

# Spatial connections and disconnections: A critique on the conceptualisation of Tshwane (2000 to 2004)

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## Abstract

This article had its origins in an interest with the disjuncture between the way people think things are and should be, and the way things 'really are'. Pursuing this notion took place with an appreciation of the inventive role that language can play in exploring and reporting on these different worlds. The article explores some of the emerging meanings, representations, understandings and visualisations of the rapidly-changing urban condition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with particular reference to South Africa. The particular case in point, the City of Tshwane, is contextualised and expounded upon by making use of post-modern writings on the contemporary urban condition, urban planning thought and personal interpretations/signage of the local spatial scenery. In a personal re-interpretation of the spatial conditions of the city, i.e. the 'spaces of recognition', an open dialogue is entered into with the prevailing 'spaces of reflection', i.e. planners' documentary portrayals of the current 'spatialities' and their views and wishes for a better future. Through employing a deconstructive mode of reading the mounting disjuncture, tension and irony in and between the recognisable urban reality and the conceptualised spatial scenery is revealed.

The primary argument put forward in the article resonates around planners' stubborn persistence to hang onto outdated and inappropriate language to make sense of and respond to the world in which they live/function. The authors subsequently argue a case for a far more vivid, fluid, responsive and innovative planning vocabulary, and discourse. In the process they suggest that it is not only the lack of new words/ideas that is of concern, but also the limiting effect that the lack of 'new words/concepts' have on what planners can see and are willing to see and navigate into existence<sup>1</sup>.

## RUIMTELIKE KONNEKSIES EN DISKONNEKSIES: KRITIEK OP DIE KONSEPTUALISERING VAN TSHWANE (2000 TOT 2004)

Hierdie artikel het sy oorsprong in 'n belangstelling in die verskil in die wyse waarop mense dink dinge is en behoort te wees, en hoe dinge 'werklik is'. Hierdie gedagte is ondersoek met 'n volle waardering van die kreatiewe rol wat taal kan speel in die studie van, en rapportering op hierdie verskillende wêreldes. Die artikel ondersoek sommige van die betekenisse, voorstellings, begrippe van en visualiserings van die vinnig-veranderende stedelike konteks in die 21<sup>ste</sup> eeu, met spesifieke verwysing na Suid-Afrika. Die spesifieke geval, die Stad van Tshwane, is gekontekstualiseer en bespreek deur gebruik te maak van post-moderne tekste oor die kontemporêre stedelike aard, stedelike beplanningsdenke en persoonlike interpretasies/beelde van die plaaslike ruimtelike kwaliteite. In 'n persoonlike her-interpretasie van die ruimtelike konteks van die stad, d.i. die 'ruimtes van herkenning', word 'n oop dialoog geskep met die heersende 'ruimtes van refleksie', d.i. beplanners se dokumentêre beskrywings van die huidige 'ruimtelikhede' en hul beskouings van en wense vir 'n beter toekoms. Deur gebruik van 'n dekonstruktiewe lees-metodiek word die groeiende verskil, spanning en ironie in en tussen die waarneembare stedelike realiteit en die gekonseptualiseerde ruimtelike beelde verwoord.

Die sentrale argument in die artikel resonereer rondom beplanners se koppige vaslooi aan uitgedateerde en ontoereikende taal in hul poging om sin te maak van en te reageer op die wêreld waarin hulle leef/funksioneer. Dienooreekomstig maak die outeurs 'n saak vir 'n meer dinamiese, vloeibare en innoverende beplanningswoordeskat en diskoers. In hierdie proses stel hulle dat dit nie net die gebrek aan nuwe woorde/idees is wat saak maak nie, maar beaam hulle ook die beperkende effek wat die afwesigheid van 'nuwe woorde/konsepte' het op wat beplanners kan sien, en bereid is om 'gestalte te gee' in en deur hul woorde.

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## KU KHOMANA NI KU HAMBANA HI KUYA HI TINDZHAWU: SWISOLO EHENHLA KA MAVONELE YA TSHWANE (2000 – 2004).

Tsalwa lere ri tumbuluke eka ku tsakela loku nga kon aeka ku hambana ka mavonelo hi ndlela leyi vanhu va ehleketaka leswi swilo swinga xiswona, leswi a swi fanele ku va xiswona, ni leswi swi nga xiswona entiysisweni. Ndzavisiso wa vonele leri wu endleka ku ri karhi ku ri ni ku twisisa xiawe lexi ririmi ri nga va ka na xona eka ndzavisiso ni xiviko ehenhleri ka ku hambana ka matlhelo. Tsalwa leri ri langutisa swin'wana swa leswi kuvuwaka swon, swikombiso, matwiselo ni mavonelo yak u hundzuka ka xihatla ka xiyimo xa le madorobeni eka lembe xidzana ra makume-mbirhi n'we (21<sup>st</sup>) hi ku kongomisa lokukulu eka Afrika-Dzonga. Mhaka-nkulu, doroba ra Tshwane, ku nga rona ri langutiswaku ni ku burisana hi rona ku ri karhi ku tirhisiwa matsalwa ya ximanguva lawa ehenhleri ka xiyimo xa sweswi xa madoroba, miehleketo ehenhleri ka makunguhatelo ya madoroba ni matwiselo/maveikelo ya swilo endzhawini hi vatsari. Eka matwiselo mantshwa hi vatsari va xiyimo xa tindzhawu tale dorobeni (leswi ku vuriwaka "Tindzhawu leti ti fivekaka"), ku khomiwe mburisano wa lerivaleni mayelana ni tindzhawu leti kombisiweke tiri kona sweswi, leswi ku vuriwaka tinhlamuselo ta va kunguhati hi maphepha ta tindzhawu leti ti nga koOna sweswi ni mavonele ni ku navela ka vumundzuku byo antswa. Hi ku tirhisa mahlayelo ya ku sola ku ya ehenhla hi ku hambana, ku tshukiselana mahlo ni swigego endzeni ni lexikarhi ka ntiyiso lowu vonakaka emadorobeni ni mavonelo mayela ni mavekelo ya tindzhawu swa paluxiwa.

Vonelo ro sungula ra nkoka leri humeleriswaka emahlweni ka tsalwa leri ritshikelela ri vuyelela eka leswi va kunguhati va xindisaka ku omelela eka ririmi ra xikhale ro ka ringa fanelangiki ku kota ku twisisa ni ku hlamula eka xivandla lexi vahanyaka kumbe ku tirha eka xona. Lexi landzelaka, vatsari va koxa leswaku ku fanele ku tirhisiwa marito ni mbulavurisano wa nkunguhato lowu wu twisisekaka, wo hundzuka hi ku olova, wo tisa swintshuxo no tisa maendlele mantswa. Loko vari karhi va endla leswi va vona leswaku a hi ku pfumaleka ka marito/mavonele mantshwa ntsena leswi swi vilerisaka, kambe ni ntshikelelo, lowu ku pfumaleka ka marito/maendlele mantshwa wu nga na wona eka leswi va kunguhati va nga kotaka ku swi vona ni ku kongoma leswi swinga kona.

