

Middle Classing in Roodepoort

Capitalism and Social Change in South Africa

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I am grateful to the respondents who made themselves available for interviews and let us into their homes and their lives. I am especially grateful to Mrs E who has chosen to remain anonymous. After months of not getting past the gate into any complex, she was the break that gave us access to complexes in Milkyway. She was also an invaluable respondent. From its modest origins the project has grown to accommodate two PhD students working in different sites, Federica Duca working in the upmarket Eagle Canyon estate and Mmamagang Modisha working in a complex on the East Rand.

The great advantage of this study is that it has been conducted over 3 years. This has allowed us to develop a long-term familiarity with the area, to watch it change and build relationships with key personalities.

Phil Bonner and I recently won a generous NRF award to explore other sites of social change in the Free State, Limpopo and North West provinces. Two more PhD students will join the project as well as a postdoctoral student from next year.

This report constitutes a portion of an emerging manuscript. It remains to explore the relationship between the complexes and the informal settlements around Roodepoort, including Zandspruit. This is ongoing research.

I have decided to release this report for two main reasons. On the one hand there has been extensive media coverage of this work. On the other hand I look forward to robust engagement with a view to improving this analysis for the final manuscript. I thank you in advance for your feedback.

Preface

David Goldblatt's recent exhibition at the Goodman Gallery contains several images of new residential developments on the western edge of Johannesburg.

The exhibition, titled TJ (Transvaal Johannesburg), a reference to the abbreviation of the city's number plates until the early 1980s, is dedicated to the legacy of apartheid on the urban form. As one reviewer described it, these pictures show "the city's cancerous-like growth, the lack of planning and the sprawling, crime-beset refugee population" (Amanda, Umuzi@BookSA). Goldblatt himself explains: "One of the most damaging things that apartheid did to us, was that it denied us the experience of each other's lives. Apartheid has succeeded all too well. It might have failed in its fundamental purpose of ruling the country for the next thousand years in that fashion, but it succeeded in dividing us very deeply and it will take a long time to overcome that." (Goldblatt, 2010).

In one of his many striking images, face-brick houses multiply, row after row, gradually filling the image with little red and grey roofs. They stretch out across the landscape as far as the eye can see.

In another image there are rows of RDP houses. There is clutter all around: shacks, rocks visible on their roofs, yards sometimes filled with rows of cars, their doors open. Unlike the other images, there are people in these pictures, though they are just specks amongst the browns and greys. As the image spreads to the horizon, so the brown streets disappear, leaving a grey haze of indistinct shacks and shanties.

Juxtaposed, Goldblatt's images cast Johannesburg in stark industrial terms. On the one side, orderly units and complexes stamped out in their tens of thousands from a great developmental machine. On the other side, the by-product: settlements of the poor, approximate rows of shacks, their symmetry broken by people and by waste. What we see are vast new settlements segregated and demarcated according to historical divisions of race and class. What we see laid bare are new geographies of inequality.

It is a short step to claim these images for an emerging literature on post-apartheid South Africa and Johannesburg, one that conceptualises these spaces in terms of the processes of *globalisation* and *neoliberalism*

(Bremner, 2011, Greenberg, 2010, Bond and McInnes, 2006). Here gated communities are phenomena of the neoliberal built environment. In the same way that “new privatised spaces of elite or corporate consumption were created,” so too were gated communities, “urban enclaves and other ‘purified’ spaces of social reproduction”. They are underpinned by an “architecture of fear [where] those with resources can afford to build citadels of protection for themselves, while those without resources become more exposed to violence and lawlessness” (Greenberg, 2010, p.9-10). In this way Johannesburg is rendered equivalent to cities like Los Angeles, depicted by Mike Davis as “Fortress L.A”. It is a landscape of what Edward Soja calls “unflinching binary oppositions”, “fortified cells of affluence versus places of terror for the criminalised poor” or between “Oz-like pleasure domes versus repressive ghettos and barrios” or between “genuinely democratic” public space versus privatised zones (Soja, 2000, p.304).

As arresting as these images are, the aerial view (and/or the view from the passing car) is misleading. The novelty of these settlements is too easily lost. In fact, to the extent that they are seen to reproduce the social and spatial patterns of the apartheid political economy, nothing really new is happening here at all. Yet there is something new in Roodepoort.

Introduction: A Common World

In 2004, after visiting Johannesburg, the London-based sociologist Paul Gilroy published a short article in the review of the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER). It was subsequently republished in the *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. There he insisted on the world historical importance of the South African transition from apartheid.

“Your specific blend of diversity and solidarity,” he wrote, “yields a special lesson for a world where we are increasingly told that diversity and solidarity cannot mix. [...] I think it has a wider, global significance as well. After all, the struggle to end apartheid generated a worldly, trans-local movement which understood the planetary dimensions of its hopes for a more substantial democracy that could not operate in colour-coded forms. I hope that will be South Africa’s gift to the future” (Gilroy, 2004, p. 288).

More recently, in 2012, Peter Wagner also insisted on the global significance of the transition to democracy here. “South Africa’s combination of a recent move towards inclusive egalitarian democracy while maintaining structures of social inequality makes it a mirror image of a world situation in which independent states, on a formally equal basis, negotiate policy measures for a sustainable future but in which at the same time asymmetries of power and wealth are extremely pronounced” (Wagner, 2012, p. 149). While the world deals with the legacy of colonialism in terms of international relations, as negotiations between formally equal states (though patently unequal in fact), South Africa is dealing with it in the context of a single society.

“South Africa may even be seen today,” Wagner continues, “as *more advanced* than much of the world because there is no legal barrier any longer between its citizens – as there is, in contrast, between citizens of Senegal and France, or Nigeria and the United Kingdom, or Tanzania and Germany” (emphasis added) (Ibid., p.149).

On Gilroy and Wagner’s terms Post-Apartheid South was not simply modern relative to its own past, it was modern relative to the present of the world. The South African experience, that is, was genuinely *avant-garde*. “For all that”, Gilroy laments, “South Africa has dropped out of debates over democracy, multi-culture, humanitarian and cosmopolitan governance” (Ibid., p.291). The reason, in part, lies in the fact that, internationally,

political and scholastic orthodoxy minimises the effects of racism and racialism (Ibid., p.291). There is another more local reason as well. In South Africa scholars, ‘public intellectuals’, opinion makers of all kinds tend to underestimate the significance of the South African project. Often they lay a charge against the present. South Africa seems to occupy a strange *entre-temps*, a present that does not loom out of the past, nor does it open up to the future.

Perhaps the institutions and processes that the negotiated settlement produced are incapable of delivering modernity. This is the question that seems to underlie contemporary political and economic debate in South Africa. Consider, for example, an essay from 1997 by Pallo Jordan. “How do we understand April 1994?” he asked at the 50th ANC National Conference. A cornerstone of the ANC’s non-racialism was that racism was *not* explained in terms of the peculiar psychology or culture of whites as individuals or as a group. It reflected, rather, the way that capitalism had developed in a colonial setting and the institutions created to sustain it. This is what gave to the ANC’s platform its specific character and its peculiar terminology. The ANC was engaged in a National Democratic Revolution that sought to eliminate the origins of white domination in the colonial-capitalist economy (the base) and their supporting racist institutions (the apartheid superstructure). What did 1994 represent on these terms? “The ANC,” Jordan writes, “had to make a number of distasteful concessions” (Jordan, 1997). In particular, capital and wealth remained in white hands. In 1997 Jordan was optimistic, nonetheless, that democracy represented an advance – a beach head he called it.

Fourteen years later optimism was waning. In September 2011, for example, Ngoako Ramatlhodi, a member of the highest decision-making body of the African National Congress and then deputy Minister of Correctional Services, argued that the “Constitution reflects [...] a compromise tilted heavily in favour of forces against change”. “Apartheid forces,” he explained, “sought to and succeeded in retaining white domination under a black government. This they achieved by emptying the legislature and executive of real political power” (Ramatlhodi, 2011).

As the future seems to recede, not in time but as an epoch – the democratic period or post-apartheid – South Africa is no longer the avant-garde. In Jonny Steinberg’s term, ‘South Africa’ has come more and more to stand for an African present – of failure and of potential ruin (Steinberg, 2012). Can

we be satisfied with such a restricted understanding of the present; where the measure of things is reduced to selected *quanta* (Gross Domestic Product, Gini-coefficient, demographic change) and limited localities – informal settlements, rural areas and places of the poor? All of which, implicitly or not, are deemed measures of the effectiveness of the State. Therein lies the dilemma of the contemporary political scene: the State is thought to be ill-equipped to deliver modernity. This is an unequivocally vertical topology, however. If we change perspective then another future is already opening up before us. We will see that it is both familiar and strange, that is, uncanny

Let us return to the notion of a *South African modernity*. What might it look like? Peter Wagner discusses several measures, including what he calls an *epochal* definition (Wagner, 2012, p. 21). Modernity is associated with the presence or not of determinate institutions, a market economy, democratic political organisations operating within the framework of a nation-state (*Ibid*,p.145). We need to add further elements to this modern imaginary, especially that of technology and the city (Appadurai, 1996).

From such a perspective and on its own terms the apartheid state too was modern. I have explored this elsewhere (Chipkin, 2007 and Chipkin and Lipietz, 2012), though here we might recall that by the late 1950s the South African government believed that the national question was pretty much resolved. English-speakers and Afrikaners were fast merging to a form a common nation; one, moreover, that governed itself by democratic means and provided for its needs via a capitalist economy. We will see shortly that Roodepoort, the research site for this study, was imagined from the 1970s in similar terms – as a showcase of Afrikaner modernity. Even the Balkanisation of the country into ethnic homelands, moreover, was a modernist gesture. Napoleon-like *viz.* the Germans (Hegel), the South African state would usher tribal groups into history as sovereign peoples in their own nation-states.

The spectre of colonialism always hung over these narratives and these events, however. It is the status of violence and its relationship to modernity that undoes the idea of an ‘apartheid modernity’. The importance of the ‘radical’ scholarship that emerged in and about South Africa in the 1970s, like third-world scholarship more generally, was that it showed how the ordinary functioning of politics and capitalism in the white polity (or, for that matter, the metropole) was dependent on extreme violence in the

colony. Therein lay South Africa's world historical specificity. The metropole and the colony were in the same territory.

Here was a twist on the historical narrative of modernity. The Leviathan did not succeed the State of Nature, it lay alongside it, often only a few kilometres away. This juxtaposition, moreover, was not so much a spatial relation than a transcendental one. In Empire, the (white) Leviathan is the condition the State of Nature (for blacks) and vice versa. On these terms Blacks are not so much (still, eternally) in a State of Nature (Roper, Verwoerd) as violently pulled out of civilisation (African polities, kingdoms) and thrown, condemned to it.

The multiple temporalities of Empire and/or of South Africa is a theme that recurs in current postcolonial literature. Claude Ake thus discussed the space of the colony as one that was pre-political in the Hobbesian sense, where all claims are arbitrary and all rights are only powers (Ake, 1996, p.2). Achille Mbembe writes about what he calls 'colonial sovereignty' in terms of the '*commandement*', a peculiar form of violence that rested on three pillars. It was a regime of exception in that it departed from common law (it delegated public functions to private entities), it was based on privileges and immunities (for some, the few), and it made no distinction between ruling and civilizing (Mbembe, 2001, p.29-31). The bifurcated state is, on Mamdani's terms, characterised by law and civil society on the one side and by despotism and violence on the other (Mamdani, 1996, p.62-108)¹.

We might say that in Empire there is an articulation of epochs (or modes of epoch): modernity in the metropole and a State of Nature in the colony. Empire is both a geography and a relation: a space of law and justification

¹In the writing of the Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, to give one paradigmatic example, the fictional state of Aburiria stands in for the post-colonial state *per se*. The ruler of Aburiria is afflicted with an illness that makes him stink and fart and simmer in a rage that consumes his heart. In State House, "it is said that the walls and ceiling of the chamber were made from the skeletons of students, teachers, workers, and small farmers he had killed in all the regions of the country, for it was well known that he came to power with flaming swords, the bodies of his victims falling down like banana trunks" (waThiongo, p. 10). The violence of the postcolonial is as much physical as it is symbolic. In Aburiria, "the Ruler controlled how the months followed each other – January trading places with July – he therefore had the power to declare any month in the year the seventh month, and any day within that seventh month the seventh day and the Ruler's birthday" (Ibid., p.12).

that simultaneously produces spaces of violence. Apartheid South Africa was, therefore, not so much a colony-of-a-special kind, than a *condensed imperial space*. On these terms, post-Apartheid modernity, like post-Imperial modernity *tout court*, involves drawing spaces of violence more and more into the realm of legality and justification. This is Wagner's hope for South Africa: "The end of apartheid meant an end to this form of [colonial] violence. Institutional practices now have to abide by the Constitution that is based on the principles of equal liberty" (Wagner, 2012, p. 147). I have discussed elsewhere (Chipkin, 2007) how the traditional tools of nation-building are not suited to the South African situation. Hence, the challenge here is two-fold: to overcome an imperial divide in one country and to do so without appealing to nationalism.

There has been important progress in reducing or mitigating some of the structural violence of South Africa's political economy. The expansion of the welfare net has lifted millions of people from absolute poverty, though little progress has been made in addressing inequality and its causes. Yet it is violence as the opposite of legitimate order/law where only limited progress has been made and, in some areas, there have been reversals. This is surprising given that the National Party and the African National Congress's shared commitment to Law and legality was a condition of the transition to democracy (Meierhenrich, 2010). The status of the law in South Africa and of the dozens of particular laws and rules and regulations in their myriad jurisdictions, however, is weakly embedded. Compliance with rules and regulations in the public service is very low (Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, 2011). The rules of the road, either as a driver or as a pedestrian, are frequently observed in the breach. The high rate of violent crime fuels legitimate speculation that there are tens of thousands of people living outside and even beyond the reach of the law and the expectation to justify their actions publicly.

In other words, the promise that the domain of colonial violence (force, arbitrariness, *commandement*) would be drawn into and under the (democratic) law – spaces of legitimate violence – has run up against the weakness of the state. Simply put, the state after apartheid has not been able to subject the economy and society to the rules of a democratic, constitutional order. What is more the state itself is increasingly the cause of the very disorder and arbitrariness (in the public service, in the administration of justice, in the police, in the provision of healthcare) it seeks to overcome. And so a negative dialectic is at work. As government

seeks to discipline more and more sites of the economy and society according to policy and plan, it generates new forms of disorder and arbitrariness (unreason).

It is in this context that sites like Roodepoort are important. To see in them simply a 'middle class' phenomenon (or worse, another artefact of 'globalisation') is to obscure their social significance. Townhouse complexes there constitute spaces of *horizontal modernity*, to paraphrase an idea from Carlos Forment (Forment, 2012). In other words, they are sites where the city, where order and rule are being constituted from below. These are certainly not spaces where violence is absent (Suren Pillay, 2008). They are sometimes, we shall see, oppressive enclosures. Yet their violence is of a different quality, not to mention quantity, to that of apartheid or of colonialism. If the violence of the townhouses is not justified in the Kantian sense then it is, at least soft (in the sense that Pierre Bourdieu intended by this term). Therein lies the innovation of the Roodepoort complexes. They are spaces of order, law and justification in response to and amidst the still-colonial form of South African society.

1. Communal Capitalism

The topography of ‘above’ and ‘below’ is potentially misleading in the case of the townhouses, however. These are not initiatives that have emerged outside of or in resistance to the state – in the way, for example, social historians once described ‘popular movements’ or ‘popular history’ (Chipkin, 1997). Their geography, in this sense, is more difficult to describe. They are concrete instantiations of law and in this sense have been posited or thought, formally, by the state. Therein lies their first paradoxical feature. They fill an opening created by legislation and their exact form is given in relationship to the regulatory instruments that exist to govern this regime, even when its agents (municipal officers) function capriciously.

The second paradox is that these zones are elaborated, not under the auspices of the Constitution and human rights – they do not function according to the logic of the categorical imperative. They are by-products of *new regime of property*. Hence they function not to protect life as an end in itself (Kant) but property as an end in itself. We must understand them not only in relation to crime or other aspects of South Africa’s social situation, but also in relation to South Africa’s property markets and the innovations in global instruments of property ownership that have emerged over the last four decades or more. They reflect categorical shifts in the form of modern capitalism.

In *City of Extremes* Martin Murray begins his chapter on ‘Entrepreneurial Urbanism’ by referring to recent changes in Johannesburg’s management practices. “In essence,” he writes, the “shift from conventional managerialist approaches to public administration – with their old-style, commandist pretensions and Keynesian-welfarist and pump-priming orientation – to more flexible modes of urban governance involves the introduction of various kinds of competition-based, enterprise policies and the expanded participation of elite business coalitions in local decision-making” (Murray, 2011, p. 245). On his terms, this represents a “shift toward urban entrepreneurialism” in Johannesburg.

There is no doubt that the reorganisation of the municipality’s traditional departments (electricity, water, roads, refuse) into agencies (City Power, the

Roads Agency, Pikitup), whose relationship to the City is as a shareholder to a Board, was strongly informed by UK and American models of New Public Management. Developments along Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard have not been accompanied by any major municipal investment. Despite the massive population movement, the electricity infrastructure has barely been upgraded. There are frequent electrical cuts. The water supply too is not reliable. It is in the road infrastructure that the neglect is most visible. No new roads have been built in the area in the last 10 years and the existing infrastructure was constructed with very different population densities in mind. The traffic congestion is severe with traffic lights out of order on any of the main roads. The delays can be considerable.

The new settlements are designed by planners in the employ or sub-contracted to property developers. Most new roads are in fact private thoroughfares, for which the responsibility is not clear. Are they part of the cluster developments or should the Johannesburg Road Agency maintain them? Few are marked or signposted. Even the bulk infrastructure, water pipes and electricity, are installed by private developers. The nearest police station is in Honeydew, 20 kilometres away, and policing is done by one of the many private security companies in the area.

These are not simply ‘neoliberal’ landscapes, however.

There has been considerable attention paid to the macro structure of capitalism over the last several decades, usually under the rubric of ‘globalisation’. A lot of this work has been concerned with the effects of new information technologies, of developments in the world financial system, the emergence of new markets and cheaper sites of production. Typically, Giddens notes that “globalisation is political, technical and cultural, as well as economic. It is ‘new’ and ‘revolutionary’ and is mainly due to the ‘massive increase’ in financial foreign exchange transactions. This has been facilitated by dramatic improvement in communications technology, especially electronic interchange facilitated by personal computers” (Giddens, 2002, p.10).

Apart from these global transformations there have been key changes in the micro organisation of capitalism as well. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiappello’s superb study of the reorganisation of the capitalist firm from the 1970s describes a ‘new spirit of capitalism’ manifest in the transformation of its operations and mechanisms (Boltanski and Chiappello,

2005, p.168). Driven by crises of production arising from political and social resistance to capitalism itself – class struggle - firms responded by taking on board elements of the anti-capitalist critique associated with the revolts of 1968. Capitalist firms, they write, were “receptive to the critiques of the period that denounced the mechanization of the world (post-industrial society against industrial society) – the destruction of forms of life conducive to the fulfilment of specifically human potential and, in particular, creativity – and stressed the intolerable character of the modes of oppression which [...] had been exploited by capitalist mechanisms for organizing work” (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005, p.201). The shift to ‘networks’, the emphasis on ‘visionary leadership’, on ‘self-organisation’ and ‘autonomy’ reorganised work in response to this ‘aesthetic’ critique of ‘alienation’. In the 1980s this analysis of the capitalist firm was extended to an argument about bureaucracy *per se*, so that its force and ultimately prescriptions were deemed relevant to the public sector as well. I have begun to explore how this post-bureaucratic fashion came to dominate the policy arena in South Africa after 1994 and its effects on the integrity and performance of government departments individually and collectively.

Less well documented, however, are the changes that have occurred to the content of ‘property rights’ during the period after the Second World War. This deserves attention. Not only do these changes create the legal framework for the emergence of the townhouse phenomenon in the first place, but they constitute a mutation in the private property relationship itself.

