realising integrated urban development through crisis

Edgar Pieterse

Abstract

Ten years into democracy, the urban crises of segregation and fragmentation in South Africa are as intractable as ever. South African cities remain beacons of racialised inequality and, perversely, it seems as if the unintended consequence of post-1994 governmental policies is a worsening of the situation. There is a paucity of imaginative and practicable ideas about how South African cities can find locally-specific pathways out of fragmentation and inequality. An important starting point for addressing these urban crises is to understand the value and function of crisis in urban development politics. Whilst on the one hand the enduring urban crisis in South Africa must be acknowledged and confronted, on the other hand it must be recast as an enabling moment – an opportunity to align and coordinate energies to undo the deeply engraved legacies of urban segregation and fragmentation. Less so than technical policy solutions, there is a need for a renewed public sphere where alternative ideas for specific urban areas can flourish. Such alternative discourses about the city's potentialities emerge from knowledge-generating collectives, or reflexive epistemic communities, that generate new symbols, new imaginings and new political practices – in other words, *homebru* alternatives.

About the author

Edgar Pieterse is a Director of Isandla Institute. He is currently on secondment as Special Advisor to the Premier of the Western Cape.

Edgar can be contacted at: edgar97@icon.co.za

Contents

Introduction	1
Three starting points for creating urban futures	3
<i>Transgressive politics</i>	3
<i>Epistemic communities as generators of homebru alternatives</i>	5
<i>Engaging economic actors and market sentiments</i>	8
Anchoring the future with iconic meta-objectives	10
Bringing the city to come to life	16
Conclusion: Recasting urban fragmentation and integration	19
References	21

Building with ruins and dreams... Exploratory thoughts on realising integrated urban development through crisis

Edgar Pieterse¹

Is it really possible to foresee the near future, in this transitional period of history we are living through? After all, it is being formed now, just in front of our eyes... Being part of this process, too near to it, we have difficulties in focussing; we might be looking, but we do so without seeing. Imagination and intuition might help. We can surf on this ocean of uncertainty and feel the breeze of time to come (Jorge Wilhelm 1996: page unnumbered).

...for me, bringing to crisis is an enabling moment. On the one hand, *who* brings something to crisis is never clear, because the moment of decision, singular or collective, is that moment which you cannot plan for. So crisis is an un-anticipatable moment which makes something inherited perhaps jump into something other, and fix onto something that is opposed. For me, crisis is not a leap of faith because it brings faith into crisis, but rather it is the leap of hope. And that's how I would connect the potential for crisis and hope in resistances of all kinds (Gayatri Spivak 2002: 173).

¹ This paper has been presented at the workshop: 'ID Documents: Images and Imagination in Public Culture', 12-13 March 2004. [An institutions of Public Culture Workshop presented by the Centre for the Study of Public Scholarship in association with the District Six Museum, Iziko Museums of Cape Town and the Robben Island Museum.]

INTRODUCTION

South African cities, and the politics that keep them afloat, are caught in a strange contradiction. On the one hand, enormous effort is exacted to create a post-apartheid identity and form through a plethora of legislation, policies and plans. On the other hand, the more the state acts on the city with all of its 'good' intentions, the more it seemingly stays trapped in its apartheid form, if not identity. There is an undeniable gap between policy intent and outcome suggesting a powerful ghostly hand of segregation intertwined with inequality, at work. In this paper I want to confront this apartheid ghost and propose a way of thinking through the dilemma of unintended consequences. The argument turns on the notion of crisis.

Crisis is of course intriguing because of its inbuilt ambiguity. One's immediate connotation of crisis is a negative one, which the Encarta Dictionary defines as "a situation or period in which things are very uncertain, difficult, or painful, especially a time when action must be taken to avoid complete disaster or breakdown." In other words, a moment to dread and avoid at all costs. A different, equally valid connotation of crisis is the idea of crisis as a "critical moment: a time when something very important for the future happens or is decided" (Encarta Dictionary 2002). The negative connotation is preoccupied with the present, the immediate condition of uncertainty, difficulty and possibly pain. The optimistic account is more future-oriented; it is about what the difficulties of the present may spawn if seen as a potentiality or "a leap of hope" in the outlook of Spivak. The quote of Jorge Wilhelm above suggests that this dichotomy between the negative present and the hopeful future is maybe less clear-cut than these two contrary definitions of crisis may suggest. Wilhelm intimates that the future is always already with us, emerging from the uncertainty of actions we take in the present. A negative, reactive approach to crisis would take action in the present to keep crisis at bay, to find our points of constancy, certainty and, possibly, less conflict, so that the future can be tamed by technologies of stabilisation. A more embracing approach to crisis would see uncertainty and destabilisation as moments of opportunity to bring new possibilities to light.

In this paper, I propose to work productively with this tension in understanding the value and function of crisis in urban development politics. The overwhelming urban crises of unemployment, inequality, social exclusion of subaltern groups and spatial segregation

that stem from apartheid ideologies of racialised fragmentation must be acknowledged and confronted. At the same time, this enduring crisis must be recast as an opportunity to align and coordinate energies to undo the deeply engraved legacies of urban segregation and fragmentation. Of course, much of the expansive range of urban development and local governance policies during the 1990s sought to remedy the apartheid city, but with minimal success (Khan 2003; Harrison et al. 2003). South African cities remain beacons of racialised inequality and, perversely, it seems as if the unintended consequence of post 1994 governmental policies is a worsening of the situation. In this context, how does one begin to think imaginatively about the problematic of persistent urban fragmentation and inequality?

I want to propose a series of arguments that is less focussed on technical policy solutions but more on creating a renewed public sphere where alternative ideas for specific urban areas can find room to flourish. More vibrant political and public spheres will stimulate more appropriate political cultures across cities that can create the conditions for grounded redistributive discourses to emerge. A central problem in the current period is that there is a paucity of imaginative and practicable ideas about how South African cities can find locally-specific pathways out of the swamp of fragmentation and inequality. Such ideas will only emerge if there is a concerted effort by progressive ‘organic catalysts’ at the margins of mainstream politics to organise themselves in order to generate new knowledge and passions for the integrated city, yet to come. On the back of such ideas the crisis of urban fragmentation can be recast as a *starting* point for new ways of thinking about, and acting on, the city. Since I have been conducting research on shifting policies and governance arrangements in Cape Town during the past eight years, I will throughout this paper invoke vignettes from there to illustrate the core points of the argument.

Concretely, the argument unfolds along the following markers. In the first section I propose that there are essentially three key conditions for addressing the structural crises of urban fragmentation: (1) vibrant city politics in a radical democratic mode; (2) a substantial ‘epistemic community’ in cities that generate imaginative ideas about alternative futures premised on a set of meta-objectives and concrete intervention strategies for the city; and (3) sufficient investment capital (private and public) to give economic support and expression to the implementation of concrete programmes and

projects in line with the ideas generated by the epistemic community for alternatives. The second section of the paper elaborates prospective mega-objectives that epistemic communities can work with in order to advance more integrative urban development based on the framework of Ayyub Malik (2001). The proposed meta-objectives are merely illustrative rather than definitive and are fleshed out to concretise the argument. The third section proposes some tangible interventions to socially and politically construct projects to build *alternative* futures, street by street as it were, in the context of Cape Town. In the conclusion, the discussion return to the theme of crisis and stabilisation in urban development efforts aimed at addressing the legacies of urban fragmentation.

