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City regeneration and the making of an urban experience : The Nelson Mandela bridge as sculpture

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CHAPTER ONE: Mapping Thoughts and Establishing Direction

INTRODUCTION

> A whole history remains to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers – from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat
>
> - Michel Foucault, 1980 as cited in Rotenberg 1995:1

The link between space making and power that Michel Foucault emphasises, underpins the significance of the Nelson Mandela Bridge's (MNB) as an emblem for Johannesburg's inner city regeneration[1]. This anthropological research looks at the NMB's geo-historical, political and symbolic references and its position in the heart of the inner city; a project after apartheid bearing the name of Nelson Mandela to launch the city as a "world-class African [one]" [2]. This investigation into the meanings of the NMB reflects on Johannesburg's changing social dynamics by outlining selected experiences in the inner city during apartheid as a way to make sense of everyday expectations and experiences in the city's downtown today.

The meanings of the project are located in the juxtaposition of ordinary people's expectations after apartheid with local, regional and national economic interests that combine with private enterprise to promote the city globally. I am interested in everyday responses to the project from people who live and trade informally in the inner city. This research looks at the arbitrariness of the project's inception, its progressive planning and now also the contradictions inherent in its branding and official marketing. It is argued that the latter reflects the elitist aspirations of the urban developers that use the project's emblematic significance to promote the inner city locally, nationally and internationally. This research looks at the NMB's significance

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[1] http://www.joburg.org.za; blueiq.co.za; Hopkins 2003.

[2] http://www.joburg.org.za; Hopkins 2003. In a bid to promote Johannesburg as provincial capital Louise Marsland (*The Star* July 21 1994) describes the city as "[a] vibrant, bustling community … the epitome of the African soul [and] a gateway to Africa". Neil Fraser of the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) (*ibid*) supported this bid by saying that Johannesburg as provincial capital "[would be] a catalyst and forerunner for the development of a world-class city, a gateway to South Africa, southern Africa and probably to Africa itself…"(*ibid*). For Fraser "[the city as world entity] will represent the aspirations of all its people … a model for democratic government of the people by the people" (Fraser 1994 *ibid*). Three years after Johannesburg became the provincial capital a R2-billion programme (over three years) known as Mayivuka "Johannesburg Awake" project (*The Star* July 18 1997) was announced on Nelson Mandela's birthday (*The Star* July 18 1997). The iconic figure of Mandela and its association with efforts to revitalise Johannesburg connect nation building and city making (see also Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:x). This is noticeable in announcements around the construction of the NMB but also as early as these reports in 1994 and 1997.

in as far as this relates to the inner city project as a product of global 'best practices' in urban development projects.

The research presents the (re) emerging inner city space's particular forms of human interaction; the production of an inner city space with its manufactured context in line with national, international and global trends. The research objective is to present the overall significance of the project in terms of the efforts employed to resuscitate the inner city and specifically those that emulate international best practice in urban regeneration. The urban manoeuvres are viewed as a set of contrived efforts that appear rooted in intricate albeit generic forms or processes of meaning making. I am interested in Johannesburg as evolving inner-city space, not as a "contextual vacuum" (cf. Farrell 2002:7) as the changes in the inner city directly impacts on the lives of the inhabitants.

The context for unravelling the meanings of the NMB is the city as non-static entity, as a dynamic evolving space. This paradoxically reflects the coming together of diverse threads, those that are part of the city (and the country's) divided past. This investigation reflects on the city's re-imagineering; the rethinking of the inner city spaces that suggests the city's changing character. The meanings in the making of the NMB are looked at in the remaking of the city through narratives in which "[a] politics of hope" intertwines "[with] the spectres of the past" (cf. Mbembe & Posel 2004:2). The point that I need to stress is that in the emerging social space that develops there is a contestation of freedom and its democratic practices (cf. Mbembe & Posel 2004:2).

The research scans the complexity of urban planning manoeuvring through everyday encounters on the streets of the inner city, especially those near the NMB. The research is held together by the emergence of an inner-city space marked by the prefix 'post- ': a linguistically defined prefix to denote a historical period that follows on from another. In the case of Johannesburg, this is essentially the period that follows Apartheid: those narratives of the inner city's reconstruction after grand apartheid and also those that connects the city to the politics of the global post-industrial economy. The project's wide-ranging meanings arise from the urban planners' agenda as much

as ordinary peoples' senses of mobility and belonging in the inner city – a politics of belonging from within the framework of democracy itself (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005).
I present the city managers' efforts to secure the city's transnational position through processes of "culture-making and identity management" (cf. Low 1996:402) together with ordinary aspirations for a home, employment and sometimes, even food. The main questions I ask are: How does this brand new structure in the inner city bridge the gap between global aspirations and ordinary needs? What is the sense of generic forms of urban regeneration and consequent senses of citiness in terms of stabilising urban poverty? I am interested in forms of "cultural resignification" and especially the media's role in propagating forms of "symbolic politics" (cf. Pieterse 2005:160).

The impact of the NMB project on Johannesburg's urban dynamics is looked at in terms of what a theorist on urban social movements Edgar Pieterse regards as a politics of integration in cities like Johannesburg (2005:160). For Pieterse there is a need to critically reflect on the making of urban spaces by looking at "Whose identities and cultures are embodied by the representations of the city"? (Pieterse 2005:160). This question directs this inquiry into the meanings in the making of the NMB as part of the inner city's regeneration programme. I am interested in what Pieterse (2005:139) sees as "[a] rising inequality within and between urban areas in South Africa" with the future of cities unanswered. Pieterse asks:

> How can the futures of the city be reimagined to reflect a radical openness as opposed to the conventional approach whereby there is only one alternative? (2005:160).

The context for the unravelling of the meanings in the making of the NMB, I argue, lies in modes of political agency that affects urban politics. The question (above) thus reveals the nature of "cultural identities and practices [as that which is] constitutively porous, relational and marked by dissensus within some aspiration for consensus" (Pieterse 2005:161). The context for analysing the meanings of the NMB is the process of reorganising Johannesburg inner city. The NMB project's meanings relate to the inner-city's newly imagined and generic forms of citiness; a product of "social relations, symbols, and political economies [or power] in the city" (cf. Low 1996:385).[3]

[3] Setha Low refers to "[the] changing post-industrial, advanced capitalist, post-modern moment … [a] site of everyday practice [that offers] valuable insights into the linkages of macro-processes with the texture and fabric of human experience" (1996:384). Also, "social change … through socio-economic

The significance of the project in the first part of the research reviewed foregrounds peoples' socio-cultural and historical experiences in the inner city and in the latter part of the research looks at the city's evolving dynamics are used as a backdrop for the analysis of the meanings of the NMB project. The project's significance, I argue, arises from its position as public symbol and especially through the *appearance* of the NMB at a particular moment (in historical time) and the NMB's structural design and its physical location in downtown Johannesburg. In this sense the meanings of the NMB relate to a space that manipulates, organises or structures everyday life (cf. Low 1996:402). The latter refers to sets of contrasting sensibilities, those of the urban imagineers for a "better" city that appear in contrast with everyday conversations on the inner-city streets that denote "belonging" as "confusing"[4]. What emerges is the ordinary perceptions of the significance of the NMB through the person of Mandela against the project as inner-city revitalisation initiative by urban imagineers whose fancy is to promote the foibles of a growing bourgeois socio-economic class. The latter appears to take preference over the former, that of the ordinary needs of people who live and trade in the inner city[5].

This research emphasises the anthropological dimensions inherent in urban landscaping or city-building: the new layering of urban experience that links place-making to people and the influence of the latter on peoples' everyday experiences. The city and its peoples' complex historical references are interrogated especially that

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transitions" (*ibid* 385) reveal the power relations that, in the case of the NMB are inscribed in Johannesburg's inner-city rejuvenation (cf. Low 1996: 399).

[4] I mention this here to illustrate a change in everyday conversations from during the NMB's construction phase's euphoria as a project about "we" and "for Nelson Mandela" to, two years later, general responses like: "I am confused …I do not know what is going on now …where am I to go". Johannesburg's inner city is marked by tensions in everyday experiences where global aspirations (as embodied in the urban imagineers' projections of a better future) clash with local needs.

[5] The schism between those who have and the 'have-nots' is obvious from numerous conversations especially in responses like: "forget about the poor". The latter cropped up in a number of conversations on the processes that drive the inner city's regeneration. The notion of "sinkholes" versus "ripple ponds" (conversation with Neil Fraser of Central Johannesburg Partnerships (CJP) – 2005) demonstrates the underlying theories behind the inner-city's regeneration. The latter being particularly relevant in trying to find the meanings in an iconic structures like the NMB, especially as it is mentioned in terms of reversing urban decay. In terms of a " 'trickle-down' democratic theory" (cf. Klein 2002:46-47) I draw on Naomi Klein's argument that "democracy is not the work of the market's invisible hand; it is the work of real hands" (cf. Klein *ibid* 47). The context for discussions with Neil Fraser was that of gentrification especially that of so-called urban sanitisation. My concerns are the presentation of a new look city and then especially comments like: "removing potentially offensive elements", "the bad apple problem" et cetera. I had much conversation with a wide range of people from those in positions of power to ordinary street vendors.

of the role of a historical past in the setting aside of an urban space for specific encounters. The meanings of the NMB lies in the city's transmogrification from a racist society to a future motivated by the celebration of freedom and prosperity under the banner of democracy. Also presented in this research is the NMB project's dramatic physical structure as that which overshadows the run-down inner city and its mediated symbolism as derived from the iconic figure of Nelson Mandela as that which widely appeals to everyday sensibilities – locally and globally[6].

The city's urban past, a historical and political backdrop of intersecting socio-cultural and economic dysfunctions, provide a basis for the NMB project's meanings. This research concerns the project's sudden materialisation and its mediated or fabricated significance that contains these opposing narratives. The latter refers to the project's official marketing strategies for a brighter urban future and especially in this juxtaposition of official ideals with what appears to be the overlooked needs of ordinary people for day-to-day survival. The project's meanings stem from its contrived significance, that of: the urban imagineers' desire for the city's regeneration with a 'world-class' city label[7] and the ways in which the revival is pursued.

This research hints at behind-the-scene meaning-making processes that impact on an increasingly[8] wider set of everyday experiences in the inner city. The research concerns the project's meanings in terms of its manufactured contribution to citiness and especially as these represent the urban imagineers' striving – including local, provincial and national level participation – for a world-class city. The research

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[6] Achille Mbembe and Deborah Posel (2004:2) write that "apartheid - and in particular, Nelson Mandela's incarceration – became a symbol of global oppression, as much as the liberation struggle became an affirmation of the courage to resist, and the dream of a world beyond race".

[7] A critical juncture occurs in what anthropologist Tim Ingold (1995) calls built and dwelling perspectives on urban planning. Favouring the latter, his politics of place builds on Heidegger's notion of *dasein*, a sense of "being-in-the-world" (*ibid*) to promote an urban planning model of "lived space"(*ibid*). The NMB's significance as proposed by people in power for global recognition has the symbolic and social meanings of a political economy of transnational culture (cf. Low 1996: 402). However ordinary experiences and everyday life occurrences also provide meanings that lie outside these official urban planning agendas. In terms of Ingold's dwelling perspective these meanings are the unmediated pictures of the NMB.

[8] This research is ongoing and as observer of the inner city's flux contains the shifting context of an evolving urban space. Walking downtown, for me, has the feeling of being on a stage surrounded by the props and waiting for the players to arrive and the play to begin. The meanings of the NMB project, although officially scripted, also await an audience and their responses. Presented in this research are bits of the official scripts and peoples' responses to these. There is also the anticipation in the inner city of yet an emptying out: the forebodings of dramatic change that only real estate can promise (see also Klein 2002; Rykwert 2004).

considers the project's meanings as product of an orchestrated planning model, that is: the self-conscious planning manoeuvres of people in positions of powers whose arbitrary adaptation of global best practices presents a backdrop for the grand-scale urban development project. The official slant given to the project through the iconic significance of Nelson Mandela provides meanings that are familiar, however this research concerns the project's significance as an artefact produced by international best practices. I am inspired by recent scholarly works on cities, especially the interrogation of cities in terms of: "Whose city is it"? (cf. Sassen 1999: 99-118) and, "a city for whom?" (cf. Martinotti 1999:155-184).[9]

In the context of the latter it is worthwhile noting Naomi Klein's (2002) response to globalisation and what she writes about "[globalisation's] lethargic vision of trickle-down democracy … [that] doesn't bring ['day to day quality and depth' to] liberty" (cf. Klein 2002:47). For me the latter refers to what Robert Rydell (1987:2) refers to as the creation of 'symbolic universes' (after Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann as cited in Rydell 1987:2) rather than dealing with matters on the ground. These 'universes' for Berger and Luckmann (cf. Rydell1987: 2) suggest that:

> All the members of society can now conceive themselves as belonging to a meaningful universe …

The issues raised by Saskia Sassen (1999), Guido Martinotti (1999) and Klein (2002) on globalisation and citiness and those by Rydell, Berger and Luckmann on "symbolic universes" form part of the processes that mark a decline in public space (see also Sennett [1974]1992). The contraction of the public realm becomes evident in the interrogation of the meanings in the making of the NMB project. I am interested in the NMB project's emblematic presence as a marker of status and the impact the project has on peoples' everyday lives: the different ways in which these are to be achieved. Of importance to me is the project's controversial presence in the inner city, an evolving socio-economic urban geography with urban managers as the developers and the people of the city as onlookers: the inner-city as emerging and uniform urban-scape in the face of ethnic diversity. I refer to the efforts of people in power to propagate a particular urbanity through the manipulation of the inner-city dynamics and through the symbolic presence of the NMB project.

[9] Saskia Sassen (1999) looks at "the new claims" on the city through globalisation. Guido Martinotti (1999) explores what he calls "the second-generation metropolis" influence on public life.

I am sceptical of narratives that emphasise the nation and nation-building whereas, the project's implied inclusiveness paradoxically promotes exclusivity. I refer specifically to the role of the media in the democratisation of South Africa and an emergent politics of being (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005). I find direction for this inquiry in what Francis B Nyamnjoh sees as "the short-comings of liberal democracy [aided by the media]". He writes:

> [the media are] too parochial for Africa's sociality, negotiability, conviviality and dynamic sense of community … a democracy [that needs to refuse] to celebrate success until the success is sufficiently inclusive" (2005:22).

This research considers the experiences of ordinary people in a changing inner city; the uncertain futures of countless homeless and largely unemployed people, some on the streets, of the inner city. The meanings of the NMB are sought in contrasting experiences that arise from official narratives through widely disseminated messages in the media and on tourist maps in juxtaposition with un-varnished words like: 'I do not know what will happen to me and my family when I can't get money for food and shelter …"[10]. I am interested in the meanings of the NMB in terms of Robert Rydell's (1987) work on the spectacle nature of public events, that of "…putting the world on display and shaping worldviews" (1987:235). Rydell sees these fairs as:

> Without exception … [as] upper-class creations initiated and controlled by locally or nationally prominent elites (1987:235)[11]

These displays, Rydell contends are "[the] vehicles for maintaining, or raising, their own status as regional or national leaders for winning broad acceptance across class lines for *their* priorities and *their* decision-making authority" (Rydell 1987:235). In terms of the NMB then, its well-publicised meanings as catalyst for the inner-city's rejuvenation are somewhat contradictorily reflected in the regeneration programme's official slogan: "We're putting billions into your future" in relations to Rydell's work (1987). The work of Rydell on fairs is referred to, not as a comparative study, but as a basis for looking at the NMB's significance in everyday life in the inner city through the grand aspirations of officials for the city's world-class status.

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[10] This is a fear expressed by people trading near the Bree Street taxi rank on a piece of council land adjacent to the Nelson Mandela Bridge.

[11] Rydell (1987) looks at the role of fairs in America between 1876 and 1916 in "showing off the nation's economic strength [through] new architectural forms and offering models for urban planning" (*ibid* 4). Rydell's reference to the role of the fairs "[in creating] long-range gain for [country's] regional, national and international economic interests" similarly offers a way into examining the meanings of the NMB.

This anthropological research investigates Johannesburg's inner city imagineers' official marketing of the NMB project by placing such strategies adjacent to the everyday expectations of ordinary people. It is a process whereby the effects of the institutions of liberal democracy on everyday life reveal a need for "other models of democracy informed by [Africa's] historical experiences, and cultural, economic and indigenous political realities" (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005:21). I am influenced by what Francis Nyamnjoh (2005) sees as democracy's celebration "[not being] sufficiently inclusive" (2005:22) as it "[minimises] the power of society" (*ibid*: 29). Nyamnjoh (2005:22) cites the work of anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff (1999:3) on the aforementioned minimising of social structure:

> [as ways of] trumpeting instead the uncompromising autonomy of the individual, rights-bearing, physically discrete, monied, market-driven, materially inviolate human subject (Comaroff & Comaroff in Nyamnjoh 2005:29).

The research into the meanings of the NMB considers the implications on ordinary peoples' lives of the strivings by inner city officials to produce a space of world-class attraction for local and global participation. The NMB's meanings are located in the city's changing dynamics that reveal a clash between the grand ideals and the ordinary expectations of people in the inner city in a new era in urban development.[12] The project has specific references to an urbanity or citiness produced by the global and contained in a popular architectural expression: New Urbanism.

The New Urbanism movement attempts to "curb and curdle suburban sprawl" (Rykwert 2000:187) through efforts that aim to resuscitate inner cities with the aid of corporate business (2000:241). In terms of the NMB projects, the planning of Johannesburg's existing inner city population resonates with what Joseph Rykwert sees as the new urbanism movement's agenda for "urgent works" with financiers and local officials (2004:241). The NMB's meanings are located in the New Urbanism movement with its underside as: the uncertain futures of ordinary people in Johannesburg's urban centre. It is important to take note here that the ethnographic investigation into the meanings of the NMB does not attack this progressive planning model that Rykwert (2000) refers to. The investigation does however offer a critical perspective on developments that are exclusionary rather than inclusive, that is:

[12] The last being Anglo-American's involvement in the building of the Carlton Centre.

"[urging civic authorities to] involve all citizens in the city … as a continuous project, in the modelling and changing of its fabric" (Rykwert 2000:242). The NMB project's overall conception or planning is part of an inner city urban regeneration project that highlights the side issues of New Urbanism's development phenomenon.

With reference to the latter I am interested in what Edward Soja (2002:406) refers to "progressive cultural politics of place" and then specifically notions of rights to the city. The implications of such 'rights' (i.e. Soja 2002:406) are a basis of the analysis of the NMB project as economic revitalisation initiative. In terms of Henri Lefebvre's *le driot à ville* – the re-empowerment of civil society (2002:409) – the meanings of the NMB becomes a contested terrain. The project's meanings are a complex process, not fixed but evolving with changes in the inner city[13]. This is also so in terms of the meanings of the NMB project as produced through acts of "hyper-realisation" (cf. Soja 2002:409) which, for Soja (*ibid*) produces a space that:

> [has] relative little effect on the vast majority of the population (2002: 406)[14].

This research focuses on events leading up to the opening of the NMB, the opening itself, and what the project's significance appears to be now. The research concerns past and present experiences in the inner city, the roles of urban planners and the media in promoting particular urban sensibilities; also that of the provincial, local and national government to brand the official significance of the project as one that strives for the city's recognition as Africa's world-class city (cf. Beavon 2004: 270). The symbolic significance of the project appears to lie in the promotion of the inner city in a re-imagined post-apartheid[15] socio-political urbanscape with global or world-class pretensions.

