Recasting urban integration and fragmentation in post-apartheid South Africa

Edgar Pieterse presents the current urban development debates and discourses, wherein South African cities appear as segregated and fragmented as previously. He posits five main reasons for this, based on a review of recent scholarship on the persistence of urban fragmentation in South Africa. A politicised approach to the problematic of urban integration is presented, which avoids the usual technocratic approach and encourages insurgent interests in the city to claim their rights and entitlements through the available participatory democratic forums, with benefits both for themselves and for the city at large.

> ... many of the challenges faced by the government in 1994 remain despite good intentions and sophisticated interventions. It has also become increasingly clear that the spatial patterns and physical forms of many human settlement types change only very slowly (Department of Housing, 2000:4).

> Cities are not just to do with housing people and economic activity, or building streets and architecture; they are also places of struggle for social and spatial justice and equitable distribution of resources as well as places of art, culture and civilisation (Malik, 2001:879).

After almost a decade of resolute post-apartheid urban development policy action we are confronted with the harrowing fact that South African cities may be as segregated, fragmented and unequal as they were at the dawn of political liberation. Given the amount of intellectual capital, institutional resources and political will we have thrown at the problem of the apartheid city, how can this be? Five main reasons are put forward to explain this, based on a review of recent scholarship on the persistence of urban fragmentation in South Africa. One of the central issues arising from the literature is the fact that urban integration efforts aimed at changing the apartheid city are often based on shaky conceptual foundations which produce unintended consequences. In light of this the conceptual roots of urban integration will be examined, through the idea of sustainable urban development and its source concept: sustainable development. This exploration allows for a more conceptually rigorous and consistent understanding of urban integration. A number of inter-related dimensions of urban integration are explored: (a) sectoral development strategies; (b) multi-sectoral strategies; (c) spatial frameworks and plans; (d) institutional effectiveness; (e) aggregate frameworks such as integrated development plans (IDPs); and (f) political accountability systems. The importance of a politicised approach to the problematic of urban integration is then presented.

The persistence of urban fragmentation

There are many reasons for the persistence of urban apartheid despite the extensive policies and legislation that the government has introduced since 1994.[1] It is vital to appreciate that the unique combination of contributing factors will undoubtedly differ from locality to locality. Nevertheless, it is possible to delineate a number of key reasons for why it has been so difficult to shift the patterns of fragmentation and inequality in our cities. Drawing on the burgeoning literature on South African urban areas, there are five major reasons to be considered.

There is firstly the question of *institutional overload* during a time when local government structures were perpetually being made and remade as the legislative timetable moved local government from the pre-interim (1994-1995/1996), to the interim (1996-2000), and permanent phases (post-2000) of existence (see Parnell *et al*, 2002). The argument is that the highly complex and conflictual processes of organisational unbundling and amalgamation, along with shifting territorial boundaries of service delivery, caused deep organisational trauma. For example, in Cape Town the former City of Cape Town municipality (CCT) inherited a number of Black Local Authorities and Management Committees, which had no resources, massive accumulated debts and endemic cultures of corruption and mismanagement. Furthermore, after the amalgamation into the CCT, workers performing the same jobs had greatly varying conditions of service and salary levels that invariably fuelled disgruntlement (Pieterse, 2002a). In this context of inevitable organisational turmoil and conflict it was highly unrealistic to expect that these municipalities would be able to formulate, operationalise, monitor and refine multi-dimensional policy objectives, especially if the policy objectives were politically contentious. Aggravating the internal trauma resulting from amalgamations was the evolving inter-governmental system as national government worked to regularise medium term budgeting and accounting systems, alongside the various sectoral policy prescriptions that emanated from national government on municipalities with scant regard for their organisational capability and preparedness. Moreover, the people charged with overseeing and leading these restructuring processes were mostly newcomers to the municipal management game. This applied equally to politicians and municipal

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[1] The ongoing research of A. J. Christopher (2001) provides detailed statistical and analytical accounts of how racialised segregation was produced throughout the history of urbanisation in South Africa and its stubborn persistence up to the present time.

managers. It therefore follows that it would have been highly improbable that ambitious and complex policy imperatives embedded in integrated development planning, seen as a prerequisite for integrated urban development, could have been realised, even if the political and administrative 'will' existed (Harrison, 2001).

Secondly, there are the *contradictory implications of sectoral policy initiatives*, such as transport, housing, primary health care, economic development, driven by powerful national government departments within the (*Reconstruction and Development White Paper*) rationale that municipalities were merely the 'hands and feet', as opposed to the 'thinking head' of government. Because the municipal dispensation was left unfinished at the historic moment of political democratisation in 1994, new policy ideas with far-reaching implications for municipalities were formulated without the direct and active participation of local government (Parnell & Pieterse, 1999). More importantly, it was conceptualised without a deep understanding of the specificities of municipal government compared to provincial or national government departments – a lacuna that persists even after the normalisation of local government in December 2000. As a result, by the time a host of White Papers and new legislation of various national departments were finalised in 1998, municipalities were trapped in a web of competing and contradictory demands (Harrison, 2001; Pieterse, 2002b). This condition complicated understandings of what exactly the Constitutional mandate of 'developmental local government' meant in practical terms. The strong emphasis on integrated development planning (IDP) – as the core function and organising logic of municipalities – was in part an attempt to secure a handle on the problem of competing demands and rationalities. However, by the time the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) was promulgated, it was left ambiguous as to whether national and provincial sectoral policies had to fit with IDPs or the other way around. This confusion worked, and continues to work, to the disadvantage of municipalities' strategic capacity and room for manoeuvre, which is essential if they are to become the leading champions of urban integration.