In the 1940s in the USA, notes David Hulchanski, one either rented or owned a house and there were few options in between (Hulchanski, 1988, p. 135). Starting in the 1960s *condominium* ownership became possible. We get a sense of the novelty of this arrangement by considering it in historical terms. The condominium is a form of what Marshall Tracht calls ‘co-ownership’, that is, a legal relationship that makes it possible for two or more people (or legal entities) to have equal rights to the use and enjoyment of a property (Tracht, 2000, p. 62). Historically, co-ownership has been most common in situations of ‘tenancy in common’ governing property relationships between married spouses (community of property) or within families (joint tenancy). Joint tenancy, for example, was a feudal right designed to prevent the division of landed estates amongst numerous heirs. It was abolished in England in 1925. In the US, ‘tenancy by the entirety’ is

recognised in 20 jurisdictions and applies between married couples. In situations where a property is owned jointly by a couple, limitations are placed on the ability of either spouse to alienate their portion of the property without the consent of the other. Ownership in 'indivision' is the common law version of 'tenancy by the entirety'.

The forms of co-ownership above are ancient; the condominium is a recent innovation. Starting in Puerto Rico in 1958 and then spreading to the 50 US states by 1968, the condominium is a form of home ownership that makes it possible for an individual to own a housing unit without exclusive ownership of the land on which the structure and its surroundings is built (Hulchanski, 1988, p. 140). At its simplest, the condominium allows the unit owner possession of the "air space" in his or her house, while the real estate is owned in common with the other owners. In effect, what home-buyers own of their unit is very modest, essentially from the middle of the brick inwards. Everything else, including gardens, the driveway, the parking area, the backyard, even the exterior of the house itself, is regarded as common property that is owned and managed by the Body Corporate. It thus combines two regimes of property rights in a hybrid bundle. On the one hand, an individual has unique authority to use, enjoy and alienate the dwelling in question, that is, he or she is an owner of property. On the other hand, he or she shares in the ownership of various common spaces and facilities, that is, he or she is a tenant (in common).

If private property is the category that gives capitalism its specific form relative to other socio-economic formations (either in time or space), then the emergence recently of the condominium as a legal and social phenomenon is of major consequence. Traditional owners of private property are organised in and through collective instruments of decision-making. That is, the condominium is a form of private ownership that borrows from historically non-capitalist social relations. This development is so much more surprising in that it has coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the failure of the project of collective ownership. In the US, social ownership has been elaborated from within the very category of private property itself; leading some Canadian real estate associations to complain there had been an "erosion of property rights" there (cited in Hulchanski, 1988, p. 136).

For all its importance, this change in the character of property rights, starting in advanced capitalist countries and spreading rapidly around the

world, has barely received attention in academic or political circles. Tracht notes, for example, the “historical patterns of changes in co-ownership appears largely unexplored in the legal and economic literature” (Tracht, Op Cit., p. 65). In the South African context there is no academic literature that this author could find on the topic at all. Yet the emergence of forms of social ownership within the category of private property is not only of legal or taxonomical interest (in the sense of how we distinguish societies and economies). The condominium as a legal instrument has given rise to condominiums as a contemporary social and urban phenomenon as well. The US case is instructive in this regard. Let us recall that prior to 1960 there were no complexes or buildings on mainland America owned and managed through the condominium. By 1980 there were 2 252 835 units. That is, 2,5% of houses or flats in America were condominiums. By 1990 the number had almost doubled to 4,7% or 4 847 921 units (US Census Bureau, 1994). In Canada too condominium units grew rapidly, from zero in 1965 to more than 170 000 units in 1981, that is, 3,3 % of all units in 16 years (Hulchanski, Op Cit, p. 142). There is very little data for the rest of the world.

In South Africa, this property regime became possible after 1986 with the passing of the Sectional Title Act. The Act provides for the “division of buildings into sections and common property and for the acquisition of separate ownership in sections coupled with joint ownership in common property” (Act 95 of 1986 Sectional Titles Act). Between 1988 and 2011 in Gauteng Province alone and chiefly in Johannesburg and Pretoria, 32 774 sectional title housing *schemes* were registered. The documents that we have from the Deeds Office do not record how many units have been constructed per complex or collectively. In the absence of a recent census, moreover, we do not have accurate demographic data in this regard. If, however, we work on the basis of a conservative estimate of 20-30 units per development, then we can guesstimate that in Gauteng alone there are approximately a million units under sectional title. If, moreover, we assume that many units are inhabited by young families or young couples or people living alone, in equal proportion, then we can work on an average household demographic of 2 people per unit (2,3 more precisely). As a rough indication, 2 million people in Gauteng or 18% of the population (11 million) live in townhouse complexes.

The growth of condominiums or sectional title estates is surprising for another reason as well. Their growth is traditionally attributed to the affordability of such units relative to free-hold property. As one South African company of real-estate agents, Remax, explained, the attraction of sectional title arrangements is threefold: security, affordability and a communal lifestyle. I will return later to the idea that townhouse complexes are sites of community. For the moment, let us note their financial advantages. Unlike freehold properties, Remax continues, where owners pay for their own home insurance and for the upkeep of the garden and exterior of their homes, owners of sectional title units pay an inclusive monthly levy. The levy includes the costs of insurance premiums, maintenance of the common property, wages and salaries of cleaners, security and other staff involved in maintaining the common property, as well as any water and electricity required for the common property. The cost of maintaining pools, tennis courts, communal park areas and clubhouses in the development is shared (Remax, 2011). Essentially, sectional title living is a way of exercising private ownership of a property, while sharing the costs of maintenance and of communal infrastructure.

Using the language of economists we can say that individual housing unit prices are kept down because the costs of the land and facilities-in-common are externalised, that is, shared with other owners. If the values of the units in the complex increase, however, the benefits accrue individually. Owners who alienate their unit for more than they paid for it keep the surplus for themselves. From a strictly economic perspective the benefits are self-evident. However, when we consider the social aspects of the condominium or sectional title regime, or, more precisely, the social conditions of this economic relation, its strictly economic advantages become less clear.

From a rational choice perspective the central economic and legal problem arising is this: how can the conflicting preferences and actions of co-owners be coordinated so that some owners do not invest in their own properties in a way that imposes costs on their co-owners and/or underinvest in projects whose benefits are shared with others (Tracht, *Op Cit.*, p. 63)? This is the problem of the commons. In cases of the condominium or of sectional title, the law provides an instrument to deal with the problem of externality. It imposes a legal obligation on co-owners to make decisions communally; that is, through the Body Corporate (as it is called in South African law). Rules governing the composition of the Body Corporate and defining the

norms of social behaviour in complexes, including granting this committee the right to impose social and economic sanctions on owners, are central to sustaining the property relation. The fact that the officers of the Body Corporate must be elected and that they must take decisions democratically is not intended to serve a democratic purpose. It is designed to maximise coordination between owners.

Hulchanski observes that “by its very nature it [a condominium] involves a communal environment requiring each tenant-owner to yield some individual rights for the sake of achieving harmonious management of the common element and of the project as a whole” (Hulchanski, *Op Cit.*, p.140). Or as a South African estate agent put it: “Management, maintenance, co-operative environment, levies and rules all require some level of understanding, acknowledgement and commitment to make a scheme functional and efficient” (Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, 2011). Indeed, writes another, “owning sectional title property can be highly profitable if your body corporate is well managed and maintained. There is a direct relationship between the state of affairs of your body corporate and the property value of your section” (Sectional Title South Africa, 2010). In this sense the townhouse complex requires a literal social contract between owners; not so much to deliver them from the State of Nature but to protect the value of their individual and collective assets. (We might recall that for Rousseau the social contract was always an instrument designed to protect the integrity and value of property, so that property owners were necessarily the privileged beneficiaries of the political community).

To the extent, however, that the sectional title regime is embedded in social relations, the value of actual housing units is dependent on the quality of those social relations. When they are not harmonious, the value of the property is at stake. The first problem arises when some of the residents in a complex are not owners but tenants; that is, they rent the unit from an owner-tenant. There is a structural conflict between owners and tenants in the best of times. Tenants relate to the property which they rent as a use-value; that is, it is place of shelter and/or as a home. It has no exchange value from their point of view. In contrast, for an owner, a property is a use-value when he or she lives in it, but it is also an exchange-value. The exchange value of a unit is related to its use-value in this way: its price on the market is affected by the manner in which it has been maintained, that is, handled as a use-value. A tenant only has an interest in maintaining the

unit or using it well to the extent that it increases his or her pleasure. He or she does not live in it with a view to its actual or future market value.

Under sectional title these inherent problems are exacerbated. One of the remedies that an owner has vis-à-vis a tenant is the termination or non-renewal of the contract between them (even if, depending on the jurisdiction, this remedy is more or less difficult to achieve). Yet in the case of a sectional title regime, the risk of a bad tenant is externalised. In other words, somebody else's bad tenant may have a negative effect on the prestige, appearance, orderliness, that is value, of the complex as a whole. The only remedy that the Body Corporate has in these cases is via the owner of the unit – tenants have no representation there. If, however, he or she, for whatever reason, including being far away or dependent on the rental income, is loath to act, then the costs of the bad tenant are externalised.

If this is the normal state of affairs, the riskiness of the condominium arrangement is amplified in the South African context (or for that matter, in any context where there has been widespread social conflict). The structure of the condominium as a property right makes onerous demands on condominiums as social organisms. The exchange value of a condominium, its value as an asset, is dependent on a relatively harmonious social order. In context like South Africa's surely 'social harmony' is an unrealistic expectation? It is reasonable to expect sectional title regimes to be less common in societies that are characterised, like South Africa, by violent histories of class and race domination. At least, it is reasonable to expect sectional title complexes to attract socially homogenous residents. This is certainly what happens when the wealthy congregate in townhouse complexes - they tend to do so under conditions of racial homogeneity. This was the original hypothesis informing the Roodepoort study. I will say more about this later, though for the moment it is worth noting that in the Roodepoort complexes diversity in racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, national terms is not associated with the inability to arrive at binding collective decisions.

Given that sectional title developments are potentially high risk assets, their affordability cannot be their only attraction. This study suggests other reasons for their popularity in South Africa. Especially for young Black South Africans, the geography of complexes (both in terms of location and in terms of internal organisation) makes the passage into the middle classes easier or possible. Townhouse complexes are a variable in the

reorganisation of the family unit in a way that makes it easier for young people to accumulate property. They are spaces where young Afrikaans-speakers are renegotiating their relationship to the past of Afrikaner nationalism and to the present of social diversity. Both groups are attracted by the promise of communal living; not because they are seeking community or non-racial conviviality. Rather, they are attracted to the security and orderliness of a regulated environment. At a global scale this potentially explains their growth. They offer order and predictability in a world of heightened risk and contingency (Giddens, 1990, 1991, 1999; Beck, 1992). In South Africa, townhouse complexes are sites of alternative government. In other words, they offer order and predictability in a society where the state seems to lack coherence, where its reach is uneven and unpredictable and where its ability to secure social order is questionable.

What we have in the townhouse complex is a spatial and especially urban form constituted through a particular regime of *governance*. As such the complex and the landscape that it produces are unlike the suburb. This is why the townhouse or condominium is not a further development of the American Levitt-town. This phenomenon of post Second World War America consisted of mass housing schemes intended for American servicemen and their families. After the war, the US government made a subsidy available to former military personnel that incentivised private developers. The most famous of these was the company Levitt and Sons. What was distinct about these developments was that houses were built according to a modular formula to reduce their costs. There were usually only 2 or 3 designs from which one could choose. In the 1980s under the auspices of the developer Schachat Cullum, South Africa acquired many Levitt-type suburbs. In Johannesburg, suburbs from Blairgowrie, Bourdeaux to Helderkruin and Windsor Park were built on this model²: modest houses on their own stand that were available in a limited number of design variations.

This modular or repetitive architectural form is certainly a key aspect of the townhouse phenomenon. Yet there is a key difference. Levitt towns reproduced a traditional municipal relationship. Homeowners related to the municipality as separate individuals in a bilateral relationship with the city, be it as a citizen or as a consumer of services. This is precisely the character

² Before them was Glenanil and all those suburbs with Glen in the name: Glenvista, Glendower and so on.

of the suburb. It is not simply a spatial phenomenon, but a political relationship between citizens (organised through the family) and the state (represented by the municipality). This is the classically liberal social contract (see Donzelot, 1997). In contrast, the condominium or the sectional title complex instantiates a new kind of social contract. In the first movement there is a collectivisation of individuals and households. In the second movement there are multiple contracts between the collective and sometimes the State (in the form of the municipality), sometimes simply other complexes (see Duca: forthcoming) and a myriad of private companies offering traditionally state services (companies offering policing, developers providing bulk services and road maintenance). This is a landscape that is more uncanny than it is neoliberal. At the moment when the logic of capitalism comes more and more to configure the physical environment and subject social relations to its property regime, it yields not a society of individuals but one organised as communes of a special kind.

Townhouse complexes are artefacts of a changed regime of private property, one that protects private ownership through a communal arrangement. They are evidence, therefore, of important changes to the social basis of capitalist organisation. In the same way that capitalist firms from the 1970s made concessions to the cultural critique of capitalism as a condition of renewed profitability, so, in the residential sector, the rights of private property are increasingly safeguarded in a historically non-capitalist social form, the commune. In South Africa, communalised regimes of private property are acting as buffers to the fragmented and apparently *aleatoire* workings of the South African state. In other words, in large parts of South Africa and elsewhere in the world, the political community or *cité* is being elaborated, not through the Constitution or the work of the state, but through a regime of property that yields unexpected and potentially unprecedented results: a capitalist society more and more organised collectively. If this is their general form they have a specific local content. Townhouse complexes in South Africa are sites of horizontal modernity; the pursuit of community in reply to a state not seen to be able to secure the Leviathan.

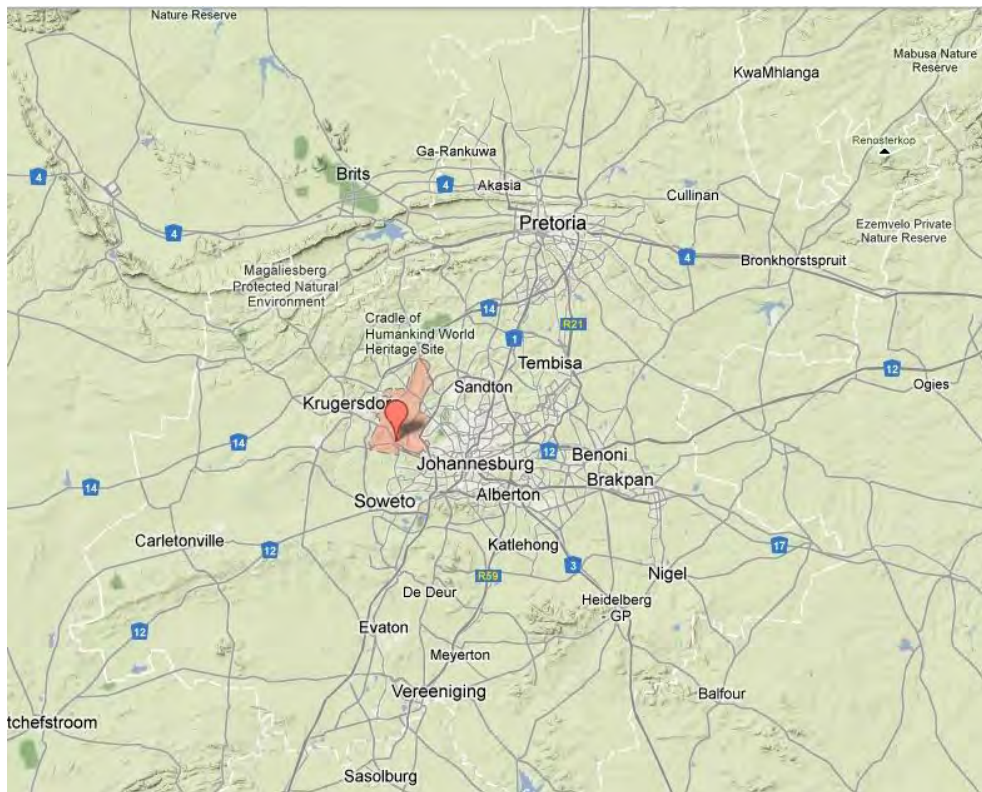


Figure 1: A map showing Roodepoort in relation to Johannesburg in the south east, Pretoria in the north and Krugersdorp. Roodepoort is shown in pink. From 1995 Roodepoort was incorporated into Johannesburg. Notice that Soweto is directly below Roodepoort.

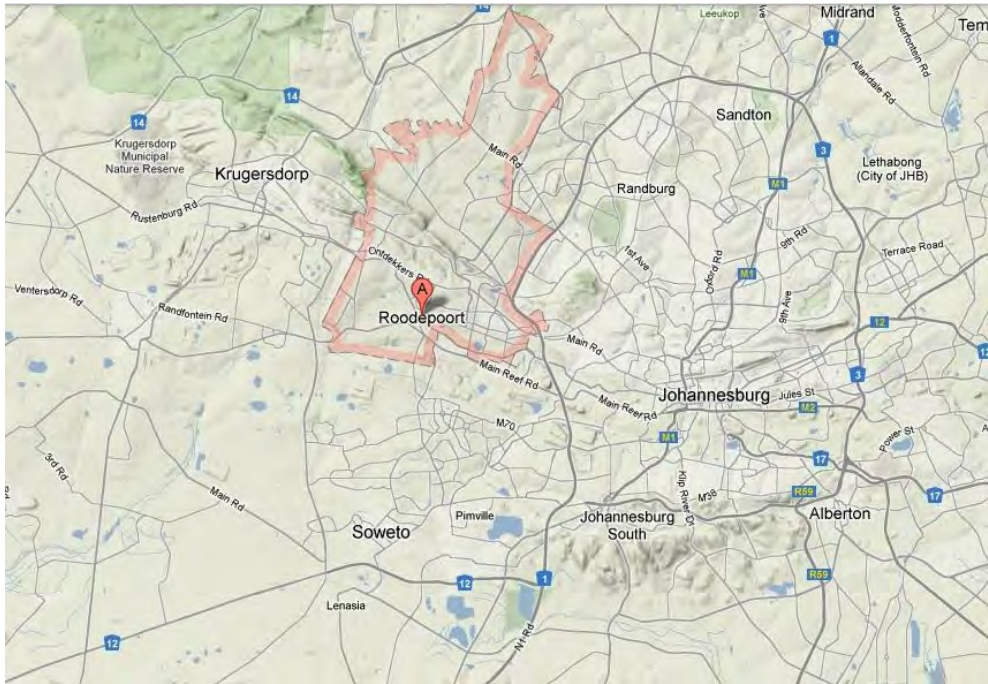


Figure 2: A map of the Roodepoort area showing the relief of the Witwatersrand. The corridor of developments that form the basis of this study are to the north of these ridges. The Roodepoort suburbs of Florida and Florida View are situated on the edges of these ridges or just south of them. Dobsonville and Soweto are behind them. Over the last ten years tens of thousands of young people have moved over the Witwatersrand into the Wilgeheuwel townhouses.

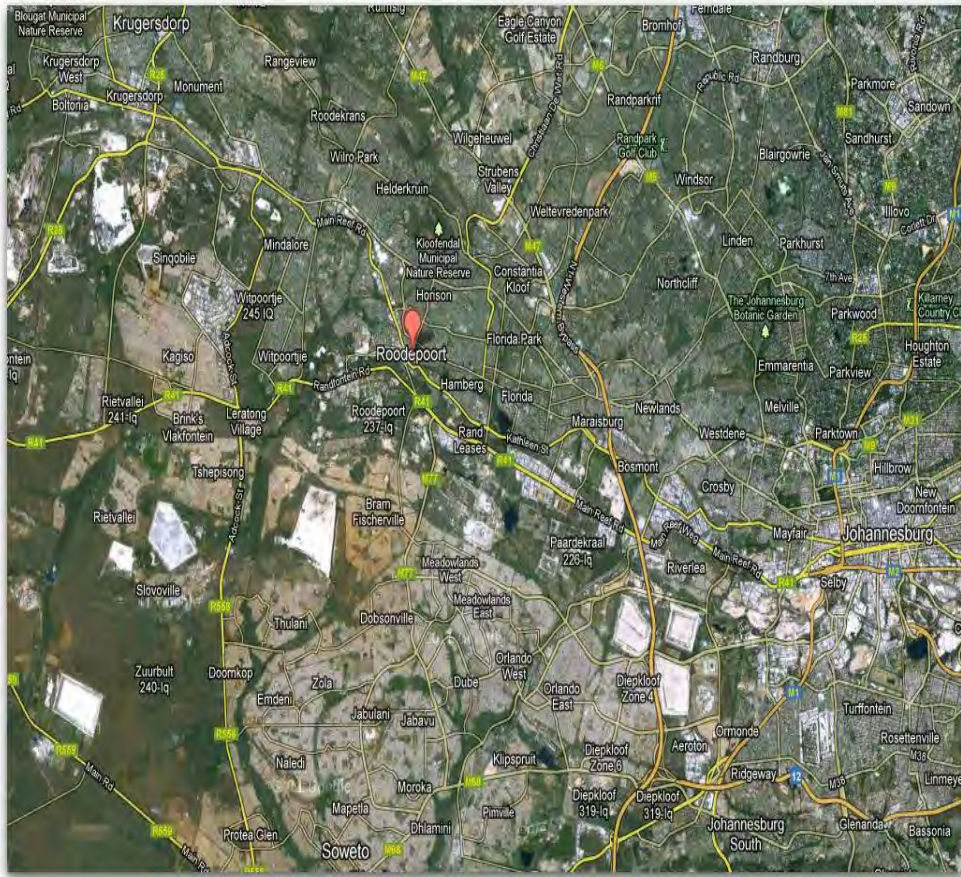


Figure 3: This satellite image from Google shows Roodepoort relative to Johannesburg, Soweto and Krugersdorp. The image is a recent one showing the area as a dense wedge of (green) settlements. Any time prior to 2003 the image would have been different.