THREE STARTING POINTS FOR CREATING URBAN FUTURES

The available models and imaginaries of urban politics seem redundant in terms of shifting the power dynamics, the nature of uneven development and the flow of resources in South African cities. Those who benefit from the status quo are generally comfortable and unperturbed by the new democratic dispensation, except for the ritualised complaints about unfair rates and decline in services standards and levels. There is virtually nothing in the way cities function and are constructed in symbolic terms in the public sphere (especially the media) that can penetrate the cocoon of privilege that characterises middle-class existence in South African cities. As long as this remains the case, we have very little chance of shifting the prevailing patterns of urban segregation, fragmentation and inequality. This is not to deny that there has been a significant shift of municipal budgets to un- and under-serviced black settlements. The problem is that such shifts amount to a limited 'basic-needs' development response to a structural problem of socio-economic exclusion and inequality which demand more fundamental redistributive policies. Such policies are not on the agenda because of the absence of a city-wide politics. Even though there has been an undeniable upsurge in militant direct action in poor areas in recent years (Desai 2003), these actions hardly add up to an urban politics beyond the neighbourhood. This observation made, allow me to make clear that I am not opposed or disenchanted with the new local government dispensation and its participatory innovations. On the contrary, I think that the transformative potential of these instruments is real, but is being squeezed out by the imperatives of stability, technical predictability and continuity as municipal councils battle to find their sense of feasible purpose in the 'developmental local government' policy universe. Furthermore, the vicissitudes of inter-

and intra-party politics also seem to weaken robust political debate about political economy and identity issues. Thus, the argument that follows must be read as one perspective on how we can rescue the transformative intent and potential of our new participatory democratic local governance system.²

Transgressive politics

Transformative development policies will only emerge within a radical democratic political framework. In other words, urban politics and policies are more likely to address the complex and intractable conditions in our cities if these become more effective in animating social citizenship, drawing on the disciplining power of radical democracy (à la Chantal Mouffe), and fostering a culture of agonistic engagement that is institutionally mobilised and embedded (following Amin and Thrift 2002; Gabardi 2001). These imperatives require a more lucid conceptual framework on urban politics than what is typically found in current South African scholarship on the city (Pieterse, forthcoming). As a first step, it is necessary to build on the post-structural insights into political identities and spatiality. By this I mean, a theoretical emphasis on culture as constitutive of the social, alongside the economic and political (Tajbakhsh 2002). With the cultural turn comes an awareness that language, discourse and symbolic meanings are central to incessant processes of identity construction and the realm of agency in the spaces of the everyday (Eade and Mele 2002). The conceptual challenge therefore becomes to adopt an approach that recognises the structuring effect of the economy, bureaucracy and discursive diagrams of power without relinquishing an understanding of the saliency of agency.

Practically, these theoretical informants lead me to argue that a strategic and transgressive approach to urban politics means working within and between the five domains of political engagement that exist between the state, the business sector and civil society at various scales (ranging from the local, to the sub-national, the national, the region, and the global). These political domains are: (1) representative political forums; (2) neo-

² In this paper I steer clear from the typical discussion of integrated development plans (IDPs) and development forums as lynchpins of democratic local governance systems in order to illuminate other aspects of the issue. Obviously, contiguous studies on strengthening democratic institutions and cultures at local level are also an important part of the picture (see Binns and Nel 2002; Parnell *et al.* 2002).

corporatist political mechanisms that are comprised of representative organisations, typically the government, the private sector, trade unions and community-based organisations; (3) direct action or mobilisation against state policies or to advance specific political demands; (4) the politics of development practice, especially at the grassroots; and (5) symbolic political contestation as expressed through discursive contestation in the public sphere. (The last domain is particularly relevant for the arguments developed in this paper.) Furthermore, hybrid interfaces can be discerned where these domains of political practice inter-penetrate. Lastly, the model draws attention to the importance of the mutually constitutive relation between the political and the public spheres in the city. This enlarged conception of urban politics makes it possible to think much more strategically about how best to shape urban agendas for transformation, drawing on formal and informal domains of practice. It is only from this vantage point that the constraints of urban development in a capitalist system can best be analysed and subverted.³

The value of crisis in urban politics is that it potentially reveals the limits of what is possible in terms of prevailing systems of power and hegemonic discourses. Agonistic politics seek to advance radical democracy by highlighting and challenging the limits of ‘the possible’. If insurgent groups can operate strategically across the various political domains of the city, they open up opportunities for new discourses that can alter the realm of the possible. In this sense, crisis can be considered an “enabling moment” (Spivak 2002: 173). This notion is helpful to think about what needs to happen for the disjuncture between policy intent (urban integration) and outcome (urban fragmentation) to be remedied. Informed by my field research in Cape Town, I am convinced that policy intentions, as expressed in planning frameworks, are bound to remain paper-ideas whilst established patterns of organisational (and spatial) practice continue. That is, unless, a profound crisis of legitimacy destabilises the predictability of ‘business as usual’. A brief example may shed light on what I mean. In Cape Town, a conflict emerged in 1997 between (progressive) municipal planners and victims of forced removals under the previous dispensation over what urban integration means in practice. The municipal planners believed firmly in compact city principles such as infill development, compaction, higher densities and mixed land-use and wanted to force restitution

³ The argument summarised here is set out in fuller terms in another paper (Pieterse, forthcoming).

claimants to dwindle their claim from 54.8 hectares to 15 hectares so that more (poor) people could be settled on a given strip of land. The claimants argued vociferously that the track-record of the council did not inspire confidence that they will in fact proceed to settle other poor African families on the remainder of the land. Instead, they fought for a historically informed approach to infill development as opposed to the a-contextual and a-historical approach that the municipal planners advocated based on their planning model. At some point along the protracted dispute, the community representatives charged the municipal planners with racism. This caused an explosion of emotion and reaction. The crisis that ensued provided a discursive space for politicians to become more directly involved. It also enabled larger structural problems of institutional racism to surface. If this crisis had not occurred, it is likely that the rationalist discourses of the planners would have prevailed and even less land would have been transferred to a significant number of African families in Cape Town.⁴

The point to be made here is that the host of transformations that must happen in the city as a way of making the place more integrated and equitable will not happen in the absence of profound and explicit political contestation, ignited by various types of crises. This is why a consensual model of politics is limited. Critically, political contestations must be strategic and linked to firm ideas about how to concretely construct alternative routes out of the fragmented city. By definition such ideas will be rooted in concrete ‘experiments of hope’ as various actors seek to find creative ways out of the quagmire of segregation and fragmentation.

Epistemic communities as generators of *homebru*⁵ alternatives

Ideas matter. Ideas are indispensable for interpreting what is wrong in our cities, how it can be fixed, and what is better than what we are settling for at the moment. Ideas can ignite creative energy, resistance and movements for change. Ideas can also fix the future,

⁴ This example should not be misunderstood as an argument for playing the so-called race-card in all policy/political disputes. It is merely invoked to underline the broader line of argument about the necessity of crisis and conflict in moving political engagements deeper to the structural bone of transformative development policy. The case study is fully documented elsewhere (Pieterse 2002).

⁵ This iconic term is used in a marketing campaign of Exclusive Books bookshop to promote South African writers by creating a brand that celebrates local talent and vibrancy in the literary field. Colloquially, ‘bru’ is a term for friend in Afrikaans.

creating convictions that we are trapped by the powers of geography, time and capital flows. Much of the impasse in urban development stem from the incorrect belief that we are circumscribed by very narrow parameters for manoeuvre at this particular juncture in history. This storyline is unconvincing because much can be done to break-away from the tropes of urban development that suggests we have to emulate trajectories of development similar to those in the North and/or successful South-East Asian countries. This is not an argument for a particular recipe for urban development (not that recipe's do not have their place), but more for an approach that takes seriously the notion that endogenous ideas can be generated through focussed processes of debate and engagement about dealing with the nerve-endings of inequality, racism and social exclusion—some of the key causes of urban fragmentation. Specifically, the suggestion is that unless more coherent epistemic communities emerge in our cities, for the city, we are unlikely to generate the ideas and creativity to find the unique trajectories out of fragmentation.

The notion of 'epistemic community' is derived from the idea that knowledge-generating collectives can be convened to vigorously exchange perspectives within a broader shared commitment to find practicable 'solutions' to intractable social and economic problems. This conception builds, on the one hand, on ideas about the roles of 'organic intellectuals' in society as formulated by Antonio Gramsci, and redeployed by Cornell West, Edward Said and Stuart Hall (Elaborated in Barker 2000). On the other hand, it draws on the Aristotlean idea of *phronesis* as advanced by Bent Flyvbjerg (2001), Jean Hillier (2002) and Michael Gunder (in press). *Phronesis* essentially refers to the skill and reason of practical judgement "in the moment of action" (Gunder, in press: 19). It is an intellectual virtue that strives to realise good and effective action in complex and unfolding circumstances. In Gunder's approach, it is particularly attuned to unequal power relations and to finding the most pragmatic and strategic path forward to effect urban policy actions that can produce greater equity and social justice.

By making the link between organic intellectuals and the practice of *phronesis*, one can argue that the purpose of the epistemic community is to fundamentally challenge conventional orthodoxy (the mainstream) about what is possible and impossible in terms of transformative urban development agendas. Expounding on Said's understanding, Ashcroft and Alhuwalia (1999: 135) remind us that "[o]rganic intellectuals, ... are those who are actively involved in society, striving to change it rather than maintain traditions.