## 1. SOME ANTICIPATORY IMPRESSIONS [TO 'GET A MOVE ON']

Hence we begin: This enquiry follows in the footsteps of contemporary critical commentators such as Dear (2000), Soja (2000), and Ellin (1999), who are all concerned with making sense of the post-modern urban condition and who seek to unlock more responsive and imaginative understandings of the changing urban condition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By using Tshwane as a case study the focus is placed on some very pertinent discrepancies between the spatial development of the city over the last two decades and the official discourse on it.

This enquiry also has its footing in a launching pad used by a few urban explorers as a means of conducting enquiries into the thinking and acting about/in space<sup>2</sup>. This cognitive paring highlights two particular appearances on the conceptualisation of space that were specifically explored during the investigation, viz:

- the picturing and portrayal of the current urban condition, i.e.: the thinking about space; and
- the profiling of a better urban future, i.e. the acting in/on space.

By narrowing our scope to this cognitive twosome, i.e. the act of conceiving and envisioning of Tshwane, we were able to explore what Harrison (2002: 80) calls "more nuanced and contextually relevant ways" to view, describe and engage our home-grown geographies.

Searching for any use and validation to this quest, led us amongst other to Harrison's (2002: 79) observation that it "... is increasingly clear that ways of thinking and acting inherited from the past are obstacles to compelling action in the present". As similarly observed by Marcuse (2003: xiv) "...this question of [where we are and] where we want

to go needs to be addressed more squarely, before we can find out what policies will help us get there" (Personal insertion added).

In the sections that follow the article explores and focuses on how the conceptualised spatial reality of the planners of Tshwane (dis)connects with the perceived urban reality. As such it consists of a discussion on the following four components:

- a brief overview of the methodological foundations and research approach employed;
- a concise description of the s(t)imulating sites and sights of Tshwane's emerging spaces of recognition;
- a narration on the prevailing conceptualisations detailing the city's spaces of reflection; and
- a critical recollection and perspective on the emerging meanings and possible openings from here.

## 2. READING THE SPATIAL MEANINGS – A METHODOLOGY TO DECONSTRUCT THE TEXTUAL CONSTRUCTS ON THE CONCEPTUALISED SPATIAL SCENERY

In recent years there has been a growing awareness that [a] planning text is much more than a straightforward conduit of objective realities. Since the 1960's a contrasting belief system has picked up momentum around the more interpretative and argumentative nature of text (Dear, 2000: 179; Ermarth, 1999: 47). The view that has transpired from all of this reflects a more sincere understanding of knowledge/truth as typically depicted in Nietzsche's "figurative image of truth", Lefebvre's suggestion about the "illusion of transparency" (Soja, 2000: 94), and Dear's (2000: 5) reference to the "crisis of

representation". These notions all signify a general disillusionment with the idea that language is an authentic, unsoiled and innocent representation of reality (Dear, 2000: 179; Ermarth, 1999: 47).

This recognition has sparked the so-called 'linguistic turn', viz.: the turn to "language, discourse and rhetoric" (Throgmorton, 1992: 17). It is an alternative quest in support of the opacity, multiplicity, figurative, and constructive function of language<sup>3</sup>. It acknowledges the ambivalent nature of text and believes [it understands] that knowledge is not just a found object that accurately represents reality, but is instead generative, inventive, interpretative, ambiguous and hardly neutral<sup>4</sup>.

Planning is no different, since the cognitive mappings planners conceive typically find expression in the plans they/we compile. Planners generally conceive their "images of the world" and "modes of maintenance and repair" in the written form of language (Mandelbaum, 1990: 353; Oosthuizen, 1999: 8). These words and constructs are generally considered to be typical archetypes of how our fellowship configures and constitutes reality<sup>5</sup>. Given the growing realisation of the importance of these "modes of self description" (Oosthuizen, 1999: 13) and the understanding that these textographies<sup>6</sup> are richly opinionated, a gap has opened-up for textual reading as a revelatory methodology of inquiry.

This turn towards narrative interpretation as the main vehicle for knowing, centers on the illumination of the various nuances formed in the text. This line of approach forms the main drive for a mode of inquiry focused on the reading of documentary realities. The particular approach followed in the examining of Tshwane's conceptualised urban scenery entailed exploring the board patterns in the text, i.e. the 'interpretative repertoire' as observed by Taylor (2001: 7-9).

<sup>2</sup> Our cloning tactic similarly echoes various other urban explorers' use of the same pairing for example: Body-Gendrot & Beauregard's (1999: 30) reference to the study of the city as an object of "thought" and "action"; Marcuse's (1995: 244) call for greater efforts to "understand" and "influence" the patterns of space; and Watson & Gibson's (1995: 255) observation on "imagining" and "constructing" new spaces, buildings and cities, and ways of living.

<sup>3</sup> For supporting views see also: Munslow (1997: 185); Throgmorton (1992: 17); Kirk (1997: 318); Eriksson & Lehtimäki (2001: 203); Himmelfarb (1997: 158); Spiegel (1997: 181); Goatly (1997: 155)

<sup>4</sup> The ambivalent nature of text is personified in many shapes, forms and appearances, for example: Wittgenstein's notion of 'language games' (Sim, 2001: 309); Barthes' ideas of the 'death of the author', 'writerly text' and 'ideological/imaginary elaboration' (Sim, 2001: 187, 221, 336 & 382; Barthes, 1997: 121); Munslow's (1997: 2, 6, 7, & 140) suggestion about the 'creation', 'inventing' 'imposition' 'colligation', 'collation', 'configuration' and 'employment' role of language; Wetherell's (2001: 16) submission about the 'constitutive' and 'constructive' function of discourse

<sup>5</sup> Some typical demonstrations of the argumentative nature of planning texts are inter alia: Throgmorton's idea that good planning is about 'persuasive storytelling' of the future (1992: 17); Mandelbaum's suggestion that planning arguments are typically expressed and emplotted in 'stories' (1990: 209); Moore Milroy's submission that planners 'construct plans that are plausible to the profession and the community' (1989: 313); Lapintie's (1998: 187) and Eriksson & Lehtimäki's (2001: 205) observation that 'rhetorical and argumentative tactics' are employed as vehicles in strategy text.

<sup>6</sup> This term was first devised by Swales (1998) to refer to the study of text in a situation.

