Cape Town as World-Class City: Identifying Radical Theory & Practice

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATIONS</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: WORLD-CLASS CITY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. DEFINING CAPE TOWN: INTERPRETING THE CITY’S URBAN DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WORLD-CLASS CITY AS A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. (RE)DEFINING WORLD-CLASS: PROBLEMATIZING THE GLOBAL CITY</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GLOBAL CITY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WORLD CITY</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTRADICTORY SPACES</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBALIZATION OPTIMISTS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVERGENCE &amp; NORMALIZATION</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITUATING CAPE TOWN WITHIN GLOBAL &amp; WORLD CITY DISCOURSE</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE WORLD-CLASS CITY</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DEFINING A THESIS TRAJECTORY: IDENTIFYING “RADICAL” IN THEORY &amp; PRACTICE</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: NEOLIBERAL CITY</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. PLANNING FOR A NEW SOUTH AFRICA: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY SINCE 1994</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT, AND REDISTRIBUTION</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NEW GROWTH PATH</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NEOLIBERAL URBAN GOVERNANCE: CONTRADICTORY IDEOLOGY &amp; PROCESSES</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE PATH DEPENDENCE OF ACTUALLY EXISTING NEOLIBERALISM</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTUALLY EXISTING NEOLIBERALIZATION AS CREATIVE DESTRUCTION</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITIES AS A PRIME LOCALE FOR NEOLIBERALIZATION</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. COST RECOVERY IN CAPE TOWN: REGRESSIVE OR WORLD-CLASS STRATEGY?</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGRESSIVE RATE STRUCTURES FOR COST RECOVERY</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ENFORCEMENT</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PLANNING IN THE NEOLIBERAL CITY: A GAME-THEORETIC UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINING THE GAME’S PLAYERS</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINING THE GAME’S OUTCOMES (1): DEMOCRATIC PLANNING</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINING THE GAME’S OUTCOMES (2): THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DETERMINING PAYOFFS: RANKING PLAYER PREFERENCES 76
THE PPP AS EQUILIBRIUM STRATEGY 82
THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AS EQUILIBRIUM STRATEGY 85
PROMOTING DEMOCRATICALLY REPRESENTATIVE PLANNING PROCESSES IN CAPE TOWN 89
V. CONCLUSION: THE NEW, NEOLIBERAL SOUTH AFRICA 92
VI. FIGURE 1.1 95
LEGEND, PAYOFF RELATIONSHIPS & EQUATIONS 96

CHAPTER TWO: JUST CITY 97

I. RECONSIDERING JUST OUTCOMES: PROCEDURE, DIFFERENCE, & SPACE 101
NEOLIBERAL URBAN GOVERNANCE & PROCEDURE 102
NEOLIBERAL URBAN GOVERNANCE & DIFFERENCE 107
NEOLIBERAL URBAN GOVERNANCE & GROUP IDENTITIES 112
REPRIORITIZING SPACE IN UNDERSTANDING JUST SOCIAL OUTCOMES 113
A THEORY OF JUSTICE AS EMANCIPATORY POLITICS 116
COMPLICATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES OF THE ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK 119
II. EXCLUSION IN THE RAINBOW NATION: THREE INSTRUCTIVE CASES 124
INFORMAL TRADE & THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALIZATION AS INTEGRATION 125
XENOPHOBIA & THE PROBLEM OF ASSIMILATION AS BELONGING 133
CITY PLANNING & THE PROBLEM OF INSUFFICIENT DELIBERATION 138
III. CONCLUSION: EMANCIPATION IN THE RAINBOW NATION 142

CHAPTER THREE: CONTESTED CITY 146

I. CAPE TOWN’S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: RESISTANCE AS RECOGNITION FROM ABOVE 149
THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS & THE TRIPARTITE ALLIANCE 150
ELECTIONEERING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN CAPE TOWN: THE DA VERSUS THE ANC 152
THE DA’S CAMPAIGN CONCESSIONS IN CAPE TOWN 155
THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS & THE UNITED FRONT: TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL? 157
ASSESSING RESISTANCE FROM ABOVE 159
II. RESISTANCE FROM BELOW: GRASSROOTS CASES, IDEOLOGIES, & CRITIQUE 161
THE LIBERAL LEFT: LIMITS TO PROPOSITIONAL POLITICS 162
THE MARXISTS: OPPOSITIONAL POLITICS & ISSUES OF CLARITY 166
THE AUTONOMISTS: PROBLEMS OF SCALE 171
ASSESSING RESISTANCE FROM BELOW 176
III. TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: THEORETICAL QUESTIONS & BEST PRACTICES 178
APPROPRIATELY PRESERVING DIFFERENCE THROUGH RESISTANCE 178
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respecting Cape Town's Contextual Specificity</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing Procedural Considerations Within Resistance</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices in Accountability</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices in Promoting Self-Determination</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices in Networking Equivalent Relations</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theorizing Cape Town's Post-Neoliberal Future</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Conclusion: Towards Radical Inclusion in Cape Town</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: World-Class City, (Re)defined</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Interviews</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABBREVIATIONS

AbM- Abahlali baseMjondolo
AEC- Anti-Eviction Campaign
ANC- African National Congress
APF- Anti-Privatization Forum
ASIGSA- Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CBD- Central Business District
CCDS- Central City Development Strategy
CJM- Community Justice Movement
CORC- Community Organization Resource Center
COSATU- Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTICC- Cape Town International Convention Center
CTP- Cape Town Partnership
DA- Democratic Alliance
EFF- Economic Freedom Fighters
ExCo- Executive Committee
FEDUP- Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor
GDP- Gross Domestic Product
GEAR- Growth, Employment and Redistribution Plan
IDP- Integrated Development Plan
ISN- Informal Settlement Network
MayCo- Mayoral Committee
MOU- Memorandum of Understanding
NALEDI- National Labor & Economic Development Institute
NDP- National Development Plan
NGP- New Growth Path
NUMSA- National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
PPP- Public-Private Partnership
RDP- Reconstruction and Development Program
SACP- South African Communist Party
SAMWU- South African Municipal Workers Union
SA SDI- South African Slum Dwellers International Alliance
SJC- Social Justice Coalition
WCCA- World Class Cities for All Campaign
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INTRODUCTION: World-Class City

“This cape is the most stately thing and the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth”

— SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, 1580

“A place to meditate on freedom, and the creative life that followed. Cape Town is again reinventing itself, and the world is invited to its renaissance.”

— THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2014

Cape Town has always captured the imagination. Its exceptional flora and fauna, abundance of culture, and blend of African and European sensibilities combine to make the city incredibly appealing. While captaining the second circumnavigation of the world, Sir Francis Drake made special note of the arresting beauty of the Cape in his travel journal, noting its superlative nature. Centuries later, Nelson Mandela, then a prisoner on Robben Island, found hope in looking across the water to Table Mountain’s “magnificent silhouette” that reminded him of the mainland to which he would one day return. Even in 2014, Cape Town’s unique geography has won praise as both the New York Times and The Guardian’s number one place to visit in the world. Better known as the “Mother City” for being South Africa’s oldest metropolis, Cape Town has also been a site of inspiration for the country’s post-Apartheid future. In his Presidential inauguration speech on May 9, 1994, Mandela again referenced the significance of the city: “Perhaps it was history that ordained that it be here, at the

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Cape of Good Hope, that we should lay the foundation stone of our new nation. For it was here at this Cape, over three centuries ago, that there began the fateful convergence of the peoples of Africa, Europe and Asia on these shores.\textsuperscript{4} In referencing the rich history, simultaneous “newness,” and cosmopolitanism of Cape Town, Mandela summed up the most frequently cited arguments for Cape Town’s exceptionalism. As the New York Times Travel Section suggests, it seems that the city is ripe for a renaissance, but the nature of this renaissance—whether social, political, economic, or some combination of the three—and, even more importantly, its extent, are still to be determined.

The ethos of exceptionalism is easily detectable in both Cape Town’s global branding and its internal city planning initiatives and manifests itself mainly in the claim to being “world-class.” In terms of global branding, the city shows little discrimination in using the title to describe various city attractions. A quick search for the phrase “world-class” on the official tourism bureau’s website yields hundreds of results, some of which are more legitimate than others: for the bureau to tout world-class property development opportunities, knowledge economies, and public transport upgrades is reasonable, but the world-class designation loses strength when used to promote rugby museums, golf tournaments, electronic music festivals, and swimming pools.\textsuperscript{5} Even on the City of Cape Town’s municipal government website (ostensibly a site with considerably less to prove when compared with that of the tourism bureau), the “world-class” descriptor is thrown around so frequently that questioning the

validity of the claim requires an assessment of a vast diversity of the city’s urban developments.

I. Defining Cape Town: Interpreting The City’s Urban Development Trajectory

In the realm of city planning, Cape Town’s urban developments have been outwardly focused (in the sense of appealing to international audiences first and a diverse cross section of city residents second) for some time. An illustrative example of this type of urban development is the Cape Town International Convention Center (CTICC) and the money poured into its building and expansion by the City of Cape Town and Western Cape Provincial Government. The Center, which required an initial City investment of R284 million in 2003 and has enjoyed subsequent investments totaling R700 million since 2011, is slated for a R4.5 billion expansion between 2015 and 2017 that will ideally allow it to break into the top ten best convention centers internationally (it is currently ranked 35th, though it is industry-leading in Africa). The expansion of the Center will double its capacity by annexing 10,000 square meters of prime real estate in the center of Cape Town’s City Bowl, which raises questions not only of the government’s resource allocation, but also of how urban spaces in the city are constituted since the privatization of previously accessible space in highly sought after areas of the city suggests a hierarchy of interests that the government is willing to serve.

The city’s successful bid for 2014 World Design Capital aligns with the exceptionalism ethos perfectly. In bidding for this biennial distinction from the Paris-

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based International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, officials working on the project (as well as the city at large) are said to have “recognized and mobilized Cape Town’s considerable design resources towards addressing the legacies of our city’s apartheid past... specifically at dealing with the vast imbalances that exist in our society.” The stated goals of the yearlong program are to “bridge historic divides, reconnect the city in structure and in spirits, rebuild social and economic inclusion and reposition Cape Town for a sustainable future.” Judging the degree to which the 460 projects deployed under the World Design Capital program achieved the aforementioned goals is obviously a subjective endeavor, but in surveying the projects a clear thematic orientation towards privileging the experiences and ideas of Cape Town’s Creative Class emerges. Of the four themes under which the projects are organized, “Bridging the Divide,” seems to be the one most closely aligned with the stated goals of the World Design Capital program. However, the division’s hallmark projects—Infecting the City, which brings a music or art festival to the City Bowl area each month; the MyCiti rapid bus system, which one can use to navigate the City Bowl district but not to reach the outlying townships of Khayelitsha or Langa, and the Maboneng Township Arts Experience, which turns informal settlement homes in Langa and Gugulethu into art galleries—can hardly be described as inclusive, diverse, or efficient in either their aims or the sectors of the Cape Town population they hope to affect.

bid to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Such mega sporting events are notoriously
to packaged as “magic bullets to development” that at once create jobs, boost
infrastructure, and spur tourism, but the temporary nature of these benefits—and who,
what, exactly, benefits from these projects—are never fully accounted for during the
hosting process or in the ex post facto assessment of the event’s success. While many
development practitioners in Cape Town would agree that the World Cup helped to
fast track various infrastructural projects mostly focused on transportation upgrades
(increasing the capacity of the International Airport, servicing major highways that
connected host cities and improving the Bus Rapid Transport System were all
completed in preparation for the tournament), the human costs to these infrastructural
upgrades were significant. Informal traders were removed from their places of work
in honor of FIFA’s licensed merchandise exclusion zones while squatters were
simultaneously evicted from their informal settlements near the new Green Point
stadium and on the routes to and from the airport so that they were “out of sight of
Western tourists.”

From a financial perspective, the first African World Cup was
deemed “the most successful in the history of the tournament,” by FIFA’s measuring
stick, but it is difficult to weigh the reputational gains South Africa enjoyed from the
successful hosting of the event against the national government’s expenditure of over
R30 billion in tax revenues on construction projects alone.

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10 “In Preparation for World Cup, the Poor in Cape Town Are Being Relocated,” The Washington Post,
June 11, 2010, sec. World,
11 “Selling South Africa: Poverty, Politics and the 2010 FIFA World Cup,” Global Research, accessed
For Cape Town specifically, the tournament-related development that betrays a world-class aspiration most egregiously is the construction of an entirely new football stadium in Green Point, an upper middle-class and predominantly white neighborhood, when upgrades could have been made to the preexisting stadium in Athlone, a predominantly Colored neighborhood near the rough and tumble Cape Flats, for one-third of the projected costs. Moreover, the implicit statement made in situating the stadium in a prosperous neighborhood should not be underestimated: in choosing Green Point, Cape Town effectively bestowed ownership of the month-long celebration that is the World Cup onto those citizens who belonged to Green Point’s privileged geography. The problems that accompany spatial inclusion will resurface again and again throughout this project. Suffice it to say here, however, that the decision reinforced the division between Capetonians that had the right to a world-class version of the city and those who could once again be spatially excluded.

The World-Class City as a Global Epidemic

It is important to acknowledge that Cape Town is not alone in its ambitions for world recognition, especially among countries with similarly emerging economies. The parallels are evident at every level of analysis from the nation state, to the city, to the individual groups working to subvert institutional power. The common desire to play host to mega-events that are continually proven to be poor economic investments, archetypal internal city-planning initiatives like waterfront revitalization that are meant to signal an openness to international influence, and even

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the hyper-local informal rights movements that are duplicated or literally transplanted from one BRICS setting to another, are all evidence of the very same processes occurring on a slight delay across various social, political, and, of course, geographic boundaries.  

That the BRICS nations hosted or will host three of the six Olympic Games between 2008 and 2016 and three FIFA World Cup tournaments in a row since South Africa’s in 2010 is not surprising; as many economists and sociologists alike have argued, mega-events offer a unique developmental opportunity for emerging economies. In allowing these countries “the ability to respond to external pressures for global competitiveness” and “the chance to reinforce collective identity,” mega-event hosting provides both the inspiration and a palatable justification to mobilize large amounts of capital towards reputational ends. Given the inspiration and justification, governments are able to dedicate massive public funds for projects whose benefits will mostly be privately enjoyed. This is what Jules Boykoff, an international expert in sports politics, has termed “Celebration Capitalism,” or the manipulation of public interests for private gains justified by the glamor and increased nationalism that accompanies hosting an event on the world stage.

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13 The term “BRICS” refers to an association of five major emerging economies, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. South Africa was added after the initial four were deemed to have significant influences over their regional economies. Many practitioner and scholars of development criticize South Africa’s inclusion on the grounds that the association does not actually benefit South Africa’s economy or its citizens.


At the nation state level of analysis, the practice of “Celebration Capitalism” is absolutely essential in understanding how urban space is so similarly reconstituted (in favor of private interests) in countries aspiring to world-class status, despite their disparate sociopolitical and geographic contexts. At the internal city level, waterfront revitalization is paradigmatic of city-planning initiatives that use world-class aspirations to coopt public interests. For example, the V&A Waterfront is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the city of Cape Town; it welcomes over 23 million visitors to its restaurant and retail heavy boardwalk, and as such, is currently undergoing an expansion that will turn the waterfront into a more expansive and mixed-use space.\(^{16}\) In the Central City Development Strategy (CCDS), documents that essentially function as a 5 Year Plan for Cape Town’s urban development authored by the municipal government in conjunction with the Cape Town Partnership (a public-private partnership entity with direct funding from the City of Cape Town), the goals for the expansion include facilitating the growth of the “…thriving nighttime economy, with many of Cape Town’s top bars, clubs, restaurants, and independent retail,” and determining “…the feasibility of constructing a new berth and terminal catering to larger cruise liners.”\(^{17}\)

These goals align well with the aforementioned outward strategy of urban development in which the experiences of international audiences are privileged above the lived experiences of Cape Town’s diverse citizenry. Even if these developments were to prove economically savvy, an enormous problem is still presented by the fact


that these developments are continually referred to as “mixed-use,” though the Waterfront has been primarily commercially oriented and enjoyed mostly by the White Capetonian population. The CCDS bolsters its calls for mixed-use spaces by promoting housing developments within the waterfront area, but given that V&A real estate is generally of the multi-million-rand penthouse persuasion, it seems unlikely that the expansion of the Waterfront will increase the diversity of its users or uses.

Waterfronts are incredibly valuable geographically for the simple fact that when developed well, they can combine business functionality with aesthetic beauty in a way that is difficult to achieve with other touristic entities. For this reason, waterfront revitalization is being pursued in various cities around the world including in BRICS cities like Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai, and Mumbai. The same pattern is emerging in these individual projects too, whereby the call for “inclusive stakeholder engagement” is falling on deaf ears, as was the case with Cape Town’s expansion project.18

Finally, at the hyper-local level, the duplication or transplantation of movements attempting to reassert public interests is yet another reason to believe that the existence of world-class aspirations changes urban development predictably despite the vast array of contextual differences. For example, shack-dwellers movements to organize against evictions of the informally settled and agitate for better service delivery have arisen so similarly in Cape Town (the Landless People’s Movement and Abahlali baseMjondolo) and Rio (the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto) that these groups have found reason to engage in knowledge-sharing and

solidarity-cultivating activities despite the extremely limited resources that accompany membership in any informal sector. StreetNet International is another organization whose subversive message has been adopted widely, especially in the BRICS countries. StreetNet has done an impressive job in transplanting its “World Class Cities for All” campaign (WCCA) that originated in response to the exclusionary world-class ethos surrounding South Africa’s 2010 World Cup to India during its tenure as host of the Commonwealth Games, and then to Brazil for the 2014 World Cup. This campaign works within and between various institutions (formal and informal trade unions, municipal governments, local academics, and even international organizations like the Gates Foundation) to identify and widely circulate the rights-based demands of the informal sector and to facilitate the realization of these demands. Though its approach will be problematized later (see Chapter Three’s discussion of current social movements), what is truly remarkable about the campaign is that while its mode of operation seems location-specific because it engages with specific stakeholders and within specific institutions, it is actually readily transferrable despite the vast physical separations and contextual specificities amongst these locales.

The transferability of these movements again speaks to the fact that world-class aspirations demonstrated in particular urban development projects are reconstituting cites in comparable ways. Of course, it would be a mistake to rely too heavily on the BRICS as a cohort of countries experiencing the same urbanization

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19 Thando Manzi, (Cato Manor Activist) in discussion with the author, Durban, August 4, 2014.
21 Ibid.
challenges, as this would deny the local, regional, and continental specificities that have undoubtedly and significantly shaped each country’s emergence as a potential world power. Even making purely economic comparisons is problematic given the asymmetric financial power that exists among the BRICS themselves (take China’s economic development versus South Africa’s, for instance). The need for Cape Town to be analyzed on its own is also abundantly clear: how its legacy as the most liberal city under Apartheid plays out today, its rampant social and spatial inequality, and the constant tension between its European and African influences and its Global Northern desires versus its Global Southern circumstances all combine to make the city a fascinating case in terms of understanding how globalization, urbanization, and democracy interact. As such, the purpose of the above discussion is instead to highlight one commonality among BRICS cities—their desire to be world-class—and trace the ways in which this commonality manifests itself similarly in the urban developments of these cities. This suggests a global “epidemic” of endeavoring for world-class status that shows no signs of slowing down.

II. (Re)Defining World-Class: Problematizing the Global City

Some key definitions and rhetorical distinctions are required before it is possible to understand the motivations behind aspiring to be a World-Class City. Establishing these definitions requires a somewhat involved process during which multiple rhetorical layers must be explicated. To orient this process, it is useful to explore the most common classifications of cities—that is, the global city, the world city, and my classification of concern, the World-Class City—so that the fundamental
assumptions underlying these classifications may be unpacked. It should be noted that
the economic discussion that appears here is quite limited; it features in this
explanation of definitions only to demonstrate why certain terms are preferred to
others.

The Global City

I will begin with the concept of the global city, theorized by Dutch-American
urban sociologist Saskia Sassen, as it is the most widely used term in discussing the
significance and interconnectedness of today’s cities. Sassen’s term (first coined in
strength from its explicit grounding in the processes of globalization, for to discuss
cities as economic or sociopolitical entities in their own right is to accept certain
premises about the way globalization has changed concentrations of power, resources,
and influence. In fact, Sassen’s term was instrumental in subverting the popular
understanding of globalization as a placeless process that transcended territorial
boundaries and thus contributed to the “decline of the nation-state” that was
predominant in the 1980s.22 By the 1990s, a popular revision of globalization was
being adopted whereby the noneconomic factors of globalization were given proper
credence alongside its purely economic processes. As such, Sassen was able to
formulate her definition as a counter to previous notions: by making agglomeration
economies (as in, the tendency for financial and human capital to accumulate in
certain areas because of the need for skilled managers to control a diffuse global

production processes) a central feature of globalization, the *global city* can be defined as a site for “major international business and financial centers and all the material resources they concentrate, from state of the art telematics infrastructure to brain talent.”

It is important to understand just how novel citing the primacy of agglomeration economies was at the time; previously, the idea that the rapid advancement of telecommunications technology would overcome the need for agglomeration reigned supreme. Instead, Sassen argued that, “the more globalized the economy becomes, the higher the agglomeration of central functions in a relatively few sites, that is, the global cities,” was and that this was the “fundamental dynamic” at play in her theory. Sassen’s logic highlights a new pattern of agglomeration that draws on Max Weber’s insight regarding the “development of specific geographic control sites in the international economic order,” that stem from a managerial society emerging as economies move further and further away from the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century. It is evident why face-to-face interactions are necessary in this new economy of producer services, especially considering the inputs needed to run the diffuse global production networks of this new economy—inputs like legal and accounting services, management consulting, and innovative financial instruments. Thus, Sassen’s global cities, New York, London, and Tokyo, are rather obvious choices: they were already the finance capitals of their respective countries when the growth of the service and financial sectors

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24 Ibid, 5.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, 8.
started to take off (at the expense of manufacturing) in the 1980s and were able to
grow alongside these sectors.

Other scholars have tried to broaden Sassen’s understanding of the global city
by outlining features of cities similar to New York, London, and Tokyo. Frequently
cited features include the existence of ports and international airports, advanced non-
financial services such as medicine and higher education, and centers for culture and
entertainment.\textsuperscript{28} Another quantitative approach taken to determining global cities
beyond Sassen’s elite three is to test their degree of integration as “production nodes
in the new global order.”\textsuperscript{29} Common measures include the number of international
flights serviced at the closest airports, the number of secretariats of international
organizations hosted within the city, and as a supplement to other measures, the city’s
population growth or growth in transnational workers.\textsuperscript{30}

The problem with these attempts at diversification, however, is that they still
elevate the economic by including some sort of disclaimer that establishes “the
strongest dynamism arises from the growth of a primary cluster of ‘high level
business services’ (management, banking, legal services, accounting, technical
consulting…etc.).”\textsuperscript{31} They go on to characterize cultural features of these cities only
as contributing to the “quality of life conducive to attracting and retaining skilled
international migrants […].”\textsuperscript{32} Sassen herself makes an attempt at broadening her
definition by pointing to the comfortable lifestyles afforded by these cities and their

\textsuperscript{29}Isin, \textit{Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City}, 117.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid.
consequent ability to attract the high-income workers that the industries of the new
globalized economy require, but again it is clear that the economic development argument is explanatorily prior to any other metric in defining global cities.\textsuperscript{33}

Herein lies the problem with making extensive use of Sassen’s \textit{global city} terminology for my analysis: in making the degree of globalization central to its definition, the global city is far too finite, too prophetic, too economistic. It fails to acknowledge that cities are unstable and always changing, and instead, assumes that the inevitable end goal for all cities is their full nodal integration into the new global order.\textsuperscript{34} Moreover, it rejects the possibility that cities with emerging economies can claim worldwide significance; the financialization of a city’s economy appears to be the only route to achieving \textit{global} prominence. In short, the economic determinism that is required to utilize the global city approach to understanding urbanization is inappropriate for the vast majority of cities that were not undergoing the right kind of economic development (greater financialization) at the right time (the 1980s).

\textit{The World City}

The use of \textit{world city} instead of \textit{global city} solves some of the aforementioned problems but further perpetuates others. The solution it offers is primarily rhetorical, but allows for the desired realm of semiotic possibility that the concept of the \textit{global city} precludes. Where the \textit{global} city so obviously prioritizes the process of


\textsuperscript{34} Susan Parnell and Sophie Oldfield, \textit{The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South} (Routledge, 2014), 17.
globalization as the major decider of significance, the *world* city acts as a significantly more neutral term. Because of this neutrality, the *world* city carries the potential for descriptive power that is inclusive of various types of cities: the traditional Western financial capital, the global Southern megacity that is rapidly growing population-wise, and, perhaps, even the BRICS city with the emerging economy that at times occupies the forgotten middle.

Alas, few scholars have made this important distinction in the relevant literature. Ananya Roy, professor (and prominent voice) of urban studies and international development at the University of California Berkeley, makes the distinction central in her contribution to *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*, in which she argues that the process of “worlding” cities of the global South “may provide an alternative to the phantom discourse of globality and the dominant paradigm of globalization,” a discourse that engenders “a ‘mode of affiliation’ for the ‘chief beneficiaries’ of globalization.”35 R. Radhakrishnan, a prominent scholar of postcolonial theory at the University of California Irvine, also acknowledges that “globality” is necessarily tied to “the travel of global capital,” whereas “worldliness” can be understood as simply as the “state of being in the world.”36 Roy’s process of “worlding” borrows from Heidegger in not only settling for “being in the world,” but also pushing for global Southern cities to be “at home” in the world.37 This requires transcending what Radhakrishnan calls the “provincialism of dominance,” that accompanies the common conception of

globalization as a process that papers over the economic, political, and social antagonisms inherent in cities.\textsuperscript{38}

Instead of utilizing the nuanced significance of this distinction, the majority of literature on urbanization uses the \textit{global} city and the \textit{world} city as interchangeable concepts. The extent to which this distinction is ignored is regrettable, but not surprising. Even for those urbanization scholars who give due credence to world-systems theory (they are already in the minority), world cities are still often defined as “the most important theatres of accumulation” and are further glorified as the “…preeminent centers of commercial innovation and corporate control, undisputed centers of taste-making, crucibles of consumer sensibility, and seedbeds of material culture.”\textsuperscript{39} Though definitions like this one and those previously mentioned may be overblown, references to capital are peppered throughout both global and world city literature alike, confirming the rhetorical negligence by which current urbanization scholarship is plagued. As such, the remaining critique of these concepts will be posed against both terms concurrently, since neither term appropriately describes Cape Town’s current relevance on the world stage. Even more importantly, however, is the fact that both terms are equally limited in expressing the future vision for the city I wish to propose. Constructing this future vision is the main purpose of this thesis.

\textit{Contradictory Spaces}

Sassen herself grants that global cities are “contradictory spaces,” as key sites for the “valorization of corporate capital and devalorization of disadvantaged
When it is acknowledged in urbanization literature, the scholarly opinion of this unfortunate feature of the global or world city fluctuates between “merely lamentable” and “exciting and new.” Sassen’s work tends to embrace the latter view, arguing that the global city enjoys a “joint presence… in which (1) the globalization of the economy has grown sharply and cities have become increasingly strategic for global capital, and (2) marginalized people have found their voice and are making claims on the city as well.”

What Sassen’s argument fails to address is that the two cases she describes are mutually exclusive: global capital claims space by privatizing it so that marginalized populations can no longer make their own claims to the space. Consequently, as globalization takes hold across the world, “[…] the city is growing smaller symbolically because of the vulnerability of social actors.”

Determining the degree to which marginalized urban populations have “found their voice” is a relatively futile effort anyway and would disrespect the political and social specificity I have been calling for all along. The ability for all Capetonians to make claims on the city is the focus of Chapter One, in which the decision-making process of the City of Cape Town in planning urban developments is modeled using game theory. For now, suffice it to say, that had all of Cape Town’s urban dwellers been able to successfully make claims on the city, this project would have never come to be; quite plainly, it would have lacked its empirical inspiration.

**Globalization Optimists**

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41 Ibid., 59.
Rarely is it possible to find as explicit an acknowledgment of inequality as Sassen’s. Where the acknowledgement is detectable, an optimistic and ambiguous assessment of the promise of globalization generally follows. Assessments like these conceive of globalization as a convergence-inducing process as in the Fukuyaman tradition. By granting that globalization has absolutely changed the experience of living in a city for better or worse while simultaneously recognizing the potential for globalization to induce “discontinuity, fragmentation, rupture, and dislocation,” it is possible to begin to subvert the popular narrative of urbanization as a sequential, path-dependent occurrence in favor of understanding urbanization as a process that could manifest itself in various forms.\(^{43}\) Procedural considerations and the problem of universalizing a singular experience of the city constitute much of the focus of Chapter Two.

*Convergence & Normalization*

Both the global city and world city are self-limiting in assuming that “catching up” to the preexisting standard for cities of worldwide significance is the singular and inevitable course of action to be taken if “development” (broadly defined) is to occur. Such an assumption fortifies the false dichotomy between cities integrated into the global capitalist system and cities remaining “localized others.”\(^{44}\) The previously mentioned criticisms all exist implicitly in the concept of convergence: privileging a certain type of economic development before social and political development, paying little attention to inherent inequality, and claiming that the disadvantaged can

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\(^{43}\) Flowerdew, *Discursive Construction,* 595.

\(^{44}\) Isin, *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City.*
benefit from globalization if cities in developing countries “catch up” enough, are all powerful strategies in arguing for a specific type of urbanization—the type that has occurred successfully in the global North. More importantly, however, is that economic convergence (determined by increased standards of living, GDP, employment rates, etc.) is inextricably tied to social and political convergence (measured by attempting to quantify vague “governance indicators” like corruption, free speech, and bureaucratic autonomy) without considering whether the city is ripe for this type of development or if this type of development is appropriate for the specific city. The prevalence of this attitude towards urbanization functions to create a normalizing effect on an otherwise complicated process: the preconditions, experiences, and outcomes of globalization on cities in the global North are taken as given; the challenges that accompany such urbanization are rendered invisible while its outcomes are thought to be optimal. The crux of the issue is succinctly stated by political theorist Warren Magnusson in a comment on Malcolm Waters’ Globalization thesis: “As Waters’ own analysis reveals, the important thing about globalization is not that it creates centers of command and control—that is an old story—but that it delocalizes those centers and draws the most remote regions into a common way of life.”

To take this common way of life as appropriate and given is the analytical danger I wish to avoid. Accordingly, the call for contextual specificity in defining development goals surfaces repeatedly throughout this thesis.

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*Situating Cape Town within Global & World City Discourse*

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Understanding where Cape Town fits in the existing hierarchy is no easy task: as a city only just emerging onto the world stage by function of its relatively new democracy and even newer economic diversification, Cape Town’s worldwide significance is not easily quantifiable. With respect to population, Cape Town is sizable at 3.4 million residents, but hardly comes close to achieving megacity status, for which 10 million residents in a single metropolitan area is required. Population is therefore not a claim to significance that Cape Town can make, though many other cities of the global South have achieved megacity status or will in the near future (In fact, 95% of urban population growth during the next generation will occur in cities of the developing world). Even in comparison to other cities in South Africa, Cape Town does not emerge as the most significant size-wise either in population or area, as evidenced by the fact that South Africa is a country without a primate city, or a city that is disproportionately larger than others in the country. As far as influence goes, any of South Africa’s three capitals, Cape Town, Pretoria, or Bloemfontein, its commercial center, Johannesburg, or its busiest port and second-busiest manufacturing hub, Durban, could be considered the most important in the region, depending on the measure used. In the scheme of “world city network integration,” coined by Peter J. Taylor, a prominent political geographer, Cape Town is classified as a “Beta+ city,” meaning it is “instrumental in linking its region or state into the world economy.” It does not, however, link “major economic regions” together like an Alpha or Alpha city or “constitute its own level of integration,” like Sassen’s elite

46 Dawson, Global Cities of the South, 1-8.
three global cities, here classified as Alpha++ world cities, have for decades.\(^48\) Judging from a purely financial standpoint, Cape Town’s network integration is surpassed in Africa only by its countryman Johannesburg, but is also trumped by a handful of global Southern megacities and commercial capitals.