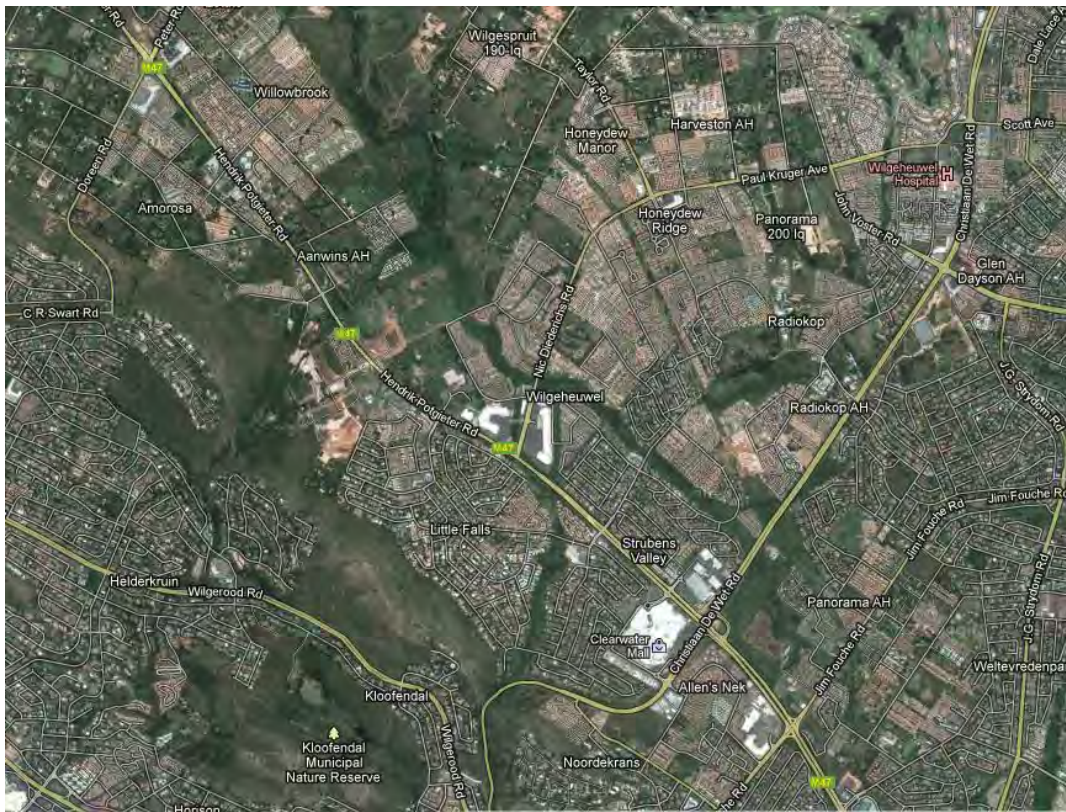


Figure 4: In the centre of this image one can see the intersection between Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard and Nic Diederichs Avenue. The Lifestyles Crossing Shopping centre is a white horseshoe shape to the North West of Nic Diederichs. Opposite it is the Retail Crossing centre. Milkyway appears as a block of settlements north of the Lifestyles Crossing centre to the West of Nic Diederichs. There is a wetlands running north through Milkyway that shows up as a green strip. Adjacent to Milkyway is the Little Falls nursery, a remnant of its former peri-urban character. Nearby is what used to be a picnic area for families wanting an excursion into the countryside.

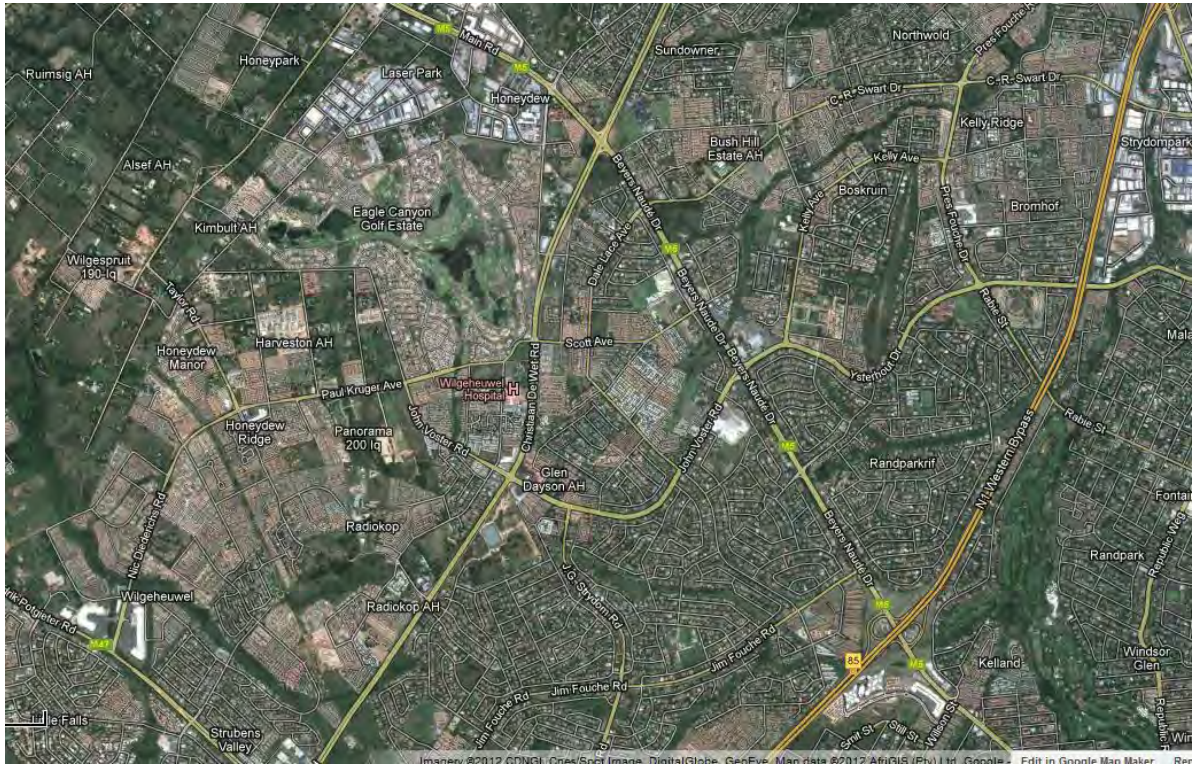


Figure 5: An image from Google Maps showing the wedge of development between Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard (in yellow in the extreme South of the image) and Beyers Naude Avenue (the yellow line stretching across the image from the south west to the north east). In the extreme East and North East of the image (in green) one can still see some of the remaining small holdings and agricultural holdings. Christiaan de Wet road (running north-south across the photo) forms the boundary with older suburbs, including Levitt-like settlements from the 1980's (Glen Dayson, for example).

2. Roodepoort City

Roodepoort forms the Western edge of the Witwatersrand, a distinctive east-west series of hills and linear ridges with shallow valleys and rolling country to the north. My father, Clive Chipkin, notes that the names of Boer farms, often mispronounced by English-speakers, provided a vivid sense of *locale*, many with watercourse or river eye suffixes: *spruit*, *fontein*; some with *koppie*, *kloof* or *krans* to designate high ground. *Roodepoort*: the gap or portal through the red rock face.

The Main Reef Series, the main line of sedimentary gold is south of the ridges, nicely parallel in an easterly direction. Here gold mines and compounds with their industrial and labour adjuncts were linked historically by the Main Reef Road – the major communication route for gold production and the creator of urban nodes east and west of Johannesburg.

It was the suburb of Parktown, however, that gave Johannesburg proper three dimensionality – an elevated focal point that stretched the city northwards, off its thin, elongated route. Clive Chipkin notes “Parktown establishes the role of the northern suburbs, the zone of lower middle class suburbs below the ridge with the rich leapfrogging northwards (Parktown/Houghton/Dunkeld/Bryanston/Sandhurst)” (CM Chipkin, 2011, casual notes).

Thompson describes the importance that hills or high ground play in the urban social morphology of cities. There are numerous examples including Hampstead in London, with its elite postal district NW3 (Thompson, 1977,p.86). Franz Fanon too discusses the symbolism of *Didier*, a suburb of the European rich on high ground dominating *Fort-de-France*, Martinique, an elevated platform permitting the colonial gaze (Fanon,1967, p.32).

The move from the mining camp to the Parktown Ridge from 1894 is a dramatic example of the role of high ground. Parktown faces northwards with vast panoramic views to the Magaliesburg and beyond, turning its back on the whole structure of the mining industry to the south of the ridge (CM Chipkin, 2008, p.232). It is not difficult to imagine late Victorian conversations on the verandah speculating the reach of Empire all the way to Cairo.

Up to the 1990s the views to the north and the west looked down on the lower road to Krugersdorp and a vast rural landscape with picnic spots at the *Little Falls* and the waterfalls at *Witpoortjie*. There is something of this view today driving down Paardekraal Boulevard over the Witwatersrand from Krugersdorp. From Main Reef Road, with the township of Kagiso behind, one passes through Krugersdorp until the road begins a steep, curving descent into Roodepoort. There is a wide panoramic view. To the right is a landscape of little roofs. To the left, small farms and agricultural estates.

Impoverished rural farmers poured into these areas from the 1880s and especially after the Boer War, hence the Afrikaans language presence on the western periphery of Johannesburg and beyond into the West Rand. Afrikaans-speakers created small Dutch Reformed Church *gemeente* and wards. In Isobel Hofmeyr's words, the Afrikaner migration "congregated in a reasonably defined community that filled the Western suburbs" (Hofmeyr, 1987, p.101).

In the 1930s and 1940s there was a noticeable political shift in the Reef gold-mining towns with the arrival of Afrikaans language miners, forming growing constituencies for the Nationalist Party (NP) and readerships for *Die Transvaler* newspaper (under the editorship of Verwoerd, himself living below Parktown Ridge in Parkview) as well as magazines like *Die Brandwag*. The English equivalence was *The Outspan*. These journals were well below the dignity of upper-class English speakers inclined towards the Smuts' brand of 'South Africanism'.

The West Rand benefited significantly from the great apartheid boom of the 1960s (post-Sharpeville). As the children of impoverished farmers and mineworkers slowly eased out of poverty they created the blue collar suburbs along *Ontdekkersweg*, Florida, Florida View and further West.

Today there are several approaches to Roodepoort from Johannesburg. Driving from the city centre the quickest route is to follow Main Road heading west. One passes the former coloured township of Westbury, travels between Brixton and Newlands, two former white working class suburbs and past Sophiatown, formerly Triomf, formerly Sophiatown – a suburb whose name once celebrated the destruction of a vital area of Black Consciousness. Near where Main Road becomes Ontdekkers Road, one crosses what used to be the municipal limit of Johannesburg and enters the former City of Roodepoort. There is a still a large road sign wishing you in

both English and Afrikaans ‘Welkom in Roodepoort/Welcome to Roodepoort. Today the green of the sign is faded almost to white. The difference in municipal infrastructure between Johannesburg and Roodepoort is noticeable. As one enters the suburbs of Roodepoort, Florida View, Florida North, Florida Hills, Floracliffe, *Ontdekkersweg* widens into a boulevard. Traffic lanes are separated by a central island, sometimes lined with traffic lights whose tall masts resemble a colonnade, sometimes decorated with flower beds. They are roads to receive Very Important People. The quality of the urban infrastructure in Roodepoort is impressive. It is testament to the quality of the original investments in the 1970s and 1980s. It is testament too to the municipality’s positioning as one of South Africa’s major cities, after Johannesburg, Pretoria and Germiston, the fourth largest in the then Transvaal.

Roodepoort was first established as a municipal district in 1903. In 1954 it celebrated its Jubilee anniversary with a brochure depicting the town’s transformation from four small villages into what the then Mayor described as a “virile urban community” (Roodepoort, 1954, p.15). The publication contains “statistics of progress”, showing the growth of population, revenue, the value of assets and electricity and water consumption. The total population doubles in the period concerned, from just over 32 000 people in 1910/11 to slightly less than 80 000 people in 1952/53. City officials must have been proud of these numbers. There was a fivefold increase in the white population, while during this period the black population less than doubled. Pride of place, however, goes to the infrastructural statistics: electricity consumption went from zero in 1910/11 and a paltry 27 297 Kwh in 1916/17 to nearly 4 million Kwh at the time of the Jubilee. Water consumption too rises dramatically from little more than 35 thousand gallons consumed in 1924/26 to nearly five hundred million gallons consumed in 1952/53.

The Jubilee publication is written in English and in German. This is doubly surprising. The majority of Roodepoort citizens were Afrikaans-speaking and German was neither an official language nor a significant local vernacular. Dutch or Portuguese were far more common. The choice of languages testified to the town’s international ambitions and local identity. Council officials were trying to attract German investment in industry by presenting Roodepoort’s developed services and infrastructure: modern hospitals, crèches and nursery schools, a mix of government and private

schools, no less than 16 parks and an 'extraordinary well-balanced' mix of industry and residential housing.

"A short motor trip round the municipality," the brochure boasts, "will show budding suburbs of charming, *modest homes* for middle and upper *artisan classes* set in attractive avenues with young trees lining the roadway" (my emphasis) (Ibid, p. 62). The brochure also boasts of a vibrant church life, with a particular character. "[The] predominance of Afrikaans people has of course, given a majority to the two Dutch Reformed Churches, the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk and the Nederduits Hervormde of Gereformede Kerk" (Ibid, p. 68). These descriptions speak volumes to the emerging Roodepoort identity. By the 1950s it positions itself as a modern industrial and mining town, with a majority Afrikaans population, which is hard-working, modest and pious.

We have to wonder if there are more than economic reasons for targeting prospective German (and Dutch) immigrants in the jubilee brochure. The description of schools in Roodepoort reminds the reader that the Transvaal is a bilingual country "with the Afrikaans people considerably outnumbering the English speaking peoples particularly in the smaller towns". "English speaking children," it adds, "will go to English medium schools and Afrikaans children to the Afrikaans medium: the two races are not mixed (or rarely mixed)". "Where children come from abroad," it continues, "it is obvious that English speaking children go to English speaking schools and German or Dutch children to the Afrikaans schools" (Ibid, p.64). From the perspective of demographics, Roodepoort's growth was a mixed blessing. It brought the prospect of English-speaking immigration and with it the decline of Roodepoort's particular 'racial' identity as a majority Afrikaans town. Is it too much to hear in these sentences an echo of the politics of the late Kruger Republic; demands for citizenship from 'uitlanders' [foreigners] carrying the risk of diluting its Boer character? Attracting German immigrants whose children would become Afrikaans speaking was surely a way of maintaining its 'racial' integrity.

In 1977 Roodepoort applied to have its municipal status upgraded from town to city. The submission is an impressive documentation of the town's infrastructure. "The municipality," it argues, "is now definitely developing metropolitan characteristics, especially in the many services it can now offer

to people in certain shopping centres and in the traffic pattern which is slowly emerging” (de Ridder: 1977, p. 10).

The becoming of Roodepoort City is not simply a development in municipal history. It is read in teleological terms as the culmination of an Afrikaner *volksgeskiedenis* (people’s history). The transition from village to town to city seems to parallel the experience of Afrikaners on the Rand, from impoverished *bywoners* to modern urban citizens. One of the first acts of the new City Council is to upgrade the Roodepoort museum and to move it to bigger premises. Cities, not towns, are repositories of culture.

‘n Dorp kan nie bloot op getalle as ‘n stad getipeer word nie. Sondanige terminologiese ineksaktheid dui of ‘n gebrekkige begripsvermoë sover dit die unieke funksie van die stad as draer en bewaarplek van kultuur betref. (Ibid, p. 14).

The Roodepoort museum hosts an intriguing collection of exhibits showcasing the interiors of local homes from the 1890s to the 1940s. It tells a story of modernisation, but also of worldliness. We see elementary houses with their dry-mud walling and thatched roofs from the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1930s Roodepoort families are living in electrified homes with art deco finishes. Amongst the decorative pieces in the mock-up lounge is a porcelain camel and other Egyptica – selections from the Royal Dalton collection to commemorate the discovery of the sarcophagus of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen.

In line with its upgrade from small-town gallery to large-city museum with international pretensions, the museum’s collection is expanded and diversified. It has a major collection of Royal Dalton porcelain, Bauhaus Silverware, Art Nouveau prints and even William Morris furniture. Similar things are happening in the theatre. The city establishes its own orchestra and opera company. It also hosts the biennial International Eisteddfod, a music festival catering for classical musicians and dancers from all over the world. That Roodepoort was a regular attraction for ‘high-art’ was certainly a surprise for many Johannesburg residents used to thinking of the ‘West Rand’ as a cultural desert. It had now become a venue for major music events under famous conductors.

It is against this backdrop that the significance of 1995 becomes apparent, when Roodepoort is absorbed into the City of Johannesburg, first as an

autonomous council and then simply as an administrative area (Region C). The memory of Roodepoort's stature is evident today in the testimonies of many white respondents. They have an enduring sense of Roodepoort and the West Rand as a whole as an 'Afrikaans area', or, at least one especially suited for Afrikaners. It is in relation to this history, moreover, that changes in what it means to be an Afrikaner today in Roodepoort are so much more surprising.

For the moment what is important to notice is that the undoing of Roodepoort's status as city is associated with major changes in the way that the area is managed or administered. It is relevant for understanding firstly, why cluster developments developed where they did and secondly, why body corporates emerge as new sites of governance.

3.1. The Apartheid City

In Roodepoort's Jubilee brochure there is a brief mention of the local black population. The relevant paragraph assures the reader that they are happy and, especially healthy. The meaning is clear. Blacks are a resource, like good hospitals and parks, for servicing the white "races" of the municipality. In 1950 they are a footnote. In 1995 the footnote becomes the main story. The integration of Roodepoort into the City of Johannesburg is part of efforts to redress the structure and the legacy of the 'Apartheid City'.

Changes to the municipal regime in Roodepoort and in Johannesburg (and elsewhere in the country) have to be seen in the context of the urban political economy of late apartheid – what was called in the early 1990s the 'Apartheid City'. Somewhat telescoped, the argument went that the peculiar character of urban apartheid was the way that the 'tax-base' was unfairly distributed between municipalities. White municipalities included industrial and commercial zones from which they generated the lion's share of their revenue, as well as the suburbs of relatively wealthy white ratepayers. White local governments were wealthy administrations that provided good municipal infrastructure and a range of municipal service to their citizens, from bus services to libraries. Townships, in contrast, were demarcated specifically to exclude such zones so that from 1983 black local authorities were dependent on service charges from electricity and water from a mostly poor, working-class population. From the beginning they were structurally bankrupt. Almost as soon as they were introduced the cost of services escalated rapidly and the urban infrastructure, already very basic, deteriorated further. This explained the extremely unequal state of the urban

environment in townships and white areas (Chipkin, Swilling, Seekings, Cobbett). Most Soweto roads, for example, were still untarred in 2003.

