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**CULTURE AND SPATIAL PLANNING: TOWARDS CULTURAL
PLANNING AND DECOLONISATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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Abstract: The main contention articulated in this paper is that cultural planning is relevant to the needs of the people in South Africa as it presents a viable framework for addressing the social, economic and physical problems particularly of small towns in South Africa. The fulcrum of the argument is that a cultural planning approach should be integrated into the national *Integrated Development Plan*¹ (IDP) guidelines and spatial planning practices in order to ensure that it informs the municipal *Integrated Development Plans*. The paper proposes that cultural planning, as an innovative planning approach, is a timely idea in South Africa, as it will lend potency to the bid to decolonize traditional approaches to urban and rural planning.

Key Words: cultural planning, indigenous planning, decolonisation, integrated development plan, spatial planning, cultural policy, urban and areas regeneration

Introduction

South African public spaces (urban² and rural areas) face many challenges due to rapid population growth, spatial fragmentation, urbanisation, neglected rural areas, poverty, badly maintained roads, gravel roads, poor public transport, unemployment, drug abuse, pollution, escalating costs of living, service delivery protests, traffic congestion, and many other societal challenges. Anyumba (2001, 98-110) observes that currently many African urban areas are at different stages of gloom, decline and congestion and are a gutter of misery, and essentially dysfunctional. The *Integrated Urban Development Framework* (IUDF) (2016, 23) expresses a similar concern: "South Africa's urban areas continue to be hampered by a legacy of racial segregation, poverty as well as exclusion from social and economic opportunities. The spatial legacy is one of sprawl, low densities, functional segregation between home and work, and overlapping racial and class separations." Similarly, Watson (2014, 24) contends that "errors in planning practice can have significant impacts on people's lives and on the environment. Cities of Africa and the global South more generally are littered with failed planning efforts."

While the national, provincial and local governments are trying different ways to deal with these urban problems through various policy frameworks, it would appear that the existing policies, both national and local, are inadequate to meet urban challenges

¹ Integrated Development Plan is the planning instrument that is employed by all municipalities in South Africa. The national guidelines are developed by the national government.

² Urban areas, in this context, refer to cities, big towns and townships, and rural areas refer to villages and small towns.

(see Ingquza Hill IDP, 2017/2022, Emakhazeni Local Municipality IDP, 2017/2022 and IUDF, 2016). In my view, one of the reasons that can be attributed to the failures of the policies and plans is the absence of 'traditional' knowledge or a culture led planning approach. Furthermore, there is no cultural policy for cities, small towns and rural areas in South Africa. Literature on culture and development suggests that a developmental agenda should identify the contribution that culture as a sector can make, encompassing tangible and intangible heritage, cultural industries and cultural infrastructures towards attaining sustainable development, as evidenced in social inclusion, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability. Culture is no longer only for its own sake, but also for the sake of economic and social development, urban revitalisation, small town regeneration, rural sustainable development or any other area where resources are greater and more available than in the area of culture (Panquette and Redaeli, 2015, 84 and Oyekunle 2014, 66). A clarion call is advanced by some seminal scholars who have argued that when cities and towns disintegrate and degenerate, the solution should be sought in the sphere of arts, culture and heritage. When the city or town ceases to be a symbol of art and order, culture again provides many exciting possibilities. Culture is in fact viewed as a driver and an enabler for sustainable development (Schafer, 1998; Turner, Verbakel and Gabbay, 2017).

To underscore the value of culture as tapped in cultural planning approaches, commenting on the problems faced by the Vilakazi Street Precinct initiative in Soweto, Segooa (2014, 28) suggests that "there is need for cultural planning which will better manage those developments in a diverse country like South Africa. Cities seem to battle with finding the appropriate balance between the past, present and future establishments such as in Vilakazi Street." He further argues that "definitely, a cultural plan that is well tied to local government strategic objectives can assist councils to tackle the challenges of social exclusion, issues of fragmentation and urbanisation in order to foster urban regeneration, create employment opportunities, construct safer and livable communities as well as enhance healthier lifestyles" (Segooa 2014, 87). About the prospects of cultural planning approaches, he posits that "The introduction of effective cultural planning approaches in the city, can offer better perceptions into the values and aspirations of local communities. These can actually form part of the local government decision-making fabric including meeting the community's expectations" (Segooa, 2014, 87).

This paper argues for a shift from an exotic Western planning approach towards an innovative cultural planning approach which can be a beacon for ongoing and future 'sustainable development'. By "sustainable development," this paper is referring to a

development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Report on World Commission on Environment and Development, as ctd. by Bianchini, 1999, 1). Catterall (1998, 4) states that “culture, but not just its aesthetic dimension can make communities. It can be a critical focus for effective and sustainable urban regeneration”. The term “cultural planning” in this discussion, is closely associated with ‘indigenous³ planning’. They have common features in that both terms are community-based planning approaches. Secondly, they are viewed as the planning work of civil society and previously marginalised peoples. Cultural planning, as used in this paper and in the South African context, suggests an alternative planning approach.