In terms of sociologist Erving Goffman's notions of 'signs given' and/or 'signs given off' (1969) the research concerns the project's meanings in terms of: for whom, why and how? [16] The official slant is that project is the product of urban imagineers role in

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[13] The research itself has been complicated by exactly the continuously shifting nature of the city – a widely publicised product of image brokers. I am especially intrigued by the way in which the city is 'branded' as destination, a method that contrasts with ordinary lives.

[14] The implied 'effects' are taken as 'benefits' rather than that of 'harm'.

[15] The use of 'post-apartheid' refers to the historical moment after apartheid – the inevitable position the city has. However I argue that other dramatic shifts – social, political and technological – worldwide have encouraged a global competitiveness which Johannesburg is taking advantage of.

[16] Goffman's theory on the 'social establishment' presents a set of performers who interact through co-operation to define for others a specific situation – these are acts of careful impression management.

the R1.7 billion provincial government project to promote investment initiatives in 11 'mega-projects' in Gauteng for tourism, transport and high-value manufacturing (from City of Johannesburg 2002:115). The brainchild of Blue IQ[17] the NMB project is a multi-billion Rand joint programme between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Johannesburg Development Agency for a "truly smart[18] province" and a "smart" city (*Joburg* November 2002 vol.1no.1). The official website of the NMB reads:

> Paris has the Eiffel Tower, New York its Statue of Liberty and Sydney it's Harbour Bridge – all internationally recognised structures which have helped put these cities on the map. It is envisaged that the new Nelson Mandela Bridge will do the same for Johannesburg[19].

I have decided to consider the project's meanings in terms of the effects that the adaptation of global best practices have on ordinary people, practices not necessarily *of* the city. The meanings of the project are looked at in terms of processes that synthesize or produce generic urban regeneration processes and especially in terms of the artificiality of making urban experiences. The next section positions the NMB as part of the evolving inner city as a space for exclusive local and global participation.

FRAMING THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the building of the Nelson Mandela Bridge in the inner city at the end of peoples' struggle for political freedom and looks at its significance in terms of urban officials' aspirations for the city's economic emancipation. The framework for the analysis of the NMB's significance is its position as a well-publicised emblem for Johannesburg's inner city rejuvenation that contrasts with the nitty-gritty of everyday life in the city. An analysis of the project's meanings exposes peoples' senses of belonging and mobility in this re-imagined inner city space; its meanings as part of the official regeneration agenda and a projection of the city's layered history.

Dean MacCannell (1990) also refers to this as "the fiction of social consensus" in his studies on communication, institutions and social interaction. For him a decision for action is the organisation of evidence that then gives meaning to the action (*ibid* 26). These theorists open the way for a critical perspective on the manufacturing of the NMB as emblem for the city.

[17] A multi-billion Rand programme of the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPA) to create "a truly smart province" (from *joburg – central business district shoppers guide and news – (Joburg* November 2002 Vol.1 no.1). Blue IQ's CEO Mr Pradeep Maharaj at the time was also GPA's head of finance.

[18] Blue IQ slogan: "The plan for a smart province – Gauteng" (*ibid*).

[19] http://www.mandelabridge.co.za

The project's meanings relate its significance as signature project[20] for the inner city revival. Its manufactured significance appears in its naming[21] as well as being a dramatic transport link between Braamfontein and Newtown. Also, peoples' senses of belonging are associated with the NMB's metaphoric stapling together of the inner city's urban apartheid past and its contemporary incarnation. The project's meanings stem from its significance as a textured artifice *in* the city and *of* its complex urban dynamics as well as an expression of a mayoral dream for Johannesburg to be a city with world-class status.

This research looks at the juxtaposition of the officials' grand scale urban development planning and ordinary social realities as epitomised by the uncertainties of people living in the inner city. It considers the nature of changing societal arrangements in the inner city as a result of the urban regeneration programme and the production of experiences through "codes and models of simulation" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:118)[22]. I am curious about the effects of urban imagineers' efforts to secure a world-class label for the city and pose the following questions: for whom and why? The project's significance is looked at in terms of the use of its sign value, that is:

> … [that] signs take on a life of their own and constitute a new social order structured by models, codes, and signs (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:118).[23]

The project's meanings are the city's complex and complicated socio-cultural and socio-economic arrangements ranging from the Apartheid City to that of today's stark economically divided city. It is also the city's emulation today of global best practices in urban planning, that of New Urbanism's promotion of generic development spaces[24], that is being inscribed on its urban fabric. The marketing of the city as a world-class African destination exposes the juncture between NMB's significance for

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[20] www.blueiq.co.za

[21] Nelson Mandela's name has a brand value the same as that of Coca Cola.

[22] Jonathan Raban's *Soft City* (1975:23) emphasises the construction of social space as a juxtaposition of material elements such as the 'hard' city and peoples everyday lived experiences. He detects the city's dichotomous realities: that of the 'built' and the 'lived' (*ibid*; cf. Ingold 1995). I am interested in the meanings of the NMB as a space planned to alter peoples' lives.

[23] This critical interrogation of the meanings of the NMB acknowledges Jean Baudrillard discussions in the eighties of "a new era of simulation [that replaces] production as the organising principle of society … an era of information and signs " (Best & Kellner 1991:118). Baudrillard (1981:185) saw the latter as "the passage from a *metallurgic* into a *semiurgic* society" (*ibid*).

[24] The adaptation and use of international best practices fits a template that is personalised to contain references to specific historical encounters. The aim appears to be to appeal to the sensibilities of as large as possible an audience, especially that of an international and moneyed one.

moneyed local, national, international and global participation (cf. Beavon 2004)[25] and that of ordinary experiences in the inner city. Its symbolism relates to the market and brand value of Nelson Mandela's name.

This critical inquiry into the meanings of the NMB uses theorist Marshall McLuhan's notion of implosion (Best & Kellner 1991:119) to look at the milieu that produced the project as well as the one produced by the project. Of interest is "[a] dramatic proliferation of signs [associated with the NMB that have come to] dominate social life" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:119). The project's significance therefore relates to the processes in the inner city that "[structure] social experience" especially those that blur the distinction between "the model and the real" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:118). As emblem for the city's downtown revitalisation the project's significance is the specific moment in the evolution of the inner city that reflects the city's dynamics as:

> … [a space where] image or simulation and reality implode … (*ibid*)[26].

The context for unravelling the meanings of the NMB is the everyday political, social, historical and economic circumstances that surround it, from its construction to that of being the emblem for the democratic reinvention of the inner city. In terms of what anthropologist Tim Ingold notes about the built environment, the NMB's position is that which relates to a built perspective as opposed to a dwelling one (cf. Ingold 1995; also cf. Raban 1975)[27]. This research looks at the juxtaposition of the officials' grand scale urban development planning and ordinary social realities as epitomised by the uncertainties of people living in the inner city. The overall framework for the analysis of the NMB project's meanings is contained in what Jean Baudrillard describes as:

> [a moment when] the real is no longer simply given (for example as a landscape or the sea), but it is artificially (re)produced as 'real' (for example as a simulated environment), it becomes not unreal, or surreal, but realer-than-real, a real retouched and refurbished in 'a hallucinatory resemblance' with itself (Best & Kellner 1991:118 cites Baudrillard 1983a:23).

This anthropological research views the processes involved in the making the NMB in the ways these are impressed on peoples' consciousness. The project's significance is looked at as the inner city's official aspiration for a world-class city status. The

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[25] Also various websites: www.joburg.org; the one for BlueIQ and that of the Nelson Mandela Bridge.
[26] This research looks at the manufactured senses of citiness associated with the presence of the NMB and contrasts these with ordinary experiences.
[27] For Jonathan Raban in *Soft City* every big city has a particular entrance, "… a route inwards which is established by mythology". This is the background context for the meanings of the NMB, "…a point of focus which endows the whole complex with a clear shape and pattern" (*ibid* 1975:43). The NMB too is an exhibit in the inner city "… to persuade the immigrant that he has crossed a frontier into a new world" (cf. *ibid* 40).

research concerns the use value of the city's reworked contentious apartheid heritage in the promotion of the inner city as a space that celebrates democracy[28]. The context for the project's meanings is the urban imagineers' fanciful decisions to promote middleclass values. I am interested in the juxtaposition of the latter with ordinary people everyday struggles for survival: a clash between the publicised meanings of the NMB project and the un-stated and uncertain futures of a multitude of people in the inner city.

What follows is an outline of plans in 1997 for the revitalisation of the inner city - six years before the NMB was opened in 2003. The revitalisation programme considered "46 years of apartheid neglect and corruption" (cf. Beavon 2004:268) to come up with a combined strategy by the city council and the inner-city private sector "to fight crime [and] cleanse the inner city" (Beavon 2004:268). The project, endorsed by then deputy president Thabo Mbeki, and known as Johannesburg *Mayivuke* (or 'Johannesburg Awake') project looked at, amongst others, new transport networks and controlled environments for hawkers and pavement sellers (Beavon 2004:268) [29].

In 2001, Johannesburg's newly appointed executive major Mr Amos Masondo announced his desire "to put the city on a sound financial footing" (Beavon 2004:269) with a vision for "[making] Johannesburg a more attractive place in which to invest" (2004:269).[30] Incorporating the work begun by Mayivuke in terms of "corporatising" inner city services, a 148-page manual for the Joburg 2030 vision was drawn up. Another project, the *Johannesburg Africa's World City: A Challenge to Action* (2002) was also incorporated in plans for the inner city's reconstruction. The work started under the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), "[a] private sector think-tank" (cf. Beavon 2004: 270), imagined Johannesburg as "Africa's world city". A statement on the city at the time read:

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[28] See Gauteng Tourism Authority (Newtown) map for Johannesburg.
[29] Keith Beavon (2004:269) notes that business people in the inner city looked at a Vegas style casino "to revive the city overnight". There were proposals for Carlton Centre and for Newtown, and Soweto. The proposed casinos indicate the role urban planners play in the development of cities like Johannesburg's urban character. The proposal are important in terms of what went on in the inner city prior to the announcement of the NMB as the emblem of the inner-city's regeneration (cf. blueiq.co.za).
[30] This placed a great onus on service providers and administrators to perform (Beavon 2004:269).

> As Johannesburg is not a primary tourist destination, and is no longer a leader in gold mining or manufacturing, the CDE believes it will have to stand or fall by recognition of its role and status as a 'world city', or more exactly, as Africa's world city[31]

This research looks at how the construction of the NMB project in the inner city challenges the notion of the public sphere. What becomes clear with the construction of the NMB are the underlying processes associated with its presence and especially how the appropriation of public space by private enterprise and real estate manoeuvres essentially bar public participation. The meanings of the NMB project lie in the officials' manoeuvres to create "a representational space of enduring weight" (cf. Rotenberg 2001:9).[32] In fact, the CDE's vision for Joburg 2030 ordered that the "[the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council could not] on its own turn [the city] around" (Beavon 2004:274). The CDE proposed:

> … a national partnership be instituted, headed by a coalition of interests and including three senior cabinet ministers, the president's economic adviser, the provincial premier, the executive mayor, two newspaper editors, two trade union leaders, two head of tertiary institutions and the governor (or deputy) of the Reserve Bank (*ibid*).

I am interested in looking at the NMB as "a context that anchor ideas and identities" (*ibid* 2001:9). I use the NMB as grand-scale innovation as a way of recognising the countless people in an urban poverty trap. The project is looked at in terms of its consolidation of the city's turbulent past in a contemporary invented or imagined space-time capsule that exacerbates what politicians call: "South Africa's double economy" – a division between the poor and the rich.

The research is a deconstruction of the urban imagineers' fantasy[33], the manufactured ideal for Johannesburg's inner-city revival with the NMB as emblem. Similarities exist between Johannesburg's spectacle regeneration[34] and others elsewhere in post-

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[31] This meant that Johannesburg "[needed] to offer a continuously competitive urban environment for world-class business … a place where top people want to visit, and where they want to live" (Beavon 2004:270). The backstage meanings of the NMB implies that as the emblem of a city by 2030 "[it would be] a world-class business location internationally" (*ibid* 273).

[32] The notion of the representational space is part of Henri Lefebvre's three-tiered analysis of social space as: "the abstract (designed or engineered space), the representative (lived space) and the representational (ideological space)" (Rotenburg 2001:9).

[33] The interrogation of the NMB is looked at in terms of Robert Rotenberg's (2001:11) depiction of the city as "commodified sign … a production of desire the consumption of which would produce an exceptional city" (i*bid*).

[34] In *All the World's a Fair* (1984) historian Robert Rydell sources America's desire for "empire-building abroad" through its fairs, that is: "a display … of national and individual welfare" (*ibid* 7). He looks American society between 1876 and 1916 "[as reflected in the country's] intellectual, political and business leaders [for] a consensus about their priorities and their visions of progress … [especially

industrial capitalist world to reclaim inner-city spaces. Atlanta's regeneration in the early nineties for the Olympic Games is similar to that of Johannesburg and now also that of London's east end[35] for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paraplegic Games. Not un-similar projects include the billboard marketing of Johannesburg's inner-city regeneration and the marketing of Disney town, Celebration; the opening ceremony of London's Millennium Bridge[36]; and Newcastle-on-Tyne's 'Angel of the North' sculpture by Anthony Gormley to attract visitors from all over the world to "to see the awe-inspiring sculpture close up"[37].

The framework for the interrogation of the meanings of the NMB includes the aforementioned projects as expressions of New Urbanism to rescue decaying western capitalist and post-industrial urban centres worldwide. The research is concerned with the arbitrariness of the Johannesburg inner-city regeneration programme, its spectacle nature and the effects thereof on the majority of the population there[38]. I am interested in what anthropologist Charles Rutheiser's (1996:4) says about city-making, that of: "[the importance of] myths and realities [as driving] processes that define, align, and produce [cities]" (Rutheiser 1996:4). Inherent in such structuring is what Rutheiser sees as "[Atlanta's] contradictory complexity…" (1996:4). Rutheiser refers to Atlanta's:

> … impressive but profoundly uneven development (1994:4).

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in terms of] economic growth" (*ibid* 8). In terms of the research on the NMB I am interested in the "distinct hierarchical message" the Rydell reads into the fairs and also "[the fairs] hegemonic function" (*ibid*). My contention is that the NMB establishes class hierarchies at the same time as trading in a sense of shared national purpose.

[35] I refer to the London Development Agency's (http://www.lda.gov.uk) public and private partnership to deliver the Thames Gateway project.

[36] I note with interest that the Johannesburg Development Agency who implemented the Nelson Mandela Bridge project cooperated with the London Development Agency.

[37] The developers of Newcastle-on-Tyne are consultants and advisers on the inner city of Johannesburg regeneration, that of Newtown and the NMB. Information on the Gormley sculpture is on http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/angel.

[38] I refer to late 20th century references to the sub-urbanisation in American cities that are accompanied by a decline in public space. I refer to the edited volume by Micheal Sorkin (1992) *Variations on a Theme park* and works by Margaret Crawford, Neil Smith, Edward Soja, M. Christine Boyer and Sorkin (1992). My argument is that the reinvention of the inner-cities are brought about by similar mechanisms of commodification and consumption that drive sub-urbanisation, especially in terms of a kind of 'theme-ing' which the inner-city of Johannesburg has embarked on attract local and international economic investment. It is part of what Sorkin detects as "a wholly new kind of city, a city without a place attached to it" (1992:xi). The "ageographical" city that Sorkin depicts is the edge-city phenomena (see also Garreau 1991) that reflect a sense of the 'hyper-real' (cf. Jean Baudrillard in Best & Kellner 1991. The connection I make is to the inner city's reinvention as a space brought about by global best practice to present the bulk of the city's history through a theme of struggle celebrated as liberation (cf. Beavon 2004; tourist maps and brochures; and various websites on the city).

The research project explores the relation between the NMB and the city by looking at changing cultural dynamics, the development of a new civic culture by "redrawing social boundaries to better demarcate class prerogatives" (cf. Rotenburg 2001:14). The research centres on the NMB meanings "[as manufactured that of new imaginings and heightened possibilities] that interacts with the place of lived experience to produce dislocations …" (cf. Rotenberg 2001:9). I am interested in the making of the NMB, the regeneration project itself, as "symbolic transparency … [a symbolic] boundary" (Rotenberg 2001:11) through the production of a civic culture that organises space around bourgeois privilege and especially the NMB as a "commodified sign" (cf. Rotenberg 2001:11). The latter refers to the place of the NMB in terms of the city's aspirations for global competitiveness, that of the city as "exceptional" in the global market (cf. Rotenber 2001:11). The NMB appears as a contentious space, as a gateway into the inner city, a "symbolic transparency" (cf Rotenberg 2001 11).

The next section outlines the chapters that make up the body of the research report. This work focuses on the everyday experiences of people in Johannesburg's inner-city in the past as much as from the perspective of today's urban dysfunctions.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

> … the fabric of the city [is a] metaphor for the society
> - Rykwert 2000: 266

This anthropological inquiry into the meanings of the Nelson Mandela Bridge is comprised of interlinking chapters to present Johannesburg's evolving socio-political history alongside its contemporary efforts at global economic positioning. The meanings of the NMB are reflected in the city as a space for political liberation and now also one of economic emancipation. The research looks at the city's changing urban dynamics through the positioning of the NMB as national and international branded space. The chapters build one on the other to present the NMB project as prototype project for the city's world-class aspirations. The latter reflects the NMB's relation to the city, its people and also as an image of a worldview (cf. Rykwert 2000).

The project's meanings are looked at in terms of the intersection of political, social, economic and global narratives with everyday experiences in the city. The project appears to be part of what has been described as the city's state of "always becoming" (cf. Lindsay Bremner 2004). I am interested in the effects of this transitional phase, a state of flux, on everyday experiences in the inner city especially as the NMB as flagship for the inner city's redevelopment appears as the emulation of rejuvenation or spectacle projects elsewhere in the western world. The symbolism of the NMB project is looked at in terms of everyday responses to the country's recent political liberation. The NMB's significance relates to its grand structure and especially as catalyst for city officials' "[to attract and retain] world-class business"[39] (cf. Beavon 2004: 270). My interest is the propagation of generic senses or imagined states of citiness after a 'world city'[40] label. Such a "badge of status" (Beavon 2004:270) provides the context for the NMB's significance as prime urban regeneration project and urban planners visions:

> [for the city to offer] the upper echelons of business and society the possibility of life-styles that at least compare favourably with [the 'super four'] … London, New York, Tokyo and Paris" (cf. Beavon 2004:270).

The chapters look at key themes, that of belonging and mobility in the inner city. I have included two chapters on the history of the inner city from the perspective of peoples' everyday lived experiences in the city as well as on the flux of Newtown where the NMB stands. There are also sections on today's policies, such as Johannesburg's Vision 2030 that serve as the official backdrop to the meanings of the NMB project. The overall theme of the research is the city's disparate urbanscape with the NMB project revealing the relation between people in positions of power who structure the urbanity and that of ordinary lives: a space tensioned between official planning and everyday reality. The meanings of the NMB are in its making as seen in the official manoeuvres to reconstruct Johannesburg's inner city. The meanings lie in the impact of this urban regeneration project on people in the inner city as seen in their uncertain futures through a lack of representation[41].