Changing this situation required re-organising municipal boundaries to unify the tax base. Post-apartheid cities necessarily integrated former townships and white areas in a single municipal entity. This is what happened in Johannesburg and other cities across the country. In Roodepoort this model was complicated by the fact that the townships historically associated with the city, Dobsonville and Kagiso, were relatively small. They were also adjacent to Soweto. From a planning perspective they fitted seamlessly into the greater township. It seemed arbitrary to separate them off in another municipality. Furthermore, the massive capital expenditure that would be required to improve, never mind equalise, the urban infrastructure in Soweto and Johannesburg made Roodepoort's tax-base very welcome to municipal officials in the new Johannesburg Metropolitan Chamber.

Redistribution of the tax-base across historically black and white parts of the city was constrained, furthermore, by the revenue sources available to the city. Johannesburg, typically, derives the lion's share of its income from rates on electricity, water and property. In 2009/2010, they accounted for almost 68% of the city's balance sheet (City of Johannesburg, 2010, p.12). Property rates alone made up nearly 18% of this amount. This is why the Council has proved sensitive to property markets across the city. When the Inner City, for example, went into decline the value of properties in the Central Business District and neighbouring suburbs plummeted. Efforts to support existing landlords and attract new investment into these areas betrayed not so much the 'reactionary' sensibilities of council officials as their interest in protecting the municipal rate base³. After all it is this rates base that financed the tarring of Soweto roads between 2003 and 2005 as well the electrification of those parts of the city until then not linked to the electrical grid.

³ See, for example, 'Court just wants city to care for the poor a bit better' an article in *Business Day* by Kate Tissington and Jackie Dugard. "The city says it doesn't have the money. But it is important to note that the city actively, albeit indirectly, subsidises the eviction of desperately poor people. Many derelict properties in the inner city are bought cheaply at auction by shell companies backed by lone speculators. They know full well that there are people living in the buildings they buy, but are not interested. They simply want to refurbish the buildings for middle-class or corporate tenants — and make a quick buck" (*Business Day*, 12/04/2011).

The structure of the municipal rate base incentivises municipalities to promote development. This is what happened in Roodepoort. Leila McKenna, the first head of Planning for Region C (Roodepoort) recalls that the former City of Roodepoort had an entrepreneurial attitude to property development. In their eagerness to attract investment the former City Council reduced the costs of township registration and often waived the bulk infrastructure fees. The new Johannesburg Council allowed these practices to continue until 1997 (Interview with Leila McKenna, 01/12/2010). During this period a group of local property developers, originally estate agents, bought several plots of land alongside Nic Diederichs Boulevard. Sensing that people were moving west and wanting to take advantage of the low costs of township development they built amongst the first cluster development schemes in the area.

3.2. Townhouse Complexes

Following closely the northern edge of the Witwatersrand, the suburbs of Wilgeheuwel and Ruimsig are portions of what was originally the farm Wilgespruit. Until recently they largely consisted of small agricultural estates, nurseries and horticultural plantations.

Over the last decade, especially since 2003, tens of thousands of townhouse units have been built on this land, forming a dense residential wedge between Johannesburg's two main, western axial routes, Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard and Beyers Naude Avenue in the north.

Milky Way was one of the first large-scale townhouse developments in the Roodepoort area. Built and financed by Genesis Projects in 2003, the cluster development consists of 31 complexes comprising 957 units. They average 30 units per complex, ranging between 9 units and 50. The director of Genesis is a young man, Charl Fitzgerald, who was formerly an estate agent operating in the Wilgeheuwel and Honeydew areas. His fortune was made on the basis of an acute insight; that there was a large market of young South Africans with little or no savings yet with formal employment. Moreover, they were seeking to leave the suburbs and townships they were born or grew-up in, in favour of new, more *modern* settlements. Genesis took advantage of the lax conditions of originating a bond in South Africa to offer units at attractive prices and, best of all, with the option of not having to put down a deposit (Interview with Charl Fitzgerald, 17/08/2010).

The aerial photograph below (Figure 6) shows the scale of development in the area between 2000 and 2006. There is a key aspect of these developments: private developers installed much of the urban infrastructure, from roads, to storm water drains and the electrical network. Most of the streets around and between complexes were built and named by the original developer (Genesis Projects) and their current legal status is unclear. They are unmarked and the Johannesburg Road Agency does not service them. If Milky Way becomes a Home Owners Association in terms of the law, then these streets will be designated private thoroughfares.

In the 2006 image below (Figure 7) there are site excavations on either side of Nic Diederichs Avenue, where it meets with Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard. Today there are a number of 'warehouse' shops there, mostly dedicated to home improvements and home decoration: Penny Pinchers, Timber City, Bathroom Bizarre, @Home, the Lighting Warehouse, Mr. Price Home, UFO Furniture. The competition is fierce, yet the market is large. Timber City, a hardware supermarket chain, sells everything from timber roof tresses to small nails. The shop on the corner of Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard and Nic Diederichs Avenue is one of the largest in the country (Interview with Mr Mare, 28/03/2011). It supplements an older Timber City store in Roodepoort. A new Penny Pinchers/Timber City combination store has been built along Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard, a few kilometers from the one near Milky Way.

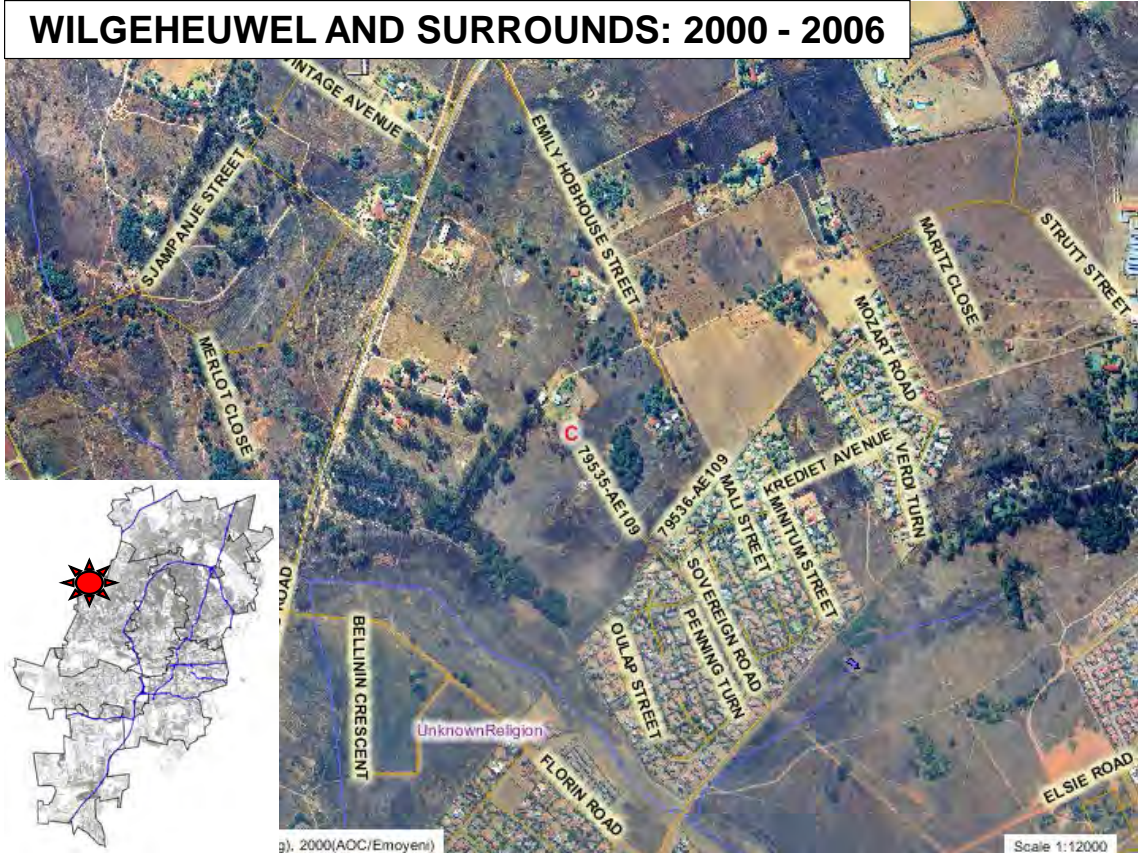


Figure 6: An aerial photo, courtesy of the City of Johannesburg, of the area around the intersection of Hendrik Potgieter Boulevard and Nic Diederichs Avenue in 2000. What will become Milky Way is marked as Merlot Close and is a picturesque field with a stream running through it.

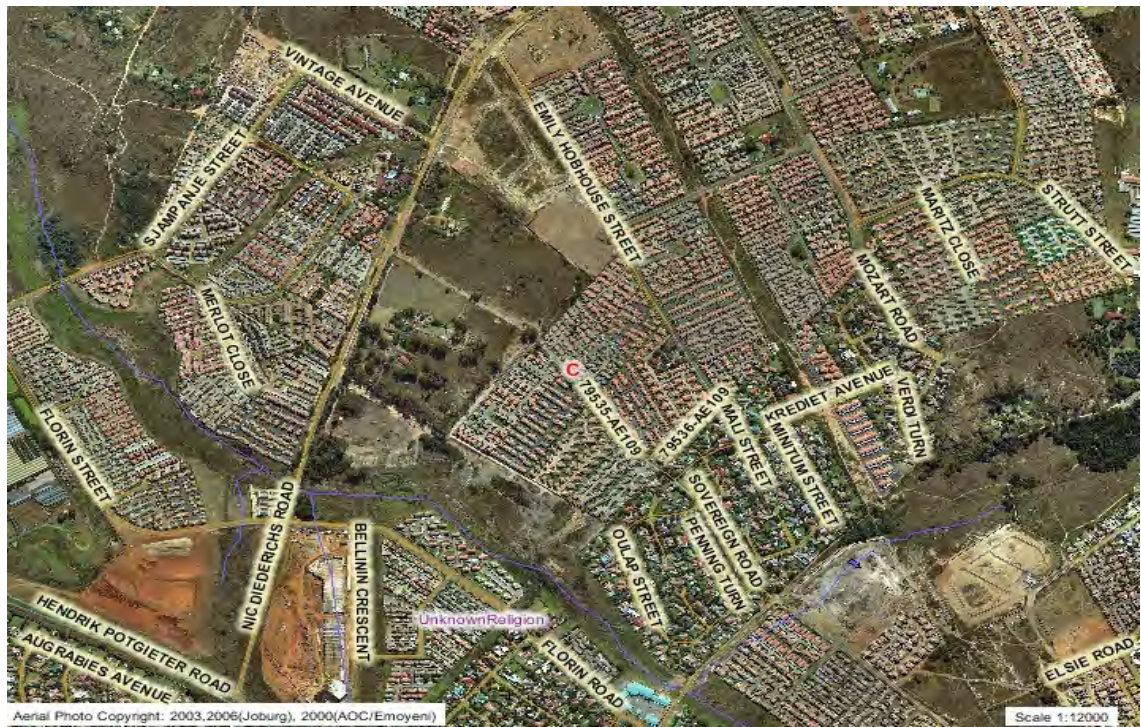


Figure 7: An image of the same area in 2006. Notice the excavations for what will become the Life Style Crossing Centre and the Retail Crossing Centre at the bottom of the image. Most of the Milky Way complexes have been built.

There is a large Fournos Bakery restaurant in the 'Lifestyles' Shopping Centre. It is a concession to a big city coffee culture. It is a mark too of changing social *mores*. The first cafes in Johannesburg emerged in the 1970s in Hillbrow – Café Vienne, Café de Paris, Café Kranzler – as cosmopolitan *lieux* with 'European' émigré manners: German immigrants and Greeks from Cyprus (a former British colony) and Portugal's African colonies escaping a crumbling empire; joined by young, upwardly mobile South Africans looking for a more libertine lifestyle (CM Chipkin, pp. 401-402). For apartheid's old-fashioned Calvinist authorities, café culture, like drinking red wine, were concessions too far to Continental habits. Without reading too much into the presence of an isolated café-bakery, its continental habits mark a changing terrain of cultural reference-points.

In a nearby home decoration store, lounge and bedroom installations are arranged against a decorative panorama of the Cape Town Central Business District. This is surprising for several reasons. It suggests a profoundly urban measure of taste and sophistication; and a change of direction for Afrikaans-speaking households for whom the reference was historically the farm. In Florida there are still houses separated from the street by ox-wagon themed walling. That the inner city in question is that of Cape Town and not, say, Johannesburg – surely the most urban of South Africa's cities – is, perhaps, a way of taming the view. We can imagine the sea or Table Mountain nearby, rather than Hillbrow or Ponte City. The Cape Town reference is evidence too of an ambivalent relation to Johannesburg, Gauteng. It represents a flight to elsewhere, though not necessarily out of the country.

Restaurants, bars and cafes are few and far between, however. Compared to the East Rand, one respondent remarked, "it's a bit like a retirement village" (Interview with Brendan, 3/04/2011). The description is awkward given the age profile and family circumstances of most residents, yet the general meaning is clear enough. The scarcity of restaurants and bars, on the one hand, and the abundance of 'do-it-yourself' stores, on the other, is testament to what residents are doing when they are not at work. They are at home, alone, with their partners and/or with their young children, watching TV and frequently renovating their units. It is this sense of family-living that comes up often in discussions.

Brendan was born and grew-up on the East Rand and moved to Roodepoort in 2009. Reflecting on the difference between the two regions he says with

some envy: “I’m looking at the 28 year-olds that grew up here. I think their parents were probably better off than our side of the world and so they had more quality family activities. You know, the kids learnt to go riding; they had a healthy family style. Whereas [on the East Rand] I think our parents work[ed] longer hours” (Interview with Brendan, 03/04/2011)

What Brendan has not stated is that the other 28 year-olds he is referring to almost certainly did not grow up in the area. He is reading the “healthy family style” of the clusters anachronistically. He also reads healthy family together with healthy lifestyle. Many of the respondents discussed the natural environment, its scenic beauty and the opportunities for mountain biking and mountain climbing.

After dark, this sunny image changes. There is a strong juxtaposition in the interviews between the clusters and ‘public spaces’. The interior of units are private spaces. The area in the townhouse complex is a private-public area. Then there are the spaces of the shop, of the restaurant, of the gym, of the bar. These are public zones. Bars and clubs have a specific racial and gender profile at night.

If the private-public space of the cluster is family-oriented and racially diverse, the public domain at night is frequently described as white, male and threatening. Alfred described never going to bars or restaurants in the area because as a black man he feels uncomfortable (Interview with Alfred, 17/08/2010). “If you go out,” Roche, a white male respondent, explained, “there is always trouble. There is always a fight here in this area. [...] That is the reason we do not go out anymore because it usually turns ugly with some of the people breaking bottles and then trying to stab you with the broken bottle. We would rather sit at home and have a braai” (Interview with Roche, 7/10/2010).

3. Middle Class Settlements

Do developments in Roodepoort confirm that the historic patterns of race and class in South Africa are changing, that a racially mixed middle class is emerging?

In *Class, Race and Inequality in South Africa*, Jeremy Seekings and Nicoli Nattrass argue, for example, that inequality in South Africa is widening, but in a way that reflects changes to class structure of South Africa. Compared to the 1970s, where patterns of wealth and poverty broadly coincided with patterns of race (Seekings and Nattrass, 2006, p.121), shifts in the apartheid “distributional regime” meant that by the late 1980s this was no longer the case. In particular, some white households were getting poorer, while some African households were getting wealthier (Ibid. p.122). By the end of the apartheid period, the white population’s share of total income had declined from about 71% in 1970 to 52% in 1996. It declined further between 1995 and 2000, from 49% to 40%. What this reflected, Seekings and Nattrass suggest, was the “marked increase in the income share of the black elite” (Ibid. p.304). In effect the deracialisation of the labour market from the end of the apartheid period saw the emergence of a racially mixed middle class (Ibid. p.46).

Seekings and Nattrass are working from a definition of class that organises people according to whether they own and/or control capital. On these terms, the ‘middle class’ constitutes a category of people that does not own capital but that exercises varying degrees of control over it – corresponding to their description as lower middle class or upper middle class. The middle class thus refers to people in various positions of management or senior supervision. Are residents in Roodepoort townhouses middle class?

It is difficult to define their ‘class location’ reliably. As we have already mentioned, most developments have happened since the last census in 2001. As a result, there is no accurate information on household composition in terms of occupation, income and/or property. Moreover, subsequent extrapolations from the 2001 census are unhelpful for the area concerned. The current population is too unlike the one that was there in 1996 and 2001 to make the exercise meaningful.

Assuming, however, that the interviews conducted in Milky Way over the last three years are representative of Milky Way as a whole and even of the area more broadly, it is possible to make some gestural comments about the class profile of the area. Residents fall into several broad categories of employment. Many are salespersons, including medical representatives; others work in the retail sector in junior managerial roles or as shop assistants (supermarket branch managers, for example or knowledgeable floor attendants in large hardware stores). There are low-level professionals like technical designers or draughtsmen in the construction industry. Others occupy supervisory positions in the industrial sector (Quality-Control Managers, for example). Some are managers in the service industry. Increasingly, there are people in the entertainment and sports industry living in the area, disc jockeys, soccer players. If what singles out 'middle class' roles and functions (according to stratification theory) is their exercise of varying degrees of control over how labour is employed and how capital is disposed, then residents of Roodepoort are 'middle class'.

Does this designation help us understand their 'lived experience'? "The central point of trying to assign a class location," Erik Olin Wright suggests, "is to clarify the nature of the lived experiences and material interests the individual is likely to have. Being 'in' a class location means that you do certain things and certain things happen to you (lived experience) and you face certain strategic alternatives for pursuing your material well-being (class interests)" (Wright cited in Seekings and Natrass, 2006, p. 245).

What middle classes 'do' or what 'happens to them' depends on the cultural and economic capital that they possess. A view that focuses on how assets are actively reproduced is especially useful in understanding middle class formation," write Amy Kracker Selzer and Patrick Heller. "The status or material well-being of the middle class is not derived primarily from property (the bourgeoisie) but rather from other power-conferring resources such as organizational authority or possession of valued skills that are either embodied (cultural capital) or institutionalized (educational capital in the form of credentials). But if property is an asset that is by definition readily stored and transmitted, organizational assets and cultural/educational capital have to be converted into wealth. Middle class practices are thus centrally about securing returns to organizational assets and educational capital" (Selzer and Heller, 2010, p.150). The novelty of their argument lies in the suggestion that *residential location* constitutes a further asset in middle class strategies (Selzer and Heller, 2010, 150-151).

What constitutes a return on educational or locational capital, Bourdieu discussed in terms of lifestyle. As we saw earlier, lifestyles are not spontaneous effects of one's class location. They are the effects of *habitus*; the translation of class location into an aesthetic sensibility by the school system. I will say more about this later. For the moment let us simply acknowledge that if the school is unable to play this role, then there will be no necessary relationship between class location and lifestyle. That is, being 'middle class' tells us little about what residents' consume, or what activities they enjoy (what they read, what they eat, what sports they play) and how they identify politically or socially. Rather, there are multiple 'middle classes', potentially a 'black' and a 'white' middle class, an 'Afrikaner' middle class, including regional and local middle classes, clustered according to the extra-class factors that influence taste.

Insisting on the qualification above we can nonetheless say that residents of the Roodepoort clusters are middle class in that they deploy a variety of strategies and tactics to leverage their educational assets to attain economic and cultural capital. Some residents are more successful than others. Hence, the lived experience of *class* in the townhouses is multiple; of 'being in', but also of 'falling out' and 'rising into'.

Many white residents are the children of working class parents (in the classical sense). Even though on a statistical basis they might qualify as 'middle class' (that is, they have 'middling' levels of cultural capital) their 'middle class' assets are poor. In some cases, especially amongst white, Afrikaans women, those educational assets are very meagre indeed. From the most recent census we have educational data for some of the 'white' suburbs where many of our Roodepoort respondents grew up. Consider, for example, Ward 14 Mogale City (former Krugerdorp). The maximum qualification for more than 70% of residents was matric and less. Only 20% had some form of tertiary education. Only 10% of households in this suburb were recorded as professional by the 1996 census. In neighbouring Ward 13 this figure dropped to a mere 8% of households (Statistics for Mogale City Local Municipality – Ward 13/14, Census 1996).