Unlike traditional intellectuals who ‘remain in place’, organic intellectuals ‘are always on the move’ (Said 1994: 4)”, in search of workable alternatives that can become hegemonic. Cornell West develops on this idea by casting organic intellectuals as *catalysts* who stay “attuned to what the mainstream has to offer – its paradigms, viewpoints and methods – yet maintains a grounding in affirming and enabling subcultures of criticism” (West 1990, quoted in Ashcroft 2001: 49). This is a vital aspect of an epistemic community’s role—understanding the rationalities and governmental technologies of the mainstream whilst recognising its inherent limits and potential for critical subversion to serve more insurgent interests of the excluded and discriminated in the city. One aspect of fulfilling this role is to engage with the totality of urban development policies as encapsulated in IDPs or city development strategies and the institutions these planning frameworks are embedded in. Another aspect is identifying the most strategic leverage points to push mainstream development agendas beyond their own limits towards a more redistributive, inclusive and integrated footing. In the following sections, I propose that this can be achieved through a focus on essential meta-objectives for the city (section 2) and a more tightly focused, imaginative agenda for medium-term structural transformation in the city (section 3).

There will undoubtedly be the danger that an epistemic community can lose its sense of what constitutes creative alternatives that can resonate with present crises for what is cutting-edge and innovative is profoundly contextual, subjective and generational.⁶ It is therefore crucial that an epistemic community remains attuned to its own potential for new orthodoxies and builds into its functioning and identity mechanisms for critique, renewal and even termination, if the need arrives.⁷ An implication of this approach is that such an epistemic community (of organic intellectuals) cannot remain (or even arise?) within the state or in highly institutionalised civil society organisations. It must inhabit a space in the border zones between the state, civil society, the grassroots, academia, and the private sector. It must be open to multiple perspectives and practice the art of

⁶ I am indebted to Ahmed Vawda for the reminder that what is considered ‘radical’ and ‘establishment’ is profoundly generational. Youth always carries within itself very particular ideas about what is radical and cutting-edge as changing fashions in popular culture and politics remind us.

⁷ I believe that a number of epistemic communities need to coexist and will in practice. However, for the sake of argument in the paper I hereon refer to epistemic community in the singular because I am invoking one that I can identify with.

interpretation and translation in order to bring new meanings and understandings to life. It must keep an ear firmly to the ground in order to know and feel the various pulses of the city and its changing moods.

Having studied the political and policy processes of local government in Cape Town, I am convinced that it is ineffectual to invest all energies in the idea of building participatory local democracy through capacity building of municipal staff and politicians. There is an important place for that kind of work, but it will not deliver transformative politics and policy. Instead, at best it is likely to deliver is a robust basic-needs agenda, which will be merely ameliorative. More potential can be found in strengthening countervailing points of power that shape and influence the political priorities of municipal government. This is more easily desired than achieved, if one considers how relations between municipalities and civil society organisations are panning out. On the one hand, a co-opted, tame and *dependent* set of relations is fostered between municipal authorities and civil society organisations that enter into service delivery partnerships. On the other hand, a purely *oppositional* political culture is being induced whereby civil society organisations define their identity on the basis of undermining the legitimacy of the (local) state as a strategy for creating ‘favourable’ conditions for a transition to socialism.⁸ These tendencies create a vacated middle-ground where a more balanced, strategic and provisional politics can grow roots. As Jenny Robinson (2004: 271) suggests, politics grounded in this middle-ground “demands an appreciation of both constructive achievements, and dangerous trends; it demands a theoretical analysis which can reflect on moments of hopeful creation, and also contribute imaginative resources to determined resistance.”

A number of objections to the notion of an epistemic community of organic intellectuals can be anticipated. For example, such a group can be seen as an elitist forum that holds paternalistic assumptions about knowing what is ‘good’ for the city. An epistemic community can furthermore be accused of undermining legitimate democratic institutions by fostering influential cliques that conduct their affairs in shadowy backrooms. I acknowledge these dangers but for the following reasons I am convinced about the need

⁸ In Patrick Bond’s terminology the strategic objective is not to ‘fix’ failing democratic institutions but rather to ‘nix’ them; meaning, dismantle and replace with popular alternatives based on the militancy and determination of the working classes.

for the presence of an epistemic community as elaborated before. Firstly, an epistemic community will invariably operate at the margins of mainstream urban politics because its agenda is radical and subversive but within the democratic rules of the game. The radical dimension is derived from the Gramscian idea that organic intellectuals explicitly position themselves to advance the struggles of insurgent classes (feminist, postcolonial, queer, working class and other oppressed subjectivities), with an acute sensitivity for the cultural terrain within which politics unfold. As long as neoliberal capitalist governmental technologies remain hegemonic and pervasive it is unlikely that such an epistemic community can become an elitist club that captures resources for narrow sectional interests. Secondly, paternalism is avoided by recognising the complementary role of such a group to existing organisational formations that *represent* distinct constituencies in civil society and/or the formal political sphere via political parties. In other words, the function of the epistemic community is not to replace democratically constituted associations but to potentially *influence* the ongoing deliberations of such organisations. The epistemic community is therefore primarily focused on engaging in the domain of politics I referred to earlier as discursive symbolic contestation. In this sense, the epistemic community can be seen as an enriching of democratic debate and contestation, not its undermining. Lastly, an epistemic community will be a voluntary and loose form of association, cohered by a shared political commitment to insurgent classes and practices (Holston 1999). The veracity of its ideas and practice must be sufficiently robust and compelling to ensure an ethos of transparency in all it does. Such a practice would avoid a tendency for clique building and shifty back-room politics. On the contrary, the epistemic community is, in my mind, fundamentally about opening up vital debates and enlarging the public sphere through the projection of iconic ideas, rooted in sound analysis, about alternative ways of city building. For instance, the prevailing political culture in Cape Town (and other South African cities) is not conducive to generating sufficiently critical, pluralistic, informed and creative debates to generate policy ideas that can address the structural problems of racism, fragmentation and inequality. What is patently absent is a series of new concepts, imaginaries and people to generate innovative ideas that can make a difference. A plurality of epistemic communities is called for to generate such ideas and ensure their insertion into the political and public spheres as a way of acting as a countervailing power to dominant policy discourses and practices.

Engaging economic actors and market sentiments

Progressive ideas that emanate from an epistemic community should be embedded in a political framework of strategic action across the various domains of urban politics discussed above (Pieterse, forthcoming). Such an approach locates urban development policy within a relational chain of actors and agendas that are continuously analysed and calibrated to deal with concrete problems, challenges and hegemonic discourses. In this respect, the biggest challenge is to engage in an informed and intelligent way with economic processes and actors given the constitutive function of economic well-being in realising a host of social and environmental objectives. In other words, along with exploring and foregrounding the cultural complexity of the city, there is a need to adopt a political economy lens in identifying strategic actions to address urban inequality and fragmentation. This is much easier wished for than achieved, especially during the current moment when neoliberal economic ideas remain hegemonic and entrenched, particularly amongst government leaders and powerful private sector interests (Brenner and Theodore 2002). However, it is an error to infer from this that little can be done to shift dominant mindsets.

There has been significant growth in theoretical programmes and policy ideas in urban studies to challenge the neoliberal assumptions underpinning orthodox local economic development strategies (Wilson 1995). For example, Moulaert (2000) and his colleagues use regulation theory to formulate a methodological framework of identifying concrete interventions to shift urban economies onto a more durable, equitable and environmentally sound footing whilst holding onto an empirically informed and materialist analysis of capitalist dynamics. Regional geographers like Allen Scott and colleagues theorise the social embeddedness of regional economic growth, which underscores the importance of democratic governance, reduced social exclusion and investment in the urban poor (Scott *et al.* 2001). In a similar vein, Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2002) provide trenchant arguments to demonstrate the importance of localised mixes of policies and priorities to sidestep the hollow obsessions with knowledge economies and industrial clusters, so as to strengthen diverse and resilient local economies. A theme extended by J. K. Gibson-Graham in their provocative theoretical work on finding a new language to capture and foster real 'diverse economies' in cities. This approach allows them to recognise both capitalist and non-capitalist forms of economic transaction, labour and organisational forms (Gibson-Graham 2002).

All of these exciting avenues of research and theorisation open up new vistas on rethinking the seeming inevitability of large-scale economic exclusion and inequality that accompanies current forms of economic organisation and development. It is not my intention to explore the specific policy ideas and experiments that flow from these kinds of arguments. Instead, I am hoping that by flagging these lines of theorisation, it is easier to make a case for more direct and concrete engagement with the private sector in all of its diversity and internal contradiction. Questions must be posed about the ways in which patterns of economic investment and development reproduce the apartheid spatial economy reinforcing racial segregation and fragmentation. Other economic issues that need to be put in the spotlight include: questions of ownership, especially in faster growing sectors such as property, tourism, information and communication technology, and other dimensions of the service sector; finding ways of supporting informal economic activity and achieving better (i.e. non-exploitative) linkages with the formal economy; optimising the potential benefits for niche markets and new productive activity arising from ecological economic strategies; dealing with the skills-training and labour market mismatches; building the social economy as a resource to foster social capital, provide temporary employment, facilitate skills development, and so on (Amin and Thrift 2002).