The most suitable way to unlock the multiple meanings found in these written portrayals, i.e. as Tett & Wolfe (1991: 196) notes: the "...circumscribed 'hard copy' instance of planners...", was through deconstruction. In using this method one tends to rupture the (supposed) preset meanings found in text. The point of departure was therefore not to uncover truth, but to distil value by unmasking, uncovering and unlocking further meanings. And, in accordance with what Beth Moore Milroy (1989: 313) proposes, this text also considers deconstruction to be a useful method for examining how planners construct plausibility. Close to home, our own contribution to this style of 'deconstructive reading' was through the development of a supplementary permutation labelled 'expansive scanning' (Serfontein, 2006). It shares with the other commentators an array of 'intentionalities' to get beneath the textual veneer, yet a lesser emphasis was placed on the disrupting/resisting objectives of a critical deconstructive reading. Our reading instead placed a far greater accent on the opening-up of further versions by focusing more on the meaning the spatial phenomenon (appeared to have had) for the various authors responsible for the official documenting of the city's visual/textual appearance.

Before we proceed with the detailing of the base-line conditions, i.e. Tshwane's (e)merging spaces of recognition, a few notes on the selected texts for this enquiry. The full complement of (planning) texts that dealt with the (re)conceptualisation of Tshwane between 2000 and 2004 were used as basis for the textual reading<sup>7</sup>. This particular time window was regarded as significant as it signifies the start of the post-transitional system of municipal government with all its expectations that new and more inventive ways would begin to transpire on the mapping and directing of the spatial scenery.

### 3. TSHWANE'S EMERGING SPACES OF RECOGNITION – AN INTERPRETATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN CONDITION

The search for more responsive ways to (re)conceptualise the contemporary urban condition was attempted on the back of urban theorists' general acceptance that something extraordinary happened to cities during the closing epoch of the twentieth century (e.g. Soja, 1996, 2000; Flusty & Dear, 1999). We witnessed a colossal erosion and restructuring of the current day spatialities to the extent that Soja (2000: 96), as one of the most prominent commentators of/on the contemporary urban transformation, goes so far as referring to it as a 'transformative moment'. In a reworking of one of the modern-day commentators of modernity, i.e. Marshall Berman's (1982) classic text "All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity", Soja (2000: 96) further accentuates this argument by describing the transformative moment as, a "...time of accelerated change when seemingly all that was solid and dependable in the recent past melted into the intensely unsettling 'air' of the present".

Against this background it has increasingly become clear that the features of the contemporary urban condition do not resemble older linguistic mappings and that considerable modifications have to be made to the rather outdated descriptions on the spatialities of our time. The perspective in the ensuing paragraphs, therefore purposefully answers the call of the various afore-mentioned commentators who called for the updating of our outdated words/concepts. We took up the challenge by attempting an alternative language of description of the symptomatic characteristics of the world in which we live/function. In our (re) telling of the images, we keenly partook in producing some supplementary signs of our own<sup>8</sup>. We believe, as many other contemporary commentators do, that in these multiple understandings/mappings of cities, new perspectives will surface that could start more appropriate and meaningful ways to (re)imagine better/alternative urban futures.

The collection that follows aims to paraphrase the facts and fiction on the post-modern spatial scenery in a redrafted (urban) atlas. The sketches

mainly characterise the current urban condition in the form of a hexapla<sup>9</sup>, i.e. a hexagonal mental matrix of six different shades/passages of the evolving spatialities. As such this established some baseline conditions for a reasonable comparison with the local planners' perspective on the spatial scenery, i.e. the 'spaces of reflection'.

#### 3.1 The emerging PLANETARY PLEXUS of transnational (re/un) bounding

The first stop offers a minor glimpse at the globalisation of the urban scenery. Since the original spottings in the 70's by David Harvey and Manuel Castells, many more commentators have joined the unscrambling of its more recent transcending circuits (see for example: Sassen, 1991; 1994; 2000a-c; 2001; 2002; Castells, 1989; 1996; 1998; Knox & Taylor, 1995; Soja, 2000; Marcuse & Van Kempen, 2000; Abrahamson, 2004). This enmeshing network materialises as a partly deterritorialised geography that transcends national borders and connects a variety of nodes of 'hyper-concentration' (Sassen, 2000b: 261; 2001; 2002; Taylor, 2004; Gugler, 2004). Its outcome is the huge unbounding of cities from local/introverted wholes to a system of global/inverted clusters that function as strategic points on/of global economic networks and pronounced city regions (Graham & Marvin, 1996; Knox & Taylor, 1995; Sassen, 2002; Taylor, 2004). Although its web enjoins the whole planet, large expanses and locales are increasingly excluded from its inner/benefiting circle. Down South the cities of this vast expanse have become the centre of many commentators' observation of the de-linking and continuing marginalisation of Africa in the planetary spectacle (see for example: Mabogunje, 2000: 169; Castells, 1993: 561, 563; Simone, 2004: 16).

Venturing somewhat deeper and further into the more specific localisations of globalisation, our analysis revealed how interweaved the Tshwane spatial scenery has become with the global planetary plexus. Firstly, the inherent production apparatus of the city,

<sup>7</sup> The selected texts included the Integrated Development Plans (IDP's), a City Development Strategy (CDS), a Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF's) and a Local Economic Development (LED) Plan.

<sup>8</sup> This type of analysis is comparable to Soja's (1995a: 15) technique, referred to as 'interpretive analytics', which he actively employs in his interpretation of the 'heterotopologies' of Los Angeles. It is also similar to Patton's (1990: 114) 'new aesthetic of cognitive mapping' that he uses in his dealings with 'Images of Postmodernity.'

<sup>9</sup> Hexapla is a word of Greek origin that means: "a six fold text" (Oxford Compendium, 9th Edition). Similar to our advance, Soja (1997 & 2000) in his most recent exploration of the Postmetropolis, also deploys a hexagonal mental matrix to (re)map six 'characteristic mentalities' (Soja, 1996: 74) of possible ways for understanding the textured mosaic of the contemporary city. For a more condensed description of the six geographies/restructurings, see also Soja's (1995b; 1997) editions.

historically pieced together to serve the aims and means of the previous Nationalist government, has seen a steady progression from its long history of inward orientation and protectionism to more outward-looking space and place (Monitor Company, 1997: iii). The process started in the 90's when more progressive export-orientated growth paths emerged on the back of the depreciation of the South African Rand and the reintegration of South Africa in the world economy. One such example is the so-called automotive cluster largely situated in Rosslyn and Watloo that has [been] re-organised into a major high value-added manufacturing network of material suppliers, automotive assemblers and component manufacturers<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the Automotive Supplier Park (ASP) has recently been added as part of the Gauteng Blue IQ initiative to further strengthen synergies and enhance global competitiveness through the optimisation of logistics involved in a highly diversified automotive supply chain.

Secondly, the city's spatial landscape is also beginning to display the general results of the vertical disintegration/fragmentation of economic production processes. A centrifugal force of (re) industrialisation has started to pick-up momentum, which has generally resulted in the horizontal (re)agglomeration of economic activity in the form of (high-tech) industrial/innovation parks exclusively settled along the N1 axis<sup>11</sup>. These, what some would like to call 'technopoles', also happen to be tactically placed with regard to the (colour/spot)less fringes and also happen to be conveniently placed to the skill-and-fear-rich bourgeoisie – i.e. those citizens comfortably sheltered in the (peripheral) encampments.