To the extent that there is social mobility between the current white residents of the Roodepoort complexes and their parents, it consists of fluctuations within the working class (between intermediate levels and the core working class). Furthermore, this movement is not always upwards. In Castra alone, we found several households that were managing

unemployment amongst the adult bread-winners. In some cases, they abandoned their homes in the middle of the night without paying the rent. Stacey, for example, remembers what she calls an 'average' upbringing (Interview Stacey Geldenhuys, 6/7/2009). Her father was a fitter. The family moved from Durban when she was little and she attended primary school in Krugersdorp. She matriculated from a high school in Boksburg. The family managed to go away every year on holiday. Often they went to Durban and/or to the Free State. She recalls a trip once to Cape Town and even to Zimbabwe.

After school she went straight into the job market without first acquiring a tertiary qualification. She has worked as a trainer with a Stock Market College, as a receptionist and as a personal assistant. She left all these positions because they lacked opportunities for advancement. Today she works as a bookkeeper in Illovo.

Stacey has a realistic sense of her social position. When prompted she says "I'll probably say middle class or a little bit lower" (Ibid, 6/7/2009). She jokes that she does not know what the rules of middle class belonging are but offers the following measure: "I suppose because I've got a medical aid and I've got my own car and I've got my own place to stay in" (Ibid, 6/7/2009).

"You mentioned when we started," reminds the interviewer, "that your parents or your family used to travel a lot, going to places like Durban [...]. Do you still do that?" "No, I haven't done that since my father passed away. [...] We just can't afford it. Our father used to do that. [...] Whereas now days it's more important to fix your car and things like that" (Ibid, 6/7/2009). Stacey lives modestly. She shops at discount or factory stores. She only goes out to movies once or twice a month. She concludes the interview: "In this day and age prices and everything go up and your salary doesn't get increased by the same sort of percentage. But everything else goes up. So everyday it's a little harder [...]" (Ibid, 6/7/2009). Stacey is not alone in feeling under pressure to maintain her lifestyle at current levels.

Carol comes from a family of six from Johannesburg. She left home when she was fifteen to work at Pick 'n Pay, "behind the toilet", as she puts it, and then in a bottle store. Her story frequently rings as untrue. According to her, she progressed to receptionist and then somehow entered the field of telecommunications, training in computers and ultimately working for the

Edcon group, a national, retail store. She claims she was head of the group's national telecommunications operations.

She raised eight children, four of her own and three of her husband's (whose ex-wife never recovered from a car accident) as well as another boy. For a long while she was able to sustain this very large family by working at Siemens. "I worked seven days per week and I worked in and out of the country, so a lot of my [domestic] responsibilities fell on my husband's shoulders. He basically got them to school," she admits (Interview with Carol, 27/7/2009). Even if the toll on her family was high, it allowed them to live in what Carol describes as a large, "beautiful" house in the south of Johannesburg and to travel frequently on holiday, including a trip to Egypt. They left the house because the crime rate was too high, she says. Today, however, she is unemployed.

The interview noticeably changes in tone from this point on. Her husband, Otto, interjects more and more vigorously in the discussion. Together they complain about the decline in the conditions of their lives. Carol misses the time when she could leave milk coupons out for the milkman, trusting that in the morning fresh milk would be there waiting. "I want to take my grandchildren for a walk," Carol says. "I want them to ride their bicycles in the street like we did, to have the freedom that we had, and not to have panic attacks because they are scared of the house being broken into" (Ibid, 27/7/2009).

Here the discussion of crime is more than a lament about insecurity and danger. It expresses their general sense of vulnerability in South Africa. Carol ends the interview by reflecting on her children. "They are Afrikaans South Africans and they want to feel comfortable. They choose to speak Afrikaans as their language of choice. [...] My son has gone to America to play rugby. They have to go" (Ibid, 27/7/2009). Here economic uncertainty, social and political anxieties and worries about the future of the Afrikaans language and culture are all rolled into one. As it turns out Carol and her family stopped paying their rent. They fled the complex where they lived in the middle of the night, leaving their unit in a state of squalor. The head of the Body Corporate reported that police later came looking for Otto, allegedly for bank fraud.

3.1. A Black Middle Class

Identifying the class location of residents as middle class is associated with a further methodological danger – the assumption that residents, especially black residents, are *new* entrants to the middle class. This, moreover, is the theme of much advertising puffery as well as some social science (Unilever Institute for Strategic Marketing, 2008; Burger 2010; Nieftagodien: 2005, Van der Berg *et al*: 2004). This image needs to be nuanced in several directions.

If the Roodepoort research is suggestive of wider trends, then persons that are regarded as new entrants to the black middle class are frequently the beneficiaries of an *earlier* period of upward class mobility. In this sense, what we are seeing is a process of class *consolidation*, rather than simply of class advance. Consider, for example the story of Thato and/or of Mrs. Radebe.

As a young boy Thato lived in Orlando in Soweto, where the family lived in a garage. “I remember,” he tells the interviewer, “my parents had rented a garage and that was home”. At the time “it seemed normal to me, but as you grow up, you realize we live in a garage, we’re from the garage, like literally where a car is meant to be. [...] My parents were just treating it as a normal house. I never felt that I was missing out on anything” (Interview with Thato, 12/6/2009).

From those modest origins, Thato’s family experienced rapid, upward social mobility. In the early 1980s, when he was ten, his father found a better paying job at Old Mutual, a large insurance company. The family moved into a house in Diepkloof Extension, part of a new residential development on the edge of the historic middle-class suburb. Thato laughs, remembering how it was a “giant leap” for the family. It is in Diepkloof that Thato’s class sensibility sharpens. Compared to Orlando “you could already tell the class difference” (Ibid, 12/6/2009). “There was a term *eneng ba e usa* (they were using) back in the day, [...] once there is a class, people they start to judge you now” (Ibid, 12/6/2009).

His heightened sense of class coincides with his political awakening. He remembers the revolt of the 1980s. “There was this guy Martin. Martin was called *le-comrade* (the comrade), he was in matric [...] He tells me things and gives me their perspective of what [is] really going on.[...] I recall instances where you are sitting in class and next thing *go nka* (you smell)

teargas and like I'm in Sub-A. What's going on? Everybody is running" (Ibid, 12/6/2009).

Thato's parents have different plans for him, than a life as a 'comrade'. They move him to De la Salle College, a private Catholic school in the 'white' suburbs of Johannesburg. In the meantime the family itself leaves Soweto. They first settle in Midrand and then relocate to Randpark Ridge. In Standard Six he enters an exclusive, private boys' school in Randburg, St Stithians College. Many of his friends, however, have transferred to King Edward the VII School in Houghton – a prestigious public school especially highly regarded for its sporting achievements. He persuades his parents to send him there too. After matriculation, Thato registers for Electrical Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand. Yet he reports that his heart was not in the course. It was elsewhere, in radio.

He drops out of university and after "killing time" at home, finds a job in a retail store, Markhams at the Cresta shopping centre. What he really wants to do, however, is work for Yfm as a DJ. Yfm is a radio station that caters especially for the urban, youth market. At the age of 21 he gets a lucky break. The station is having an Outside Broadcast and he manages to get an interview for an internship.

"What can I say," he says laughing, "my life from then... I started becoming my own person" (Ibid, 12/6/2009). I want to discuss further this idea of 'becoming one's own person' later. For the moment, however, let us note the similarities between Thato's story and that of Busisiwe.

We met Busisiwe earlier. She was born in 1982 in Soweto. She is an only child. Her mother died when she was 25. Her parents ran a popular community dry cleaner in the township. "I was schooled with dry cleaner money," she remarks, "our house was extended with that money. [...] The quality of life that I had was because of that dry cleaner" (Interview with Busisiwe, 23/6/2009).

Busisiwe first goes to school at Boleka, a commercial college in Rosebank in Johannesburg and then to Observatory Girls, a school in an area of the same name. She matriculates from Waverley Girls High, a public school in an upmarket white suburb. Like Thato, Busisiwe's parents insist that she get a good education. "It was very difficult when I was in Grade 1, there weren't a lot of black kids in multiracial schools [...] My parents were very

old and they just wanted me to get the best education and they didn't care about friendship stories" (Ibid, 23/6/2009). In a similar fashion, her own son goes to St David's Marist Brothers College in Sandton. This is an exclusive private boys' school situated in one of the most affluent suburbs of Johannesburg. It is nowhere near where they live. Yet it is clear that Sandton and other affluent, northern suburbs are where they aspire to be. "My husband is a very glamorous person," Busisiwe says, "he loves the north, he goes to Melrose, Sandton [...], that's where he hangs out" (Ibid, 23/6/2009).

To the extent that these accounts are indicative of broader trends, they suggest that the 'new' black middle class has developed from an emerging or embryonic middle class from the end of the apartheid period. This resonates with studies of the class structure that indicate black class mobility from the 1980s (Nzimande, Crankshaw, Seekings and Natrass, Southall). It also accords with studies that have found that the principal beneficiaries of Affirmative Action (in the period 1995 to 2006) have been Indian men and white women. In contrast, African men and women have made statistically modest gains in the workplace. The authors of one study remark laconically that "one interpretation of this trend is that affirmative action helped those designated groups who least required it" (Burger and Jafta., 2010, p. 11). The Burger and Jafta study suggests that educational achievement is the key driver of these trends, with white women being the most qualified of those eligible in terms of the equity legislation. Amongst the black population those that are highly qualified are disproportionately those that have benefited from either a private school education or attended well-performing public schools, many of them former model C schools. Taken together, it is reasonable to speculate that the principle black beneficiaries of Affirmative Action have been the children, like Thato and Busisiwe, of parents who experienced an earlier phase of upward class mobility.

3.2. Class, Race, Family

There is another sense in which the term 'middle class' is deemed consequential. It is in relation to racial and/or ethnic identities. That is, race and ethnic sensibilities are thought to decline in favour of class ones. In the South African context we might wonder if this suggests that to the extent that black South Africans enter the middle class, they become less *black* and more *middle class*?

In 'Nation in the Making' the South African Presidency's review of Macro-Social trends, government noted with some pride that between 2000 and 2004 there had been a "rapid rise in the percentage of blacks in the slightly higher echelons of the middle strata (average household income of R4 075 per month and above)" (Presidency, p. 19). Later in the same review, it was noted that in 2000, "44% of South Africans considered their primary form of social identification as racial or nationality/language. By September 2001 this had declined to only 22% (12% racial and 10% nationality) using these categories as groups to which they 'belong first and foremost'" (Ibid, p. 85). Moreover, "in 2000, 14% used class or occupational descriptions for primary self-definition, 37% defined themselves in this way in 2004". In 1994, this figure was only 3%. The Presidency's review stops short of drawing any hard and fast conclusions. It states merely that "there is a suggestion that class identity is rising in prominence" (Ibid, p.85).

Do black and white members of the middle classes share more of a 'lived experience' with each other than they do with their brethren in other classes? Should we expect to find not simply racially mixed middle class communities but racially mixing ones? This is what is implied by one study of middle class young black people in Johannesburg. It claims that they are increasingly preoccupied with "self-stylization" – an attempt to "soften race and class difference by invoking the powerful notion of style" (Nuttall, 2008, p.111): in particular, contemporary advertising, for clothing, for shoes, for beer, for magazines, for radio, especially to the youth market, "activates deep impulses of desire that are commonly shared *beyond* race" (my emphasis) (Ibid, p.113). In this way they aim to "bridge the gap of race" (Ibid, p. 113). What is being suggested is a social space, the Zone in Rosebank, for example, where race sensibilities are weakening (softening) and where youth middle-class South Africans are increasingly meeting, simply, as individuals.

The difficulty of analysing middle-class youth culture from marketing material or from magazines is that we do not know how these messages are received by the people that consume the products advertised. This is why Raymond Williams insisted that cultural studies be a combination of literary study and sociology (Williams, 2005, pp.22–27). The evidence is anecdotal otherwise. On the basis of the research in Roodepoort, however, processes of individualisation and continued assertions of being black are not mutually exclusive. They are happening at different levels, so to speak. Expressions of identity are, to use Nuttall's topographical metaphor, surface expressions,

whereas individualisation is happening in the structure of families. Moreover, deep social changes, like processes of individualisation, are explained and made sense of in terms of an ideology of blackness. I will discuss this more fully later. For the moment let us note, however, that the number of households in South Africa increased by approximately 30% between 1996 and 2001. This far exceeded population growth, which was only 11%. Moreover, the average size of households declined from an average of 4,5 to 3,8 persons per household in the same period (Presidency, p. 71). Nuclear households in South Africa are declining, whereas single-person households and extended family households have both increased.

Changes in Household Type: 1996 - 2001

Type of Household	Urban		Non-Urban		Total	
	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001
Single	18.1	20.1	13.4	15.9	16.2	18.5
Nuclear	49.5	45.1	41.5	34.4	46.3	41.1
Extended	17.9	22.4	25.5	35.8	20.9	27

Source: Nation in the Making, p. 71.

How do we explain this paradox?

Kate Philip's excellent study of inequality and marginalisation in South Africa helps provide half the answer. Philip takes aim at the notion that South Africa is characterised by two economies, the first, modern and formal and the other, informal. In particular, policy interventions that seek to assist poor and unemployed people cross from the one to the other – for example, by promoting local entrepreneurship in basic foodstuffs – fail to appreciate how economic marginalisation is rooted in “structural inequality” (Philip, 2011, p.4). This goes a long way to explain one of the enduring puzzles of the South African political economy. Despite high levels of unemployment, the informal and small enterprise sector is small (relative to comparable economies). Why are there so few entrepreneurs in South Africa, especially when a lot of money has been invested in enterprise

development schemes in rural areas? Philip's answer is that mass produced goods squeeze out small scale produces in poor communities. "These structural constraints on employment creation in marginal contexts," she concludes, "mean poor people in South Africa are unusually dependent on either social grants or wages – directly or through remittances" (*Ibid*, p.20.).

The 'unusual dependence' of the poor and the unemployed on social grants and remittances makes access to resources, no matter how paltry, contingent on claims of kin and fictive kinship (Chipkin and Nqulunga, 2008, p71-74). This is what is driving the growth of the extended family in rural and urban areas. Structural dependence means that the wages of black South Africans function as a *social wage*. They support the wage earner, his or her immediate family and numerous other dependents⁴. For some, physically moving away from the township or relocating to settlements that are more homogenous in class terms –the new developments on the edge of Soweto, for example – is a way of easing this pressure. We will see shortly that for young, aspiring members of the middle class, moving into a townhouse complex allows them to mediate their relationship with their immediate and extended families on terms that are more favorable to them.

⁴As an aside we must note that wage inflation in South Africa is not driven by the behaviour of an economically illiterate labour aristocracy. Working class South Africans are subsidising taxpayers by bearing the costs of mass unemployment. Is it realistic to expect workers to show wage restraint under such conditions? There might, however, be a counter-intuitive solution to South Africa's mediocre growth and high unemployment rates. Shift the burden of unemployment from workers to taxpayers. In other words, the extension of welfare provisions (either in the form of grants but more especially in the form of public works initiatives) would potentially allow wage inflation to drop, thereby generating gains for labour productivity and for economic competitiveness. We might call such a growth path one of liberal-welfarism. It is worthwhile doing the math to see if the increase in the tax burden would off-set the benefits of slower wage inflation.

4. Behind the Walls

4.1. Townhouse and Suburb

Townhouse complexes are not simply ‘security villages’. In Lindsay Bremner’s evocative phrase Johannesburg has become a “city of walls” (Bremner, 2010, p. 203), where the image is at once metaphorical and methodological. In her essays on her Johannesburg the closest we get to these complexes is to the gate. The only residents that we hear of are the security personnel that control access to what is inside. Yet the wall, its electric fences and technologies of surveillance exclude as much as they include. Townhouse complexes, the vast majority of them as we have seen, are also not luxury estates. They must be distinguished by more than wealth or class. Their relationship to the traditional garden suburb is different.

Wealthy estates like Featherbrook or Eagle Canyon or Leopard’s Creak are attempts to recreate an idealised version of South African suburb of the 1960s. They contain large houses on their own stands, not separated by walls or fences. They are places of idealised domesticity where children are free to roam and explore in safety. In Roodepoort, they are also overwhelming ‘white’ spaces. In Featherbrook, for example, less than 10% of families are black. In this sense, luxury townhouse estates are enclosed suburbs. This is what Benjamin Christopher Stroud calls the suburban promise – “that home ownership and living close to the land will make you a better person” (Stroud, 2009, p. 6).

Consider the following discussion with ‘P’. She is a resident of Featherbrook Estate, for a long-time the benchmark of a security-estate. She recalls arriving in Johannesburg from Durban and settling with her husband in Weltevreden Park, an established suburb in the North West of the City.

“We moved to Weltevreden Park [...] and we had a lovely home, with beautiful six foot walls all the way around it. The usual [security features]: sparks on the wall and alarm system and the whole trip. I was in this house with my daughter who was only 3-4 years old at the time and ‘M’ [her husband] travelled. He was away three nights a week. I was a bit of a baby on my own, so I used to lock myself in the bedroom at night with my child, with my daughter and lock the passage doors and switch the alarms on.

Then ‘C’ was born [her second daughter]. I used to have the cam-cords [security cameras] as well in their room”.

‘P’ eventually tells her husband she can no longer live like this. “I am absolutely petrified on my own,” she admits. They eventually buy a house in Featherbrook. Since then, she says, they have “never looked back”. They love Featherbrook estate.

Featherbrook fulfills the suburban promise that Weltevreden Park did not. “I think,” she explains, “that from the point of view of raising children, on an estate you can’t compare it to anything. [W]hen I was growing up we used to walk everywhere. We would, after school if we wanted to go the beach, we went to the beach. Or if you wanted to go to movies, you hopped on a bus and you went into town. Children don’t have that freedom [today].

In Featherbrook, however, children “have a little bit of freedom”. “They can get on the bus to go and visit their friends, or they can go for a ride. My daughter likes to run. She goes for a run every afternoon and I don’t have to panic. I don’t have to worry. It’s been absolutely amazing for us” (Interview with ‘P’, 7/06/2011).

Therein lies the paradox of the estate. Its artificiality – walls and electric fences, surveillance cameras and regular armed patrols – is seen to permit a more natural life, one oriented towards the outdoors and where family relations are unmediated by fear and terror. Featherbrook and estates like it are contemporary versions of the traditional suburb.

Ongoing ethnographic research by Liezmarie Johannes and Federica Duca finds that social life is overwhelmingly organised around a gendered division of labour. Men are fathers and breadwinners. They leave the estates in the morning and return in the evenings. Women are mothers and homemakers. They look after the children. Given that domestic work is mostly handled by a housekeeper, women are free to participate in the wide selection of activities available for them on the estate; ranging from cooking classes, to ‘scrap-booking’ to dancing and yoga (Duca, forthcoming). Federica Duca has found, furthermore, that woman frequently begin meeting from lunchtime and drinking (usually white wine) can continue throughout the afternoon.

When Betty Friedan revitalised American feminism in the 1960s, with the publication of the *Feminine Mystique*, she described women living in post-war suburbs; probably Levittowns. Expecting to find fulfilment as wives and mothers they were inexplicably unhappy, burdened with a ‘problem that had no name’ (Duca, forthcoming). In American fiction of the period after the Second World War, especially from the 1970s, the suburb is frequently portrayed as “perilous”; its families are breaking apart, children die, girls are abducted, the streets are not safe (Stroud, 2009, p. 145). Suburbs are bleak and dangerous, reflecting, Stroud suggests, disillusionment with the suburban promise. Yet it less perilous than it is duplicitous. It promises genuine family but delivers something else⁵.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the counterpoint to the suburb was or used to be the township; at least places where sounds, things and people mixed and intermingled in subversive ways. Descriptions of Sophiatown in the 1950s are exemplary in this regard. It is diverse, from its landscapes (shebeens and slumyards and courtyards), to its cosmopolitan society (workers, rural immigrants, gangsters and liberal whites). It is a place which produces genuine things, from the images of Gerard Sekoto, to marabi music and the tickey-draai, musical genres that were combined to produce the distinctive sound of township jazz (CM Chipkin, 2008, p.204).

This is why it is important to distinguish between the luxury estates and the average townhouse development. The complexes that form the object of this report are frequently lived as *non-suburbs*, as urban spaces that are unlike the suburbs from which many of their residents grew up. We will see too that their appeal also lies in not being anything like the township. This is why it is important to enter the estates to meet who lives in them.