The paper questions the universalisation of Western planning approaches without taking into context their relevance in some regions, particularly in South Africa. It further argues that the spatial planning practice is a kind of ‘storytelling’ and ought to be shaped by history or histories of the public space, that is, decolonisation. Therefore, planners should be prepared to take into account historical continuity from generation to generation in order for the past, present and their cultural values to sustain the future and unlock the historical imbalances. The framing questions are, if indeed planning is a kind of storytelling, what type of stories do South African planning practices tell? Who tells the stories? Whose stories should be told? Furthermore, the question of politics, space and planning approaches and cultural diversity is discussed.

The paper concludes with a call for the broadening of the established Western planning approach, that is, moving beyond conventional ‘top-down’ models to include previously marginalised diverse groups in the planning process, and including “bottom-up” planning models.

Understanding Cultural Planning and Decolonisation

There is a debate amongst scholars about the interpretation and conceptualisation of cultural planning and indigenous planning (Bianchini, 1993&2013; Dreesezen, 1997;

³ I am aware of some arguments against the use of the term “indigenous”. However, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights recognised and documented people’s reluctance and eventual resistance to using the colonial term (ACHPR 2006:13):
... the phrase “indigenous peoples” has negative connotations in Africa, as it was used in derogatory ways during European colonialism ... [and it is being] ... misused in chauvinistic ways by some post-colonial African governments. The ACHPR then concludes, illogically, the following:
However, notwithstanding the possible negative connotations of the word itself, it [the word indigenous] has today become a much wider internationally recognized term by which to understand ... certain forms of inequalities (see Open by Prof. Karsten Legère, 31 January 2019).

Stevenson, 2004; Sirayi, 2008; Mercer, 2002; Ghilardi, 2003; Jojola 2008; Hildebrand 2012; Redaelli, 2013), resulting in several definitions for these terms. For example, Bianchini (2013) defines cultural planning as:

[A] way of thinking culturally and even artistically about public policy. Cultural planning is a culturally sensitive approach to urban and regional planning and to environmental, social and economic public policy making; it is about creating a two-way relationship between cultural resources and public policy. It is a relationship in which people who are in charge of mapping cultural resources should also be able to influence public policy — it should be a dialogue between equals (Bianchini, 2013, 382).

Stevenson (2004, 120) similarly contends that cultural planning is a “range of social, economic and urban, [and] creative outcomes”. According to the Scottish Executive (2002), cultural provisions – such as cultural planning – are a “successful means of pursuing a number of cross-cutting agenda policies and goals, including social justice or inclusion, economic regeneration, active citizenship, and environmental improvements” (as quoted in Stevenson, 2004, 120). Moreover, cultural planning can be understood as “a strategic approach to city building and reimagining, and community cultural development that, at its base, involves establishing arts precincts and nurturing local creativity” (Stevenson, 2013, 155). For some, cultural planning serves as a “mechanism for placing local cultural activity on the urban agenda in order to improve city life and the fabric of the built environment” (Stevenson, 2003, 105). Similarly, Dreeszen (1997) notes that cultural planning is a structured, community-wide fact finding and consensus-building process to assess community needs and develop a plan of action that directs arts and cultural resources to address those needs (as quoted in Baycan & Girard, 2012, 224). Mercer (2002, 8) frames this idea somewhat differently, positing that cultural planning does not refer to the “planning of culture,” per se, but offers guarantees that cultural elements and considerations will be reflected throughout the various planning and development stages.

While these scholars are commendable for these views, it is reasonable to argue that their insights on cultural planning are framed from Western planning theories and practices which do not take into account indigenous or African values, worldviews, and traditions when engaging with planning processes. Very often Western planning theories fail to focus on planning itself, including context and cultural values.

The foregoing illuminates the necessity to apply postcolonial theory and Southern Perspective in Planning Theory as these focus on planning itself, its context and cultural

rebirth. They emphasise that planning practices must be questioned for the ways in which they have been abusive and colonialist in relation to Indigenous or African people. The theorists are also interested in the ways colonialism continues to function in the settlement space or post-apartheid planning. The practice of universalizing ideas and various aspects of Euro-American planning theories are questioned in terms of relevance in cities of the global South (Sandercock, 2004, 95; Watson, 2014, 24). Mirafteb (2009, 45) states that the persistence of Western planning ideals in our post/neo-colonial, neo-liberal times suppresses the African or indigenous conceptualization of cities and of planning. Provocatively, Njoh (2010, 369) argues that “modern planning is not the benign, objective and value-neutral tool for promoting the functioning of the built environment that it professes to be. Rather, it serves as a viable instrument for realizing the cultural imperialistic goals of Westerners.” Watson (2014, 24) suggests that cities of Africa and the global South more generally are littered with failed planning efforts due to the generalisation of Western planning approaches.