While Cape Town is economically overshadowed by other financial and production centers, its cultural star is undoubtedly rising. Its direct spending on tourism increased at a little over 5% per year for four years consecutively between 2009 and 2012, which will ostensibly increase given the recent international titles it has claimed as a tourism and design capital.\(^49\) It is obvious that Cape Town’s government is trying to match this cultural prominence with increased investment, especially from finance and technology. In a government-commissioned study completed by Grant Thornton (an international consulting firm), Cape Town is promoted as an “upwardly mobile” city because of its expanding international markets and rising importance as a chief destination for foreign direct investment.\(^50\) This is significant because it indicates that the city possesses the resources to do something about rising inequality and poverty reduction.\(^51\) However, more important than its current status—be it measured by population, regional supremacy, or network

\(^{48}\) Ibid.
integration—however, is Cape Town’s obvious commitment to aspiring to world city glory.

*The World-Class City*

Given a continual quest for discursive and rhetorical precision, I wish to argue for the term that more accurately captures Cape Town’s emerging role on the world stage, and the radical course the formation of this role could take in the future, though it must be redefined—or, at least, reclaimed—from its current imprecise usage. This term, the *World-Class City*, references the strategy guiding Cape Town’s urban developments, highlights the aspirational quality of the city’s urbanization, properly characterizes urbanization as an ongoing process and, in its inexactitude, allows for a certain degree of normative postulating concerning what “world-class” ought to mean. Though it too has been used interchangeably with the *global city* and *world city*, after some elucidation, the nuance and explanatory power of the *World-Class City* as a unique concept will be apparent.

As stated before, the desire for world-class designation is apparent in Cape Town’s urban development strategy. In outwardly orienting these developments by focusing on attractions for foreign capital and workers, pursuing prestige projects like winning the World Design Capital title, and foregoing investments in the lived experiences of citizens (especially marginalized ones), it appears that Cape Town is aiming to mimic the experiences of cities in the global North without having achieved the same levels of foundational development economically or institutionally. The gap between the prestige projects pursued and those foundational development projects foregone is perhaps what prohibits Cape Town from joining the ranks of the bona fide
global or world city (the Alpha level, according to Taylor), at least by economic measures.

This gap also speaks to the aspirational nature of Cape Town’s recent urbanization initiatives. In deeming everything from its swimming pools to its golf courses to its electronic music festivals “world-class,” the city has focused on building up amenities that could help to approximate the experience of living in a more developed city. These amenities do not make a world city, but contribute to a world-class ethos, suggesting a city like the best in the world without actually being the best in the world, where “best” is narrowly defined in economic terms. In a comment on the pervasive use of the “world-class” designation in Cape Town’s marketing materials, McDonald drives this point home: “The term has also come to represent a strong ideological commitment to ‘going global’ and is an important discursive example of the normative desire of policymakers in Cape Town to see it become a ‘world city’ in the more academic sense of the term [emphasis added].”

The significance of Cape Town’s commitment to world prestige should not be underemphasized for it directly relates to the city’s move away from the strong state-led development that characterized the immediate post-Apartheid years. Since the early 2000s, a new era of urban development—one defined by private actors putting forth both the vision and the capital to realize it—has unfolded in the city. At the same time, Cape Town has also played host to various political events (ranging in organization and impact from one-off protests to full-blown social movements) in the name of social justice that suggest the city’s urbanization goals are neither clear nor

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past revision. This undecided nature, the potential it suggests, and the difference it allows, are all qualities of cities that are often ignored, especially when globalization underpins the urbanization narrative. The conception of the urban as “always emerging” is exactly what privileging the *World-Class City* designation permits.53 Instead of being a *global* or *world* city in particular, belonging to a *class* means sharing common attributes, while differing in kind, type, quality, or various other significant ways.

Cape Town as a World-Class City suggests a certain degree of self-determination that is prefaced upon the fact that the city is neither the financial capital nor sole seat of political power in South Africa or in the region. It is, of course, highly significant and influential in both of these realms and others (culturally, historically, as a melding of African and European traditions, as a sort of entry point to the rest of the continent, etc.), but the nature of its role in the world is anything but established. My project is premised on this very idea—that Cape Town’s current pattern of urban development creates certain problems, but that there may be potential for a radical departure from this pattern. The World-Class City is inexact and as of yet undetermined, and consequently, provides considerable room for normative considerations of what it could—and more importantly, what it *should*—mean to be world-class. The arguments that follow are guided by this inspiration.

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III. Defining A Thesis Trajectory: Identifying “Radical” in Theory & Practice

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Cape Town’s urban development, and certainly the most important and central to the forthcoming exploration, is the radical nature of the city and country’s stated ideals. By deeming the city and state’s ideals “radical,” I mean to highlight those commitments that both acknowledge the injustices of Apartheid-era urban development (with its social, economic, and geographic division and exclusion), and promote fundamental, thorough, and transformative improvements to development outcomes. The Constitution of South Africa is exemplary of the radical nature I speak of: it begins with recognizing past injustices and promising to honor those who suffered from these injustices, and goes on to make specific reference to the importance of facilitating social justice and greater equity, and protecting fundamental human rights. In addition, South Africa’s Bill of Rights not only guarantees typical civil freedoms like the right to vote, associate, and express oneself freely, but also protects socioeconomic rights such as the right to clean water, sufficient food and housing, good health care, and social security for all citizens. The candor and specificity of the arguments found in its Constitution and Bill of Rights make South Africa’s governing documents some of the most progressive in the world.54 This progressivity is mirrored in political declarations from every level of government—national, provincial, and local. Explicit commitments to reducing poverty, increasing equity, and promoting the further realization of citizens’ rights are made by every government official, regardless of

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party or department affiliation. Therefore, the political will to improve development outcomes in Cape Town along these progressive lines also clearly exists, at least in rhetoric to the public.

Why, then, have Cape Town’s urban developments fallen short of realizing these ideals? This question serves as the starting point for Chapter One, in which Cape Town’s specific style of governance, neoliberal urban governance, is defined and explored as the overarching cause of the gap between the city’s radical intentions and less-than-radical development results. Chapter One first traces the evolution of national social policy that has caused the widespread adoption of neoliberal urban governance practices in Cape Town, and then analyzes both the ideology and processes of neoliberal urban governance to demonstrate the contradictions between the two. It goes on to offer an example of how this system of governance has shaped development practices in the city. Finally, Chapter One uses game theory to model the decision-making process of the City of Cape Town that leads to the institutionalization of neoliberal urban governance as a system of urban planning in an effort to surmise how far off the city is from realizing its radical intentions.

The game theoretic model in Chapter One will reveal that neoliberal urban governance’s institutionalization in Cape Town is a stable equilibrium that cannot be spontaneously altered. As such, Chapter Two centers on an exploration of how critical theory can inform a move away from this equilibrium. Critical theory is utilized in this chapter as a tool for exposing the roots of the problematic equilibrium—which I take to be the insufficient normative framework currently employed in assessing the arrangement and efficacy of Cape Town’s social
institutions—and proposing a new normative framework for assessing social institutions that could inspire better outcomes in the city by fundamentally altering the normative goals of development. This alternative framework for assessing just social institutions borrows from Iris Marion Young’s politics of difference and other theories of deliberative democracy while reemphasizing the importance of spatial considerations. It is meant to highlight the ways in which the current normative framework reinforces neoliberal urban governance and its suboptimal development goals. The chapter then delves into specific examples of exclusion in Capetonian society to explore how this new normative framework could inspire outcomes more closely aligned with the ideal World-Class City—a concept whose revised definition I will endeavor to construct throughout this thesis.

Given this alternative normative conceptualization of the ideal goals of urban development, Chapter Three assumes the task of politicizing, or articulating a strategy for the realization of this preferred normative conception using the current state of resistance as a baseline. It begins with a criticism of the overreliance on elections as the path to realizing better outcomes and explores Cape Town’s highly adversarial political climate that functions to reinforce neoliberal urban governance and its suboptimal outcomes. It then moves on to assess current practices of grassroots resistance in the city to understand why current resistance has been unable to realize the socially transformative development goals I recommend. Next, the chapter imagines a new way of organizing resistance that upholds the normative standards set forth in the previous chapter, and finally, identifies current best practices in resistance
that have the potential to move Cape Town closer to the realization of a more inclusive idea of the World-Class City.

I borrow the strategy triad of exposing, proposing, and politicizing from Peter Marcuse’s approach to what he calls “Critical Planning.”^55 The approach defines theory as an “attempt to understand, to explain, and to illuminate the meaning and possibilities of the world in which practice takes place.”^56 It defines practice as the set of experiences that “…develop the potential of existing urban society.”^57 These concepts all combine to inform critical urban theory, which ideally “…should help deepen the exposé, help formulate responses that address the root causes thus exposed, and demonstrate the need for a politicized response.”^58 The diverse modes of inquiry utilized in this thesis are employed to further the application of critical urban theory to Cape Town’s specific case. Though analytically separated, the constant interplay between theory and practice should be apparent, as the driving force of this project is the desire to contribute to both the imagination and realization of Cape Town as a transformed version of the World-Class City that can genuinely be enjoyed by all its inhabitants.

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^56 Ibid, 185.
^57 Ibid, 186.
^58 Ibid, 194.
CHAPTER ONE: Neoliberal City

“We, the people of South Africa,
Recognize the injustices of our past;
Honor those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.”

- PREAMBLE of the South African Constitution, 1996

“In Cape Town, we have taken the decision that not only will we not be left behind, but we will take the lead in ensuring that we are one of the great emerging cities of the 21st Century. We know that a rhetorical commitment will not translate into action on its own. Instead, we have undertaken a new strategic process for our city to be the driver of economic and social development – a process that will involve an organizational shift.”

– PATRICIA DE LILLE, Mayor of Cape Town, 2013

Since the “Revolution of 1994,” as former President Thabo Mbeki referred to the fall of the Apartheid regime, South Africans have harbored a tripartite vision for the “new South Africa” defined by a commitment to democratic processes, the promotion of the ideal of total equality among citizens, and a deeply rooted belief in the power of resistance to create social change. This vision is reflected in the country’s first non-discriminatory Constitution, in which statements of intent concerning the correction of Apartheid-era wrongs, establishment of greater social justice, and protection of South Africa’s rich social diversity appear as early as in the first sentence of the Preamble. Though widely considered to have among the world’s most progressive governing documents, translating this progressivity into practice has been a challenge for South African local governments, who have recently been

charged with the responsibility of carrying out state mandates. The practice of
devolution, along with many other governing processes characterizing what urban
theory scholar Neil Brenner calls “actually existing neoliberalism,” are being
thoroughly embraced by aspiring World-Class Cities around the world. For Cape
Town, the adoption of neoliberal urban governance processes—reduced and
neutralized by Mayor de Lille’s referring to the processes simply as, “an
organizational shift,” in pursuit of global recognition—has changed the form and
function of government considerably, and, arguably, for the worse. While Mayor de
Lille’s concession of the inadequacy of rhetorical commitments to progressivity is
welcomed, the “organizational shift” as it has been carried out in Cape Town has
served to widen the chasm between the existing conception of world-class
socioeconomic development and the potential for world-class development that
fosters greater inclusivity.

The division between progressive theory and inclusive practice is exhibited in
numerous city policies that span many dimensions of urban life. Perhaps the most
glaring manifestation of this discontinuity lies in the city’s inability to carry out state
mandates; As the world’s “biggest welfare state,” South Africa is relatively unique in
that it mandates free basic municipal services including housing, water, food,
clothing, electricity and sanitation services for the indigent.\(^3\) However, with a
dependency ratio of three people to one taxpayer, the state has simultaneously
devolved the responsibility of providing these basic services to local governments and
largely unfunded the mandates, indicating just how unsustainable the current welfare

\(^3\) “You & Your Rights,” Black Sash, last modified May 2011,
policies are. For instance, the current public housing backlog in Cape Town is estimated to fall between 360,000 and 400,000 houses and is growing by 18,000 to 20,000 units each year. As far as enjoying the cultural amenities of urban life, the prior discussion of the exclusionary nature of citywide celebrations such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the more recent World Design Capital suggest that South African cities have yet to create an experience of city life that truly “belongs to all who live in it.” Even the seemingly straightforward establishment of democratic processes in elections has failed in its effort to reintegrate the previously divided South African population: in recent years, Cape Town’s local election results have repeatedly fallen along racial lines with White and Colored populations overwhelmingly favoring the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Blacks almost entirely voting for the African National Congress (ANC). Currently controlling the municipality, the DA has succeeded in enacting even more aggressively neoliberal policies than the ANC before it, suggesting that white racial supremacy is not just a static remnant of the city’s apartheid past, but is actively reproduced via elections.

It is obvious that the discontinuity between intended progressivity and a lack of inclusivity in the endeavor to achieve world-class status is expressed in Cape Town in various forms, but it is important to further understand the processes and policies that have created this discontinuity. As such, this chapter will focus on understanding

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the reasons for the particular ways in which Cape Town’s local government has chosen to pursue South Africa’s constitutional ideals and the effects these decisions have had on the creation of a more inclusive social, political and economic environment in the city. Beginning from the international political-economic climate in the immediate aftermath of the end of Apartheid, this chapter will attempt to explicate the external forces and intrinsic logic that were used to justify the organizational shift towards neoliberal urban governance. After a survey of the evolution of social policy is given, this chapter will consider the theory behind this new style of governance before launching into a deeper exploration of one of its primary practices, pursuing cost recovery for municipal services. Finally this chapter offers a game-theoretic model to understand how the City of Cape Town conceptualizes its urban development decisions in an effort to determine how far off the city is from realizing the goals for a New South Africa put forth in 1994’s constitutional transformation.


For South Africa to continue with its Apartheid-era strong state-led development would have been politically impossible by the 1990s. Global calls for divestment from Apartheid South Africa began as early as the 1960s, but were only truly impactful once Western economies became involved. The United States, especially its young people, led the charge, with institutions of higher education like the University of California campuses voting to withdraw almost $3 billion in
investments. Between 1984 and 1989, capital flight from South Africa totaled over R23.9 billion. This had deleterious effects on the value of the Rand, which in turn caused a staggeringly high inflation rate of 15% per year, in no small part forcing the Apartheid government to begin negotiations to dismantle and turn over its power or face total economic ruin.

The Reconstruction and Development Program

The end of Apartheid, however, did not signal the end of South African policies being shaped significantly by international, and more specifically, Western, pressures. Needing desperately to rebound from decades of increased economic isolation, the ANC’s first try at creating transformative social and economic policy resulted in the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), which was included in the ANC’s official running platform and likewise implemented beginning in 1994, when the party was first elected. Its five broad policy goals included building a balanced economy, providing for basic needs, developing human resources, democratizing society, and eliminating racist hiring and training processes. As evidenced by its diverse goals, the RDP aimed to take a multifaceted approach to the country’s development by recognizing that economic growth could not occur without social development and vice versa. In retrospect, of the four major socioeconomic policy sets to feature in the post-Apartheid period thus far, the RDP was novel in its

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
comprehensiveness: it gave equal billing to both the economic and the political, social, and environmental ideals of the new democracy. Its broadness, however, is thought to be the root of its downfall.\footnote{Esabe Loots, “The Public-sector: state incapacity in the 1990s- a critical evaluation of government performance,” in \textit{South African Economy and Policy (1990-2000)}, ed. Stuart Jones and Robert W. Vivian. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 346-347.}

Its policies were meant to strike a balance between social and conservative policies, but did so quite uncomfortably: by simultaneously enacting austerity measures in an effort to practice fiscal restraint, choosing not to collect new taxes, and building a robust social security system, the RDP proved very difficult to finance.\footnote{“South Africa’s Key economic policies changes since 1994-2013,” SA History Online, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-africa%E2%80%99s-key-economic-policies-changes-1994-2013.} Budget estimates for the program ranged from R40 billion to over R700 billion, though initially the policy only received R2.5 billion from the national government.\footnote{Esabe Loots, “The Public-sector,” 347.} However, because of disjointed relations between the national and local governments, less than half of this money (around R1.1 billion) ever reached the appropriate delivery channels and even less was actually spent.\footnote{Ibid.} In conjunction with the country’s insufficient capacity to implement RDP initiatives, the policy, with its undecided ideological bent, was quickly discarded in favor of a program with a firmer ideological stance, as it was believed that such a policy would lend the ANC “greater credibility.”\footnote{Ibid.}

\textit{Growth, Employment, and Redistribution}

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That this new comprehensive policy happened to align with the leading ideological trends for global development of the day should be no surprise. The ANC introduced the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution program (GEAR) in June 1996, its second try at transformative policy. The macroeconomic ideas it espouses were largely proposed by the supply of consultants sent to South Africa from the World Bank and other Western organizations. Its erasure of the social orientation of the RDP is indeed shocking: in the early 1990s, Nelson Mandela supported nationalizing various South African industries, but such proposals had all but disappeared from the political landscape by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{16} The stark reversal that GEAR represents is attributed to the “sheer volume of advice” the World Bank consultants provided, along with “the intellectual coherence of neoliberal policy frameworks (as opposed to the disorganized and often poorly articulated advice that was coming from the left) and the slick presentation styles and resources of neoliberal proponents,” that, “combined to make a powerful ideological package.”\textsuperscript{17} It is also true that South Africa’s unique economic history played a role in its relatively aggressive promotion of neoliberal ideals: the country could not afford to face the economic isolation of the Apartheid era again and clearly needed to conceive of its own economy as part of the globalized whole.\textsuperscript{18} As such, GEAR is commonly seen as a “watershed in the ANC’s ideological shift” towards a more neoliberal, market-friendly economic stance.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 348.
\textsuperscript{17} McDonald, \textit{World City Syndrome}, 76-77.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
As a program, GEAR fell into step with the World Bank’s belief that free trade and export-oriented growth would increase aggregate output and employment. Concessions to domestic and foreign capital were a central feature, eventually resulting in the complete dismantling of exchange controls to attract foreign direct investment.\textsuperscript{20} Trade liberalization was paired with drastic cuts to social spending especially in the realms of housing and municipal services: in fact, when compared to the spending at the beginning of the decade, the ratio of spending on housing and community services was actually halved by 1999.\textsuperscript{21} The social aspects of GEAR were almost nonexistent; the program promoted concurrently lowering corporate tax rates (from 27\% of tax revenues to 11\%) while increasing personal taxes (from 25\% to 42\%), including a regressive Value Added Tax that adversely affected the poor most of all.\textsuperscript{22} GEAR also facilitated an assault on the rights of labor in supporting “regulated” labor flexibility and wage restraints that served to atomize labor negotiation abilities, which was a major complaint of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).\textsuperscript{23} Redistribution was also missing from GEAR’s agenda though it was given equal billing alongside the goals of growth and employment in the policy’s naming. As prominent South African political analyst Hein Marais explains, “Despite the attempts to align GEAR rhetorically with the socially progressive objectives of the RDP, GEAR set no redistributive targets and demurred on the linkage between growth and income distribution.”\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} Loots, “The Public-sector,” 351.
\textsuperscript{22} McDonald, World City Syndrome, 147.
\textsuperscript{23} Marais, South Africa Pushed to the Limit, 149.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 116.
Assessing the impact of GEAR is difficult because of the statistical discrepancies that exist between government-sponsored studies and those independently undertaken. Concerning growth, it is clear that GEAR at least reversed the negative economic growth from earlier in the decade, though its target of 6% annual growth was never achieved in the period between 1996-2000 (it instead averaged around 2.9% growth). Growth by other measures, such as GDP per capita had suffered a 2.6% decrease by the end of the period, and rates of foreign direct investment, for which South Africa trailed behind the likes of Angola, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, also do not suggest the abject success of GEAR. On the employment front, GEAR’s failure to create jobs is commonly agreed upon, except by South Africa’s official statistics agency, Statistics South Africa who report the creation of 1.1 million jobs in the period between 1996 and 2001.

Suspecting data manipulation, COSATU created its own research body, The National Labor and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI), whose results indicated the possibility of up to 1 million jobs created in the informal sector, but a loss of around 400,000 jobs in the formal sector. More recent studies of the period suggest even more damning numbers, ranging from over half a million jobs lost to upwards of 37% unemployment, where Statistics South Africa had narrowly suggested the rate had reduced to a mere 22.5%. The goal of redistribution enjoyed mixed results: total social spending had increased since the 1990s but the ratio of the total budget dedicated to the key areas of health, housing, transport, and

\[\text{\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item 25 Ibid, 117.
\item 26 Ibid.
\item 27 Knight, “Sanctions.”
\item 28 Ibid.
\item 29 Marais, South Africa Pushed to the Limit, 118.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}\]
communication services decreased. In line with the mass informalization of trade and the concurrent growth of informal settlements, NALEDI cited that the income of the poorest 40% of South Africans had decreased by 20% between 1996 and 2001. It is clear, then, that GEAR not only functioned to increase inequality and decrease the quality of life for most South Africans (one indication is the decrease in life expectancy from 63 years in 1990 to 50 years by 2000, due in large part to the HIV/AIDS epidemic which escalated from a mere 318 reported cases in 1990 to an estimated 3.7 to 5.5 million cases by 2000), but had also been a disappointment in achieving seemingly straightforward economic goals.

The New Growth Path

GEAR continued to have similar effects until the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASIGSA), which reasserted some of the social imperatives of the RDP by outlining broad goals for poverty reduction and employment, replaced it in 2005. ASIGSA was implemented with far less conviction than the RDP or GEAR (both of which suffered from implementation problems themselves), and accordingly had minimal effects on the economy. It was replaced, along with President Thabo Mbeki, once Jacob Zuma was elected in 2010. The New Growth Path (NGP) followed thereafter and, in theory, was meant to reassert the primacy of job creation among the nation’s broader economic goals. Created and introduced under a new political environment, in which the ANC,

31 Knight, “Sanctions.”
33 “South Africa’s Key economic policies changes since 1994-2013.”
COSATU, and South African Communist Party (SACP) had formed a tripartite alliance, the policy enjoyed a positive reception initially.

The NGP has recently faced some critique in its implementation, as the progressive nature of its programs are questionable, especially when the more socially oriented microeconomic pieces of the policy are considered separately from the macroeconomic pieces, of which very little has changed since GEAR. The hallmark of the NGP is the benchmark of creating 5 million new jobs by 2020, all of which should align with the International Labor Organization’s guidelines for “decent work.”34 The policy lays out five avenues to pursue in meeting this target including public investment in infrastructural projects; spatial, especially rural, development; development of the green and knowledge economies, focusing on public services, and generally pursuing more labor-absorbing activities in the main economic sectors.35 With these five strategies in mind, the NGP offers microeconomic and macroeconomic initiatives by which to achieve these goals. The microeconomic include advancements to technology, investments in skill development, restructuring labor policies to enhance productivity, and the promotion of small enterprise creation.36 The macroeconomic initiatives are, tellingly, far less detailed, and include a monetary aspect that aims to reduce interest rates and create more “competitive”

exchange rates, and a fiscal aspect that is far more conservative, arguing to cap increases to government expenditures at 2% per annum.\(^{37}\)

The contradictory nature of the NGP’s goals is visible in other areas too, most notably in comparing the fairly progressive industrial policies it promotes (acknowledging the role of the state in creating jobs) with the way it aims to tackle vast inequality in South Africa (namely, by increasing employment without mentioning progressive taxation or putting forth a method of implementation for its proposed salary caps on high earners).\(^{38}\) Thus, the NGP came to represent more contradictions than its “compromises and tradeoffs” tagline—as it has come to be represented in the South African media—would suggest.\(^{39}\) By 2011, South African researchers were doubtful that the economic growth seen in the country would translate into job creation and reduced unemployment, finding that employment growth had been negative in five of the 10 years between 2001 and 2010, while only one year of negative economic growth occurred.\(^{40}\) Such a statistic indicates that the economy has not become more labor-absorptive, which means that economic growth would have to drastically increase (to greater than 10% annually, at least) if this growth were to automatically translate into job creation.\(^{41}\) For reference, the current GDP growth rate in South Africa is 1.4%, which bodes poorly for the successful

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\(^{37}\) Ibid.  
\(^{38}\) Ibid.  
\(^{39}\) Ibid.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid.
creation of 5 million more jobs in the five remaining years before the 2020 target date.\footnote{42 \textit{“Economy | Statistics South Africa | Page 2,”} accessed April 9, 2015, \url{http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=735&id=1&paged=2.}}

\textit{The National Development Plan}

Sensing the need for a longer-term socio-economic program, the ANC has since introduced the National Development Plan (NDP), which is meant to guide, not override, the NGP. The policy package, enacted in 2013, provides a strategic plan to transform the country by 2030; the vision includes “building consensus” (as opposed to the “tradeoffs” of the NGP), reducing South Africa’s Gini coefficient from 0.7 to 0.6, halving unemployment by creating 11 million new jobs, and eliminating destitute poverty entirely.\footnote{43 \textit{The National Development Plan Unpacked,”} accessed April 9, 2015, \url{http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/national-development-plan-unpacked.}} Under these broad goals are specific policy areas, each with key actions to be taken toward implementation. The areas include improving the quality of education (by focusing on early childhood programs and providing better incentives for teachers); strengthening the health system (by increasing training for hospital managers and promoting public-private partnerships for service delivery); uniting society (by reviewing Black Economic Empowerment policies); improving the capacity of the state (by clarifying chains of command); making planning more inclusive (by pursuing city densification and devoting more resources to rural development); promoting a low-carbon economy and other infrastructural projects (by investing more money, especially in research and development); and fighting
corruption (by improving the monitoring system for tenders). Many of the specific project areas had never before been so explicitly identified as priorities by the state, which once again made for a positive initial reception to the NDP.

The NDP and NGP were similar in another regard: while the NDP’s microeconomic goals appeared to be progressive, its macroeconomic goals were largely unchanged from the NGP and actually echoed the monetary and fiscal conservatism of GEAR. The most important similarities across these programs include the emphasis on export-driven growth, tariff reduction and other forms of trade liberalization, and a reduction of the state’s consumptive expenditures. Thus, the creation of policy after policy hardly indicates an ideological revolution: instead, it reflects a staunchly neoliberal stance on macroeconomic policy paired with proposals for somewhat progressive microeconomic policies without providing the necessary funds or requisite capacity to implement them. Unsurprisingly, the prevailing neoliberal belief that economic growth can automatically solve social problems has persisted throughout these policy iterations; common to each policy document is the belief that “reallocating existing resources” will suffice in funding entire social policy overhauls. Reallocation is always touted as the answer; redistribution is rarely mentioned.

In fact, despite the insufficient capacity to enact many of the initiatives prescribed in the various iterations of South Africa’s national social policies, the country has never had a problem with asking the working class, young, and indigent to make “compromises and trade-offs,” while repeatedly making concessions to

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business elites, claiming that the “private sector must be on board” to make
transformation a reality. President Zuma’s pro-business bias is no secret to the
South African public, but having won the recent 2014 election with a 63.7% majority,
the continued strength of his opposition—mainly hailing from the leftist and unionist
camps—has been significantly neutralized. The relative newness of the NDP along
with the recent landslide election has created an aura of political uncertainty in South
Africa. While business elites are urging the ANC to implement NDP policies
immediately (as resistance will be weakest in the aftermath of Zuma’s overwhelming
victory), both COSATU and the SACP have published lengthy critiques of the NDP
and are now formalizing alternative prescriptions and resistance mechanisms. As
the largest constituent member of COSATU with 320,000 members, the National
Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) is calling for the NDP to be
replaced entirely and threatening to vote against the ANC and revoke its campaign
funding in the next elections.

Asserting that it has “recommitted itself to a ‘worker controlled, socialist,
revolutionary, militant, democratic Marxist-Leninist inspired industrial and
manufacturing’ philosophy,” NUMSA’s major grievances align with that of the larger

COSATU body.\textsuperscript{49} Beginning from the “highly inaccessible” 484-page NDP document (that ironically fails at its own goal of making planning more inclusive), COSATU rails against the provision of low quality and unsustainable jobs that will most likely be created in the informal sector, given the existing lack of labor-absorption in export-oriented industries.\textsuperscript{50} Its more subtle argument claims that the NDP’s goals are not ambitious enough: “It proposes to increase the share of income to the bottom 40% of income earners from the current 6% to a mere 10%. The ambition of the NDP is that nearly half of our people should receive 10% of the wealth after 18 years of implementation of the national plan!”\textsuperscript{51} The SACP similarly points to the NDP’s ambition to reduce South Africa’s Gini coefficient by so little, arguing that a coefficient of 0.6 is still higher than any other middle- or high-income country in the world.\textsuperscript{52} The party also critiques the process used to construct the NDP; specifically, it finds fault with the depoliticized planning commission that is chaired by just one minister (but has consulted with various KPMG employees) and the fact that little to no consultation was allowed in the period between announcing the creation of the commission and introducing the completed NDP.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps most insightfully, COSATU and the SACP have repeatedly pointed out the ways in which the NDP functions to atomize the solidarity between the working class and the poor by promoting job creation without redistribution.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Sipho Hlongwane, “SACP on the NDP: We do need a plan, just not this one,” The Daily Maverick, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-05-17-sACP-on-the-NDP-we-do-need-a-plan-just-not-this-one/#.VLgUXGTF94g.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
This observation, alluding to the fractured nature of resistance, is absolutely crucial to understanding how exactly the ideologically identical (neoliberal) core of South Africa’s socioeconomic policies has continually been able to reinvent and repackage itself as a progressive departure from the past. When understood as employing “moments” of creation and destruction (suggested by Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore’s theory of “actually existing neoliberalism,”) the tendencies for this neoliberal core to both exacerbate inequality and fracture resistance are made logically possible. These tendencies are even clearer when applying traditional neoliberalism to the urban setting, as neoliberal urban governance has fundamentally changed the role of local governments from service providers to service assurers. The ideology and practice of neoliberal urban governance are important to understand in greater depth; as such, a fuller explanation of what neoliberal urban governance is and how its processes and effects are visible in Cape Town is provided below.

II. Neoliberal Urban Governance: Contradictory Ideology & Processes

Understanding what exactly neoliberalism is and is not remains fuzzy in most of the literature on the subject. I believe the ambiguity arises from two concurrent problems. The first is the inability to discuss capitalism, globalization, or neoliberalism as separate entities and the second is the tendency to conceive of each as individually having “practice,” “process,” and “ideology” components on their own. While the behaviors that drive this ambiguity are understandable and even justified in certain respects, it is useful for my purposes to spend a moment
delineating between the three so that the novelty of neoliberal urban governance can be fully comprehended.

Primarily, I wish to cast capitalism as a specific mode of production or set of productive practices (focused mainly on profits and accumulation) and globalization as the process of extending the practices of capitalism around the world (which functions to diversify financial and technological flows across geographic boundaries). Neoliberalism is more difficult to define individually. Sequentially, it clearly arose out of capitalism and globalization and thus, is understandably conceived of in relation to the others. There is a tendency to cast neoliberalism solely as an ideological construction that carries out the implicit goals of capitalism and globalization, but to understand neoliberalism only as an ideology would be to miss its inherent contradictions. Ideologically, neoliberalism emphasizes the importance of private property and free markets through promoting the policy trio of privatization, liberalization, and deregulation. In practice, however, neoliberalism has not succeeded entirely in facilitating a “withering away” of the state and instead, frequently results in a “dramatic intensification of coercive, disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all aspects of social life.” This “rather blatant disjuncture” between neoliberalism as an ideology and its “everyday political operations and societal effects,” is precisely what makes the

increased intensity of the promotion of neoliberal urban governance so important. Instead of reducing the state’s influence, as neoliberalism’s ideology would dictate, this disjuncture allows the state to be mobilized to privatizing and disciplinary ends.

The disconnect between the ideology of neoliberalism and the process of neoliberalization is a rich place to begin, as many separate contradictions are encapsulated within this larger disjunction. Brenner and Theodore point to two fundamental mischaracterizations of neoliberalism that do not hold up in practice. First is the portrayal of states and markets as opposing forms of social organization, which “fails to recognize the politically constructed character of all economic relations.” Second is the widely held belief that neoliberal policies can be rolled out in the same ways and have the same effects across various contexts, instead of respecting the contextual specificity and path dependence of most reform. For the South African case, a third disjuncture that has already been hinted at—that is, the curious commitment to seemingly progressive ideals (via the Constitution and the evolution of national development policies) and their concurrent pursuit via transparently neoliberal processes—is important to include, as it raises the question of just how progressive South Africa’s social policies really are.