The third reason involves the *question of political pressures to achieve numerical targets* in line with the service delivery commitments elaborated in the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Many observers routinely point out that the fixation on numerical targets – most famously, 1 million houses in five years – shaped the priorities and imperatives of municipal government whilst they reorganised, effectively skewing multi-dimensional transformation objectives towards

the exigencies of delivery of physical infrastructures (Khan, 2003; Huchzermeyer, 2003). This trend reinforced the power of the engineering and accounting disciplines within municipal government, not unlike during the apartheid era. Almost everything inside government was geared towards addressing the severe service backlogs in black communities with little time or energy to consider the potential unintended consequences on the overall spatial form (Harrison *et al*, 2003; Royston, 2003). It was therefore left unchecked that the combination of the size of the housing subsidy, which had to cover land and top-structure costs, the tight time-frames within which delivery had to take place, and the reliance on private developers, would lead inexorably to the development disaster stories that are the RDP housing schemes clutching the outskirts of cities and towns. The net effects were, of course, to reinforce and exacerbate the spatial form of the apartheid city, because the only affordable land that could accommodate the large-scale, private sector-driven construction required for economies of scale was on the periphery of cities.

The matter of affordability provides the fourth reason for the perpetuation of urban fragmentation, the *lack of understanding and engagement with urban economic processes and actors*. Studies of property development patterns in post-apartheid South Africa are unambiguous: private property development interventions aimed at the middle-class and enterprises are almost without exception located in the established white suburbs at the expense of central business districts and nascent black-owned areas. This is particularly pronounced in Johannesburg, but is also in evidence in other cities across the country (Goga, 2003; Maharaj, 2002; Turok, 2001). These patterns of flows of investment capital reinforce the economic marginalisation of the working classes and the poor, which in turn tends to exacerbate racial segregation and urban fragmentation due to the acute race-class coincidence in South Africa. Because of municipal government's disengagement with such developments in land markets and general planning impotence, there has been a tendency to allow these dynamics to unfold with an attitude of resignation. Hardly any effort has been made to engage with real estate firms and property markets to challenge and alter market perceptions and concomitant behaviours. Neither was there any rush to exploit the provisions of land restitution and redistribution to settle poor people in more strategic locations in the city (Royston, 2003). Andrew Boraine (2002) explains that during his tenure as City Manager in Cape Town (1996-2000), his administration never really got a handle on what the drivers of economic development processes were, let alone engaging proactively with specific actors and investment patterns. Evidence from other contexts

is emphatic that there is great political scope for assertive, transparent, accountable and consistent government to engage constructively with private sector interests so that larger social justice concerns in the city can be better served (Amin *et al*, 2000; Fernandes, 2003).

A fifth and final reason pertains to the question of the *politics of urban development policy frameworks and implementation*. Most of the key government policies dealing with the pursuit of integrated urban development are premised on a *consensual model* of politics. Echoing the discursive repertoires of international policy frameworks of the United Nations (UNCHS, 1996; UNDP, 1991) and World Bank (1991), the South African government tends to promote conceptions of urban sustainability – the catch-all policy term for integrated urban development – which assumes that diverse stakeholders will be able to find agreement through deliberation on the necessity of making cities that are "spatially and socio-economically integrated, [and] free of racial and gender discrimination and segregation" (Department of Housing, 1997:iii). An attempt has been made to deconstruct and critique this consensual model of politics that underpins urban development policies post-1994 (Pieterse, 2003), and this problematic approach has been recast in more useful terms through 'transgressive urban politics' (Pieterse, forthcoming)[2]. Similar arguments about the limitations of consensus politics have been made about the problems of prioritisation and sequencing in the IDP processes (see Harrison & Todes, 2001). It is important to note that as long as the inevitable contradictions between competing interests and classes are not acknowledged and actively catered for in the political conception of urban policies, they will be limited in their impact, despite how transformative the rhetoric may appear on paper. This is because transformative urban policies must produce outcomes that involve a diminution in power and behavioural change by the powerful so that

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[2] Transgressive politics entails the animation of the public sphere by insurgent groups and interests by bringing everyday discourses and practices to a crisis of legitimacy, undermining its hegemony (Holston 1998). Such acts of insurgency open up opportunities to put alternative conceptions of development and governance onto the agenda. These strategic political interventions are only likely to emerge if progressive actors in the city are able to *articulate* five domains of political practice: (1) representative political forums; (2) neo-corporatist political mechanisms comprising representative organisations, typically the government, the private sector, trade unions and community-based organisations; (3) direct action or social 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 (Pieterse, forthcoming).

subaltern classes in the city can gain access to more resources and opportunities to enhance their lifeworlds[3] and aspirations.

