

CUBES

CENTRE FOR URBANISM
& BUILT ENVIRONMENT STUDIES



**CUBES COLLOQUIUM – 27 JAN 2014 – Wits University,
Johannesburg**

**Exploring Practices of the State
in the Governance of Southern African Cities**

ABSTRACTS

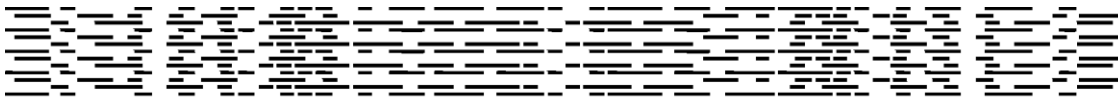
Ryan Brunette, PARI and Department of Political Studies, Wits
rbrunette@pari.org.za

The ANC and the State: Notes from a Theoretical and Strategic Paradigm

A central strand of the analysis of the South African political economy takes as its starting point a politics of distribution, one played out between a range of class and ethnic agents. In very schematic form, the analysis proceeds by describing a series of key policies, specifying which interests are served by such policies, investigating how these interests were able to secure these policies, usually ending with some developmental prescription influenced by a judgement regarding whether the right groups are distributed to in the right sorts of ways. The analysis is powerful, and it remains important. It assumes, however, that politics is played out across policy options that distribute benefits and costs to whole classes, or sizable fractions of classes. The analysis approaches the limits of its usefulness, that is, when politics ceases to be about such policies. In fact, the politics of the ANC, even in its own terms, is increasingly not about such policies. What this means is that at this point the traditional analysis of the ANC, which mirrors that of South African political economy in general, loses purchase. The ANC, to elaborate, is traditionally conceived of as a constellation of class and ethnic agents bound together by an ideological and institutional matrix rooted in anti-apartheid struggle, and by selective policy

School of Architecture & Planning
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3 Wits 2050
Johannesburg South Africa
www.wits.ac.za

T +27 11 717 7623
F +27 11 717 7649



concession from the dominant emergent bourgeois group to others. Factionalism in the ANC now increasingly cleaves within these groups, and this requires separate explanation. It is argued that in driving 'transformation' the ANC became intimately entwined with the state, that in this process the progressive fragmentation of the state produced the fragmentation of the party, and that this occurred especially through the haphazard decentralisation of the procurement system. It may be that we are seeing – as a function of these developments, and the general orientation to the state that they produce – the tendential descent of South African politics from one of programmatic appeals and the mobilisation of high ideals, to an immobilism characterised by distributions of patronage to relatively atomised groups and individuals.



Karl von Holdt and Tokelo Nhlapo, SWOP, Wits

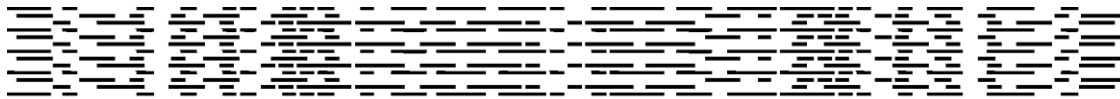
Karl.VonHoldt@wits.ac.za

Preventing the state, informalising the state: Civics, land and control in informal settlements

In our research into protest, xenophobic violence and the politics of the poor, we found that while civic organisations such as SANCO were barely visible in formal townships, they existed as important and dynamic organisations in informal settlements, regularly organising protests directed towards the local councillor and local authority. On the face of it, this suggested that 'civil society' was relatively vibrant and well organised in these sites. However, deeper research indicated that their leadership were deeply involved in controlling access to stands, shacks and RDP houses, selling the right to occupy these to those who could pay a fee. The source of the tension between these civic organisations and ANC branches turned out to be a struggle for control over the allocation of these stands and dwellings between the leadership of such Civics, and the local authority. In order to maintain control the civic organisation needed to mobilise residents around their grievances and undermine the ANC and the local council, but the basis for their durability was the access to and control of economic rents. This presentation will explore the tension between representation and mobilisation on the one hand, and control of the business of allocating plots for fees on the other – a process that at times also requires the forging of informal collaborations with corrupt council officials. There is in other words an ambiguous process of curbing the formal state's ability to manage the informal settlement, and at the same time informalising state procedures for allocating stands and houses through forging collaborations with corrupt officials. The presentation