The Path Dependence of Actually Existing Neoliberalism

Within the context of South Africa, the reason Brenner and Theodore emphasize path-dependence as a feature of “actually existing neoliberalism” is

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56 Ibid.
57 Ibid, 353.
obvious: increasingly neoliberal reform had to be rolled out gradually in the newly constituted democracy, as it was politically imprudent to deny non-Whites their transformative vision for a New South Africa so soon after they had taken positive steps toward achieving it. Path-dependence is also crucial in understanding the initial mischaracterization of neoliberalism as entirely hostile to the state. As crises and contradictions emerged within neoliberal doctrine, the role of the state evolved to ameliorate these negative tendencies. Neoliberalism’s inherent trend toward crisis is also well documented in the South African case, as evidenced by GEAR’s disastrous effects on the country’s employment rate and wealth distribution, which are yet to be rectified by programs found in the NGP or NDP. This specific case also illustrates the usefulness of Brenner and Theodore’s concept of “moments” of neoliberal reform that can be built upon a progressive base, which makes possible the many instances when a policy may seem progressive at first, but is underpinned by a “…deeper dynamic of marketization and commodification, leading to the creation of an even more profound neoliberalization of markets and society…”

Actually Existing Neoliberalization as Creative Destruction

Along with path-dependence, Brenner and Theodore also borrow from Joseph Schumpeter’s understanding of capitalism as a form of social organization with a constantly shifting interplay between destruction and innovation in an effort to further contend with neoliberalism’s inherent contradictions. They describe the creative

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58 Ibid, 362.
59 McDonald, *World City Syndrome*, 72.
destruction of neoliberalism as “two dialectically intertwined but analytically distinct moments: the (partial) destruction of extant institutional arrangements and political compromises through market-oriented reform initiatives; and the (tendential) creation of new infrastructure for market-oriented economic growth, commodification, and the rule of capital.” However analytically distinct, the ideological thrust of both the destructive (“roll back”) and creative (“roll out”) moments are the same in aiming to clear the way or provide new paths for markets to facilitate economic growth. Here again South Africa provides an interesting case for creative destruction, especially in the post-Apartheid context. The ‘revolution’ of 1994 served as the first moment of destruction, dismantling the interventionist Apartheid regime that ruled via strong, state-led development. But this “partial and truncated” destructive moment needed to be followed immediately by another that more closely mimicked the kind of destruction found in the global North. This second destructive moment is seen in the half-hearted administration of the RDP, which made rolling back the more Keynesian policy in favor of rolling out the more neoliberal GEAR a fairly simple task.

Brenner and Theodore also identify specific “sites” for related moments of creation and destruction including wage relations, forms of inter-capitalist competition, financial and monetary regulation, governance, international relations, and uneven spatial development. The destructive and creative activities in these sites are all evident in the evolution of South Africa’s development policies since the end of Apartheid. Some of the most blatant examples include the assault on organized labor in the name of “flexibility” and dismantling of exchange controls found in

61 McDonald, World City Syndrome, 78.
GEAR, the devolution of welfare programs to municipal governments that were previously the state’s responsibility (as accomplished by the NGP’s cap on national expenditure increases), and the NDP’s creation of public-private partnerships that privatize the planning and delivery of various social programs and services.

_Cities as a Prime Locale for Neoliberalization_

The third and final facet of actually existing neoliberalism to demystify is its proclivity for playing out in urban settings. Cities have always been intrinsically tied to the rise of capitalism, as the prominent scholar of geography David Harvey explains:

From their very inception, cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product. […] Capitalism is perpetually producing the surplus product that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces. In this way an inner connection emerges between the development of capitalism and urbanization.⁶³

As discussed in the Introduction, Saskia Sassen popularized the notion of cities as spaces for agglomeration economies that make possible the processes of globalization and ground these processes in specific locales. But to understand the importance of

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⁶³ David Harvey, Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution (New York: Verso, 2012). 5.
Cities in the age of neoliberalism, Brenner and Theodore’s concept of creative
destruction is necessary. They identify the era of roll back neoliberalism (the 1990s
for South Africa but the previous decade for countries in the global North), which
prompted austerity measures in national governments that lead to the devolution of
many duties previously handled at the state level. At the municipal level,
governments were then directed to increase efficiency by shifting to a style of
governance referred to as “urban entrepreneurialism,” that espoused strategies of
privatization and cost recovery as “best practices.” The next decade (the 2000s for
South Africa) marked the era of roll out neoliberalism that dealt with creating new
institutional and infrastructural pathways for economic growth. In the city, this meant
constituting specifically economic spaces by delineating certain areas as “…arenas
for capitalist growth, commodification, and market discipline…” This translated
into the creation of City Improvement Districts, waterfront revitalization and even
larger-scale prestige projects, and other developments in the built environment.

It would be incorrect to summarize this understanding by proposing that cities
are important because they have been mobilized to do the bidding of increasingly
neoliberal national governments. While this is true, cities have also originated their
own forms of governance, physical developments, and instances of political
resistance that are entirely unique to the urban setting. As such, understanding the
manifestations of actually existing neoliberalism in the city have become increasingly
more urgent, especially for those wishing to thwart the hegemonic forces of
neoliberalism that have only functioned to increase urban inequality. Having detailed

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
the theory and general processes of neoliberal urban governance, it is now possible to assess the degree to which neoliberal urban governance is being pursued in Cape Town. To these ends, a deeper investigation of the logic of one of the most pervasive actions undertaken in the name of neoliberal urban governance in Cape Town—the aggressive pursuit of cost recovery for municipal services—is provided next.

III. Cost Recovery in Cape Town: Regressive or World-Class Strategy?

One major institutional shift that aligns with Cape Town’s neoliberal transformation is the rolling back of its welfarist approach to municipal services in favor of pursuing high levels of cost recovery for service delivery, a neoliberal “best practice.” Because of the devolution of service delivery from the state to local level, municipalities are now required to administer services that they have the capacity to provide (this includes water, sanitation, refuse removal, electricity, etc.), though state financing remains limited (and cities are restrained by national caps on local tax rates). When the state does not finance its mandates and the municipality is limited in the revenues it can collect to subsidize service delivery, cost recovery becomes a necessary evil. In essence, cost recovery amounts to consumers paying at or near the full cost for service delivery and maintenance. In Cape Town, cost recovery has been combined with block tariffs from the state: the city uses block tariff funds to provide a “basic” level of services—for example, the first 6kl of water, 4.2kl of waste removal, or 60kwh of electricity for a single residential household—at no cost to
residents, but can then aggressively increase rates thereafter to recoup costs. In helping to balance budgets and lower the welfare burden that falls on the state, cost recovery is a sound policy in terms of pursuing neoliberal urban governance. However, in its ability to disproportionately target the least advantaged of Cape Town’s citizens both by setting unfair rate structures and inappropriately enforcing these payments, cost recovery—like many of the policies already discussed in this chapter—fails to uphold the constitutional ideals set forth for the New South Africa.

Regressive Rate Structures for Cost Recovery

The strategy for setting these service rates varies across cities, but in Cape Town, the rate schedule equals the full marginal cost for the provision of services as well as a portion of the long-term maintenance cost of service delivery. In terms of equity, the problem with this equation is that the combination of seemingly progressive block tariffs and cost recovery at higher consumption levels means that very little cross-subsidization occurs from the rich to the poor. Instead, a regressive rate schedule is created that places the burden of cost recovery on the poorest Capetonians. This policy is obviously attractive to foreign investors, who enjoy lower operating costs for their businesses because cost recovery in poor areas decreases the pressure for cross-subsidization in commercial and high-income residential areas (thus aligning quite nicely with the world-class ethos Cape Town is attempting to cultivate).

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68 McDonald, World City Syndrome, 22.
The regressive nature of Cape Town’s cost recovery model is apparent when looking at the evolution of the city’s tariff schedules in recent years. In the last decade, the “blocks,” or levels of consumption have been made more stringent so as to recover more from fewer services provided. For example, after the initial ≤6kl water allocation at no cost to the resident, the next consumption block has decreased from ≤12kl in 2004 to ≤ 10.5kl in 2014.\(^69\) By decreasing the price levels (the highest block decreased from >60kl to >50kl in the same period) of water consumption, residents consuming at high levels are less likely to conserve water, which weakens the popular environmental argument in favor of cost recovery. A more recent development (in the last four years) is the cost increases from block to block, which have risen more steeply at lower consumption levels, as evidenced in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 shown below:

Table 1.1: Domestic Water Tariffs in Cape Town between 2010 and 2014 (price per kiloliter per household)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (kl)</th>
<th>Price in May 2010 (R per kl)*</th>
<th>Price in Jan. 2014 (R per kl)</th>
<th>Price Increase (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block 1: ≤6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2: ≤10.5</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>9.98</td>
<td>73.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3: ≤20</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>16.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 4: ≤35</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>16.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 5: ≤50</td>
<td>22.40</td>
<td>26.16</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 6: &gt;50</td>
<td>29.55</td>
<td>34.50</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adjusted for inflation

Source: Calculated with pricing figures from www.capetown.gov.za/water

Table 1.2: Domestic Sanitation Tariffs in Cape Town between 2010 and 2014 (price per kiloliter per household)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (kl)</th>
<th>Price in May 2010 (R per kl)*</th>
<th>Price in Jan 2014 (R per kl)</th>
<th>Price Increase (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block 1: ≤4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2: ≤7.35</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td><strong>22.35</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3: ≤14</td>
<td>14.29</td>
<td>15.46</td>
<td>8.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 4: ≤24.5</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>16.90</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 5: ≤35</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td>8.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculated with pricing figures from www.capetown.gov.za/water
*Adjusted for inflation

To adequately compare the differential rate structures at lower versus higher levels of consumption, one must keep in mind that Block 1 in both instances is meant to provide a “basic” level of services, but whether these allocations are “sufficient” is an entirely different question. Given that the average water consumption of a household in Cape Town is 26kl per month, it is reasonable to wonder what poorer families are sacrificing in order to satisfy their actual water needs.70 In Khayelitsha, where the average household income is R3,200 per month, affording the average level of water consumption would cost a family about 15% of its monthly budget.71 Comparatively, in a richer neighborhood such as Green Point or Rondebosch, the average level of water consumption would only amount to 4% of an average

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70 David McDonald, telephone interview with author, February 2015.
household’s monthly income.\textsuperscript{72} Basic calculations of this nature cannot account for the significant portion of Capetonians who have no income at all (around 60% of Khayelitsha residents have no steady source of income, and about one-third of Cape Town’s population calls this township home). Combined with the costs of other fundamental services (sanitation being one of a necessary set of services that are all priced using regressive rate structures), it is clear that lower income households must sacrifice some essential aspect of the needs that, when satisfied, constitute a sufficient—rather than basic—quality of life.

\textit{Adverse Effects of Enforcement}

Along with these increasingly regressive rate structures for municipal services, Cape Town has also enacted methods of enforcement that reduce costs to the municipality. The most innovative of these “flanking mechanisms”—as Brenner and Theodore would refer to policies that appear progressive in comparison to more problematic municipal actions (i.e. service cutoffs and evictions), but generally further the neoliberal urban governance project in subtler ways—is the prepaid meter for electricity and water that requires payment for services upfront. These meters are beneficial to the city by keeping administrative costs low in two ways. First, users cannot go into debt because payment is due upfront; this frequently results in the poor self-disconnecting when they can no longer afford services, though they may be in desperate need of them. Second, officials need not be physically present to cut off services anymore, which not only reduces administrative costs, but also may have the

\textsuperscript{72} These calculations are based on the average annual income of R160,000 in these neighborhoods, as reported by the City of Cape Town census.
residual effect of softening the city’s image. Cities can also justify charging higher rates for services in an effort to recoup the costs of meter installation. Within the neoliberal urban governance schema, the cost-cutting and profit-generating effects of prepaid meters are so attractive that Cape Town now requires all new houses to be built with meters.

The public-facing justification for meters is that they are actually pro-poor in assisting lower-income households with more effective budgeting. In reality, however, self-disconnections are frequent—even if the user is in dire need of services beyond the “lifeline” (or, basic free) allocation. Additionally, making payments and procuring the materials (tokens or smart cards) needed to transfer these payments to meters can be inconvenient and expensive, especially for township dwellers that often must travel long distances to make prepayments. In informal settlements the case is very similar, given that such residents often do not possess the resources to acquire such tokens or live in areas that lack the infrastructure for meter installation. As a result, some of the poorest Capetonians are not even able to claim the paltry basic services they are guaranteed constitutionally simply by nature of where they live. The City of Cape Town’s condescension (at best, and paternalism at worse) in believing that metered services are beneficial to the poor—whose biggest problem, apparently, is not regressive rate structures or service cutoffs, but actually, the inability to budget—would be shocking if patterns of neoliberal urban governance were not so easily recognizable by now; instead the public has come to expect such agency-limiting, regressive policies as the norm in the New South Africa. Here again, is an

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73 McDonald, World City Syndrome, 244.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
example of how the practices that govern the city create societal circumstances that are a far cry from those called for during the Revolution of 1994. The final facet of Cape Town’s neoliberal urban governance that must be explored, then, involves understanding how the city government makes these implementation decisions and what factors it values in so doing. To these ends, the city’s decision-making processes are modeled in the following section.

IV. Planning in the Neoliberal City: A Game-Theoretic Understanding

The overarching question that has inspired this exploration of the various ways in which Cape Town’s governance has fallen short of its constitutional ideals is as follows: how is it that the City of Cape Town has been allowed to ignore the progressive intentions that are enshrined both in the country’s founding document and in various legislation, and explicitly expressed by the city’s politicians? This broad question exposes a multitude of more specific concerns. If Cape Town has democratic elections, why are urban development plans generally unrepresentative? How are businesses so heavily favored in urban development plans, especially with respect to mega-events like the World Cup, which was sold as a celebration for all to enjoy? Has the government completely lost sight of its duties and goals? And, most critically, is there hope for a move toward more inclusive urban development, and if so, what would be required for such an outcome to be realized? These concerns guide the game-theoretic model that follows (see Figure 1.1 in the Appendix), which
attempts to represent the various considerations weighed by the City of Cape Town in making urban development plans.

Defining the Game’s Players

Though this game centers on the City of Cape Town (player G for government) because it has the ultimate decision-making power in whom to involve in planning processes, its decisions can be understood as a weighted average of the preferences of its constituents, meaning a diversity of constituent preferences must also be represented. I have chosen to divide the Cape Town constituency into Businesses (player B) and the Masses (player M) because the planning preferences of these two players are most directly opposed. Obviously, to model player M’s preferences requires making generalizations across the diversity of preferences that non-business interests in Cape Town possess, which could emerge as a weakness of a simplified model. In light of this, I have included a variation to the game that will differentiate between the elite among the masses, whose preferences tend to align more with the interests of businesses, and the rest of the masses, who desire the most representative planning process possible. This differentiation changes the government’s idea of the median voter, which is significant because only the preferences of the median voter will ultimately be accounted for in Player G’s decision.\footnote{1. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, “De Facto Political Power and Institutional Persistence,” \textit{The American Economic Review} 96, no. 2 (May 1, 2006): 325–30.} This addition will offer greater modeling precision, but is not absolutely necessary to the general understanding of development planning in Cape Town, and
as such, will only be explained after the two basic planning outcomes, democratically representative planning and the public-private partnership, are explored.

**Defining the Game’s Outcomes (1): Democratic Planning**

The first type of planning process that the City of Cape Town could choose to facilitate is one that is democratically representative. Filling out the definition of what I am calling “representative democratic planning” is difficult for two reasons: first, because the degree of representation that could qualify as “democratically representative” varies widely, and second, because Cape Town does not currently employ this type of process, so conceptualizing the likely case versus the ideal case is difficult. Deciding which (the likely or the ideal) is taken as exemplary of representative democratic planning (DP$_{rep}$ in Figure 1.1) for the purposes of this model requires an explanation of the institutional organization of planning in Cape Town, which is given next.

Cape Town is governed by a mayoral system in which the mayor, elected by the city’s council, holds executive powers in the city. The city council is elected by a mixed-member proportional representation system: each voter selects one candidate to serve as their ward’s councilor (Cape Town is divided into 111 smaller geographic areas called wards), and one party to govern the local municipality’s city council. Proportional Representation Councilors (PR) are then chosen based on the share of the vote their party received such that the number of councilors from each party in the council is proportional to the share of received votes. Cape Town’s 221-member council, comprised of 111 directly elected ward councilors and 110 PR councilors
chosen by party-list proportional representation, selects the executive mayor. The executive mayor then selects a ten-member mayoral committee comprised of City Councillors. The mayoral committee, or MayCo as it is known for short, is tasked with whatever responsibilities the executive mayor decides to delegate, but primarily plays an advisory role.

The city’s current mayor is Patricia de Lille, a DA candidate. She has chosen to fill the MayCo entirely with DA councilors. Each MayCo councilor is appointed to head one of the city’s policy portfolios, meaning he or she controls which plans are brought to the wider council for debate and ratification, and more subtly directs the nature of these plans before any debating commences. Of the ten MayCo councilors, four are party-rank councilors who joined the council through proportional representation and likewise do not represent a ward directly. Of the six ward councilors on the MayCo, only two represent generally working-class or poor areas of the city (Athlone and Gugulethu). Moreover, these MayCo councilors are in charge of the Early Childhood Development and Health portfolios, which are generally considered to be less powerful policy portfolios because they are limited in their influence over economic planning as compared to other portfolios. The other four ward councilors on the MayCo represent generally wealthy suburbs including Stellenbosch, Sea Point and Green Point, Gardens and Observatory, and Parow. Tellingly, these councilors’ portfolios include Human Settlements, Transport, Utility Services, and Safety & Security, which could be one reason, besides their greater

wealth, that these areas are so much better served by the policies that result from these portfolios. The Finance, Tourism & Events Marketing, Spatial Planning (Energy & Environmental), and Corporate Services portfolios are all controlled by PR councilors, meaning these councilors are more narrowly concerned with the desires of the DA than ward councilors who are more directly accountable to their constituents.

That Cape Town is governed by a mayoral system is significant, given the power entrusted to the executive mayor in such a system. The city did not always employ a mayoral system; in fact, the system has only been in place for the last four mayorships, three of which were held by DA candidates (though the system was first implemented by an ANC mayor). Previously, the city was governed through a collective system: executive powers were still vested in the executive committee (ExCo), but the entire council elected this committee whose members must be proportionally representational of the entire council, and the mayor would only possess ceremonial powers as the chair of the committee. The collective system, while definitely more democratic than the mayoral system insofar as power is not centralized within one individual and the ExCo is more representative of the city as a whole, still had trouble fairly distributing portfolios. In the mayoral system, the mayor allocates the portfolios to his or her committee, but this is not such a strong expression of power given that the committee members are personally appointed and have the same party affiliation. With the collective system, ExCo members frequently fought over portfolios, with the majority-represented party taking control of the more powerful portfolios (Finance, Human Settlements, Spatial Planning, and Transport),
leaving the less-funded, less-noteworthy portfolios (Childhood Development and Health) for minority parties.

Despite its improvements on the mayoral system in terms of democratic representivity, there exists a better system than the collective system for governing municipalities in South Africa. In the plenary system, the entire council collectively holds executive powers with the mayor acting as chair of the body; this subdues the power vested in portfolio allocations and assures that all planning and policy decisions are made with the entire body’s concerns in mind. Instating a plenary system is one way to conceive of what a democratically representative outcome would look like in Cape Town. One can imagine the improvements this would make to the diversity of urban development projects that are proposed by the council and subsequently ratified. Moreover, the increased accountability that accompanies a decision-making process where every elected official has the same power, as opposed to the current system in which the wider council insulates MaCo councilors, is also significant. However, democratizing the executive organization of the municipality is only one way to imagine more democratically representative outcomes; it also centers specifically on a conception of citizenship I will later critique (see Chapters Two and Three)—that of the citizen as voter.

Facilitating truly consultative planning, whereby citizens are asked about their needs in order to inspire development plans or asked to comment well in advance of any council votes on existing plans—basically, a situation in which “consultation” is not reduced to “notification”—is another version of a democratically representative outcome. Even more radically, one could conceive of democratically representative
planning as a further devolution of state funds allowing wards to control their own
planning budgets through participatory budgeting practices. This idea is further
explored on Chapter Three, but suffice it to say, participatory budgeting forums
constitute the most democratically representative of the planning processes mentioned
here because citizens, as opposed to elected or selected officials that owe nothing to
specific sets of constituents, directly control the means to development, which by
default, means that these same citizens control the ends of development as well.
Participatory budgeting conceives of citizenship more actively: citizens have equal
control over the development plans that most directly affect them. Thus, each
possesses the power of self-determination, something sorely lacking in the era of
racial domination that was Apartheid, and consequently, a core value of post-
Apartheid South African society.

Defining the Game’s Outcomes (2): The Public-Private Partnership

The second type of planning process that the City of Cape Town could choose
to facilitate, the public-private partnership (PPP in Figure 1.1), is easier to
conceptualize because it is currently employed in the city. This planning structure is a
classic example of the kind of institutional organization promoted by neoliberal urban
governance. A public-private partnership (PPP) can be defined as any relationship
between the government and one or more private-sector companies to finance, build,
or operate a project that will serve the public and its interests. Most unique to Cape
Town with respect to this institutional form is the creation of a separate government
body called the Cape Town Partnership, which serves as a PPP that brokers deals
with the private sector for various public works projects. Though the term functions as a sort of catchall phrase for various relationships between the public and private, that Cape Town has created an official body separate from, but funded by and serving, the municipal government in its effort to court private-sector collaborators should be taken as a sign that the city is pursuing neoliberal urban governance with vigor.

The Cape Town Partnership (CTP) was established in 1999 as an explicitly pro-business entity. Tracing this commitment over its fifteen-year existence reveals an interesting ideological evolution: for its first nine years in operation, the CTP’s programs were organized around the slogan “Cities are for Business.”^78^ Inspired by the Central Business District’s (CBD) apparent “state of crisis,” the CTP primarily focused on cleaning up the district in terms of safety and business attractiveness to fortify the city as an “economic engine, [a] place driven by investment.”^79^ In 2008, the CTP’s slogan progressed to “Cities are for People” because of its claim to “have come to understand cities as places of ‘connected humanity,’ networks of human connections.”^80^ This phase, largely inspired by the hosting duties of the 2010 World Cup, fast-tracked public transport and public space developments to make the city more user-friendly, though the question of which users—international tourists or the city’s residents—the CTP aimed to serve is one to return to. Its vision for the future seems to have realigned with the previous business-orientation, if implicitly: the

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“People make Places” theme in effect through 2018 stresses Cape Town’s lifestyle amenities and creative flare, a perfect embodiment of another strong indicator of neoliberal governance—the “construction of place,” or focusing on marketing the city rather than serving its citizens.\(^1\)

Canvassing the CTP’s recent activities reveals that most of its projects exclude certain portions of the population. In focusing mostly on the CBD, the CTP’s projects are spatially inaccessible to various marginalized populations living in townships on the periphery of the city—remnants of Apartheid-era spatial engineering. Landmark past projects include brokering upgrades to the Bus Rapid Transport System before the World Cup and procuring private funding for the creation of free WiFi zones in the Company’s Garden and other frequently visited tourist destinations. Unfortunately, most townships remain unreachable by the new MyCiti bus system, which mainly connects the CBD to wealthy suburbs like Green Point and Durbanville, and the free WiFi zones are largely unusable by marginalized populations for obvious reasons. In fact, even the CTP’s projects dedicated exclusively to marginalized populations (such as homeless and informal traders) have rarely amounted to more than fact-finding missions: its housing project, “Why Social Housing Matters,” is characterized as an “ongoing series of conversations” with policy specialists and the only product of its informal project, “En Route with Informal Traders,” so far is a video portraying the daily struggles of a group of traders.\(^2\) The ongoing projects included in the CTP’s current People Make Places

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\(^2\)Cape Town Partnership, “Mapping the Work.”
phase precisely capture the city’s new world-class marketing pitch. They mostly cater to the city’s Creative Class by pursuing urban revitalization by creating makers’ studios for discounted rent on the fringes of the CBD and hosting collective storytelling events and free philharmonic concerts at City Hall. Perhaps the most telling of its current projects is the CTP’s leadership of Cape Town’s bid for World Design Capital 2014, a year-long design festival that has redirected massive municipal funding toward public art creation and showcase events.83

It is important to note that while the Cape Town Partnership is one organization taking the idea of a PPP to a more serious institutional level by nature of it being an independent entity, virtually all of Cape Town’s infrastructural projects are funded through some combination of public and private funds and are often operated jointly. An illustrative example of this type of urban development is the Cape Town International Convention Center (CTICC) and the money poured into its construction and expansion by the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Provincial Government, as introduced in the Introduction. To review, the center required an initial government investment of R284 million in 2003 and has enjoyed subsequent investments totaling R700 million since 2011. It is slated for a R4.5 billion expansion between 2015 and 2017.84 The expansion will double the Center’s capacity by annexing 10,000 square meters of prime real estate in the center of Cape Town’s City Bowl, which will ideally allow it to break into the top ten best convention centers internationally. The Chairman of the Municipal Finance Management Act Advisory Team (the body overseeing the tender process for the

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83 Ibid.
84 SouthAfrica.info, “Cape Town Convention Center Expands.”
expansion) explained the motivation behind the government’s large investment into the expansion: “We are looking forward to the positive impact this project will have on the marketability of the Western Cape and South Africa as a year-round business and leisure destination.” Much like in the case of national social and economic policies, again governmental resource allocation raises questions of whose interests the government is willing to serve.

It would be reductive to only discuss the inherent unfairness and contradictions of neoliberal urban governance and its processes (the PPP being one of them). Though it is convenient to treat the PPP as an enemy of the public interest, appreciating the logic of this form of governance on the behalf of the players involved only serves to make the question of who is included in government’s idea of “public” more powerful. Instead of telling the naïve Marxist tale of the state acting merely as the pawn of moneyed interests, I wish to explicate the rationality of the curious partnership between local governments and businesses. The normative questions that arise from this discussion of PPPs (and neoliberal urban governance in general) are many, but strategizing against a hegemonic force requires one to first understand the hegemonic perspective thoroughly. Thus, it is imperative to understand how a Public-Private Partnership represents an equilibrium strategy for the City of Cape Town, despite its obvious exclusionary tendencies.

**Determining Payoffs: Ranking Player Preferences**

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Given these potential outcomes—the democratic process ($\text{DP}_{\text{rep}}$) or the public-private partnership (PPP)—it is now possible to explain how each of the players involved value either outcome. The variables that must be considered in ranking either outcome are, for modeling purposes, generalized as, “development” ($D$ in Figure 1.1), and “zoning” ($Z$ in Figure 1.1). The variable ‘development” is actually meant to denote a much narrower set of practices than its name suggests. It refers to business-led, capital-intensive, and profit-oriented urban development initiatives like the construction of convention centers and stadiums, or the revitalization of waterfront districts, and the like. Pursuing a “high” level of development ($D^H$ in Figure 1.1) would mean the facilitation of City Improvement Districts, or tax-free zones that invite foreign investment, assuming hosting duties of mega-events like the World Cup or Olympics, and generally supporting city beautification projects and other “place-making” initiatives that improve the city’s exchange value (as opposed to its use value). Alternatively, the variable “zoning,” is meant to encompass a much broader set of practices than simply land-use related considerations, though it does include those too. Zoning is meant to address both the access to the city afforded by development projects and the degree to which such projects increase the welfare of a wide cross-section of the city’s population; in other words, this variable represents how development projects affect the city’s use value, as opposed to its marketability in exchange. Pursuing a “high” level of zoning ($Z^H$ in Figure 1.1) would involve increasing the connectivity of public transport systems by adding lines that link townships at the periphery with the CBD, dedicating more funds to reducing the city’s public housing backlog, and increasing the reliability and amount of free
municipal services delivered to low-income Capetonians. Because of the inherent budget constraint that exists for any financially responsible city, a high level of both development and zoning cannot be concurrently pursued; the payoff \((D^H, Z^H)\) is accordingly not shown in Figure 1.1 because it is not possible to achieve. A corollary relationship of note is that in this model, high development necessarily means low (L) zoning, just as high zoning causes a low level of development (that is, \(D^H\) is paired with \(Z^L\) and \(D^L\) with \(Z^H\) in the payoffs provided in Figure 1.1).

Ranking Player B’s preferences is a straightforward affair: businesses obviously value high development, and though they are not necessarily intent on minimizing zoning effects, to the extent that zoning considerations slow down or hinder the profitability of developments, they prefer low zoning. In the model, however, only variable \(D\) is factored into Player B’s payoffs to reflect that fact that even if businesses would prefer low zoning, they cannot openly admit to such a stance publicly. Thus, Player B’s payoffs \((\pi^B)\) are ranked as follows: \(\pi^B(D^H) > \pi^B(D^M) > \pi^B(D^L)\), which corresponds to high levels of development being preferable to medium levels and low levels of development being the least preferable. Aside from being profitable, high development pursued via a PPP arrangement is attractive because it allows businesses to share costs and risks with the government, and they can often broker investment incentives like reduced taxes and trade exclusion zones.\(^{86}\)

Finally, members of the private sector often reap reputational benefits from the global marketing orientation pursued by the City with projects like the World Cup or World

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Design Capital. For these reasons, Player B’s high valuation of variable D, preference for the PPP strategy, and distaste for the strategy yielding DPrep, are all quite obvious.

Player M’s preferences are slightly less clear for the simple fact that business-led development is not unambiguously bad for the masses; if these types of developments were unambiguously suboptimal for Player M, the commonly used trickle-down sales-pitch—that benefits to business will trickle-down to benefit the entire population—would not be nearly as effective as it has been. Similar excuses have been used widely in defending business-led development: the masses are said to benefit from the improved efficiency that fast-tracks public works projects, psychological gains that accompany increased global prestige (for example, the World Cup as a month-long public celebration), and the general hope that the private sector’s profits from PPP projects will be redistributed across the entire population. In many cases, the masses have, in fact, benefited from some business-led development. Insofar as the World Cup created jobs in the construction sector, the World Design Capital has increased traffic to townships (albeit via slum tours, which some construe positively as “gaining exposure”), and the new bus system has made the city-center more navigable, the masses have benefited from such development.

The key here, however, is that when businesses leads development, businesses disproportionately benefit, and costs to the masses are rarely given enough weight. The World Cup’s construction boom only created temporary jobs, and the human costs of indecent working conditions were many; increased slum tourism has further

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87 McDonald, World City Syndrome.
rendered township-dwellers the beneficiaries of visitors’ donations, which the city has started to reflect in its budgets, so fewer resources are allocated; and by focusing on the central city, the bus system has further isolated the peripheries from the economic center.\textsuperscript{88} As such, Player M values zoning considerations more highly because of the diversity of ends that can be promoted and the welfare focus of these ends, as compared to strictly profit-oriented ends. Player M’s payoffs ($\pi^M$) are accordingly ranked as follows: $\pi^M(D^L, Z^H) > \pi^M(D^M, Z^M) > \pi^M(D^H, Z^L)$. This payoff ranking illustrates that Player M values the multitude of welfare considerations that affect the use value of the city accounted for in the zoning variable, over the narrowness of the development variable, which can only accommodate concerns over the city’s marketability and competitiveness. It also suggests that Player M values the power to determine the course of development above all, which is why the representative democratic process is most appealing. Even if the developments eventually promoted through a representative democratic process are similar to those that would have been enacted through a PPP, such a project will have been ratified after a broad set of considerations were weighed. This ensures that the desire to develop with profitability and marketability in mind does not obscure or outweigh welfare considerations, including the importance of improving city access or, more crucially, the value of self-determination in decision-making.

Modeling Player G’s preference ranking is by far the most complicated for two reasons. First, as stated before, the government must take a weighted average of its constituents’ (businesses and the masses) preferences, and determining these

\textsuperscript{88} Eddie Cottle (local author and activist), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014. Langa Tourism Coordinators, interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014. McDonald, telephone interview with author.
weights is a *political* consideration (as much as it is determined by profitability and welfare considerations) that tends to fluctuate frequently. Second, the government must use backward induction to predict how each of the other two players will react to whichever decision it makes, meaning the model must work with *expected* payoffs instead of payoffs that are (theoretically) realized. These two facets of Player G’s payoffs ($\pi^G$) can be represented algebraically as follows:

$$\pi^G = \alpha \pi^B + (1 - \alpha) \pi^M,$$

where the variable $\alpha$ is a fraction that expresses the relative importance government gives to pleasing business, making $(1 - \alpha)$ the fraction that expresses the importance government gives to pleasing the masses (one caveat that will be explored later is that $(1 - \alpha)$ actually ends up representing how heavily government weights the median voters’ interests, and not the masses as a whole).