The aim of this section was to sketch five inter-related reasons that contribute to an explanation for the disjuncture between urban policy intent (greater integration) and outcomes (deeper fragmentation) in post-apartheid South Africa. To attain a fuller and more nuanced understanding, one would have to focus on a particular city or town and explore the specific combination of factors and actor strategies (see, for example, Beall *et al*, 2002; Freud & Padayachee, 2002; Haferburg & Oßenbrügge, 2003; Watson, 2002). The following section will consider a rudimentary policy framework aimed at assisting decision-makers in rethinking the various dimensions of urban integration and its progressive realisation.

Re-anchoring urban integration

As a policy outcome, the integration of economic, political, environmental, social and cultural objectives is considered desirable and essential to ensure the attainment of sustainable and balanced urban development patterns. However, considerable disagreement persists on what exactly this may mean in practical terms, with different responses rooted in divergent theoretical standpoints.

The conceptual root of urban integration is the notion of urban sustainability. It is widely regarded as the solution to the myriad of problems, complexities and uncertainties that confront developing countries in all parts of the globe. Urban sustainability in turn is a direct outflow of the broader development discourse on sustainable development. Sustainable development can be traced back to the Brundtland Commission which in 1987 released its report, *Our Common Future*. The Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." According to Dalal-Clayton and Bass (2002:12), "at the heart of the concept is the belief that social, economic and environmental objectives should be

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[3] 'Lifeworlds' is used in the lexicon of Norman Long (2001:241) who defines it in the following way: "*Lifeworlds* are 'lived-in' and largely 'taken-for-granted' social worlds centring on particular individuals. Such worlds should not be viewed as 'cultural backcloths' that frame how individuals act, but instead as the product of an individual's own constant self-assembling and re-evaluating of relationships and experiences. Lifeworlds embrace actions, interactions and meanings, and are identified with specific socio-geographical spaces and life histories."

complementary and interdependent in the development process.'' This conception was seen as a vital breakthrough in what had become a deeply entrenched impasse in development thinking (Adams, 2001)[4]. Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to clarify what this impasse entailed, suffice it to mention that sustainable development, as defined and promoted by the Brundtland Commission, provided a much-needed alternative approach to consideration of the continued viability and elements of national development strategies, and, by extension, local development strategies.
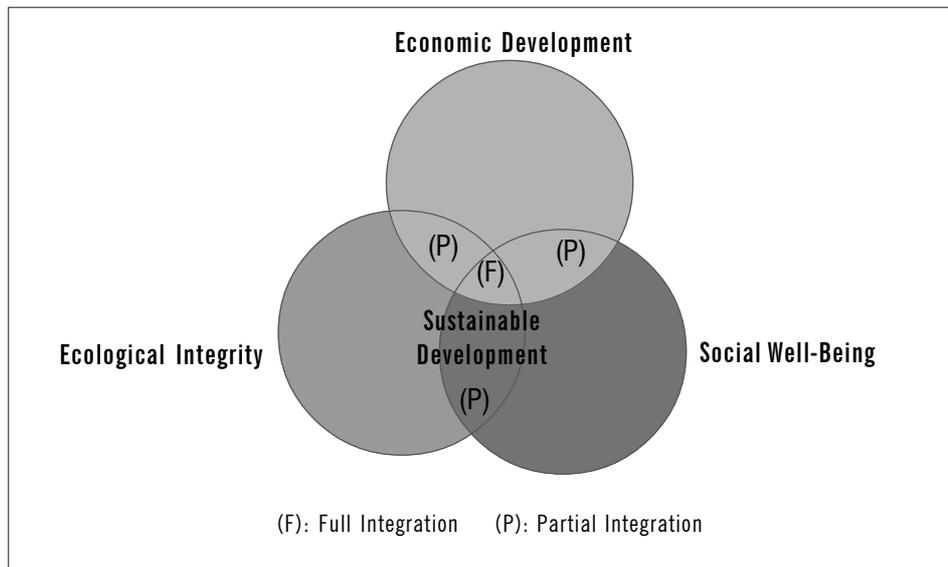
For the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development to find widespread acceptance it had to be both vague and simple enough so as to be inclusive of a variety of divergent interest groups. It succeeded admirably in this regard. Sustainable development is ascribed to by just about every single nation-state, irrespective of their democratic credentials, economic strength or political system. Furthermore, many corporations also ascribe to its virtues despite their own complicity in degrading social and natural ecologies. A similar pattern of endorsement and promotion of sustainable development can be observed amongst local, national and trans-national civil society organisations. In other words, sustainability as the raison d'être and ideal of development action has become ubiquitous as reflected in the ambiguous jamboree, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) that South Africa hosted in 2002 (Patel, 2004:87).