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[39] Beavon (2004:270) writes that Johannesburg "[needs] to offer a continuously competitive urban environment for world-class businesses … a place that top people want to visit, and where they want to live" (*ibid*). This is the context for the meanings of the NMB – a competing socio-landscape marked by economic disparities and dysfunctions.

[40] Keith Beavon 2004: 270; also Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), *Johannesburg Africa's World City*; City of Johannesburg, Joburg 2030.

[41] The CDE proposed a national coalition of interests: "three senior cabinet ministers, the president's economic adviser, the provincial premier, the executive mayor, two newspaper editors, two trade union

The first chapter entitled: "A New Historical Frontier" roots the meanings of the NMB project in the contemporary inner city. A glance to the city's past provides an entry point to understanding the city today and especially into the way in which this space is being re-imagined. This chapter presents a picture of life in apartheid Johannesburg, a snapshot of isolated experiences that are representative of the everyday life of millions of people disqualified through race from being in the inner-city. It views apartheid laws through the narrations of peoples' experiences in the inner city as a way of assessing peoples' mobility in the inner city today.

The NMB's meanings are looked at in terms of the country's "miracle" transition (Sparks 2003) from apartheid and today's official planning of a "competitive [or] world-class [comprising of] major national and foreign direct investment" (Beavon 2004:270). I am interested in Johannesburg's haphazard urban make-up, one that reflects the arbitrary nature of its inhabitants lives, especially now with the NMB project's role in setting aside new spaces for socio-cultural engagement. The project's meanings are looked at in terms of the city's history, its origins as opportunist mining tent-town about 120 years ago. It includes references to the decades of racial oppression and also socio-economic and geographic fragmentation in the mid-eighties. As result there have been urban trends such as the edge-cities phenomenon and also that of sub-urbanisation that has impacted on the inner city dynamics.

This research looks at the NMB project's significance as a local expression of global expectations, a product of architectural trends like that of contemporary New Urbanism to stop urban inner city fragmentation through innovative re-development projects. I am interested in the implication of the latter in terms an overall shrinking of the public domain in the face of grand aspirations for world-class city status. This research hints at emerging kinds of segregation through peoples' experiences of the city's transitional context: the marketing of the city as a "living museum" to local, national and international tourists.

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leaders, two heads of tertiary education institutions and the governor (or deputy) of the Reserve Bank" (Beavon 2004: 274; cf. CDE, *Johannesburg Africa's World City*, 114).

In "Newtown's Restless Urbanscape" and "Regeneration – The Story Of The Bridge" the emphasis is on the meanings of the NMB in terms of peoples everyday lived reality. The chapter on Newtown presents an interesting scenario with so much likeness to what is happening there today that the latter seems more like a replay. The inclusion of references to development in the seventies and eighties is to specifically refer to the need of civil society in development planning. It is also a way of interrogating today's lack of civic movements and especially public participation in urban development projects like that of the NMB. Presented in these chapters are everyday experiences of inhabitants at the mercy of those in power – Newtown as temporary clearing-house for surplus humanity.

Thinking about Newtown is almost like saying: history repeats itself. Newtown's restlessness lies in being a transient space, an experimental one that exposes the highhandedness of people in power. The Chapter includes references to Newtown's Coolie Location origins and subsequent gutting in 1900 to make way for Newtown as industrial suburb of Johannesburg. Almost a century later, "shocked residents watch helplessly as the security guards, armed with riot shields, pulled down their homes and set fire to them."[42] Included in the chapter on Newtown is also mid seventies redevelopment there somewhat similar to what is happening today, that of a cultural precinct. This chapter highlights the role of civil society and that of *The Star* environmental reporter James Clark to agitate against private developers' expropriation of public space. This opens a debate on the developments in Newtown today, especially that of the NMB project's marketing as in the interests of all and at the same time a lack in civic participation. The chapter is a backdrop for interrogating today's urban imagineers' actions in the planning of the NMB and especially that of the media's one-sided boosting of the project.

[42] Bunty West's report: 'Shack people watch in tears as their homes are set alight' appeared in *The Star* (June 26 1998) describing the fate of a squatter camp on the site where the Nelson Mandela Bridge was opened in Newtown in 2003. At the time Metro Council spokesman Kenny Fihla did not comment on why the shacks were set alight, but West reported that he said: "… people building shacks in the inner-city were doing so in the full knowledge that their actions were illegal" (West *ibid*). Fihla was quoted saying: "These are not destitute people. They are here to pursue business interests. The council cannot accept the erection of shacks in the inner-city as the impact of this development would be devastating to the city's economy as it tends to drive business away… against the council and health bylaws" (Fihla *ibid*).

In the chapter, "Regeneration – The Story Of The Bridge" the planning and official announcement of the Nelson Mandela Bridge is discussed in terms of the positioning of the project for public support. This section views the project from the perspective of the urban imagineers and the role of the media in promoting the project in terms of the city's Vision 2030 for world-class status. Included here are extracts from newspaper that draw a link between the NMB project and Nelson Mandela as the figure of a nation-builder. The information presented looks at the meanings in the making of the NMB as an urban landmark through the iconic presence of Nelson Mandela.

The chapter, "The Opening Of The Bridge" is an ethnographic account of the opening of the NMB from the perspective of the researcher as participant observer. This chapter includes impromptu interviews with workers on the street preparing for the grand opening and bystanders observing the processes around the opening of the NMB which newspapers called: " … a bridge to freedom". This chapter is based on ethnographic material collected on the day the NMB was opened, notes I made of first impressions and those of speaking to participants in a city marathon as well as ordinary spectators. It includes an interview with someone I regard as an everyman[43], especially as he proudly conveys his understanding of NMB project's significance as that which he saw on television and in the newspapers.

The chapter also looks at the nature of the spectacle as derived from Robert Rydell's *All the World's a Fair* (1984) in which he comments on American fair as a way of "[promoting the] visions of Empire". The context for the analysis of the meanings of the opening event lie in its presentation, something akin to that of the "spectacle" that Rydell describes, that of:"[a] blueprint of future perfection" (cf. Rydell 18984:4)[44].

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[43] I am interested in his depiction of the NMB as "like someplace else" (cf. Sorkin 1992:216) which for Sorkin can be likened to a visit to Disneyland: " … just like the world, only better" (*ibid*). I refer to Sorkin's notion of the "city as spectacle" to position the NMB in a montage-like presentation of Johannesburg through a theme of the post of the Apartheid City.

[44] This section introduces Michael Sorkin's description of the edge-city phenomena as "theme park …gentrification that orders space" (1992) which comes about through "the loosening of ties to any specific space" (*ibid* xiii). His reference to the role of globalisation (*ibid*) includes "urban designs [preoccupation with] reproduction, with the creation of urbane disguises" (*ibid* xiv). I am interested in what Sorkin sees as: "[the new space's] generic historicity or generic modernity [based on a] calculus of advertising, the idea of pure image-ability, oblivious to the real needs and traditions of those who inhabit [the city]" (*ibid* xv). The NMB's context relies on its position as landmark structure and then also to draw financial capital to Johannesburg's downtown (cf. Hopkins 2003). I view the position of

This chapter introduces the ambiguous nature of life in the city through the attempts by city officials to launch development initiatives that would rid the city of urban decay (cf. Beavon 2004:274) by setting up spaces to control people and especially their movements in the inner-city. The vast amounts of ethnographic detail gathered from conversation and observation made in the days before the opening and especially on the day the bridge was officially opened sets the scene for what happened there after the opening of the NMB. The significance of the project takes on new dimensions after the opening as the NMB now links Braamfontein directly with rundown Newtown.

In the next chapter, "Urban Contradictions," I look at the role of the media in propagating the inner city revival through publicity that entices[45] people into Newtown and affirms the NMB's landmark structure. In this chapter I rely on personal observations and scattered interviews to reflect everyday experiences in the inner city. I am able to locate the meanings of the NMB in a contradictory urban setting, especially in terms of its implied meanings of being for the good of all. I am able to present a picture of the inner city not popularly communicated in the media. Presented here is the clashing milieu of divisions between rich and poor.

I am interested in comments that the NMB belongs "somewhere else" and also that of its status as being in limbo. It is not clear who the bridge belongs to – the implementing agent, the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) or the Johannesburg Road Agency (JRA)? The controversy concerns whether it is a bridge over a road or a road with a bridge on it – if a bridge[46], then the JDA owns it and a road, then the JRA. This is an interesting aside to the project as whoever it belongs to is able to profit from its commercial letting at R40 000 a day.

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the NMB in terms of Sorkin and others (1992) comments on cities as themed spaces for capital investments and the consequences thereof.

[45] This chapter contains the essence of what Sorkin (1992) depicts as "a definitive there … an abstraction [through] the mobility of capital that enables them" (*ibid*). Sorkin's cross references to Disneyland and Disney World emphasises "the travel agent's parlance, 'destination'" (*ibid*). His depiction the place visited "is 'like' someplace else" (*ibid* 216).

[46] The tussle has been settled with the JRA taking care of the NMB. It has not been handed over to the people of the city.

The chapter looks at spin-offs in terms of heritage and tourism related to the status of the NMB through its structure but more so its name. Its grand architectural structure is an important location for the film industry. The bulk of this chapter is part of an ongoing ethnography of the changing inner city dynamics, looking at the tactics of power to control this emerging inner city space through the city's official marketing strategies. I am intrigued by the NMB project as a product of best practices in urban renewal schemes from across the world in terms of the value of these for heritage tourism and real estate development. I also look at the significance of the project in terms of the borrowed ideas for grandiose urban planning schemes and the relevance thereof in relation to solving problems of urban poverty.

The final chapter of the research is an analysis of the multiple meanings of the NMB, the project's relation to the city and its people in terms of its projection on local and increasingly global scale. The project's meanings are derived from its position through interconnected relations between the city, its people and especially that of an official emblem for the inner-city rejuvenation to attract moneyed local and global participation. The meanings of the NMB are looked at in terms of its presence as a 3-dimensional sculpture or advertisement for the inner city's revitalisation and also that of the city's position as a multi-dimensional advertisement for itself.

METHODOLOGY

> … the city has long been used as a device to read social change.
> - Nuttal & Mbembe 2004:352

The Nelson Mandela Bridge appears as another instance, that of "a bracketed moment" (cf. Boyer 1992: 192), in the unfolding historiography of Johannesburg's inner city. This research into the meanings of the NMB looks at the project in relation to the inner city and especially that of the city's ever-present "elusiveness" (cf. Nuttall & Mbembe 2004). The methods used to locate the NMB's meanings are those that present the project as a representational space (cf. Rotenberg 2001:9 citing Lefebvre 1992). I look at the production of the NMB though its planning and especially its branding as emblem for the inner-city's rejuvenation and its relation to the production of everyday experiences in the inner-city.

The significance of the NMB is interrogated against the backdrop of the city as: "a capitalist formation closely tied to the money economy and individuality, to calculability and fortuitousness" (Mbembe & Nuttall 2004:365). The bridge as emblem for the inner city's rejuvenation in the decade after apartheid exposes urban contradictions: that of the city official's search for a globally competitive "world-class African city" label (Beavon 2004) and everyday needs for employment, food and shelter.

I was able, through the method of the ethnography, to explore the meanings of the NMB by observing a series of everyday occurrences in the inner city and especially by recording people on the streets responses to the NMB. I was interested in the juxtaposition of what Achille Mbembe refers to as Johannesburg's "rationalization of relations of production (through the increasing prevalence of commodity systems) and [also] the rationalization of the social sphere (human relations) that follow it" (Mbembe 2004: 373). People everyday experiences in the inner city lie at the heart of this interrogation.

The ethnographic data gathered here from interactions with people in and around the construction site and later also from pedestrians on the NMB opened another side to the meanings of the NMB, ones outside the realm of the controlled and mediated perceptions of the inner-city's reinvention. The latter refers to what Mbembe observes in Johannesburg, its transition from "racial city [to] metropolitan form [through] performances of worldliness" (Mbembe 2004:374). Mbembe writes:

> [Johannesburg] is structurally shaped by the intertwined realities of bare life (mass poverty), the global logic of commodities, and the formation of a consumer public. … [its] nervous rhythm …and its cultural pulse are made up of an unrepentant commercialism that combines technology, capital and speculation (Mbembe 2004:374).

This ethnography is based on "[an] experience-near critique of inner-city life [to provide a] complex understanding of the differences between cities' and residents' responses …"(cf. Low 1996:402). The basis for the information or data gathered stemmed from my position as participant-observer documenting the minutiae of everyday events by being "on the spot" (cf. Holy & Stuchlik 1983:5). It concerns the interrogation of the NMB's meanings through its specific "social reality" (cf.Holy & Stuchlik 1983). I am interested in the meanings of the NMB through processes of deduction, such as: "[a decoding of] the ideological intentions and material

consequences of architectural [planning in relation to everyday experiences]" (cf. Low 1996: 402).

The methods used, such as multiple encounters on issues of everyday life and the NMB, form the basis of this interpretive study. The data gathered resulted from numerous conversations, interviews – impromptu, informal and unstructured – that complemented my observations of a changing city, perhaps even an emerging gentrified one. I noted peoples' responses, an openness to the topic of the NMB and keenness to relate anecdotes. I also noted that in the months after the opening of the NMB there occurred a change peoples' attitudes towards the NMB in terms of their relations to the city itself, that of belonging and mobility in this re-imagined inner-city space. The ethnographic method of interviews allowed me to look at the NMB as a construction in the inner city that adds another layer to the city's already layered history.

My role as participant-observer[47] is also that of witness to the unfolding of urban scenario both manufactured through mass-mediated official narratives and derived from ordinary everyday conversations on the inner-city streets. I rely on the actual experience of being present in and around the NMB; in the early stages on the construction site speaking to workers, foremen and engineers as well as documenting ordinary conversations with people on the streets in Braamfontein and Newtown. Later, towards the official opening of the project I followed media reports on the NMB, attended a publicity campaign and press conference on the construction of the NMB which was held on the bridge and continued speaking to and interviewing people on their perceptions.

I also relied on secondary materials such as newspaper clippings and academic works on inner-city regeneration as well as considering 20th century theories of space, place and power and what I was witnessing as a shrinking of the public sphere through a lack of public participation. This supported the critical perspective I took analysing

[47] For anthropologist Kaori Sugishita (2005) the role of the anthropologist "aims to elucidate the essence of humanity". In 'Transgression for Transcendence? On the Anthropologist's (dis)Engagement in the Politics of Meaning' (2005) Sugishita writes that: "the constitution of culture [lies within a] universe of signification" (7). As participant-observer in this research I am aware of "a gamble of representation played by certain we and the others" (cf. Sugishita 2005:7) – the juggling bits of observation through participation.

the information. The primary source for materials is then that of conversations, sometimes off-the-record interviews but generally writing down peoples' stories, opinions, fears and worries.

I was able to gather personal information because of peoples' openness towards the NMB project, a sense of solidarity with the project through its name and also a hopeful anticipation of the city becoming a safer place. This was mostly in conversations before the opening of the NMB when most people felt that they too might benefit from the project even find a place to stay.

I jotted down details of conversations with the construction team, pedestrians on the streets around the construction site and in neighbouring Braamfontein and Newtown. It was not always easy in the face of what appeared to be the hopeless predicament of a group of young people in Bertha Road in Braamfontein who 'live' on the pavement, less than 300m from the constructions site. They were exited about the activities but knew it meant: "we have nowhere now". So too, there are the stories of three women I spoke to on more than one occasion who lived on the site of the NMB until three days before the opening of their bridge when their make-shift shelters constructed out of black plastic tarpaulins were levelled by bulldozers.

The method of participant-observation allowed me to position the landmark NMB in its context, that of: Johannesburg's downtown. I looked at the inner city's changing spatial relations and through conversations and impromptu interviews I was able to assess how the urban space was being managed, controlled or re-organised for social interaction. Through the gathering of anecdotal histories I was able to piece together a picture of the urban landscape that fell outside the well-publicised media coverage on the official plans for the inner-city generation. I noted responses that seemed less informed by the media about the merits of the inner-city regeneration and also unconnected to the Mandela name of the project, but rather concerned with issues of unemployment and housing.

Part of the research included following up news reports by talking to people on the streets and NMB to ascertain whether what people though came from news coverage or whether it was a genuine reflection of their states of mind. This was not always the

best way as I did not rely on questionnaires but rather made notes of peoples' responses. At the time I was also curious about a knock-and-drop style newsletter *Jozi News* published by *The Star* and circulated for free at taxi ranks and railway stations on inner-city developments.

The research involved copious note-taking on and off-site, reflecting a wide range of observations drawn from extant billboards, to newspaper headlines, to everyday activities in and around the construction site[48]. I spent months doing fieldwork in the form of observation, casual conversations and impromptu interviews especially in the weeks before the opening of the NMB. I saw this as an especially important moment as I noticed increased efforts directed at beautifying and even sanitizing[49] areas like Braamfontein and Newtown. I attended the opening of the NMB as an observer speaking to officials and people at the opening and also conducted a unique interview with a keen observer, a kind of everyman, of what was happening in the inner city. I was interested in finding out how someone who followed the much-publicised reports on the NMB interpreted the happenings in the inner-city – a non-critical response from the caretaker at a near-by building whose employment was secured and also lodgings on the top floor of the building he works in.

It is important to mention that the research grew from my own fieldwork. As I spoke to people not linked to the project I realised that the NMB project had more to it than meets the eye. From books on urban regeneration projects in the downtown post-industrial western capitalist cities, as well as seminars on inner-city developments and the occasional media reports on a lack of public participation in inner-city projects I developed a critical view of the urban imagineers supposedly altruistic intentions for all through the project. The data collected from observation, conversations and news reports conveyed the specific information needed to take a critical stance on the inner-city developments. These reflected "…ideas, ideology, myth or simply a set of notions [about] their social reality" (cf. Holy & Stuchlik 1983:9). I became aware that

[48] I befriended a number of people working on the site. This was important in terms of where they stood in relation to the evolving city and their feelings about the meanings of the NMB. I befriended an 11year old scholar selling hardboiled eggs near the NMB site to construction workers to raise funds for his schooling. He told me that his mother "was too poor to pay fees".

[49] I use this term as this was commonly used by workers and tradesmen who showed impatience with groups of people who slept on the streets in shop entrances at night and parked cars in the day in Braamfontein (March 2003).

many people, mostly traders and also tenants in converted office block in the inner city did not know what their future was in the inner city. Some I had spoken to while the bridge was under construction felt optimistic saying that the inner city would be a safer place and they felt proud about the attention the city was getting. However in the months after the NMB's opening their voices became disillusioned and even fearful of having no place in the future to stay in or trade.