The variable $\alpha$ is used to factor a myriad of complicated governmental considerations including the *externality effect* (whereby too much business-led development can create negative externalities to development), the *incentive effect* (whereby businesses are likely to work with greater efficiency when they expect to claim a greater share of the benefits to a development project), the *international pressure effect* (this can come in two strands—the humanitarian pressure that suggests including more of the populous in decision-making or improving welfare outcomes, and the globalization pressure that encourages free trade and reduced government oversight over markets), and, of course, the *welfare effect*, as governments are assumed to value the welfare of their constituents to some degree. The value of $\alpha$ increases when the incentive effect or the globalization strand of the international pressure effect is prioritized. The value of $\alpha$ decreases (thus increasing
the value of \((1 - \alpha)\) when the government prioritizes the externality, humanitarian strand of international pressure, or welfare effects more heavily. Because the value of \(\alpha\) is sensitive to various situations and is generally in flux, this model cannot give the variable a finite value. It can, however, offer empirical explanations for when and why \(\alpha\) will increase or decrease, which will in turn illustrate how either outcome, the democratic process or the PPP, becomes the equilibrium strategy pursued by Player G.

The PPP as Equilibrium Strategy

In deciding whether to select the PPP as its strategy for planning, Player G has two variables to consider. The first, as just discussed, is \(\alpha\), or the relative importance given to pleasing Player M. For the City of Cape Town, there is a certain degree of path dependence to this decision, as previously discussed. The Apartheid era left behind both a fragmented city government riddled with bureaucratic inefficiencies and a serious need to reintegrate into the global economy after being placed under various trade sanctions during the international anti-Apartheid movement. These factors combined to motivate a “transformation of the form and content of the city’s management and governance.”

South Africa’s economic planners, who created “a homegrown structural adjustment package” for Cape Town that was consulted on by World Bank and IMF economists, very obviously met the “opportunity for Cape Town to finally take on the status of a ‘world-class city,’ with great vigor.” In short,

\[89\] Ibid, 197.
\[90\] David A. McDonald and Laïla Smith, “Privatising Cape Town: From Apartheid to Neo-Liberalism in the Mother City,” Urban Studies 41, no. 8 (July 1, 2004): 1461–84, doi:10.1080/0042098042000226957.
the need to liberalize, deregulate, and privatize in an effort to become economically viable in the post-Apartheid era’s globalized economy has made strong business relations a priority for the city’s government. Aside from this path-dependent need to foster a thriving business environment in the city (this can be considered prioritizing the globalization strand of the international pressure effect), the PPP presents other benefits that would increase the value of $\alpha$ in player G’s payoff function. The PPP streamlines bureaucratic inefficiency, allows the city to share costs and risks with the private sector (prioritizing the incentive effect), and makes it possible for the city to orient these developments toward global marketing ends. Finally, by reducing the need for public funds, the city also makes itself less accountable to the masses, thus decreasing the magnitude of the welfare effect.$^{91}$

The other variable that Player G has to consider in deciding whether or not to select a PPP is closely related to $\alpha$ in that it both affects the initial prioritization of business over the masses, and can force a reappraisal of $\alpha$ afterwards if the PPP is chosen. This new variable reflects the ability for Player M to obstruct, given that the PPP clearly favors Player B and is a suboptimal strategy for Player M. This variable, denoted as $q$ in Figure 1.1, represents the probability of Player M posing a serious obstruction once the PPP is selected; likewise, $(1-q)$ represents the probability that the masses do not seriously obstruct the decision. The payoffs for Player G and Player B if Player M obstructs are drastically reduced, shown as $\pi_G^o$ and $\pi_B^o$ respectively, because both players have already invested significant resources and effort in PPP-

organized developments, and the obstruction would affect these developments to some degree. Player M enjoys some positive payoff, shown as $\pi^M_+$, because obstructing would not be worthwhile unless $\pi^M_+$ was greater than the payoff of not obstructing, or $\pi^M(D^H, Z^L)$. Thus, it is possible to construct a payoff function for each player that reflects the expected payoff to the PPP, factoring in the potential obstruction of the masses. For Player G, this function is $\pi^G = (q \cdot \pi^G_0) + (1 - q) \cdot \pi^G(D^H, Z^L)$. It shows that if the government believes the probability of obstruction is high (or predicts that $q$ will be larger than $(1 - q)$) then it will not select the PPP because its payoff will be considerably lower ($\pi^G_0$). The same goes for Player B, who wants to avoid sinking costs into a project that is likely to be obstructed. The expected payoff function is $\pi^B = (q \cdot \pi^B_0) + (1 - q) \cdot \pi^B(D^H)$, which shows Player B’s sensitivity to a high $q$ value that would drastically lower the overall payoff.

As important as the probability of obstruction, is the nature of obstruction that Player M could pose. It is necessary to fill in these details to fully understand how the government weighs this threat. Player G poses the question as such: If Player M were to obstruct, would the obstruction function as a stand-in for a democratic planning process, or would it simply slow down business-led developments? If the former is true, then Player G might consider selecting the democratic process strategy from the beginning to avoid wasting sunk costs. If the latter is true, Player G may believe the benefits of the PPP outweigh the risks of a weak obstruction even if it were to occur. For the specific case, historical evidence and empirical experiences would suggest to the City of Cape Town that the latter statement—that obstruction only poses a
hindrance to the efficiency of business-led developments, not a threat to the overall execution of the development—is more accurate in the Cape Town context.

Further explored in Chapter Three, the reality is that Cape Town’s resistance is weak, one-dimensional, and lacks scalability for a number of reasons; these include the existence of a highly fragmented left, a cycle of resistance that only appeals for service delivery improvements (meaning that the government can make small concessions to stave off more serious contestation), and a deeply adversarial political climate that makes resistance through voting an impossibility. Thus, even for Player M, the payoff of obstructing (as obstruction is currently employed by the masses in Cape Town) is not disproportionately high. In assessing the expected payoff function for Player M (given by \( \pi^M = (q \cdot \pi^M_+) + (1 - q) \cdot \pi^M (D^H, Z^L) \)), it is clear that if neither \( q \) nor \( \pi^M_+ \) are disproportionally large, then the payoff to Player M of obstructing may be only marginally better than its payoff when subjected to the PPP. This suggests to Player G that pursuing a PPP is the optimal strategy because both the government and businesses (Player B) are made better off, and the threat of a lower payoff via Player M’s obstruction is neither serious nor significantly harmful if it were to occur.

*The Democratic Process as Equilibrium Strategy*

It is already known that the value of \((1 - \alpha)\) in the government’s payoff function, expressed as \( \pi^G = \alpha \pi^B + (1 - \alpha) \pi^M \), would need to be larger than \( \alpha \) for Player G to select a democratically representative process (DP_rep) as the city’s planning strategy. Even though DP_rep gives Player M the highest payoffs and is
therefore its optimal strategy, if $\alpha$ is too high, then the low payoffs to Player B would weigh more heavily in Player G’s decision. As previously mentioned, the value of $(1-\alpha)$ increases when the government prioritizes the externality effect (for example, if a significant portion of the construction workers hired to build World Cup stadiums had been injured, or worse, on the job), the humanitarian strand of the international pressure effect (unfortunately, the call for inclusive governance is not a strong one in the international scene, especially when compared to calls for greater foreign direct investment, a financial strategy that continues to be a primary source of revenue for the city), or the welfare effect (if being a World-Class City was defined by the degree of access to the city enjoyed by a majority of the city’s population or the affordability of municipal services). Given that these effects are not currently prioritized by the City of Cape Town, DP_{rep} does not emerge as an optimal strategy for Player G. I will return to how $(1- \alpha)$ can be increased to promote a democratically representative process after exploring the modeling addition that is created by differentiating the masses.

If the masses are differentiated into the commoners, for lack of a better term, and the elites, a new planning strategy of facilitating a democratically unrepresentative process (DP_{unrep} in Figure 1.1) emerges as a possible equilibrium. With this new strategy, the elites become the median voter of the constituency (meaning Player M represents only the elites in the model); their preferences fall between the preferences of the commoners and businesses and therefore, are always reflected in the winning policy of a majoritarian voting system.\textsuperscript{92} The payoff ranking

\textsuperscript{92} Acemoglu and Robinson.
for this class of elites can be expressed as follows: \( \pi^M(D^M, Z^M) > \pi^M(D^H, Z^L) > \pi^M(D^L, Z^H) \). This ranking reflects the fact that elites prefer some medium level of business-led development in conjunction with some medium level of zoning, but are only concerned with those zoning issues that directly affect them. When zoning concerns do not affect the elites personally, their preferences align more closely with those of Player B in supporting high development and low zoning, as this combination is more profitable than low development and high zoning.

One illustrative example of how an unrepresentative democratic process would transpire in Cape Town occurred when residents of Durbanville (one of Cape Town’s wealthy suburbs) rallied against a commercial residential development that was set to encroach on their suburb’s land. Previously, Durbanville residents had been supportive of the City’s proposal to bend the urban edge (a pre-set boundary that prohibits land titling for commercial development in the outer reaches of the city to promote urban compactness and environmental preservation) in honor of commercial gains, but were moved to obstruct (by having their ward’s powerful councilor bring opposition directly to the Spatial Planning Portfolio Manager) the development once their own land was in jeopardy.\(^{93}\) The MayCo, who directed the proposal to bend the urban edge for commercial development in Durbanville, has since shifted its attention to bending other zones along the edge, such as Philippi’s Horticultural Area, an important stretch of farmland in one of Cape Town’s largest townships, despite protests from the Philippi Agricultural Trust. Though the area provides insurance against rising food costs by keeping produce production local and selling 20% of its

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crops directly to the poor, the MayCo is aggressively pursuing commercial tenders in the area to “balance competing needs in light of rapid urbanization.”94 The effective obstruction of the Durbanville ward reflects the fact that the abilities of a resource-rich ward committee are greater than those of poorly-financed townships, that these more powerful committees are advantaged simply by the ability to understand technical policies like the plan for the urban edge, and that the MayCo is more willing to listen to objections from wealthy areas.

Differentiating the masses so that Player M now represents only the elites, instead of the masses as a whole, significantly improves the accuracy of the model in describing the reality of how the City of Cape Town selects a planning strategy. The equilibrium outcome changes because Player M is now more likely and able to obstruct the PPP decision, as the elites did in the Durbanville case above. With this knowledge, the value of $q$, or the probability that Player M will pose a serious obstruction to a development project planned through a PPP, increases, and Player G is more likely to select the next best planning option, in this case, $\text{DP}_{\text{unrep}}$. Moreover, in Cape Town, the payoff $(D^M, Z^M)$ is actually much closer to the value of $(D^H, Z^L)$ than it is to the value of $(D^L, Z^H)$. This fact can be explained theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, it is easy to see how the elite and business circles in the city would overlap, and accordingly share a broad set of interests. Empirically, one can consider the current executive organization of the city, whereby the mayor personally selects an unrepresentative MayCo (consisting of elite and business

representatives), that has the final say in all development proposals, as evidence that a democratically unrepresentative process tends to yield decisions fairly similar to those of a pure PPP. As such, Player G’s selection of the DP_{unrep} strategy is easy to explain: this planning strategy requires only minor concessions be made to the elites, who are generally amenable to the PPP planning structure. This means that the government can almost concurrently prioritize the preferences of Player M (when Player M only represents the elites) and Player B, which yields the ideal weighted average of constituent preferences.

Promoting Democratically Representative Planning Processes in Cape Town

In considering what should be taken away from this model, perhaps the most obvious point that emerges is that the cards seem stacked against the realization of a democratically representative planning process. At least in terms of the current state of executive organization, resistance, and most importantly, the government’s priorities, facilitating a democratically representative planning process is not an equilibrium strategy. In the model, the value of \((1 - \alpha)\) is not large enough to influence the government’s payoff function, because the externality effect, humanitarian strand of the international pressure effect, and the welfare effect are prioritized below the globalization strand and the incentive effect. For the time being then, the PPP represents a stable equilibrium that will not be spontaneously altered. Inspiring a move toward a political-economic situation in Cape Town where DP_{rep} would constitute an equilibrium strategy for the government requires reducing the magnitude of \(\alpha\), or increasing the value of \((1 - \alpha)\). This can be accomplished in one of three ways.
The first is to wait for the long-term negative externalities of business-led development to manifest and hope that the majority of the population—businesses and elites included—recognizes these faults of business-led development and decides to pursue a different planning strategy. Externalities may include urban sprawl created by leapfrog developments, or the sort of commercial developments that bend the urban edge and function to reduce the compactness of the city (a poor choice for the city economically, because more resources must be dedicated to servicing and connecting these developments) and degrade the environment.\textsuperscript{95} Failed commercial tenures from a lack of public oversight are also becoming a problem in the city. Many tenured projects have been canceled recently due to a lack of initial research into the tenure partner’s ability to deliver the development.\textsuperscript{96} It is believed that a tenure process involving more of the public would reduce this risk by improving oversight. White elephant developments are another concern, especially given the uselessness of the behemoth that is the Green Point Stadium. Newly built for the World Cup when existing stadiums could have been upgraded, the Green Point Stadium represents sunk costs of R4.5 billion in construction and R46.5 million in annual maintenance fees that must be subsidized by the government.\textsuperscript{97} Though pitched as a tourist attraction for years to come, it is too large to be used for any of Cape Town’s professional sports teams and was not built to serve many other purposes. Finally, the city may incur reputational losses if human costs to metered services (for example, a cholera

\textsuperscript{97} Cottle,\textit{ South Africa’s World Cup}, Chapter 10.
epidemic arising from reusing unclean water) exceed a certain level of acceptability, or if the vibrancy of the city is reduced by too many commercial developments. Any combination of events like these occurring in rapid succession would surely stifle the incentive effect of facilitating business-led developments through PPPs and magnify the externality and welfare effects significantly.

A more radical approach to reprioritizing humanitarian and welfare concerns in development planning would be to shift the normative goals of urban development altogether. This involves changing the factors that are considered in defining the World-Class City so that cities are valued not for the economic opportunities they provide, but more so for the inclusivity of these economic opportunities and the diversity of other opportunities on offer. Promoting inclusivity would involve accommodating a diversity of experiences in the city, and generally accepting difference, instead of using economic arguments to justify a universal approach to reducing inequalities stemming from informality, xenophobia and other instances of social injustice. Exploring this idea further is the main function of Chapter Two. A final option, which actually utilizes and builds on the previous two strategies, is to create more effective resistance in the city, so that the masses (not just elites) pose a genuine obstruction to the roll-out of business-led development projects. Because the current cycle of resistance in Cape Town relies on service delivery demands alone, the government can usually get away with making small concessions to these ends without having to engage with the causes of such insufficiencies. If instead, fragmented resistance could be united (without imposing an inauthentic sameness over very different movements) and directed towards reclaiming spaces for self-
determination (as opposed to relying on governmental delivery), the masses could pose a very real threat to the viability of neoliberal urban developments in the city. This idea is the guiding force of Chapter Three.

V. Conclusion: The New, Neoliberal South Africa

Just over twenty years have passed since the revolution of 1994 when the country’s transformation into the New South Africa began. In that time, the nation has drafted a thoroughly ambitious (and comparatively radical) governing document, reneged on said document’s promises with successive iterations of national development policy, and forged an entirely new path in pursuing neoliberal urban governance. The country’s commitment to this new path, especially as exhibited by activities in South Africa’s cities, is obvious in its destruction of welfarist policies in favor of liberalization, privatization, and deregulation; establishment of cost recovering rate structures for services that disproportionately affect the poor; and creation of public-private partnerships that give private interests an inordinate amount of sway in planning urban development projects.

The situation on the ground today in Cape Town does not seem to indicate any wavering from its firmly neoliberal stance by the city government, even with regard to South Africa’s most seemingly progressive policies. For example, even though the right to water has been enshrined in the Bill of Rights (an incredibly progressive move on South Africa’s part), wasteful usage (and few incentives for high-income residents to curb their consumption) has created a “water crisis” in Cape Town since 2014. Because the municipal government does not have the money to finance the
right to water thoroughly, it is currently exploring ways to privatize water service delivery completely.\textsuperscript{98} This is almost guaranteed to raise prices for consumers, which may increase service cutoffs for low-income Capetonians because of their inability to pay. The problem here is not so much the price increases, which are more or less a function of basic supply and demand dynamics, but the way service cutoffs can increase a population’s vulnerability to realities higher-income citizens could never imagine. The cholera outbreak that originated in KwaZulu-Natal in 2001 resulted from township communities reusing contaminated water because they could no longer afford clean water and adequate sanitation at the country’s increased prices; of over 114,000 cases registered in seven South African provinces, the outbreak resulted in over 250 deaths.\textsuperscript{99} The potential for human costs of neoliberal urban governance is clearly mounting, and so too, is the potential for the type of instability and widespread resistance that first inspired the idea for a transformative New South Africa twenty years ago.

There can be no doubt that neoliberal urban governance increases inequality, but some of its most insidious effects are far less obvious than those mentioned above. The socioeconomic policies atomize working class and poor solidarity by stressing the need for employment without establishing any channels for redistribution. The introduction of metered services under the guise of being beneficial to the poor creates a shift in the public ethos, whereby the poor are made responsible for the suboptimal conditions in which they are expected to live, as if


government policy has not systematically disadvantaged them and silenced their voices. The establishment of public-private partnerships pays lip service to democracy by allowing the government to promote purely profit-oriented developments under the guise of a democratic process; thus, not only the projects themselves, but also the processes through which they are planned and approved, function to create exclusionary spaces for large swaths of the population—especially the historically disadvantaged, who are neither welcome in high-growth areas of the city nor able to engage with highly technical consultants running such planning initiatives. These less tangible effects of neoliberal urban governance—and the normative questions they raise about conceptions of justice and citizenship in Cape Town—are the focus of the following chapter.
Figure 1.1

Diagram showing the relationship between Government, DP_rep, DP_unrep, PPP, Business, Masses obstruct (q), and Masses do not obstruct (1-q). The diagram includes various mathematical expressions and notations, such as $\pi^g(D^M, Z^M)$, $\pi^b(D^M)$, $\pi^m(D^M, Z^M)$, and $\pi^g(D^H, Z^H)$. The diagram is structured to show how different variables interact and flow through the system.
LEGEND, PAYOFF RELATIONSHIPS & EQUATIONS

PLAYERS:

G: Government
B: Business
M: Masses

OUTCOMES:

DP_{rep}: Representative Democratic Process
DP_{unrep}: Unrepresentative Democratic Process
PPP: Public-Private Partnership

PLAYER PREFERENCE RANKINGS

Player G: \( \pi^G = \alpha \pi^B + (1- \alpha) \pi^M \)
Player B: \( \pi^B(D^H) > \pi^B(D^M) > \pi^B(D^L) \)
Player M_{rep}: \( \pi^M(D^L, Z^H) > \pi^M(D^M, Z^M) > \pi^M(D^H, Z^L) \)
Player M_{unrep}: \( \pi^M(D^M, Z^M) > \pi^M(D^H, Z^L) > \pi^M(D^L, Z^H) \)

PPP EXPECTED PAYOFFS

Player G: \( \pi^G = (q, \pi^G_0) + (1 - q) \pi^G(D^H, Z^L) \)
Player B: \( \pi^B = (q, \pi^B_0) + (1 - q) \pi^B(D^H) \)
Player M: \( \pi^M = (q, \pi^M_0) + (1 - q) \pi^M(D^H, Z^L) \)
CHAPTER TWO: Just City

"We enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans... will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."

- NELSON MANDELA, Inaugural Address, 1994

“The idea of African livability... is a combination of user-friendliness (how easy it is to access the city’s public spaces and services like transport), distinctiveness (a strong identity based on a celebration of a city’s unique characteristics) and a shared sense of community that transforms inhabitants of a place into active citizens who take pride in their city.”

- B. MAKALIMA-NGEWANA, Cape Town Partnership CEO, 2014

The misalignment of the stated intent of post-Apartheid urban development and how this intent has actually manifested in Cape Town is striking, at least in policy terms, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Neoliberal urban governance has clearly redirected (or, in my view, stymied) the realization of the original vision of the “New South Africa”—one whose ethos was initially defined as a commitment to thoroughly democratic practices and greater equality. The potential for societal transformation through existing policies has been subdued by a drastic reduction in funding; this coincides with a general reprioritization of developing competitive and growth-stimulating urban economic centers. Of course, international pressure has contributed to the overwhelmingly neoliberal development policies governing Cape Town today, but in questioning the government’s prioritization of facilitating a thriving private sector over the welfare of its citizens, it becomes apparent that such

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2 Cape Town Partnership, “Mapping the Work.”
policies are based on an understanding of the city’s social welfare calculus that is problematically limited in its scope. It seems, then, that to truly transform the course of urban development in the city, the normative goals of these developments will need to change. Instead of a singularly economic understanding of the normative ends of development—the sort of goals demonstrated by the Cape Town Partnership’s urban development projects—this new normative conception must give due consideration to the social and spatial relations with which economic plans must inevitably interact if urban developments are to significantly transform and increase the use value, rather than the exchange value, of the city.

For twenty years—the duration of democratic South Africa’s existence—this persistent interplay between progressive, even radical, intentions and underwhelming implementation has created urban development discourse and activities that can only be described as uninspiring. During my fieldwork in Cape Town, this phenomenon was easily detectable, perhaps most poignantly in the unrelenting references to South Africa as the “rainbow nation” by Capetonian locals. This metaphor, first presented by President Nelson Mandela in his inaugural address and expanded by South African luminaries such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu and activist-poet Jeremy Cronin, is meant to suggest the unity and acceptance of difference in democratic South Africa that further fortifies a commonly held belief in the country’s exceptionalism. The overarching theme of rainbowism, of exceptional togetherness and appreciation of diversity, emerged in most of my interviews in central Cape Town in August, 2014—just one month after a string of violent attacks against Somali storeowners, two months after “work camps” for the homeless were proposed as a serious approach to
dealing with informality, and amidst the ongoing World Design Capital celebration of top-down, highly uncommunicative and commercialized city development.

Even as this thesis is written, the City of Cape Town is gearing up for its 6th annual Cape Town Carnival, which is billed as an opportunity to realize the “harmonious images that the notion of the Rainbow Nation evokes,” in spite of the widespread media coverage of “violent strikes and protest” that “portray to the world a South Africa rife with discord and discontent.”

The capacity for a certain portion of Cape Town’s citizens to “rainbow-wash” the reality of violence, displacement, and disenfranchisement occurring both at the outskirts of Cape Town and right before them in the central city, should come as no surprise: it is rooted in the same misguided faith in trickle-down benefits—a direct effect of a conception of social harmony fallaciously derived from the over-prioritization of economic outcomes. This “rainbow-washing” is exactly what allows the CEO of the Cape Town Partnership to promote the organization’s efforts to foster “African livability,” as if the benefits of its programs and events are equally enjoyed, or even have the potential to be equally enjoyed, by all Capetonians.

These apparent erasures of fragmentation and dissimilarity from the dominant popular conscience suggest that simply redressing current socioeconomic policies will not suffice in actualizing a city that is truly rainbow in its access to the amenities (or, in many cases, the basic requirements) of urban life. Rather, it is vital to examine the political-theoretic premises by which these socioeconomic policies are inspired, as it is clear that the set of possible policy prescriptions that could arise from the

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existing premises (one example of such a premise is universal equality of persons) are too limited in scope to broadly effect change in any meaningful way. It is more likely, instead, that such policy prescriptions will accomplish what they have in the past—namely, the maintenance of existing institutional and distributional structures that function to benefit certain citizens while dominating certain others. The forthcoming argument is premised on the belief that if existing urban policy as it has evolved to serve Cape Town is unsatisfying in a number of ways, then perhaps an overhaul of the theoretical underpinnings—those philosophical arguments that guide the moral objectives propelling any normative judgment into the positive space of legislation and institutions—is not only presently appropriate, but also necessary in order to move toward more optimal outcomes. In short, then, this chapter aims to demonstrate that treating the provision and distribution of services and infrastructure as merely technocratic issues will not precipitate improved outcomes; instead, a reevaluation of such issues as political processes is required to produce meaningful change.

As such, this chapter revisits the foundational theoretical arguments that inform the interplay between seemingly progressive intentions and repeatedly lackluster implementation that has clearly increased inequality in the city—a dynamic that has come to define urban policy and development as it occurs in Cape Town. Divided in two parts, the first begins where the previous chapter’s game-theoretic understanding left off in posing the question, “what should a democratically representative process provide?” Given that Cape Town’s democratic processes are only democratic in name, it is first necessary to critically engage the theory of justice underlying neoliberal urban governance to uncover why its currently accepted
conception of justice is inadequate. Next, alternative theories of justice (as well as reprioritizations and new emphases of already accepted theories) will be considered in the hopes that a more robust normative framework for assessing social institutions can instruct a move toward greater justice in the positive realm of urban policy. The latter portion of this chapter substantiates the former’s theoretical critique and reformulation with an empirical analysis of three important instances in which urban planning has fallen far short of the Rainbow Nation ideal: these include how informal populations are treated in planning and program implementation, the degree to which foreigners are included in such processes, and whether the masses should have a legitimate claim to inclusion in such processes given their technical nature. The chapter will conclude in elucidating how the ideology and processes of neoliberal urban governance function to justify the exclusions of these three populations and how a reformulated vision of justice could inform improved democratic functions in Cape Town.

I. Reconsidering Just Outcomes: Procedure, Difference, & Space

In the previous chapter, it was established that indefinite urban development is not unambiguously good; in other words, business-led development can create negative externalities that problematize the popular conflation of “good development” and “more development.” As such, it follows that urban governance must consider other factors alongside economic growth in the calculus of a city’s social welfare. Growth is just one of many determinants of the social welfare function
of the citizenry. When it is weighted more heavily than other social welfare inputs such as access to urban space and services or participation in planning processes, one can expect similar results to those of the Cape Town Partnership—namely, the production of a city that is more ripe for exchange (in its highly attractive place-marketing) than for the wide use of its citizens. While it is obvious that neoliberal urban governance prioritizes economic growth and competitiveness—the exchange value of cities—over these other social welfare considerations, it is not entirely clear how the reprioritization of these other welfare inputs can occur without a fundamental shift in the way just outcomes are interpreted. The general discussion that follows is aimed at identifying opportunities for reprioritizations, new emphases, and radical injections in the construction of a more appropriate normative framework for assessing just social institutions.

**Neoliberal Urban Governance & Procedure**

First, and somewhat obviously, it is useful to establish the significance of the “publicness” of urban development projects, especially those directed by PPPs. The term “public-private partnership” suggests a voluntary and intentional relationship, but the publicness referred to here is defined by the fact that all participants in urban development (the City of Cape Town, businesses, and the masses alike) find such developments costly to avoid or exit. Given that exiting from the city is not a readily available option for most, affected parties of urban development should be able to use voice to communicate issues with urban development projects and propose improvements. Recall that the masses’ ability to exercise voice in Cape Town is
severely curtailed by the strategic decision to pursue a PPP as the institutional arrangement for development planning; the masses’ voices are ignored in making this decision because they do not pose a credible threat to the establishment of a PPP and the realization of its projects. This clearly demonstrates the importance of voice as a means of ensuring the establishment and maintenance of just social institutions.

The establishment of the PPP as modeled in Chapter One reveals that only weak consideration is given to the procedural aspects of establishing just social institutions. This is complicated in the specific case of neoliberal urban governance precisely because of the discord between its ideology and process (also detailed in the previous chapter). Whereas the ideology of neoliberal urban governance and a specific theory of justice may align, the *process* of this form of governance is often without a robust procedural component, at least with respect to dominant conceptions of justice. This discord is the basis of my call to reassert procedural considerations in the establishment and assessment of just social institutions.

Recall that neoliberalism is innovative conceptually in that it can accommodate both an ideology and process that fundamentally contradict one another. The ideology of neoliberalism emphasizes the importance of private property and free markets by promoting the tenets of privatization, liberalization, and deregulation. Its faith in uninhibited markets to allocate efficient distributions is meant to influence a weaker state-apparatus whose main function is to protect private property. This proclamation for the state, however, has not been realized in the way neoliberalization (the process through which neoliberalism is established) occurs in the specific case of urban governance. Instead, the state is often mobilized to serve
disciplinary and coercive functions in honor of imposing market-rule on citizens. In so doing, the state must embody both destructive roles, in rolling back pre-existing state commitments (particularly to welfare services), and creative roles, to enable new sites of accumulation, devolve various former duties, and atomize potential forms of resistance (especially among labor forces). As such, the state practicing neoliberal urban governance is an agile one; it fully embraces its contradictions and adjusts its functions accordingly.

The dominant paradigm of assessing neoliberal urban governance in Cape Town tends to fall along distributional lines: government officials, businesses, and societal elites all call for the creation of more wealth to be distributed, while the masses call for a redistribution of existing wealth and resources. While growth and redistribution are obviously important to facilitate in the city, focusing on distributions alone reinforces the faith in trickle-down benefits that has continually justified neoliberal urban governance’s exacerbation of inequality. Such a view takes the institution of neoliberal urban governance as given; this is obvious when considering the claims that marginalized Capetonians tend to make on the city. These claims rely entirely on the delivery of rights and services that have already been provisioned via the city and state’s governing documents. These claims very rarely address which rights should be allocated or the social processes—the institutional arrangements—that allow insufficient distributions and improper delivery of these rights and resources to materialize repeatedly.

Accordingly, any improvement to the current mode of assessment must not treat social institutions as embodiments of justice themselves, but instead as
promoters of justice that are mindful of the social processes that create just or unjust outcomes. To make this point more finite, because neoliberal urban governance is comprised of contradicting ideological and procedural components, an appropriate conception of justice must have the ability to assess both parts. The current mode of assessment for social institutions—namely, assessing institutions based almost entirely on distributive considerations—reinforces neoliberal urban governance’s process in mobilizing the state to the specific ends of privatization, liberalization, and deregulation, even though any mobilization of the state is somewhat counterintuitive to its ideological principles.

Beyond reinforcing the contradictory nature of neoliberal urban governance, the game theory model from Chapter One demonstrated that a state mobilized to promote privatization, liberalization, and deregulation through coercive and disciplinary measures above pure welfare considerations is very obviously excluding certain portions of the population it is meant to serve. Thus, the current mode of assessment is not just ignoring a neutral procedural component in favor of prioritizing distributions: the processes it chooses to ignore are actually the very roots of exclusion in the city. It is therefore imperative that the alternative normative framework I construct does not assume away social processes as neutral or given. In search of a procedural theory of justice that can offer a more complete basis by which to assess social institutions, then, Iris Marion Young’s politics of difference emerges as a robust option because of its reconceptualization of the problem of injustice as an issue of power imbalances instead of as a distributional issue.
Young’s theory begins with the argument that it is a mistake to reduce social justice to distributional issues for similar reasons to those already articulated: because distributive patterns are structurally and institutionally determined, it is an oversight to avoid dealing with the organization of those structures and institutions directly. She zeroes in on the commodification of nonmaterial goods with respect to rights—things like power, opportunity, and self-respect that are not usefully conceived of using this framework because they are difficult to allocate—as a particular weakness of over-prioritizing distributions. Young asserts the importance of procedural considerations by criticizing this overreliance that leads to quantifying the non-quantifiable in order to allocate justly. Perhaps most instructively, Young points to the tendency to misunderstand the concept of power as “some kind of stuff that can be traded, exchanged, and distributed,” as the reason why distributive justice so frequently ignores the “structural phenomena of domination,” to which I now turn.

Young recommends a displacement (but not a replacement) of the distributive paradigm by refocusing on the specific social conditions, domination and oppression, that are characteristic of injustice. In so doing, her theory avoids placing judgments on certain possessions that constitute the “good life,” which are too closely associated with a universalist ethic that tends to promote what is already dominant and further disadvantage the marginalized. This approach is particularly appropriate for the post-Apartheid context precisely because domination and oppression were so characteristic of the Apartheid period: to ignore their consideration so soon after the end of the

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5 Ibid, 17-20.
period is to assume that the job of promoting greater justice is already complete. No one—native or tourist—would consider justice to be a completed project in South Africa, and as such, addressing injustice directly is the most prudent course of action for the context.

Young defines domination as the institutional constraint on self-determination and oppression as the institutional constraint on self-development; the two are overlapping concepts that are indicative of injustice. The five “faces” of oppression Young identifies—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence—are a particularly rich analytical lens, as they directly correspond to events occurring in Cape Town, some of which will be explored in the final section of this chapter. Suffice it to say for now, however, that insofar as it is possible to see direct causal relations between the state under neoliberal urban governance and the perpetuation of dominance and oppression in the city, the procedural conception of justice has already produced a different, more contextually appropriate, assessment than that of its distributive companion.