In this section, I am arguing that the perpetuation of urban fragmentation in our cities is not inevitable, but unlikely to change unless we radically rethink the nature of urban politics and the production of ideas that animate political debate. A more expanded conception of urban politics is required with a stronger emphasis on the symbolic dimensions of politics; i.e. how are political agendas determined by particular discursive systems. Organic intellectuals enlisted in epistemic communities can intervene more proactively and decisively to unsettle conventional political agendas and work to replace them with more imaginative alternatives that can address the structural determinants of urban fragmentation and exclusion. For such ideas to resonate it will have to be culturally attuned and economically informed—imperatives that require the practice of *phronesis*. Given the capitalist system within which urban development and politics are embedded, any effort at generating alternative knowledges will have to engage directly with market sentiments and influential economic actors. However, this requires a rounded understanding of urban development and its many interwoven dimensions.

ANCHORING THE FUTURE WITH ICONIC META-OBJECTIVES

In the previous section I made the interlinked argument for agonistic radical democratic politics, the need for epistemic communities committed to social justice in the city, in combination with a willingness to engage the private sector (and market sentiments) about the relationships between economic development and urban inequality. If an epistemic community is to be successful in reversing this admittedly ambitious agenda, it must have a deep and rounded understanding of the city. Such an understanding can be developed via the notion of meta-objectives for the future city. Meta-objectives, in turn, can provide useful entry points for practicable proposals to act in favour of an alternative trajectory—more integrative—of urban development. Here I draw on the stimulating ideas of Ayyub Malik but there are of course many other options that are equally useful.⁹

Ayyub Malik (2001) provides a useful take-off point to explore the multi-dimensionality of urbanity in relation to the imperative of forging contextually specific trajectories for non-western cities. In this section, I build squarely on his provocative ideas, even though I would take issue with the bold stripes of characterisation with which he paints the history of modernist-inspired city building in the South. But first I need to slip in the distinction of Charles Landry between narrative and iconic forms of communication:

Narrative communication is concerned with creating arguments; it takes time and promotes reflection. Its ‘band-width’ is wide as its scope is exploratory and linked to *critical* thinking; it is ‘low density’ in the sense of building understanding piece by piece. It is about creating *meaning*. Iconic communication by contrast has a narrow ‘band-width’ and highly focused purpose; it is high-density because it seeks to squash meaning into a tight time frame, creating high impact by encouraging symbolic actions that make what is being projected feel significant ... The challenge of creative urban initiatives is to embed narrative qualities and deeper principled understandings with projects which have iconic power (Landry 2000: 64-65, emphasis added).

⁹ I am drawing on the framework suggested by Malik as a device to advance my argument. However, the models of Stren and Polèse (2000) or Hall and Pfeiffer (2000) organised around the notion of urban essentials for advancing the sustainable city could be an equally valid starting point. Significantly, the South African Cities Network is organising their work around the notions of: productive city, inclusive city, well-government city, sustainable city and the cross-cutting theme of city development strategy (Boraine 2003).

Even though the examples that Landry provides in his book about what constitutes progressive iconic symbols is not fully convincing, it does seem that he is onto something about the need to combine a deep analytical understanding of the city with more symbolically rich concepts to transport analysis into the realm of the public sphere where it can animate numerous energies. It is a distinction that I use below to extend the provocations of Ayyub Malik's argument about the ills of the non-western city into practicable ideas about addressing urban fragmentation in South African cities.

The gist of Malik's argument is that modernist assumptions in architecture and urban development were uncritically endorsed and pursued with such teleological determination that it displaced any appreciation for what existed, or was incipient, in cities in the South. As a result, we now witness three distinct co-existing cities in most non-western cities:

The contemporary non-western city is not one, but three segregated cities: the inherited city—dilapidated, unkempt and disowned, but still a repository of knowledge and resonance; the modern city—a meaningless construct of costly images irrelevant to the life and need of the many; and the vast slum city, made up of urban poor and rural migrants without help, skills or resources (Malik 2001: 875).

This assessment, which echoes the earlier characterisation of Marcello Balbo (1993), leads Malik to suggest that there is no chance of finding durable and appropriate urban development responses to the vast challenges in our cities whilst we remain trapped within the assumptions of modern city building, i.e. architecture, urban design, urban planning and infrastructure development based on single land-use patterns. In contradistinction, Malik insists that we need to turn to our histories, heritages, latent knowledges, insurgent practices and the moral imperatives of equity and sustainability to animate the generation of endogenous 'solutions'. Invariably, such an approach involves a persistent questioning of what passes as 'givens' in current registers of urban development and local governance. Malik therefore asks:

what can architects, planners and people in the non-western world do to learn from their history, engage with the present and produce an urban synthesis for the future[?] How can they begin to shape their cities within the framework of their culture, climate and needs and resources while experimenting with new possibilities? Such questions lead only to more complex questions about the nature

of politics, about social and civic institutions, about the distribution of power, wealth and influence in society, and about those forces—local and global—which control what is and is not built and provided in the city (Malik 2001: 877).

However, there is not merely a deconstructive element to Malik's argument. He continues to make a case for the establishment of deliberative forums to imagine and plot alternative approaches to urban development. Such approaches will obviously be locally determined and embedded whilst remaining cognisant of larger forces that impact on the city's trajectory. Malik believes that "citizens have to define their social and environmental aims and ideals and actively participate in shaping their city so that it relates to their culture, provides for their needs, and is safe and healthy to live in. It is only thus that cities will become culturally relevant, aesthetically satisfying and intellectually rewarding" (Malik 2001: 879-880). This position connects usefully with my own argument for a vibrant radical democratic politics in the city discussed before (Pieterse, forthcoming). I would therefore locate the core sentiment of Malik—to foster local spaces of deliberation on alternative objectives for the city—within and between the five domains of politics so as to subvert and animate the public sphere in the city.

However, to do this effectively one needs more concrete entry points. Here again, Malik is useful, even if merely suggestive. Within his open-ended call for locally-defined city-building strategies, the author suggests that as a minimum, there must be deliberate effort at building the following attributes (or meta-objectives) into the city of the future; i.e. a city that is "democratic, productive, innovative and sustainable as well as cultural, creative and tolerant" (Malik 2001: 880). In the search for integrated urban development, it is worthwhile elaborating on each of these dimensions of city making, building on Malik's ideas and extending them to accentuate the South African context:

‣ **Democratic city:** The human rights-based South African Constitution and the local government dispensation provide a strong footing for the emergence of participatory, radical democracy in South African cities. However, this is not nearly enough, not least because of the incentives of the proportional electoral system in a context where the ANC party dominates the political landscape. The formula seems to breed party loyalty and political intolerance more than citizen responsiveness. A comprehensive array of participatory techniques needs to be designed and deployed to ensure a political culture marked by inspired political leadership, public accountability, transparency and the right

to information, inclusive, responsiveness to citizen claims and grievances (especially the poor and marginalised), and non-violent conflict mediation (see Friedmann 2002: 116-117).

More concretely, I want to propose one illustrative initiative of what can be done to foster the democratic city. In 2000, the Unicity Commission in Cape Town proposed the establishment of a “City Leadership Academy” (Unicity Commission 2000: 23). The thinking behind this was to create a permanent learning environment where elected political leaders from diverse political parties could encounter each other along with community leaders to hone political, leadership, managerial, conceptual and personal skills. The approach would be problem-solving and outside of the typical party-political frames of references. Potentially, such an initiative would strengthen the democratic management skills of city leaders, but more importantly, it would help to create a breeding ground for the establishment of new networks that are more value-based and less purely ideological and/or instrumentalist. Of course, it is easy to be naïve and starry eyed about these kinds of projects and lose sight of the deeply entrenched cultural and political differences between competing ideologies. This notwithstanding, we need new socialisation opportunities if we are to nurture city leaders that can recognise and accept good ideas that “are part of common agenda rather than the expression of a single person” or political party (Landry 2000: 70). A similar argument must be made for the establishment of “Civic Education Centres” that cater for community activists and citizens of all stripes and hues – i.e. learning forums where citizen rights can be debated and made more tangible in terms of what it means in everyday life and political practice. Such forums could easily be adapted to drive participatory budgeting methods of democratic participation and redistribution. Possibilities are as many as the imagination can hold.