School of Architecture & Planning
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3 Wits 2050
Johannesburg South Africa
www.wits.ac.za

T +27 11 717 7623
F +27 11 717 7649

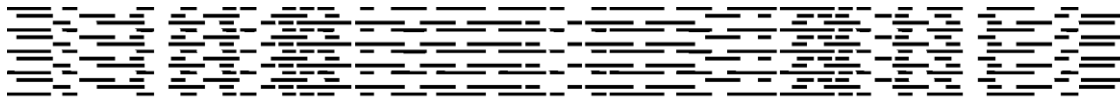


explores shifting relationships and contestations around these issues over two decades in an informal settlement called Trouble.

Thembanani Mkhize, SoAP, Wits Thembanani.Mkhize@students.wits.ac.za

Managing urban change and neoliberal governmentality: Ekhaya Neighbourhood Improvement District's housing supervisors as street-level bureaucrats?

The Foucauldian notion of 'Governmentality' (conduct of conduct) stipulates that our daily practices – while shaped by administrative powers and knowledges/truths – involve self-governance and government of others via constructed norms. Not only does this widen our conception of governing beyond state institutional management; it also calls our attention to micro-institutions and individuals actively involved in the management of urban neighbourhood change but who are more-often-than-not ignored in conventional political economy and in urban renewal efforts such as improvement districts. Such individuals include NID housing supervisors who, in the context of Hillbrow's Ekhaya NID, are considered as the 'glue' binding property owners and tenants in the respective buildings which they 'govern'; and are purportedly empowering their tenants in Ekhaya decision-making issues. Foucault – who conceives of spatiality as an important factor in governmental thought and in any exercise of power – observes that insofar as the state governs at a distance; 'lower-level orders' still work to support the State's broad agendas on the ground. This suggests that although NIDs like Ekhaya signify a delegation of powers to private bodies, the State still somehow makes itself manifest in NIDs; and Lipsky would argue that the State's presence in localities is felt via 'Street-level Bureaucrats'. These are state actors such as house letting officers who, through their everyday interaction with their clients/fellow citizens in their respective lines of work, exercise discretion by bending/negotiating policy norms that constrain them. By so doing, bureaucrats construct 'practical norms' that slightly differ from state agencies' 'official/professional norms'. Literature reviewed for my research so far on NID's housing supervisors, points to housing supervisors as street-level bureaucrats, in the light of their role as brokers of knowledge and other services and as practical implementers of their companies' codes of conduct, among other things. An extraction of the concepts running through my research study as well as the empirical evidence emanating from fieldwork, the paper explores the 'stateness' of Ekhaya NID and its street-level bureaucrats; and portrays Ekhaya NID as a 'mutant' device of State power. As well, it is pointed out that the daily micro-practices of housing supervisors – and the rationality/rules informing them,



among other things - solicit our understanding of housing supervisors as 'street-level bureaucrats' in their own right, even though they routinely work for private bodies.

Nicolette Pingo, CUBES pingonicolette@gmail.com

Engaging with the State: Social movements and Electoral Fronts: a new way of entering the fray? The Case of the Operation Khanyisa Movement, Johannesburg

The South African urban governance landscape is largely understood in terms of party politics, local government structures (in particular ward committees), social movements and less formal community based organisations as distinct entities that relate to one another in particular ways. It is the relationship between these entities that interests South African urban governance scholars (Matlala & Benit-Gbaffou 2008, Piper & Deacon, 2008, Thorn & Oldfield, 2011). This paper explores the intersection of these entities through the strategic decision of a social movement, the Thembelihle Crisis Committee (affiliated to the Anti Privatisation Forum), to form an electoral front, the Operation Khanyisa Movement (OKM), competing for local elections since 2006 in Johannesburg. This decision to compete for elections at the municipal level, but also to participate in selected "invited spaces of participation" such as ward committees, as ways of exploring new modes of influencing public policy without giving up popular practices of resistance and mass mobilization, is analysed through discourses and practices of the movements' leadership.