It is therefore incumbent to unlock our understanding of the term ‘cultural planning’ within the theoretical perspectives above in order to ensure that it is domesticated or contextualised, decolonised and relevant for African or Indigenously diverse geographical contexts. Jojola (2008, 10), as the key proponent of this school of thought, suggests that “indigenous planning represents both an approach to community planning and an ideological movement. What distinguishes indigenous planning from mainstream practices is its reformulation of planning approaches in a manner that incorporates ‘traditional’ knowledge and cultural identity. Key to the process is the acknowledgement of an indigenous world-view, which not only serves to unite it philosophically, but also to distinguish it from neighbouring, non-land-based communities. ... A world-view is rooted in distinct community traditions that have evolved over a successive history of shared experiences.” The notion of community planning approach is implied by Segooa (2014, 87) when arguing that “with effective cultural planning approaches; government and councils can offer a clearer sense of a community’s desires and standards. In turn, this makes it easier for officials to trace daily practices and cater services for them. At the same time, it also informs policy-makers and guide further planning decisions inclusive to existing local communities.”

Similarly, Hildebrand, (2012, 12) states that the beauty of indigenous planning is that it starts first and foremost with Indigenous values, worldviews, and traditions when engaging in planning work. This approach could be understood as planning that is undertaken by Indigenous people and is informed by Indigenous values. While these scholars are referring to indigenous planning, the same can be said about cultural

planning. More importantly, cultural planning is more appropriate, as Howitt, Connell, and Hirsch (1996, 15) argue, for countries which have experienced colonial and apartheid processes. It is relevant for African countries and indigenous people whose assets, and property have been sold, leased, traded, and despoiled; communities that have been dispossessed, displaced and impoverished.

Cultural planning is different from the conventional Western planning approach in that it incorporates 'traditional' knowledge and cultural identity while recognizing that indigenous worldviews or African values also have something to offer to conventional Western planning practices (Jojola 2008, 10). It is therefore equitable to suggest that cultural planning is a general term used to designate an innovative approach to urban and rural development based on traditional knowledge and cultural values.

Hildebrand (2012, 31) presents succinct insights on the concept where he asserts, that "the approach of encouraging new ways of cross-cultural planning while maintaining the centrality of Indigenous worldviews and autonomy represents some useful possibilities for Indigenous planning as it moves forward. The challenge, though, is to avoid the dangers of giving lip service to Indigenous values and subsequently subsuming them within non-Indigenous social structures and planning approaches." In his research Segooa (2014, 87) concludes by suggesting that cultural planning is "a way of linking the contemporary with the historical and the impending. The envisaged deliverable comprises characterized connections, memoirs, and practices within a specific place. Moreover, it always involves attractiveness, historical events and a sense of place."

Based on these observations and understanding, this paper aims at aptly submitting that cultural planning is an integrated alternative planning approach to planning and is pertinent to all cultures notwithstanding the fact that it may be customised in some cultures when implemented or formulated. African planners, developers and policymakers should develop cultural planning strategies that are informed by what Nadine Gordimer (1973) describes as an "African-centred consciousness" that incorporates knowledge of the parts of the world whose history, culture, and languages have had an impact on Africa (as quoted in Ngara, 1994, 79). This approach facilitates decolonisation of Western planning practices in countries that have experienced colonial processes. Jojola (2008, 10) explains that "unlike Western approaches, indigenous planning approaches were formulated on practices associated with land tenure as well as the collective rights associated with inheritance."

Decolonisation can be understood as a process of replacing colonial planning paradigms with post-colonial African planning practices with the view to ensure that social, physical

and economic transformation is in place at the planning level. It is a transformation of African people's intellectual landscape, lands, cultures, space, and communities who have been colonised, oppressed and marginalised. Oelofsen, (2015, 131) points out that "it is the change that colonised countries go through when they become politically independent from their former colonisers." In the context of spatial planning, decolonisation is a practise of moving African planning approaches to the centre of planning to ensure the approaches interact with Western planning approaches. It is "new ways of looking at planning with Indigenous groups, critiquing how Indigenous populations have often been misunderstood, and their values sometimes assumed or essentialized by Western planners (In the context of Australia) and institutions" (Hildebrand, 2012, 23). The decolonization of planning is a "complex renegotiation of values, knowledge, meaning, agency and power between planning and Indigenous peoples, and within planning itself" (Porter, 2010, 162). Therefore, when speaking of decolonization in the context of planning, it is largely understood as a corrective measure that applies alternative indigenous planning approaches to address colonially imposed Eurocentric and apartheid planning approaches.