⁵I suspect that this sentiment goes a long way to explaining why the suburb is barely treated in the South African literature. In *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, a collection of essays on the city that was first published as a special edition of the journal *Public Culture*, the topic scores a brief mention in an essay on literatures of the city. In *Blank: Architecture, Apartheid and After*, the book associated with the very successful exhibition on South African architecture, there is no discussion of the suburb as an urban form at all. There is no mention, for example that ‘House Martiensen’, built by the architect for himself in 1942 and one of the first major statements of modern movement architecture in South Africa is situated in Greenside, an area in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Yet surely the relationship of the house to the suburb is one of its key tensions?

4.2. Milky Way

Castra⁶ is one of 31 complexes that make up the Milky Way constellation. It has 29 units that sell for between R550 000 and R650 000. They vary in size, but even the 2 bedroomed units are less than 100m². Roughly half the units are occupied by tenants (15) and the rest by owner-occupiers (14). One of the residents drew up the list below to demonstrate how socially mixed the complex was. It is more than an account. It reflects the chair of the Body Corporate's own sense of the social diversity of the complex.

Unit - Tenant - Indian - English
Unit - Owner - Muslim - English
Unit - Tenant - Coloured/White - Afrikaans
Unit - Tenant - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - White - English
Unit - Tenant - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Tenant - Indian - English
Unit - Owner - Black - English
Unit - Tenant - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - Coloured/White - Afrikaans/English
Unit - Owner - Black - English
Unit - Tenant - White - English/Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Tenant - Portuguese - Broken English
Unit - Owner - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Tenant - Black /Nigerian - English
Unit - Tenant - Empty
Unit - Owner - Black - English
Unit - Tenant - White - Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - White - Trustee - Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - White - English
Unit - Tenant - White - English/Afrikaans
Unit - Owner - Black - Trustee - English
Unit - Tenant - Black - English
Unit - Owner - White - Trustee (Lesbian) - English
Unit - Owner - White - Chairperson - Me - English
Unit - Owner - Black - English
Unit - Tenant - Black /Zimbabwean - English
Unit - Tenant - Black - English

⁶ The name of the complex has been changed to protect the identities of the inhabitants of the complex. Castra, like the complex's real name, refers to a star in the Capricorn constellation.

Residents in Castra have very little contact with each other. When asked by the interviewer if she interacts with her neighbours, Mrs Khumalo first laughs and then replies “no”: “In Castra everybody keeps to themselves [...] There are boundaries you know, it’s their living space, don’t go and intervene [in] people’s places” (Interview with Mrs Khumalo, 23/6/2009).

All respondent made similar observations about the lack of social life in the complexes. Neo, the wife of a well-known DJ commented: “Another thing I’ve noticed is that the more we stay in areas like Castra, the less we socialise. It’s not the same as in Kwa-Thema, where you will know the person staying three streets away from you. It is very different here. You come home and you box yourself in. There is no socialising. Yes, you greet your neighbour every now and then [...] I have been here for two years but I know absolutely nothing about my neighbour or his family” (Interview with Neo, 12/7/2009).

Gavin and Lauren, a Coloured couple from Port Elizabeth also contrasted the deeply convivial world of their childhoods to their current living environment: “We grew up in Port Elizabeth [...] and the culture was so different when we moved to Joburg. I mean we did not have high walls, electric fences and all that. [...] In Port Elizabeth you make friends so easily, even when you meet on the road people are a lot more open. Here, they are aloof, they connect on a superficial level, not on a deeper level they are very distrusting [of] each other” (Interview with Gavin and Lauren, 4/7/2009).

Navarshni, a young Indian woman, represents the extreme of this social isolation. She starts by contrasting Castra to an idyllic elsewhere, this time Durban from where she has moved recently. She speaks without full stops. “It’s very different because I’m from Durban. There you’ll always be meeting people all the time and here the only person that I talk to is my neighbour”. “I live alone, so I’m always scared. I’m paranoid. I check my door and windows ten times before I go to bed. And when I read the paper I freak me out when I hear about the things that happen around here” (Interview with Navarshni, 8/8/2009). The fact that she lives so close to others, however, is no comfort to her.

“There is no sense of being so close to other people that you feel more secure. If you shout out people would not hear. I had an incident a couple of months ago. It was about one o’clock in the morning and my alarm went off. My neighbour wasn’t around that weekend. I refused to get out of my room. I was trembling” (Interview with Vashni, 8/8/2009). Eventually Navarshni called the head of the body corporate, Madame E, who advised her, in turn, to call her armed response company.

If residents of Castra report high levels of anonymity between themselves, they all report regular encounters with the head of the Body Corporate, Madame E.

Madame E constitutes the exclusive point of communal interaction in the estate. The context is frequently disciplinary.

In terms of the Sectional Titles Act, 95 of 1986 one of the key functions of the Body Corporate is to protect the collective rights of the members (owners) of the scheme. In this regard, it sets down certain obligations to individual owners, including that they:

- *use and enjoy the common property in such a manner as not unreasonably to interfere with the use and enjoyment thereof by other owners or other persons lawfully on the premises;*
- *not use his [or her] section or exclusive use area, or permit it to be used, in such a manner or for such purpose as shall cause a nuisance to any occupier of a section (S44 of Act 95 of 1986).*

In order to discharge this function the Body Corporate may devise a set of rules and regulations to govern collective life in the estate. In Castra this task falls principally to Madame E. It is a role she takes very seriously. Residents are fined for making too much noise – the fine is added directly to their levy. They are penalised for not closing the electric gate immediately after entering. They are fined for any infringements of the communal spaces, including for not maintaining their ‘private’ gardens.

Madame E explained: “If somebody complains about your noise level, I will step in. Okay, I will go to you and I will say I had a complaint. Cut down your music, control your guests. Please. I’m not going to come down here again. If I come here again I’m going to switch off your lights, half an hour later, if it’s worse, I just switch your lights off” (Interview with Madame E, 22/7/2009).

Every resident we interviewed had a story about this uncompromising regulatory environment. Gavin and Lauren, for example, remembered being fined R500 for allowing their guests to follow them into the estate without first shutting and then re-opening the gate. “I don’t know how she does it but she finds out”. Lauren continued: “you can’t fix your car in the complex, you can’t make so much noise. Like animals, *ag* it was Chevonne’s rabbit[her daughter’s]. We couldn’t have a rabbit. They don’t allow animals” (Interview with Gavin and Lauren, 4/7/2009).

Navarshni recalls her first day in the estate: “The estate agent gave me a remote control and I came in the complex and the gate wouldn’t open when I had to go out [...] So I parked my car on the side because I didn’t know anything about the rules. I saw this lady and she said ‘what are you doing? If you park your car there you’ll get a R500 fine for this’. I said I want to go out but the remote is not working. [...]

She said I don't know how you are going to get out because residents of Castra know that [...] nobody is allowed to let you out" (Interview with Navarshni, 29/7/2010).

Apart from fining residents for transgressions of the regulations, Madame E also 'names and shames' them in newsletters. Lauren explains: "She would put it in a letter that so and so was fined because of this and this or with the noise or [someone] didn't wait for the people to close the gate [...]" (Gavin and Lauren, 4/7/2009).

DJ T also referred to the "very strict rules". "Look, the lady *waka mo* (on this side), the one that's staying behind us, she's the chairperson, and she is very strict with the rules. She tends to think that she owns the place. [...] I'm sure she is in [her] sixties or late fifties. And we come from a different time you know. And with my background, white people don't make the best impression. So when things start I will always say, hey *wena* (you), *ska bua lenna okare*, you know, 1973 (don't talk to me as if it's 1973) (Interview with DJ T, 12/6/2009).

It is far from obvious, however, that Madame E's enforcement of the regulations is motivated by racism. "Well," says Lauren, "people think somehow she's a racist because of the way she handles things in a situation. [...] She's not racist. I know she treats everybody like that" (Gavin and Lauren, 4/7/2009).

In 2008 a young, Afrikaans-speaking male, at his wits end with the disciplinary regime in Castra, played an April fool's joke on the head of the Body Corporate. At some cost and with much effort, he prepared posters, all in red, which he displayed on the entrance gate to the estate. The first was of a hapless man hanging from the gallows. The second bore an image of a skull and cross bones, with the text 'Warning: Whingers get shot!' underneath. The third poster was a mock official 'Notice'. It read: "Welcome to Castra". In capital letters it continued, "Please Note the Following:"

1. You are entering a CEMETRY, so SHUT THE FUCK UP
2. NO DRIVING ALLOWED IN THE COMPLEX. Upon arrival SWITCH YOUR CAR'S ENGEN (sic) OFF & PUSH YOUR CAR TO ITS CARPORT.
3. We do not take responsibility for YOUR PETS BECOMING someone else's LUNCH.
4. OFFENDERS WILL BE MADE TO HUG THE ELECTRIC FENCE FOR AN HOUR.

It ended: “By order of the trusted”.

The rigid, even oppressive insistence on communal by-laws and regulations, while apparently petty, is informed by a geopolitical sensibility. Madame E frequently refers to the *multinational* character of Castra. Discussing Nigerians, for example, she explained: “The actual thing is that they are a different nation” (Interview with Madame E, 3/9/2009). When asked if there are other ‘nations’ in the estate, she replied: “Uh, there are so many [...] I’ve got Sotho, I’ve got Zulu, I’ve got Muslim, Italians, Portuguese, *er* (pauses) ... staunch Afrikaans, very staunch Afrikaans. Obviously, and then I’ve got no.16 which is actually (she pauses) a Nigerian” (Madame E, 3/9/2009).

In this traditional, taxonomy, each nation evidences fixed ‘national’ traits. Nigerians deal drugs. “When you got a Nigerian living in your complex,” she explains, “you can scare yourself out of your skin because [the] things they get up to is absolutely pathetic. They will actually do drugs right in front of your doorstep”. Madame E’s stereotypes are uncompromising. The tenants in the unit in question said they were from Malawi. Madame E would have none of it, insisting they were Nigerians.

Madame E is also inclined to invoke the term ‘black’ to discuss common ‘black’ behaviours, manifest, irrespective of particular ‘national’ identity. “Actually,” she explained, there was “quite a funny incident. We were doing the garden up at the top there and he [a black man] came in with such speed that I just had time to jump out of the road. [...] Okay he stopped before he could open the door, I opened the door, I grabbed him, I slapped him [...]. It was hilarious, I will tell you something now, ever since that day I could be anywhere in the street, he will greet me, he will respect me because I stood up to him. *That’s where as a white woman, white people you don’t show that you are scared of them, even if you are shaking you don’t.*” (Madame E, 3/9/2009).

She discussed Afrikaans-speaking residents in equally stereotypical fashion. “Listen,” she says to the interviewer, “staunch Afrikaans is Afrikaans okay. Just like a little *boertjie* can be, when I say to you I am Afrikaans I am Afrikaans and I will not speak your language, I will not do anything else” (Madame E, 22/7/2009). I will discuss Madame E’s attitude to white residents more fully below. For the moment it is enough to note that Madame E reserves her most scathing remarks for white residents.

Madame E’s national and racial stereotyping serves other purposes than discrimination or segregation. From her perspective, what makes ‘respectful’ relations possible under conditions of social diversity, is the law; that everyone is subject to the same regime of by-laws and regulations. In this regard, she is uncompromising. This is nothing less than a version of the social contract, not so

much between individuals, as between nations. Castra is a United Nations of residents.

In Castra, however, the social contract is not a mythical, foundational act of political union. It is sustained on an hourly/daily basis through the predictable, even and transparent enforcement of the regulations. In other words, it is possible because the Body Corporate has sovereign power and is prepared to exercise it, either through the law (fines) or through violence (a 'good *klap*'), if need be. Hence, the function of Madame E's racial/national taxonomy is instrumental, rather than political. It helps her devise strategies, as a woman, as a white person, to enforce the common law. There is an acute irony in this. Whiteness is invoked as a strategy to integrate the complex or subject its residents to a common regime of civility.

The strict disciplinary regime and the lack of social interaction might make Castra sound like an unhappy place to live. Yet, interviewees uniformly expressed ambivalence about the Body Corporate. On the one hand it is annoying. On the other, it provides a peaceful and safe living environment. In DJ T's terms it helps people "learn their boundaries".

Even when some respondents compare Castra with their convivial place of origin, the distinction is not between *community* and *alienation* or between *warmth* and *coldness*. The strict, regulatory environment makes the estate a peaceful, quite, relatively safe place to live. What Castra makes possible is privacy. In other words, the comparison is between community and *privacy*.

"I love the rules," Navarshni tells us, "because I like the peace and quiet and the neatness of the place" (Navarshni, 29/7/2009). DJ T said similar things: "One thing I really liked about [Castra] was that you have your own yard that is not that attached to somebody else. In Ferndale we had a guy above us. Eish, this guy was noisy. [...] After experiencing that guy, we appreciate that [Castra] is so peaceful and there is no-one around" (DJ T, 12/6/2009).

Busisiwe has been explaining to the interviewer that she misses Soweto. "Castra is very restricted". "I feel like I need a place where my kids will be able to play and actually enjoy the play and ride their bikes and, you know, feel like they're at home, so now they're restricted, my son just sits and watches TV" (Mrs Khumalo, 23/6/2009). Then she interrupts herself. "I can never go back to Soweto," she says. "It's fine that I have a home day, but I can never go back and live there" (Ibid, 23/6/2009). "I think because I'm getting used to the peace, I'm getting used to the quiet, I'm getting used to the cleanliness, I'm getting used to having my own space and privacy" (Ibid, 23/6/2009).

In Soweto “everybody knows everybody’s business. [When] you buy a new car, everybody knows. It’s like you bought a new car and other kids that you grew [up with] don’t have cars and they’ve got three kids and you only have one kid and because you have a car you think you are educated, you are better than others, and so on and so forth and this one is not talking to you, and this one [...] says this”. “In Soweto when you go to the shop, they know what you going to have tonight, she is buying that and that, that is what they’re having tonight [...] and when you don’t go to the shops, they say you don’t go to the shops because she works in Sandton and this and that [...]”. At least, “here I know, I get home, I get into the house, it’s my own space and safe” (Interview with Mrs Radebe, 23/6/2009).

The search for privacy, here, is not just a personal preference. It is the name of an anthropological development. These testimonies of home as a haven from the world of family and kin are remarkably consistent across all residents of the complexes. They help to situate these respondents in a long, trans-national history of middle-class emergence⁷. The location of the Roodepoort complexes gives to households a buffer from the financial and other claims of extended family, neighbours and community. It allows them to conserve some of their income for savings and for consumption. The townhouse complexes are thus key elements in the process of becoming middle class.

Castra does not simply offer privacy, however. The character of the estate as a highly regulated environment (quiet, neat, safe) conforms to a standard of what some interviewees defined as ‘respectable’. Respectability is a term used to perform two types of differentiation. In the first place it allows young, newly married couples to indicate that they have matured into responsible adulthood. In this sense, living in Castra is a generational term. In the second instance it is a term of that designates class membership: that the respondent has left or is not part of the (noisy, chaotic) working class.

Stacey recalls: You have to sign the rules before you are allowed in here. And on the door they stipulate what you are allowed to do and what you aren’t allowed to do. So it’s basic things like the noise level, your garden. You’re not allowed to put Wendy-houses or anything like that” (Interview with Stacey, 6/7/2009). A Wendy-house is a wooden, pre-fabricated structure that is sometimes attached to the main building, usually as an additional storeroom⁸. They are common in some estates. In

⁷Kocka, Jurgen, ‘The Middle Classes in Europe’ in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol.67 (4), December 1995, p. 787. This makes sense.

⁸ Wendy Houses have their own history, beginning as dolls houses in Edwardian England for aristocratic families. Lutyens created a full, large dolls house for Queen Mary (wife of King George V), complete with furniture in minute detail, all to scale. Even the doors opened and closed. Rich families called in carpenters to build small but habitable miniature houses in their gardens – called Wendy houses after Peter Pan and Wendy. Somewhere in

Castra they are strictly forbidden. “I think that something that worries Madame E about Wendy-houses,” Gavin explains, “is that it will be outside and people will be putting their staff outside” (Gavin, 4/7/2009). He too favours this arrangement. He likes the fact that Castra is respectable (Ibid, 4/7/2009).

That the rules are sometimes onerous should not obscure what they permit. As long as the Body Corporate is sovereign, potential disputes and conflicts between residents are mediated through a legitimate authority via an impersonal set of rules and regulations. Residents are able to negotiate diverse and complex histories of family, of community, of race, of gender in their own space and in an environment that enables them not to have to fall upon each other.

the 1960s, 1970s a local, South African firm started making prefabricated Dolls Houses that became storerooms for garden equipment and overflow goods. These degenerated into pre-made stores. They still retained the name Wendy House, from the ‘age of respectability’.

5. Middle-Classing

We saw above how for some black residents, 'boxing yourself in' is a strategy to manage social and financial claims arising from poor and unemployed kin. Under conditions of growing inequality and structural unemployment, the burdens on economically active family members is often unbearable. Geographical separation becomes a way of negotiating these situations. There is something else to note as well. In the previous chapter Mpho and Busisiwe described a process that structural anthropology calls individualisation. In the anthropological literature, especially the structural anthropology associated with Claude Levi-Strauss, individualisation refers to the break-down of kin-based relationships and their replacement with more voluntary forms of association (Fukuyama, 2011, p. 127). In South Africa today, individualisation and the strengthening of the kinship-based attachments are two sides of the same coin⁹.

Structural individualisation is accompanied frequently by an ideology of *self-realisation*. Let us return to Thato. We saw earlier, in Chapter 3, that he associated moving out of home as a process of "becoming my own person". It is not a casual description, but rather one that helps him make sense of his life as something that is invested with meaning and with progress. Thato relates his life in terms of two motifs, asserting his independence and being true to himself.

After school he registered for electrical engineering at university. He pursued his studies without passion or without interest for two years. His real interest lay elsewhere, in radio. Thato had auditioned earlier at several radio stations but they had "denied him flat". So he went to university. "One day I had a test to write at University and I was in my car listening to the radio. I said *akeilo ngwala* (I'm not going to write)". That night he told his parents that he had dropped out of university. They were shocked. "I said, look, I am not going back to school [university]. I told them I understand the

⁹This alone does not explain the phenomena of new, single person households. Many of these households are composed of young women either alone or with a child. They are asserting their independence, not simply as individuals but as women.

position that I am placing you in, so here is my deal: I drop out of school and you never have to pay for me anymore” (Thato, 12/6/2009).

After taking a job in a retail store “to kill time”, Thato gets his lucky break in radio work. He gets a contract: “I was getting R8 an hour and I said, Jesus, there is still tax. I did not mind because [now] I am doing something that I love doing”.

“I started becoming my own person,” he says with pride. “I moved out of home and rented a townhouse with a friend of mine”. Very soon afterwards he meets the woman that will become his wife. It is difficult not see a symmetry in Thato’s life, between the structural and ideological assertions of individuality. It is both an event in the social structure and an event at the level of identity.

We see a similar movement in the story of Mfundo. Like Thato, Mfundo grows up in Diepkloof in Soweto. In 1985 his parents move him to Marianhill in Pinetown so that his schooling is not disrupted by the growing urban revolt in Soweto. He matriculates and receives a bursary to return to Durban to study at Natal Technikon. “I was there ’94, ’95, ’96, ’97 – more partying than studying”. “We used to party for three days and we never slept”. Until the 15th of December 1998 his life is governed by the pleasure principle: women, drink and parties. The date is precise. On that day something happened that changed his life. “I had an accident that nearly killed me, nearly took my life,” he says. He is taken to the Milpark Hospital where he spends a week in ICU. He is there for almost a month. “It was a turning point in my life,” he explains. “I told myself that I am not going anywhere, I am not going to exit [die]” (he repeats this three times) and “that is when I saw my mental strength”.

“Mental Strength” is akin to Thato’s notion of “becoming himself”. It designates a process of self-reliance. He stops “partying” and hanging-out with party people to focus on “where you are going and what your responsibilities are”. “I told myself,” he explains, “that I have a kid, there are nappies, there is milk, there is food and there is a woman”. In 2002 he takes a job at MTN. The company has a share scheme for black staff that can be cashed-in only after 6 years. “For six years I was sitting there, waiting for this thing to come through”. Eventually he can realise the value of his shares. “I bought a brand new car, a Golf Vtec”. He pays off the

house and then takes R100 000 from his bond. “I go back to the shops, Bakos [Bakos Brothers a furniture store] and I buy and I buy”.