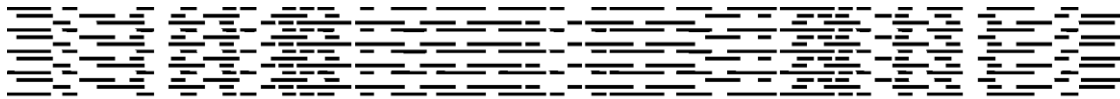
The tension this dual mode of action creates (Oldfield and Stoke 2008, Booyens 2007) is placed in the literature on institutionalization of social movements (Hipscher 1996, 1998, Barker et al. 2001, Roy 2009), also caught in the inextricable tensions between the search for political efficiency in shifting contexts and on the long run, and the possible loss of identity, radicalism, groundedness and legitimacy that this institutionalization entails. Contrasting perhaps with the scholarly dominant negative vision of institutionalization, the presentation (based on my Master's thesis) will pay attention to the discourses, debates and practices of TCC leadership that explain their strategic choices.

Loren B Landau, ACMS, and Caitlin Blaser

loren@migration.org.za;
caitlin.blaser@whiteband.org

School of Architecture & Planning
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3 Wits 2050
Johannesburg South Africa
www.wits.ac.za

T +27 11 717 7623
F +27 11 717 7649



Mobility and State Making: Going Local; Looking Wide

Drawing on new research in ten Southern African municipalities (8 in South Africa, 2 in Botswana), this paper highlights how states are being made and remade at the intersection of mobile populations and local government. By documenting local authorities' responses to migration – or their perceptions thereof – it ultimately makes a three part argument. First, it demonstrates the value of understanding state formation as an ongoing dynamic involving the perpetual reconfiguring of population, territory and political authority. Second, by contrasting the remarkably varied forms of state making within a country – and sometimes within a district or municipality – it illustrates the need to position local political forms as analytical counterpoints and complements to the national state. Lastly, it argues that as the region's population embraces translocalism as a means of addressing economic and social precarity, the analysis of politics must too become translocal and diasporic.

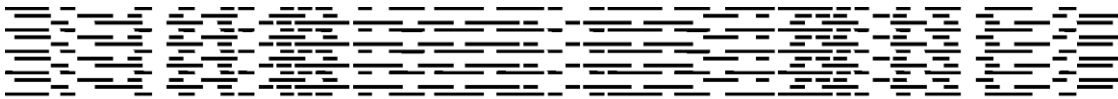
Dylan Weakley¹, CUBES, Wits Dylan.Weakley@wits.ac.za

Incremental Upgrading: The States “Informal” Position on Informal Settlement Intervention in the City of Johannesburg?

In Johannesburg, planning and housing authorities have generally responded to informal settlements through relocation of residents to new ‘green fields’ housing developments, with in-situ upgrades a relatively new and still partial response (Huchzermeyer, 2009a; Harrison, 2013). This is the case in Kya Sands Informal Settlement where all of the long term interventions proposed involve the full relocation of the settlement to purpose built formal housing. Generally these interventions can take years to implement, if they happen at all.

While this is the case, in the ‘interim’, the municipal government has implemented some ‘short term’ solutions. These include the delivery of some services (communal standpipes, VIP toilets, floodlights and refuse removal) and ‘emergency relocations’. These relocations involve moving households from the most dangerous areas (in the flood line for example) to safer areas within or immediately adjacent to the settlement. The areas relocated to, although better serviced and more regimented, are still considered as informal (by both the state and residents). It is argued here that planning

¹ Dylan Weakley is currently finishing revisions for his MSc research report in town Planning, Wits School of Architecture and Planning, on which this paper is based. The title of his dissertation is “Recognising Vulnerability *and* Resilience in Informal Settlements: The Case of Kya Sands, Johannesburg, South Africa”.



authorities use the extension of informal settlements as a direct planning tool, arguably acting informally.

This proposed paper will delve into the notion of the state acting informally, as suggested by Ananya Roy (2009). The aim of this paper was initially to make an argument (using the case of Kya Sands Informal Settlement) that the City of Johannesburg (CoJ), at times, acts informally in intervening in informal settlements. While this is argued, the overall argument has evolved to make a case that the state (CoJ) has unofficially adopted as its major approach to informal settlement intervention, incremental upgrading. While this approach does on the one hand slowly improve living conditions in informal settlements, if these small, incremental interventions are seen as temporary and not part of a sustained upgrade, their effects will be limited. I argue that the CoJ should acknowledge the approach, which could lead to a better uptake of in-situ upgrading in the city.