The source of this almost universal appeal can be found in the highly elastic core ideas that flow from the Brundtland definition. Underlying this definition is the assumption that a balancing of three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, ecological integrity and social well-being – is realisable. The omnipresent three-circle Venn diagram (see Figure 1) is widely disseminated, accepted and deployed. In this conceptual model, integrated development arises when economic, social and environmental objectives are realised simultaneously.

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[4]   The impasse related to persistent lack of improvement in the quality of life of billions of people who have been subjected to a variety of modernisation efforts in order to emulate the reconstruction process of Western Europe after the Second World War and earlier processes of modernisation. Using the three-fold criteria of Dudley Seers put forward at the end of the 1960s – reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality – it was patently obvious that development efforts were failing (Martinussen, 1999). Another dimension of the impasse was theoretical. With the disintegration of structuralist accounts of societal development, in particular Marxism, there was a proliferation of theoretical streams seeking to redefine development and plot ways out of the theoretical impasse (see Nederveen Pieterse, 2001).

This is not always possible and trade-offs become necessary. It is further assumed that through political debate, societies formulate development objectives and strategies that can move in the direction of full overlap between the three circles, based on incremental steps that edge towards partial integration (P in figure 1).

FIGURE 1: THREE SPHERES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development

(P)   (P)

(F)

Sustainable Development

Ecological Integrity   **Social Well-Being**

(P)

(F): Full Integration   (P): Partial Integration

Sources: Allen, 2002; Dalan-Clayton & Bass, 2002

This ideal model is premised on a number of inter-related and problematic assumptions. The chief assumption is that contradictions and trade-offs that arise with the pursuit of objectives in each sphere, and especially in the zones of overlap, are manageable and potentially resolvable within the current political-economic systems that operate at local, national and international scales. The argument follows that the main obstacle is 'political will' and institutional capability to implement these inter-related objectives of sustainable development. In economic terms, the solution is seen as capitalist economic growth but with increasingly benign effects on the carrying capacity of the planet due to technological innovation, which will arise with appropriate regulatory interventions by governments (see Hall & Pheiffer, 2000). Adams systematically critiques these assumptions on two primary grounds. First, the assumptions rest on a weak theoretical grounding which reduces much of the policy talk to mere rhetoric. Second, sustainable development policy prescriptions

are disturbingly naïve due to the frequent absence "of any explicit treatment of political economy" (Adams, 2001:5)[5].

Despite these crippling weaknesses, the policy discourse has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to endure and be reformulated to address some of the academic and activist criticisms levelled against it. However, many critical scholars have also sought to recast the discourse so as to overcome the theoretical weaknesses of political voluntarism, which underpin consensual politics favoured by mainstream discourses. In the field of urban development, the work of Argentinian scholar, Adriana Allen, is particularly instructive in addressing the apolitical elements in the original conceptions of sustainable development. Allen reformulates the core arguments of sustainable urban development towards a working model of urban sustainability that foregrounds 'the political'. She achieves this by expanding the three domains of sustainability development to five:

- **economic sustainability:** defined as the ability of the local economy to sustain itself without causing irreversible damage to the natural resource base on which it depends and without increasing the city's ecological footprint;

- **social sustainability:** defined as a set of actions and policies aimed at the improvement of quality of life, but also at the fair access and distribution of rights over the use and appropriation of the natural and built environment;

- **ecological sustainability:** pertains to the impact of urban production and consumption on the integrity and health of the city-region and global carrying capacity;

- **physical sustainability:** defined as the capacity and aptitude of the urban built environment and techno-structures to support human life and productive activities; and

- **political sustainability:** refers to the quality of governance systems and frameworks guiding the relationship and actions of different actors among the previous four dimensions. It involves the democratisation and participation of civil society in all areas of decision-making (adapted from: Allen, 2002:16-17; DPU, 2002:16-17).

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5   Due to space constraints these criticisms cannot be explored in greater depth, and readers are urged to consult as starting points the work of Solon Barraclough (2001) on sustainable development, in general, and Adrian Atkinson (2000) on sustainable urban development, more specifically.

This expanded definitional model (see Figure 2) captures the *political* underpinning of processes aimed at formulating policies and programmes to advance sustainable development. Political sustainability is the connection between all four domains of sustainability. Allen (2002) specifically seeks to bring global political economic factors – and their local manifestations – into the frame of the debate because the primary determinants of policy options and room for manoeuvre are often outside of the sphere of decision-making of local actors such as municipalities. In other words, the political debate about trade-offs between competing objectives over time is framed by a balance of power between local actors and between local actors and others who exercise power from afar. In particular, business interests who seek to maximise profit through the exploitation of local labour, natural resources and favourable regulatory regimes (Atkinson, 2000). These asymmetrical power relations infuse all domains of sustainable development, which leads to the conceptual emphasis on rebalancing power through democratisation, discursive contestation and participation by insurgent classes in decision-making processes about trade-offs and the other four domains of urban sustainability. This conception informs the remainder of the paper, which is more propositional in tone and intent.