Whatever preconceptions I may have had about the meanings of the NMB, these changed dramatically while conducting fieldwork. I also soon found out that many people to whom I had spoken did not know why the NMB was built in the first place. Some said it was a gift for the city from Mandela and others thought they were "honouring" Mandela. Mostly people I spoke to in spot interviews were "happy" about "giving" Mandela the bridge for his part in the liberation struggle. I have included these bits of ethnography in this section on the methodology as I feel that it illustrates how being in the field altered my exploratory route. This then needs to be seen in the light of what Holy and Stuchlik (1983:2) have written with respect to an anthropology that:

> … is keen on the totality of the social system and how it functions … [a] recurrent pattern of activities emerges from them, is created and changed by them

The methods used were a way of gaining insight into how society organises its activities (cf.Holy & Stuchlik 1983:2). I was able to gain data from "observing and asking questions or listening to [people] talking: thus [from] the verbal statements of members of society and their observed behaviour"(Holy & Stuchlik 1983:12) to draw conclusions for an analysis of the meanings of the NMB as yet another, contentious layer added to the city. This research stems from my concern over what Edward Soja sees as a majority poor population concentration in cities (Holy & Stuchlik 1983:3) in search of "[a] spark of economic life" (Jacobs 1969:176 in Holy & Stuchlik 1983:3). In Johannesburg I am aware of the grand-scale NMB urban project at the same time when urban poverty figures keep on escalating. The process that Soja (2000:19) refers to, he calls: '*synekism*'. For Soja, this critical study of the elements that make up a city is imperative not least because:

> [these are] a way of examining the enigmas of the world and our existence[50]

[50] This extract from Lea Virgine's *La città e l'immaginario* (1985) and others by Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs connects the urban built forms with "lived space" (Soja 2000:19).

CHAPTER TWO: A New Historical Frontier

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this Chapter, a historical account is given of life in Johannesburg's inner city by presenting a series of narrations of ordinary experiences during the city's colonial occupation and, especially, in the period of racial segregation during Apartheid[51]. This is seen as a way of viewing emerging and contradictory trends in the inner city through its transitional positioning as a space for 'global interaction'. The latter term refers to the city's position in an increasingly global economy at the same time as the majority of the city's population still struggle everyday to make ends meet. So that at the same time as people emerge from the oppressions of a radical past, the inner city faces the challenges of competing in a global economy and especially the implications of the latter.

In the first part of this Chapter, peoples' narrations reflect on life in the Apartheid City, primarily the spaces of racial exclusion that were impressed on peoples' minds at the time and still inform their personal identities. The inner city's historically divided urban fabric (like elsewhere in South Africa) is part of peoples' everyday experiences in the inner city with the memories of exclusion bringing about contested states of belonging (or a complete lack thereof).

The processes whereby inscribed memories drive peoples' sense of identity today again surface in the ways in which Johannesburg's inner city is being re-imagined. Equally important is today's inner-city imagineers' use of or reiteration of past narratives to create value or adherence for projects and a projected better city in the future "for all"[52] (see Chapter 4-6 and Conclusion). The inner city managers' reconstruction agenda based on peoples' experiences in the inner city in the past points to a way forward for Johannesburg's inner city revival[53] (*ibid*). In this sense the unfolding of yet another inner city layer in Johannesburg's already layered urban history is revealed.

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[51] The basis for interrogating the potent symbolism of the NMB for Johannesburg lies in a statement by anthropologist Hilda Kuper that "social space is never neutral …" (cf. Rotenberg 1995:23).
[52] The official website of Johannesburg, that of Blue IQ and the JDA.
[53] In conversation with Gordon Metz (August 2005), the architect of the 1995 Legacy Project, he explains that "much of South Africa's history was either colonial or Apartheid". There as a need to redress this and the Legacy project – the forerunner of the South African Heritage Resources Act and the National Heritage Council – did what it could to addressed the imbalances of the past.

This chapter lays the foundation for exploring the meanings in the making of the NMB in terms of the project as not only catalyst for the inner city's urban revitalisation but also its associations with peoples' experiences of racial indignation in the past. This chapter sets the scene for Chapters that follow. I am interested in the juxtaposition of experiences of racial confinement/exclusion and today's expectations of freedom and democracy with the official use of similar narratives to advertise and promote the inner city and its regeneration. A contentious situation[54] arises from what I see as the unfortunate underside to the latter with new forms of exclusion[55] developing. Both the inner city's emergent urban imaginary and peoples' ordinary expectations are rooted in the injustices of the racist city. The latter gives rise to tensions between the mediated statements of "a city for all"[56] whereas peoples' everyday experiences and expectation on the street speak of ignorance about inner city developments.

This anthropological research does not endorse the official urban planning efforts by experts to market the inner city as a destination. Nor does this research support city managers' theories for the inner city's resuscitation through notions of "sinkholes" and "ripple ponds"[57]. This research instead builds on what Naomi Klein (2002) sees as the un-liberating affects of "[a] trickle-down democracy argument" (Klein 2002:47). For Klein such neo-liberalist responses to globalisation's empowering world economies need to be tempered by "deeper and more responsive democracies" (Klein 2002:77). She challenges:

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[54] Abdoumaliq Simone (2005) as co-editor of *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City* writes that "[as] cities grow more fragmented, dispersed and outward-looking, the concept of 'public' is put into question" (*ibid* 5). In Johannesburg's reinvention notions of who belongs and who does not have become a critical point of inquiry. In the same book Edgar Pieterse (2005:138) writes about "rising inequality within and between urban areas in South Africa … as new political frameworks and identities are being assembled". The two authors' depictions of inner-city changes, especially those that emulate a "world-class" label, are part of this investigation into the meanings of the NMB.

[55] This question arises from a paper *Enclosed Communities: property and public space in post-apartheid South Africa* by Karina Landman (CSIR Built Environment) – November 7 2005 (Constitution Hill, Johannesburg). Landman writes that "old spatial patterns [of segregation] are reinforced by new patterns of segregation …the inequalities between wealthy and poor areas in Johannesburg" (*ibid* 2).

[56] Landman (*ibid*) suggests that "[a] disrespect for the rights of citizenship" gives rise to "a disjunctive democracy [with] equity, efficiency and the expansion of human rights [becomes] contested". In the inner city of Johannesburg, the right to be there becomes arbitrarily fixed by people in power.

[57] This was part of a discussion between the CEO of the Central Johannesburg Partnerships (CJP) Neil Fraser and I on the processes linked to urban regeneration in the inner city. He referred to the role of iconic inner-city initiatives in areas that have become rundown, i.e. the sinkholes and the effects the former have (a 'ripple-pond') on the latter in terms of changing urban dynamics (August 2005).

> … the internationalization of a single economic model: neo-liberalism (Klein 2002:77).

The context for this research and especially in this Chapter are peoples' historical sense of loss, isolation and dislocation in the Apartheid city. These narratives remind one of the unfulfilled expectations of a vast majority, essentially poor people on Johannesburg's inner-city streets today: "displaced by neo-liberal globalization itself" (cf. Klein 2002:73). The voices of people on the margins of development programming are connected to the making of the NMB as an urban landmark through references to Nelson Mandela as person and his position as iconic nation builder[58]. These testimonies direct peoples' everyday expectations at the end of legalised Apartheid and at a time when democracy has yet to meaningfully touch the lives of all.

The chapter introduces the city's complex spatial arrangements as an emerging urban frontier after grand apartheid. I argue that the city's contemporary incarnation holds out the voices of its marginalized majority in Apartheid Johannesburg for an increasingly globalised market at the same time as creating spaces that challenge citizens' newly found democratic ideals. The past injustices in Johannesburg's inner city and the role of these in the inner city's reconstruction do not happen in isolation but are exacerbated by the city's participation in a globalised or world economy.

This Chapter, in somewhat disjointed fashion, introduces a backdrop for the significance of the NMB as catalyst to the inner city's regeneration agenda. The urban trajectory followed here is the reshuffling of the model Apartheid City's racial agenda through mediated messages on the significance of the NMB and the regeneration of the inner city as "[the creation of a space] for all"[59]. A critical question however is: How will Johannesburg reconcile its past history in a contemporary format without falling prey to notions of inclusion and exclusion as well as stereotyping and favouritism?[60] This Chapter offers a basis for Chapter Three and Four with regard to a need for a strong civil society to represent people on the much clichéd 'ground'.

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[58] "When Mandela was freed from prison, his vision was of a South Africa that offered economic, as well as democratic freedom" (Klein 2002:1008). Instead, "a cookie-cutter free-trade program" came into place (*ibid*).

[59] The official websites: Johannesburg and Blue IQ.

[60] This question arises from a paper *Enclosed Communities: property and public space in post-apartheid South Africa* by Karina Landman (CSIR Built Environment) – November 7 2005 (Constitution Hill, Johannesburg).

NEW SPACES FROM PAST EXPERIENCES

> … [the past is] part of a 'social portrait' [of] ideas and sentiments concerning identity, morality and cosmology …
>
> -Anna Bohlin 2001:274

As outlined in the Overview to this Chapter, fundamental aspects of life in Apartheid Johannesburg's inner city act as a filter for viewing the idiosyncrasies of today's inner-city reconstructions[61]. Ordinary peoples' experiences in apartheid Johannesburg are part of what Anna Bohlin calls a "social portrait" of everyday life (*ibid*). The latter is the foreground for this interrogation of the meanings in the making of the grandiose Nelson Mandela Bridge (NMB)[62]. It is argued that the events in the racist inner city are part of peoples' consciousness and drive an emergent urban narratives to promote the inner-city locally as well as globally. The latter is part of processes of fusing local experiences with contemporary inner-city regeneration agendas from cities across the world (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xiv; cf. Beavon 2004:274; cf. Moore 1999)[63].

The significance of the NMB relates to a linkage between the project's conceived ideals and its perceived meanings as gleaned from everyday memories of experiences in the inner city in the past and now also feelings of anticipation in a newly dawned democracy. The NMB's significance is reflected in a superimposition of apartheid memories on the inner city in order to spark its contemporary reinvention. In this sense the intricacies of Johannesburg's social history forms a backdrop for the meanings of the Nelson Mandela Bridge project especially in as far as the city's official marketing strategies[64] are concerned (see Chapters 4-6).

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[61] Johannesburg's multifarious history is embodied in its built environment and the multi-million Rand Nelson Mandela Bridge between institutional Braamfontein and the new Newtown cultural precinct, established another particular spatial meaning (cf. Kristin Koptiuch 1999:234-248). The configuration of spaces and places invariably involve hegemonic power structuring (*ibid*).

[62] The meanings of the NMB project are interlinked with that of the changing city and this is reflected in everyday experiences in the built environment - how people live and what it is used for. The latter is especially important in this research in terms of the changing inner city, the imposition of new urban narratives, and the unfolding making of the city as that of people in positions of power.

[63] The "social portrait" (cf.Bohlin 2001:274) of peoples' apartheid experiences presented in this chapter are also implied in the official marketing of the NMB as "historically significant and hugely symbolic" (cf. Hopkins 2003). Pat Hopkins (*ibid* 58) writes that the NMB "will be recognised as a landmark, something that will encapsulate the triumph of South Africa's transformation…".

[64] *Ibid*; contrasting notions of informality and formalisation through modes of control of movement.

The marketing of the city as "world-class African [one]" (cf. Beavon 2004; also Hopkins 2003)[65] reveals a shift in urban dynamics from a space preoccupied with segregationist socio-political concerns to that of the city contemporary socio-economic aspirations that include global dictates[66]. Inscribed in the official meanings of the grand-scale Nelson Mandela Bridge project, are references to the bridge "[as] world-class engineering [and also as prompt for] private investment [and] tourism" (cf. Hopkins 2003: 66-67)[67]. Yet how this is to happen is relatively unclear, as:

> Just when blacks were able to imagine [post 1994] Johannesburg as also belonging to them… retail business, insurance companies, and the stock exchange [left an urban] 'shell' [and soon] blacks from other African countries [poured into the inner-city] (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xiii).

The positioning of the NMB as emblematic of the inner city rejuvenation is complex and made up of peoples' memories of the material world and their daily experiences there (cf. Bender 2001:4)[68] but also that of the city as contemporary lived reality. I am interested in the reconstruction of the inner city through a mixing of individual struggles and personal memories of life in apartheid with narratives created around celebrating an emerging urban epoch (cf. Bohlin 2001:274; also Fentress & Wickham 1992; Middleton and Edwards 1994)[69].

The city's developing social history is significantly linked to the making of the NMB and visible in the official slant given to its marketing, particularly that of the symbolism attached to the project through its naming. The latter is significant in terms of ordinary experiences in the inner city and especially the memories of life in apartheid Johannesburg and also that of apartheid South Africa[70] in marginal terms.

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[65] The NMB designed by Danish architect Paul Ove Jensen "encapsulates the triumph of South Africa's transformation – its stepping back from the brink of civil war to embrace a new beginning…" (Hopkins 2003:58).

[66] "Without the burden of apartheid, Johannesburg could be imagined as a global city" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii). The editors (*ibid*) referred to Johannesburg as "a world city" (see also Rogerson 1996).

[67] Since the mid-nineties Johannesburg was earmarked as "the gateway for South Africa's entry into the global economy" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii).

[68] Under the heading, 'Inscribed Spaces', Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003:185) have looked at how people's experience is "embedded in place and how space holds memories that implicate people and events". This research concerns the predicament of ordinary people who have been politically liberated but are not realising a sense of economic liberation (cf. Emdon 215-230).

[69] That which is socially produced can be distinguished from the "physical space of material reality and the mental space of cognition and representation, each of which is used and incorporated into the social construction of spatiality but cannot be conceptualised as its equivalent" (Soja 1989:120).

[70] This appears as the drawing together of three interconnecting aspects of social life, those that Soja (1989) denotes as: the physical, the mental and the social (*ibid* 120).

Pat Hopkins (2003: 54) suggests that the significance of the NMB seen from its official perspective, is that of:

> Bridges are not merely engineering feats … [but] architectural wonders [that] symbolise great feats – such as Nelson Mandela's heroic overcoming of incredible obstacles to bring people together[71].

The inner city's reconstruction is likened to the classical associations of the centre of the early Roman city as the *umbilicus*, a source of nourishment and of immense religious value. Contemporary changes in Johannesburg's inner city therefore epitomise the city's search of its very own centre[72]. Richard Sennett (1994) notes that the 'centre' of the city historically represented a 'start', especially that in the Roman city after conquest. He writes that it was necessary for the Roman city to pinpoint its centre, as: "knowing its centre, the planners could define its edges" (Sennett 1994: 106-7). The importance of the *umbilicus*, in as far as Johannesburg is concerned, underpins some of the observations made in terms of the inner-city regeneration developments and the decision-makers, especially in terms of the city's executive mayor Amos Masondo and his 'ordinary' aspirations following his involvement in the liberation struggle (Redmond 2003:20).[73] Encapsulated in his dream for "world-class [city status and the bridge as] bustling tourist attraction" (cf. Hopkins 2003:9 cites Masondo), this research considers the role power plays in the making of places.

A critical stance is taken to locate the meanings of the NMB based on notions in classical social theory, that of: the structures, constituents and trajectories of modern society works in conjunction with the economy, state, society and culture to give a sense of a particular historical grid of social organisation (cf. Best & Kellner

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[71] Also, "… bridges have taken on a deeper meaning that is so universally accepted that they have been sketched by painters, eulogised by poets and had songs composed to them…" (Hopkins 2003:54). Michael Lebese's 'Bridge to the Future' is a "[dedication] to the Nelson Mandela Bridge between Braamfontein and Newtown in Johannesburg and to the people of South Africa". I first saw the CD for sale on the street in Tyrwhitt Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg, when I met a man who claimed to be Lebese and said he had performed at the opening of the NMB and was collecting money from the sales of the CD to pay for his wife's funeral. She had died in hospital after being a hijacking in Carr Street at the foot of the NMB (2004). The NMB also appears prominently in the promotional logo of television reality programme, 'The Apprentice' (SABC 3 – June 2005).

[72] Czeglédy (2003:28) writes: "Johannesburg's city centre no longer fulfils the role of *centre* … [after being deserted by big business and becoming] a virtual 'no-go' zone [for suburban residents] " (*ibid*).

[73] Reporter Gillian Redmond (2003:20) quotes Masondo in the *Rosebank Killarney Gazette* as saying: "I am an ordinary person … thrust into a high level of responsibility [following his involved in the struggle for democracy] … as youth activist and trade unionist" (*ibid*). She writes that Masondo was incarcerated on Robben Island and released at 27 in 1981. He was the secretary of the Cosatu Witwatersrand region between 1981 and 1993 and coordinated the African National Congress (ANC) election activities from 1993 to 1994 (Redmond *ibid*).

1991:258). The research views the past organisation of space in Johannesburg's inner city as a way of gauging the effects of dominant politics on peoples' lived experiences. Peoples' narrations act as 'guides' (in terms of Best & Kellner's critical interrogations) to the understanding of specific societal structuring, such as the Johannesburg social reality as reflected in the presence of the NMB. The authors write that:

> [the past] models and cognitive mappings of societies [offer] the 'big picture' [of] how the economy, polity, social institutions, discourse, practices, and culture interact to produce a social system (Best &Kellner 2001:260).

The backdrop for the meanings of the Nelson Mandela Bridge is contained in policy decisions on the re-imagining of the city. These, as outlined by the editors of *Emerging Johannesburg* (Tomlinson *et al* 2003), suggest that inner city reforms need to present an urban character that "[captures the country's] current transformations and possibilities [by incorporating these with] the egalitarian and social justice impulses of the antiapartheid struggle [and] recognizing the imperatives of global capitalism and its neo-liberal mode of governance" (Tomlinson *et al* 2003: xiv). However, the editors write that the city's future "[lies in] knowing the transformation's origins, but [they are] at a loss to name its destination" (*ibid* xiv).

The "elusive"[74] city is a backdrop for the meanings of the NMB from an official perspective as emerging and re-imagined inner city in line with Johannesburg's executive mayor Amos Masondo's '2030 vision' of a world-class city. The NMB significance is what the CEO Graeme Reid of the project's implementing agent, the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), describes as:

> [the NMB is] an architectural statement of [the city's] determination to re-imagine and re-invent itself as a democratic, modern and African [one] (Reid in Hopkins 2003:9)[75].

The NMB relates to the iconic significance of Nelson Mandela, that of a "… symbol of freedom and hope not only for the people of South Africa and the continent, but the entire world" (Masondo *ibid*). For the managing director of the Johannesburg Road

[74] Czeglédy (2003:21); also Nuttall & Mbembe 2004.
[75] Graeme Reid, the chief-executive officer of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) after his presentation on 'Cities and Citizenship: The evolving nature of South African cities' (Wiser May 20 2004) told me that present developments in the inner-city were that of "gentrification". He advocated a "long term" view of these (*ibid*). The JDA is the Johannesburg City Council's implementing agent for the Nelson Mandela Bridge, a project Reid regards as synonymous with the inner-city regeneration through gentrification (*ibid*). The logic behind the latter is that of the "trickle-down" effect that will benefit "all in future" (*ibid*).

Agency (JRA), Mavela A Dlamini the NMB is "the first public asset named after Mandela [and represents a] centrepiece of transformation … '*A bridge to a better future for all'"* (Dlamini in Hopkins 2003:90). The latter is the context for an unravelling of the meanings of the NMB, an interrogation of what is really implied by this "all". The latter, I argue is revealed in the juxtaposition of the official narratives with ordinary peoples responses as experiences in spaces in the city are both made by people and make people (cf. Bender 2001:4).

The strategic manoeuvres behind changes in Johannesburg's inner city and especially those that drive the NMB project are ways of not only redressing urban decay but, intrinsically "[attempt] to unburden [the city] from the grip of a contentious past" (cf. Czeglédy 2003:22). However, the city's socio-economic disparities and economic separateness (*ibid*; also Robinson 2003:275; Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003) ask a single question: "Is the postapartheid Johannesburg likely to be no more integrated than its apartheid predecessor?" (Tomlinson *et al* eds.2003:18). This question underlies the research into the meanings of the NMB as emblem for the inner city's rejuvenation. The emphasis is on ordinary peoples experiences, their struggles against apartheid, and now: the meanings of the NMB in terms of a promise of freedom.