### 3.2 The strengthening REGIONAL WEBS of inter-connectivity

The second, and perhaps as revealing as the globalisation effects, is the regionalisation and expanding geographical scope of cities. In this case the centripetal power of the

city centre begins to fade as a new network of metropolitan centres and nodes become entangled in what Soja (2000: 179) similarly describes as a new 'combinatorial' regional urban system and Simone (2001: 15) describes as an elastic regional spatiality. The metropolitan landscape gets extensively deconcentrated by the dispersal of activities in a massive regional arrangement where different parts and points begin to specialise in certain functions dedicated to the broader regional spatiality. Also of note, as similarly emphasised by Calthorpe & Fulton (2001: 2) and Soja (2000: 242), is the realisation that this stretching out of the urban form is not simply further sprawl, but rather the appearance of a new genus of mass regional urbanisation and the rising of a new interconnected regional urban system.

(decentralised) settlements and nodes in the south-eastern quarters are increasingly intertwined with Johannesburg and its similar north-western clusterings. The (traditional) orbital logic of suburban realms under the consistent gravitational pull of the central-city, have been eroded by the linear resurgence between the two main anchors of Gauteng. The N1 development axis has become the backbone of this larger north-south development corridor between the two central cities. This almost continuous urban entanglement in the form of a regional web of interconnectivity along an intricate lattice of paths is rapidly elevating the role of the non-central metropolitan locations (i.e. the peripheral/in-between spaces) above the historic influence of the two central-cities (Note Figure 1 for a graphical representation of this Regional Urban Merging).

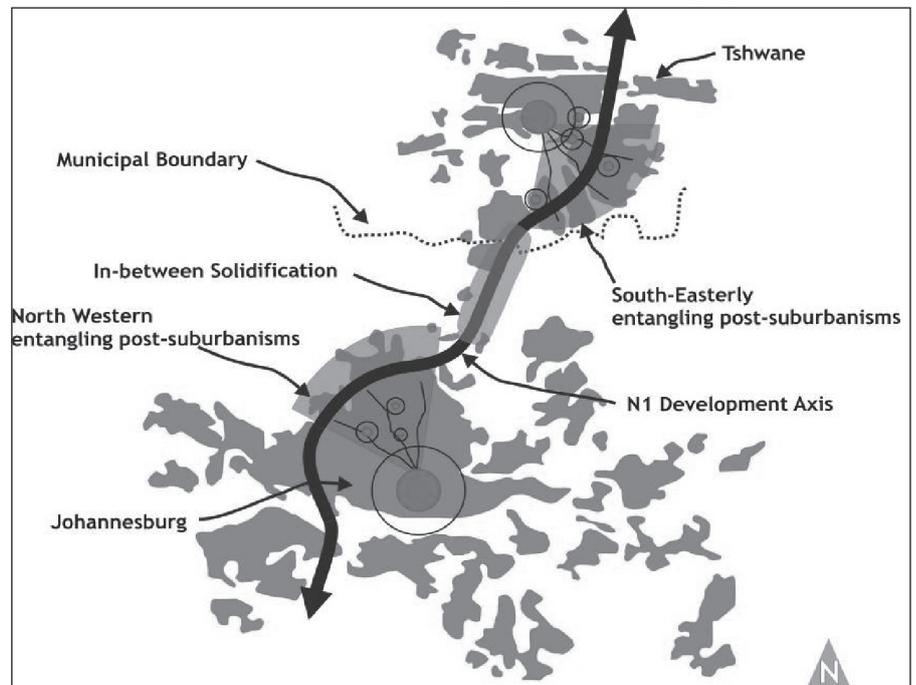


Figure 1: The regional urban MERGING into a combinatorial urban system  
Source: Serfontein, 2006: 62

Zooming into some of the facets of the expansible urban region of which Tshwane forms a part, our scoping revealed the existence of an imposing regional urban merging. Apart from the outer solidification and convergence in/on Midrand, Tshwane and its new

### 3.3 The rising WHIRLING PATCHES AND KNOTTY LINES of ex-centricity<sup>12</sup>

A further facet to our new spatial habitat, has taken shape around the fundamental alteration of the suburban

<sup>10</sup> Several of the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM's) are present in the cluster: BMW, Daimler Chrysler, Fiat, Nissan and Ford (including Mazda, Volvo and Land Rover). Together they represent the largest concentration of Gauteng's motor vehicle industry and are responsible for 37% of passenger vehicles manufactured in South Africa.

<sup>11</sup> These include amongst other the premier publicly funded research institution, the CSIR; Persequor Park; Centurion Technopark; Kentron; Gateway; Samrand etc. A recent addition is the Innovation Hub, a Blue IQ development that is being developed as the first internationally accredited Science and Technology Park in South Africa (The innovation hub management company, 2003: 9-13).

<sup>12</sup> This textual snarl attempts to portray the exocentric character of the 'exopolis', i.e. the notion used by Soja (2000) to describe the restructured contemporary urban form. The ex- prefix relates amongst other to the exogenous thrust, i.e. the exodus towards the outer fringes; it accentuates/suggests the end of the traditional traits of urbanity; and also highlights the pull that does not come from the centre anymore (For similar use and interpretation see Soja, 2000: 250).

logic and the rise of what Kling *et al.* (1995) denotes as post-suburban regions. The urban scenery becomes less and less visible in terms of the traditional conceptual filters, such as rural, urban, and suburban and increasingly perceptible as a muddled patchwork of multifaceted activity clusters interlinked by a series of intricate paths. A mosaic of mostly peripheral destinations have become the uplands of the contemporary metropolitan landscape as more elements of city-proper have been outsourced to the suburbs.

In Tshwane the post-suburban reformation has become noticeable in the activation of various enclavations in the borderlands such as: office/corporate parks; regional shopping; transport hubs; campus districts as well as hybridised blending of these with residential typologies. The main drivers of this outer surge have been the weakening central-city, the building of the N1 highway<sup>13</sup> and the catapultic building boom towards the south-eastern outskirts, which have created the necessary critical mass for the appearance of various new (non-residential) outcroppings.