FIGURE 2: THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY
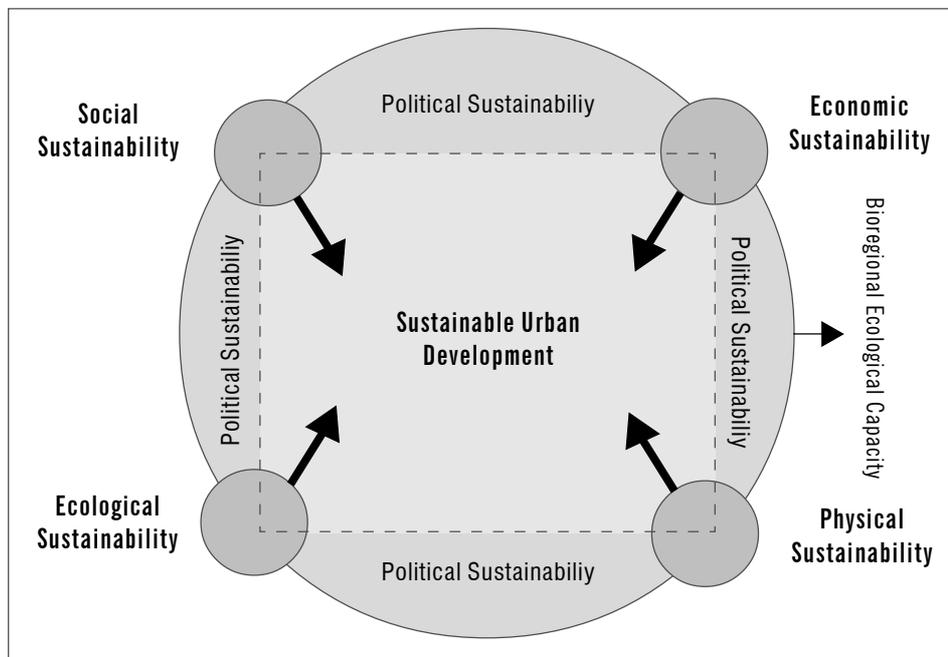
Source: Allen, 2002:18

Allen's conceptual model allows one to move beyond the narrow and apolitical conceptions of influential bodies such as the World Bank (1991) and United Nations (UNDP 1991; UNCHS, 1996). The approach to urban sustainability, reflected in the Habitat Agenda that emerged from the Habitat II process in Istanbul in 1996, can be reworked to prise open spaces for a more politically informed approach to urban development, in general, and integration, in particular. Significantly, the Habitat Agenda has provided the main reference point for governments, like South Africa, and civil society groups in finding policy ideas and strategies to address the myriad of urban problems stemming from systemic fragmentation and inequality. Central to this agenda is the notion of integration spawned by the belief that sustainable urban development is only possible if economic, social and environmental agendas are aligned and mutually reinforcing. Typically, to sustain the fiction of this approach, a weak conception of urban politics and state-civil society engagements has been adopted for the reasons already explained. However, building on Allen's model it becomes possible to see that one can inhabit and reformulate these mainstream discourses towards more transformative ends. In order to understand how to concretely achieve this, it is necessary to explore a number of inter-related dimensions of urban integration:

(a)   sectoral development strategies;

(b)   multi-sectoral strategies;

(c)   spatial frameworks and plans;

(d)   institutional effectiveness;

(e)   aggregate frameworks and places such as IDPs; and

(f)   political accountability systems.

Understanding and effecting appropriate inter-relationships between these domains or dimensions in relation to specific urban contexts, with unique geo-historical roots, is a vital step in advancing urban integration (see Figure 3). It is critical to appreciate that urban integration is not some magical end-state that will be achieved in the foreseeable future. Instead it must be regarded as a horizon that we move towards (or away from) through deliberate actions which produce increasingly equitable and just outcomes. The remainder of the paper will unpack each of these dimensions of urban development.

FIGURE 3: TAPESTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND NESTED SCALES OF INTERVENTION
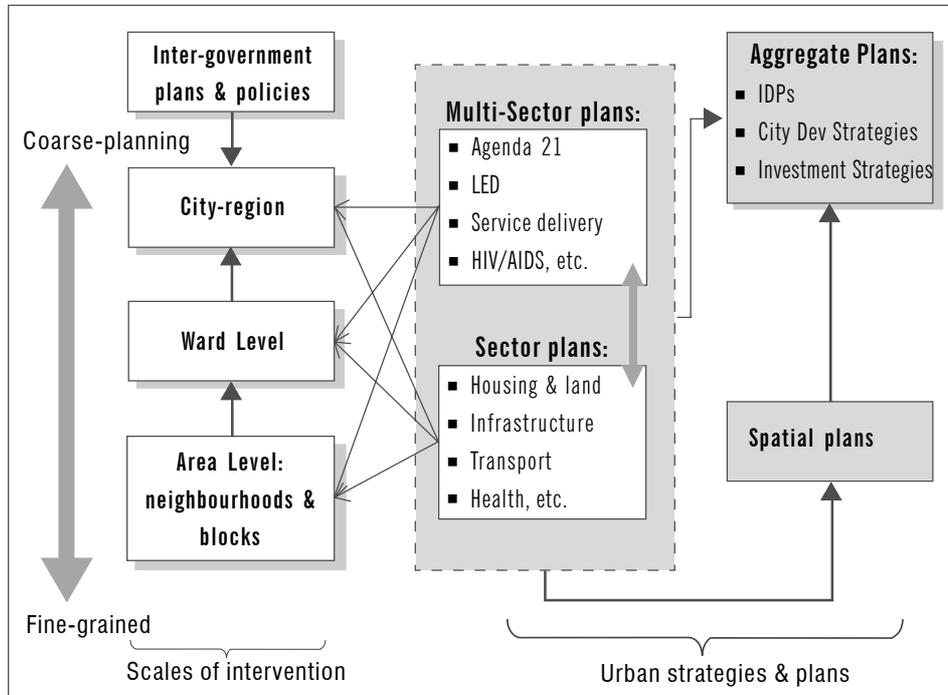
Weaving together strands of integrated urban development