› **Productive city:** Earlier in the paper I have made much of the importance of recognising that there is no single path to urban economic development, i.e. a path reflected as a mirror image of Northern experiences. I will not rehearse the argument again. Suffice it to say that in a context such as South Africa, with the obscene levels of unemployment and income inequality illustrated before, a lot of effort must be invested in exploring alternative economic strategies. In particular, we need to overcome our obsession with economic policy fashions (Amin *et al.* 2000) and simultaneously confront

the unmistakable prevalence of informal and parallel economies (Friedmann 1992: 96-103; Simone 2000). Also, there seems to be immense untapped potential to explore the possibilities of environmental economics as a starting point for finding a more endogenous route out of economic crises (Friedmann 1992: 119-133). These flickers of ideas are obviously merely suggestive and not to be read as the alternative policy recipe.

‣ **Educational/Learning city:** It is hard to imagine a more important meta-objective for the city. Investing in (critical) educational opportunities and promoting the importance of continuous learning is the surest investment to be made in the productive city, the democratic city, and most importantly, in fostering assertive citizens who can articulate claims and struggle for the realisation of their rights. Of course, this assertion assumes a decidedly critical approach to knowledge, learning and pedagogy, in line with traditions of Paolo Freire and Franz Fanon, about the importance of ‘knowledge of self’, in the parlance of hip-hop heads, DeadPrez (2000) and Talib Kweli (2001). There are so many layers to this meta-objective; it is dizzying to formulate a succinct argument. One level, and probably most important, is getting the basics right, i.e. pre-primary and primary schooling. In this instance, following Njabulo Ndebele (2002: 16), schools can be re-imagined “as public institutions [... that are] the focus of the community’s social policy.” Ndebele argues for a model of schooling that re-situates the curriculum, everyday functioning and safety of schools within the broader communities where they are built. Schools become hubs for micropolitics by ensuring that the needs of learners, their communities and the larger world are explicitly catered for. In this way, the constitutional “values of tolerance, accountability, equity, multilingualism, openness and dialogue make sense” (Ndebele 2002: 16). There are of course already experiments underway in Cape Flats townships under the auspices of Extra-Mural Education Project (EMEP) to make schools multi-purpose centres under community control. The point is that these experiments need support to become the norm.¹⁰

In addition, there is much to be done to re-train the large swathes of workers who have lost their jobs as the regional economy restructures under pressure from greater international competition, in addition to the more foundational task of ensuring a match between the economy’s needs and educational policy. However, even vocational training

¹⁰ The Director of EMEP is Jonny Gevisser and this observation is based on a number of conversations I have had with him over the course of the past five years.

can be embedded in larger social and political concerns which also work to foster citizenship and community activism. In fact, part of the new learning ethos ought to be the application of skills and knowledge to improvements and maintenance of community and public spaces. Similar cross-over teaching and learning may well begin to characterise secondary, tertiary and technical education as well. It seems incredulous that Cape Town can boast three universities, two technikons and numerous other education, technical and research centres, and yet, there is hardly a tradition of community service or ensuring a correlation between community development needs and academic research and teaching. (There are isolated and inspiring exceptions to this.) This is politically irresponsible and economically wasteful. Beyond the limitless potential of using educational institutions for multiple civic purposes, it is also possible to think of the idea of a learning city as a symbol that can animate innovative social experiments. For example, it seems highly feasible for Cape Town to adopt an aggressive and proud tradition of tri-lingualism, i.e. promoting understanding and proficiency by all in the city in the three main languages of the region (isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English). Fantastically innovative campaigns can be launched to transform schools, churches, sport clubs, workplaces, pavements, libraries and the like into spaces of learning and cross-cultural engagement. Surely, media and advertising industries (the supposedly creative pride of the Cape economy as the recent Design Indaba claims) who win numerous international awards for creative imaging can volunteer talent and time to ensure such as a campaign resonates widely.¹¹ As I said before, I am merely proffering illustrative examples. Of course, concrete practicable solutions will have to emerge organically.

‣ **Cultural city:** It is axiomatic that cities are places of great cultural mixture and diversity. However, it would be naïve to think that diversity and proximity goes along with equality between cultural practices and identities. On the contrary, as economic value is increasingly culturally mediated and image driven, cultures are becoming more and more the mere receptacles of marketing messages. Cultural practices and identities are hallowed out in favour of image-based commodification in the relentless pursuit of market share and profits. As a consequence, politically inspired ideas like multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism get emptied out and equated with globalised representations of so-called coffee cultures, or shopping-mall experiences, or hip-hop

¹¹ This example fits neatly with the excellent conceptual framework on linking values, education and democracy, as argued by Mark Gevisser and Michael Morris (2002).

street cultures, that can be staged for profitable consumption. Accordingly, any effort to bring cultural development to the fore in re-imagining the city for more democratic and equitable purposes is fraught with all kinds of dangers (Stevenson 2003). So how can we conjure a more grounded and politically sensitive conception of the cultural city that needs to be made?

Practically, I can envisage at least three categories of intervention that can give expression to the fostering of a cultural city. First, public and private investments must be poured into community-level cultural infrastructures to strengthen other development investments (e.g. access to quality housing, primary health care) and promote the flourishing of visual and expressive arts. Clearly, this will dovetail with efforts at transforming schools as alluded to earlier, for cultural infrastructures will have to be grounded in learning and public spaces. Secondly, the cultural city cannot but allow its citizens to learn about and work through the individual and collective memories that haunt our dreams about the future. The multi-dimensional scaffolding of apartheid and colonialism conspired successfully to systematically erode black people's sense of self and community, creating psychic legacies that live on in the profound social dislocations that characterise working class life in particular. Culture-based work is a vital resource to allow for memorialisation efforts and the reworking of terror and shame into empowering acts of individual and collective assertion of pride and dignity (Field 2001).¹² For the crises of poverty and social exclusion are not merely a matter of lacking employment; it is also about reclaiming one's sense of being and belonging to allow what Arjun Appadurai (forthcoming) calls 'a capacity to aspire' to take off.

Third, in a context such as South Africa, everyday racism must be tackled head-on. This is simply not happening in the wake of discourses such as, 'rainbow nation'. In the racialised and conflictual contexts of northern cities in the UK, Ash Amin (2002: 13) suggests that habitual contact between different groups in itself "is no guarantor of

¹² There are a number of existing initiatives in Cape Town that seek to achieve these kinds of projects. Notable examples include: (1) the work surrounding the District Six Museum; (2) the black artist collective called BLAC and their insurgent initiatives between 1998-2003 (Minty 2003); (3) the Project on Public Pasts organized by the History Department of the University of the Western Cape (see: www.uwc.ac.za/arts/history/Research/Popps.htm); and (4) the archival mapping project orchestrated by the Research Unit for the Archaeology of Cape Town (RESUNACT) based at the University of Cape Town (see: www.archafrica.uct.ac.za/resunact/resaabout.htm).

cultural exchange. It can entrench group animosities and identities, through repetitions of gender, class, race, and ethnic codes, and paradoxically, through interventions working the grain of everyday interaction. Cultural change in these circumstances is likely to be encouraged if people can step out of their daily environments into other spaces acting as sites of ‘banal transgression’” (2002: 13). Amin argues that stepping out can take the form of face-to-face encounters about the use and functioning of essential community resources such as public spaces, schools, community gardens, minibus taxi ranks, libraries, and so on. This would be one crucial aspect of anti-racism work. Many other initiatives would also be required to set the larger public sphere in the city alight with debate and contestation about how racialised cultural practices structure opportunities for different people and what can be done to address habitual discrimination. Living in any South African city leaves one baffled at how little is surfaced and addressed in terms of excavating and dispelling the powerful spell of racism and associated biases. These practical avenues towards the cultural city makes it obvious that my approach to the matter is decidedly different to that what has become in vogue as cultural planning in the North as catalogued and analysed by Deborah Stevenson (2003).

‣ **Inclusive city:** Given the deeply ingrained patterns of residential segregation between classes and races, extreme unemployment and gross socio-economic inequalities, it is predictable that South African cities are marked by numerous boundaries, borders, quarters and lines of exclusion (Marcuse 1995). There is much merit in the spatial planning ideas about creating linkages between circumscribed communities through creative use of movement imperatives and connectivity infrastructures (transportation and communication). The challenge is to combine such efforts with interventions suggested earlier to realise the multiplicities of the democratic, learning, cultural and productive cities. Most urgent in relation to creating a more free and interlaced city is the establishment of an affordable, safe, reliable, accessible public transport system. There is nothing new in this idea and it features in just about every manifesto for urban transformation in South Africa (Dewar and Uytendogaardt 1991). Almost ten years on, we have at our disposal a potentially favourable legislative and policy framework, but little operational precedent for a new approach to public transport that will advance more integrated urban development (see Behrens and Wilkinson 2003). Nevertheless, it seems clear to me that the desirability of a public transport system can be a major platform of a multi-class and multi-party alliance in the city that aims to tie together issues of access,

improved movement and circulation, and, crucially, reduced environmental depletion through reduced private car usage.