The paper will be based on desktop research and on empirical data collected by the author for his MSc dissertation, submitted and accepted by the University of the Witwatersrand in 2013.

Li Pernegger, CUBES, Wits li.pernegger@iburst.co.za

Unpacking informal practices of the State – stories from the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council

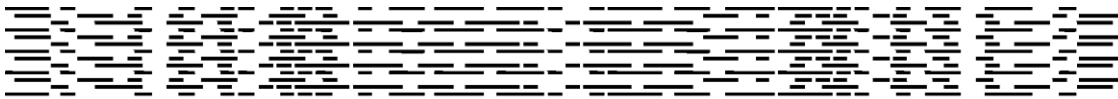
Provoked by the work of Roy who argues that the state intentionally uses informal practices to govern the city in a Southern context (Roy 2009), I wish here, through adopting the perspective of municipal officials in the management of state-citizens conflict within the City of Johannesburg, to question, unpack and perhaps offer a typology of state “informal” practices in governing the City. I base my reflection on three stories (investigated for my PhD research): officials’ response to mass protests in Orange farm, an informal settlement in Johannesburg; how the City was trapped in becoming a de facto slumlord whilst attempting to regenerate the inner city of Johannesburg; and contradictory policies and practices from various city departments in managing street trading in Johannesburg inner city. These three stories highlight different dimensions of state’s “informal practices” and question the intentionality lying therein.

Chloé Buire, CUBES, Wits chloebuire@gmail.com

School of Architecture & Planning
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3 Wits 2050
Johannesburg South Africa
www.wits.ac.za

T +27 11 717 7623
F +27 11 717 7649





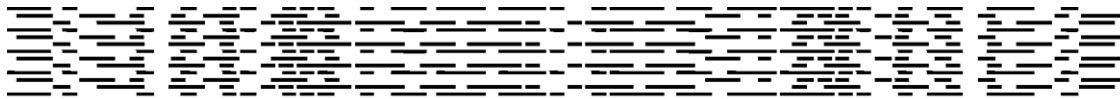
Making plans in the unplanned city

Departing from the theoretical debates on the nature of the State in Angola, this paper focuses on the daily life of urban dwellers in Panguila, in the northern periphery of Luanda to understand the state/society interface. The construction of this new settlement started in the 2000s to offer alternative housing to people evicted from the city because of post-war reconstruction works. A decade later, more than 60,000 people inhabit Panguila. The majority of them did not receive their house as compensation from the State after an eviction; they rather navigated intricate socio-political networks in order to be allowed to live in Panguila independently from their recognition as evictees or not. The paper focuses on these unexpected itineraries, and maps the slow transformation of a resettlement camp imposed by the State into a peri-urban neighbourhood strongly appropriated by its residents. The complex articulation between individual opportunism and collective strategies, between written rules and tacit loyalties, and between the planned and the improvised fleshes up Roy's idea of informality as an "idiom of urbanization". Behind the stories of the urbanites, the paper eventually reveals the haunting presence of the ill-defined idea of "the State", a locus of power that needs to be tamed for dignity to be insured.

Margot Rubin, CUBES, Wits rubinmargot@gmail.com

South to south conversations: Chatterjee in South Africa and India

Much has been written about using "southern" theorisation in order to explain and understand southern phenomena. Using two cases, one in Delhi and one in Johannesburg, I propose to look at Chatterjee's widely discussed political/civil society duality and demonstrate its extent and usefulness as well as its limitations in the two court cases, both in the "global south" - one in Johannesburg and one in Delh. Chatterjee argues that the state can be divided into its political and civil incarnations - whereby civil society represents its formal, official and what Holston would call the manifestation of "paper" rights i.e. Constitutionally and legislatively embedded rights, which mediate the relationship between legal citizens and state. Conversely, the political aspect of the duality is the less formal or official dimensions of the state and may be likened to Roy's notion of the state "acting informally" whereby services, and urban goods are accessed through patronage, clientalism and the ability of residents to leverage their social, economic or political positions. To my mind such a reading does not sufficiently demonstrate the intricacies of intra-state relations i.e. the moments when civil and political society interact, engage or touch one another. Nor, I would argue, is the line so clearly drawn as to when formal rights are mobilised and used, and when patronage and leverage is utilized and by whom. Thus the aim of the exercise is



not to disavow the framework that he proposes but rather to add nuance and context and offer an account that complexifies the relationship within the state and between the state and urban residents