Urban integration is most likely to be realised if local government assumes the lead in using its resources and power to shape the urban system. Moving from this vantage point, the legislative obligation on municipalities to formulate IDPs through participatory democratic means is an excellent starting point in thinking through the practicalities of advancing greater urban integration. It is worthwhile restating that IDPs are essentially strategic planning frameworks that allow municipalities to establish a holistic but prioritised development plan for the territory under its jurisdiction. IDPs are meant to provide a roadmap for how municipalities intend to address the social, political, livelihood and cultural needs of citizens and firms residing in their ambit. IDPs therefore reflect situated political agreements about which urban challenges and needs are most urgent and how best to address them in the

context of limited resources and competing needs. It is accepted that IDPs must be consistent with the Bill of Rights in the Constitution and contribute to the realisation of socio-economic rights. More pointedly, the priorities of municipalities must reflect a bias towards realising socio-economic rights of the vulnerable and marginalised. At the same time, IDPs must provide a sound enabling environment for inclusive economic development and growth. This is a vital platform to facilitate access to meaningful employment of everyone and a general increase in standards of living.

These far-reaching and ambitious imperatives that inform the IDP can overwhelm even the most capable and resourced of municipalities. It is therefore essential to think more concretely about how one can ensure that IDPs are indeed representative and appropriate development strategies that will lead to more integrated and equitable development outcomes. To aid such reflection, the different parts of the urban development puzzle will be disaggregated to expose how one moves from traditional functions of local government to a more dynamic understanding of the necessary inter-related actions and investments in the city, which can lead to greater integration. The traditional functions of local government were always exercised through hierarchical bureaucracies with departments acting in silos in order to deliver in terms of the functions, such as water, electricity, housing, which are categorised as sectoral in Table 1. The challenge of urban integration necessitates moving from effective sectoral efforts to effective multi-sectoral actions on the basis of clearly defined spatial objectives. Such reforms imply political-institutional support systems to facilitate multi-sectoral (or 'joined-up') practice, and each of these dimensions of urban integration is depicted in Figure 3 and Table 1.

TABLE 1: DIMENSIONS OF URBAN INTEGRATION POLICIES

SECTORAL	MULTI-SECTORAL	SPATIAL	POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL
■ Housing & land	■ Agenda 21 (environmental)	■ Compact city model (sustainability focus)	■ Integrated development plan (IDP)
■ Infrastructure: water, sewerage & electricity	■ Local economic development	■ Planning and spatial design models on: nodes, corridors, urban edges and open-space systems	■ City Development strategy (CDS)
■ Health	■ HIV/AIDS	■ Strategic planning: linking scales of land-use planning with sectoral planning.	■ Municipal partnership framework
■ Education	■ Service delivery strategy		■ Human resource development strategy
■ Transport	■ Spatial planning framework		■ Work process re-engineering (including IT).
■ Community services: libraries, parks, open spaces, recreational & civic spaces	■ Social development planning framework		
■ Economic development.	■ Poverty reduction strategy		
	■ Area-based plans		

Note: These categories are not inflexible. For instance, IDP, CDS and spatial plans could be regarded as multi-sectoral plans or frameworks.

Sectoral interventions

The fundamental building block of municipal government is the provision of services to address basic needs such as access to water, sewerage, sanitation, housing and electricity (see Table 1). It is vital that these services are provided in the most effective, efficient and affordable manner possible with appropriate subsidies for the poor so that everyone enjoys access to a minimum level of service. There is always a danger that municipalities can get so caught up in fanciful discourses about renewal,

integration, and so on, that they lose sight of doing the basics well. With this said, it is also important to appreciate that there is much to be gained from co-ordinating and inter-linking sectoral strategies through multi-sectoral policy frameworks.