‣ **Sustainable city:** Ayyub Malik (2001: 880) prefers to focus on the potential of “ecologically conscious design and urban management.” There is a vast literature on the sustainable city and what it denotes from within a wide range of theoretical perspectives, producing different policy agendas. Because of the malleability of the concept—sustainable development—it is inevitable that diverse and conflicting policy agendas will emerge.¹³ This is not the place to explore and clarify these issues. I merely want to draw attention to the fact that discourses on urban sustainability have been profoundly productive in rethinking and reframing various aspects of city development and management (see Sorkin 2001; Stren and Polèse 2000). For me, the discourse of sustainability is useful, because it draws (political and policy) attention to four sensibilities that are vital in imagining the integrated city to come.

First, it reasserts the basic needs focus in urban development, which must be a foundational plank of city building in our context, marked as it is by poverty and vulnerability due to a lack of access to the material foundations of a decent life. These foundations are, *inter alia*, socially adequate housing/shelter with associated infrastructures, affordable health care, adequately remunerated work, and adequate social provision “for those whose own efforts are insufficient to provide for what is regarded as an adequate social minimum” (Friedmann 2002: 113). This raft of measures coincides with what is typically referred to as the brown environmental agenda (McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2000). Second, sustainability stimulates and legitimises a more inter-related approach to urban development, which counterworks the deep legacies of silo-based service delivery that remains dominant in South African municipalities. Third, the discourse of sustainability makes room for more phenomenological considerations such as design aesthetics, tastes, beauty and their vital function in producing services that are

¹³ W.M. Adams (2001) provides an excellent overview of the roots of the concept sustainable development and how it produced the proliferation of diverse and contradictory theoretical approaches. Adrian Atkinson (2000) provides an incisive overview on how these debates spilled over into the urban development field. Adriana Allen (2002) proffers a conceptual approach to urban sustainability that is rooted in post-structural political ecology that I concur with. Recently, Mark Swilling (forthcoming) undertook a sweeping review of South African urban scholarship post 1994 from the perspective of sustainable development, with devastating effect.

desired and enjoyed by citizens. This is particularly well documented and projected in the ongoing work of David Dewar and his collaborators (City of Cape Town 1999; Dewar and Uytendogaardt 1991; Dewar 2000). This dimension connects with the imperatives discussed earlier as part of the cultural city. Lastly, sustainability with its evolutionary undercurrent potentially promotes a more historically attuned approach to people, landscapes and spaces of interaction. Ecologically conscious design can provide a culturally resonant approach to weave the knowledges, pain and heroism of the past into the present as seamless tapestries of the new identities that are being made and remade in the sustainable, cultural and inclusive city. As argued before, a pronounced sense of history and time are vital resources for unlocking creativity and innovation without losing one's critical politics in the process.

The purpose of this section has been to identify possible entry points to stir a deep and concrete debate about how we can address the chronic pathologies of segregation and fragmentation in the city. It was merely suggestive with no intention to be any more. Fuller and more contextual catalogues of ideas will by definition have to arise in situ. Two moves were attempted. One, building on the distinction of Charles Landry (2000) between narrative and iconic forms of communication, it was asserted that the priorities facing the city must be pursued through a limited number of iconic projects. Two, working off from the canvass of Ayyub Malik (2001), it was suggested that the iconic ideas should be defined in relation to the promotion of a multiplicity of cities—democratic, productive, learning, cultural, inclusive and sustainable.

It is vital to bear in mind that appropriate and resounding iconic ideas cannot be established in the absence of extensive knowledge that can provide depth of insight and an ongoing pursuit of ethnographic, quantitative and theoretical knowledge about the city and its constitutive palimpsests. This returns me to the earlier argument for invention and intervention by epistemic communities. Clearly, we have dreams of a post-apartheid to work with and shaped by the principles elaborated in this section. However, this must be rooted in a sober reading of the ruins of the past that we continue to dwell in. This appreciation of both dreams and ruins compel one to identify practicable interventions to convert crisis and constrain into something more.

BRINGING THE CITY TO COME TO LIFE

In the interest of debate and action I want to round off the discussion with a series of practical suggestions to act in the city (Cape Town) in the interest of grasping time yet to come. It will also serve to tie together the various arguments up to this point. In exploring the topic of this paper I am confronted by the penetrating gaze of tough questions like these: How do we concretely address the unremitting perpetuation of the apartheid city by its ghostly other—the post-apartheid city? How do we conquer the intertwined problems of: institutional overload in city governments; divergent and competing sectoral imperatives on city governments; political incentives to remain caught-up in a numbers-driven delivery race; inequality inducing and job-shedding (urban) economic development processes; and, impervious capitalists intent on maximising profitable returns despite the consequences for urban liveability? Given the fractured nature of urban politics, how do we incrementally build a coalition of interest and action to work towards a more democratic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable city?

It would be downright foolish to suggest that I have come close to addressing these questions satisfactorily. What seems clear is that a knowledge community would be required to help me (and others) to understand and think through these intractable questions. This knowledge community I have come to call an epistemic community - as a strategy to capture the political mission of an organic intellectual and the epistemic practice of phronesis – involves working pragmatically and intelligently with and through what is already emergent and insurgent in the city. As argued earlier, such an epistemic community will stand alongside formal political arenas whilst aiming to influence what amounts to dominant discourses in the public sphere about the direction and management of the city. The epistemic community will formulate deep understandings of the detrimental trajectory of the city with an eye on identifying alternative pathways that could produce more integrative and equitable futures. Such alternatives could be woven around and through the multiplicity of cities identified by Ayyub Malik that need to co-evolve in the interest of all inhabitants. All of this would be background analysis and proposition. To be effective though, what is required are much more focused and penetrating proposals to move the city into new, more equitable directions. In this regard, ongoing research on Cape Town (Abbot 2000; Dewar 2000; Pieterse 2003; Turok 2001; Wilkinson 2000; Watson 2003) suggests to me that there are three immediate priorities that an epistemic community can expound on.

1. *Put strategically located and publicly owned land to integrative uses through the promotion of high-density, mixed-income and mixed-use property developments.* There are at least six major parcels of land in the Cape Metropolitan region that can be targeted in this way (CCT 1999). These sites must be re-imagined as vibrant hubs of Cape Town’s future—*incubators of hope*. There, people of different incomes will live contiguously, share child-care facilities, tend to organic communal gardens, maintain shared sports facilities, carpool into the city, and so on. Furthermore, different types of businesses will buttress the mixed-income housing developments to ensure a more intense and bustling series of encounters in and around these spaces as other people from the city (or visitors) seek out the leisure and aesthetic spaces of these areas. Most importantly, the sites will be experiments of non-racialism, not because racial difference is erased, but because inter-racial experiences will be explored and mediated through encounters of ‘banal transgression’ à la Amin (2002). Based on interviews and discussions with urban planners in local government, an informed ‘guestimate’ suggests that up to 70,000 households could be settled through such initiatives. This would fundamentally alter the racial complexion, circulation and cultural character of the city. Obviously, it would require fantastic political determination and tenacity in the context of widespread NIMBYism. Moreover, it would involve a complex and huge investment strategy that will force the property development sector to reconsider its complicity with segregation and racism in the city.¹⁴
2. *Maintain and enlarge a strong focus on improving the social, economic and physical ecology of townships and squatter settlements.* Whilst structural unemployment remains a central feature of South Africa’s economy, an aggressive redistributive programme will have to be maintained to improve the quality of life of working class and poor inhabitants. In addition, what is required is to reframe the basic needs delivery and maintenance agenda in more cultural and economic terms. Again, to attenuate the unemployment problem, much greater reliance on labour-intensive technologies must be adopted alongside community-based efforts to beautify and

¹⁴ There is much more to say about how such an initiative can be made to work despite the current business and social climate in the city. That will have to be the focus of another discussion more empirically grounded in the political economy and social dynamics of Cape Town.

green settlements. Such efforts must pivot around reformed education facilities and beautiful public spaces. A very large number of households and community-based organisations can be enrolled in such efforts, breathing life into social citizenship.

3. *Invest in connectivity infrastructures; specifically in a safe, affordable, extensive and integrated (rail, bus, mini-bus taxi) public transport system* that can dramatically improve the circulation of people in the city whilst the long-term social processes of racial and class integration get underway. Also, a good public transport system ensures an explicit articulation of the investments discussed in points one and two above. Finally, it would be politically feasible to cohere a broad-based political and social alliance in support of such a strategy.