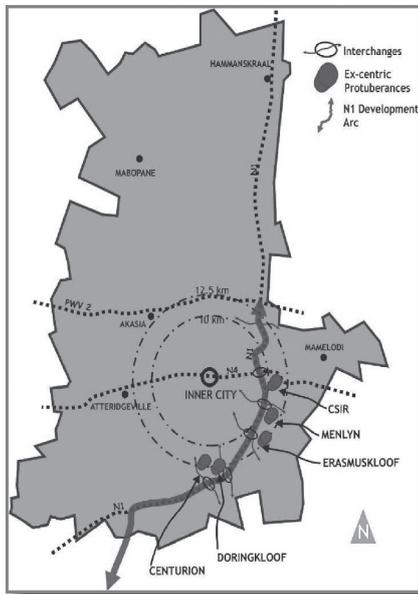


Figure 2: A series of ex-centric Protuberances along the N1 Development Arc  
Source: Serfontein, 2006: 67

Five significant concentrations (i.e. protuberances) have sprung up mainly around the interchanges with the N1 in the south-eastern outer reaches of the city, which in turn have collectively reinforced the prominence of the N1 Development Arc (Note Figure 2 for a visualisation of these protuberances along the N1 Development Arc). In addition to the above, various other subsidiary (economic) concentrations have externalised along the outer route system. This linear concentration further amplified the omnipresent lattice configuration and also added to the fading of the former (inner) suburban nodes<sup>14</sup>. Although many traces are still evident of the former radial logic, a much more powerful spontaneous lace-work is developing between the growing nuclei within the post-suburban region.

### 3.4 The MULTI-CENTERED JUNCTIONS of conglomeration

The fourth facet concerns the development of a multi-centered urban landscape in place of the previous mono-centric arrangement. This signals a new period where some peripheral nucleations have become gravitational nodes in their own right in response to the continued emptying-out of the inner-city's commercial and corporate splendour. (For similar views see also Soja, 2000: 242; Gottdiener, 2004: 199; Gottdiener & Budd, 2005: 87-91; Fainstein & Campbell, 2002: 11; Hack, 2001: 36; Mabin, 1999: 143; Harrison & Oranje, 2002: 28). They are perhaps neither cities nor suburbs, yet they function as fully urbanised/specialised anchors of the regional urban collage<sup>15</sup>.

The Tshwane urban landscape is also visibly showing this re/decentering phenomenon. Five particular nucleations have become significantly dense, focused, and autonomous in a zone 7-12 km away from the old central-city (see Figure 3 for a picture of this phenomenon). At these junctures they have solidified and become the new gravitational nodes of shoppertainment, post-suburban employment, sport and recreation and cultural expression.

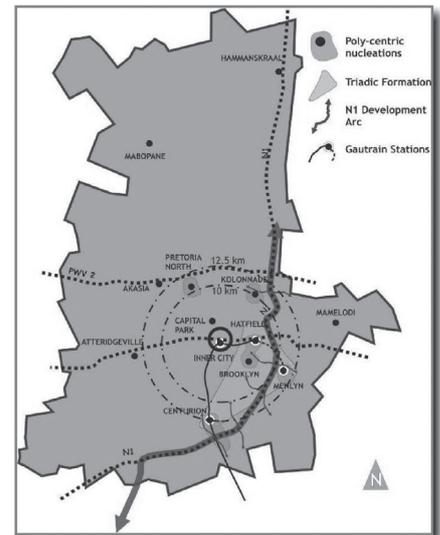


Figure 3: Emerging multi-centric nucleations  
Source: Serfontein, 2006: 69

This configuration, also closely linked to the N1 Development Arc, functions relatively independently from the central-city and increasingly challenges the inner-city for supremacy (See also Prinsloo & Cloete, 2001: 12 for a similar remark). Most of the smart jobs, shops, sports and leisure are huddled in these nucleations, even more inaccessible to the escalating much poorer fellow-citizenry still mainly bound to the urban realms of the north-west.

### 3.5 The amassing (UN)DONE REALMS of 'urbaning'<sup>16</sup>

This feature of the contemporary urban reformation consists of an amorphous amassing of informal shelters and make-shift livelihoods mainly in the marginalised quarters of the urban landscape. This is the other/dark side of the urbanisation discourse, which has deserted the masses to the multiplying (peripheral) engulfing repositories, which Simone (2001: 5) refers to as the "half-built environments" and Smith (1992: 316) in a more local slant as the "shacklands". The urban characteristics that an increasing number of (marginalised) individuals find themselves in these undone realms, are that of being "...under-developed, over-used, fragmented and often makeshift urban

<sup>13</sup> This was part of a significant 'freeway shift' in South Africa (Mabin, 1995: 192). See also Ellin's (1999: 270) similar observation on the exocentric affect of the building of highways.

<sup>14</sup> These sedimentations of yester year relate to the former preference of the neighbourhood unit concept, which dominated layout planning in the past (Parnell & Mabin, 1995: 57). For an elating description/critique of the neighbourhood unit concept and its specific application in layout planning in South Africa see Behrens & Watson (1996).

<sup>15</sup> Rowe's notion of the 'collage city' has become the contemporary metaphor for the city, which appropriately highlights its new qualities of montage, assemblage and pastiche (Ellin, 1999: 285).

<sup>16</sup> 'Urbaning' is a concept used by Coetzee & Serfontein (2002: 1) to denote the "complex, ongoing and dynamic changing processes, within and outside urban areas, which impact on, or are impacted upon by the process of becoming evermore urban"

infrastructure – where essential services are not only erratic or costly, but whose inefficiencies themselves induce the cultivation of new diseases and the ‘urbanisation’ of existing ones” (Simone, 2001: 5).

Tracking these enfolding traces into the spaces of Tshwane, some extraordinary occurrences become visible of the city’s own forgotten (post) apartheid scenery. Juxtaposed against Tshwane’s ‘big brother’-standing in Africa and its selected connections to the wider world, are the accumulating disengaged masses, which find themselves increasingly excluded from an economic engine progressively tuned to fit the global agenda. Footed in the remnants of yesteryear’s grand apartheid model, the (unending) post-suburban shack build-up<sup>17</sup> and the (monotonous) subsidy-driven housing palliations have simply continued the (peripheral) segregation and fragmentation of the ‘Apartheid City’<sup>18</sup>. These unassuming/enlarging (racially homogeneous) fringes constitute the non-centres of a growing new post-urbanism. However, a few informal clusters have recently been interjected (against the tendency) in the south-westerly outskirts of Centurion, which places them much closer to the economic dynamo picking up between Johannesburg and Tshwane. These (tactical) insertions could just be the beginnings of a rising gulf of (well-informed) citizens not content with the RDP<sup>19</sup> aims so much disconnected from the economic logic emerging between the two largest cities in the Gauteng urban region.

### 3.6 The escalating ILLUSORY SCENES of urbanity

The sixth and final feature visible along this path of discovery revolves around the post-suburban consciousness. This reinvention of the urban imagery is a response to the rather outmoded “city-centric consciousness”, and presents

a contemporary blurring of the once much clearer boundaries between the assumed (“real”) city and the (“fake”) suburbia (Soja, 2000: 324). It instinctively flows from the recent exogenous reflex (and its related fabrications) and involves the gradual passing into a mode of simulation where novel/illusory scenes of urbanity are constantly fabricated and then used to replace the reality itself (Soja, 1995b: 135; Graham, 1998; Oswald, 2001)<sup>20</sup>. As appropriately observed by Oswald (2001) the simulation of cityspace involves certain processes such as the: sanitisation, homogenisation, privatisation, zoning and theming.