Multi-sectoral interventions

It is particularly at the neighbourhood level that the effective co-ordination and inter-linkage between sectoral investments and interventions is important. The oft-cited example is the mismatch between contiguous investments in new settlements which result in situations where, for example, a new RDP housing scheme would have been completed but the water pipes and electricity connections were not installed and would not be for some time because the lead time for such investments is usually a few years. Beyond such blatant wastage, there are also many other reasons for achieving better co-ordination between disparate services, especially in poor and peripheral communities. Multi-sectoral strategies can, potentially, save costs, build social capital and improve the economic efficiencies of a locality. One example from Cape Town may suffice to illustrate the point.

Planners and urban designers of the former City of Cape Town municipality worked closely with community-based organisations in an informal settlement to ensure their input into the design of a new multi-purpose centre. In the lead-up to the process a group from the community was encouraged to learn the art of ceramic sculpture and tiling in order to decorate the walls of the new facility. In addition, the community was encouraged to debate the history of their locality with a view to identifying narratives they could relate to and that could also be used in the ceramic depictions on the walls of the building. Furthermore, the open space outside the building was not fenced-off but opened up, leading onto street furniture like benches and simple arched structures to allow traders to display their goods in a neat and aesthetically pleasing setting at a spot where people were now likely to congregate and mingle. As a result, the space was transformed into a beautiful and vibrant hub of community life, restoring a sense of pride and dignity in the bleak landscape of under-serviced shacks. In other words, by adopting a multi-functional approach to the investment of a community facility all kinds of animations – of the local economy,

cultural expression, memorialising history, spaces for association, access to information and other services – could be realised[6].

In a similar vein, it is well-established in the literature that complex and intractable problems such as poverty, social exclusion, the spread of HIV/AIDS, crime, social violence, and the like, which always embody multiple causes, cannot be addressed with sectoral responses. Instead, such problems require multi-dimensional responses, which mirror the inter-related dimensions of everyday life (Perri *et al*, 2002; Rakodi, 2002). Such responses will be embodied in multi-sectoral and multi-scale strategic interventions such as Agenda 21 plans, a local economic development strategy, a safety and security strategy, an HIV/AIDS strategy and plan, a service delivery strategic framework, an anti-poverty strategy, and similar (see Isandla Institute, 1998; Sowman, 2002; Van Donk, 2003). The move towards multi-sectoral strategies has also reinforced the importance of 'area-based' intervention models, which enable municipalities to physically pool their resources and staff and provide easy one-stop access points for communities and citizens. However, because the history of municipal government is steeped in hierarchical and fragmented organisational models, it is not easy to reorient staff, managers, politicians and the community to work in more horizontal, networked ways. Many of the current experiments in urban renewal and anti-crime forums reflect a deep inability to work in more networked, inter-linked ways that invariably imply the loss of autonomy and power to control discrete pockets of resources. This leads into the issues of control and direction-setting in urban development.

Spatial frameworks

The missing piece in the urban integration puzzle is often spatial planning. Part of the reason for this is that planning has earned itself such a bad reputation because of its role in forging the apartheid city in South Africa, and more broadly, being complicit in uneven development processes that produce ever more urban inequality (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003). Traditional forms of blueprint planning (master plans or structure plans) were generally ineffective in realising their aims in many post-colonial contexts. In much of the world, spatial planning's reputation is in ruins. In recent times, however, the pendulum has begun to swing back in favour of

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[6]   This example is based on first-hand observation and discussions with Barbara Southworth and Steven Boshoff who championed the initiative and many others like it.

spatial planning even though it is a different conception of urban planning, being more provisional and strategic.

Borja and Castells (1997) suggest that spatial planning is best seen as a tool to inform political processes of strategic assessment and planning, aimed at shaping the future growth trajectory of a given city. The normative planning models currently in play across South Africa (compact city models, urban design approaches) have powerful diagnostic and purposive capacities (Dewar 2000). Spatial planning is useful as a diagnostic to understand the spatial relations, for example, proximity, distance, intensity and flows, between numerous actors and facilities that co-exist in the territory. In practice, however, spatial planning has proved less useful in guiding and shaping the investment and business decisions of especially private actors, resulting in the wasteful and uncontrolled processes of suburbanisation and sprawl evident all around us (Turok, 2001). But, in combination with other regulatory instruments, spatial plans can play a vital role in remaking patterns of urban fragmentation. This is an argument that can usefully be explored more fully, but suffice it to underscore that there is a crucial place for spatial plans, especially as democratic talking points, to explore the balance of resources and services as they are spread across the city, and to animate more integrated community development.

By using the diagnostic mapping power of spatial plans it is possible to have better informed and concrete debates about the distribution of essential resources and services across cities and towns. The apartheid geography of disparities between rich and poor, black and white, 'north' and 'south', means we can plot through spatial representations how well or badly we are doing in achieving redistribution and equity across the full urban terrain. Furthermore, difficult political problems of relative unequal access between adjacent poor communities can be enhanced through spatial modelling and engagement. Most importantly, spatial maps of the city can also be linked to the budgetary allocations, both capital and operating, of the municipality to demonstrate year on year where resources are flowing to; a potentially empowering political moment, which creates the vital opening to ask questions about why and how come? In Manenberg on the Cape Flats, local community organisations working with Council officials, local businesses and other public sector

staff employed detailed spatial plans to understand why crime is so endemic and the extent to which existing public facilities are greatly under-utilised[7]. In addition, these plans have been used to structure a discussion about what the government is bringing to the renewal efforts of the community, alongside the contributions of local organisations and actors.