The context for unravelling the significance of the NMB as a project lies in urban imagineers' efforts to revitalise the inner city (cf. Hopkins 2003)[76]. The role of the city's apartheid past is a critical dimension in the city's reinvention[77] and therefore, what follows in the next sections is a 'social portrait' of life in the city as an aspect of a search for "[a new] civic identity" (cf. Czeglédy 2003:22).[78] This discussion sets the scene for interrogating the meanings of the NMB in terms of "the relevance of a civic community for the city as a whole" (cf. Czeglédy 2003:21). The latter is linked to notions of locality and identity in the inner city (cf. *ibid*; also Nuttall & Mbembe 2004).

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[76] See also Tomlinson *et al* eds.(2003:xiv);Robinson *ibid* 259; Beavon 2004:274.
[77] Tomlinson *et al* eds.(2003:xiv) envisage the inner-city's future in terms of "[remembering] the past … [and regulating] the flow of investments".
[78] Social life is concretised in urban spatial arrangements that Edward Soja (1989) refers to as "open-ended [processes] in which spatial and social forms dialectically intertwine and transform each other" (Soja *ibid* 17; also cf. Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Bender 1993, Hirsch 1995 and Lovell 1998).

In general, the existent tales about Johannesburg has been told from various perspectives ranging from the extravagant lives of the Rand-lords, the white mining elite, to the hardships of the poor whites, the Blacks, Coloureds and Indians on the Reef. These reveal life experiences on either side of the institutionalised differences of the past – all are part of the city's history. It has become clear during my research that there are several issues crucial to being a citizen or visitor in Johannesburg and that, Johannesburg still is and will be a place where disparity rules (see also Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xiii; Beavon 2004).

BLACK SPOTS AND 'WHITES ONLY'

This section views inner city changes now by referring to life as a black in the white city. The context here is Johannesburg as Apartheid City (cf. Christopher 1994); a space that remained symbiotically attached to the heart of white supremacist politics through acts of segregation that ordered peoples' lives by government decree. Officially starting when the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948,a series of restrictive legislations were passed. The Group Areas Act of 1950 enforced residential segregation by banishing blacks from setting up home in so-called 'white' areas. People who did try and live in these spaces were forcibly removed to new areas set aside solely for black occupation, popularly known as 'black spots' (cf. Christopher 1994: 105-33). The 1953 Reservation of Separate Amenities Act enforced racial superiority and exclusivity in public spaces and become known as the legislation that revealed "racism with a public face" (cf. Christopher 1994: 105-33).

Primarily seen from the perspective of the effects of the Apartheid state on the lives of people who were allowed to only move through Johannesburg, this section dwells on the varied and many-sided nature South Africa's economic hub, Johannesburg. The effects of a 'whites-only' built environment on peoples' lives are revealed through the formal and official orderings of the built environment during Apartheid as these orderings impacted on a people's sense of being, especially those who were restricted socio-politically and socio-economically because of race[79].

[79] During apartheid (and the colonial period) general anthropological "commonsense" appears to suggest, "a world of unique, self-generating bounded races, peoples (nations) and cultures [and in South Africa] such identities [were] maintained under armed guard" (Coplan 1997:135). Three laws (the Group Areas Act (1950), the Natives Resettlement Act (1954) and the Native (Urban Areas)

Living under the Apartheid dictatorship meant that the majority of South Africans were denied urban living and freedom of movement in the city. As 'lesser'[80]citizens, Black South Africans daily commuted from the outskirts to the inner-city for employment and the 'whites only' signage[81] on buildings and public places channelled their movements: open spaces in the built environment became a maze for 'non-whites' *en route* to and from work as they were racially 'disqualified' from lingering, let alone living, in the inner city. Blacks as 'inferiors' and as 'outsiders' played the part of extras[82] in the urban environment as what the city built carried the imprint of racial segregation. The narrow 'white-mindedness'[83] of the Apartheid City monitored people's movements and therefore their experiences and these became embodied in the everyday; non-whites were not allowed to live in the city, only to work there[84]. For close on four decades the inscribed meanings imposed on the urban environment denied the majority of South Africans under Apartheid dictatorship[85] opportunities to move freely in the city.

Amendment Act of 1955) framed urban experiences in Apartheid (cf. Christopher 1994:105-33; also *ibid* on *Johannesburg as model Apartheid City*).

[80] Neluheni (2000:74-75) suggests that white Nationalists thought of "blacks [as] under-develop and [that] whites decided for them". The Group Areas Act was the most concrete basis for understanding South Africa's urban past … "clear markings to denote who was entitled to use space" (*ibid*). Neluheni writes that "[between] 1976-1990 … scores of blacks were prepared to perish under detentions, arrests, shootings and successive States of Emergency, rather than be stifled under the appalling conditions of *apartheid*" (*ibid*).

[81] The 1953 Reservation of Separate Amenities Act that enforced white race superiority in public places was known as 'racism with a public face'.

[82] Citing Franz Fanon's *The Fact of Blackness*, Lesley Naa Norle Nokka (2000) connects human experience and architecture to stress the historical whiteness of the makers and users of urban architecture. Fanon writes: "… I was an object in the midst of other objects" (cf. 2000: 14). Nokka (2000) refers to Roger Sanjek notion of race as 'object'. For Fanon then " 'race … a social relation [is a product of] systematised hierarchization … anchored in … historical configuration of power" (*ibid* 18). Nokka underlines the importance of "spatial, temporal and cultural ambiguity of diasporic/post-colonial conditions". Similarly Setha Low depicts white institutions' control over "even the production of 'blackness'" (cf. Low 2000:8).

[83] Nokka (2000) looks at the meanings of the social and that of the cultural and detects the political implications of "'giving' voice/representation" to others (*ibid* 34).

[84] The notion of embodied space here draws on the material and representational aspects of the body; as biological entity and lived experience, and also as centre of agency "and a location of speaking and acting in the world" (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:2). Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (*ibid*) cite Michael Csordas on the notion of embodiment as "[a] mode of presence and engagement with the world" (Csordas 1994:2). For Low and Lawrence-Zuniga "embodied space is the location where human experience and consciousness take on material and spatial from".

[85] Between 1948 and 1994 Johannesburg was symbiotically attached to white supremacist politics and its Apartheid legislation. Space was politically defined. The Groups Areas Act (1950) was a form of residential segregation in which blacks were barred from living in so-called white areas and forcibly removed to 'black spots'.

The discriminatory laws informed peoples' memories as these are the embodied collective experiences people have with places.[86] The affects of Apartheid on peoples' lives as historians Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool (1998:95 in Bohlin 2001:273) denote is that apartheid was not only about resistance "but more [about the] subtle forms of economic, cultural, and intellectual exchange [as revealed in today's] layers in which past and present are negotiated through memory, tradition and history". From these experiences it is possible to picture the contrasting ways of life in parallel situations in the 'white' city. The majority of South Africans lacked ordinary privileges in the country of their birth, such as basic freedom of movement and the freedom to choose where to live[87].

In the "whites-only" areas people's subjective socio-historical memories[88] too were moulded by the official policy of white supremacy[89]. The affects of white supremacist rule have been part of Johannesburg[90]'s just under 120 years of history and epitomised in the secular postapartheid city's new urban fabric. Presented in the following sections are a handful of experiences selected as the isolated strands in the archive of memories of 'non-whites' subjection to the peculiarities of social stratification and racial segregation[91]. Most importantly, the promulgation and policing of racist laws affected peoples' identities and senses of place through the restrictions imposed on their mobility because of race.

The relation between place, space and memory is part of a process in which "[history is vital] to construe, reproduce, or alter [peoples'] relation with the world" (Bohlin

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[86] Under the heading, 'Inscribed Spaces', Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003:185) have looked at how people's experience is "embedded in place and how space holds memories that implicate people and events".

[87] Among the laws were The Pass Laws that ruled that every black man had to carry a pass. Another was The Group Areas Act (1950) to enforce residential segregation and which resulted in "cities and towns [being] divided into racial zones [and these were where] particular races were allowed to live" (*ibid* (3) 5). The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953) prohibited blacks from using white parks, beaches, the main entrances to buildings, post offices, go on buses and there where 'whites only' public toilets. This Act of 1953 became known as "racism with a public face".

[88] For Yalouri (2001:16) people's identities flow from their "memories and experiences [and these then] become the medium for people to construct identities".

[89] This kind of historical account is based on Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) conviction that places become 'inscribed' with experience and that the latter "is embedded [and] holds memories that implicate people and events [through narratives and praxis]" (185).

[90] Johannesburg started out as a mining camp in 1886.

[91] It is important for people to retell their experiences of exclusion especially as the bridge symbolically sets out to correct these socio-economic and political disparities by emulating in its structure what Mandela stands for.

2001:274)[92]. This is also the context for Johannesburg's 'emerging' inner city (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds.2003). The production of a new social reality (cf. Lefebvre 1991) is reflected in urban imagineers' efforts as much as peoples' everyday experiences orchestrated through the manoeuvrings of powerful urban strategists (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1999; also Källtorp 1998).

The restrictions on peoples' movements in apartheid Johannesburg's built environment became their embodied experiences (cf. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003) [93]. For anthropologist David Coplan the city of Johannesburg has yielded "many paradoxes" when he first came there in the mid-seventies and apartheid "[was a] bloated, parasitic flower" (Coplan 1994:ix). Intrigued by "the story of black Johannesburg … the continuity and vitality of black popular culture" which was hardly documented. Coplan noted "[for] the majority of whites" international stars like Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekele, Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ebrahim) "seemed to appear from nowhere" (Coplan 1994:ix).

This paradox is also evident in the writings of veteran journalist and editor[94] of the *Rand Daily Mail*, Allister Sparks, whose controversial[95] piece on Johannesburg in the mid-eighties was published in London's *The Observer* (September 20 1983). He described Johannesburg as "a space [that] H.G. Wells[96] might have invented … a country where people occupy the same space but live in different time frames, so that they do not see one another and perceive different realities" (*The Observer* September 20 1983). What he had observed "[was a] peculiar incognizance of the black masses all around [as a] special kind of apartheid colour-blindness" (*The Observer* September 20 1983). For Sparks "a visual paradox" existed in terms of people's "separate time

[92] See also Fentress & Wickham 1992; Middleton & Edwards 1994.
[93] The notion of embodied space here draws on the material and representational aspects of the body; as biological entity and lived experience, and also as a centre of agency "and a location of speaking and acting in the world" (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:2). Low and Lawrence-Zuniga cite Michael Csordas on the notion of embodiment as "[a] mode of presence and engagement in the world" (Csordas 1994:12). For Low and Lawrence-Zuniga (2003:2) the notion of "embodied space [locates] human experience and consciousness [in its] material and spatial form".
[94] Sparks was sacked 1981 from the *Rand Daily Mail* following the newspaper company board of directors' decision to make the paper appeal more to the white than black community
[95] The article which appeared ten months after November 2 1983 when white South Africans went to the polls to vote on a controversial new constitution master-minded by the prime minister PW Botha - the "famous 'yes/no' referendum" could not have been published in South Africa 20 years ago.
[96] HG Wells's *Time Machine* (1895) is an allegory set in the year 802701 describing a two-tier society. It pioneered English science fiction and was followed by *Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds. The First Men on the Moon, Men like Gods.*

frames" on a Sunday when Johannesburg was "never more black" (*The Observer* September 20 1983) with:

> thousands of servants on the streets … off from domestic duties [while] whites feel more securely alone and at ease [gathering] with their friends behind their high garden walls.

The socio-political divisions depicted echoed the socio-political climate that preceded the country's first democratic election in the early nineties. The article, published in *The Observer* (1983), roughly ten years before the country's first democratic election (April 1994), revealed the entrenched patterns of white South Africans' social consciousness and behaviour as part of a particular fear, that of '[the] swart gevaar' (translated: a fear of the blacks)[97].

Against this backdrop I introduce the following sections made up of anecdotal memories of urban apartheid as an attempt to broaden the total picture of the city's urban character. This anecdotal history focuses on the lived experiences of people whose memories are tainted by the humilities and brutality of the city's racist urban environment. The inclusion of these anecdotes underlies the official marketing of the NMB "as hugely symbolic" (cf. Hopkins 2003) – it sets up a tension between peoples' experiences and contrivances of marketing and advertising that are especially evident in chapters 4-6 of this research. It is the orchestration of actual experiences into simulated ones that lie at the basis of the interrogation of the NMB.

ANECDOTAL HISTORIES

For Mohandas Ghandi (1869 – 1948) life in Johannesburg was epitomised by experiences in a coolie[98] location[99]. He soon became a significant[100] player in the early history of Johannesburg and the city has since been referred to as "[the] birthplace" of the philosophy of Satyagrapha[101] (soul force or passive resistance)

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[97] The manifestations of the pre-democracy society fascinated Sparks and today his vigilance has shifted to take in post-apartheid Johannesburg's "new fault lines" – new forms of exclusion. The changing dynamics of Johannesburg's middle-classes is visible in spatial changes on the city's edges and especially the strengthening of socio-economic enclaves to the north of the city centre.

[98] The offensive name used to label a South African Indian.

[99] Under Apartheid, these were townships - places where Black and Coloured people were forced to live.

[100] Johannesburg was the Satyagrapha movement's main centre of resistance from 1906 to 1912 (Itzken 2000:1).

[101] In the early 1900s the movement was inspired by popular struggles against oppression and throughout the twentieth century it [Satyagrapha] brought to a hastening end the rule of colonial empires (*ibid*).

(Itzken 2000:1). For Ghandi Johannesburg represented a space with "prodigious energy and coarse materialism" (Itzken 2000:1) which he described as:

> … people do not walk but [it] seems as if they run. No one has the leisure to look at anyone else, and everyone is apparently engrossed in thinking how to amass the maximum wealth in the minimum time! [And] amidst the scramble for wealth, people of colour (including Indians) were often trampled underfoot (Itzken 2000:1).

The indignity of racial assaults and divisions are described in Ghandi's memoirs in which he depicts Johannesburg's "huge social divides – from slums and shanties of [the] Coolie Location to comfortable white suburbs across town" (Itzken 2000:9). The colonial segregation that Ghandi experienced in the heart of the city for others similarly embodied feelings of cold anonymity and terror.

In the mid-sixties Noni Jabavu's[102] in the autobiographical *The Ochre People: Scenes from a South African life* (1963 in Bussy 1992: 287 – 297) depicts life in Johannesburg not well documented at the time[103]. The city that she came too was "big [with] unnameable terrors [in its] locations[104]; of dirt, disease, robbers and gangsters, squalor and of '*the language'* "(1963 in Bussy 1992: 287 – 297). Born into a relatively affluent Eastern Cape family, Noni had little choice over where to stay in the city. Transport was segregated and, she writes that if one dared to take a taxi[105] one "[risked] suicide; you could be robbed, probably knifed your body abandoned on the veldt or in some location backyard". She writes that as a Black South African one was immediately part of the lower ranks of society created by Apartheid legislation. One's human dignity was not recognised.

The city also exhibited a "cold anonymity", she writes, with people of different races not speaking to one another. It was also a fact "of life in urban areas" for "[the] Natives [to be] moved on[106] as white suburbs spread themselves" (1963 in Bussy

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[102] Jabavu is from an Eastern Cape Xhosa family of intellectuals, lived in England from an age of fourteen and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and married English film director Michael Cadbury Crosfield, a 'victim' of South African miscegenation laws (Bussy 1992: 287 – 297).

[103] In *A City that leapt to life: Johannesburg's flamboyant origins* (1985) Johannesburg citizens were described as "happy, confident and fiercely loyal to their town" (1985:3). The booklet – published to celebrate the city's centenary (1986) described Johannesburg's "balmy days, when champagne was fizzing and hearts were young" (*ibid*).

[104] Under apartheid this was noun used to refer to the place – township or other areas – where blacks or coloureds were forced to live.

[105] Blacks and whites had different experiences of the city. Blacks could not use official white transport.

[106] Jabavu describes what she calls "the great removal of Natives from urban Johannesburg" as "pictures of the destruction, of the inhabitants watching the bulldozers work while soldiers and Saracen

1992: 287 – 297). These forced removals as a 'folly' of municipal bureaucrats lead to the setting up of migratory shacks for people desperately in need of a place to live. "It cast a blight on municipalities like Johannesburg, which often wanted to act" (1963 in Bussy 1992: 287 – 297). People's daily lives were punctuated by a lack of tolerance and there was no space for cultural diversity as this difference, based purely on skin colour, resulted in the peculiar spatial polarisation with no sense of common experience, especially not one of common belonging.

These narrations of Jabavu pinpoint a loss or lack of a sense of commonality based on the racial divisions in the city; "[a state in which] the individual [has fallen] silent in the city" (cf. Sennett 1994:358). For decades, a lack of mutual participation that resulted from statute-enforced senses of exclusions as well as the kinds of inclusion that characterised Johannesburg, brought about a suffocating silence. The silence filled the space between two sides: the oppressor and the oppressed. The cruel expressions of power and enforced statutory silences produced states in which "[the] human body [was] almost choked by the knot of power" (Sennett 1996: 26)[107].

The experiences of Jabavu in a society that banned civic participation because of racial difference and imposed derogatory segregationist labelling brought about a situation in which blacks were seen in Edward Said's words as the 'Other'[108]. The effects of such 'othering' form the basis of what urban strategists have to contend with in Johannesburg and it is not a simple matter, nor is the kind of urban re-organisation unique to Johannesburg only as the similar questions asked about New York (cf. Sennett 1994) applies to the city's future, that is: Can civic culture be forged out of human difference [in Johannesburg]? (cf. Young 2000:221-8 as cited in Tomlinson *et al* (eds.) 2003:xi). Also, can a diverse civic culture become something people feel in their bones? (cf. Sennett 1994:359). What Sennett found about New

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tanks imported from Britain stood by. Armed white policemen scanned the evicted Africans whose belongings were in sad bundles on the ground waiting to be transported by military lorries" (1992:290)

[107] This quote refers to Richard Sennett's understanding of the suffocating effects of power on peoples' lives. His understanding is derived from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment*. For Sennett such power stood outside the will of the people in opposition to the notion of democracy – from the Greek *demokratia* meaning 'people' (*demos*) are the 'power' (*kratos*) (Sennett 1996:32).

[108] Late Palestinian literary critic Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1979) attacked the West for creating a notion of the East, the Orient, in order to dominate it by various forms of exploitation. In the same way, I suggests, that Apartheid legislation created the Black other as an exercise of the dominance.

York is that the city's "chameleon urban fabric has had great importance for [its] history of multiculturalism" (cf. Sennett 1994:359).

BELONGING AND IDENTITY IN A WHITE SOCIETY

This section specifically looks at notions of belonging[109] and identity in Johannesburg through the everyday stories of people who were disadvantaged by race. These emphasise that people like places "[have] biographies, histories [that offer] enriched … layers of meanings [through the retelling of] social and individual memories" (Yalouri 2001:17 cf. Tilley 1994). The subjective socio-historical memories[110] were moulded by the official policy of white supremacy[111] and reveal the effects of power, culture and dominance on the lives of people.