Origins of Cultural Planning

Neoliberal planning academics, cultural historians, and practitioners have attempted to trace the origins of cultural planning or indigenous planning in different periods. For example, Dreeszen (1997) identifies 1979 as the year when cultural planning first entered cultural policy discourses – implying that it originated before 1979 as a concept. Similarly, Stevenson (2004) traces the origins and development of cultural planning to the 1980s. This relative assessment of cultural planning's origins is further supported by Bianchini (2013), who argues that the concept, as it is used and understood today, originated in the late 1970s in the United States.

In his book, *Insurgencies: Essays in Planning Theory*, Friedmann (2011,77) traces planning ideas which he defines as radical planning as originating in about the late 18th and early 19th century. He observes: "I traced the history of this idea back to the late 18th and early 19th century, ... as a primer of radical planning for social transformation, focused on its 'mediations' between transformative theory and radical practice."

Progressive post-colonial scholars are of the view that indigenous planning began to emerge in the United States at a 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference, where Indigenous scholars usurped the meeting and proposed a new agenda to draft a declaration of purpose on 'Indian policy', which quietly ushered in the first "semblance of Indian self-determination" in the United States (Jojola, 2008, 41; Hildebrand, 2012,

11). They further state that another key event occurred in 1992, when participating students at an MIT Community Fellows event pushed forward a postmodernist discussion on “grassroots activism and culture,” an action that resulted in “the formulation of a theory of action they named indigenous planning” (Jojola, 2008, 42; Hildebrand, 2012, 11).

One of the deliverables of the paper is to establish whether or not the indigenous communities conducted planning before colonial dominance by Europeans. It would be inappropriate to suggest that indigenous communities, Africans in particular, did not have their planning practice before Africa was colonised or the Western planning approach was imposed. Jojola (2008, 10) suggests that “before traditional authority had been wrestled away from or usurped by Euro-Western agencies, tribal societies actively planned their communities. Unlike Western approaches, indigenous planning approaches were formulated on practices associated with land tenure as well as the collective rights associated with inheritance.”

Against this backdrop, it can be safely construed that indigenous groups in Africa and elsewhere have always planned their land, towns and villages, underpinned by indigenous knowledge systems and cultural identity. Mountain (1999), for example, epitomises Dingane’s – the king of the Zulu nation – Royal Palace in South Africa that was established in Umgungundlovu (Pietermaritzburg), KwaZulu-Natal, at the end of 1829. The palace was an impressive establishment, far larger and more stunning in its architectural design than any of Shaka’s capitals. The palace was planned and designed in a roughly oval shape that centred a parade ground used for military displays, rituals, festivals, social interactions, celebrations, and national meetings. Ngema (2009) offers a similar description of the palace that “looking at the layout of King Dingane’s Royal palace (Umgungundlovu), one is confronted by the layout that is similar to that of the *kraal*. The general plan and design of the palace is identical to that of a normal Zulu homestead, but at the top end of the huts circle, there is a secluded semi-circular section of the huts which upon intersecting with the semi-arch of the outer circle/fence, completes a circle which forms the crown of the homestead (Ngema, 2009, 35)”.

While Mountain and Ngema’s observations are based on Dingane’s Royal Palace, similar descriptions have been made regarding other South African Royal Places, not to mention the planning elements of ordinary South African homesteads of the pre-colonial era. Generally, the cultural elements of royal palace planning were identical and similar to those of their villages. According to Zulu or African planners, land use was a critical factor in South African planning – far more important than the question of zoning or rezoning land for commercial purposes. The planning approach of Zulu planners sought to ensure that there was sufficient land for the community’s cattle to graze, to produce

agriculture, and hold traditional rituals and other events/activities. Jojola (2008, 46) confirms that “land tenure in land-based communities is distinguished by long and sustained patterns of ownership. In the case of indigenous communities, such ownership was sustained over successive generations.”

To this end, land-use planning was different from the colonial land-use planning approach, as it was not monopolized by private developers and capitalist philosophies. Watson (2014, 25) confirms that “the imposition of Northern planning ideas on global South cities had long antecedents in colonial administration where this was very much part of the colonial political project. Moreover, some of these ideas have also been useful for property development companies trying to sell visions of Western cities to Southern governments and the urban elite, and for governments which find traditional Northern planning regulatory systems useful to suppress ethnic minorities.” On the contrary, for African people, land was the focus of a community identity within which people ploughed, organised social meetings, performed rituals (marriages, initiations, performances, graduation ceremonies, and funeral services), and shared ideas on social and political matters.