What is the mental strength that Mfundo refers to? “Patience, that is the thing,” he explains. “I think in most of the things I have been very patient”. At the time of the interview in 2009, Mfundo had just bought a BMW; he had just recently got married and was planning to move into a house in Ruimesig [a luxury golf-estate nearby].

“This house in Ruimsig has got one double garage. I love that, it has got three bedrooms, two bathrooms. I want to put in a pool, a sun bed, trampoline for the kids. But this is not where I want to be. I want four garages in a house, I want a huge yard. There is a guy called Steffano Antonio, a designer. If my house can be designed by Steffano Antonio then I would say that God has blessed me” (Interview with Mfundo, 13 June 2009)¹⁰.

There is an interesting ambiguity in Mfunda’s account of “mental strength”. If in the case of Thato becoming his own person was linked to fulfilling his dream (as a radio DJ), in the case of Mfunda the object of his desire is less straightforward.

What should we make of the following admission?

“So for a person out there, they think that I am making money. But I am playing around with the numbers to give myself the quality of life and good things that I want in life”. When Mfundo refers to “quality of life” we must be careful not to assume that he means what ‘P’ does – we met her earlier – *viz.* a more natural way of living as a family. Elsewhere in the interview he makes the following claims. “Unfortunately the eye is a powerful tool, it is a powerful thing to a black man. What he sees, it formulates perceptions and his confidence is determined by [he pauses] ...are you in my league? We would normally joke around and would say [he pauses] ... that is top drawer, middle draw. It is how, from the ghetto, we are. It is [the] perception that is more important than the content to a black man”.

Mfundo is suggesting that being middle class is declaration of status, like being “top drawer”. More importantly, living in an estate or driving a certain

¹⁰Steffano Antonio is a Cape Town based architect known for designing modernist homes for the super-rich.

car is not associated with a determinate lifestyle, a determinate way of living as a family or as a neighbourhood or as a community. It is a declaration of individual status. Mfundo uses the term more as a verb than as a noun. He acquires things and consumes products in order *to middle class*, that is, to create the perception that he is “top drawer”.

The notion of a middle class lifestyle without determinate content is what sets the generic cluster developments in Roodepoort apart from lifestyle estates like Featherbrook and Eagle Canyon. They accommodate multiple lifestyles and a complex range of family forms; from those of young families with small children, to friends living together, to those of gay couples or gay singles, to those of young women living alone. It hosts people *middle-classing* as well as seeking a more natural way of living. What makes this diversity possible is a regulatory regime (administered by the Body Corporate) that enforces a standard of communal living without, for all that, restricting too narrowly the range of lifestyles that the estate and/or complex can accommodate. In this sense, cluster developments are more like townships than suburbs.

5.1. Blackness

‘Becoming one’s own person’ or finding one’s ‘mental strength’ is not the language of a declining or weakening racial consciousness. It is an ideology of being black after apartheid. It helps us partly understand what we saw or rather did not see inside the estates and complexes. We did not see non-racial conviviality. Being middle calls does not weaken racial identification.

Thato recalls listening to a discussion of multiracial schools on the radio. “Sam Mthiya [the DJ] was doing a breakfast show. He is like *bana ba di* multiracial schools [children of multiracial schools] don’t talk their home languages. He made me angry. I called the radio station and he answered and I said stop talking crap. I go to a multiracial school, *ke bua Setswana mo ntlong* [I speak Setwana at home]. So don’t be generalising *ontse o bua gore* [and keep on saying that]” (Thato, 12 June 2010). Thato is visibly upset as he talks. What bothers him is the suggestion that stepping out of traditional ‘black’ roles or moving away from traditional ‘black’ townships represents either a repudiation or dilution of blackness itself.

In a subsequent interview he is asked about leaving Soweto and whether he would ever move back. “Sometimes you hear people talking about the township and being proud, wanting to be there forever. [...]”. “I’m not

proud,” he says, “because we were put there, not by choice. [...] A Black guy has a right to be here [in the cluster development]. I [had] better be here. I don’t want to be put in a little box called Soweto and that’s where I should be for my entire life. Nelson Mandela: what’s the point of spending 27 years in jail if I’ll still be where my parents were. [...] It saddens me when you hear black people say they are still proud of the township. There is nothing to be proud of. I actually think that every township should be a museum, the people kicked out and given a better life” (Thato, September 9, 2010).

Thato is referencing the subjectivity ‘being black’ to new terrains of fantasy and desire, not those of the struggle or the revolution, but to the marketplace, to consumption. ‘Becoming his own person’ is a measure of black freedom – to be in ways prohibited by apartheid. Thato is a *free black man* because he can follow his dreams, be true to himself, he can live where he chooses. Thato’s speech is full of references to motivational speakers and to church. There is a Pentecostal inflection to Thato’s conception of freedom, moreover. He attends Rhema church in Randburg. It is linked to a version of the ‘prosperity gospel’ that insists that G-d did not intend black people to be poor. During the apartheid period there was no relationship between how hard black people worked, their effort, and what they achieved – they remained materially poor all the same. In contrast, South Africa is today full of opportunity. Freedom as a black person means taking them up.

Listen to Mpho: “Two weeks ago we went to a complex just up the road. It is much bigger than this one [where they live] and it has bigger houses. We were literally walking in and looking at houses worth R1,2 million, R1,7 million. [...] Well, we can’t afford it, but we were there” (Interview with Mpho, 12/6/2010). That same day Mpho and her husband visit various car-dealerships, looking at sports cars and cabriolets. “I don’t know how,” she says, “but I am going to get it” (Ibid, 12/6/2010).

In their narratives, Thato, Mpho and Mfundo associate two movements with freedom, entering (new spaces) and driving. There is very little treatment of these themes in South Africa (Posel, p.61), though Paul Gilroy has begun to explore them in relation to the automobile.

“Apart from the battles for human recognition and political rights, black vernacular expression sought and found new freedoms in areas of social life [...] : in the vitality of no longer abject and exhausted bodies; in sexual,

familial, and household life; in linguistic play and cultural *style*; in the larger health of a public world which was not simply the opposite pole of a closed and idealised, bourgeois privacy; and last, for a few, in the very ideals of that bourgeois privacy which supplied an index of social advance as potent as it was deluded” (Gilroy,2004, p.6)

In the American context African Americans spend in the region of \$30 billion on cars and a further \$9 billion related products. They make up almost 30% of the buying public for cars and yet they constitute only 12% of the population. “It is difficult to resist the idea,” he writes, “that the special seductions of car culture have become an important part of what binds the black populations of the overdeveloped countries to the most mainstream of dreams” (Gilroy, 2004, p. 15). In the face of “racial terror, brutal confinement and coerced labour”, the “auto-autonomy” of the car provides a means of escape, transcendence and even moments of resistance (Ibid, p.20).

In a high-end car, enclosed in his or her own world, with the radio on or a CD playing, a black South African is not simply free and equal. If an earlier generation “walked to freedom” – surely we must understand the importance of shoes to an earlier generation of black South Africans in this context – today one drives, preferably in a fast, beautiful car. In South Africa there is something else as well. This is not simply an expression of individual freedom or political freedom as equal citizenship. Driving is a metaphor for the exercise of political power. This is where the experience of blackness in the UK and the US differs from its articulation in South Africa, Africa and the Caribbean. We recall that at the time of Thabo Mbeki many of his fellow-travellers decried attacks on his presidency as an attack on black leadership and, specifically, as racist disbelief that blacks could drive a modern, industrial economy (Chipkin: 2002, pp.569-582).

We can now better understand what is at work when Mfundo describes wanting a big car and a house with four garages. He is not simply a crass materialist. He is describing becoming free. Moving out of the township, living in a cluster development or a mansion, for that matter, going to a multiracial school, driving an expensive car, going on holiday overseas or to Cape Town are not gestures towards whites or towards a white lifestyle. They are new measures of blackness.

This moral-economy of black freedom goes a long way to account for the internal character of cluster developments. Despite their racial diversity, townhouse complexes are not places of non-racial conviviality. This is as true in Castra with its strong regulatory regime as it is in other complexes, such as Himalia where the Body Corporate is less fierce.

5.2. Whiteness

We saw earlier that Roodepoort had a history as an Afrikaans area, both in fact and in aspiration. It is still ought of as an Afrikaans-speaking region by many of the residents of the townhouse complexes. 'J', for example, describes himself as "very Afrikaans". "I am very proud to be Afrikaans," he says, adding "I have a strong Afrikaans accent" (Interview with 'J', 11/2010).

"It is very Afrikaans this side," he says of Roodepoort. "I am Afrikaans and I appreciate that". His family is in the Cape and the interviewer asks if he would ever go and join them there. "No," he replies, "I am just comfortable with this area. I would not even think of moving to the East Rand or to the South. I like the scenery [...] It is on the outside of the city, ten minutes and you are in the veld". At one point he describes the estate where he lives as 75% white and Afrikaans. The reality is closer to 40%.

'J' invokes an Afrikaans community in Roodepoort to which he belongs, even though it is more imagined than real. Like most respondents, he describes life in the estate where he lives as a place of solitary existence. I have noticed," he says, "that here in the big cities, people tend not to...", he interrupts himself and explains: "if you are not friends with the guy already you just say hello and that is it" (Ibid). What is more he has lost touch with many of his childhood friends and new friendships are usually fleeting. This is compounded by the fact that 'J' works in Klerksdorp, nearly 180 kilometres away and is only in his unit in Roodepoort on weekends.

This sense of belonging to a symbolic Roodepoort is something that distinguishes white, usually Afrikaans speaking residents of the townhouse complexes from their black neighbours, for whom the Roodepoort estates are often transitional zones to elsewhere in the city. Mr and Mrs Radebe, for example, have children at a private school in Sandton and describe spending most of their leisure time in the bars and restaurants of Melrose Arch. What this suggests is that the measure of social solidarity or 'social cohesion', a term that increasingly figures in government discourses as a measure of

‘national unity’ (Barolsky, forthcoming), is not the degree to which there are physical relations between neighbours or within communities, but the degree to which there are imagined communities. These findings endorse Benedict Anderson’s broader thesis, though in the South African context point to multiple imaginations that do not necessarily coincide.

‘J’ thus represents an ironic and new figure on the political scene in South Africa. He is prepared to live amongst black South Africans physically, though he does not easily accommodate them symbolically. The interviewer asks ‘J’ about the municipal infrastructure in Roodepoort.

“It just irritates the crap out of me,” he explains, “I know how much is collected in rates from this area. Everyone pays their rates and we sit with a road like Nick Diedericks that looks the same as it did way back in 1999 when there were no townhouses here”. In contrast, “if you drive past Soweto, they are building highways for them [blacks] there, proper decent roads. In winter if it goes below five degrees Celsius our power goes down here. In Soweto it looks like sunshine. And they [blacks] are not paying, half of them are not paying but their power does not get cut off. [...] It just makes me crazy, it is so unfair and that is the problem. [...] But these okes [people] stand up and they got black this and black that and ‘be proud to be black’, and ‘black is beautiful’ and no one can say anything about that. But if you stand up now and say you are proud to be white, you would be marked as a racist immediately. That is what getting me down about this country; it has become one big excuse. If anything does not go your way, it is because you are not white. That is bullshit and that is starting to irritate me”.

There are several things to note about ‘J’s’ testimony. It is unusual in several respects or, rather, conventional in old ways. Symbolically his imaginary does not open out to black South Africans. This marks him out as a lonely figure amongst white respondents of the study.

Far more common are the testimonies of Colin and Louise. Colin too describes himself as an Afrikaner during the interview. “With F.W. De Klerk, he did a good thing by removing apartheid and thereby opening the society. [...] I really do have hope about the racial issue since 1994. When I saw the support for Bafana Bafana¹¹ and white Afrikaners wearing Bafana

¹¹The national soccer team. During the apartheid period soccer and rugby were starkly distinguished as ‘black’ and ‘white’ sports respectively.

Bafana T-shirts. I thought that day would never come. I also think the [Blue] Bulls [rugby team] did a good thing [by playing in Soweto]. It's like with the World Cup Rugby, when Francois Pienaar, said this [cup] is for 40 million people and thus included the whole of South Africa when the Springboks won (Interview with Colin, 2/2011).

The difference with 'J' is stark. Colin and Louise too belong to a symbolic Afrikaans community, though it is not closed in on itself. It is a way of being Afrikaans increasingly unmoored from the values and practices associated with Afrikaner nationalism. Colin begins discussing the role of men and women in the home. He has recently attended a Mighty Men weekend. These are gatherings of mostly white, Afrikaans men to discuss masculinity. They are Christian events led by an evangelical pastor. The setting of the interview resonates with the message. Colin has convened his whole family for the interview, including his wife and daughter. He does most of the talking. It is a way of leading without dominating?

"God changed the hearts of the husbands to be the head of the households," he says, "and not say 'where the paper is and where are my slippers?' This is especially a problem with Afrikaner men who want to be dominant," he explains. "You will cook meals, and you will wash the clothes and you will do as I say! That is the end of it". The wife is not something inferior. She should be cherished. She is the one that gives you life. That is the way it is supposed to be in the home" (Colin, 2/2011).

It is not simply at the level of surfaces that 'J' is unusual. Every other respondent described themselves as having abandoned the Dutch Reformed Church.

"People are leaving the traditional churches for variety of reasons," Colin explains. "Some of the traditional churches have hurt a lot of people. People are disillusioned by the way they were treated. That is why we went to this other church in Muldersdrift. It is an Afrikaans church called Arendshoogte (Eagle's height). We have been going to this church for a year. They are a church for people who were drifting from the traditional churches and have been hurting. [...]" (Colin, 09/08/2010).

Colin does not discuss what he means by this hurt, though he implies that Afrikaners have been doubly betrayed by their leaders, then, for taking them down the road of apartheid and now for not securing their safety and rights

(especially linguistic rights) in the 'new' South Africa. "He [the Afrikaner] still feels lost because the Afrikaner has no leader at the moment," he laments.

Colin and his wife are typical of the tens of thousands of Afrikaans speaking respondents who have left the Dutch Reformed Church for one of the new Pentecostal churches in the area. Anthony Albeker found similar processes at work in Stellenbosch, though with sinister consequences. In *Fruit of a Poisoned Tree*, Albeker provides a fascinating account of the trial of Fred van der Vyver and of the circumstances surrounding the murder of Inge Lotz. Fred, the former boyfriend of the beautiful Stellenbosch student was ultimately acquitted for killing her. Both he and she belonged to wealthy and respected members of the Afrikaans community in Stellenbosch. Albeker makes a compelling case that despite the lack of evidence against him, Fred attracted suspicion, in part, because of his religious practices. He had left the Dutch Reformed Church and had become an active member of the Stellenbosch chapter of His People Church – an American based Pentecostal that preaches a gospel of personal salvation. Albeker writes: "Fred's membership of His People Church was interpreted as evidence of some imbalance in his personality" (Albeker, 2010, p. 197). Fred's new religious affiliation, moreover, was neither isolated, nor idiosyncratic. It was part of a general movement of young, Stellenbosch students away from the Dutch Reformed Church.

Sometimes people have abandoned church altogether. Neels is from the East Rand. He explains that his family went to the Dutch Reformed Church. "When I was a teenager it was forced on me. Wednesday, Sundays, Sunday School" (Interview with Brendon and Neels, 13/02/2011). "It is an Afrikaans thing," he adds. Brendon tells a similar story. Neither of them takes any interest in church anymore. Tracey too is from the East Rand. She does not go to church either.

Why is this important? The complicity of the church in the apartheid project, especially after the Cottosloe Consultation in 1960 (see De Gruchy, 2005, pp. 60-67), has weakened its authority over Afrikaners. It is a dramatic sign that Afrikaans speakers are searching for ways to renegotiate their relationship to the past, but especially to the future.

Consider the interview with Brendon and Neels. They are discussing how different the West Rand is to the East Rand. The term they use to distinguish

them is “civilized”. Compared to the East Rand, the West Rand is civilized. The term has multiple associations and invokes several binaries: run-down/prosperous, clean/dirty, affluent/poor, low-class/upper-class, rough/family-oriented; natural/industrial. Amongst these distinctions is another: the East Rand is white. The West Rand is racially diverse. This surely marks a new South African imaginary, where whiteness is no longer the measure of all things good. Instead, prosperity, civility and nature are deemed qualities of a multi-racial environment.

Let us note that Colin and Brendon and Neels and Louise and the many other white respondents we spoke to have not relinquished being ‘Afrikaans’ or being ‘white’. Many are still strongly attached to these identities. Yet they are changing the landscape of metaphors, values and practices to which they are being directed. Pentecostalism creates an opportunity to do this, while still holding on to some core values. Rhema Church, one of the first major Pentecostal churches in South Africa, very early on disavowed apartheid as a system of racial segregation and discrimination. Even before the Anglican and Catholic churches in South Africa, traditionally more ‘liberal’ in their opposition to apartheid, desegregated their congregations, Rhema was convening racially mixed services. Yet apart from their ‘liberalism’ on questions of race, the Pentecostal churches preach a gospel that valorises patriarchal gender relations, especially in the home. They are also hostile to homosexuality. In other words, Pentecostals today have reinvented social conservatism as a legitimate *post-apartheid* faith. This goes a long way to explain their growing attractiveness to both black and white South Africans today.

As a final remark, we should note that on the West Rand the move away from the Dutch Reformed Church by young Afrikaners is accompanied by the physical movement away from the ‘old fashioned’ suburbs of their birth. It is part of a general process of distancing themselves from the locations and organisations associated with Afrikaner nationalism.

6. The Theory of Ordinary Life

Castra may be unusual for the strictness of the Body Corporate. In other complexes in Milky Way and elsewhere the regulatory regime is more *laissez faire*. Yet all complexes demand compliance from residents' *viz.* communal regulations. People are routinely fined for breaches of rules. What is remarkable about the Roodepoort clusters is how willing residents are to agree. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is not the case everywhere. On the East Rand, for example, agents responsible for the management of Home Owners Associations complain that rules tend to be observed in the breach. More generally, the difficulty of managing social relations between townhouse residents is a frequent dinner-table conversation amongst those that live in clusters. It is currently a headline story in several daily newspapers. *The Star* newspaper reported on the 19th of September 2011 that a resident of a golf estate in Bedfordview "took the unprecedented step of hauling [a neighbour] to court last week. [...] They accused her in court papers of spitting in their faces, exposing her private parts to them, running around the complex naked, throwing a cat at a neighbour during an argument and hammering nails into residents' cars" (*The Star*, 19 September 2011). Is it relevant that Bedfordview is on the East Rand?

That more and more people in South Africa and elsewhere in the world (Poland, Turkey, Egypt, the US) are subjecting themselves to this form of immediate self-local government is suggestive of a major social development. In South Africa, the uncertainty of the political environment and the unpredictability of the regulatory scene are seeing millions of people pursue communal living. What they seek is social order. In this sense the discourse about crime is symptomatic of a larger concern with political authority and predictability in the social environment. Centrally, the move into cluster developments is evidence of a broader pursuit of order and community in a world that is increasingly uncertain, unpredictable and insecure.

In South Africa today body corporates and the institutions associated with the sectional title property regime have become important sites of governance, both in terms of managing the distribution of things and people and in terms of framing the way that citizens relate to each other. In terms of the number of people that fall under their jurisdiction they may well be the most important 'disciplinary apparatuses' in South Africa today. They are unlike government agencies or departments, even at local government

(ostensibly the closest to the people), however, because they structure and frame social interactions on a daily basis in the intimacy of people's ordinary lives.

This is precisely what the Constitution as a 'living document' is supposed to do. It is not simply the highest law. It is the ground of the South African political community in its democratic form. In the absence of 'standard' national characteristics (a common language, common race, common religion, common culture) as the basis of national solidarity, from the perspective of the Constitution, the nation emerges to the extent that South Africans relate to each other in public (even in private) as equals, with respect and with tolerance. Yet South Africa faces a Jacobin problem – that there are no ceremonies and institutions that translate such norms into daily practices on an everyday basis¹². In other words, there are few places and instances, apart from occasional national elections, that subjugate South Africans as citizens.