Like many other school children who lived with grandparents in the 'Transkei' while their mothers worked as domestic servants in Johannesburg, Margaret Zwana remembers the Johannesburg of the late seventies as:

> … a space of struggle … I had to have a special pass to come and visit my mother here. I was fifteen and had to wear a school uniform during my stay here. I was twice arrested and taken to the police cells in Hillbrow for taking a walk in the neighbourhood of Parktown where my mother worked as a domestic. My mother also had her passbook stamped [endorsed] on more than three occasions with a 72hour stamp. [That meant that she] had to leave the city, leave her employer and go 'home'. She had to then at a later stage again work her way back [to the city].

The early memories that Zwana has of Johannesburg's divided society relate to when she, as a teenager, visited her domestic worker mother and stayed in the 'out buildings' of the historic Herbert Baker Stone House in Parktown, Johannesburg. Zwana says that she, from very young, was aware of the restrictions placed on her personhood and movement that she now associates with pre-democratic Johannesburg[112]. Overcoming these memories is still a part of her struggle for a sense

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[109] The stories of peoples' lives are embedded in the communities they live in (Basu 2001: 342 cf. Alasdair MacIntyre 1984:220-221). Basu writes people 'invent' themselves 'anew' with a "personal lexicon … private thesaurus" to constitute "[an] 'association-net' of personal consciousness" (Basu *ibid*).

[110] For Yalouri (2001:16) people's identities flow from their "memories and experiences [and these then] become the medium for people to construct identities".

[111] This kind of historical account is based on Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003) conviction that places become 'inscribed' with experience and that the latter "is embedded [and] holds memories that implicate people and events [through narratives and praxis]" (*ibid* 185).

[112] For Francis Yates (1966) memory and place intertwine and that memory too is connected to '[its] supposed causes" (*ibid* 374). In this sense memory is connected with culture (*ibid* 389).

of belonging and identity[113]. At forty, she is struggling to find employment and sells 'fat-cakes' at construction sites to make ends. She is partly self-educated, but lacks the professionalism that comes with certificates that will enable her to start a career in marketing, she said.

What struck me about Margaret and why I see a connection between her story and that of the making of the NMB is her aspirations to find work and a place to live in the city. The story of her life on the margins through the coming into power of a black majority government has given her a sense of anticipation and belonging that she did not experience before. She sees the construction of the NMB as an emblem of her democratic liberation and as one for the city to be proud. However she experiences a sense of dislocation in terms of where this all fits into her life.

Similarly the late Nat Nakasa[114], a sixties' journalist, knew the anguish of living in a white Johannesburg with no sense of belonging or true identity other than that which was imposed on him. On the eve of leaving South Africa[115], in his weekly column in a white paper [116] he penned a piece under the heading: 'A Native of Nowhere'[117]. He wrote that the next week "[he'll write] as a former South African". This was not as he was leaving behind the country of his birth, but rather as he was no longer carrying the burden of an identity impressed on his consciousness. In the case of Johannesburg's regeneration and the recently constructed NMB, what late Nakasa might have expressed is a search for an authentic identity. I argue that once again Johannesburg is experiencing the imprint of another official identity. For Nakasa there was a commonplace identity tag of "kaffir". He mockingly wrote:

> I am supposed to be a Pondo, but I don't even know the language of that tribe. I was brought up in a Zulu-speaking home, my mother being Zulu. Yet I can no longer think in Zulu because that language cannot cope with the demands of our day. I could not, for instance, discuss negritude in Zulu. Even an article like this would not be possible in Zulu. …. I am not a tribesman. I am, inescapably, a part of the city slums, the factory machines and our beloved shebeens … I am more at home with an Afrikaner than with a West African.

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[113] Earlier this year (2004) Zwana told me that she did not belief any written rendering of what it was like to live under Apartheid can actually fully describe it – the pain, humiliation and awful discrimination. She reiterated how it has affected her still marginalized position today.
[114] From Jennifer Cwrys-Williams's *South African Dispatches* (1989).
[115] Nakasa left Johannesburg and went to live in New York and he was reported to have "[fallen] to his death from the 7th floor apartment he shared with his wife".
[116] Nakasa's articles were published in 'As I see it', a Saturday column in the *Rand Daily Mail*.
[117] *Rand Daily Mail* June 20 1969.

The arbitrariness and fluidity of identities and identity-making processes are part of an evolving politics of being and belonging which today are visible in the processes and projects like the inner city of Johannesburg's reinvention with the aid of spectacular projects like the NMB. The project's connections to the ideals of nation building involve socio-economic, political and cultural developments (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005:129) and the importance of the media to consolidate the ruling power base (*ibid*).

JOHANNESBURG AS TRANSITIONAL GLOBAL SPACE

The Johannesburg urban context in its post-apartheid democratic incarnation contains the city's aspirations for world-class citizenship. This context however contains "new fault lines" (cf. Sparks 2003) as result of new forms of exclusions in the city. The inner city emerges as an idiosyncratic space; a space not lived in by the socio-economic middle-classes. These classes prefer the upmarket residential, business and retail enclaves to the north of the city's urban centre. It is interesting to note that a new sense of belonging has developed in the urban edge developments that have become associated with a moneyed Johannesburg social class[118]. The city's transitional make-up reflects specific apartheid planning (cf. Sparks 2003). I likened these to acts of "cultural territorialisation" (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1999). The latter is also embedded in the meanings in and *behind* the making of the NMB[119].

In short, Johannesburg as a 'follower' of trends in developed Western cities is a product of the economic, social and urban changes across the world in the thirties when modernisation, mass production. Like cities elsewhere, Johannesburg too has

[118] In 1999 at a public seminar during the Grahamstown Arts Festival, urban planner Dr Wallace van Zyl cautioned against urban planning's move away from being a "Reform and Welfare movement against Health Hazards of the Industrial Revolution" to ones that ignored public interest and social welfare. He concerns were that city planners were "leap[ing] on the wagon of economic competition [and building cities on] private profit alone" (Van Zyl 1999). The planners were ignoring "intangible and symbolic values". He said: "Urban elites and the power structures may marginalize the poor (street people) who must fend for themselves in a squatter camps or ghettoes. The rich can afford to 'internalise' their private compounds and private transport, and may profit also from the 'privatisation' of public squares and parks in the city. Capital cities world wide have been variously described as "displays of grandeur, national treasures or shrines … containers of sentiment and symbolism and a moving aesthetic experience".

[119] In conversation with Gordon Metz of Kagiso Media – the 'architect' of the Government's Legacy Project – it was pointed out how the Colonial and Apartheid pasts of the country had inscribed themselves on the urban imaginary (August 2005). He explained that the Legacy Project came about in the mid-nineties to address the one-sidedness of such pasts and to drive projects that would celebrate the struggle for liberation.

had the automobile[120] change its urban character. In the seventies the removal of industries out of the inner cities left urban wastelands[121]. The 80s sub-urbanisation trends - the construction of suburban shopping malls and complexes of which the edge-developments are the apotheosis (cf. Garreau 1991) – further destroyed the inner cities' urban fabric. Johannesburg's enclave business-cum-entertainment and shopping developments, for example Sandton City and Melrose Arch, have sprung up on the city's periphery nearby security-tight residential compounds such as Dainfern. Also, entertainment and leisure orientated centres such as Rosebank, et cetera, have developed in opposition to the original city centre[122].

Considered in this chapter are a range of inner city changes, those of spaces of exclusion during apartheid in the inner city to efforts today to control the decaying urban centre by promoting this space for big business interests (cf. Beavon 2004; cf. Hopkins 2003). The city's re-invention of its symbolic centre and the reviving the inner-city as a functional one (cf. Beavon 2004; cf. Hopkins 2003) form part of the meanings of the NMB project: a project that is more than just a transport link "but [aims] to mobilise private investment back to the city centre" (cf. Hopkins 2003:67 cites Nazir). Ali Nazir (in Hopkins 2003:67) states:

> The Nelson Mandela Bridge thus fulfils the twin objective of reconstruction and of adding another dimension to the African Renaissance.

The meanings in the making of the NMB project thus lie in its physical and symbolic presence as an emblem for the city's rejuvenation (cf. Hopkins 2003). The NMB appears like a monument through its sense of fixity and permanence (cf. Harbison 1993:9). However at this early stage of consideration it is difficult to predict future outcomes. It is however possible to argue that the NMB "interiorises" collective memory (cf. Basu 2001:342). For Basu (2001:342) this implies that people and places have become intertwined with processes that involve myth, history and memory making. He writes:

> … myths of place [provide]a reservoir of 'cultural resources' (Basu 2001: 342).

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[120] In the thirties Johannesburg was known as the "New York on the highveldt" (cf. Clive Chipkin).
[121] Chapter 3 looks at Johannesburg's urban wasteland Newtown – the space where the Nelson Mandela Bridge stands.
[122] For theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991) the organisation of space in society is significant as the space reveals specific cultural codes and symbolic meanings.

This critical point underlies the multiple meanings of the NMB and stresses the relationship between ideas that combine the processes of making cities with the ideals for the nation (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:x). In the inner city of Johannesburg the urban regeneration narratives appear embodied in those that "build fabric which celebrates heritage emancipation" (Lipman 2004)[123]. Johannesburg's built environment consequently may be understood as a decision to set the city free from the past socio-political constraints, albeit sometimes embodying the material expressions of other utopian nationalist ideals.[124] The city's evolving historiography[125] thus finds embodiment in the fast-moving processes of innovation that affect its materiality and influence future predictions on the effects of rapid change on the everyday experiences of its citizens. Past spaces[126] are being re-colonised and past historiographies are now being used as the sources for new ones. For Eleana Yalouri (2001:50) "history is an essential element in the cohesion of a nation". She writes that:

> Lacking a history means lacking grounds for national recognition (Yalouri 2001:50).

The apartheid roots in place and people making (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1999) are part of processes that appear directed towards a setting aside of "spatially territorialised notions of culture" (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1999: 6). The culture of Apartheid and its dictates, that of where people lived, with whom they socialised, and even terms of employment today appear to make space for other forms of "cultural territorialisation" (Ferguson & Gupta 1999:6). What is happening under the banner of creating new democratic spaces, the significance of the NMB (cf. Hopkins 2003) also includes a mosaic of embedded meanings that are part of the city's changing politico-historical landscape.

In this sense then, the historical connections between the city and its spaces reveal that history "[is not only about] drawing peoples' territory [but that that act of]

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[123] Newspaper columnist and architectural critic Alan Lipman writes "disquietingly [on the] inner city revamp [as an act] to counter its divisive inheritance [and to] build fabric which celebrates heritage emancipation" (*The Sunday Independent* Feb. 8 2004:11).
[124] "Places [are] simultaneously in the land, peoples' minds, customs and bodily practices" (Low & Zuniga 2003:6 cf. Stuart Rockefeller 2002).
[125] Yalouri (2001:50) distinguishes between history as suggesting 'truths' and historicity as about "[more] profound qualities and virtues." History displays the record of, for her, the Greek nation whereas historicity implies "the richness of the record" (*ibid*).
[126] I suggest that the NMB's meanings lie embedded in the "richness [of the past]" (cf. *ibid*). See also Yalouri's reference (*ibid*) to the "dualistic character" of writing history, that of nation and territory (cf. Malkki 1992:26).

drawing one's territory is a way of writing history" (Yalouri 2001:50). I am intrigued by the meanings of the NMB in terms of the latter observation by Yalouri (2001:50). I refer to what she sees as the role of the Acropolis to Athenians – though the connection between the NMB and the Acropolis appears rather remote. The connection between these two national sites lies in the promotion of the NMB as that which connects the city and its people: an expression in Johannesburg's built environment of spatial and historical significance through the iconic person of Mandela.

The significance of the NMB relates to what Italio Calvino (1972) calls the city's hardware (its built form) and the software: people and their experiences with the thread in between of that which connects people and places historically (cf. Calvino 1972:10). Musing about his personally imagined city of Zaire, Calvino (Calvino 1972:11) notes:

> [the city's past is contained] like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the external lighting rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

The official meanings of the NMB project are those of its mainstream promotion as a "gateway" into the city (Hopkins 2003:7 cites Nelson Mandela). However the NMB's meanings also connect to the daily struggles of people in the inner city. The project as joint Gauteng Provincial Government and City of Johannesburg effort to revitalise Newtown is significant in terms of its official positioning as "[a way to promote] the competitive advantage of doing business in the inner-city" (Hopkins 2003:58 cites Shilowa). For Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa the NMB project is:

> … honouring Mandela [and] our gateway to the future – a symbol of the rebuilding of our nation (cf. Hopkins 2003:7).

The many-sided meanings of the NMB project are delicately suspended between progressive official efforts angling for a slice of the global capitalist market (and its trickle-down effects) and that of the everyday lived realities of thousands of struggling people on the inner-city streets. These contrasting yet interlinked scenarios define two visible sides of the inner city's downtown regeneration programme. In terms of the official narratives, that of: "[the NMB's] positive impact … will be felt long after construction is completed [and] its symbolism will be invaluable to Johannesburg's effects to mobilise private investment back to the city where jobs can

be created … (cf. Hopkins 2003 cites Nazir Ali).[127] CEO of the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) Nazir Ali comments that the NMB "[ensures] a better quality of life for all our citizens" (cf. Hopkins 2003:42). Ali is quoted saying:

> The Nelson Mandela Bridge thus fulfils the twin objective of reconstruction and of adding another dimensions to the African Renaissance (cf. Hopkins 2003:67).

The underside of the "twin objective" is peoples' everyday expectations of freedom after apartheid combined with their struggle for survival against the odds of poverty (cf. Emdon 2003: 215-230). The project's significance lies in the city's transitional positioning, a space in which the city's new urban narratives balance local needs with global ones. This is evident in the NMB's role to promote tourism (Hopkins 2003; cf. Woods 2003). It is then also possible to consider the NMB position in terms of notions such as transnationalism where "belonging" becomes connected to that of a global "community" (cf. McLuhan 1964). I refer to Marshall McLuhan's notion of the "global village" as result of technological invention and especially the shrinking of time and space in place. The city and the nation extends beyond its ordinary context to include another imagery community's[128] expectations, that of the global tourist.

The background for the NMB's significance is a set of historical references that shift backwards and forwards to expose the city's contentious apartheid past in relation to the inner-city's official regeneration agenda for the "run-down" downtown (cf.Tomlinson *et al* 2003; also Beavon 2004). Epitomised in Nelson Mandela's words: "We must move from the position of a resistance movement to one of builders" (Hopkins 2003:36)[129], the NMB is said to "[promote] the social and economic growth of the city … [in South Africa and] on the African continent" (Mandela in Hopkins 2003:7). Mandela says:

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[127] CEO of the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) Nazir Ali commented that the NMB "was to ensure a better quality of life for all our citizens" (cf. Hopkins 2003:42).

[128] After Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) in which he writes of the nation as "[an] imagined community". "Nationalism is directly predicted on resemblance [and the] pivotal idea is that all citizens are … alike; that is what Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community' implies" (Herzfield 1997:27; see also Yalouri (2001:50) citing Malkki 1992:26).

[129] Cited in Hopkins (2003:36). Nelson Mandela "walked to freedom … at 4.16pm on 11 February 1990" the week after the ANC and other outlawed organisations were un-banned by Nationalist Party president FW de Klerk. Curiously ten years later I briefly met a Johannesburg florist who said he was a personal assistant of de Klerk's and that on the day of Nelson Mandela's release de Klerk "was unusually quiet". De Klerk said to him: "If you are my friend after today, you are a friend indeed" (in conversation 2000).

> … the Bridge will attract trade into the metropolis's commercial hub and its splendour will appeal to tourists, providing Johannesburg with a matchless and recognizable signature (*ibid*).

This prompts a question, that of: To what extent does Johannesburg constitute a tourist destination? The next section, 'Living Museum' looks at the significance of the NMB in terms of its position to draw investment from the city's affluent edges to the inner city and position itself in the global capitalist tourism economy[130]. The section looks at the theme-ing of life in the inner city after apartheid to attract national and international investment (cf. Hopkins 2003) as a "world class African city" (cf. Beavon 2004).

The history of the city highlights the significance of the NMB as potent symbol in the city's regeneration programme. The contemporary transitional manoeuvres in the city are those of groups of people who engineer change and, ultimately, create the city's post-apartheid historiography. Such engineering is, however, not a simple matter as efforts are compounded by 21st century techno-global changes. The city seems to not only aspire to amend and adjust its fraught socio-cultural and political past but I feel, has to invent a new iconography[131]. The latter is reflected in moves towards a simulated state for the enactment of its past in local style for a global audience[132].

LIVING MUSEUM

In this section Johannesburg's role in a globalising tourist market is looked at in terms of the city's transitional historical context (as outlined in the previous section) and also as the ideals and dreams of people in position of power to market the city locally,

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[130] The promotion of the city initially was done through the Joburg City Council's marketing division under Mandy Jean Woods and now is done by the Johannesburg Tourism Company (JTC). The company is a Section 21one that was planned during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD 2002) and acts as a "convention bureau for Joburg's business developments" (in conversation with Jaco Engelbrecht, JTC business operations manager – June 8 2005). JTC's first chairman was the late Sowetan editor Aggrey Klaaste who was known for the newspaper's nation building ideals epitomised by a vision "to look beyond the present" (cf. *Mail and Guardian* editorial – June 25 to July 1 2004). The company is municipally owned and functions as a public-private partnership that receives a subsidy from the city council (*ibid*). The JTC's core business is "to attract conventions and international events, such as: sports events, as well as participating in bids and tenders involved in these" (*ibid*). The company sports the NMB in its logo.

[131] In *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (1997) Herzfield writes about his 'fascination' with "the desire to control external images of a national character" and "[the presentation of individual selves] within the intimacy of national space" (1997:ix). These observations underline the processes of nation-building that underlies the meanings of the NMB.

[132] Herzfield notion 'iconicity' implies "[the presentation] of a formal image of national and collective self" (1997:ix). It is "an effective way of creating self-evidence" (*ibid* 26). I am interested in relating the meanings of the NMB to what he refers to as: "All social performance reifies people in culturally coded roles or identities" (*ibid* 26).

internationally and globally (cf. Hopkins 2003). Johannesburg, not unlike European and North American cities that profit from "tourism's role in economic regeneration" (Rogerson 2003) is inventing "the Johannesburg experience of tourism" (*ibid*: 130). Comparatively speaking the city appears part of the international trends in urban economic revitalisation in which "cities economies [are transformed] from places of production to places of consumption" (Rogerson 2003:130).

For Johannesburg tourism means that the city is able to connect its regeneration to what has become "[a] potential 'sunrise' economic sector" (Rogerson 2003:130). Johannesburg is marketing itself as a tourist destination: a themed reinvention based on the past organisation of socio-cultural space in the city by the country's one-sided social history[133]. The former juxtaposes with the socio-economic changes taking place now under the banner of democracy and which are poised "[to] 'sell' the city to potential visitors" (Rogerson 2003:131)[134]. The latter implies a kind of reinvention of a specific sort and, in this sense all Johannesburgers have become 'tourists' in their own city. The invented city's urban narratives are signposted in tourist brochures that "celebrate democracy"[135] and break with the city (and country's) "thunderous"[136]past.