It is crucial to note that more than 25 years after the country’s democratization, South African policymakers, developers and planners remain uninfluenced by African indigenous planning approaches and indigenous knowledge systems. If they were to be influenced and inspired by indigenous planning approaches and knowledge systems, they would make an important contribution to shaping the conception of the cultural planning framework or redefining space (city and town) regeneration processes.

Cultural planning as a form of storytelling

Some scholars have argued that planning is a form of storytelling. This part presents some empirical evidence of cultural planning with suggestions for the integration of the cultural planning frameworks with the municipal IDP’s. de Boer (2012, 6) states that “Sandercock is one of the few scientific writers who examine the combination of land use planning and storytelling. More profoundly, the scholar looks at what use stories have for the planning practice. She states that by knowing which stories are told by the social environment, planners are able to sharpen their judgement.”

In a similar vein, Hildebrand (2012, 94) notes that stories are shaped by power relations and often have certain underlying moral ‘orderings’ and assumptions. Sandercock

(2003, 4) emphasises that “stories are central to planning practice: to the knowledge it draws on from the social sciences and humanities; to the knowledge it produces about the city; and to ways of acting in the city. Planning is performed through story, in a myriad of ways.”

In view of the above argument, it seems reasonable to suggest that the cultural planning practice ought to be shaped by history or histories of the public space. The importance of historical dialogue between the past and present cannot be underestimated because it is upon the past that the future can be constructed. Planners should be prepared to take into account historical continuity from generation to generation in order for the past, present and their cultural values to sustain the future and dismantle the historical imbalances. Sandercock (2003) discusses the importance of learning cultural histories from diverse communities, paying attention, participating, being involved in different ways of knowing, and not just in showing our dominance as authorities.

It is against this backdrop that similar, but different questions should be asked about the planning approach in South Africa, 25 years into democracy. What are the narratives of the planners or communities in the planning process? If indeed planning is a kind of storytelling, what type of stories do South African planning practices tell? The answers to the questions are found or implied in the Spatial Development Frameworks, Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), and Urban Renewal Plans and Integrated Urban Development Framework, 2016.

The IDP, as a planning document (The City of Johannesburg IDP, 2018/2019), does not give the historical description of the City of Johannesburg, a history involving its African pre-colonial heritage and history. For instance, European settlement inscribed itself in the urban landscape, with streets bearing the names of many prominent early settlers according to Hildebrand (2012, 94). The historical continuity from generation to generation requisite for the past, present and their cultural values to sustain the future of the city is absent. Casually, The IDP 2018/19 does mention that “Johannesburg’s urban form is a consequence of its history. Apartheid planning contributed to urban sprawl, with race-based townships deliberately developed on the periphery of the city, away from opportunity and resources.”

Furthermore, the IDP 2018/19 refers to the Spatial Development Framework (SDF), 2040 as “a city-wide spatial policy document that identifies the main challenges and opportunities in the city, sets a spatial vision for the future city, and outlines a set of

strategies to achieve that vision.” The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) is addressing what is referred to as five major issues in Johannesburg’s spatial and social landscape, albeit without historical descriptions of the City. The major issues are:

- ☒ Increasing pressure on the natural environment and green infrastructure.
- ☒ Urban sprawl and fragmentation.
- ☒ Spatial inequalities and the job-housing mismatch.
- ☒ Exclusion and disconnection.
- ☒ Inefficient residential densities and land use diversity.

Without downplaying the importance of the five major issues, it should be said that the SDF gives the impression that South Africans do not have stories or a history upon which to build their future and integrate the past, the present and the future. As Jojola (2008, 11) suggests, they are not “mindful of the past, cognizant of the present, and suitable for the future.”

The Emakhazeni Local Municipality’s *Integrated Development Plan, 2017/2022* depicts Dullstroom as a major cultural attraction for tourists and is growing rapidly. It is further stated that this area has the rural character and beautiful qualities which should be protected from over-exposure and commercialisation. Linked to Dullstroom, is the development of the R540 tourism corridor (highway) between Belfast, Dullstroom and Lydenburg towards the north. One of its commendable priority areas is Culture, Sports and Recreation. While the same document makes mention of various towns throughout the municipality that bear resemblance to its European heritage, it is quiet on pre-colonial histories of the area. The document also mentions well formulated sector plans without mention of any cultural plan.

The IDP focuses on physical, social and economic development, spurning the past that should shape the future, relating to historic continuity from generation to generation of the African people before the colonial history and the apartheid periods.

Thaba Chweu Local Municipality’s IDP (2017/2022: 166& 167) states that this municipality is home to and has close proximity to some of South Africa’s prime natural cultural and tourist attractions such as God’s Window, Three Rondavels, Pot Holes,

Graskop, Sabie, and many more. It further admits that “there is no significant involvement of previously disadvantaged communities in commercial agriculture and tourism development except through employment and selling of curio products along the main tourism routes. There is also lack of effective coordination and alignment of efforts, initiatives and resources to market the tourism industry.”