These are potential interventions that can drill down to some of the structural causes of segregation, fragmentation and inequality in the city. They also represent avenues with good prospects for widespread political support if they are framed with sufficient depth of analysis and sensitivity to political exigencies and are communicated in iconic ways. A precondition is sufficient quality research to generate the policy options, practicalities and procedures for implementation. Such research is most likely to emerge if we can reorient the incredible wealth of knowledge production infrastructure in our cities for such purposes. More than that, the knowledge must be translated into manageable narratives that can be absorbed and contested in the public sphere, particularly through the mediums that form and shape popular opinion such as commercial newspapers and radio stations. In the same way, there is a need to ‘package’ knowledge for engagement with the private sector and democratically elected political leaders. It is for these reasons that I argue that interstitial forums, like the epistemic community argued for in this paper, are indispensable actors for advancing an agenda of urban integration. An important qualification is worth emphasising. It will be vital for an epistemic community to be respectful of existing initiatives and energies bubbling all over the city, which may be poorly linked and articulated. Any action that may flow from the deliberations of an epistemic community must bend itself along the insurgent points of energy and activism that are already incipient.

Finally, some thoughts on connecting the proposals in this paper with emergent policy processes. The increasingly influential South African Cities Network (SACN), serving

the nine largest city governments across South Africa, is promoting the policy discourse of city development strategies. This represents an important wave to catch and surf as a strategic route to mainstream some of the arguments here about the complex matrix of actions to advance urban integration and equity. According to one founder of SACN, Andrew Boraine (2003: 7), city development strategies must be regarded “as appropriate planning responses to the new challenges, high levels of complexity and rapidly changing circumstances facing cities”. City development strategies are made up of a “long term vision resulting in short term action” (Ibid: 9). Crucially, it embodies a *collective* city vision that local government, the private sector and civil society organisations subscribe to. The collective vision reflects a “shared understanding of a city’s socioeconomic structure, constraints and prospects, within the context of global, regional and national trends” (Ibid.). Following on from that, the city development strategy defines “change drivers, points of leverage and ‘transformation triggers’ where impact is maximised” (Ibid.). In other words, the city development strategy stands alongside the IDP and is more than a government programme; it belongs to the city and tends to emerge from stakeholder-based dialogical processes (Pieterse 2003). Given the political importance that city development strategies are assuming across the country (and globally) and their methodological structure, these strategies are an obvious target for ‘subversion’ by the ideas that would emerge from an epistemic community. The vision and short-term actions put forward in the city development strategy represent important sites of engagement, for its influence could be far and wide and enduring.

CONCLUSION: RECASTING URBAN FRAGMENTATION AND INTEGRATION

On the cusp of the political liberation in 1994, Alan Mabin (1995) pointed to the paradoxical challenge of pursuing urban integration within a modernist frame of spatial determinism, as reflected in compact city policy approaches, in a time that is decidedly postmodern and therefore impervious to solutions based solely on technical rationality. Since the liberation movements (civics in particular) opted to replace apartheid modernism with a form of post-apartheid modernism, he was sceptical about the prospects for “overcoming segregation and fragmentation in southern Africa’s cities” (Mabin 1995: 187). Almost ten years on and Mabin’s scepticism seems to have been well founded, for the urban crises of segregation and fragmentation are as intractable as ever. Modernist rationalities have certainly played their part, but it remains crucial to document, analyse and theorise the quotidian dimensions of institutionally embedded attempts to remake the (post)apartheid city through the conscious efforts of urban

managers and the unconscious practices of all in the city—thick descriptive and analytical work. A central point in this paper is that we have some way to go in urban scholarship to establish this kind of knowledge base. In addition to limited knowledge production, there is hardly a discourse about *the city*, with notable exceptions (Beall *et al.* 2002; Freund and Padayachee 2002). In the absence of a ‘loud’ and critical discourse about the city as a whole (as opposed to localised narratives and concerns), everyday practices of firms, households, and government agencies ineluctably reproduce segregation and fragmentation. The argument has therefore been that what we need to do is disrupt this silent flow of continuity by projecting alternative discourses about the city’s potentialities—alternatives hatched by reflexive epistemic communities aimed at bringing the city’s identity and futures to *crisis*. As suggested earlier, this is crisis understood as an enabling moment—a tear in the fabric of normality that makes space for new symbols, new imaginings, new political practices, i.e. *homebru* solutions. Invariably such homebru solutions will be makeshift fabrications that comprise the ruins of apartheid socio-spatial engineering and dreams that transcend the limits of modernist codes of city building.

In other words, homebru solutions avoid the pitfall of modernist confidence in technical, pre-ordained solutions critiqued by Mabin (1995). Instead, homebru solutions seek contextually-specific, organically produced policy ideas that can address the specific social, economic and cultural patterns of urban segregation, fragmentation and inequality. (Sections two and three are dotted with fleeting examples of such ideas.) Homebru solutions can only emerge and flourish in a context of radical democratic politics that stretch across formal/informal, concrete/symbolic and consensual/conflictual binaries. Put another way, it requires a relational cultural politics. This kind of politics will not fall from the sky, but can only grow from insurgent shoots of experimentation across the city (Holston 1999). One of the immediate tasks, according to this analysis, is for politically committed, activist intellectuals to come together more purposively to connect insurgent experiments with deeper knowledge production efforts to bring the alternative city to come to life. Such catalytic actions must involve the establishment of (and subversion of existing) dialogical forums where critique and proposition come to work their dialectical alchemy. In each city and town there will by force be a unique diagram of possibilities for “the play of critical invention and intervention” (Rajchman 1998: 110). This of course confirms Mabin’s argument that we need to divorce ourselves from technocratic modernist blue-prints in favour of ethically-grounded, politically situated, provisional agendas for intervention.

The obvious, even if destabilising, implication of this line of argument is that we may need to begin to contemplate abandoning our fixation with the binary: fragmentation versus integration or crisis versus stability. The time may be upon us to come to terms with the multiplicity of urbanisms that co-exist and probably always will. The question may be less how far we have moved along a spectrum from a fragmented to an integrated

city (that glorious teleological endpoint!), but rather: how are we doing in creating/dreaming more equitable, more cosmopolitan, more socially just, more liberating, more beautiful, more erotic, more meaningfully productive, more creative cities *and* citizens?

Acknowledgements

This paper is informed by research underway as part of completing a PhD on urban integration and urban development policy in South Africa post 1994. The research is part funded by: a Chevening Fellowship grant, an Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust grant, a Commonwealth Fellowship grant and a grant from the Social Policy Department at the London School of Economics. I am further indebted to Jo Beall and Mirjam van Donk for incisive comments, editorial support and encouragement. I am also obliged to Prof. Njabulo Ndebele who set me off on the line of thinking explored in this paper as part of an ongoing dialogue about the role of the university in the city. The normal disclaimer applies.

References

- Abbott, J. (2000). 'Cape Town: Seeking Social Sustainability in a Fast-Growing City', in M. Polèse and R. Stren (eds) *The Social Sustainability of Cities. Diversity and the Management of Change*. Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press.
- Adams, W. M. (2001). *Green Development. Environment and Sustainability in the Third World*. London: Routledge.
- Allen, A. (2002). 'Urban sustainability under threat: the restructuring of the fishing industry in Mar del Plate, Argentina', in D. Westendorff and D. Eade (eds) *Development and Cities*. Geneva and Oxford: UNRISD and Oxfam.
- Allmendinger, P. (2002). *Planning Theory*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.
- Amin, A., Massey, D. and Thrift, N. (2000). *Cities for the many not the few*. London: The Policy Press.
- Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2002). *Cities. Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Amin, A. (2002). 'Ethnicity and the Multicultural City. Living with Diversity', Durham: University of

Durham.