The importance of tourism ties into the meanings of the bridge and reveals the planning operations of people in charge of the propagation of such meanings (see Chapters 3 and 4; also Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xiv; Beavon 2004:274). It also reveals the contrived inner-city regeneration planning that leaves little to people to fill in themselves, but rather happens as that which is planned from outside, imposed on the urban-scape and not necessarily complementing notions of the public sphere (cf. *ibid*; Herzfield 1997:26).

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[133] The city's socio-historical context is a space inscribed with narratives that describe the early mining of gold from 1886 to the societal changes brought about by industrial development and mostly the politics of racial segregation.

[134] In the week after the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge a new tourism company was formed – the Johannesburg Tourism Company – "to tell the story of Johannesburg in its historical and political context" (RosebankKillarneyGazette weekending July 25 2003:5).

[135] This extract from the Gauteng Tourism Authority information brochure promotes the city of Johannesburg (2003/4).

[136] Allister Sparks refers to the Apartheid ear as "[the] thunderous history of my country" (203:vii). He describes an era of white male supremacy which was rooted in Christian Nationalist fundamentalism and the tortures of living in a society divided by race where the 'other' was black – a racially inferior person, a lesser white (the idea here of the 'other' as a lesser is derived from Edward Said's *Orientalism*).

Inner city planning since the late seventies, as anthropologist Charles Rutheiser notices, has developed "phantasmagorical landscapes characterised by fragmentation, near-instantaneous communication, privatised public spaces, highly stylised simulations, and the subordination of locality to the demands of a globalising market culture"(Rutheiser 1996:4; see also Sorkin 1992; Crawford1992 & Boyer 1992). Similarities exist between the aforementioned and inner city transformations in Johannesburg's downtown, epitomised by the presence of the Nelson Mandela Bridge. In conversation with anthropologist Johannes Fabian (March 2004) he commented on the changing socio-cultural and political milieu of South African cities saying that these changes were similar to ones in Europe known under the label *Erinnerungskultur* – "roughly translated as 'cultures of memories'" – and warned against the commercialisation of this phenomenon as: "such an act actually destroys exactly what it sets out to preserve"[137].

Worldwide trends in inner city regeneration now capitalise on the global tourism boom and in Johannesburg this also is part of the meanings associated with the Bridge (cf. Zukin 1998; also Boyer 1992; Crawford 1992; Sorkin 1992). The city's regeneration programmes fits into those across the western world to present the personal and collective histories and experiences of people and also create emblems for cities, such as symbols[138] to drive local economies[139]. The construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge therefore interconnects on different levels with the political efforts striving to overcome past racial inequality within the ideals of a democratic nation (cf. Herzfield 1997:26).

Viewed against the backdrop of these, the construction of the bridge sets the scene for the scripting of future narratives not bound by ordinary nation-making ideals. The parameters that define the nation appear to extend beyond the nation to include a set

[137] Fabian delivered a talk entitled 'Memory and Counter Memory' (University of the Witwatersrand's Institute of Social and Scientific Research March 19th 2004).
[138] Johannesburg is not unique, just following a trend. This week *The Sunday Independent* (December 2003:1) published a photograph of the Freedom Tower in New York, a monument to the destruction of Twin Towers in September 11 2001 and to remind people of America's refusal to submit to tyranny.
[139] An interesting outside perspective of Johannesburg's post-apartheid inner-city theme-ing is perhaps that of illustrated in a documentary film 'From Dachau with love' (2003) by Bernd Fischer – his bittersweet narration of his concentration camp hometown as tourist attraction.

of codes that define another imaginary community[140], the expectations and aspirations of the global tourist. The extent to which Johannesburg constitutes a tourist destination is detectable in the following statement, that:

> Johannesburg is known as the living museum of the fight for democracy. There are notable people and places all around the city – because everywhere you go, you bump into the history of the struggle and apartheid[141].

This statement is drawn from a newspaper interview in which the tourist and marketing director for the city, Mandy Jean Woods, mentions the Nelson Mandela Bridge as a "major draw for future visitors to Gauteng" (*The Sunday Times Metro* October 12 2003: 10). Woods' mentioning of the branding the Bridge as an emblem of struggle fits Maggie Ronayne's[142] (2001) description of historical tourism. The latter is a commodified experience in which:

> progressive social forces [drive the] rediscovering how to live history in an active way … heritage-as-a-process is not an impossibility [but] simply impossible *in itself* , without reference to a broader transformative struggle (Ronayne 2001:162).

For Ronayne (2001) the 'consumer-tourist' seeks out forms of world heritage sign-posting which, she writes: "[satisfies a] demand for the presence of 'the visitor' [and guarantees] the creation of demand for heritage tourism [where] the present [is told] as if it were the past and vice versa" (Ronayne 2001:57). Heritage tourism "[becomes part of] the world of commodification … [in which a] distinctive 'sense of place' [is derived from] a suitably iconic, national past [which] is re-colonized as a localized and commodified present" (Ronayne 2001:161). This perspective of Ronayne on commodified tourist attractions are part of what I see as the processes in Johannesburg where the city's struggle against apartheid features in the inner city's reinvention. For example, the city is packaged for national and international tourists in

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[140] After Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) in which he writes of the nation as "[an] imagined community". "Nationalism is directly predicted on resemblance [and the] pivotal idea is that all citizens are … alike; that is what Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" implies" (Herzfeld 1997: 27).

[141] From an interview with Mandy Jean Woods, the director of tourism and marketing for Joburg City Council in *The Sunday Times Metro* October 12 2003: 10.

[142] In 'The Political Economy of Landscape' Maggie Ronayne (2001) writes on the 'commodification of the heritage spectacle'. The article is included in Barbara Bender and Margot Winer (eds) *Contested Landscapes: Movement Exile and Place* (2001). Ronayne sees the consumer-tourist market as spawning "[an] idealized pre-colonial past through the monumentalising of nationality [to be exchanged as] commodity-past" (2001:161).

a tourist map entitled, 'The Celebrate Democracy map – The Freedom of Our People.'[143].

The Nelson Mandela Bridge features in the aforementioned map issued by the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA). The NMB in this way also forms part of the kind of urban scenarios in other western cities across the world where the scripts for urban regeneration lies in "[the] pantheon of the city's visionary dreamers [who] conjure … alternative mythologies of the city's past and present" (Rutheiser 1996: 14). The Bridge is part of the set of urban narratives that drives efforts to create a world-class city (cf. Hopkins 2003; Beavon 2004) and also a viable tourist destination (cf. Hopkins 2003; Beavon 2004)[144]. Not unlike what Rutheiser finds in the urban manifestations in Atlanta, the making of the NMB appears as a new frontier in the history of the city for "[the city's] people, places, and politics, its myths and realities as well as the processes that define, align, and produce them" (Rutheiser 1996: 4).

I would like to briefly point to the official meanings of the NMB as a catalyst for the inner city revitalisation and as a tourist attraction by looking at the NMB's significance as a product of contemporary official innovations to restructure the "model apartheid city"[145] into a "world-class African city" (cf. Masondo in Hopkins 2003:9; also Beavon 2004: 274)[146]. The NMB project launches the bridge as a landmark structure for the inner city's "economic growth, innovation and excellence" (cf. cf. Masondo in Hopkins 2003:9) and projects it as promoting "bustling tourism"

[143] The map is issued by the Gauteng Tourism Authority (2004) and lists 'places of struggle … on the road to democracy" (*ibid*). It cites a line from President Thabo Mbeki opening address at the 2003 Tourism Indaba in which he said: "I would go to places from where humanity emerged and think about issues that have shaped who I am today". Also, from Nelson Mandela's inauguration speech: "We dedicate this day to all the heroes and heroines in this country and the rest of the world who have sacrificed in many ways and surrendered their lives so that we could be free. Their dreams have become reality. Freedom is their reward" (May 10 1994).

[144] Also www.joburg.org.

[145] Christopher's "model apartheid city" (Czeglédy 2003:24) is "[one along] *Johannesburg* lines … [its] focal down-town core traversed by a single railroad line running from east to west, flanged by white groups areas to the north and a variety of industrial, black, Indian and coloured groups areas to the south" (Czeglédy *ibid* refers to Christopher 1994:105).

[146] As outlined in the introduction to the research (Chapter 1) I do not regard the NMB project as uniquely South African but rather as a derivation of global best practices in urban regeneration, a generic or replica or montage of urban processes elsewhere in the world. This is the reason why I have decided to focus on everyday lived experiences in the inner city and also present here anecdotal references to life in the city under Apartheid.

(cf. Masondo in Hopkins 2003:9). Nelson Mandela (cf. Hopkins 2003:7) describes its significance as follows:

> …a gateway [that] will attract trade into the metropolis's commercial hub and its splendour will appeal to tourists, providing Johannesburg with a matchless and recognizable signature.

AFTER DISLOCATION, A CITY RE-IMAGINED

The NMB as tourist attraction with its meanings as part of the inner city's regeneration project also reveals "[the city's] urban dislocation [and] suburban disengagement from [its centre] and the nation as lived identity" (cf. Czegledy 2003:22). Johannesburg is a city with many parts that, like modern cities elsewhere, is made up of "forms of swift transportation … " (cf. Mumford 1979:641)[147]. An early critic of the modern city Lewis Mumford sees modern communication and transportation as "lamentably [failing to] integrate [people as] the essential components of the city" (Mumford 1979:643). Johannesburg's fragmentation is considered as part of the authorities plans for integrating city-building and nation-making ideals (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xi).

The latter refers to efforts in Johannesburg to "[make a space for] its residents also to identify with it and feel a moral attachment to its fortunes" (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xi). This appears encapsulated in a need to consolidate what appears as:

> In the post-apartheid era, institutions are in disarray and cultural identities flourish. There are now as many Johannesburgs as there are cultural identities (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xi).

This is the context for viewing the inner city rejuvenation in terms of the city's lack of coherence, the impossibility of a single coherent history for Johannesburg. The meanings of the NMB are part of the city's evolving historiography. A question that comes to mind is: "What institutions will enable the citizens of Johannesburg to live 'together in difference'"? (cf. Young 2000:221-8 cited in Tomlinson *et al* (eds.) 2003). The backdrop for the latter is "[a] rise of new politics, changes in cultural, religious and social practice, and new desires and expectations" (cf. Van Onselen 2000:12). This 'newness' is part of Johannesburg's already unstable character, that of: "[a city that] has and will continue to change in significant ways [and where divisions

[147] Technology's impact on the city is that of creating "a new world [with] invisible boundaries" (Mumford 1979:641). He writes: "The visible city [becomes] the dispensable place of assemblage [and functioning best when] superimposed one on the other" (*ibid*).

of race, class and space will] continue to haunt it [Johannesburg]" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. *ibid*). In this respect, Tomlinson notes:

> [Johannesburg's] white population understood it to be theirs and the black population could neither escape nor significantly change the city's role in their lives (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix).

This describes Johannesburg in "grand" Apartheid "[when] there was a single [one]" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix). Spaces in the city were clearly defined, like elsewhere in the country and that meant that there was "one official Johannesburg, all the others were hidden or suppressed" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix). This persisted until post-1994 "[when] a multiplicity of Johannesburgs came into being, each with a different imaginative moment" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix). The remaking of the inner-city, now in splendid evidence, was contemplated back in the 80s however not until the non-racial democracy was it possible to contemplate its remaking. However, it is not an easy task, as:

> The forging [of institutions that will enable all citizens to live together] is more than a matter of allocating resources and organizing tasks, it also requires a shift in the way we think about cities….The city has to be re-imagined in ways that both remember the past… (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix).

Looking at Johannesburg's re-imagined urbanscape one is able to sense the role played by international governmental leaders, CEOs of transnational corporations, international consultants and global finance agencies (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:ix; also Beavon 2004:274) as well as real estate investment and re-investment (cf. Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xi). The city, after decades of racial policing and exclusions, in the late nineties adopted a plan to promote the city as a "world city, an international metropolis …" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii). Efforts were directed at ridding the inner-city of "[of] an image of a crime-ridden and deteriorating city, an inner-city in decline" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii).

Whether the story is told from the perspective of "white sub-urbanites" or relocated township dwellers, the abandoned inner city "shell" after retail business, insurance companies and the stock exchange moved to the northern suburbs became a space of contention. An influx of peoples from all over Africa and South Africa became visible on the inner-city streets and its effects still question the essence of "belonging", and that involves:

> Black South Africans have been forced to re-imagine Johannesburg not as belonging to all South Africans or to them alone but hared instead with others in a new African cosmopolitanism (Tomlinson 1999 as cited in Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii).

The dual function of the inner-city regeneration appears linked as much to notions of the nation as those aimed at asserting itself in a globally competitive world (cf. Zukin 1998). Consequently, the city's past reflects the city now – as Brazilian poet and professor of architecture Lourdes Teodoro writes:

> … history plants consciousness in the opaque moment (Teodoro 1992: 382)[148].

Contemporary Johannesburg is a socio-economic phenomenon epitomised by developing economic disparities between a growing middle-class and an equally growing under-class or poor (see Chapter 6 'Urban Contradictions'). Part of the meanings of the bridge is then specifically related to the developing socio-economic disparities highlighted by the presence of the Nelson Mandela Bridge in Newtown and also the lack of involvement of civic movements in the decision-making done at the level of people in power and which will affect the future of the city. The absence of effective civic structures[149] today introduces the reasons for including in Chapter 3 the workings of a civil society movement in the late seventies and eighties to oppose urban developments in Newtown.

The NMB appears loaded with symbolism, not just as something that bridges across a divide but specifically because of its socio-political and significant name, one that is easily marketable and even open to branding[150] across the country and across the world (see Chapter 7: 'Concluding Thoughts'). The Johannesburg regeneration process is part of a global phenomenon in which cities across the world compete with one another by inventing local narratives (cf. Ruthheiser 1996).

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[148] In a poem the voices of women *griots* recount: 'Generation of fear' (from an anthology *Daughters of Africa*, 1992). The editor of the anthology Margaret Bussy remarks: There is a need to know where we come from or else we would make less sense of where we are going …. These words have specific relevance to South Africa, Johannesburg – a city in transition. However, it is also important to be aware of: "past tribulations must not bow us, rather strengthen us for what ever the future holds" (Bussy 1992:xxxv). I have included these extracts here to stress the importance of history at the same time as suggest the problems inherent in clinging to history.

[149] Cf. Emdon 2003: 215-230.

[150] Chief executor Jeremy Sampson of *Interbrand* (Johannesburg) says that 'a face' is an important and so too a name, but most importantly a brand need to inspire trust (*The Sunday Times* October 5 2003:19). In the same paper Thebe Ikalafeng (managing director of Brand Leadership) said people are important brands too … "Mother Theresa, like Nelson Mandela is recognised among the top brands globally, along with Coco-Cola and MacDonald's" (*ibid* 2).

It is as if the country's new constitution has opened the way for the imagining of "new kinds of geographies … new kinds of futures"[151] for Johannesburg – and other South African cities (cf. Robinson 2003:259). The end of apartheid has challenged the city[152] to overcome "the long burden of separate development and the threat of international isolation " (Robinson 2003:259). Johannesburg's new frontiers extend into an evolving and globalising world – leaving the city to precariously perform a tightrope act between its quest for global recognition and that of internalising its post-apartheid predicament.

The former refers to the fact that the demise of apartheid has not ended the experiences of inequality and segregation as the future Johannesburg is entwined with the idea of a global city (Robinson 2003:259). However, the post-industrial globalising trends accentuate the post-apartheid city's dichotomous[153] nature in which the urban poor in the city count "just under a million people"[154]. Ironically, with the Nelson Mandela Bridge the postapartheid city wants to recreate itself in a fashion that will avert comparisons with poor and starving metropolises in Africa. With the NMB, the city[155] sees itself as: a London, a New York, a Sidney, but another generic world city[156].

The bridge's structure appears as an exaggeration on the city landscape and unlike other significant bridges in the world it does not cross a natural divide, but a 'man-made' one. Also, the multi-million Rand bridge in the poorest part of Newtown

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[151] Bohlin (2001:275)writes: "… socially produced spatiality is never permanently fixed, but always remains open to, on the one hand, contestations in the present and, on the other, further transformations in the future [and] notions of place and belonging [shape] narratives" (*ibid*).

[152] According to Czeglédy (2003:28) Johannesburg urban centre was 'dislodged' by wealthy urban peripheral developments. A disproportional distribution of wealth resulted in the city's lopsided character – a poor decaying and deserted inner city contrasting with its wealthy 'edges-cities' (after Garreau 1991).

[153] This is the opinion of Neil Fraser, the executive director of Partnerships for Urban Regeneration (PUR) and the Central Johannesburg Partnerships (cf. official citichat website on Dec.8 2003. The city has no specific plan for "thousands of people living in unacceptable and often unsafe conditions in the inner-city which impacts negatively on their quality of life and also negatively on the fabric of the city itself" (*ibid*). Fraser is of the opinion that the urban poor need to be provided with "suitable accommodation … without removing them from the opportunities that only a city can offer"(*ibid*).

[154] On the same website as mentioned in footnote 153. Robinson (2003:259) urges that the urban poor are given priority in urban planning.

[155] Gotz and Simone (2003) in 'Belonging and Becoming' write: "… many African cities are seeing long-valued frameworks of 'social and spatial fix' gradually undermined [as] displacement is accelerating" (*ibid* 123). What has emerged is "new orientations towards place-making" (*ibid* 124).

[156] Http://www.mandelabridge.co.za; blueiq.co.za. See also earlier references to Haila 1997; Sassen 1991.

enclaves the urban poor as onlookers to a future that they do not know how to become part of (see Chapter 4, 5 and 6). The bridge's physical location in a divided[157] Johannesburg therefore is as important as its temporality: at a critical juncture in the process of nation building. These spatial and temporal dimensions of the Bridge suggest a possible way of interrogating its meanings as that which grows from the city's polarised past socio-political milieu to a symbolic or imaginary space. It is as if the scripts that had previously defined sociability in city, now have become the inspiration for contemporary narratives on structuring the city's post-apartheid identity. The history of the city's divided past is therefore as important as today's trends by planners worldwide to create emblematically significant urban environments to boost their cities in a globally competing tourist-orientated world (Rutheiser 1996:4; Moore 1999).

The transformations in downtown Johannesburg are thus more than the antidote to past ills in terms of what Ruthheiser (1996) and Moore (1999) suggest. They are an act of mimicry[158], a kind of copycat phenomenon in which globally competing nations launch their capitals with competing significance in a spiral of publicity and one-upmanship. It is my contention that it is exactly those cities on the lower ranks of socio-economic development who aspire for the mythological 'world class' label – a somewhat ambiguous category – and compete with other more established cities on an international basis.

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[157] Beyond race, economic displacement marks Johannesburg's post-industrial character: a collapsed city centre contrasts with its flourishing edge-developments (Czeglédy 2003). The rise of such edge developments correspond with Joel Garreau's (1991) depiction of the "Edge City" phenomenon that characterises late 20th century American cities as "a third wave" in urbanisation. After post-WW 11 processes of sub-urbanisation, followed the 60s and 70s American suburban mall phenomenon and, in the nineties, Garreau writes: "… our ways of creating wealth, the essence of urbanism – our jobs – [have moved] out to where most of us have lived and shopped for two generations … the Edge City [with its] office monuments" (4 - 6). He regards 'Edge City' as "the laboratory of how civilised and liveable urban America will be, [but mostly as] works in progress" (8). His concern is over "[the] amorphous essentials [such as] 'growth' and 'quality of life' [as we] flee the old urban patterns of the nineteenth century for the new ones of the twenty-first [in the] unsettling environment of Edge City [where] great wealth may be acquired, but without a sense that the place has a community" (10-14). "It is a creation of a new world, being shaped by the free in a constantly reinvented land" (15).