A pertinent question to be dealt with is, if African communities who were assailed by an oppressive history are not involved in commercial agriculture and tourism, how was the planning done and upon what pillars was it framed? Taking into account that South Africa is 25 years into democracy, in what way was the community involved in storytelling during the planning process? It seems reasonable to suggest that this IDP is in conflict with the view that planning is a ‘performed story’ (Sandercock, 2003:6). Sandercock further notes that “in community or public participation processes, planners orchestrate an event in such a way as to allow everybody, or as many people as possible, to tell their story about their community, neighborhood, school, or street (Sandercock, 2003: 6).” One of the critical observations is the glaring failure to include cultural plans along with other sector plans among its imperatives for the municipality.

A similar situation can be observed in the Ingquza Hill Local Municipality IDP, 2017/2022. What is fascinating about Ingquza Hill IDP, 2022 is the notion of Precinct Plan which was also mentioned in the Ingquza Hill IDP, 2016. Both IDPs include Urban Renewal Plan: Road Safety along R61 (Vehicle, Pedestrians & Access), Land for expansion, Network of road access, Road Conditions, Provision of Storm Water System, Improved Taxi Rank and provision of Bus Rank, Better Management of Traders (Trader Stalls, Pedestrian Priority areas, Residential Opportunities, and Economic Support).

A critical question to be asked is whether the IDP 2016 worked in the context of urban renewal or not? If not, what would be the rationale for repeating or recycling the same strategy for IDP 2022? The answer to the first question lies with Figures 1 and 2⁴ below. Flagstaff is a small town in Ingquza Hill Local Municipality. As demonstrated by Figure 1 below, the town is characterized by disorder, decay, decline, and traffic congestion and a gutter of misery. The city is essentially dysfunctional and yet the IDP 2016 refers to a *Precinct Plan* and *Urban Renewal Plan*.

⁴ The pictures were captured or taken by Prof Fana Sihlongonyana on 18 May 2018.

Figure 1



Figure 2 below illustrates the lack of support for small businesses and creative industries. Based on the Urban Renewal Plan mentioned above, the town is still grounded on Western planning practices which are not rooted on indigenous worldviews and cultures. This could be viewed as symptomatic of a lack of cultural or indigenous planning as an organising strategy for revitalisation of towns and villages, lack of arts, culture and heritage to planning which characterises the disconnect between town planning and the local people, histories and investment. Thus, some scholars have argued that when cities and towns disintegrate and degenerate, the solution should be sought in the sphere of arts, culture and heritage. When the city/town ceases to be a symbol of art and order. Culture again provides many exciting possibilities in the context of urban renewal and rural development. Culture is a driver & enabler for sustainable development (Schafer,1998 & Turner, 2017).

Figure 2



It is clear that planning in these municipalities is not guided by community-based planning approaches designed to overcome the problems of previously marginalized communities and overcome the misinterpretation of African cultures and aspirations. If a cultural planning approach was employed to guide the social, economic and physical development in these municipalities or towns, a different story would be told about them.

Many years into democracy, as Hildebrand (2012, 32) trenchantly observes, the frightening pictures above are “the recognition of the role played by widely accepted Western planning models in suppressing marginalized voices.” Njoh (as quoted in Hildebrand 2012, 32) argues that “modern planning is not the benign, objective and value-neutral tool for promoting the functioning of the built environment that it professes to be. Rather, it serves as a viable instrument for realizing the cultural imperialistic goals of Westerners”.

Although the *Integrated Urban development Framework* (IUDF) which was published in 2016 will not be analyzed in detail in this article, it should be mentioned that it is a well thought out policy framework that can be viewed as a response to urbanization trends and some of the post-2015 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs). Notably, the development of the framework was the directive of the *National Development Plan* (NDP). The framework is premised on Integrated urban planning and management; Integrated transport and mobility; Integrated sustainable human settlements; Integrated urban infrastructure; Efficient land governance and management; Inclusive economic development; Empowered active communities; Effective urban governance and Sustainable finances as strategic priorities or policy levers. Based on these strategic priorities, it could be indubitably concluded that South African urban areas will never be the same again, provided IUDF is implemented. As commendable as IUDF is, it is unfortunate that the framework is bereft of African cultural values. Also regrettable is the fact that cultural planning as an integrative strategy for urban regeneration has not been incorporated into the crafting of the framework. The framework thus appears to be substantively premised on exotic Western planning approaches. A paradigmatic shift towards a decolonized planning approach is not evident in the IUDF, if any. However, when the strategy for its implementation is developed, there is an opportunity for cultural planning as a holistic model or at least its salient tenets to be considered.