Institutional effectiveness and delivery capability

A profoundly complex aspect of urban integration is the fact that both sectoral and multi-sectoral interventions must occur simultaneously at various scales in the city, ranging from the street in a neighbourhood up to the urban region (see Figure 3). Furthermore, the interventions at these various scales must also be consistent and enhance greater synergy across the whole urban system while also accommodating the requirements of national government departments. This requires immensely sophisticated institutional systems to ensure information flows and organisational alignment between municipal departments, between local and other spheres of government, between government and civil society organisations, and of course, between government and private sector initiatives. Spatial planning frameworks can potentially ease this task by providing an accessible and graphic 'language' to talk about sequencing, co-ordination and integration of disparate efforts. Crucial, though, is the imperative that sectoral, multi-sectoral and spatial plans hang together in the IDP. In this sense, the IDP can also be seen as an aggregate framework that provides a consistent and politically situated rationale for how numerous development efforts hang together and move the city in the direction of less fragmentation and more integration. However, for the IDP to come into its own in this way, what is needed is a razor-sharp understanding of politics, political accountability frameworks and the underlying issue of institutional effectiveness (Pieterse, forthcoming).

Institutional effectiveness is a prerequisite for achieving success in improving the delivery capability of local government. For this reason it is vital to recognise that inter-governmental reform initiatives to improve the alignment between national, provincial and municipal government efforts are crucial. So is the need for better co-ordination and linkage within urban areas between municipal government, parastatals, civil society organisations and the private sector. It is also against this

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[7] This example is based on conversations (March 2003) with key local activists, Councillor Faldiela de Fries and municipal officials.

backdrop that performance management systems, which include monitoring and evaluation instruments, must be appreciated as potential levers to enhance more effective urban development. However, this is subject to a politicised understanding of these measures, which defines performance management as one aspect in a larger suite of democratic accountability mechanisms.

Aggregate urban development frameworks

The primary instrument of democratic accountability is the IDP. As explained before, the IDP processes provide unique opportunities for progressive civil society actors to profile urban integration on the political agenda. This is because urban integration is more likely to address the systemic problems of urban inequality than the current pattern of fragmented development. The power of the IDP is that it comprehensively reflects the various sectoral and multi-sectoral strategies and more importantly, the argument for how these strategies address the priorities of the city, as defined through participatory democratic processes. Of course, if the democratic institutions and forums are weak it is highly unlikely that the IDP will indeed be a force for realising urban integration. What this implies is that the champions of radical democracy and social justice in civil society and the state need a comprehensive understanding of the various elements that comprise urban integration (as discussed above) and how they need to be related and aligned in the specific circumstances of the city where they find themselves. Thereafter the trick is to ensure that the IDP priorities, which inform the allocation of resources, are consistent with their understanding. To be sure, such a progressive coalition will have to fight to make their vision and understanding of urban integration hegemonic, and this may well be a tough and protracted process, given the predominance of neo-liberal urban development thinking in a great deal of mainstream policy. Usually the greatest obstacle faced by progressive forces is not the absence of ideas or operating space, but the chronic fragmentation of dissenting voices in society. This leads into the final aspect of envisioning and fostering urban integration: keeping politics alive.

Political accountability frameworks

The biggest danger for discourses in support of urban integration is slipping into a technocratic mode, fixated on co-ordination, alignment, indicators, reporting, and the like. As the discussion in this section demonstrates, there are so many variables at play in the pursuit of urban integration that one must rely on technical and managerial tools to retain an overview. However, it would be a grave error to think

that the struggle for urban integration is not fundamentally about altering the balance of power between opposing interests in the city. For this reason, if urban integration is reduced to a particular multi-sectoral (local Agenda 21), or area-based, or spatial planning model, it will have missed both the point and the political bus. The central political challenge is to empower insurgent interests in the city to claim their rights, entitlements and interests through the available participatory democratic forums (Pieterse, forthcoming). Their demands and claims should be framed in terms of the benefits of urban integration, both for them and for the city at large. Seen from this angle, the transformative potential of the IDP, and other related urban governance instruments, shines brighter.

Conclusion

While providing an overview that conveys why urban fragmentation persists despite so-called good intentions, there is much that requires further elaboration and of course, many outright silences. It is important to open up a more concrete debate about the conceptual roots of urban integration, sustainable (urban) development. Flowing from that are the numerous facets of urban integration as it unfolds at various scales and through numerous organisational sites across our urban spaces. In echoing the sentiments of Ayyun Malik in the opening quote, urban integration and especially cities can never be reduced to functional imperatives but are irrepressibly vibrant spaces of cultural contestation and struggle. Social justice is never delivered on a platter, but must always be seized by determined actors, and if this is recognised, alongside the constitutive complexity of urban integration, we can dispense with underwhelming sentiments that change can only arrive very slowly.

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