Scoping this cognitive undoing in the ‘lifeworlds’<sup>21</sup> of Tshwane, a plot-scripting technique became visible of the orchestrated recomposing of the urban scenery into a lavish ‘scamscape’ (Soja, 2000: 343). The first characteristic is revealed through the theme-omagic emplacements of consumer/entertainment delight (e.g. Menlyn, Collonade etc.) that increasingly mimics an international/other-and-all-place persona. Also prominent are the many simulated Tuscan and Provençal Eden’s-of-pretence so ‘real’ that it takes precedence to the motherlands it is supposed to mirror. These simulated additions, primarily situated along the south-easterly (exurban) outskirts, lure their clientele with various enticements that evokes a sense of transcendental serenity and locational superiority. Various examples of nostalgic attempts of new-urbanism - in which live, work, and play are carefully packaged and manicured into car-less/pedestrian romanticised archetypes<sup>22</sup> - appear to complement these [perceived] aspirational outer zones. Moreover, in order to protect all these [virtual, perfect] landscapes, a fortification impulse seems to exist that does not only guard over the new [simulated] ways of life, but actually serves as a tactical gearing-up of post-suburbia into a securitopia, which is

amongst many other things also simply a disguised form of spatial (iso/insu)lation.

To sum up, the symptomatology of the post-modern restructurings, portrayed through our personal hexagonal prism, represent a first local offering of what Soja (2000: 348) specifically refers to as “transgressive imagery”. These emerging spatialities, i.e. the ‘spaces of recognition’ increasingly expose our usual modes of cognitive understanding as being grossly outdated. This brief demonstration of how to scope the spatial reality in more contextual and engaging ways has formed the basis for our personal critical reading of the prevailing local spaces of reflection, i.e. the current strands about the conceptualisation of the local spatialities in Tshwane.

## 4. TSHWANE’S PREVAILING SPACES OF REFLECTION – A DECONSTRUCTED VIEW OF THE (CONCEIVED/ENVISIONED) URBAN REALITY

Moving beyond our understandings towards the very interpretations or versions of reality the planners in Tshwane chose to bring to light, we looked forward to observe the first attempts to reflect and speak of the newness, and hence also to view more meaningful ways to respond to the new world we were living and functioning in.

However, with the same sceptical stance of the critical scholars from whom we morphed our mode of deconstructive reading we became increasingly aware of the growing disjuncture between our expectation and the actual versions of reality found in these texts. The ensuing perspective on our critical reading of Tshwane’s spaces of reflection has been shaped by an engagement and merging of the six refracted perspectives concerning the ‘spaces of recognition’. This is presented as a convergence around

<sup>17</sup> In the period 1996 – 2001 the number of households without formal shelter in Tshwane grew 58% - the highest percentage growth registered for all the largest cities in South Africa (SA Cities Network, 2004: 31, 186). In 2001 the number of households without formal shelter in Tshwane numbered 129688, which represented approximately 25% of all households (SA Cities Network, 2004: 185).

<sup>18</sup> Vide Van der Merwe (1993) for a description of the ‘Apartheid City’.

<sup>19</sup> The reference here is to the government’s original mass housing delivery scheme of standard housing units on single residential plots.

<sup>20</sup> The foremost exponent of this confounding, Jean Baudrillard, in his explorations refer to this phenomenon as ‘the precession of simulacra’ (Soja, 2000: 326; Sim, 2001: 358).

<sup>21</sup> The reference here is to the term used by Harbermas to refer to the shared common understanding, i.e. the “practices, and attitudes representable in terms of one’s cognitive horizon. It’s the realm of informal, culturally-grounded understandings and mutual accommodations”. Vide Wikipedia, 2007: online.

<sup>22</sup> An eminent example is the 210ha – mixed-use development known as Centurion Eco-park, situated just off the John Vorster off ramp. Apart from the residential, retail, recreation and educational facilities, an upmarket office park is also being developed, known as Eco-[con]Fusion [Personal emphasis added]. All the components are finely landscaped and linked with walkways, safeguarded and protected by fences/walls, styled in recycled vernaculars and within walking distance of each other.

the two central perspectives of our enquiry, namely: the act of conceiving the current spatial realities and the envisioning of better urban futures.

#### 4.1 The act of CONCEIVING the current spatial realities

In this part of our recollection the attention is purposely focused on how the existing urban fabric of Tshwane is imagined, described, observed, visualised, patterned and mapped. The following sketch-out therefore provides a review of the favoured nuances in the picturing of the contemporary city scenery. For this purpose the discussion briefly highlights:

- the core themes;
- the dominant absences/silences;
- the main assumptions on which the ideas are based; and
- some closing reflections of this conceptual profile.

##### 4.1.1 Core themes

- A bounded city patterned from within – Throughout the many textual passages, Tshwane was largely pictured as an almost isolated locality of which the dominant altering forces were found within its (municipal) borders. Globalisation and the interrelationship with Johannesburg was only vaguely acknowledged and for most of the part not deemed significant enough to register on the (official) urban radar. The urban landscape was somehow viewed as an almost conceptual cut-out from any possible larger geographic reality that did not necessitate any conceptualisation beyond/across its municipal borders.
- A gravitational landscape around a governing inner-city – The Inner-city of Tshwane was continuously depicted as the real centre at the very top of a perceived patriarchal conceptual arrangement. This functional/symbolic heart was viewed as the beginning and end of all destinations, and as such, perceived to be the main/only anchorage of the metropolitan landscape. The outer zones and their emerging (autonomous) nodes

were mostly viewed as the subsequent satellites of the (unnecessary) decentralisation affects that still strongly related to the central city via its (old) radial network. In the (concentric) depiction the 'orbital' satellites simply showed as outsized nodes at the direct expense of a glorified inner-heart.

- An untamed place of uncontrolled suburbanisation – The contemporary urban form was constantly portrayed as having a (severe) strain of 'suburbangitis'. In this diagnosis the outer realms were generally homogenised under a single mantle of low density expansion, private car dependency, fragmentation, and separation of uses. Most development in the outer realms was simply pictured as the unwanted divergence from the good path of urbanity - actually to be found and supposed for the inner-city. These (undesirable) suburbanising zones were largely depicted as the tolerated zones for those that did not understand and appreciate the urbanity of the so-much admired Jacobsean<sup>23</sup> romance of everyday urban life. The non-residential development was mostly deemed out of place, an invasion to the integrity of the sleeping quarters and a (complete) disruption to the good (urban) order actually supposed for the inner-city.
- A banal environment with no sense of place – The planners mainly opted for a voyeuristic depiction of the physical look of the city scenery. In their bias towards surface appearances, the conceptualisation of the current spatial reality was mainly done through various descriptions of land use arrangements/typologies and pictorial scenes around (the lack of) beauty, identity and legibility. In a very sentimental viewpoint, the city's perceived lack of a sense of place was continuously bemoaned, whilst their preferred set of benchmark indicators, based largely on idealised European street scenes, were found rather unrealised.
- An unbalanced urban form – With a strong perceptual anchoring in the inner-city, the new post-suburban growth became mainly visible as overly focused and skewed towards

the south-eastern side of the city. The outward growth towards this unfavoured side was predominantly seen as a threat to the (imagined) edge – somehow assumed as the precise line formed by the municipal boundary, or in some other cases, by arbitrary lines drawn around the perceived ends to the urban form. Whilst this observation was not necessarily strange, it was the assumptions and absences that accompanied this observation (highlighted below) that made this pronouncement rather odd.