Politics of Planning, Space and Cultural Diversity

Some of the areas which require attention are the societal aspects of politics, space and planning approaches as well as cultural diversity. These cannot be divorced as they are inalienable to differences - racial, and cultural difference or diversity. Indeed, the salient thread of the paper is imbedded in a postcolonial perspective that questions the techniques in which apartheid institutions continue to be reproduced in the post-apartheid epoch, in terms of discourse, knowledge, spatial planning, space and racial marginalisation.

The issue of spatial planning, cultural diversity and racial marginalization has been discussed by Jennifer Nelson (2008) basing her argument on postcolonial perspectives and other progressive theoretical frameworks. She looks at the neighbourhood which was marginalized both social, cultural and spatially, and eventually destroyed. She focusses on the historical (and colonial) context of Africville, a small community located in Halifax, Canada. Nelson suggests that the ways in which 'common knowledge' about Africville was produced, the process of demolition and the relocation of residents, as

well as its subsequent memorialization and how “white dominance and subjectivity are secured through the incitement to place, replace, and displace people in particular spaces, as well as to make and remake the spaces themselves” (2008. 21). She further suggests that urban planning and policy were employed in line with racial discourse to demolish the neighbourhood and relocate its residents. Nelson (quoted in Hildebrand, 2012, 40 and 41) contends that “City-led industrial violation on Africville land, followed by formal city policy recommending the expropriation of the land for industrial use and the relocation of residents, could all be carried out through the deployment of discourses of the black population of that particular space as a threat and a danger to the city around them.” Although Nelson’s sentiment references the Canadian small community, it is relevant in the South African context in that apartheid history has demonstrated in clear terms how the Western planning approach was used to entrench racial difference, discrimination, demolish black townships, relocate black people from place to place, while enforcing discrimination through space to accommodate apartheid racial interests. The question of planning and cultural space was a driving force behind drawing boundaries between blacks, whites and spaces in South Africa. It could be argued therefore that Western planning approaches entrenched the marginalisation of African people.

No doubt, Western planning approaches have failed to take into account cultural diversity and its management and the appreciation of cultural difference. Watson (quoted in Hildebrand, 2010, 42) is of the view that “the old rationalist planning theories – as well as the more ‘progressive’ planning theories that have begun to flourish in their place – as “normative theories” are unable to address the social and spatial contexts of the global south generally and Africa particularly. Specifically, they fail to take into account the unique urban spatial forms of sub-Saharan African cities, where “strong urban-rural ties still exist,” keeping “many people in perpetual motion between rural and urban bases,” as well as the high degree of informalization that characterizes many urban settings in the global south.” She asserts vehemently that “all of this points to a “gap” between the notion of ‘proper’ communities held by most planners and administrators (grounded in the rationality of Western modernity and development), and the rationality which informs the strategies and tactics of those who are attempting to survive, materially and politically, the harsh environment of Africa’s cities.” It is unfortunate that 25 years into the democratic dispensation in South Africa, these “normative theories” continue to be employed by the policy makers and administrators without any apology despite their exploitative history and of marginalisation of black communities and their cultures and worldviews.

The post-apartheid marginalisation is the continuous consequence of original Western approaches to land use and management. Porter (quoted in Hildebrand, 2012, 44) states that these approaches “were based on the perception of territories previously unknown to Europeans as a terra nullius or ‘blank slate’ on which could be built on an “ideal human settlement” – ideal, that is, to the colonists. The lands in these new settler colonies were seen as “laboratories” in which tests could be carried out to “determine the arrangement of space on [Europe’s] own abstract terms, regardless of how the original Indigenous inhabitants perceived or used those lands.”

This approach to land use, planning and management led to where Africa intractably is today in terms of land use, planning, intellectual landscape. The zoning approach was and today is intended to benefit the capitalist, developer and ensure the land is a parcel or commodity for developers. Porter (quoted in Hildebrand, 2012, 45) further observes that “not only were these European spatial configurations used as a way to impose order onto perceived chaos, they also functioned as military strategies for settlers in conflicts with Indigenous nations. The ‘rational’ and ‘scientific’ ordering of buildings and towns on gridiron patterns “allowed easy policing and patrol of town boundaries to restrict the movement of Indigenous people.” Although Hildebrand refers to the American situation, his observation applies to South African planning approaches, as well as it squarely portrays how the townships were designed and planned in South Africa.