**Neoliberal Urban Governance & Difference**

A related observation to the publicness of urban development is also useful for understanding the alternative normative framework I wish to propose: having established that urban development is necessarily public (and therefore must allow every affected party to exercise voice when they cannot exit), it follows that any principles of justice developed must be understood in the context of what is

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7 Ibid, 37-38.
8 Ibid, Chapter 2.
reasonable to claim in light of what may be claimed by others. This recognition of plurality is vital to any urban policy, and even more so in a society as divided and polarized as Cape Town, so it is important to understand how the unavoidable plurality of the urban experience is treated in both the city’s system of government and its conception of justice. It is likewise important to acknowledge that this plurality is not purely cosmetic: it is not only that citizens possess different wills, skills, and interests, but that citizens are subjected to varying degrees of domination and oppression, and therefore enjoy different degrees of power to pursue their unique interests.

Distributive considerations are often prefaced on the perfect freedom and equality of all persons in a given society. Such a precondition is only applicable to Cape Town in the formal sense, in terms of all citizens being guaranteed the same set of political and socioeconomic rights under the Constitution. In promoting privatization, liberalization, and deregulation, which are jointly celebrated for their ability to allocate resources impartially, neoliberal urban governance operates in some imagined vacuum of perfectly just and equal initial conditions—a vacuum in which formal equality actually fosters substantive equality. However, it is clear that the political and socioeconomic rights guaranteed in the country’s governing documents are not equally provided for or promoted by the City of Cape Town (prepaid service meters, unequal access to public transport, and the immense public housing backlog are a few indicators that support this point). Moreover, it is necessary to acknowledge the inequality that stems from certain deeply-entrenched differences, the kind that have been woven into the fabric of Capetonian society since the Apartheid era; by
this, I mean to highlight the instances of domination and oppression based on identity and geography that were engineered into the city’s social relations and landscape, and consequently, are not easily undone.

Young’s move away from the distributive paradigm affords the ability to reconceptualize difference instead of insisting on the equality of all individuals. As previously argued, resting on the formal equality of all citizens, something that is only rhetorically achieved in South Africa, inequality will undoubtedly persist, as Young explains:

[The] main quarrel is with the story’s conclusion, namely, that since we have achieved formal equality, only vestiges and holdovers of differential privilege remain which will die out with the continued persistent assertion of an ideal of social relations that make differences irrelevant to a person’s life prospects. The achievement of formal equality does not eliminate social differences, and rhetorical commitment to the sameness of persons makes it impossible even to name how those differences presently structure privilege and oppression.9

Insisting on the sameness of all persons only functions to further marginalize the already disadvantaged because their experiences are considered suboptimal to the dominant norm. Instead, celebrating difference as “variation” or “specificity” rather than “exclusion, opposition, or dominance,” can serve as the basis for the realization of the emancipatory politics envisioned during the “Revolution of 1994,” evident in

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9 Ibid, 164.
references to the “Rainbow Nation,” but conspicuously absent in considering the lived experience of Capetonians and South Africans more generally.\footnote{Ibid, 166.}

Neoliberal urban governance, unfortunately, is not especially adept at accommodating such difference in the development prescriptions it offers. In attempting to further integrate into the global financial system by attracting foreign direct investment for private ends, promoting the private sector’s takeover of various previously public functions (such as service delivery and urban planning itself), and dedicating a necessarily constrained budget to financially supporting business-led developments, the City of Cape Town’s employment of neoliberal urban governance demonstrates a clear adherence to the trickle-down, “rising tide raises all ships,” development philosophy. This orientation is overly optimistic about the potential for vastly different urban experiences to converge into one economically-focused idea of what it means to live in the city (this view tends to exaggerate the citizen as laborer and voter, and not as one who is owed a certain level of agency simply by inhabiting the city, but I will return to this idea later). This orientation is supported by what philosopher and economist Amartya Sen would call “non-parochialism as a requirement of justice.” This requirement is meant to acknowledge the growing interconnectedness of social institutions and the concordant outcomes they facilitate in light of the globalized world that we now inhabit.\footnote{Ibid, 403.}

Sen’s main argument against parochialism is that there is a great deal of global knowledge that can be missed when only local knowledge is considered.\footnote{Ibid, 403-405.}

While this may very well be true and without commenting on the relative weights of

\footnotesize
\begin{thebibliography}{99} 
\item \citep{Ibid, 166.} 
\item \citep{Ibid, 403.} 
\item \citep{Ibid, 403-405.} 
\end{thebibliography}
local versus global knowledge, this insistence on non-parochialism leaves the
consideration of justice susceptible to two related and equally serious problems that
are taken advantage of in the neoliberal urban governance schema (especially in Cape
Town, and other cities of the global South). The first arises when global “best-
practices,” inform interpretations of just institutions and outcomes without any
semblance of contextual specificity. If examples of “ideal” cases are taken from, say,
experiences in the global North, and are applied to global Southern contexts, it is
almost guaranteed that institutions as ineffective as the PPP will emerge in locales for
which they are not at all appropriate. The second is essentially the same problem in its
opposite formation; that is, it arises when contextually appropriate and just social
institutions in one locale are thought to be appropriate at a universal scale. This
functions to depoliticize and despatialize the plurality of struggles for greater justice
by treating all variations as deficiencies of the dominant (and thus, neutral) standard.
It is easy to see how privileging global over local perspectives in discourses on justice
plays directly into strengthening the ethos of neoliberal urban governance:
ideologically, it aligns exactly with a belief in trickle-down benefits that will, in due
time, accrue evenly across space and group specification; it also furthers the treatment
of justice and injustice as impartial (economic) distributions instead of as processes
and relations that the state has an active and direct influence over. Of course, the
dangers of parochialism are well taken, given that difference can be over-asserted to
the point of creating new experiences of exclusion that bleed into atomism and
anarchism. The alternative normative framework I am offering calls for local-
specificity and the acceptance of difference in assessing development, but is mindful

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of the dangers of hyper-localism; this framework attempts to perfectly position itself within the universalizing-atomizing spectrum.

Neoliberal Urban Governance & Group Identities

A third part of the insufficient normative framework that I wish to displace is the primacy of the individual as the unit of analysis in assessing social institutions. My major qualm with privileging the individual as opposed to considering group identities is that it plays into a common narrative of development whereby the significance of the market is overemphasized and the immense capacity that the state has to orient development toward better normative ends is undervalued. Here again is another example of the ways in which distributive considerations tend to reinforce neoliberal urban governance, which admits to primarily serving individuals in the market, but asserts the impartiality of allocations that can only result when markets are in charge as a worthy tradeoff to treating individuals as members of communities.

To be fair, distributive theorists have commented on this “methodological individualism,” by arguing that community considerations need not necessarily be excluded from discussions of justice, but that impartial reasoning becomes much more difficult given the potential for individuals to claim identification with various communities. Such an argument betrays an oversimplified understanding of communities as mere aggregations of individuals, which, along with the tendency to associate the idea of communities with communitarian critiques of liberal individualism, function to stifle the analytical potential of group identities.

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13 Ibid, 246.
When the normative assessment of social institutions is no longer hyper-focused on allocations of material and nonmaterial goods, using social groups as an analytical unit becomes possible. Pursuing a group-centered approach is more relevant to Young’s definition of justice as the absence of institutional domination or oppression because institutional structures are most often acting in favor of or against specific groups at large, though individual cases of domination and oppression are certainly important. Moreover, centering on groups as the unit of analysis also enables the useful consideration of social movements that fight injustice and are frequently inspired and led by groups. Factoring in social movements widens the possibilities for theorizing normatively improved social institutions while also honoring the specific context of Cape Town, which hosts a vibrant landscape of social movements that will be analyzed in the following chapter. Inserting group-centered analysis via social movements also obstructs the tendency toward static institutional fundamentalism and strengthens the case for a fluid vision of the city, one that is always “becoming,” and is thus, what makes this analysis worthwhile.

*Reprioritizing Space in Understanding Just Social Outcomes*

A final consideration of justice that serves as a radical injection for most normative frameworks is the notion of access as it applies to physical space. Too often with theories of justice, one forgets that many of the social institutions that determine our qualities of life are actually physically manifested in the built environment. The “spatial turn,” the term used by geographer Edward Soja to describe the recent trend in critical thinking focused on spatial determinants of
wellbeing, is primarily meant to reassert that humans are equally as spatial as temporal. As such, space cannot be thought of as an “...empty void. It is always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives and challenging us to engage in struggles over geography.”\(^{14}\) This much is evident in Cape Town and other locales striving for the world-class designation: aggressive place marketing, prestige and mega-projects, and services that only benefit the centrally located, do not result from the just distribution of rights and resources to a perfectly equal citizenry; the hallmark aspects of the World Class City are clear expressions of dominance and oppression in the planning, execution, and maintenance of space.

The reason for the growing importance of the spatial turn is exceedingly evident at multiple scales; the widening power differential between global cities of the North and mega cities of the South, the disparate qualities of life that can be achieved in the urban versus peri-urban (let alone the urban versus rural) settings, and even the vastly differing experiences of citizens occupying the same exact urban space, are all powerful indicators that uneven geographic development is very much the reality of urbanization today. The ideology of spatial justice calls for a recognition of this foundational truth and the motivation to change the “socialized geographies of (in)justice” that “create lasting structures of unevenly distributed advantage and disadvantage” through targeted social and political action.\(^{15}\) To imagine appropriate social and political change, one must move away from the dominant materialist-idealistic (or first space-second space) dialectic that only accommodates critical thinking concerning the objectification of space and its subjective representations,


\(^{15}\) Ibid, 20.
toward conceptualizing lived (third) space, or how space is used and inhabited.\textsuperscript{16} In considering lived space in Cape Town, it is easy to see how the ideology (in privatizing formerly public spaces to garner greater profit from them) and process (by embracing security-obsessed urbanism that uses coercive measures and force to fortify spaces against difference) of neoliberal governance has clearly molded the city in its image spatially.

For now it is important to recognize two factors that warrant the emphasis on spatial considerations in building an emancipatory theory of justice that is better suited to assessing both the ideology and processes of the neoliberal South African city. First, the post-Apartheid context necessarily must redress the production and uses of space precisely because the Apartheid era “revolves paradigmatically around struggles over geography.”\textsuperscript{17} Second, the universalizing drives of distributive justice tend not only to ignore procedural aspects of justice, but also to despatialize justice because the distributions are necessarily concerned with outcomes in the current place and time.\textsuperscript{18} Principles of spatial justice are more difficult to identify specifically, but this excerpt from UCLA’s \textit{Critical Planning} journal begins to get at the spatial justice ideal:

\[\ldots\] Those vested with the power to produce the physical spaces we inhabit through development, investment, planning—as well as through grassroots embodied activisms—are likewise vested with the power to perpetuate

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 102-105.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 39.
injustices and/or create just spaces… What a just space looks like is necessarily kept open, but must be rooted in the active negotiation of multiple publics, in search of productive ways to build solidarities across difference. This space—both process and product—is by definition public in the broadest sense; the opportunity to participate in inscribing its meaning is accessible to all…justice is therefore not abstract, and not solely something ‘handed down’ or doled out by the state, it is rather a shared responsibility of engaged actors in the socio-spatial systems they inhabit and (re)produce.¹⁹

Thus, it is clear that space is an unavoidably public consideration and must accordingly accommodate (though it would ideally celebrate) difference. Acknowledging the causal chain between the process by which space is produced and the subsequent uses it is able to serve and for whom these purposes are served is absolutely integral to creating a just spatiality in the city. The degree of access to the planning processes as well as to the space itself (as it is continually reproduced by the interactions and the uses within it) enjoyed by all citizens regardless of their specific identity or abilities serves as the appropriate principle for assessing the degree of spatial justice achieved.

_A Theory of Justice as Emancipatory Politics_

To speak of emancipatory politics, one must understand exactly what the politics does not accept. First, and most obviously, the politics I wish to construct and

¹⁹ Ibid, 28.
that is in line with Young’s theory is absolutely opposed to the assimilationist ideal. But somewhat surprisingly, it is equally opposed to the autonomist ideal, which is considered the celebration of difference to a harmful degree. Young describes autonomy as a “closed concept, which emphasizes primarily exclusion, the right to keep others out and to prevent them from interfering in decisions and actions.”

Because of the state of interdependence in which we all live, it is counterproductive to the goal of this project to argue for autonomy with any gusto; the idea is wildly utopian and, in practice, is likely to produce more harm than good. Finally, to return to an earlier comment of Sen’s logic, this emancipatory politics is explicitly critical of liberal individualism, but is likewise skeptical of communitarian arguments that tend to privilege the hyper-local, face-to-face interactions that inculcate sameness and universalism. Young instead insists on an understanding of politics that is “conceived as a relationship of strangers who do not understand one another in a subjective and immediate sense, relating across time and distance,” which has obvious relevance to urban justice specifically, given the vast diversity of Cape Town’s urban dwellers, and accordingly, the unique set of opportunities the city must facilitate.

Having very thoroughly delineated what is not permissible in my alternative framework, it is now possible to offer positive theoretical contributions to this understanding. Young’s primary point lies in developing a formation of deliberative democracy that avoids institutionalized domination and oppression while also tolerating—if not celebrating—difference and protecting the useful functions difference can serve in highlighting injustice. Within the scheme of deliberative democracy.

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20 Ibid, 251.
21 Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, 234.
democracy, Young emphasizes Habermas’ communicative ethics that place a premium on civic participation because of the important function it serves in increasing social knowledge.\textsuperscript{22} In sum, then, the hallmark institutional form of the emancipatory politics I wish to uphold is what Young calls the “heterogeneous public,” in which “…participants discuss together the issues before them and come to a decision according to principles of justice” and where “…group representation …nurtures such publicity by calling for claimants to justify their demands before others who explicitly stand in different social locations.”\textsuperscript{23} Social norms are likewise considered just if all parties are able to exercise efficient voice in constructing them and submit to the agreed upon norms without coercive measures.

The theory of justice I have endeavored to construct—one that is more conducive to assessing the reality of neoliberal urban governance in Cape Town and other aspiring World-Class Cities, especially in the global South—can be summarized as promoting two principles concurrently. The first, termed the \textit{participatory imperative}, encapsulates the call for procedural (as opposed to purely distributive) considerations that will result in the creation of normatively superior and contextually appropriate social institutions. Such institutions do not merely accommodate, but legitimate and celebrate, difference while rejecting and redressing existing forms of institutional domination and oppression. The second principle, called the \textit{accessibility imperative}, draws specific attention to the manifold instances in which injustice is manifested in built and imagined geographies. The just space will facilitate social differentiation without exclusion and features porous but detectable borders; it

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 93.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 190.
promotes inexhaustible variation and diversity and fosters unregulated encounters, meaning citizens are exposed to diversity in unplanned ways, from which much civic engagement is inspired.\textsuperscript{24} Perhaps most importantly, such spaces will be planned, executed, and maintained in forums to which every citizen has access and in which they may all exercise appropriate voice. Though this imperative is not specific to the urban case, it is particularly useful for contextualizing the immense plurality and difference of urban life and for theorizing how such diverse actors can come to justly interact. Taken together, these imperatives create a more thorough standard of justice to assess the lived experiences of Capetonians against the “Rainbow Nation” ideal.

\textit{Complications and Sensitivities of the Alternative Framework}

As with the dominant conception of justice that I have critiqued, there are a number of concerns to be wary of in ascribing to my alternative framework. The first is a concern with the tendency for rights-based claims on the state to be couched in “legal dressage,” that appeal directly to the Constitution and are generally adjudicated in courts. This is of particular significance in South Africa, given the nature of the Constitution’s guarantees to certain social rights like the right to clean water or adequate housing. The problem in relying too heavily on these appeals is twofold. First, those appealing for the realization of these rights become stuck in a cycle of resistance that generally results in small court-ordered concessions by the state, and therefore generally lack the ability to dialog with the state about the root causes of these insufficiencies. Second, because of the Constitution’s inclusion of certain

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 238.
safeguards that tend to depoliticize these appeals, including clauses calling for a “progressive realization” of rights “within available resources,” the state oriented towards neoliberalism will take this opportunity to further privatize and commodify the services they are meant to provide. Of course, the need to institutionalize rights is equally relevant; political philosopher Onora O’Neill captures the problem succinctly:

Unfortunately much writing and rhetoric on rights heedlessly proclaims universal rights to goods or services and in particular ‘welfare rights,’ as well as the other social, economic, and cultural rights that are prominent in international charters and declarations without showing what connects each presumed right-holder to some specific obligation bearer, which leaves the content of these supposed rights wholly obscure…Some advocates of universal economic, social, and cultural rights go no further than to emphasize that they can be institutionalized, which is true. But the point of difference is that they must be institutionalized: if they are not there is no right.  

Instead of presupposing institutional arrangements for the realization of rights-based appeals, the alternative conception of justice I put forth here requires deliberation over these arrangements so that rights are not “established in restricted forms.” My problem then, is not with the concept of rights in particular, or their institutionalization in general, but rather, the path of contestation that is generally taken in South Africa for the institutionalization of these rights. I prefer contestation

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26 Ibid.
that allows a society to “rediscover the blood that has dried in the codes,” instead of taking the codes as given, as will be explored further in Chapter Three’s discussion of resistance.  

The second concern is one that is influenced by political theorist Antonio Gramsci’s ideas about hegemony: that is, hegemonic relations that arise from structural inequality must necessarily distort the ability for just deliberation (in which no voice is heard more loudly than another) to transpire. Iris Marion Young took up this criticism of her theory directly in arguing, “…only if the theory and practice of deliberative democracy are willing to withdraw from the immediacy of the already given policy trajectory can they respond to [the] activist’s challenge…” that “deliberation is as likely to reinforce injustice as to undermine it…” given conditions of structural inequality. I am inclined to agree with her in arguing against institutional fundamentalism and believing that remaking, as opposed to reforming, institutions will drastically reduce the existence of structural inequalities, but concerns over deliberation still remain.

Mark Purcell, a prominent urban planning theorist, argues against deliberation in pointing out, “while it may be going too far to say that poor and non-white communities are being systematically excluded from communicative processes, it is not at all too much to say that property owners are being systematically included.” This fact is definitely true, and is part of a problem that I have already discussed, that

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28 Iris Marion Young, “Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy,” Political Theory 29, no. 5 (October 1, 2001), 684.
is, insisting on the sameness of peoples instead of upholding and accommodating their differences. Thus, it is worthwhile to mention here (though I will expand on this idea in Chapter Three), that in prioritizing procedural considerations and arguing for deliberation, this alternative framework is not assuming preexisting consensus that must simply be uncovered through improved communication. The framework does not entertain delusions of the ability for deliberation to transcend the reality of scarce resources (a truth that neoliberal urban governance aims to avoid). Instead, it aims to re-politicize the processes that have come to be accepted as a stable equilibrium in the hopes that more just distributions—and certainly, the intrinsic and undervalued benefits of widely facilitating the right to self-determination and self-development — can be realized.

The final concern I wish to address here is more of a tradeoff; one that emerges when promoting an alternative normative framework that can better capture the shortfalls of neoliberal urban governance. In criticizing neoliberal urban governance (an institutional arrangement designed to streamline bureaucratic inefficiency in honor of facilitating growth) as vehemently as I have, it is possible to pose the critique that my normative framework systematically undervalues efficiency considerations.30 In some ways, this criticism holds up. I am, after all, calling for a change in the way that the normative goals of urban development are conceived. Insofar as prioritizing efficiency has resulted in forms of city governance that systematically exclude large swaths of the population (thus making the realization of

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its progressive stated ideals impossible), the magnitude of efficiency concerns must be reduced in the welfare calculus of the citizenry.

Instead of rehashing the ways in which greater inclusion in urban planning could actually inculcate greater efficiency in the city (see Chapter One’s discussion of the negative externalities of business-led development), I wish to point out that citizens should primarily deliberate over the government’s social priorities. Given that much development planning is highly technical (though deliberation can help to demystify these plans), and that having the time to join deliberations may be a luxury for many citizens, deliberators need not engage over the majority of the government’s activities as long as the society’s socially determined priorities are upheld by these actions (and if there are effective channels for redressing actions that do not uphold these social priorities). Though diversifying technical expertise and spreading incentives for involvement can both improve deliberative outcomes, what is more important is the fact that deliberation reveals shortcomings, revises and publicizes new priorities, and improves accountability. These are all practices that are vital to institutionalizing planning structures for urban development that are normatively superior to those that exist currently. With this fuller understanding of what constitutes justice in the city, it is now possible to turn to aspects of the lived experience in Cape Town where the current conception of justice in conjunction with neoliberal urban governance has functioned to create unacceptable exclusion. This analysis is undertaken in the hopes that the emancipatory normative framework offered here can inform a move towards greater justice in the city.
II. Exclusion in the Rainbow Nation: Three Instructive Cases

Having constructed a theory that claims to be more thorough and contextually appropriate for Cape Town specifically, it is time to assess current exclusionary experiences in the city to highlight the ways that this new, emancipatory normative framework may inform different ideas about and treatments of these cases. The experiences of exclusion I have selected are at once contextually specific and evident around the world. In the vein of Iris Marion Young’s direct treatment of injustice, I analyze each experience separately, though this should not suggest that they emerge distinctly or are to be addressed independently of one another. Indeed, informal trade, xenophobia, and non-consultative planning are causally and theoretically connected, but are analytically separated here for three reasons. The first reason is to make clear the different aspects of neoliberal urban governance by which these experiences arise and recur. The second reason for the analytical separation is to highlight the varying insufficiencies that arise from assessing these exclusionary experiences with the current theory of justice. The final function of the separation is to demonstrate the thoroughness of the alternative framework by exploring how its commentary is more relevant and useful to improving the lived experiences of Capetonians. Even in these isolated explanations, however, it should be very clear just how much these experiences of exclusion—no matter which particular group they affect—overlap and intersect.
Informal Trade & The Problem of Universalization as Integration

Among various differences between cities of the global North and global South, the sociopolitical importance of the portion of urban populations relegated to informal sectors of production and housing stands out as a hallmark of the South. The informal sector, which can account for up to half of many developing countries’ economies, poses a political problem as well as an economic one because governments absolve themselves of the responsibility to serve populations that have not yet been officially recognized by the state. Members of the informal sector forfeit the ability to claim social security benefits or basic rights that aim to provide decent housing and working conditions to all city inhabitants. The informal sector accounts for around 60% of the sub-Saharan region’s economy and is consistently growing. In Cape Town, the informal sector accounts for about 12% of the city’s economy and employs around 20% of its 3.4 million residents.\(^\text{31}\) 42% of these traders were found to engage in the informal sector because they were formally unemployed, proving that the informal sector goes a long way in absorbing high rates of unemployment (the unemployment rate has fluctuated between 23% and 26% since 2010, but has hovered around 25% since 2013).\(^\text{32}\) Due to sheer numbers, improving the lives and livelihoods of Cape Town’s informal population has become a necessary project for the government, and accordingly, an issue of central importance for any theory of justice applied to the Cape Town context.\(^\text{33}\)

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\(^{31}\) City of Cape Town, “Mapping the Work.”


\(^{33}\) Cape Town Partnership, “Mapping the Work.”
The approaches to informality sponsored by the city thus far have ranged from expectedly unimaginative and obtuse to utterly lacking in empathy. The Cape Town Partnership, whose approach to managing urban development has been referenced, and criticized, frequently throughout this project, takes a characteristically business-oriented and top-down approach to informality, despite acknowledging its shortsighted projects (“We never saw ourselves as agents of gentrification, or thought of development as a tool for displacement. And yet that is how our work has been seen…”). This is evidenced by the Partnership’s “multi-stakeholder consultations” that invite “high-level policy professionals” to “imagine a way to share the benefits [emphasis added] of informal trade.” Its robust marketing materials suggest a primary focus on design-oriented solutions by collaborating with the Cape Peninsula University of Technology’s Industrial Design students to imagine better stalls for traders, for example. These improved stalls are rarely physically produced, even as prototypes, and are more useful to the students as course credit than they are to the traders they are meant to serve. The Department of Economic Development (a bureau of the City of Cape Town) has launched its own investigation into improving the trading experience (in partnership with a “worldwide best-practice identifying organization, CityMart”), and is soliciting suggestions from the public. However, the submission platform is accessible only via smartphone, which obviously limits the

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Zahira Asmal (Cape Town community organizer), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014.
number of informal traders that can actively be involved in suggesting personalized solutions.

The other aspect of its prescriptions for informality can be found in the Partnership’s collaboration with the City of Cape Town to update its Informal Trading Policy and Management Framework document. The document is guided by a “problem statement,” that concedes informal policy in the past has been more focused on regulation than on developing the sector because implementation has proven tricky.\textsuperscript{39} Despite this concession, most of the concrete proposals made in the document are still related to regulation, while planning initiatives are exceedingly generalized. For example, though ‘Strategic Objective 1” of the policy calls for development activities in support of the sector, the only non-regulatory item that falls under the objective reassigns the responsibility for capacity building to partner organizations in the private sector (“Make available, via partners, commercial and business skills opportunities”).\textsuperscript{40}

Tellingly, the duties of the 17 government departments identified as stakeholders strictly relate to permit regulation and enforcement.\textsuperscript{41} The remainder of the document delineates the differential values of trading sites that correspond to different tariffs and the grounds for permit revocation. It is clear that the updates made to the document between 2003 (the first draft) and 2013 (the latest version) mainly benefit the government by offering the City of Cape Town greater control


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 13.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 15.
over space permits, tariff structures, policy monitoring.\textsuperscript{42} It should be noted that in addition to providing no protection for (and making no mention of) street hawkers, the Cape Town Partnership also approves of subjecting poorer traders to the same policies as upmarket artisans (those who sell primarily at farmers markets in wealthy suburbs to white patrons), thus failing to respect the different experiences and needs of these two subdivisions of informal trade and betraying a belief that experiences will converge even within the informal sector itself. In the same vein, formalization is recommended as a development goal from the very beginning, with “proper zoning and land use, business registration, health certificates, sector body registration, [and] tax registration” being the City of Cape Town’s ultimate incentive for promoting formalization.\textsuperscript{43}

However misguided and unimaginative, at least the plans instated by the city so far have been humane. The work camp proposal presented in April 2014, but repeatedly tabled since, is anything but. Presented by the Social Development MayCo Representative, the “community village” plan would entail removing “street people” (traders) and relocating them to “community villages,” where they would be “rehabilitated” by engaging in productive labor for the state. Though public descriptions of the program argue that it is a more “caring and supportive” approach to informality as opposed to “the law enforcement approach,” to businesses, MayCo members used words like “cleansing” and “work camp,” before correcting themselves. There should be no confusion that relocation to these “community


\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, 10.
villages” would be enforced via handing down citations for minor infractions like “blocking the pavement.” As such, it is no exaggeration to compare these hypothetical villages to the labor and internment camps associated with some of the most unjust states in global history.

Though informal trade predated the onslaught of neoliberal policies in Cape Town, as the sector has grown in size, the city’s policies have failed to adjust appropriately. Without elaborating the economic argument that explains the causal chain from trade liberalization, to the need for leaner firms, that in turn cause greater unemployment, which results in growth to the informal sector, it is necessary to understand that the government’s chosen strategy for treating the economic reality of informality is specifically neoliberal. This point mainly hinges on the fact that in treating informal traders as it would small-scale entrepreneurs with formal businesses, the City of Cape Town’s policy is assuming that both experiences can be addressed with a universal policy. Notice that while services owed to informal traders are streamlined (in line with the treatment of other disadvantaged groups in Cape Town), disciplinary measures against traders (via strict permit enforcement, tax collection, and forced removals in the name of “cleansing” the streets) that aid in imposing market-rule even on those subjects not yet formally recognized by the state, have expanded.

One way to understand this policy orientation is by invoking the idea of the “state of exception,” that is informality; in other words, planning for informality is
often referred to as planning the “unplannable,” in urbanization discourse. However, in systematically dividing the informal experience into the aspects of it that can be brought under state control (trading permits and the associated tariffs, forced removals in the name of beautifying certain public spaces, etc.) and removing other aspects of the experience (basic service delivery, especially with respect to housing) from the potential realm of the “plannable,” the City of Cape Town has actively produced this state of exception, at least to some extent.

Another useful comparison is to liken the City of Cape Town’s understanding of informality to that of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. The Chicago School rose to prominence in the mid-twentieth century with the rise of urban migration in the United States. It primarily theorizes the dynamics of “…invasion, survival, assimilation, adaptation, and cooperation,” in other words, the “transformative cycle” from new urban-dweller to full-fledged urbanite. The school has accordingly been described as taking an “ecological” and “evolutionary” approach to the study of urban life, as it promotes the significance of natural forces shaping behaviors, adheres somewhat rigidly to the sequential patterns of urbanization instead of its individual processes, and espouses the idea that cities will converge in their development to create a singular model for city life. Inherent in these ideas is the centrality of individuals as the agents of urban life that can “…ultimately [explain] the overall

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urban condition, including spatial structure, crime, poverty, and racism.”

Informality, then, is treated as a shortcoming of the individual, who “failed to complete the transformative cycle,” and is thus relegated to the margins of society.

The Chicago School’s prescriptive measures for informal populations correspondingly promote further integration into the market, with microenterprise schemes, and more generally, the valorization of the entrepreneur, being key.

In short, then, the Chicago School synthesizes informality as a problem for the market, utilizes individuals as the preferred unit of analysis, and is committed to a convergent model of urbanization that functions to universalize urban experiences across geographies. It is easy to see the many ways in which Cape Town’s treatment of informality aligns with the Chicago School’s explanation, and how easily informality as a social institution could be deemed just within a distributive framework: that the vastly disproportionate resource allocations between the formally and informally employed were dealt via the impartial system of markets, that informal trade helps the least advantaged (in this case the unemployed) more than remaining unemployed would, and that the ability to earn a livelihood is enjoyed by a vast majority of citizens, are all potential arguments in this vein.

A shift in the conception of informality toward the procedural and spatial theory promoted as emancipatory earlier in this chapter would entail treating informality as an end of the process of urbanization instead of a symptom of incomplete urbanization. It would require dealing with the injustices that arise from

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49 Roy, Transnational Perspectives, 9.
50 Ibid.
informality directly and specifically instead of relying on the hope that eventual integration into the formal market will correct for these injustices. One policy prescription in honor of these new ends could be to rededicate funds formerly used for monitoring trading permits or policing markets towards capacity building exercises such as promoting better bookkeeping, as poor informal traders often suffer from miscalculating their inventories. Another use of rededicated funds could be providing better trading stalls or storage units for informal traders so that their perishable or delicate wares are no longer susceptible to theft or the elements. Iris Marion Young would call for a celebration of the diversity that informality creates (diversity in employment, in wares available for purchase, in uses of public space, etc.), while redressing the domination that arises from regulating and policing informal traders so strictly without offering them the same services that are provided to the formally employed (such benefits include the sustained security of trading spaces from government disruption, which is not guaranteed even with permits, for the informal permits must frequently be renewed and many traders are unaware of all of the minor codes they are subjected to in registering). Informality as it is currently understood and addressed in Cape Town rests too squarely on the universality of economic experiences in the city and the hope that integrating into this supposedly universal scheme of trade is the best course of action for handling what is, at its core, as much a political as an economic issue. Normatively superior prescriptions would require incentivizing informal traders for the vibrancy they add to the city both experientially and economically, instead of disciplining them through various measures that are more beneficial to the City of Cape Town than they are to traders.
Xenophobia & The Problem of Assimilation as Belonging

Another moment of exclusion that results from high unemployment and heightened security of privatized space is xenophobic violence, which has increased in Cape Town and South Africa significantly since the 2010 World Cup inspired a large inflow of African migrants looking for work in the years leading up to the event. The World Cup, marketed as a truly “African” event, reignited the bygone philosophies of Pan-Africanism and Ubuntu by promising that the South African event would actually serve to introduce the entire African continent on the world stage. As such, thousands of Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Malawians, and others from even farther reaches of the continent migrated to South Africa in the hopes of sharing in the spoils of the mega-event. The World Cup—its new stadiums, highways, airports, and hotels—was quite literally built by over 500,000 migrant laborers who could claim very few rights and were paid subsistence wages in exchange for what was often very dangerous work.\textsuperscript{51} The related xenophobic attacks, inspired by the belief that foreigners were taking South African jobs began in May 2008, when a string of incidents of violence against foreigners in townships north of Johannesburg occurred (these incidents most often amounted to arson of foreign-owned shops and mob violence against the shop owners, sometimes injuring them critically). These incidents quickly spread across the country, igniting a “crisis” of displacement in Cape Town where foreigners preemptively removed themselves from the city’s townships in anticipation of violence (it is estimated that 30,000 people left

\textsuperscript{51} Cottle, \textit{South Africa’s World Cup}, 149.
Cape Town in the first few days of violence, though there may have been many more unrecorded relocations). Lootings, burnings, and petrol-bombs directed at foreign-owned establishments in Cape Town were frequent in the summer of 2008.⁵²

After these temporary jobs were lost, the vast majority of migrant laborers were absorbed into the informal economy (thus demonstrating the overlapping nature of exclusionary experiences in Cape Town); no string of xenophobic attacks emerged, but one-off cases definitely still occurred across the Cape. A significant political development related to migrants occurred in 2012 when South Africa chose to remilitarize its borders. Once believed to have among the most liberal immigration and asylum policies in the world, the “Fortress South Africa” policy exposed a deep-seeded strain of xenophobia in the national government that casts foreign migrants as threatening both to the domestic economy, and, more seriously, to national security interests.⁵³ Unsurprisingly, the xenophobic ethos in South Africa has fragmented the informal sector and the population of disadvantaged citizens involved in various forms of resistance: the us versus them mentality influenced by xenophobia has obscured resistance by forcing the question of who among the affected parties can even legitimately claim rights—instead of focusing on what rights should be claimed and how these rights can be more fruitfully realized.⁵⁴ For example, “native” informal traders have been known to serve as informants to the City for foreign traders without

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⁵⁴ Shawn Hattingh (Member of Zabalaza Anarcho-Communist Front), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014.