The reason is not simply a lack of will from those in the ruling party or those in government. It speaks to the institutional character of the South African state; our 'postcolonial' paradox.

Not only is there great unevenness in the performance of the departments and agencies that make-up the body of the government and the state, but the skin holding them together in a common body is often so thin that they are barely of the same being. The result is a social and political scene that is not simply *over determined* in a theoretical sense, but overwhelmed by contingency and randomness at the level of daily life – crime, electricity cuts, water cuts, identification documents that may or may not arrive, and so on. It is in this context that cluster developments offer meaning and community, even when the practices of ordinary life involve awkward sacrifices.

Events in Roodepoort are significant for more than what they say about South Africa. What we are seeing there, to use the language of Pierre Bourdieu, are not new identities forming *within* an already existing social space, but the social space itself emerging. This is the second sense in which I will use the term ordinary life; as the daily practices through which a

¹² This was David's preoccupation as a painter at the time of the French Revolution: to produce Republican traditions and representations so that democracy could become a kind of civic religion.

common social space is itself elaborated. I will discuss this more fully in the conclusion; though it is important to note that this common world is *not* that of the nation. In other words, the activities of ordinary life are not nation-building practices and the common world is not the nation. I want to define what I am calling ordinary life in relation to other, more familiar expressions; that of the practices of *everyday* and that of *habitus*. Both terms refer to daily practices (of walking, of reading, of eating) that speak to the character and limits of sociability. Yet the problem that De Certeau and Bourdieu respectively seek to solve, is not our problem, or rather, it is not a major problem. Indeed, both terms, the *everyday* and *habitus*, assume exactly what we cannot assume in Roodepoort and in South Africa generally: the pervasiveness of power and/or of the state.

The ‘ordinary’ or the trope of daily life is obscured in social science by research that focuses on sites of contradiction/antagonism. From this perspective what matters are sites where contradiction is either latent (the workplace, the family, the colony) or where it has transmuted into antagonism (sites of conflict, violence, protest). When revolution or revolt does not burst forth from the mounting contradictions of social and economic life, then it is the quietude of daily life that becomes a political and theoretical challenge. It is in the concepts that emerged in response to this situation in the 1960s – ideology, discourse – that we must look for the origins of the concept of the *everyday*.

Louis Althusser’s famous essay on ideology, first published in 1970, was concerned with how the ruling class reproduced itself. “In fact,” Althusser insisted, “the State and its Apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction. But there is no class struggle without antagonistic classes. Whoever says class struggle of the ruling class says resistance, revolt and class struggle of the ruled class” (Althusser, 1997). This was a confusing formulation. On the one hand ideology moderates struggle, on the other, there is always struggle. What kind of struggle did workers undertake when beholden to the ruling class ideology?

The answer lay in a distinction that Althusser entered elsewhere between economic and political class struggle, or rather, in the movement from a *class instinct* to a *class position*. The working class had a *class instinct* that could be transformed into a *class position* through education (Althusser:

1968, p.2). This was more than simply becoming aware of one's objective location in the class structure (class-in-itself/class-for-itself). An instinct was not a position because it consisted of acts of resistance, of subversion that were *not* (yet?) expressed in a consistent worldview or a revolutionary consciousness (class position). Nonetheless, workers had a hunch, irrespective of their formal politics, their level of education, their social or political circumstances that things were "out of joint".

Through the notion of class instinct, therefore, Althusser defines a domain of social life that it is given in relation to micro instances of resistance, subversion, struggle – in the workplace, in the school and in the family – that are not (yet) political (in any ordinary sense of the term). This is the first dimension of the concept of the 'everyday' as it later emerges.

The idea of a sphere of pre-political resistance was taken up in the early Foucault, especially in *History of Sexuality Volume 1*. Here, the counterparts to Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses are the disciplinary procedures that operate at the level of 'micro-power' and through which power inscribes itself directly into the body (Zizek, 1997, p. 13). In *The Birth of the Clinic*, however, despite the fact that Foucault refers to resistance, acts of resistance are absent. Ultimately, there is only power, which masters its subjects and dominates them.

This is the omission that De Certeau seeks to redress in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. He is interested in what he calls the "polytheism of scattered practices [that] survive, dominated but not erased by the triumphal success of one of their number [that is, panoptic procedures]" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 48). De Certeau (and Foucault) is discussing those societies that have already been mastered by technologies of surveillance and of discipline. The domain of the everyday thus refers to earlier/other practices that are still there, bellow the belly so to speak of power. We might refer to them as 'survivals' of another configuration of society.

This is why De Certeau insists that, in addition to exploring how society is represented (in the media, in texts, in the planning of urban space), it is important to consider how these representations are used by cultural consumers. "The presence and circulation," he says, "of a representation (taught by preachers, educators, and popularisers [...]) tells us nothing about what it us for users. We must first analyse its manipulation by users and not by its makers" (De Certeau, 1984, p. xiii). It is in these practices,

manipulations that traces of other regimes of power survive. They survive as resistance to panoptic procedures.

“If it is true that the grid of ‘discipline’ is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also miniscule and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally, what ‘ways of operating’ form the counterpart on the consumer’s (or ‘dominee’s?’) side, of the mute processes that organ network of procedures and ruses that consumers use to compose an “antidiscipline” (Ibid, p. xv).

In the chapter on ‘walking’, the city becomes a terrain of “totalizations” and of “panoptic” power. It is “geometrical”, it has a “functionalist organization” that arranges space according to a “scientific and political technology”. It “puts the city-dweller under control”. Walking, in this universe, is manipulative and subversive. It consists of operations that “counter-balance and combine themselves *outside the reach* of panoptic power. [...] Beneath the discourse that ideologizes the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer” (emphasis added). In one of the more delightful sections of this essay, walking is conceived as a “space of enunciation”. Walking can be Rhetorical, it has Style, it is a “long poem”, a “forest of gestures” (Ibid., pp 93-102).

In describing these everyday acts of resistance, De Certeau turns to the *early* works of Pierre Bourdieu, to his work in Algeria. The villagers of the Kabyle play with the possibilities, the rules of tradition, like one might play a hand of cards (Ibid, 54). In these strategies and tactics, De Certeau finds gaps in the social structure, which allow him to develop his own language of the social and of resistance. Therein lies his critique of the later Bourdieu, especially of the concept with which his name is mostly closely associated, habitus. Habitus “puts out the flame” that Bourdieu’s early work lit, by closing over the gaps in the social structure. With habitus there are no longer places in society where power does not fully exhaust the terms of social action.

Let us dwell a little on the concept of ‘*habitus*’. In South Africa it is regarded as full of analytical promise regarding that most elusive of

concepts, the middle class. The ‘middle class’ both as a real social fact (Seekings and Nattrass, Nuttall) and as an objective of government policy (GEAR, ASGISA) is said to be one of the major social phenomenon of post-apartheid South Africa.

The notion of *habitus* plays a key role in Bourdieu’s conceptual schema, as the mediating term between, on the one hand, the social structure and, on the other, social practices. In Bourdieu the social structure is a statistical configuration, referring to the distribution of economic and cultural capital in society. *Social positions* designate groups of people endowed with similar volumes of economic and cultural capital. In this schema, a term like the ‘middle class’ is a relational term, deriving its position from the global distribution of economic and social capital in society. It is middle, in other words, in a strictly mathematical sense – not because those in the middle class vacillate politically between supporting the working class or the capitalist class (Poulantzas, 1981; Olin Wright, Erik, 1983). This is one sense in which Bourdieu’s schema seems to hold promise: it apparently resolves difficult definitional disputes about the limits of the middle class.

Moreover, social positions do not constitute classes in the Marxist sense. They are not “groups organised on the basis of common objectives and, in particular, mobilised against another class” (Bourdieu: 1994, p.26). Bourdieu calls them theoretical classes to emphasise that they are mere potential. Theoretical classes come to life, so to speak, when they are endowed with *habitus*, this ‘principle’ that translates one’s social position into a unified lifestyle, that is, a shared ensemble of choices about people, things and practices Bourdieu, 1994, 23).

Habitus is elaborated in and through the school system. The peculiar habitus of the middle classes resides in the educational assets that they acquire in order to accumulate economic and social capital. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the status or material well-being of the middle-class is not derived from property, but from organisational authority or skills that are either embodied (cultural capital) or institutionalised (certificates, diplomas, degrees) (Selzer and Heller, 2010, 150). Hence, “Middleclass practices are thus centrally about securing returns to organizational assets and educational capital” (Ibid, 150). As attractive as this theoretical schema is, there is a heavy price to pay for it. It obscures what is genuinely new about social life in Roodepoort.

“In our societies,” writes Bourdieu – by which he means “advanced countries” (*pays avancés*) (Bourdieu, 1994, 29), that is, precisely not *our* countries – “the State is the determinant of the production and the reproduction of the instruments of construction of the social reality. As an organisational structure and as a regulator of practices, the state always exercises a formative action on attitudes and behaviours (dispositions) through the constraints and mental and corporal disciplines that it imposes uniformly on the collection of agents” (Bourdieu, Op Cit, 125). That is, “the State establishes and inculcates the forms and categories of common perception and thinking, of the social frames of perception, of understanding and of the memory, mental structures, state forms of classification” (Ibid, 125-126). In this way “habitus is the foundation of a kind of consensus about the collection of shared evidences that are constitutive of common sense” (Ibid, 126).

In school, people interiorise social structures (through learning) and exteriorise them through practices. Practices (like playing golf or rugby, driving a Volvo or a Citroen, drinking wine or beer) correspond to the social structure at a particular point in time. As De Certeau points out, “structures can change and thus become a principle of social mobility [...] Achievements cannot. They have no movement of their own. They are the place in which structures are inscribed, the marble on which their history is engraved” (De Certeau, Op Cit, 57). The school, in other words, does not serve simply to distribute assets in society. It serves to define the measure according to which assets have the values they do. We can understand now why De Certeau sees in the concept of habitus a ‘fetish’, that reveals more about Bourdieu’s own dogmatism than it does about society.

The limits of this model in our situation (Roodepoort, South Africa, those countries emerging from recent or distant colonial periods) is not simply that it eradicates any gap between social structure and perceptions and behaviours. (As an aside, Althusser used the term ‘overdetermination’ to refer to a structure whose effects were, ultimately unpredictable (*aléatoire*)). It was in the work of Laclau and Mouffe (Hegemony and Socialist Strategy), however, that this concept received its full expression). The problem is that it assumes, to paraphrase Bourdieu, that the structure (state and society) is already structured. This is why using Bourdieu’s concepts we make elementary mistakes regarding political life in South Africa. On Bourdieu’s terms, people that dispose of similar volumes of economic and

cultural capital will likely share common tastes in politics as in art as in sport.

What is certain on Bourdieu's terms, though, is that workers and capitalists are too far apart in the social structure to share common political positions. Yet, one of the 'achievements' of Afrikaner Nationalism from the 1930s was to draw white workers out of trade-unions and parties where they were developing common political tastes with especially coloured colleagues and into to national bodies where they developed common tastes (beer, rugby, the Nationalist Party) with bourgeois and middle-class Afrikaners (O'Meara, 1983) . Furthermore, the term black, historically and still to today, is used to designate social agents who, at least in terms of political beliefs and practices, have much in common politically – irrespective of the volume of economic and cultural capital that they dispose of. This is the basis of the ANC's electoral platform, which regularly produces overwhelming political majorities. Entry into the middle class, moreover, is not associated with the emergence of communities of common taste, of post-racial communities where black and white identities somehow soften. The distribution of economic and cultural capital in South Africa is, at best, a very imprecise approximation of social practices and identities.

The reason is that our situation is not that of Bourdieu (or De Certeau or Foucault). Ours is not a society where we can start from the assumption that the state has mastery over the terrain it governs. One has to wonder about the value of the notion of 'biopower' – *le flic dans le tête* – in societies where the political challenge is as not so much about escaping state domination as it is about constituting political authority *per se*. Jean-Francois Bayart argues, for example, that one of the key lessons of Africa for the world is living in the absence of a State (Bayart: 1989). Jeffrey Herbst claims that the project of state building in Africa has been hampered by low population densities – it was only in 1975 that Africa reached population densities that Europe had achieved in 1500 (Fukuyama,2011, p.90) – and a natural environment that made it very difficult to project power (Herbst,2000, p.11). Sardonicly, Fukuyama remarks that much of sub-Saharan Africa is a "libertarian's paradise" where governments are unable to collect more than 10 percent of GDP in taxes, where services are starved of funding and where infrastructure necessary to economic growth is usually absent (Fukuyama, 2011, p.13). This is not the case in South Africa; though Francis Fukuyama's broader point is apposite: the difficulty of constituting political authority, especially as it is exercised in and through

institutions, is underestimated and infrequently studied (Fukuyama, 2011, p. 10-11).

In South Africa during the apartheid period, the government worked to splinter the administration of people and things through hundreds of distinct and parallel organisations. In this sense, there was never a South African society but, rather, myriad societies, conforming to diverse regimes of government and governance – a white society in apartheid South Africa, bantustan societies in their ethnic enclaves, self-governing territories and the imagined communities of the various anti-apartheid movements (with their overlapping and diverging borders). One of the achievements of the African National Congress since it came to power in 1994 has been formally to overcome the ethnic fragmentation of the country by integrating and in some cases dissolving the ethnic governments inherited from the apartheid period. It has been less successful in the creation of a common world for South African citizens; that is, shared institutions that are governed in common and that function impersonally according to rules and the law.

Here in Johannesburg, in South Africa, what we need to account for are not practices that seek to escape from totalising or panopticon structures, but practices that *pursue order and structure* in the absence of structure itself. In this sense, ordinary life refers to the pursuit of identity, of structure, rather than revolt or resistance to it. This is the fuller meaning that I intend for the expression, ordinary life: the day-to-day practices through which a common society is itself elaborated.

This is what is emerging in the Roodepoort townhouse complexes. A paradoxical common world conjured into being through a new regime of property right and mediated by body corporates.

Conclusion

This essay has explored social change in South Africa since the end of apartheid. It has done this by considering the kinds of communities that are emerging in the new townhouse developments on the western edge of Johannesburg. That something significant is happening is evidenced by two factors. The number of complexes and units built since 2003 suggest a mass social phenomena. Moreover, that these developments are accompanied by important social changes is confirmed by demographic data. Large-scale black migration into the Roodepoort area generally and into the Roodepoort complexes and estates more particularly has not been associated with ‘white flight’ – a pattern that has typified patterns of behaviour elsewhere (Chipkin, 2005, p. 95).

A common social world is emerging in Roodepoort that has paradoxical features. On the one hand white and black South Africans (terms used here as shorthand for those who formerly had and those who did not have full South African citizenship) are entering a *common world*. On the other hand, racial and ethnic solidarities have not weakened. Entry into a common world is not associated with new patterns of sociability that transcend race or ethnicity. What has changed is that assertions of being an ‘Afrikaner’ or being ‘black’ do not necessarily signify antagonistic social positions, like they did until even recently. Even for those residents still committed to being ‘white’ there is an openness to black South Africans that may well be unprecedented outside liberal and/or leftist political circles in South Africa. The situation has long been different for black South Africans. African nationalism until recently tendered not to be an exclusivist political ideology, such that identifying as ‘black’ did not mean turning away from whites.

Racial and ethnic heterogeneity in the Roodepoort complexes, as important as it is, does not adequately capture the significance of this emerging *common world*. Apartheid was not only a system of racial (and class domination). It was also a system of government and regulation, one that splintered the administration of peoples and things according to hundreds of parallel and overlapping agencies and departments. Even if there were some isolated, mixed social spaces (Hillbrow, Yeoville), there were no mixed institutions of social citizenship. It is this reality that is evoked in political metaphors like Thabo Mbeki’s image of “two nations” and before that, in

theoretical expressions like the “articulation of modes of production” (Wolpe, 1974) or more generally in images of the “bifurcated” state (Mamdani, 1996).

Relative to this recent past, a common world represents a place where former citizens and former subjects share, not simply a common geography, but a space where they are equally subject to a regime of rules. These are post-apartheid spaces, though not postcolonial ones. The term ‘postcolonial’, that is, has come to be associated with an ironic smile. It suggests that the period chronologically after the colonial one, that is, after the departure of the European colonial power, represents not so much a break with the past (an ‘after’) as the continuation of the colonial present.

The common world in Roodepoort is not one where violence is absent. Far from it. Daily life in the townhouse complexes is frequently oppressive and there are sometimes hostile encounters between residents and officials of the management body. For all that, the violence of the complex is qualitatively different to that associated with apartheid or colonialism more generally. Even if it is regarded as sometimes fierce, the violence of the Body Corporate is the violence of modernity. It is the ally of rules and regulations that are widely accepted as general and legitimate. Residents (mostly) submit to the regulatory environment, not because they have been cowed into submission, but because they desire the rule itself. They might object to the way the rule is applied (unfairly, for example, or inconsistently) but they seldom object to the rule itself. This was not the case with apartheid laws.

The objection to apartheid (except perhaps from apartheid legalists) was *not* that it was implemented unevenly or unfairly. The problem was with the law itself. The law was evil¹³. We might recall the arguments about the legality of Nazi law after the Second World War. In his famous critique of moral positivism in 1958, Fuller argued that the incorporation of evil aims in law undermines its very foundation, namely, the claim to command fidelity to law (Pappe, 1960). "When a system calling itself law is predicated upon a general disregard by judges of the terms of the laws they purport to enforce, when this system habitually cures its legal irregularities, even the grossest,

¹³ Some qualification is required here. Not every law passed during the apartheid period was an apartheid law in the sense that it was an element of a system of racial domination. In other words, apartheid laws refer to those laws whose basic purpose was racial domination and discrimination. Other laws, including those pertaining to inheritance or contract or public administration etc. had racial exclusions, though their purpose was not racial domination itself.

by retroactive statutes, when it has only to resort to forays of terror in the streets, which no one dares challenge, in order to escape even those scant restraints imposed by the pretence of legality – when all these things have become true of a dictatorship, it is not hard for me, at least, to deny to it the name of law" (Fuller, 1958).

Unlike apartheid law, which often lacked the character of law, the body corporate is a space of legality. In the complex, residents are subject (and subject themselves) to a regime of rules and regulations that have both coherence and are logical. They are regulations to the extent that they are publicly announced, that they do not contradict themselves and that they do not require ‘forays of terror’ to exercise. Even if some body corporates implement these rules in an arbitrary way, the rules themselves have what Fuller called a certain “internal morality” (Fuller, 1958, p. 645). In this sense townhouse complexes in Roodepoort are spaces of legality: they subject their residents to a common set of rules as a condition of social order. This is precisely what apartheid law could not achieve. The implementation of apartheid laws worked against the possibility of good social order – their very exercise required bare violence against black South Africans (humiliation, forced removals, censorship, detention without trial, execution, war).

Apartheid laws have since 1994 been progressively repealed. This is not enough to constitute a regime of legality, however. It is not enough for laws and rules and regulations to be issued from duly constituted bodies or agencies for them to be legal. What matters, in addition is how they are administered. In this regard, in the period since 1994 the exercise of laws and rules and regulations is frequently *ad hoc*, uneven and inconsistent. There are numerous reasons for this, including the limited reach of the South African state itself (aggravated by policy choices at the beginning of the transition and the politicisation of the public service by the ruling party). Taken together, however, the state itself has not realised social order and in some cases generates new forms of disorder. We might say that the South African state is not and perhaps cannot deliver post-apartheid modernity.

This study, however, has found post-apartheid modernity in an unlikely place. Township complexes in Roodepoort, organised as condominiums or in terms of the Sectional Title Act, are sites of common place legality or the legality of what I have called *ordinary life*. Townhouse complexes elaborate

social order in the day-to-day transactions of their residents. They are thus post-apartheid locations in an ordinary sense.

What has rendered these spaces invisible to academic and official notice is that they have been constituted in unexpected places (Roodepoort!) and through unexpected instruments. They are products of an innovation in capitalist property relations and not that of the Constitution or that of government policies and actions. Post-apartheid modernity has been elaborated in Roodepoort through the further development of capitalism. In other words spaces of order have been constituted through a regime of (private) property that, historically, least stands up to the test of legality. For those who looked forward to a post-apartheid society tending towards socialism or participatory democracy or, at least, subject to the morality of the Constitution these are surely awkward terrains. They are post-apartheid terrains nonetheless.

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