##### 4.1.2 Absences

The general conceptualisation hardly acknowledged the broader regional context in which the City of Tshwane was situated. The portrayals were therefore mainly silent on the city (and certain specific parts of it) becoming increasingly interrelated/integrated with a much larger combinatorial spatial reality. No convincing exclusions or qualifications to the concentric/gravitational mental map were offered, nor did any infill development between Johannesburg and Tshwane become visible as the possible beginnings of a 'new centre' as apposed to the continued view as the condemned sprawling outskirts.

Any linear structure/arrangement that related to the flow and connection between the different parts of the city and the broader urban region was completely unobserved. The portrayals struggled to localise broader trends and affects and also refrained from accepting the permanence of the changing forces especially active in the suburban realms. The descriptions were also silent about any new labels/concepts emerging and instead chose to picture the current patterns as simply outsized and extreme manifestations of old forms and trends. The portrayals were also silent on significant social challenges such as HIV/Aids<sup>24</sup> and migratory and urbanisation trends<sup>25</sup> and lacked any form of engagement with the possible futures that might transpire from them.

##### 4.1.3 Assumptions

Many strange and peculiar assumptions appeared to underlie the many biases evident in the portrayals. Amongst the

<sup>23</sup> The reference here is to Jane Jacobs' romantic celebration of urbanity and everyday city life in her classical text on the Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)

<sup>24</sup> According to the South African National HIV Survey (2005), the HIV prevalence amongst those between 15 and 49 years old, was 16.2% in 2005. The same study estimates that 30.2% of all pregnant women were living with HIV in 2005. Vide South Africa. 2006: online.

<sup>25</sup> Vide for example Kok & Collinson (2006) for an elucidating discussion on the Migration and Urbanisation trends in South Africa.

many but more prominent was the assumption that urban is better than suburban and that clear distinctions between these typologies should be observed. The representations also presumed that a clear, definable edge was possible and also necessary. The reading of the western and the northern parts of the city was 'unmistakably' done from a presumption that it had the same (and even in some cases the most) development potential as compared to the (all criticised) south-east. The view of the (skewed) urban form also appeared to be based on the assumption that the city's ideal form is compact and typically symmetrically arranged around a dominant centre. Moreover, the socio-economic segmentation of the city was also seen as an extraordinary phenomenon with regard to the assumed norm where all sides of the city were apparently supposed to mirror the other.

#### 4.1.4 Some closing reflections

Our expounded reading on the conceiving of the existing urban condition found the portrayals conceptually biased, mostly outdated and hardly relevant to the real patternings of a contemporary post-suburban landscape. We found the broad outlook to be a gross simplification of the underlying complex trends with its back totally turned towards the broader emerging regional spatiality. Most of the offerings were delivered from a point of resistance (i.e. believing and stating/repeating) and not from a position of awareness (i.e. seeing and expressing). It is our view that the various representations did not propel themselves adequately along the path of ex-urban discovery and instead chose to become a cynical, impotent and embittered critique of the fall of the imagined Tshwane Jacobsean ideal.

## 4.2 The ENVISIONING of better urban futures

The final outline presented here provides a review of the more prominent shades favoured by the planners on the envisioning of a better urban future. As with the first scoping, the main arguments are also recapped through a brief discussion on:

- the core themes;
- the dominant absences/silences;
- the main assumptions on which the concepts are based; and

- a few closing reflections of the conceptual profile.

### 4.2.1 Core themes

- Tightening the market's advance towards the periphery – Reading through the many textual passages, a very clear case could be discerned for restraining the perceived undisciplined development forces favouring the outer realms. This re-call of the modernist rei[g]n, was pictured as the vital source that would ensure that a firm grip is put on things. The (good) path to a better (ordered) future was to be pursued through neatly delineating, parcelling and compacting the city and redirecting its energy to the favoured [in]side. By going back to planning's supposed basics (i.e. good design and control), a more compact, neat, legible and fine-looking urban landscape would supposedly transpire that (they believed) would somehow fit the aspirations and expectations of the citizens of an African (Capital) City.
- Spicing-up of the monotonous suburban-scapes – Looking further a-field, the aspired mental pictures were strongly based on the introduction of (imitated) heavens of urbanity. These vibrant sanctuaries of the good and bustling urban life were to be formed, shaped, and nurtured in the (dystopian) borderlands. These zesty hubs were envisioned to sprung-up and grow around all high order railway stations in size, shape, and character very similar to the many European imitations they were so desperately trying to emulate. This modification was profiled as the critical intervention needed to make the decentralising pursuit (and its subsequent peripheral nuclei) more tolerable and amenable. This fixation with urban-like patternings, also stood out as the single-most important intervention somehow favoured to invigorate and restore the Apartheid City legacy.
- Reconditioning/reinstating the inner-city to its former glory – Almost juxtaposed against the strong containing offensive envisaged for the borderlands, was a more accommodating ploy intended as the proper release of the imagined developmental energy destined for Tshwane. The inner-city was to be redecored and profiled as the highest bastion of ('real') urban qualities and symbol of national pride. Apart from the restoring of the inner-city's monumental glory, a strong case was also made for the further concentration and intensification of all types of development in the 'heart' of the metropolitan region. These actions were viewed as the prerequisites that would ensure that the inner city remain the beginning and end of all flows of/to the metropolitan region.
- More (RDP) houses to the (entrapped) masses – Moving towards the most acute zones of exclusion and despair, the planners appeared to concur with the current political view that these places were actually the most empowering locations to intensify the city's capital and infrastructural investments. The better and more inspiring future was perceived to take shape (exactly) around the very same dislocated and marginalised places that needed to be uplifted. The number one strategy of the city was seen as a massive housing exercise that would see the current make-shift shelters converted into "proper"/ permanent RDP houses. The logic to this revamping scheme and hence the justification of housing of the poor (still separated from the rich and the real jobs), was to be found in the imagined complementary tactic for "a[u]ctioning the North".
- Advancing to the GREAT North – The most interventionist tactic for the dramatic reshaping of Tshwane's perceived unequal/unbalanced urban form was outlined around a daring ploy to develop the North. The area naturally avoided by private capital was actually to be targeted for investment, development, growth and intensified job creation. This heartening scheme for imitating the south-east was put forward as the missing link that would not only balance the skewed urban form but would also bring the jobs to the places where most people lived and were pictured to remain. The area was tactically branded as the 'Zone of Choice' and singled out for the biggest package of infrastructure investment the city has ever seen. In short, the developmental agenda for the whole city was envisaged to take place through a massive rebuilding and activating exercise of the city's forgotten quarters, i.e. the part(s)/ side(s) deemed more meaningful.