Manzi, interview with author.

Bandile Mdlalose (President of Community Justice Movement), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014.
permits, because it is believed that the eviction of foreign traders will limit the chance of the eviction of natives; this is obviously counterproductive to solving the real issue that all informal traders face—namely, forced removals by the city. All the while, xenophobic violence continues: already the violence in 2015 (what little of it has passed, anyway) has exceeded the violence of any year since 2008 when 60 lives were lost in xenophobia-related incidents. The most recent attack occurred in the Capetonian township of Philippi where nearby squatters from an informal housing camp petrol-bombed a Somali-owned corner store in the township, killing the Somali shopkeeper and two others in the process, thus demonstrating how xenophobia functions to divide groups that may otherwise benefit from embracing each other’s struggles.

That a formerly racial state has not achieved total success in establishing a non-racial basis for membership is not surprising, and many argue that xenophobia in South Africa is a holdover of Apartheid-era racism. But for Cape Town specifically, as the fastest growing municipality in South Africa in terms of migrant influx, xenophobic reactions to foreigners has as much to do with the sense of inter-urban competition inculcated by the city’s neoliberal governance. Cape Town is reliant on the cheap labor that African migrants provide for much of its urban development, but the city selectively decides which foreigners to celebrate and which it will vilify based on its endeavor to claim world-class status. Being seen as a paradise for highly

55 Pat Horn (President StreeNet International), interview with author, Durban, August 2014.
skilled transnational elites and Western tourists improves Cape Town’s image as the “most cosmopolitan city in Africa”. The desire to exclude African migrants from this cosmopolitanism is evident in the city’s empty appeals to the “Rainbow Nation” and Ubuntu unity. It is also evident in the city’s spatial separation—frequently referred to as ghettoization by development practitioners familiar with the city—of lower-class African migrants even from those South African natives in the same socioeconomic bracket.\textsuperscript{58} In effect, this is another example of the city directly placing foreigners into a state of exception. The city chooses when to benefit from these foreigners (primarily in the construction sector and other labor-intensive jobs for which foreigners receive disproportionately little compensation), and when to exclude them by failing to provide them with basic social services and conveniently overlooking the need to provide security to their threatened communities.

In “turning its back on the very labor and cultural connections it relies on” to achieve world-class status, and choosing to instead focus on a “homogenized vision of (white) global urban practices and design,” Cape Town is fostering exactly the opposite set of social institutions as a procedural, spatially focused, politics of difference-promoting, theory of justice would dictate.\textsuperscript{59} The crux of the issue lies in the fact that distributive considerations can only address members of a closed society; in other words, distributive justice has only weak arguments for who can legitimately claim to belong to a given society. As such, in most societies organized by norms of distributive justice, assimilation becomes the only channel through which to claim belonging, despite structural barriers to assimilation (like the insecurity of foreign

\textsuperscript{58} McDonald, \textit{World City Syndrome}, 290-293.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 293.
communities) and personal inclinations against integrating in the requisite cultural ways.

This example highlights the immense development responsibility of the state to provide for citizens, despite my primary argument for self-determination. If the City were to more vehemently denounce xenophobic violence, or better yet, dedicate resources to offering security and social support to affected foreign communities who generally tend to fall within the state of exclusion, such actions would reverberate across the citizenry. Even the rhetorical recognition of migrants could be helpful, insofar as their presence was and is imperative to building the city and requisite for maintaining it. Grappling with anti-immigrant sentiments more deeply will require the identification of different dimensions for “belonging,” that relate neither to formal labor contributions (to include informality) nor nativity (to reduce xenophobia). One option is to promote “citizenship as inhabitance,” which gains strength from the displacement of citizenship based on national identity that is already taking place with the rise of global cities, and rescales the idea of citizenship such that those who inhabit the city have the right to use it fully.\textsuperscript{60} Citizenship as inhabitance has obvious anti-neoliberal and pro-spatial significance. From the anti-neoliberal perspective, it reprioritizes the use of the city over its exchange; from the pro-spatial perspective, it asserts the right of those who inhabit to appropriate and produce the physical space of the city in ways that promote their self-determination and self-development.

Solving xenophobia is no easy task, and explains why my prescriptions are less tactically articulate than others I have offered in this discussion. In fact, this example is used here precisely because it demonstrate that a wholesale normative shift would be required to even begin to tackle such a deeply entrenched problem as xenophobia; technocratic policy tinkering would not begin to scratch the surface of this issue and its causes. A normative ideal like “belonging” requires a promotion of difference that is more rigorous than acceptance, or even celebration, but less extreme than the kind of difference that informs a policy like Fortress South Africa. For natives to truly believe that foreigners are owed just as much by way of material goods, safety, and participation and access, an alternative idea of belonging will need to be widely adopted, a cause whose success could be significantly determined by the City of Cape Town’s willingness to lead the charge.

City Planning & The Problem of Insufficient Deliberation

A final area of exclusion arises, unsurprisingly, from the planning processes for urban developments in Cape Town, in which projects are frequently deemed too technical or time-sensitive to engage the public in substantive periods of consultation. Though there exists legislation to this effect (the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act is most frequently cited) and the intent for such consultation is often explicitly stated in the city’s development manifestos (references are made to public-facing consultation in the Western Cape Growth and Development Strategy, City of Cape Town Integrated Development Plan, the Cape Town Partnership’s Central City Development Strategy, and Accelerate Cape Town’s 2030 Vision for Cape Town, to
name just a few), a combination of factors leads to public consultations more often completed after widespread public outcry than during the actual planning phases of public developments. Potential reasons for this lack of meaningful consultation range from government corruption to lack of public will, but insufficient methods can surely be claimed regardless of which side one chooses to hold accountable.

According to the City of Cape Town’s “Notification Policy for Land Use Development Applications” document, the minimum level of informing interested and affected parties (IAPs) most often requires a notification letter and advertisement in the press. The ways in which this can be exclusionary are obvious: not only is it possible that citizens may have limited access to press advertisements, such a method of consultation is clearly constructed with formally housed property owners in mind (in fact, property ownership is specified as a qualification for being considered an IAP). Moreover, with this method of consultation, the onus falls on the individual IAP to submit a written objection (itself exclusionary given different levels of literacy, leisure time to dedicate to such a process, etc.) to the appropriate City Council committee without any understanding of how such objections are reviewed.

The development plans for which consultative duties are devolved from the City Council to various neighborhood Business Improvement Districts are also numerous and rarely result in substantive public engagement aside from with business-owners,

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62 Ibid, 11.
especially when the fact that districts possess varying resources to dedicate toward consultative processes is considered. Chapter One’s example of Durbanville’s well-financed ward committee being better equipped to facilitate meaningful consultation and objection to the city’s plan to bend the urban edge than Philippi’s ad-hoc consultation process is relevant here.

These various instances of insufficient consultation are yet another example of the neoliberal city’s government being mobilized to promote market-rule of the city, even if such strategies can result in greater bureaucracy, which is inimical to the ideological goals of neoliberalism. This contradictory function (that is, as previously stated, central to neoliberal urban governance) is inspired by the same inter-urban competition that influences a fear of foreigners. Cities aspiring for world-class status must constantly be on the forefront of innovation in the urban development sector; accordingly, allowing for hands-off market direction of such projects is considered an international best practice. The City of Cape Town has knowingly allowed urban development by and for the market, thus directly creating another state of exception in which planners, the directors of private proposals, and council members can pay lip service to participatory democracy without actually having to deliver.

Reasserting the importance of procedural justice could go a long way in redressing the problems that emerge from such insufficient and exclusionary consultation. Most urgently, the value of increased social knowledge as a result of democratically representative and deliberative decision-making processes should be prioritized. This is particularly important for social welfare projects that are meant to

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63 Eddit Cottle, interview with the author.
improve disadvantaged areas but rarely consult with the disadvantaged populations directly. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai’s concept of the “politics of shit” is usefully employed here: when “professionals” (especially business professionals) are tapped to lead planning processes (especially for welfare-improvement projects), the aesthetic and exchange values tend to be overemphasized, while legitimate questions of how such projects will be used by those who are meant to benefit from them are ignored or barely considered. Like in the case of World Bank consultants who are brought in to, “discuss the merits of feces management with the defectors themselves,” Appadurai argues that when the subjects of public works projects are consulted directly, they are transformed from mere beneficiaries to political actors.64 The transformation of citizens from beneficiaries to political actors is inherently good: it promotes self-determination and self-development in ways that mere redistribution cannot.

Another major issue with Cape Town’s current planning process is the universal approach taken to consultation for all land-use projects and development programs. Determining who qualifies as an interested and affected party is a problem in itself (that is, those without legal claims to land are still affected by its use), but to assume the duty of consultation is fulfilled once a notification letter is sent is to disrespect differences among populations entirely. Instead, various deliberative approaches—from traditional written submissions, to e-governance platforms, to holding public forums away from City Hall—should be employed. The power of

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increasing social knowledge and politicizing the planning process should not be underestimated; deliberatively discussing development plans among a diverse audience of citizens before said plans are implemented can stifle the potential for plans to be misunderstood because of their technical nature—not to mention that those who use and engage with the city directly are likely to understand its needs better than outside consultants and CEOs.

III. Conclusion: Emancipation in the Rainbow Nation

In 2010, the Tutu Peace Center hosted a series of public dialogues focused on bringing South Africans closer together in honor of Archbishop Tutu’s retirement. One of these dialogues invited South African public intellectuals to meditate on the idea of the “Rainbow Nation” and to what extent its ideals had been achieved. In addressing whether the rainbow ideal was too mythical to ever be attained, poet and academic Antjie Krog posed a reminder to the audience about what such an ideal would actually entail that I find quite applicable to the previous discussion of justice:

The kind of light needed to form a rainbow is sunlight. But sunlight contains all colors. One could therefore suggest a rainbow cannot even begin to exist if it's not inclusive. There are separate bands of colors, but there is no dominant color within a rainbow. All the colors are continuously spilling over and into each other. Has the notion of a Rainbow Nation clouded the path to reconciliation? I would say 'Yes it did.' Because we were too lazy…too ethically confused and too badly educated to truly explore the enriching
possibilities of being complete, liberated and almost fatally interlinked. We grabbed the superficial, non-scientific, shimmery version of a rainbow to claim an enclave of privilege for ourselves. Best of all, now we can either say ‘Shh! Please don't disturb the pretty picture’ or, "Ag shame, the naive old fool. It's all been a myth." Krog aptly assesses what went wrong in the original South African adoption of the rainbow ideal and elegantly captures here exactly why a politics of difference as the basis for a theory of justice and alternative normative framework for assessing social institutions is so appropriate for the urban context. In 1994, South Africa called for greater justice in social organization, but was misguided in prioritizing the equalization of outcomes over the processes and social relations that dictate how these outcomes arise. Krog’s appraisal that the current attitudes toward the rainbow ideal in South Africa range from blissful ignorance to undue despondency is one reason why technocratic adjustments to policy have failed to foster greater justice in Cape Town—and surely why a new conception of the citizen and his or her role in democracy is desperately needed.

In proposing “city life” as a normative ideal that opposes both liberal individualism and similarly exclusive communitarianism, Iris Marion Young is referencing precisely the same non-domination and celebration of difference (the kind that fosters a “continuous spillover” of diverse interactions) that Krog’s version of the rainbow ideal would necessitate by definition. It is important, however, to recognize

that a theory of procedural justice without accompanying distributive guidelines is realistically no more robust than the opposite theoretical formation. What I am arguing for here is a reprioritization of process guided by different basic assumptions; this should not suggest a wholesale rejection of the worth of distributive justice entirely. My critique of distributive justice addresses its use of individuals as the primary analytical unit and hypothesizes that the use of allowing for group considerations could outweigh the difficulties that accompany such analysis. It criticizes the universalizing tendencies inherent in assuming the perfect freedom and equality of individuals and treating allocations of primary goods as the basis of justice, and alternatively proposes that embracing difference is especially important for the Capetonian and urban contexts (though employing difference to an extreme extent is likewise harmful). My critique calls for dealing with injustice directly instead of working within a framework of perfect justice where it does not exist. But in doing so, it simultaneously recognizes how easily dealing with actual social realizations can lend itself to the market-fundamentalist approach of neoliberal urban governance whose contradictory state processes are defended in the name of the market’s ability to impartially allocate. Finally, it identifies an often forgotten source of injustice that is entirely spatial, and calls for a reimagining of geographies both built and imagined that would promote wider access to and uses of space in the city.

While it is obviously true that the (radical) redistribution of material resources is necessary for the realization of a truly emancipatory kind of social justice, to believe that a strategy of redistribution will ever be politically viable without first instating inclusive participatory and accessibility imperatives, is to fundamentally
misunderstand how political progress is made. In support of this argument, the next and final chapter focuses on the consideration of how citizens of Cape Town can realistically achieve the wide adoption of this more comprehensive normative framework—with its more contextually appropriate understanding of urban development goals and alternative conception of justice—especially by those currently in power.
CHAPTER THREE: Contested City

“Cape Town likes to keep things superficial; it has fancy things for fancy people. We are still learning how to actively engage with our democracy. Right now, it’s like we are waiting for our almighty father to deliver, waiting for his mercy!”

-ZAHIRA ASMAL, Founder of Designing South Africa, 2014¹

“Whereas in other cities there may be a sense of rewriting frameworks, in South Africa’s cities, you have forty years of apartheid planning and planners that only really know how to do that, followed by twenty years of NGOs fighting for a rights-based agenda. So when you start there you really close down the debate. We don’t have a celebration of the urban. By and large, the city government sees urbanization as a ‘crisis’ that we must ’stem.’ So I’d say in South Africa, cities are unique in their inflexibility.”

-LIZA CIROLIA, Housing Researcher, African Center for Cities, 2014²

Results in the realm of just urban development during South Africa’s twenty years of democracy have been consistently underwhelming, which is not altogether surprising given the nature of neoliberal urban governance, the types of developments it promotes, and the underlying normative framework for assessing social institutions that renders such developments acceptable. The radical intentions of democratic South Africa’s founding document remain unrealized, and if the evolution of national socioeconomic legislation is any indication, it seems that the country is moving further and further away from its original ideals. Moreover, the plausibility of the City of Cape Town departing from its neoliberal urban governance model in an effort to include and meaningfully involve a more diverse idea of “the public,” seems unlikely in the immediate future, and especially so as long as the current goals of

¹ Asmal, interview with author.
² Liza Cirolia (African Center for Cities Housing Researcher), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014.
urban development—goals that are centered on growth and efficiency, motivated by inter-urban competition, and rely on the misguided belief that trickle-down benefits will disperse across the city’s population and geography evenly—remain unchanged.

An alternative normative framework is desirable—one that embraces difference by promoting group identities, addresses the procedural aspects of social institutions more directly instead of distributions alone, and recognizes the spatial dimensions of much institutionalized injustice that must be redressed. Such a framework is likely to inform development goals that are both inclusive and more contextually appropriate. However, it is difficult to conceptualize what would be required for Capetonians to adopt this alternative framework because of the type of ineffective resistance that has emerged as a dominant pattern in South Africa, the nation commonly referred to as “the protest capital of the world.” The majority of resistance that transpires in Cape Town takes an all too common form: marches to the state legislature and other governmental buildings in the central city, sit-ins at public transport depots and similar service hubs, and more symbolic acts like tire-burning in townships. Such resistance is only directed at one opponent, politicians, and tends to militantly harp on a singular demand, that is, the delivery of services like refuse removal and reliable electricity by the state. Utilizing the language of rights to makes these demands further convolutes the problem, given that the Constitutional commitment to realizing these rights is exceedingly explicit, but still unfulfilled. Because resistance rarely diverges from this singular strategy, politicians have learned to conciliate situations of contestation without meaningfully engaging with the systemic issues such actions are meant to expose, as will be discussed in the
following section of this chapter. Thus, cities are not only inflexible from above, as has been suggested frequently throughout this project, but also from below. In utilizing the very same tactics over and over again, dissatisfied citizens are met with the same types of responses that have always functioned to maintain—rather than transform—societal relations.

The static nature of resistance and its responses informs the question guiding this final portion of the analysis of Cape Town as a World-Class City: what reasonable course of action can be taken to inspire a radical departure from the current neoliberal equilibrium that seems to be justified normatively, but is, in reality, suboptimal both from a normative and functional standpoint? Having assessed the plausibility of alternatives to Cape Town’s neoliberal framework being reached by the City of Cape Town’s own accord, and having postulated the nature of alternative outcomes that could materialize from adopting a different set of normative goals of urban development, the logical conclusion of this analysis involves evaluating current resistance and positing improvements both to the theoretical understanding of resistance and the way it is enacted on the ground. As such, this chapter begins with an overview of Cape Town’s current political landscape to better understand why resistance from above—political recognition in campaigns and elections—has had minimal transformative effects on the city. Next, an assessment of Cape Town’s grassroots resistance, utilizing the normative criteria set forth in Chapter 2, is provided to appraise the value and potential of resistance from below. The following section of this chapter considers the various theoretical problems that are raised with either approach—resistance from above or below—in an attempt to determine the
most useful way to organize resistance so that transformative outcomes may materialize. Accompanying this section is an identification of the “best practices” of actually existing contestation in Cape Town, or those cases that are best suited to the theoretical understanding of resistance determined to be most useful. Finally, this chapter theorizes the potential for actions of resistance and contestation that could move Cape Town closer to realizing the type of World-Class City that would promote a more inclusive urban future in the longer term.

I. Cape Town’s Political Landscape: Resistance as Recognition from Above

I have repeatedly emphasized the novelty of the South African Constitution: it’s radical nature, including explicit commitments to redressing Apartheid-era wrongs and promoting social justice and human rights, has inspired both praise and critique. The national, provincial, and local levels of government alike have adopted this explicit commitment and rhetorical references are frequently made to the government’s duty as provider. It is no wonder, then, that the culture surrounding the provision of services and basic needs, and even the claiming of rights, is one of delivery. That is, citizens expect their needs to be met by the government; the government is the provider and must “deliver” if a sufficient standard of living is to be achieved. This observation is exceedingly evident in conversations from either end of the citizenry—both the marginalized and the supposed providers. It is obvious among journalists, scholars, and activists too, with criticism primarily being leveled at citizens (“We don’t have a culture of self-building in South Africa”; “Capetonians
say, ‘Why should we even have to ask?’ They think, ‘Shouldn’t the state be providing?’” and so on), while the government’s lack of commitment to its radical statements is merely lamented, as corruption is considered the inevitable downfall of democracy.  

Perhaps the inevitability of such dissatisfaction is partially accurate—after all, Constitutions stipulate the ideal case, and are meant to be worked towards in every context for which they have been ratified. However, the sheer ferocity of electioneering that occurs in Cape Town and broader South Africa must be of note, given that political parties, at least on the surface, understand that greater progressivity is desired among large portions of the constituency (or these rhetorical commitments would no longer be necessary). What follows is an exploration of Capetonians’ abilities to contest neoliberal urban governance with their votes. Elections are universally viewed as the most significant way to participate in democracy, but given the state of the political landscape in Cape Town, it should be abundantly clear why I have called for a different understanding of citizenship—one that does not rely entirely on the citizen as voter.

The African National Congress & The Tripartite Alliance

The popular acceptance of social-movement-political-party hybrids originated with the African National Congress (ANC) during the Apartheid era. The ANC describes itself as a “liberation movement,” not a political party—a title they still hold today. As the vanguard of anti-Apartheid resistance, the ANC was entrusted with the

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3 Cirolia, interview with author.  
McDonald, interview with author.
responsibility of crafting the first democratic South African Constitution, in which many of the progressive commitments I have repeatedly referenced can be found. Likewise, as the majority party in charge of leading the new democratic South Africa, the ANC hoped to achieve a “National Democratic Revolution,” that would lead to the realization of a non-racial, non-sexist democracy in which the “liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage…” and the improvement of the “…quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor,” were the main priorities.\(^4\) In the 1990s, the ANC forged an alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Joining the alliance meant that neither constituent group of the ANC could field its own candidates for election, but were allowed senior positions within the ANC, thus neutralizing the potential for radical politics within the Alliance. The Alliance was also supposed to confer some influence over national policy to the SACP and COSATU, but since the onslaught of neoliberal national policy, relations within the alliance have been tense (I will return to this point in discussing the Democratic Left Front).\(^5\) For the purposes of this analysis, the final detail of note about the ANC is that much of the current anti-government agitation in South Africa invokes the party’s basic policy document, the Freedom Charter, which calls for equal rights, wealth sharing, employment and security, shelter, comfort, and


the ability to express oneself culturally. Today’s ANC holds up the RDP as a prime expression of the Freedom Charter, without acknowledging that most RDP policies were aggressively curtailed under the ANC’s very own leadership. It is safe to assume that the ANC will not (at least not in the foreseeable future) be the vanguard of the sort of social transformation that could combat neoliberal urban governance, as they themselves ushered in its adoption in South Africa.

_Electioneering & Urban Development in Cape Town: The DA versus The ANC_

The Democratic Alliance (DA) became the official opposition party to the ANC in the 1999 national election, but first enjoyed significant political gains when it claimed control of the Western Cape provincial government in the 2009 general election. It is difficult to place the DA politically because its policies have always been crafted to compete with the ANC; in other words, it has adopted the same pro-poor rhetoric, the same references to the Freedom Charter, the same calls for liberation, but just as frequently adopts policies that are counter to this goal. Moreover, in the perpetual power struggle that is South Africa’s national elections, the DA’s primary strategy has been to position the Western Cape as the model province by socioeconomic measures, and Cape Town specifically as the gold standard of urban development. This means that inter-urban competition, a characteristic of neoliberal urban governance, is heightened by the political context. The main purpose of selecting the examples of DA and ANC interactions that appear below is to highlight how aggressive electioneering has created a negative externality

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in Cape Town, whereby development outcomes are made significantly worse (where “worse” can be defined as less just and more contradictory) by the political hostility that has become a feature of Cape Town’s current landscape of resistance.

A recent illustrative example transpired over two years in the lead-up to the 2014 national elections, when the DA was forced to address rising township agitation concerning the indignity of bucket toilets. During prime campaign opportunities, township residents took to throwing bucket-collected human waste into various public areas of the Central Business District, at the steps of the national Legislature building, and across the N2 highway (that connects the central city with wealthy suburbs and the townships) resulting in the highway’s shutdown. Because ANC politicians were campaigning in Cape Town during the waste protest and latched onto the “story of gross indignity” quickly, the DA quickly responded by distributing “porta-loos” widely across major townships. This allowed the DA’s national leadership to praise the city governments’ responsiveness and concurrently criticize the increased use of bucket toilets in the Eastern Cape, an ANC-governed municipality. Though the DA maintained its majority in the city during the 2014 election cycle, because its rudimentary portable toilet solution functioned quite similarly to the bucket-toilets that inspired the initial protest, the very same protest has repeatedly occurred in Cape Town. Without an election to immediately contend for, however, the city has opted to prosecute protesting individuals instead of implementing more comprehensive solutions, or, at the very least, seeking more meaningful input from said protesters.

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about the type of solution they desire (as opposed to criminalizing their actions).\footnote{Natasha Prince, “Poo Protest Charges ‘trumped Up’ - Crime & Courts | IOL News,” \textit{Independent Online}, accessed April 9, 2015, http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/poo-protest-charges-trumped-up-1.1765339#.VSY6yZTF94g.} The disruptive nature of this instance of resistance instead reinforced the Cape DA’s belief that mobilizing the police in honor of “cleansing” public space in the city was entirely necessary and justified.

Inter-urban competition between DA and ANC controlled municipalities has also inspired counter-intuitive actions from either party—the larger issue, of course, being that the average citizen has a difficult time unilaterally opposing any party because positive change from either party is erratic. Substantiating the argument that the dominant political parties are significantly more interested in how municipalities outside of their own jurisdictions are being governed is a simple task: one need look no further than the press release section of either party’s website to recognize that public denunciations of the opposing party’s latest political activity is far more urgent than offering a propositional party platform. Moreover, the hypocrisy latent in such public denunciations is overwhelming, though unsurprising given the low standard of accountability parties must uphold. In one Cape-specific case, the DA has chosen to align with the majority of Capetonians in siding against the Gauteng province’s e-toll scheme. E-tolling would help pay for maintenance of the province’s freeway upgrade project that connects the Gauteng to the Western Cape region, and is only being opposed because it presents another opportunity for the party to position itself as “pro-poor” in contrast with the ANC-governed Gauteng. Interestingly though, the Western Cape portion of the highway already has traditional tolls and will be forced to introduce an e-tolling system if traffic increases. Thus, the DA’s opposition to e-
tolling is enabled by a temporary circumstance, and not by deeply entrenched pro-poor ideology. In reality, the underlying efficiency and maintenance arguments put forth for the e-toll program by the Gauteng government are remarkably similar to the rationale behind cost-recovery for basic services—something that the DA has aggressively implemented throughout the Western Cape.10

*The DA’s Campaign Concessions in Cape Town*

As previously mentioned, the prevailing narratives of resistance in Cape Town revolve around claiming service delivery as a human right and has led to a cycle of resistance that is rather futile given the political forces at play. Such calls are obviously relevant insofar as insufficient basic levels of services, service cutoffs, and aggressive cost recovery have made procuring necessities like clean running water or refuse removal a daily struggle for many of the most disadvantaged Capetonians. But in repeatedly relying on the very same tactics and demands to yield improved outcomes, residents have underestimated the ability of the city’s governing body to systematically disregard such claims, or spin the reality of insufficient and discriminatory services through clever marketing and information management.

For example, the DA’s social media campaign in light of the 2014 national elections, called “#DAdelivers,” allowed the opposition party to disseminate (via Twitter) various unsubstantiated statistics about its progress in Cape Town in comparison with ANC-led municipalities across the country. In response to

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challenges that the sources of such statistics as, “Of the R18 billion spent on service
delivery in the City of Cape Town, R11 billion is spent on the poor communities.
#DAdelivers,” and, “76% of the Western Cape Government’s budget is redistributed
to poor communities. #DAdelivers,” were neither publicly available nor independently verifiable, the Democratic Alliance simply argued that if claims were not independently verifiable, then they were equally undisputable.11 Another statistic circulated, “The [South African] gap between the ‘haves’ & the ‘have nots’ is smallest in the City of Cape Town. It has the highest level of equality in SA. #DAdelivers,” is even more revealing as far as understanding what Capetonian resistance is up against. The bar for equality in South Africa is set so low that Cape Town, with its astronomically high Gini coefficient of 0.67, can be self-congratulatory (in comparison to Johannesburg’s 0.75 coefficient), despite the country being considered the most unequal in the world by the same study.12

Oppositional politics result in initial progress that steadily declines, as in the case of housing delivery: the DA did, in fact, deliver double the number of houses in its first two years of governing Cape Town as the ANC did on average in its last three years of governance, but has since fallen well below this target in the last two fiscal years (from 9,576 housing opportunities in the 2008/2009 fiscal year to a mere 5,718 opportunities in the 2013/2014 fiscal year). It also stands to be noted that in response to the city’s steadily rising housing backlog, its Annual Report proposes an unrealistic delivery target of over 14,000 housing opportunities in the 2014/2015 fiscal year,

further proving that the city is neither held accountable for making realistic projections nor for the underwhelming results that inevitably follow. In an environment where claims of progress can be made without substantiation, and claims that can be substantiated (albeit hidden on the 73rd page of a 229-page document whose broad accessibility—both content-wise and physically—is seriously questionable) reveal stagnating or regressing results, both of which are under-publicized (and, likewise under-politicized), the idea that electoral channels could serve as a sufficient course of contestation in the city is laughable. In summary, the transformative potential of the city is tied up in party politics whereby the opposition-governed Cape Town only needs to appear marginally more equal than ANC-governed municipalities for its politicians to boast of the party’s achievements—achievements that are certainly couched in complacency when they are not utterly unsubstantiated.

The Economic Freedom Fighters & The United Front: Transformative Potential?

Though it is true that the DA and ANC (with its Tripartite Alliance), two equally problematic options, are not in a position to be challenged in elections, alternative movement-party hybrids are currently assembling at the local and national level. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), founded by former ANC Youth leader Julius Malema and accordingly invested in building a diverse youth base of supporters, are one such option. The self-described “Leninist/Fanonist/Black Petit-


\[14^{a}\] Patrick Bond (UKZN Scholar and Activist), interview with author, Durban, July 2014.
Bourgeois” movement advocates for the state seizure of mines, banks, and land, and approves of political violence as a method for politicizing the mass injustices created by the “right-wing, capitalist, neoliberal” DA and ANC. The EFF’s bold demands and methods, while winning about 6% of the national vote in 2014, have largely been denounced by every other strand of resistance as “completely and utterly corrupt,” which is substantiated by the latest EFF Western Cape call for a court-ordered audit of the national party’s spending. More telling from a critical perspective is the EFF’s competing claim to the Freedom Charter, whose rhetoric has been too frequently coopted by mainline political parties to be relevant in today’s political discourse. In sum, the EFF comes off as an inexperienced “radical” outpost of empty rhetoric; especially in its militant leanings, its transformative potential seems bleak.

An alternative met with greater general optimism is the United Front, a movement inspired by the National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa’s (NUMSA) expulsion from COSATU in late 2014. From a sheer numbers perspective, ending its association with NUMSA (the largest constituent union of COSATU boasting over 300,000 members) significantly weakens the Tripartite Alliance, thus posing a legitimate threat to the ANC’s survival. Though it is far too early to assess the United Front’s potential for success (it has postponed its official national launch until June 2015), documents from its preparatory assembly that shed light on the Front’s vision show some signs of promise. It has identified leading activists in the

15 Ibid.
16 Hattingh, interview with author.
18 Bond, interview with author.
separate realms of education, housing, sanitation, health, agriculture, and women’s issues to inform the creation and finalization of its political vision. The United Front is also explicitly against recycling the Freedom Charter, but aims to recreate the grassroots consultation process that informed the ideals of the Freedom Charter by undertaking a suggestion campaign across Cape Town and Gauteng townships (the Front’s political base). Though the Front vows not to field political candidates itself, current discussions of the national and local working committees center on whether socialism will be the Front’s ultimate prescription, and if so, how this can be agitated for via elections. At least by procedural standards, the United Front seems promising in that it has not rushed to enter elections as an oppositional force without considering its own propositions. It also seems to respect difference by considering how best to articulate separate demands among various interest groups within its broader working class movement. Of course, the optimism that accompanies new social movements is not unique to the United Front, and it is absolutely too early to promote the United Front as the key to transformative change at any scale. Even so, the movement does seem to be taking a reasoned and critical approach to contestation, which however minute, is to be commended in an electoral context like South Africa’s.