- Appadurai, A. (forthcoming). 'The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition', in V. Rao and M. Walton (eds) *Culture and Public Action*: Publisher unspecified.
- Ashcroft, B. (2001). *Post-Colonial Transformations*. London: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B. and Ahluwalia, P. (1991). *Edward Said. The Paradox of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Atkinson, A. (2000). 'Promoting Sustainable Human Development in Cities of the South: A Southeast Asian Perspective', *Geneva 2000 Occasional Paper* No. 6, Geneva: UNRISD.
- Balbo, M. (1993). 'Urban Planning and the Fragmented City of the Developing World', *Third World Planning Review* 15(1): 23-35.
- Barker, C. (2000). *Cultural Studies. Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Beall, J., Parnell, S. and Crankshaw, O. (2002). *Uniting a Divided City. Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg*. London: Earthscan.
- Behrens, R. and Wilkinson, P. (2003). 'Housing and urban passenger transport policy and planning South African cities: a problematic relationship?', in P. Harrison, M. Huchzermeyer and M. Mayekiso (eds) *Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratising Society*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Binns, T. and Nel, E. (2002). 'Devolving development: Integrated Development Planning and Developmental Local Government in Post-apartheid South Africa', *Regional Studies* 36(8): 921-945.
- Boraine, A. (2003). 'The State of City Strategic Planning in South Africa.' PowerPoint Presentation to DPLG/ SACN City Strategic Planning workshop, Protea Hotel Umhlanga Rocks, eThekweni, 8-10 June.
- Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002). 'Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism"', *Antipode* 34(3): 349-379.
- Campbell, S. and Fainstein, S. (2003). 'Introduction: The Structure and Debates of Planning Theory', in S. Campbell and S. Fainstein (eds) *Readings in Planning Theory*, Second Edition. Oxford: Blackwell.
- CCT (City of Cape Town) (1999). *Municipal Spatial Development Framework*. Cape Town: City of Cape Town Municipality.
- Dead Prez. (2000). *Let's be Free*. Audio CD, Relativity Records.
- Dear, M. (2000). *The Postmodern Urban Condition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Department of Housing (1997). *Urban Development Framework*. Pretoria: Department of Housing.
- Desai, A. (2003). 'Neoliberalism and Resistance in South Africa', *Monthly Review* 54(8): 16-28.
- Dewar, D. (2000). 'The Relevance of the Compact City Approach: The Management of Urban Growth in South African Cities', in M. Jenks and R. Burgess (eds) *Compact Cities. Sustainable Urban Forms in Developing Countries*. London: Spon Press.
- Dewar, D. and Uytendogaardt, R. (1991). *South African cities: A manifesto for change*. Cape Town: Urban Problems Research Unit, University of Cape Town.
- Eade, J. and Mele, C. (2002). 'Introduction: Understanding the City', in J. Eade and C. Mele (eds)

- Understanding the City. Contemporary and Future Perspectives.* Oxford: Blackwell.
- Field, S. (2001). ‘“I dream of an old house, you see there are things that can never go away”’: Memory, Restitution and Democracy’, in S. Field (ed) *Lost Communities, Living Memories. Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town.* Cape Town: David Philip.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it can Count Again.* London: Sage.
- Freund, B. and Padayachee, V. (eds) (2002) *(D)urban Vortex. South African City in Transition.* Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development.* Cambridge & Oxford: Blackwell.
- Friedmann, J. (2002). *The Prospect of Cities.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gabardi, W. (2001). *Negotiating Postmodernism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gevisser, M. and Morris, M. (2002). ‘Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy’, in K. Asmal and W. James (eds) *Spirit of the Nation. Reflections on South Africa’s Educational Ethos.* Pretoria: New Africa Education and the Human Sciences Research Council with the Department of Education.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2002). ‘Beyond Global vs. Local: Economic Politics Outside the Binary Frame’, in A. Herod and M. W. Wright (eds) *Geographies of Power. Placing Scale.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gunder, M. (in press). ‘Passionate planning for the other’s desire: an agonistic response to the dark side of planning’, *Progress in Planning* 60.
- Hall, P. and Pfeiffer, U. (eds) (2000) *Urban Future 21. A Global Agenda for Twenty-First Century Cities.* London: E & FN Spon.
- Harrison, P., Huchzermeyer, M. and Mayekiso, M. (2003). ‘Editors’ Introduction: Confronting Fragmentation’, in P. Harrison, M. Huchzermeyer and M. Mayekiso (eds) *Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratising Society.* Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of Hope.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hillier, J. (2002). *Shadows of Power. An Allegory of Prudence in Land-Use Planning.* London: Routledge.
- Holston, J. (1999). ‘Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship’, in J. Holston (ed) *Cities and Citizenship.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Khan, F. (2003). ‘Continuities, Ambiguities and Contradictions: The Past, Present and (Possible) Future of Housing Policy and Practice in South Africa’, in F. Khan and P. Thring (eds) *Housing Policy and Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa.* Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.
- Kweli, T. (2000). *Reflection Eternal.* Audio CD, Rawcus Productions.
- Landry, C. (2000). *The Creative City. A Toolkit for Urban Innovators.* London: Comedia & Earthscan.
- Mabin, A. (1995). ‘On the Problems and Prospects of Overcoming Segregation and Fragmentation in Southern Africa’s Cities in a Postmodern Era’, in S. Watson and K. Gibson (eds)

Postmodern Cities & Spaces. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Malik, A. (2001). 'After modernity: contemporary non-western cities and architecture', *Futures* 33(10): 873-882.
- Marcuse, P. (1995). 'Not Chaos but Walls: Postmodernism and the Partitioned City', in S. Watson and K. Gibson (eds) *Postmodern Cities & Spaces*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McGranaham, G. and Satterthwaite, D. (2000). 'Environmental Health or Ecological Sustainability? Reconciling the Brown and Green Agendas in Urban Development', in C. Pugh (ed) *Sustainable Cities in the Developing Countries: Theory and Practice at the Millennium*. London: Earthscan.
- Minty, Z. (2003). 'BLAC bows out', downloaded from: www.artthrob.co.za/03feb/reviews/blac/html, accessed on 4 July 2003.
- Moulaert, F. (2000). *Globalization and Integrated Area Development in European Cities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ndebele, N. (2002). 'The Social Bases of Values for South Africa', in K. Asmal and W. James (eds) *Spirit of the Nation. Reflections on South Africa's Educational Ethos*. Pretoria: New Africa Education and the Human Sciences Research Council with the Department of Education.
- Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. and Wooldridge, D. (eds) (2002) *Democratising Local Government. The South African Experiment*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Pieterse, E. (2002). 'Prospects for Realising Social Sustainability in Cape Town', Presented at: The Social Sustainability of Large Cities Panel at the International Conference on Social Science and Social Policy in the 21st Century, 9-11 December 2002, Vienna.
- Pieterse, E. (2003). 'Problematising and Recasting Vision-driven Politics in Cape Town', in C. Haferburg and J. Oßenbrügge (eds) *Ambiguous Restructurings of Post-Apartheid Cape Town: The Spatial Form*. Hamburg & London: LIT Verlag, Munster.
- Pieterse, E. (forthcoming). 'At the limits of possibility: working notes on a relational model of urban politics', in A. Simone and A. Abouhani (eds) *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Rachman, J. (1998). *Constructions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press.
- Robinson, J. (2004). 'Communities to come: Re-making cities in a new South Africa', in E. Pieterse and F. Meintjies (eds) *Voices of the Transition. The Politics, Poetics and Practices of Social Change in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.
- Scott, A. J., Agnew, J., Soja, E. W. and Storper, M. (2001). 'Global City-Regions', in A. J. Scott (ed) *Global City-Regions. Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Simone, A. (2000). 'Informality and considerations for policy', *Dark Roast Occasional Paper Series*, No.3, Cape Town: Isandla Institute.
- Sorkin, M. (2001). *Some Assembly Required*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Spivak, G. (2002). 'The Rest of the World', in M. Zournazi (ed) *Hope. New Philosophies for Change*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

- Stevenson, D. (2003). *Cities and Urban Cultures*. Maidenhead - Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Stren, R. and Polèse, M. (2000). 'Understanding the New Sociocultural Dynamics of Cities: Comparative Urban Policy in a Global Context', in M. Polèse and R. Stren (eds) *The Social Sustainability of Cities. Diversity and the Management of Change*. Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press.
- Swilling, M. (forthcoming). 'Grasping the Passing Breeze: Rethinking the Sustainability of the South African City.' *Development Update*, Vol. 5(1).
- Tajbakhsh, K. (2001). *The Promise of the City. Space, Identity, and Politics in Contemporary Social Thought*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Turok, I. (2001). 'Persistent Polarisation Post-Apartheid? Progress towards Urban Integration in Cape Town', *Urban Studies* 38(13): 2349-2377.
- Unicity Commission (2000). 'Building a Unified City for the 21st Century.', Cape Town: Unicity Commission.
- Watson, V. (2003) 'Planning for Integration: The Case of Metropolitan Cape Town', in P. Harrison, M. Huchzermeyer and M. Mayekiso (eds) *Confronting Fragmentation: Housing and Urban Development in a Democratising Society*, Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Wilheim, J. (1996). *Fax. Messages from a New Future*. London: Earthscan.
- Wilkinson, P. (2000). 'City Profile: Cape Town', *Cities* 17(3): 195-205.
- Williams, J. J. (2000). 'South Africa: Urban Transformation', *Cities* 17(3): 167-183.
- Wilson, P.A. (1995). 'Embracing Locality in Local Economic Development', *Urban Studies* 32(4): 645-658.