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, CUBES, Wits claire.benit@wits.ac.za

What does “constructing the post-apartheid city” mean? Views from former officials and politicians from the City of Johannesburg

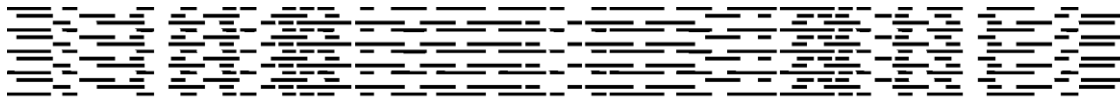
This presentation is inspired by Roy’s ‘Why India cannot plan its cities? Informality, Insurgence and the Idiom of Urbanisation’ (2009), crossing ongoing research² - documenting the way former anti-apartheid activists employed in Johannesburg local government after 1994 tried to ‘transform’ the city in the post-apartheid period. This research rationale is three fold: understanding the shift from activism to government, from liberation to reconstruction; analyzing the internal workings of an arm of the state – metropolitan government, animated by a strong (if rather unclear and ambiguous) drive for political and urban transformation; and questioning the opportunities and challenges of driving change from the state.

‘Transformation’ in the SA context has a quite specific, although multiple and confused, meaning in the post-apartheid South African context. It is about reversing or turning away from the apartheid past. It can entail social redistribution, spatial desegregation, black empowerment, shift in power, ownership and capitalism: and these different dimensions might obviously contradict one another.

A key difference with Roy’s work in tackling this question – on the possibility of *urban change* (even possibly more ambitious than the possibility of planning, in a post-apartheid context of great hopes and political drive in South Africa)- is in the point of view, or the entry point into the question. The research is not looking from the impact of state actions on different, peripheral spaces marked by ‘un-mapping’, informalities, uncertainties and contests; but looking from the state, or rather from various agents and departments within the state, and giving them space (as critically framed and analysed as possible, an obvious methodological challenge) to unpack, present, self-reflect on their own practices.

At this interim, preliminary stage of the research analysis, what appears cross-cutting challenges to driving urban changes from a local state perspectives are: 1) questions along institutional complexity leading inter alia to contradictory forces, emphasis and impetus from different parts of local government; 2) the prominent role of party

² This presentation is based on an ongoing research project, entitled ‘Post Apartheid Planners Tell Their Stories’ (in homage to Krumholz and Clavel’s book), conducted jointly with Rashid Seedat, a former advisor to the Johannesburg Mayor now working in Provincial Government: Planning commission. Views expressed here are my own.



politics in shaping agendas, priorities, exceptions, and a number of visible interventions – sometimes at odds with other municipal dynamics; 3) implicit strategic choices (in the name of post-apartheid transformation and fight against clientelism) leading to limit the powers of the most decentralized and participatory level of the state – that of the ward – leading to a growing disconnect between the top and the bottom of the local state on the one hand, between state and civil society on the other.

Sarah Charlton, CUBES, Wits sarah.charlton@wits.ac.za

State views on peoples' practices: how the state sees the outcomes of its low-income housing intervention in Johannesburg

Rather than focusing on claims-making or navigations of the state by ordinary people, I explore what people do with a state benefit, and how the state views this usage. The research thus asks: having been 'seen' by the state and received a resource, how do people interact with it, and how does the state view, interpret and respond to this? Specifically, in the state's encounters with 'people as beneficiaries' (rather than as 'claimants'), what does it make of people's responses to a benefit which appear to contest some of the terms on which the benefit was offered? Focusing on the delivery of RDP housing in Johannesburg, this paper explores the state's assessment of housing outcomes for recipient households, what it sees in the lived experiences and practices of beneficiaries, and how the state's views can be explained. The limited information the state has on the results of its intervention is surprising, given the large scale, vast expenditure, huge footprint and impact on millions of lives of the housing programme. Yet despite its lack of systematic review and analysis, and its handover of autonomy to beneficiaries through the transfer of ownership, the state reprimands and censures residents' practices which it sees as diverging from policy intentions. Drawing on the views of state housing practitioners across three spheres of government, I consider how the differences between policy intentions and outcomes are received and understood, what dilemmas they create for the state, and what this suggest about the nature of the state.

**SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE
& PLANNING**