*Assessing Resistance from Above*

There are a number of reasons why I am doubtful of the transformative potential of the political parties on offer. Through its Tripartite Alliance, the ANC has acted against fostering political diversity; the potentially radical ideals that could have been put forth by the SACP or COSATU have instead been brought under the ANC’s

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19 Bond, correspondence with author (United Front Preparatory Assembly documents).
neoliberal urban governance umbrella to neutralize each member’s politics. The only genuine threat to the ANC is the DA, whose over-prioritization of distributions and trickle-down philosophy have been well documented throughout this thesis. Moreover, the DA’s purely oppositional politics has disproportionately made inter-urban competition the focus of its policies—policies that need not involve meaningful deliberation as long as the party can publicize its slight improvements to ANC policies. While both parties recognize that the lackluster translation of progressivity from the country’s governing documents to its actual policies, neither is interested in redressing the processes that lead to these suboptimal outcomes. Instead, both promote the Freedom Charter, a document that falls prey to the typical problem of institutionalizing universal rights (see Chapter Two), that is, the document lacks the tactical articulation for realizing this institutionalization, beyond facilitating every citizen’s right to vote.

The United Front seems to be taking the procedural imperative of deliberation seriously, and has demonstrated both oppositional and propositional approaches to creating different development outcomes. It also has upheld difference and promoted group identity by consulting various interest groups and promising to articulate their separate demands (instead of trying to build consensus where it may not exist), but it is clearly too early to tell if its seeming adherence to my alternative normative framework will continue, especially as it scales. The main shortcoming of resistance from above in realizing transformative outcomes in Cape Town is that this form of resistance relies too heavily on the citizen as voter; though voting is an important way of exercising citizenship, with substandard candidates on offer, voting does very little
to democratize the power of self-determination in development so that transformative urban development goals can be imagined and adopted. It is my view, then, that a truly progressive political party could be part of the larger strategy to move away from neoliberal urban governance, but the parties on offer and election environment in Cape Town stifle the potential of this part of the strategy significantly, at least for the time being.

II.  Resistance from Below: Grassroots Cases, Ideologies, & Critique

Though every major moment (event, movement, political party) of grassroots resistance recognizes the flaws of neoliberal urban governance, the degree to which each is willing to engage with the city government, and the types of reformative action prescribed are the features that define the major ideological strands of resistance in Cape Town. The three ideologies explored here, the liberal left, Marxist, and autonomist camps, represent the major strands of resistance in Cape Town (and South Africa more broadly), though instances of “everyday resistance” are concurrently taking place in the city. Actions like illegally restoring water and electricity connections that are cutoff by the city’s cost recovery schemes and occupying land that has already been allocated for private development constitute the type of everyday resistance that political scientist James Scott argues is evidence against the Gramscian understanding of necessarily hegemonic relations (referenced in Chapter Two). However, because these actions are neither oppositional nor propositional, and instead are a function of self-preservation, it is difficult to assess
their potential in terms of inspiring widespread, transformative change. The general strategy, an example of an organization or movement that utilizes said strategy, and brief commentary on some of the theoretical questions raised (especially in South African scholarship that represents each ideology, given the country’s culture of activist-scholars) are provided to round out the understanding of each ideological camp. The ideologies are presented in increasing order of radicality, where espousing a radical politics is defined as engaging and participating less with the state.

*The Liberal Left: Limits to Propositional Politics*

The moments of resistance that fall into the liberal left camp are characterized as such because they generally call for the realization or expansion of already existing rights, and in this sense, possess the closest relationship to the state as it currently operates. Liberal leftist resistance usually engages with the government through legal action, which lends itself to embracing liberalism as discussed in the previous chapter. To quickly recap the argument, because the struggle over rights to state services is increasingly being adjudicated in courts, the delivery of such services becomes more important than the method through which services are delivered. The delivery method becomes depoliticized, and consequently, this type of struggle often leads to greater privatization and resource commodification. Notice that concerns over delivery methods are in line with normative critique I leveled against valuing distributions of resources over the processes that allocate these resources. Various court cases related to the constitutionality of prepaid meters for water can be cited as

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evidence of this type of resistance, but given that the City of Cape Town has increased water service charges by 8% during the most recent fiscal year (2014/2015) and called for the further devolution of municipal services (that would allow individual metros within the Western Cape to identify their own energy sources and tax expenditures), it seems that adjudicating in the name of human rights is ineffective in inspiring a change in the state’s assumption of responsibility.21

When translated into a social movement, the liberal left strategy focuses on appealing for a greater share of a set portion of benefits resulting from some development project, as opposed to agitating for different, participant-specific benefits, or different projects altogether. This point is evident when assessing the World Class Cities for All campaign (WCCA) organized by StreetNet International, an alliance of street vendors’ unions, cooperatives, and trusts that originated in South Africa in 2002 but has since campaigned in various countries on the African, Asian, and South American continents.22 The WCCA campaign mobilized thousands of South African vendors and unionists during the run up to the 2010 World Cup to demand decent work standards and more inclusive benefits of Cup-related trade that could be enjoyed by street vendors, hawkers, union members, and slum dwellers alike. In calling for a united front against exclusionary trade zones, unfair compensation for unsafe work, and similar Cup-related injustices, the campaign tried to utilize the narrative of FIFA as the common enemy to unify groups whose interests were actually opposed. For example, union members and slum-dwelling migrants

22 Horn, interview and correspondence with author.
were competing for the same indecent construction work and ended up lowering wages. Likewise, informal market traders and street hawkers competed to sell the same foreign-produced FIFA gear and knockoffs instead of their own traditional wares, thus tacitly consenting to their own removal from the trading posts best situated to capitalize on increased Cup-related tourism\(^{23}\).

The resulting message of the WCCA campaign, despite its good intentions in desiring to build enduring alliances between constituent groups, was that the working class supported FIFAs’ developmentally irresponsible and unsustainable projects, as long as certain concessions were made that benefited these groups specifically. Such an approach immediately narrows the realm of possible contestation by automatically consenting to the World Cup’s exceedingly unjust reorganization of social institutions so that a private multinational corporation like FIFA can accumulate the highest possible profits. Unsurprisingly, whatever solidarity was established in the shadow of the World Cup dissolved almost immediately afterward, but the campaign’s organizers neither fundamentally questioned the basis of such unity nor problematized the message of consent that the campaign’s demands would send to those in power (both the South African government and FIFA). Instead the WCCA campaign’s ex-post evaluation documents rue the “immaturity” of South African resistance as compared to that of Brazil’s and vows to begin building alliances before host city agreements are even signed (this itself suggests a lack of contextual specificity, let alone the group-specificity that a politics of difference calls for in order to transform social arrangements).\(^{24}\)

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
\(^{24}\) Ibid.
The most cited academics from the liberal left, Susan Parnell and Edgar Pieterse, hail from the African Center for Cities at the University of Cape Town. They are well known in the field for espousing a propositional, as opposed to oppositional, approach to contesting neoliberal urban governance. This approach essentially critiques Cape Town’s overreliance on service delivery protests by the urban poor (referenced at the outset of this chapter), but concurrently asserts that second and third generation rights—the socioeconomic, as opposed to democratic (first generation), requirements—must be the focus of any transformative urban agenda. In so doing, Parnell and Pieterse fall prey to the typical liberal flaw of prioritizing distributions and consequently depoliticizing processes. For example, in the case of informality, though their point that expressing the political will to provide basic services is an empty political statement without the ability to deliver these resources is well taken, the pair end up recommending prepaid meters for services as one institutional mechanism that could help to realize Cape Town’s progressive political will. Such prescriptions rely too heavily on distributional measures that frequently underestimate the degree to which prescriptions can be coopted by a neoliberal agenda. I suspect that neither would accept the criticism I have posed, citing their assertion of the valuable role states can play in a developmental capacity in response. In fact, both acknowledge, “…for the state to roll out a rights-driven development agenda presupposes that there are adequate systems in place as well as the political commitment to see through their implementation.” But in acknowledging this truth while concurrently arguing both for the prioritization of resource delivery

26 Ibid, 3.
27 Ibid, 7.
considerations and the assumption of a developmental role by the state, Parnell and Pieterse construct a very convoluted idea of what is required to contest neoliberalism. This convoluted idea suggests that liberal leftist scholars rely on the sort of transcendental institutional arrangements to inspire transformative social change that were problematized in the previous chapter. Given that redressing existing inequality is precisely the purpose of contesting neoliberalism, to assume the preexistence of adequately just institutional arrangements and procedures proves unhelpful to this discussion.

_The Marxists: Oppositional Politics & Issues of Clarity_

Though the Marxist application of resistance is more difficult to place, its influence on politics and critical theory in South Africa is obvious. As far as strategic calls, Marxists cannot be faulted for unintentionally bolstering neoliberalism in the way that the liberal left can. In light of a fragmented leftist opposition to neoliberalism, Marxists very clearly call for anti-capitalist struggles whose ultimate goal varies by scale: within the urban setting, the goal is to decommodify public spaces and services (as prescribed by Right to the City discourse), but Leninist elements within the movement aim to serve as the vanguard that would inspire a united class movement to overthrow the current government and establish a socialist South Africa. 28 Specific recommendations for inculcating the type of movement that would beget such results are challenging to identify in Marxist discourse because its ideology is more oriented toward exposing and politicizing the shortcomings and

28 Bond, correspondence with author.
injustices of existing circumstances than proposing a “viable roadmap” for the realization of its ambitious goals. As such, while many one-off campaigns and organizations in South Africa (almost all of which would reject these categorizations in favor of being known as ‘movements”) invoke Marxist frameworks like Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey’s right to the city, very few seem to have articulated their demands clearly enough to inspire enduring and transformative change at any geographic scale.

The most illustrative example of the embodiment of Marxist ideals in Capetonian resistance can be found in assessing the Western Cape Anti-privatization Forum (APF) and its incorporation of both the movement-based and vanguard-promoting approaches that derive from the right to the city and Leninist elements of Marxism respectively. This “social movement unionism,” as its members described it, allowed the APF to act at various scales, from organizing hyper-localized community movements to campaigning for national trade unions to join its cause. Thus, the APF comprised of over twenty (membership fluctuated frequently, especially because members are not card-carrying) constituent movements, organizations, and unions that met semi-regularly to agree on “transformative demands” based on common interests. Such demands were difficult to agree upon because “…while [members] could all agree on condemning capitalism, imperialism, globalization and privatization, identifying what they were for proved to be an intractable task.”

\[29\] MacDonald, correspondence with author.
\[31\] Ibid.
\[32\] Ibid, 813.
Moreover, divisions between some of the most active member organizations (both in individual membership and in notoriety) raised questions about the nature and basis of the inclusivity and non-hierarchy stipulated by the APF. For example, while the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) often utilized illegal tactics (occupation, reconnections, vigilantism that sometimes ignited violence, etc.,) to fight local battles against privatization, the Cape constituency of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) took on exploitative labor laws in formal settings (via courts and electoral campaigns). These tactics failed to easily align, revealing the tendency for movements and unions to operate not only at different scales (local versus national; informal versus formal), but also in different roles—with the AEC agitating as the user of municipal services, and SAMWU resisting as a producer of these services. The APF is fondly referenced by Marxist activists, though its activity since the mid-2000s has been erratic: the APF experienced a resurgence during the run up to the World Cup, but has since gone quiet again due to infighting and a lack of “place-specific and case-specific struggles” emerging in the Cape that all members could unite behind. As a product of the need to unite leftist resistance against neoliberalism, however, the APF is demonstrative of the ineffectual resistance that results from poorly founded calls for unity, organizational structures that lack clarity, and prefigurative mission statements centered on the desire to cultivate a revolutionary and transformative politics, while dismissing tactical plans of action as too instrumental.

33 Cottle, interview with author.
These issues are reflected in the scholarship that theorizes Marxist resistance as well. While most of the prominent South African Marxist scholar-activists would deny the viability of Leninist vanguard-promoting strands of resistance in their writing (and only sometimes acknowledge their own fraught roles as gatekeepers to and organizers of much Marxist discourse in the country), many pin their hopes of posing a credible anti-capitalist threat to neoliberal urban governance on the ability for the largest single trade union, NUMSA, to gain political power electorally. The problems that arise with contesting neoliberalism electorally have already been addressed in the previous section; suffice it to say, however, that accepting this mode of Marxist contestation in the South African context means necessarily stifling its transformative potential. Scholarship on Marxist resistance instead takes the right to the city approach; unsurprisingly, this view is just as useful for its critical adeptness and similarly lacking in tactical clarity. Lefebvre’s original version of the right is imagined as both a “cry and a demand, […] It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life.” This oft-cited summation is clearly inspirational, but neither explains what the right to the city includes or how to achieve it.

Most contemporary interpretations of the right to the city shy away from the legalistic understanding of rights (problematic in Chapter Two) and prefer to understand the right instead as a “…mobilized struggle that [gives] rise to a right,

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35 Padayachee, interview with author.
Bond, interview with author.
Ashwin Desai (Scholar and Activist), interview with author, Durban, August 2014.
36 Purcell, “To Inhabit Well,” 566.
rather than the particular outcome of legal codification.”\textsuperscript{37} This is an interpretation of
goals that accords with my normative framework, but again, the path to realizing rights in
depends on the specific situation and approach. The most concrete prescriptive translation of this
idea in the South African context is the argument for “commoning” resources like
water, medicine, and electricity, thus creating collective claims to these necessities
and decommodifying them in the process. Commoning runs into a problem, like
most Marxist resistance, with its tactical articulation, which sits in limbo between the
totally informal achievement of resource commons via illegal reconnections or
occupying land (the everyday resistance that Lefebvre romanticizes, despite its
unlikely scalability), and the formal legal route that utilizes courts to uphold resource
commons.\textsuperscript{38} When the latter strategy is deployed, and its success results in state-
provided or state-protected common resources, the “dangerously porous” distinction
between urban public goods and urban commons must be considered: as Harvey
rightly questions, “How often are developmental projects subsidized by the state in
the name of the common interest when the true beneficiaries are a few landholders,
financiers, and developers?”\textsuperscript{39} Here, Harvey is referring to the tendency of universal
rights to be institutionalized in incomplete ways, whereby the state may agree that
certain socioeconomic rights must be protected, but can promote privatization and
cost-recovery as ways to deliver on these rights.

Thus, it is clear that Marxist resistance is better deployed as critique—as
exposure and politicization—than as a well-articulated tactical guide to social
transformation. It is important to note that this interpretation of Marxist resistance is

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Bond, “Limits to Rights Talk,” 57-58.
\textsuperscript{39} Harvey, Rebel Cities, 79.
not lost on the South African scholars who espouse it. In fact, some of the cohort’s most prominent scholars would be the first to admit that the outlook for social change through resistance of the Marxist variety is not optimistic.\textsuperscript{40} Marxist discourse persists in South Africa specifically for its critical lens and ability to engage at multiple entry-points from local community struggles to national union-party campaigns. As such, my overview and interpretation has addressed these dimensions, but my critique says nothing of the problems that may arise from citizenship primarily based on labor contributions (though this is not the case specifically in right to the city discourse, at least discursively), and the absence of procedural considerations offered—especially if a Marxist transformation of the city were to occur.

\textit{The Autonomists: Problems of Scale}

The autonomist camp of resistance is by far the most difficult to define, given that its ideological imperatives are rather spare; the only real requirement is arguing for social change independent from the state. Autonomism, of course, borrows many of its values from Marxism—the major difference being the scale at which autonomist resistance operates. Because of its unwillingness to engage with the state at any scale, autonomism necessarily functions as a celebration of the local. This celebration is pursued with the hope, as opposed to any articulated strategy, that effective practices will catch fire and grow from below to overtake exploitative state structures. The benefits of this strategy of resistance are significant, given the emancipatory politics that hinges on recognizing the value of social difference

\footnote{McDonald, interview with author.}
suggested in the previous chapter: autonomist resistance is much less likely to be coopted by traditionally powerful entities, the scope for prescriptions offered by an autonomist ideology is much more diverse, and self-determination within a single act of resistance is more plausible because autonomism simultaneously negates state-influence and valorizes local expertise. Likewise, the dangers that can arise when autonomist resistance is exercised to an inappropriate degree are equally significant—most notably, in creating new situations of exclusion that tend to be parochially justified. On a practical level, autonomist movements frequently suffer more seriously from poor organization and accountability than other forms of resistance, since to institutionalize chains of command would be antithetical to their original intention.

The classic South African example of the pitfalls of autonomist resistance that arise from non-scalability and unclear organizational structures is the Abahlali baseMjondolo Shackdwellers’ Movement (AbM), which began in 2005 as a localized response to forced removals of shack dwellers in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and enjoyed relative success, in the form of politicizing the injustice of these removals, almost immediately.\(^{41}\) Their direct action strategies, including frequent protests and occupations (and rare instances of destroying private property), made for a potent exposé of just how poor the shack dweller quality of life actually was, and accordingly, demands for better land and free services in the city were initially granted.\(^{42}\) Even more significantly, AbM mobilized hundreds of protests (against xenophobia and police brutality, to increase school access and services, etc.), ran soup

\(^{41}\) Mdlalose, interview and correspondence with author.

kitchen programs, and even facilitated knowledge-sharing courses and seminars called “AbM University.”\textsuperscript{43}

AbM was clearly establishing the foundation for transformative change in these locales, but as its success and popularity concurrently grew and members started asking for more formalized improvements, scaling AbM’s operations became a priority—despite the misalignment of this new imperative with its autonomist founding vision. Infighting and power struggles revealed the difficulty in preserving a “non-professionalized, non-individualized, and truly people-powered” movement. Even though the founding president and face of AbM is a shack dweller himself, Dr. Richard Pithouse (a Rhodes University academic) is known as the “gatekeeper” to AbM’s activities, controlling the direction of protests and publication of press statements. Perhaps most disappointingly, having boycotted national elections and denounced party politics for the entirety of its existence, AbM encouraged its “active membership of 20,000 disempowered peoples” to vote for the DA in the 2014 national elections in a move against the ANC’s national corruption.\textsuperscript{44} Though it continues to assert its non-alignment with any political party, the endorsement of the DA was enough to inspire many splinter movements by those looking for a purely autonomist relationship with the government.

A former secretary of AbM’s Durban Branch, Bandile Mdlalose, started one such splinter group, called the Community Justice Movement (CJM), to combat the “fame-seeking, opportunist move by the AbM to partner with the DA and further

\textsuperscript{43} Manzi, correspondence with author.
\textsuperscript{44} Mdlalose, correspondence with author.
drive disempowered people into the capitalist system.”\textsuperscript{45} The CJM positions itself as directly counter to everything that AbM has become: it only uses protest as a last resort, refuses to interface with the government, and vows not to become a “press-statement only” organization. However, in speaking with its members, many of the messages and actions seem eerily similar to that of AbM. For example, the CJM wants to build a close relationship with the media since there is “nothing the government fears more.” It hopes to build solidarity with trade unions, despite the party affiliations most unions have. Even its mission statement, “bringing the government to the people and the people to the government,” has appeared in countless AbM publications.\textsuperscript{46} The only major difference I could detect (as an outside observer) was the informal settlements each movement was working in, which functioned to create adversarial relations between AbM and CJM affiliated areas. It seems that most of the CJM’s strategic actions are taken directly from its familiarity with AbM, which suggests that the CJM, too, will experience mixed results, especially as wider success is achieved.

The available collection of South African autonomist scholarship is quite sparse, with scholar-activists like Pithouse being the most prolific publishers on the subject. His work mostly praises the work of AbM, and fails to posit a theoretical understanding much deeper than the one I have provided by reviewing autonomist strategy, so it is less relevant to this discussion. The work of another activist-Scholar, Dr. Vishwas Satgar at the University of Witwatersand, is not considered a purely autonomist understanding because it offers a different, more networked prescription

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, (CJM Press Release).
\textsuperscript{46} This fact was gleaned from assessing the press statements of either party on each website.
for autonomist groups; his scholarship and activism is presented in the best-practices section of this chapter because I consider it to pose a more legitimate strategy for creating enduring social change. From the global perspective, anarchist thinker David Graeber’s assessment of the sustainability of autonomous resistance is quite illustrative of the South African case:

Temporary bubbles of autonomy must gradually turn into permanent, free communities. However, in order to do so, those communities cannot exist in total isolation; neither can they have a purely confrontational relation with everyone around them. They have to have some way to engage with larger economic, social, or political systems that surround them. This is the trickiest question because it has proved extremely difficult for those organized on radically democratic lines to so integrate themselves in any meaningful way in larger structures without having to make endless compromises to their founding principles.47

This is precisely the problem faced by AbM and the CJM, two of the most significant manifestations of autonomist politics in South Africa today. Their politics were compromised when scale became a consideration, and betrayal of the foundational principles has created purely oppositional splinter groups whose differences are mostly geographic, thus functioning to further spatially divide the movement (adding to the existing ideological divisions).

47 David Graeber, Direct Action: An Ethnography (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 239.
Assessing Resistance from Below

Grassroots resistance presents obvious improvements to resistance from above—namely, in promoting a more active conception of citizenship than the citizen as voter. However, the ideological camps of resistance presented here suffer from their own frailties as far as adhering to normative framework I have proposed. For example, the primary course of action for liberal leftist resistance is redressing distributions by promoting shared benefits to existing urban developments inspired by neoliberal urban governance (recall the WCCA campaign that consented to many coercive practices in honor of the World Cup). Even more problematically, its main applications in South Africa tend to assume away the existence of just institutional arrangements and processes as a precondition for realizing its distributive prescription. This is how the liberal left ends up supporting measures like prepaid meters; these methods are considered a benign means to the end of service delivery, which over-prioritizes distributions in comparison to processes.

The Marxist strand of resistance fares better, at least in wholly rejecting the unjust processes of neoliberal urban governance. However, it tends to assume away procedure in a different way: by failing to provide a plan for realizing its alternative development goals, Marxist resistance tends to prop up its ideology (building resource commons, overthrowing the government through the leadership of a vanguard party, etc.) as the means to realizing its ends. The ideology is rhetorically rich, but tactically scant as far as offering a legitimate plan for the realization of its goals. Its ideology also tends to erase difference by assuming class-domination as the
unifying experience that will inspire the movement it recommends. While class differences are obviously a hugely important point of injustice in Cape Town, there are other differences (including ethnic and geographic differences) that are underserved within Marxist ideology. My assessment accordingly deems Marxist resistance most useful as a critical lens.

Where liberal leftist resistance is not oppositional enough, and Marxist resistance is too oppositional without offering concrete tactics for achieving its propositions, autonomist resistance can offer improvements. It is oppositional in its complete disengagement from the state, and propositional by way of determining and directing its own alternative practices (recall AbM’s soup kitchens and university of knowledge-sharing). It also clearly upholds difference and can accommodate a variety of different development goals, but its promotion of difference may be too extreme in certain respects; this kind of resistance often bleeds into the isolation realm, in terms of the universalizing-atomizing spectrum I defined in Chapter Two. By this, I mean to suggest that the level of difference autonomist resistance espouses tends to be unsustainable when scalability is required for creating truly transformative change. Thus, while its diffusion of the power of self-determination is admirable, autonomist resistance requires a different type of oppositional politics, as completely disengaging from the state makes scalability impossible. Balancing the positive contributions that each strand of resistance offers to realize my proposed normative framework while redressing each of the weaknesses identified here is taken up in the following section.
III. Towards Transformative Change: Theoretical Questions & Best Practices

Despite the pessimistic assessments of current channels and acts of resistance in Cape Town, the sheer frequency with which these examples occur in the city—and the richness of the broader discourse that inspires them—should be encouraging. However, because criticisms were leveled against resistance from above and resistance from below, the problem of how best to organize resistance and which practices resistance should promote such that transformative outcomes (of the sort my alternative normative framework would promote) can be realized, is obviously a relevant issue that must be addressed. Thus, it is useful to grapple with the criticisms raised from the previous assessment of existing resistance to identify necessary improvements; a discussion of this nature is offered below.

_Appropriately Preserving Difference Through Resistance_

For starters, it is obvious that there exists a great deal of difference in South African society in general and Capetonian society in particular (socioeconomic, political, ideological, and ethnic difference constitute just the surface of a deeply divided society). This difference stands in stark contrast to the assertion of an exceptional kind of unity—recall the Rainbow Nation ideal—that South Africans claim lies latent in their country, if only it could be realized. From the empirical assessment preceding this section, it should be clear why acknowledging unity as a strictly _political_ project, one that is not credible given the empirical reality of Cape Town, is a necessary theoretical concession that must be made before the rightful
organization of resistance can even begin to be considered. In fact, the claim I make
is a stronger one: that is, the notion of Cape Town’s unrealized transcendental unity is
not only unrealistic, but has actually stifled post-Apartheid social transformation
significantly, precisely because the normative goals of urban development have been
too unwilling to accommodate difference.

On the reverse, the assertion that the call for unity (both in organizing
resistance to neoliberal urban governance and as an end goal) is poorly founded and
contextually inappropriate should not be misconstrued as an endorsement of anarchy.
Such an endorsement would be equally as contextually inappropriate, given the
current state of grassroots resistance in which a multitude of oppositional movements
have proliferated that are unable to engage with one another, and thus, have a small
chance of creating widespread social transformation. This fact is obvious when
considering the autonomist strands of resistance that have emerged in South Africa.
While commendable insofar as they neither reinforce the existing status quo (like
resistance by the liberal left) nor superimpose an arch of sameness onto profoundly
differentiated social realities (like Marxist class-oriented resistance), autonomist
movements are often too isolated to have a real impact on deeply entrenched social
institutions. To uphold difference appropriately, then, a sensitive balance must be
struck between rejecting unity in the name of embracing difference and promoting
anarchic relations that result in fragmented resistance.
Respecting Cape Town’s Contextual Specificity

To propose an improved organizational framework for resistance, it is also necessary to reframe prescriptions within the limiting parameters that Cape Town’s contextual specificities impose. For the specific context, neoliberal urban governance presents a special kind of hegemony to challenge. Its contradictory ideology and process, at once adhering to market fundamentalism while mobilizing a more interventionist state (albeit to specific, market-centered ends), make for a state that is particularly dexterous in staving off crises. Relevant to this understanding is the idea that neoliberal urban governance creates states of exception in its planning processes. Most exclusionary experiences in the city (those stemming from informality, xenophobia, or non-consultative planning, etc.) have been actively created or reinforced by the state. When the state cannot garner value from employing the process of neoliberalization by intervening in exclusionary experiences (be it by requiring permits for informal trade, tightening immigration policy, or establishing PPPs), the state will assert the ideological component of neoliberal urban governance to claim either that the government is practicing non-intervention or that economic growth will solve these problems in due time. Thus, any attempt at defining a path for transformative social change in Cape Town must successfully navigate these states of exception. This involves expertly towing the line between embracing the experience of exception as a form of social difference (by acknowledging diverse needs and promoting specific solutions for different groups), and unnecessarily deepening the state of exception by inadvertently enabling resistance that is too fragmented (in isolating these diverse needs and solutions from one another so they are rendered
individually weak), in order to pose a legitimate threat to the hegemonic power that is neoliberal urban governance. This consideration presents another formation through which to understand why achieving the proper position within the difference-fragmentation continuum is vital.

**Prioritizing Procedural Considerations Within Resistance**

The first imperative that must be addressed by an improved organization of resistance—that is, the need to occupy the ideal position within the difference-fragmentation continuum—is accompanied by a number of procedural considerations for which the continuum applies. One such consideration is how to address the culture of delivery that permeates the South African development agenda and has been thoroughly adopted by the public. The futility of the current cycle of resistance, characterized by continual service delivery protests, would suggest the need for a development process that is more self-directed and independent of the state. However, this culture of self-determination should not move too far toward the fragmentation end of the continuum, for this would ignore the state’s tremendous capacity and responsibility to help orient development towards normatively desired ends. A related consideration, then, is how and to what degree resistance should engage with the state. The chance that Cape Town’s existing governance structures will be overthrown is quite unlikely (and probably undesirable), but its electoral climate has bred politicians utterly lacking in accountability because their confidence that the current status quo will be maintained is so high. Consequently, the types of claims being made on the state must be the perfect hybrid of oppositional and
propositional, such that inefficient state development processes will be excised and more useful structures can be created and efficiently mobilized.

A third procedural consideration that must factor in the need to redress Cape Town’s culture of delivery and to modify the mode of state engagement, is the degree to which new resistance practices should endeavor to be institutionalized. Much resistance in South Africa, as previously mentioned, would self-describe as non-hegemonic, but these autonomist and anarchic streaks are not only difficult to scale, but also fail to utilize the radical political will that is already codified into South Africa’s development policies. Because elections are currently unviability as a route to institutionalizing socially transformative outcomes in the city, it is necessary to reconsider the nature of institutionalization too. The danger of relying too heavily on just procedures to beget just outcomes is relevant here, since examples of progressive political wills being neutralized or coopted and participatory planning becoming a purely technical formality, are abundant in Cape Town. As such, an improved organizational framework for resistance must pursue some degree of institutionalization to avoid isolation, but must also be wary of the threat of over-institutionalization whereby resistance practices become purely formal and are consequently depoliticized.

Reconceiving the Organization & Practices of Resistance

Having highlighted necessary procedural considerations for an improved conceptualization of resistance and connected these specific procedural considerations (remaking development culture, modifying engagement with the state,
and pursuing a sufficient degree of institutionalization) to the overarching problem of promoting difference appropriately, I now turn to a prescriptive discussion of this improved framework for conceptualizing resistance. Urban design scholar Mark Purcell provides a useful organizational understanding for my purposes, which he calls “networks of equivalence.” These networks can be defined as “counterhegemonic combinations of differentiated but equivalent popular struggles…” that seek to, “…establish simultaneous relations of interdependence and autonomy.”48 The networks speak to the struggle I have defined in properly positioning resistance within the difference-fragmentation continuum by recognizing the need to “combine local struggles into something larger without reducing each struggle to a homogenous unity.”49 Networks of equivalence would define a new type of recognition between acts of resistance: the idea acknowledges the need to contest the hegemony of neoliberalism with an alternatively hegemonic force, but also insists that the “counter-hegemony that networks of equivalence pursue is less an end-state than a process: [the process of] perpetual democratization.”50 I interpret this point as suggesting the need for resistance that continually democratizes power so that urban development enables self-determination to be widely enjoyed. Democratizing this power, however, does not simply result in a redistribution of decision-making power. Instead, it creates new sources of power that can make unique claims on the state by defining new development goals and processes for realizing these goals.

“Networking” these new sources of power requires that they are not oppositional to one another. In other words, one group’s possession of power does not

48 Purcell, “To Inhabit Well,” 562.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid, 572.
necessarily reduce another group’s possession of power. The amount of power that exists among the citizenry is not finite; rather, resistance is meant to constantly multiply and diversify this power. Purcell borrows from Gramsci the idea that constructing an alternative hegemonic force that can legitimately contest neoliberalism requires individual acts of contestation to forge alliances, such that their causes are no longer defined by self-interest alone, and instead become obligated to one another in their interdependence, yet free in their equivalence. Individual acts of contestation are able to recognize allies by identifying those groups that are equivalently (but not identically) disadvantaged by the dominant form of governance and its insufficient development goals. The constituent members of the network may share some development goals, but further unification (beyond being equivalently disadvantaged) is not necessary. Finally, Purcell acknowledges that relations of equivalence are rare between acts of resistance and must be consistently renewed. Because it is more common that resistance is either too unified or too fragmented, as is the case in South Africa, I harbor no delusions about the ideality of the organizational structure Purcell recommends.⁵¹ I do find it useful, however, insofar as its prescriptions for resistance align with the alternative normative framework for the assessment of social institutions that I have promoted throughout this thesis. The affinities between these two frameworks are apparent in the shared call for reprioritizing procedural considerations by articulating a strategy of contestation instead of specific ends of contestation, and in the call for preserving difference and

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⁵¹ Ibid, 568.
group identity by invoking networks of differentiated but equivalent relations among disadvantaged parties.

This discussion has so far identified the considerations that an improved conception of resistance must undertake and connected these considerations to Cape Town’s empirical reality as well as to the alternative normative framework for assessing social institutions that I have already developed. With these nuanced considerations in mind, my recommendation for conceptualizing a path to transformative social change in Cape Town addresses procedural concerns by calling for the construction of a *counter-hegemonic* politics that is *oppositional* in engaging with the state to uphold accountability and *propositional* in claiming opportunities for self-determination back from the state (thus remaking the culture of delivery and accommodating differences in needs, approaches, and solutions). As such, the best practices that appear below were selected because they succeed either in holding the city accountable to its radical ideals, or in remaking the culture of delivery by instating self-determinative processes, or both. They also promote the appropriate degree of difference by possessing the potential to *network* with other forms of resistance (or have already done so) in such a way that cross-promotes various projects of contestation without imposing the idea of unity where it need not apply. Most importantly, these examples of resistance were selected because they inspire a diverse set of possibilities for Cape Town as a more inclusive World-Class City.