#### 4.2.2 Absences

The conceptualisation of a better urban future generally avoided more indicative and interventionist strategies (except for the focus on the North). There was hardly any visible attempt to use the unique insides to possibly navigate, steer and even incorporate the growing significant outsides. The text was also silent on more modest (but perhaps more meaningful) tactics to invest in the competence of the people and hence their tactical ability to negotiate the opportunities of the metropolitan landscape, which the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) of course regards as a key developmental strategy<sup>26</sup>.

Looking at the visualised spatial outlook of the city, very little suggestions could be found on how the urban form and structure towards Johannesburg could/should be shaped. Even the single largest spatial intervention of the provincial authority, i.e. the Gautrain, was overlooked with a substantial gap left on how the urban form could be re-made to potentially incorporate and optimise its catalytic prospect. Any reference to where the (real) potential of the economic landscape lay, were conveniently ignored and hence no logical connection could be found between urban potential and the planner's view of the future shape and form of the (future) economic landscape. Moreover, no possibilities to start redirecting the city's efforts towards increased urban/social intensification much closer to or even within the South-Eastern growing space seem to be forthcoming<sup>27</sup>.

#### 4.2.3 Assumptions

The emerging discourse on the conceptualisation of a better future appeared to be founded on a variety of rather dubious assumptions. The advance to the North supposed that most economic potential existed on the northern side of the Magaliesberg and that the market could/would be ushered/rushed into action on the inspirational branding of the area as the 'Zone of Choice' and the massive infrastructure investments promised for this part of the city. It also

took for granted the economic faculty of this part of the metropolitan landscape and assumed that the growth of the dominant economic activity in this area (i.e. automotive manufacturing) would effortlessly continue and be delivering the required employment (i.e. sufficient numbers & types) that was needed to justify the even greater focus on residential expansion of the poor in this part of the city. This bold tactic bullishly assumed that by generally growing the city on the Northern side of the Magaliesberg, stability and prosperity would be returned to those that needed it most.

Looking towards the more flourishing side of the urban landscape, the strategy towards 'Maintaining the South' appeared to be based on the assumption that the market knew best what to do and hence it is better to leave it doing what it is doing. The fact that no constructive (spatial) shaping/directing of the development thrust in the South-East was made also appeared to confirm this assumption. The general outlook was also based on the view that the poorer people were indefinitely destined, inclined, and willing to a life of time-consuming and inconvenient commuting stuck in low-density residential zones significantly disconnected from the growing regional economic reality. Lastly, the high priority placed on accentuating the more favoured urban characteristics and the tactic to reinstate the city's urban heart, largely assumed that the better (urban) future was to be found in retrofitting preferred glimpses of a romantic past.

#### 1.1.4 Some closing remarks/reflections

In our deconstructive reading on the envisioning of a better (urban) future, a very strong preference emerged for the restraining of the current development condition. It primarily took shape around a complex array of classificatory and cataloguing schemas with little effort spared for steering the (urban) newness to pre-eminence. The re-envisioning was generally speckled with many jumbled and diverging attempts to reposition the city. We found little convergence

around the leading developmental themes and a general reluctance (based maybe on a perceived inability) to convincingly speak to the future. The visualisations mostly drew their inspiration and guidance from a romantic view of the past and saw the city's primary interventions exclusively focused around its inner-city and the aspirational quarters of the North. It is our view that the envisioning lacked the necessary dynamism and pertinence to thrust the city along a path of adequate recovery and endearing/enabling success.

### 5. A FEW CONCLUDING WORDS AND SOME OPENINGS TO THE READINGS/ACTIONINGS BEYOND

Looking forward and beyond this reading, we would fail our responsibility if we do not also echo Albert Einstein's so often quoted [especially at the bottom of e-mails] and profound admonition that "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew". This perspective on the conceptualisation of Tshwane has also confirmed the non-place thesis that pervades much of contemporary architectural & planning style. Our comparison between the/our spaces of recognition and the/their spaces of reflection has once again exposed the deep disconnection between planning thought and the 'real, emerging' spatialities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is perhaps explainable by the persistence of (1) outlooks based on the nineteenth century industrial city and (2) 'city-fossilising' efforts that still remain the default filter (in Tshwane) through which planners see, think and act in space. This stands as an acute contrast to the many critical scholars' pleas like Soja (2000: 279), who aptly remind us that the contemporary spatialities "... stretch our imaginations and critical sensibilities in much the same way it has stretched the tissues of the modern metropolis: beyond the older tolerances, past the point of being able to spring back to its earlier shape". If we persist in responding in inappropriate and outdated ways, the planning profession

<sup>26</sup> This document is available on the website of the Presidency of South Africa: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/show.asp?type=sp&include=minister/sp/2003/sp1027.htm>

<sup>27</sup> In a recent attack of this implied strategy by the president of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki at the opening of the Brickfields Housing Development at the Newtown Cultural Precinct, Johannesburg, on 12 August 2005, noted the following: "...the perpetuation of settlement patterns along racial, gender and class divisions is an obstacle to the objective of building a non-racial and non-sexist society ... to succeed at this task we have an urgent challenge of bringing to a stop the pro-rich housing development strategies that ensure that the best located land that is close to all the best facilities is always available to the rich ... while the poor can only access dusty semi-developed land far away from modern infrastructure". Vide RSA. Department of foreign affairs. 2005: online.

runs the risk of becoming an inapt servant of the past. As so eloquently noted by Calvino (1974: 29), "Futures not achieved are only branches of the past: dead branches".

In using this case study on the conceptualisation of Tshwane we have demonstrated how the words and constructs we as planners have at our disposal (in our minds) determine what we (can) see, how we see/describe that which our words allow us to see and how we respond to that which we (have said we) saw. For us this reading suggests a new and intrepid path where planners purposefully choose to engage and describe the unfolding present and not the (nostalgic) fragments of Tshwane's past very rapidly fading in the background. Our texts need to begin to connect with the emerging spatialities, their new logic, and the possible destinations that await discovery along the post-suburban trajectory. Looking past this reading, we would hope to soon observe the first future-shaping actions that would begin to redirect the city's future away from a romanticised past and beyond the assumed (better) models that have actually fallen into petrified obsolescence. For us the more enabling future simply lies in the reshaping and nurturing of the many embryonic beginnings already [and clearly] visible in the city's current spatial reality. All we need now is the language to assist us in doing so...

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