For example, Segooa (2014, 16) illustrates that “access to Soweto was limited to few roads for connectivity. These roads structure controlled accessibility to and from city centre, for defence purposes during war times, and locations to work as well as activity (economic) zones. Evidently the notion behind this structure was to control movement in and out of the area mostly in times of civil riots.... Facilitating movements between isolated uses, streets became specialised in their functions, they were multifunctional (used for vehicles, pedestrians, community socialisation, riots and children to play.” The built environments were built such that no space for African rituals and gatherings was planned, except a string of four or three houses, single sex flats, and hostels for community labourers which were based on Western planning approaches.

In fact, the built environments were worse after 1994, if one takes into account how RDP houses and architecture were designed and built. Thus, Hildebrand (2012, 45) points out that “colonialist spatial organization is also present in contemporary urban contexts, and particularly in terms of urban Indigenous populations. Past colonial

relations are continually inscribed in the present, and in present built environments.” He continues to suggest that “not only do spatial configurations and building design function to marginalize urban Indigenous populations through the evocation of colonialist values, but urban Indigeneity can also be “buried” or made invisible to affluent white populations,” and assimilated African elite who tend to marginalise the African cultural values.

The main aim of this discussion is therefore to bring to the fore the understanding of politics, planning, space, cultural diversity, and cultural values which are central and fundamental to cultural planning in the African context. As Hildebrand (2012, 49) cites, “in urban settings, Indigenous approaches to space not only help inform and strengthen Indigenous-led planning processes, they also bring about spatial reorganizations and reconfigurations that can help Western planning’s process of decolonization and re-education.” Without decolonising planning approaches in South Africa, the visions of holistic emancipation and upholding of cultural diversity in sustainable ways will remain elusive. On the importance of cultural planning and diversity, Stevenson (2013,160) points out that “cultural planning is positioned as a form of an instrument for fostering diversity through the creation and animation of public space and for negotiating and neutralising the tensions that form in the context of the coexistence of deference.”

Conclusion

South Africa has formulated and designed many policies, plans, and strategies to address social, economic, spatial problems and the legacy of apartheid since 1994. Urban and small town regeneration programmes and initiatives were and still are put in place with the intention to decipher and improve city, small town, informal settlements, rural and township challenges. While the main stream planning practices in South Africa have been in place for a very long time and have contributed to the development of small towns and cities, there are valid reasons, as demonstrated in this paper, to believe that there is a need for a paradigmatic shift in both urban and rural planning.

This paper has illustrated incisively that the South African societies, 25 years into democracy, are still characterised by spatial fragmentation, racial inequalities and social exclusion. Cities and small towns are marked by low density sprawl and poor land-use management. Disjointed and inadequate mainstream planning approaches for urban growth and rural development are posing a serious socio-economic and anthropological challenges and there is a need for a radical planning approach if South Africa hopes to address the different stages of gloom, decay, decline, and traffic congestion, and

essentially dysfunctional urban areas. However, it is important to be aware that there can be no “one size fits all” in terms of planning approaches and strategies to address these challenges. The current practice of a single national “bible” approach for IDPs, cities, towns and villages seems to be failing. This could be attributed to the fact that cities, towns, and villages have unique features and characteristics forming part of their histories and languages. This implies that cities should be examined individually according to their historical, social-economic contexts and cultural identity.

In the same way that South Africa resolved to adapt and embrace the Western planning approach many years ago, this paper argues for a planning paradigm shift towards cultural planning in order to ensure that planners are more conscious of how social, ‘traditional’ knowledge and cultural issues fit into planning processes. This could be done in the following way:

1. Adopting new ways of cross-cultural planning or hybrid planning approaches while maintaining some conventional elements of Western and cultural planning approaches in order to avoid any planning disruptions.
2. The question of the national IDP planning approach should be revised:
 - 2.1 IDP planning should include a cultural plan as a sector plan
 - 2.2 IDP planning should be more city, town, township and rural-based instead of current municipal-based IDPs.
3. The issue of intellectual landscape transformation should be encouraged by policy makers to ensure that graduates from centres of learning contribute to the decolonisation process planning in South Africa.

Lastly, this paper has demonstrated that the mainstream planning approach is serving the previously marginalised communities poorly and is failing to remedy the colonial spatial legacy. Therefore, to augment the foregoing conclusions, it is incumbent to call for a shift towards a modified insurgent planning approach referred to as cultural planning. Cultural planning, as an innovative planning framework, is an idea whose time has come in South Africa. Through embracing the demonstrable efficacies of a culture-led planning outlined in the paper, the aspirations to decolonise planning and space will materialise in South Africa. Taking into account challenges of social exclusions, inequality, land issues, fragmentation, urbanisation, ruralism, urban regeneration, unemployment, crime and many other social problems, policy-makers have a responsibility of moving cultural development to the centre of planning. This requires partnerships across and among policy-makers, academia, civil society and the private

sector to enhance efficiencies and foster synergies while eliminating the infirmity of departmentalisation.

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