*Best Practices in Accountability*

In light of the plethora of unsubstantiated claims that the DA has made during various campaign cycles, some of the most effective resistance against the DA has
involved monitoring and evaluating its welfare programs to expose and politicize their many shortcomings. The Social Justice Coalition (SJC), a group of activists working mainly in Cape Town’s largest township, Khayelitsha, is best known for this form of activism, primarily through its “social audits.” These audits consist of Khayelitsha residents collecting data on the ineffectiveness of the City of Cape Town’s service delivery projects within the settlement, authoring reports that detail the program’s flaws, and publicizing these reports through direct relationships with various media outlets and academic institutions.\textsuperscript{52} Its most publicized audit to date was completed in 2014 and focused on assessing the efficacy of the City of Cape Town’s R60 million janitorial project to service over 11,000 public toilets in the city’s townships.\textsuperscript{53} Though admitting to a limited sample size (the audit only considered Khayelitsha Township and SJC only had the capacity to assess certain settlements within it), the audit’s results were damning: one-third of the interviewed residents said their public toilets were only cleaned once a week while half of the residents claimed their toilets were cleaned even less frequently (toilets are supposed to be cleaned daily); one-fourth of the relatively new flush-toilets installed in Khayelitsha were not working; and less than 15% of the community members tapped to join the janitorial staff had been inoculated against disease, though all were to be provided this protection. The audit also revealed that even two years after the janitorial program had been rolled out, the City of Cape Town could not produce a

\textsuperscript{52} Fleming, interview with author.


general implementation plan for the program, let alone one for Khayelitsha or any other township specifically. The SJC’s final report, entitled “Wasteful Expenditure,” is accompanied by another report entitled “The Importance of Data as Evidence,” which was inspired by this rallying cry (that appears in almost every related press release or article): “Remember if the government can use statistics to lie about delivery, you can use that data against them and uncover the truth.”

Though the SJC is still waiting to see what action DA representatives will take on the results of its audit, the statement it has made to Capetonians is significant. In collecting its own data and producing evidence-based, contextually-specific critiques of the city’s delivery programs, the SJC bypassed the need for “experts” to construct the type of criticism that tends to force responses from the government. Such auditing activities pose a direct threat to unsubstantiated campaigns like “#DAdelivers,” and transform the current idea of citizenship (citizenship as electoral participation) into a more active conception—one which will hopefully lead to greater accountability in creating robust welfare programs that actually follow through on the goals they are created to accomplish. Though at scale, enumerative activities like the SJC’s self-driven data collections can be a cause for concern (the power that enumeration lends states in monitoring and controlling its subjects has been discussed by philosopher Michel Foucault, political scientist James C. Scott, and others), for marginalized populations, access to this sort of data can be instrumental in gaining leverage to

contest the state. The SJC’s social audits constitute precisely the type of oppositional politics that can adjust the mode of state engagement utilized by resistance, as recommended earlier: the audits hold the state accountable for its poorly founded self-satisfaction, can help to excise inefficient delivery programs, and serve as the foundation for what Arjun Appadurai calls “autogovernmentality,” or “government from below”—a form of governance for which the ideal of self-determination is central.

**Best Practices in Promoting Self-Determination**

In the previous chapter, the treatment of Cape Town’s informal population was raised in order to illustrate the shortcomings of the city’s currently accepted notion of justice, and how a framework that accommodates difference instead of hoping for the convergence of experiences could be beneficial to realizing more just outcomes. The “state of exception” was invoked to show that the city is willing to plan for informal trade because such planning could garner revenues for the city, whereas service delivery for the informally housed and related housing considerations were relegated to the realm of the “unplannable,” because the city must deliver more than it can hope to gain from these sites. The ever-increasing housing backlog is entirely a problem of insufficient funding, unrealistic benchmarks, and bureaucratic


56 Appadurai, “Deepen Democracy.”

red tape, but the citizenry’s culture of delivery surely has stifled the acts of resistance that could lead to meaningful change in the public housing realm. For this reason, self-determinative actions with respect to housing delivery are especially needed.

Enter Ikhayalami, an organization that serves as an example of a more bottom-up orientation toward improving informal housing in Cape Town. Ikhayalami (meaning “my home” in Xosha and Zulu) is a nonprofit research and architecture firm imagining and implementing “affordable technical solutions for informal settlement upgrading.” Its main activities include sustainable housing research, settlement upgrading with special attention paid to community facilities and infrastructural development, and informal settlement “reblocking”—its most widely implemented and important project for the purposes of this analysis. Settlement reblocking reconfigures informally agglomerated settlements in Cape Town’s townships with the goal of enabling the city to better provide services by offering deliverers some semblance of planned order (or, by rendering their typical excuses null and void). Reblocked settlements improve the lives of informal citizens first, by implanting planned service delivery points (like refuse removal points) for which the government and citizens can both be accountable; second, by introducing shared public spaces within the reblocked “neighborhoods” that have multiple uses; and third, by making settlements safer both by creating spaces that are more easily surveilled by the community and by creating emergency contingency plans that are more implementable.⁵⁷ Plans for reblocking are created via consistent consultation with the township’s residents and even employs residents in the building and maintenance of

⁵⁷ Andy Bolnick (CEO of Ikhayalami), interview with author, Cape Town, August 2014.
the plans once the community has ratified them. In its marketing materials, Ikhayalami makes claims to the “transformative change,” its programs can have, arguing that “community led spatial design and reconfiguration of informal settlements linked to shack upgrading (…) leads to social cohesion, draws in the State, opens the space for infrastructural improvements and creates neighborhoods where previously there were (…) disparate and unconnected households.”

Reblocking is clearly an innovative planning process, but its scalability was initially in question, given that it was first implemented as a donor-funded humanitarian response to fires and floods. The city was vehemently against allowing the zoning changes reblocking required, let alone releasing funds from its insufficient “starter kits” (these kits, provided by the government, include ten poles and five pieces of sheet metal that informal populations can use to build temporary edifices) to fund reblocking (redirecting funds was rejected because the city held private contracts with industrial providers for these materials). After seeing the success reblocking had with disaster prevention (by using higher quality materials and rationally ordering settlements so relief plans could be constructed), ward councilors began to demand reblocking for their wards, which led the city’s Informal Settlements Portfolio Manager to engage with Ikhayalami on promoting reblocking as a citywide policy. Reblocking is now one of the policy documents that appear on the Human Settlements web platform, though funding from the state still has yet to be released. This incremental approach to state recognition allows the informally housed to selectively engage with state power structures, always articulating specifically what

the state can offer to a self-building community (i.e. refuse removal from community-determined and built collection points), instead of demanding state-led delivery processes. Moreover, by focusing on the spatial considerations of service delivery, Ikhayalami’s work has removed the frequently used excuse for non-delivery (derived from the state of exception), that informal settlements are too haphazardly organized to allow any reliable method of water and electricity delivery or refuse removal.60 Perhaps most importantly, Ikhayalami’s reblocking activities, and its more recent forays into settlement densification (by building two-story “Empower Shacks” that use solar technology on the roofs for electricity delivery, and experimenting with collective funding systems so that the Empower Shacks can be community-owned assets) do not treat informality as a transient state. Instead, its approach directly shapes the informal experience incrementally, with the ultimate goals of formal structures and tenure security in mind. Its commitment to community-directed development that produces permanent solutions shifts the role of the informally housed citizen from state beneficiary to settlement planner (and builder and maintainer), thus upholding the intrinsic value of self-determination to the highest degree.

Best Practices in Networking Equivalent Relations

Scalability is certainly a primary consideration in facilitating self-determinative development processes that are not easily coopted by state power as they are incrementally institutionalized, but the discussion of best practices has only

60 Ibid.
focused on scaling up until now. Networking equivalent relations requires scaling in a different direction, scaling out, to construct associations of resistance that are powerful enough to pose a legitimate threat to Cape Town’s current hegemonic neoliberal urban governance. The most successful example of associational resistance among Cape Town’s marginalized population can be found in the South African Shack Dwellers International Alliance (SA SDI), which combines two partner networks, the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP) and the Informal Settlement Network (ISN), as well as two technical support NGOs, the Community Organization Resource Center (CORC) and the uTshani Fund. The network partners, FEDUP and ISN, both engage at multiple scales (settlement, city, regionally, and nationally), but work on different sides of the same problem: FEDUP is primarily concerned with building community savings mechanisms to finance informal settlement upgrading, whereas ISN works with government allies to facilitate appropriate entries for the institutionalization of community-led upgrading within the city and state government’s preexisting Integrated Development Program (IDP) policies. Of the technical support NGOs, CORC works at the settlement level to facilitate horizontal knowledge sharing relations among various settlement communities and consolidate each settlement’s pro-poor platform by networking individual settlement interest groups (as well as settlement enumeration and data-mapping activities), while the uTshani Fund functions as the bridging financial institution that provides loans for community-led incremental settlement upgrading activities undertaken by ISN. Each of the Alliance partners operate under individual charters as well as a joint Alliance charter; this ensures that each member’s individual
activities are protected, but strategically aligned with the tactical approach of the whole. The SA SDI Alliance was born out of the need to utilize the government’s housing subsidies more efficiently. The Alliance’s approach has centered on engaging community expertise and skills as well as community savings; it collects subsidies from the government on the settlement-scale and then deploys these funds, in conjunction with the settlement’s own community savings, toward community-determined development ends ranging from reblocking, flush-toilet construction, upgrading existing structures, or building community assets. This is in contrast to the government’s strategy of individualizing the process by expecting individual households to successfully hire and communicate with private developers and fund the entirety of the building process with their individual subsidies alone.\textsuperscript{61}

The Alliance’s impact should be commended for the diversity of interests it has been able to engage and represent through its multi-scalar, multi-pronged approach to settlement upgrading. Though it has delivered around 14,000 houses since its founding in 1996, it is more impressive in signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with eight provincial governments and the national government’s Human Settlements department, as well as with the City of Cape Town’s Mayoral Committee Executive for Human Settlements.\textsuperscript{62} A MOU, with the City of Cape Town for example, ensures that the Alliance’s strategies are enshrined in policy documents for settlement upgrading, while also guaranteeing the explicit alignment of SA SDI strategies with the city’s IDP, its OneCape2040 and City


Development Strategy documents, and its five-year Integrated Human Settlements Plan. This formal recognition offers the Alliance the protection of its autonomy in its particular areas of impact as well as from state cooptation. By promoting accountability (through CORC’s enumeration and data agglomeration activities in specific settlements that are then compared against other SA SDI settlements’ profiles); and self-determination through facilitating community planning, building, and savings platforms; and networking these activities by working at multiple scales and even engaging with formal state structures at certain points to ensure an proper degree of institutionalization, the SA SDI Alliance is emblematic of the way forward for contesting neoliberal urban governance. It has successfully and appropriately promoted difference while strengthening alliances instead of fragmenting resistance.

Theorizing Cape Town’s Post-Neoliberal Future

The best practices explored above are positive indications that inclusive urban development can be achieved in Cape Town. However, progress has been slow, state support has been difficult to attain in meaningful ways, especially financially, and even if such support is established, the potential for negative forms of cooptation by state power will continue to be a threat. As such, there exists a cohort of urban development practitioners, scholars, and activists that suggest agitating for more sweeping solutions to the problems of neoliberal urban governance. Two of these solutions—remaking ward committees by establishing participatory budgeting

practices and creating solidarity economy communities that can then be networked—are presented below; they were chosen because they frequently appear in more radical discourse on the matter of contesting neoliberal urban governance. However, because neither recommendation has been implemented widely enough to be assessed on the grounds of contextual feasibility or tactical articulation, their inclusion here should be read as an attempt to consider the post-neoliberal future of Cape Town’s urban governance as an extension of the more temporally contained discussion of resistance that has already transpired.

Part of the current problem with instating substantive participatory planning practices in Cape Town is that the government officials typically respond that such initiatives are already enshrined in policy. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 confirms this point; the policy asserts the requirement for municipalities to “…facilitate the participation of the local community in all processes related to their IDPs and performance management systems…” and references the ward committee as the ideal structure to facilitate this community participation. Cape Town is broken into 111 geographic areas, called wards, for better service delivery provisions; the ward committee consists of ten to twenty representatives plus the city’s elected ward councilor. These representatives are meant to reflect the interests of the registered community-based organizations and are assembled to advise the ward councilor on issues facing the ward community that can then be brought to city council meetings.

64 Terence Smith and Jaap de Visser, “Are Ward Committees Working? Insight from six case studies,” (Cape Town: Community Law Center, University of Western Cape, 2009), 12.
Unfortunately, today’s ward committees suffer from a number of practical and theoretical weaknesses that more or less render their existence useless in the planning process. These weaknesses include a lack of representation (because ward councilors often select committee members based on aligning political affiliations); a lack of capacity (committee members, especially in marginalized areas, are rarely able to comprehend the technical nature of planning problems); a lack of functionality (high turnover rates in committee members and irregular meetings mean that the ward committee does not present a viable method for combatting an issue or facilitating sustained consultation on a plan); and a lack of power in general (committees are only meant to serve an advisory role, and councilors are not required to follow up with committees after decisions are made).\(^{66}\)

Because ward committees are already intended to serve as participatory institutional structures, some South African political scholars have theorized the potential for these committees to be turned into participatory budgeting forums of the type that exist in Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, two Brazilian municipalities where participatory budgeting has been incredibly successful (these municipalities have the highest scores on the United Nation’s Human Development Index) and sustained.\(^{67}\) Participatory budgeting forums promote self-determining by allowing citizens to have direct control over how state resources are allocated, and thus, simultaneously deepen democracy by instating transparent and public budgeting

\(^{66}\) Bolnick, interview with author.


Cheryl-Anne Smith, “An Assessment of Public Participation in Selected Ward Committees in the City of Cape Town” (PhD Diss., University of Cape Town, 2012).

Smith and Visser, “Are Ward Committees Working?”

processes, and improve state performance, by utilizing the expertise of those who state resources are meant to serve. These forums would have the additional advantage of increasing capacity among ward councilors and citizens alike, given that technical development plans would need to be publicly debated before the forum could put plans to a vote. To instate participatory budgeting practices in Cape Town would, of course, require a great deal of political will, especially on the part of the mayor, which does not currently exist. The path to inculcating this type of political will is not easy to postulate; I can only offer the hopeful suggestion that the desire to facilitate participatory budgeting would accompany a shift in the normative goals of urban development of the sort I discussed in the previous chapter. Despite the ambiguity of this previous suggestion, the other social conditions required for successfully instating participatory budgeting processes in Cape Town already exist, including an active civil society that frequently contributes to political debates and the financial means to fund selected projects (though redistribution related to the ward budgets of traditionally underserved areas would probably be necessary).

Solidarity economies, on the other hand, present a more autonomist approach to Cape Town’s post-neoliberal future. The alternative presented by creating a solidarity economy in South Africa takes globalized capitalism as its enemy and posits various forms of socioeconomic sovereignty (from local food sovereignty, to collective ownership of productive assets, to cooperative banking, to deliberative and bottom-up governing processes) that are linked within communities as the solution. Solidarity economy theoreticians explicitly reject South Africa’s “social economy”

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69 Ibid, 24-25.
alternative (the robust welfare state that fails to meaningfully engage with the sources of inequality), stating that this ameliorative solution, “does not see itself as an alternative to capitalism, but rather as a democratic organizational structure functioning competitively within capitalism.”\textsuperscript{70} Instead, the solidarity economy’s “transformative vision,” is portrayed as creating societal relations based on “democratic self-management, redistribution, solidarity and reciprocity.”\textsuperscript{71} Its primary theoreticians would not disagree that the solidarity economy presents a romanticized alternative that may be infeasible; in fact, they would be the first to admit that the solidarity economy is “…not a blueprint for an alternative society, but rather a series of experiments, becomings, emergent possibilities, and prefigurative practices.”\textsuperscript{72} However, insofar as these experiments are being conducted across South Africa, it seems that the practices promoted by the solidarity economy could have some legitimate transformative potential.

One of these experiments, the Ivory Park Eco-Village just north of Johannesburg, has achieved varying success due to a lack of stability over its fifteen years of existence, but its longevity alone is reason to take the solidarity economy alternative seriously. The village, with its own urban farms, transportation, manufacturing, and medical cooperatives, collective waste-recycling practices, and other social institutions, has been able to horizontally network these institutions so that the solidarity economy can be embedded from the bottom up in the governance

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, 51.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
of Ivory Park.\textsuperscript{73} Activists engaged with the Ivory Park experiment have also demonstrated a commitment to knowledge sharing activities by holding “activist schools” to educate practitioners in other areas of South Africa on how to set up urban farms, cooperatives, and the like. Similar experiments in Cape Town, like the Oude Moulen Eco-Village in Two Rivers Urban Park that considers itself a “guerilla-farming collective” operating on illegally occupied private land and using illegally connected water, are already being conducted.\textsuperscript{74} The greatest question facing the individual solidarity economy experiments in South Africa is whether they can find points of confluence with other social movements such that the “various points of resistance can be networked and advance alternatives for a new left project in the country.”\textsuperscript{75} This is vital if the solidarity economy alternative is to overcome its predisposition to isolation from the state and from other resistance movements. Despite its romanticism and precarious progress in South Africa, however, the solidarity economy alternative at least seems to have the correct priorities in mind by fostering practices that democratize the power of self-determination and attempting to create and network these new, bottom-up relations of power.

IV. Conclusion: Towards Radical Inclusion in Cape Town

The above assessment has considered various approaches to contesting neoliberal urban governance in Cape Town, from the traditional electoral channel that

\textsuperscript{73} Vishwas Satgar (Solidarity Economy Activist), telephone interview with author, December 2014.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
conceives of citizenship as voter participation, to forms of resistance that require more active conceptions of citizenship. Along with questioning the potential for elections, or resistance from above, to lead to transformative social change in Cape Town given the current climate of electoral politics, this assessment has also criticized certain aspects of grassroots resistance. Despite the diversity of strategies employed from below, none of the dominant ideologies of grassroots resistance in Cape Town embody the ideal balance of exposing, proposing, and politicizing actions (the methodology promoted in the Introduction of this thesis) to constitute sufficient and scalable alternatives to neoliberal urban governance. The alternatives put forth as best practices in this analysis were selected both for their handling of procedural issues (including remaking the culture of delivery, engaging with the state effectively, and institutionalizing practices to a sufficient degree) and for their ideal position within the difference-fragmentation continuum, such that a diversity of circumstances and solutions could be promoted without isolating the acts of contestation or the populations involved. A post-neoliberal future in Cape Town could range from remaking existing ward committees to incorporate participatory budgeting practices, to forgoing existing institutional structures altogether in facilitating the realization of a solidarity economy by concurrently pursuing cooperative relations for various economic practices, and institutionalizing the relations of power that would arise from these alternative relations.

From this analysis, it is not entirely clear if the circumstances necessary for the pursuit of either of these post-neoliberal futures (or any others) can be fostered in Cape Town. Current processes for development planning would need to be entirely
rewritten to realize these radical futures; this says nothing of the *objectives* of these processes, which would surely need to evolve. In closing, then, it is important to recall the observation that inspired this portion of the analysis in the first place—that the current cycle of resistance in Cape Town, based on flashpoints where service delivery needs become so blatant that the government is cornered into making minor concessions that fail to meaningfully engage with the sources of such inequality, cannot be considered an adequate path to social transformation in the city. These moments of social explosion are accompanied by a whole set of limits that are rarely considered: besides being episodic in nature, and therefore rarely scalable or sustainable, these moments reinforce a culture of delivery that prevents the facilitation of self-determination through development processes.

One common feature of all of the aforementioned forms of resistance is that each is concerned with claiming power—most centrally, power in determining the social and material conditions that constitute one’s life, and referred to throughout this thesis as the power of self-determination. This feature of resistance aligns well with the normative framework for assessing social institutions that I have already proposed, in that the function of self-determination in development is to problematize and redress the unjust or insufficient processes that have inspired such resistance. If this commonality is accepted, then what is really required for transformative change is the embedding of a new understanding of power relations in the city. For the meaningful participation of all citizens in urban development processes to be viewed as the defining feature of Cape Town’s alternative future as a World-Class City, power can no longer be conceptualized as a scarce good—one that can only be
claimed by a certain few to remain potent enough to retain its worth. Instead, if the generative quality of collectively held power is promoted—the “positive-sum concept of power” that treats each holder of power as complimentary, instead of antagonistic, to the others—then participation will begin to be viewed as an intrinsic benefit to development planning. If a commitment to this alternative conception of power can be fostered in the city, then the possibilities for transformative social change multiply exponentially and diverge into unpredictable frontiers. As such, altering the concept of power must be the directive for all projects of resistance in Cape Town if a truly inclusive version of the World-Class City is to be realized.

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76 Miraftab, “Perils of Participatory Discourse,” 228.
CONCLUSION: World-Class City, (Re)Defined

“In 1994, the urban divide in Cape Town between rich and poor as well as between white and non-white population groups was significant. In 2014, Cape Town is an international, culturally diverse and dynamic city, offering opportunities for people from all walks of life and nationalities. [...] Judged by inclusivity, transparency, participation, as well as long-term planning, there is evidence that the City’s strategies for fostering good urban governance are deepening.”

- CITY OF CAPE TOWN, State of Cape Town Report, 2014

“How, after twenty years of democracy, do you have a R4 billion stadium in Cape Town but we can’t even build proper toilets in Khayelitsha? Sure we have protests, but we don’t have a culture of social dialog in the city—only top-down planning. Everyone can see the divisions are widening. Looking at the development of our city, I think the Apartheid state would smile.”

- EDDIE COTTLE, Capetonian Writer & Activist, 2014

In considering Cape Town’s urban development in the last twenty years, two dominant understandings of the city emerge. The first is that of a city whose endeavor to reach world-class status has been more or less achieved. Developing this understanding begins with celebrating Cape Town’s storied past and exceptional future: its historical significance since the second circumnavigation of the world, Nelson Mandela’s connection with the Cape since his Apartheid-era imprisonment, and of course, the city’s shimmering landscape with its many natural endowments, all contribute to this ethos. The impression is furthered by Cape Town’s rising global prestige. Its successful role as one of the major host cities of the 2010 FIFA World Cup (the continent’s first experience with the mega-event model of development), its tenure as 2014’s World Design Capital, and its presence near the top of every major travel list of must-see destinations, are potent evidence that Cape Town’s cultural star
is rising. This understanding of Cape Town thus has a rosy assessment of the city’s first twenty years of democracy, citing in its favor the efforts made to deracialize the urban experience of Cape Town and the city’s transnational appeal as well as the sheer progressivity of its governing documents, which include the recognition of past Apartheid-era wrongs, the promotion of social justice, and the commitment to preserving both civil and socioeconomic rights.

The second understanding argues that the project of Cape Town as World-Class City is far from completion. This version begins from a very different premise by acknowledging South Africa’s designation as the most unequal society in the world. It is fortified by considering how comparatively little some aspects of the city’s urban landscape have actually improved since the end of Apartheid; features like the disconnection of peripheral areas with the economic center of the city, both in terms of physical access to the city and participation in creating Cape Town’s urban experience are exemplary of this argument. The spatial and democratic separation of the city into opposing factions often serves as the motivation for the social protests that transpire in the city, which occur with such rigor and frequency that no citizen may remain ignorant of the development realities such protests aim to highlight.

The fact is, however, that both understandings—the one the claims the World-Class City has been achieved, and the other, that cannot possibly accept such a claim—turn out to be appropriate in the context of Cape Town’s urban development. This equivocation hinges on the concept’s definition: if high levels of foreign direct investment, a suitable environment for businesses, transnational allure, and growth-oriented urban development indicate world-class status, then the first understanding
of Cape Town is surely accurate. Where world-class is meant to function as a more inclusive term—indicative of spatial connectivity, meaningful participation in planning, and the realization of a city that can be enjoyed by all who inhabit it—the second understanding of Cape Town must be deemed most accurate. Regardless of which definition of the World-Class City is employed, the reality of Cape Town as a “contradictory space” (per sociologist Saskia Sassen’s definition from the Introduction) is undeniable. The contradictory nature of the city has served as the inspiration for this thesis, whose main goal has been to understand how these two contradictory understandings of Cape Town could develop concurrently, and what can be done to construct a more coherent vision for the city.

Unpacking this contradictory nature (the focus of Chapter One) involves engaging with multiple scales of development planning, from the national to the local and community-based. An assessment of South Africa’s national development policies reveals just how quickly the progressive intent for development originally enshrined in the country’s Constitution during the ‘Revolution of 1994’ was reversed in policy due to international pressure arising from a more globalized economy. More salient, however, is the way Cape Town’s contradictory nature has been bolstered at the local level through the institutionalization of neoliberal urban governance practices. With its ideological promotion of privatization, liberalization, and deregulation, and its counterintuitive component processes, which, instead of rolling back state intervention, actually mobilize the state for various coercive and disciplinary ends to facilitate market-rule over urban life, neoliberal urban governance has resulted in the creation of a city that is only world-class to a portion
of the citizenry. This portion, comprised of business interests and other social elites, are well represented in the development planning processes of the city precisely because of the way in which neoliberal urban governance has rearranged Cape Town’s planning institutions in the form of the public-private partnership. Such a partnership allows the City of Cape Town to exclude the masses from playing a role in directing developments because the masses do not pose a credible threat to the execution of business-led developments that tend to be capital-intensive and investment-oriented.

Given the current prioritization of values by the City of Cape Town (including a relatively high valuation of business incentives and global competitiveness as compared to its valuation of the negative externalities of business-led developments or general welfare), the institutionalization of neoliberal urban governance represents a stable equilibrium that is not easily altered. Part of the reason for the institutional stability of neoliberal urban governance stems from the normative criteria used to assess its development outcomes, which actually function to reinforce its planning structure and goals instead of problematizing them. Exploring this point was taken up in Chapter Two, in which an alternative normative framework for assessing social institutions was constructed to inform a shift in the normative goals of urban development. This alternative framework problematizes the over-prioritization of just distributions of resources, which functions to depoliticize the processes that dictate such allocations. The tendency to privilege outcomes over processes is apparent in the nation’s socioeconomic development policies that call for increased privatization in governance and service delivery, in the City of Cape Town’s commitment to the
public-private partnership as opposed to a democratically representative planning process, and in the masses’ tendency to rely on protests concerning the delivery of services instead of the methods by which services are delivered. By calling attention to this fact, the alternative framework I offer only means to reprioritize procedural considerations on the way to radically transforming relations of power in the city. It does not argue that distributional considerations are unimportant, but rather, that such considerations constitute a necessary but insufficient condition from which to theorize a radical departure from the economic-centered norm.

The alternative framework also addresses the tendency for neoliberal urban governance to be justified on the grounds of its impartiality and efficiency. This claim betrays the universalizing drive of neoliberal urban governance, a drive that ignores development issues arising from Cape Town’s contextual specificities. Instead of relying on a faith in trickle-down economics and the belief that diverse urbanization experiences will converge into an economically determined idea of the World-Class City, my framework considers the celebration of social difference essential in imagining and realizing normatively superior development outcomes in Cape Town. This rejection of inappropriate universalization and the call for the recognition of difference is not limited to issues of identity or class, though both are hugely important; the unique circumstances of the post-Apartheid context, for which segregated and disconnected townships on the peripheries of an economically compact urban landscape is a hallmark, also highlight the importance of geographic difference in demonstrating that the benefits of development are not diffused evenly across space. This realization reveals the difficulties of trying to combine
considerations of political and urban theory with spatial arguments: while the former employs an expansive, top-down vantage point in dealing with generalizable prescriptions, the latter is concerned with unique and finite circumstances. To dexterously navigate between scales is a particular methodological challenge assumed by my alternative framework. It is undertaken in an effort to engage with critical urban theory and its practice, instead of considering either in isolation. As such, theorizing strategies for institutionalizing the accommodation of difference in urban development goals serves as my project’s final channel of inquiry.

For a number of reasons, the institutionalization of this alternative normative framework is especially challenging in Cape Town—be it through electoral channels or grassroots resistance. Among the many difficulties of altering development goals identified in Chapter Three, perhaps most surprising is the fact that Cape Town’s seeming progressivity with regards to its stated intentions may actually stifle the potential for social transformation via urban development. Because its progressive intention is already codified in the form of universal rights, the claims that can be made on the state by resistance or via elections are necessarily limited; recall political philosopher Onora O’Neill’s observation that without connecting “…each presumed right-holder to some specific obligation bearer [the content of such universal rights] remains wholly obscure.” The content of these rights in Cape Town remains obscure despite the connection to an obligation bearer (namely, the state), because of the counterintuitive procedural component of neoliberal urban governance, whereby the state actually practices intervention in the name of privatization, liberalization, and
deregulation; thus, the actual “delivery” of these rights is negatively affected by the processes neoliberal urban governance chooses to employ.

This thesis has exposed the flaws of neoliberal urban governance in detailing how its institutionalization has come to affect the version of the World-Class ideal Cape Town has pursued thus far, and determined that the unique institutional arrangements of neoliberal urban governance remain a stable equilibrium as far as the city’s chosen planning process is concerned, despite its many shortcomings. Based on the argument that the stability of neoliberal urban governance as a development planning strategy is reinforced by a normative approach to assessment that overemphasizes distributive considerations, erases difference in the name of universality, and often fails to incorporate spatial considerations, this thesis has also proposed an alternative normative framework for assessing social institutions that can aid in the theorization and realization of transformative development outcomes in the city. From these two arguments, the important role critical theory plays as an analytical tool and rallying call for improved urban development in Cape Town should be clear.

The reverse relationship, in which practice informs theory, is also evident in the city—a feature that originally inspired me to write about Cape Town and one that has continually sustained my inquiry. In Cape Town, theory does not exist in isolation; rather, it is consistently embodied in and altered by the practice of resistance, as evidenced by the three ideological strands of resistance detailed in Chapter Three. Despite continual setbacks, this faith in the power of resistance to improve lives is something I found to be shared by the whole of Cape Town’s
citizenry; it must be the only remnant of the Apartheid era that has not proven wholly
detrimental to the facilitation of just urban development. Thus, despite the many
methodological and contextual challenges of embedding my alternative normative
framework in Capetonian society—including the need to preserve social difference
while navigating between various scales of institutionalization, and the issue of how
to alter the masses’ overreliance on government delivery without absolving the state
of its immense capacity to positively orient urban development—the potential for an
articulated, contextually specific strategy of politicization to realize transformative
outcomes is still significant.

My argument concludes by offering a prescription for organizing resistance
that contends with the aforementioned challenges. It calls for a networked, counter-
hegemonic approach that employs both oppositional activities to uphold the state’s
accountability and propositional activities to claim opportunities for self-
determination back from the state. Admittedly, this understanding of the ideal form of
resistance is rather academic. That is to say, even with this reconsidered, contextually
fitting strategy, there still exists a legitimate risk that transformative acts of self-
determination will be reduced to their technocratic components by the government or
limited economically by budget constraints. More importantly, this risk is not the sole
function of a lack of recognition from above: marginalized populations must be
concerned with securing their livelihoods first and foremost, and rightfully so. That
the realities of living through injustices inform such a prioritization, and that
assertions of radical theory are generally foreign to this calculus, is not lost on my
analysis.
Even so, understanding the arguments made in this thesis in terms of the relations of power they promote is still relevant, insofar as the desire to determine the conditions that constitute one’s life is commonly held, regardless of geographic context or social position. The true determinant of radical theory and practice, then, is the concept of power that is employed: in my estimation, for transformative social outcomes to be realized, power cannot simply be redistributed. Instead, an overhaul of the very method by which power is created and conceptualized in relation to other sources of power is necessary. The concept of power promoted by my recommendations is power in its positive-sum formation, whereby sources of power are complimentary to one another, rather than antagonistic. This understanding of power is fundamental in redefining the ideal of the World-Class City—the question that has driven this thesis from the beginning. If it is accepted that city living presents the unique opportunity to remake the world after one’s own purposes, as geographer David Harvey muses, then “the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of… what kind of social relations we seek.”¹ The course of action I have set out for reconsidering Cape Town’s social relations clearly presents its fair set of challenges, but is absolutely essential to both imagining and realizing an inclusive urban future for Cape Town—one in which the World-Class City designation is neither conditional nor disputed, and instead, enjoyed by all the city’s inhabitants.

¹ Harvey, Rebel Cities, 22.
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