[158] Outlining contemporary trends in restructuring, Soja (1989:186) mentions a global phenomenon "paralleling" and also the tendency of "intensified territorial competition [as the result of] accelerated geographical mobility of industrial and industry-related capital" (*ibid*). Soja describes a paradoxical tendency towards "reaching out from the urban to the global and a reaching in from the global to the urban locale" (*ibid* 188).

The re-engineering of the urban space in Newtown is tied to a new iconography[159]; a space for the enactment of the city's past in a particular local style for the consumption of a global audience. The Bridge, as this research aims to illustrate, is more than just a transport link between the city and its edges but ties the city's mining origins to its painful apartheid past and in the changing postapartheid socio-political and cultural milieu, official aspirations are to put on offer a 'world class city' to attract local and foreign business investment and also to become an international tourist destination[160].

The discussions in this Chapter sets the scene for the unravelling of the meanings of the NMB in the chapters that follow and especially in terms of what lawyer and urban planner Erica Emdon sees as:

> [the] prerogatives of capital [that] continue to ensure that real social equality is a dream for most people (2003:215).

The history of Johannesburg through the anecdotal history of its apartheid past is, therefore, not only a part of the context for the unravelling of the meanings of the bridge – the other is the city's endeavours to connect itself to the world of cities and experiences (cf. Alonso 1994; Källtorp 1998, Zukin 1998). The next two chapters explore the "spatial tactics" (cf. Low & Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:351) involved in the making of places (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1999) and especially how people in power create "conditions of social production" (cf. Low & Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:351). The tactics are about structuring the NMB in peoples' consciousness, allowing the built environment provide a historical context for negotiating not only past socio-cultural and political injustices, but using these in the creation of new urban experiences. The next chapters prod critical issues of who makes decisions, how and for whom and especially: Why should the construction and opening of a bridge across a railway line be greeted as an epoch making event? In the chapters following, this question is asked

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[159] In *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (1997) Michael Herzfield writes about his 'fascination' with "the desire to control external images of a national character" and the "[presentation of individual selves] within the intimacy of the national space" (ix). His preoccupation is with the presentation of "a formal image of a national and collective self" (*ibid* x). He uses the term iconicity as "[an] effective way of creating self-evidence" and writes: "All social performance reifies people in culturally coded roles or identities" (*ibid* 26).

[160] From official websites of the NMB, BlueIQ and Johannesburg City - Joburg and the sites that are linked to these.

and answered against the backdrop of frequently ignored divisions that still make Johannesburg:

> an unequal city [with] a very large percentage of its population is poor, it has a substantial middle and upper-middle class, competing in global financial and trade markets and adhering to international norms of urban consumption and culture (Beall *et al* 2002:7).

CHAPTER THREE: Ongoing Urban Restlessness

NEWTOWN – A RESTLESS URBAN-SCAPE[161]

Johannesburg remains a restless landscape, with change continuing at a pace that is not experienced in other southern African cities
– Philip Harrison[162], 2003

The restlessness[163] of inner city regeneration[164] projects are the confluence of multiple "competing rationalities" (Harrison 2003: 4-8) that are at work on a local and global scale. These rationalities are embedded in the fast-moving socio-cultural and political vectors that appear to be driving inner city changes worldwide (cf. Harrison 2003: 4-8). In Johannesburg, multiple *post* narratives collide as the urban-scape is transformed into a semblance of not only a post-modern but also post-apartheid city: a city set to compete in a capitalist, post-industrial world and to balance the effects of its apartheid past. The city emerges from a complicated past as in the postcolonial period the colonists did not leave. What followed was a period of fierce segregationism when Apartheid affected peoples' everyday lives. In the city the confinements of racial prejudice became peoples' socio-real perceptions and actual lived experiences (see Chapter Two).

Post-1994, development projects and strategies are again the manifestations and manoeuvres of people in power who, in an effort to counter colonial and post-colonial apartheid extremism, aim to rebuilt the city with a particular presentism[165]: a new

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[161] This chapter relies on the information gleaned from newspaper and magazine articles and reports, scholarly works and promotional brochure on the regeneration of Newtown into a culturally viable node for the city, as well as ethnographic participant observation and interviews.
[162] Professor Philip Harrison holds the Chair of Town and Regional Planning in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand.
[163] I equate 'restlessness' with Harvey's notion of 'knife-edged capitalist development' that "[devalues] past commitments [and opens up] fresh room for accumulation" (Harvey 1985:150 as cited in Soja 1989:157). The capitalism Harvey describes "[is perpetually striving] to create a social and physical landscape in its own image [of] its own needs at a particular point in time [and even] undermine, disrupt and even destroy the landscape at a later point in time" (*ibid*). Harvey looks at capitalism's "inner contradictions [and its] restless formation and re-formation of geographical landscapes [to] the tune to which [its] historical geography must dance without ease" (*ibid*).
[164] From the Latin *regenerare, regeneratum* meaning 'to bring forth again' and here I extend it to Edward Soja's (1989) 'restructuring' and implying the bringing about "structural change of a significantly different order and configuration of social, economic and political life" (159). For Soja societal restructuring processes are embedded in "idealized evolutionary schemata in which change just seems to happen, or arises to punctuate some ineluctable march towards 'progress'" (*ibid*).
[165] This transpired from a conversation with South African artist Clive van der Berg who is involved in the arts and cultural aspects of the inner-city revival. He mentions that 'what's happening' is "writing the present". According to Thomas Eriksen the notion presentism involves understanding history as not the past, but rather as shaped by the present (2001:9). Differing forms of social cohesion and new

space is being negotiated to make sense of difference in the postapartheid era, and in the city's[166] built form. The city appears to stimulate local and global economic interest through processes of local "memorialisation" – that is, memory-making and specifically, material remembering (cf.Werbner 1998). The latter is an aspect of global trends in post-industrial cities that combine heritage formatting and politics to produce particular forms of cultural territorilisation (cf. Ferguson and Gupta eds. 1997; see Chapter 1). The latter happens in the hope of economic emancipation.

The reshaping of urban space in large cities across the world appears as the work of "social agents" and these can be defined as people in positions of power "[who do not] simply enact culture but reinterpret and re-appropriate it in their own ways" (cf. Ferguson and Gupta (eds) 1997:5 cites De Certeau 1985 and Bourdieu 1977). The re-appropriation and redesigning of public space in Johannesburg's downtown appears in line with the ideologies of people in power and not necessarily in the interest of all citizens or users of the city. The official narratives appear to accommodate national interests in terms of global demands and in Johannesburg these are the city managers' ideals of building a "world-class city"(cf. Hopkins 2003).

The urban regeneration programmes of the city therefore extend beyond notions of the local to include "processes [such as] cultural globalization and transnational cultural flows [in which] power relations [link] localities to a wider world" (cf. Ferguson and Gupta (eds.) 1997:5). James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (1997:5) comment as follows:

> Complex and sometimes ironic political processes [produce] cultural forms [that are] imposed, invented, reworked and transformed [into] culture as a space of order and agreed-on meanings

Johannesburg's downtown developments also appear intertwined with "[the] complex cultural politics of the nation-state [and that of] place making and people making" (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1997:4). As such the NMB can be viewed as a cultural product with specific representation value in the public sphere; a representation that necessarily impacts on peoples lived experiences (cf. Ferguson and Gupta (eds.) 1997).

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power groups necessarily impose such historical change (Erikson *ibid* 10 cf. Ibh Khaldun). It is interesting to note that a "[presentism] reduces memory to an artefact of the here and now" rather than "[an] ongoing processes of memory work" (Werbner 1998:2 rejects Maurice Halbwachs's *The Collective Memory*).

[166] Cities represent the largest groupings of people.

The processes driving Johannesburg's spatial and architectural re-engineering present dominant narratives that appear to be directed at moulding people and places into "social and historical creations" (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1997:4). The Nelson Mandela Bridge appears as an expression or exercise of power that takes the form of "cultural territorialisation" (cf. Ferguson 1997:4; cf. Hopkins 2003). For Ferguson and Gupta (1997) such 'territorialisation' refers to:

> [complex ethnic and national processes that are the] contingent results of ongoing historical and political processes (1997:4).

In Johannesburg, the Nelson Mandela Bridge is a major new infra-structural emblem to promote the inner-city. As such, the NMB offers many layers, even challenges, to the concept of regeneration; challenges that on the surface run counter to previous political trends but need to be addressed through research. The presence of the NMB in Johannesburg's inner-city follows regeneration trends across the world in western cities and reveal the close relation between power and ideology in the making of urban spaces (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1997:4).

In Johannesburg, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) dictates the parameters of the city's emerging urban scene as: "[political and civil movements have become] consolidated [through ANC's moves at] incorporating or marginalizing the popular movements that brought it to power" (Heller 2003:155). The post-apartheid city is controlled by a "top-down vision and strategies of transformation [with] increasing centralization and insulation of the institutions of municipal governance" (Heller 2003:155). The effects of such centralisation and the parallel processes of privatisation of urban space, reveal the city officials' calculated attempts to order the inner-city.

It appears that the ANC's power-base has diminished "the autonomy and vitality of civil society" (cf. Heller 2003:155); a decline in civil participation is most noticeable though urban idiosyncrasies and especially the predicament of the urban poor. A lack of public participation in the articulation in urban processes has therefore exposed "[a] gap between communities and the increasingly distant centres of authoritative decision making" (Heller 2003:155). The public appear sidelined as the authorities' control development projects and resources (Heller 2003:155). For Heller this "centralization and insulation of representative structures" in the ANC-led

Johannesburg has produced a "clientelization of politics [that takes precedence over] a public moral economy in the face of the commodification of life chances" (Heller 2003:155).

These and other observations by Heller suggest that the operating manoeuvres of civic authorities clash where private and public interests are concerned. The civic planners dictate the future of the city through embedded or inscribed meanings in places. In Johannesburg these inscriptions necessarily follow the city's socio-political and politico-historical trajectories. Peoples' experiences are connected to the meanings authorities superimpose on places (cf. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003; cf. Ferguson and Gupta 1997). In Johannesburg, it is suggested, an external referent such as the NMB through its embedded meanings affects peoples' everyday interactions (cf. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003; cf. Ferguson and Gupta 1999).

The process of ascribing meaning to places has a specific temporality in terms of being politico-historically time-bound constructs: the meanings are ideology specific and narrow in their long-term presentation. The political aggrandisement of public space through ideologically embedded connotations contributes to processes of making public memory (cf. Low and Zuniga 2003; also Werbner 1998 and Soja 1989:157). The latter are ways of inscribing meanings on places and these processes necessarily aid the making of national identity (cf. Ferguson and Gupta 1999). Consequently, for Edward Soja (1989:135):

> the 'short circuits' inherent in the horizontal experience [contributes to] the push and pull of spatiality on the vertical-temporal trajectory of life.

THE BRIDGE AND NEWTOWN

Selected extracts from newspaper articles on the urban past of Newtown presented in the remaining sections of this chapter locate the Nelson Mandela Bridge in terms of the history of Newtown. The articles show that the redevelopment plans for Newtown and the building of a bridge started in the seventies and that, in the mid-eighties, plans were put on hold as people's rights and needs, in terms of civil society, were neglected. The drives for public participation then necessarily contrast with contemporary urban regeneration, especially in as far as public consultation is

concerned. The NMB too, its name and "signature aspect" (cf. Hopkins 2003)[167] differs from what was originally envisioned in the past. The point made is that there appears today to be a lack of civic participation in the regeneration of Johannesburg's downtown.

The eighties media reports decried the Council-led planning of Newtown from the perspective of community participation being ignored. These accounts contrast with the discussions surrounding today's reports of regeneration and the projects that are presented as a *fait accompli*: a situation that appears to command rather than invite public participation. This chapter suggests the contrived official sanctioning of the Nelson Mandela Bridge project through the use of the Mandela name, media publicity campaigning and, especially, the planning of the spectacle opening of the Bridge. The contrivances suggest that the presence and name of Nelson Mandela offered the particular and necessary approval needed to sanction the urban regeneration programme.

A critical point is that civil action and participation appears to be overlooked in today's planning of Newtown and that the opinions of 'experts' dictate the city's development into a 'world-class' one. The latter, of course, is partly justified after South Africa's post-1994 return to the world-stage. Also, the aspirations for world-class status are not uniquely southern African but emulate global trends to counter the effects of post-industrialism in a capitalist-dominated world.

Worldwide trends are about the dreaming of "utopian" images as themes for cities' reinvention and in Los Angeles, its' reinvention is driven by processes akin to advertising called 'boosterism' (Dear *et al* (eds.) 1996; see also Rutheiser 1996:ix). The latter forms part of the dramatisation of Los Angeles' reinvention as "[a] glossy … burgeoning World City - a collage of prosperity, fantasy, and play" (Rutheiser 1996: ix). It is interesting to note similarities between the hype that surrounded Los Angeles's reinvention and that of Johannesburg's downtown regeneration. Of interest also is that the exaggerations necessarily obscure what in Los Angeles is "[the city's] underbelly"(Rutheiser 1996:ix) from "casual observers, visitors and residents alike

[167] Also Johannesburg's official website – joburg.org.za – and that of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, www.mandelabridge.co.za.

[who are distracted by images of] the corporate glitter of a downtown citadel" (Rutheiser 1996:ix).

The Johannesburg imagineers appear to follow these same trends of inflating urban projects and labelling these as fashionable, especially for the moneyed locals and international tourists (see Chapter 4)[168]. Inner city managers and developers willy-nilly appear to go along with the hyperbole and persuade people to inhabit such imaginary realms. The media-propelled portrayals of a desirable downtown proliferate and the construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge has been hailed as the "gateway" into a 'world-class' urban future (Hopkins 2003). Urban anthropologist Charles Rutheiser writes that "[a] city [reveals its] personality and changing moods [through] the invisible hand(s) that write the urban text" (Rutheiser 1996:10). The latter is aided through the media and in Atlanta:

> the sheer extent and pervasiveness of mediated images [makes the city] a "text" that can be read by an informed observer [as] the "pattern languages" employed by planners and urban designers [kowtow to] market forces" (1996:10).

CLASHING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE NOTIONS

Public and private interests clash as the city's revitalisation programmes amplify the discrepancies between official orderings of space and general conceptions of the public realm (Habermas 1989/1962)[169]. In Johannesburg the public sphere's potential for public participation appears to have fallen prey to the orderings of experts[170], not

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[168] A news report in *The Citizen* (February 1 1995) on the future of the inner-city reports: "[this space] had to be made tourist friendly and crime had to be drastically reduced if the city was not to lose its position as a key tourism centre and thus loose thousands of jobs". Two months later in *City Vision* (April 20 1995) it is announced that the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council officially partnered with the Gauteng Provincial Government to address "inner-city problems" (*ibid* 3). An urban renewal strategy was started "to ensure that the Johannesburg inner city continues to function not only for the benefit of the Greater Johannesburg metropolitan region but, also the Gauteng Province …" (*ibid).*

[169] Since the 80s (after the translation of Jurgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* 1962) the "public sphere" has been seen as the "open arena or forum for public debate" (McQuail 2000:157). In the post-apartheid Johannesburg, a space in transition, this space has become a contentious one as the public life has become dominated by political institutions at the centre and at the top and there appears to be a lack of mediation between the private and public realms.

[170] Joseph Rykwert (2004(2000) writes that 21st century urban planning is "[a process of] dialogue with the citizens." A shift has occurred away from the "insidious city of networks 'arranged' by the traffic and sanitary engineers whose interstices are to be filled by the developer and the speculator" (2004:232). I have taken what Rykwert says to make sense of the inner city where the NMB stands – now part of what is described as: "the city of efficiency guiding profit" (cf. Rykwert *ibid*). This research develops against the backdrop of different processes especially that of urban renewal. I note

necessarily local, but global ones who 'specialise' in the 'world-class' label. The city's spaces are the contrived products of 'experts' that work at the request of officials[171] to dictate how urban space is used: the urban built forms negotiate the everyday lived experiences of city-dwellers, users, etc. (cf. Lefebvre 1991; also Chapter 4: 2030-Vision). What then appears are reduced possibilities for serendipitous experiences – the kind of things you can do are muted by the environment you find yourself in.

In Johannesburg, the space of the NMB represents the attitudes of officialdom and the workings of global urban experts. The reasoning of the 'common good' appears to be transposed into the workings of a few, who act and decide for *all*. The dynamics that drive the decisions appear to be rooted in both socio-cultural and politico-historical trajectories and the ultimate aspirations for world-class city status (see Chapter 4: '2030-Vision'). The NMB therefore appears as part of a contested domain in which the public realm is diminished as decisions about the Bridge rest with authorities and image-makers (see Chapter 4: 'Simeka'). The latter reveals the role of dominant structures in society that "[condition] needs, fantasies, and behaviour"(cf. Baudrillard in Best & Kellner 1991:115)[172]. For Baudrillard "the system of political economy rationalizes objects and needs, producing a system of objects and a rationalized subject which produces the system of labour and consumption through satisfying its needs" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:115). Best & Kellner (1991:115) note Baudrillard's distinction between symbolic (gift giving, festivities, religious rituals) and productivist societies organised around production (1991:115) and write:

> [For Baudrillard a] new era of simulation in which computerization, information processing, media, cybernetic control systems, and the organisation of society according to simulation

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with curiosity how an "injection of capital" (Rykwert 2004:232) necessarily sidelines and/or removes the poor from urban centres (cf. *ibid*).

[171] The Bridge's importance is also that of "infrastructure … north-south linkages". But to large extent the NMB is a symbol of revitalisation of the city centre - for the whole of Johannesburg. Graeme Reid, the CEO of Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) sees its as a space for world-class interaction (cf. *Mail&Guardian* 2003: July 18-24, p.10). The Bridge is the "mother" of Blue IQ initiatives, conceived by the Gauteng provincial government in 1995 "to bring the shine back to the City of Gold" (Reporter Vicky Robinson *ibid*). The Government gave R3,5billion as "seed money' to Blue IQ, JDA and Gauteng Tourism Authority to implement the city's 2030 vision of "a safe, economically productive and efficient city" (*ibid*) . Mrs Pradeep Maharaj, the head of Finance at Gauteng Province, heads Blue IQ and his wife Sadhna Maharaj (a former schoolteacher) is the information officer of the Gauteng Tourism Authority. Mr Reid is the CEO of JDA. The Bridge is co-funded by Blue IQ, the City of Johannesburg, National Roads Agency and the National Department of Transport.

[172] Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1991:113) cite *Le systeme des objets* (Baudrillard 1968) to explain the latter's description of 'a *new* social order', a technical one in which objects and signs proliferate in everyday life.

> codes a and models replace production as the organizing principle of society (Best and Kellner 1991:118)

Baudrillard maintains that information has "dissolved meaning and the social into a sort of nebulous state" (1983b:100 as cited in Best & Kellner 1991:118) and that in the semiurgic society signs constitute a new social order (Best & Kellner 1991:118)[173]. The 'real' becomes not given but "artificially (re)produced as 'real' … not unreal, or surreal, but realer-than real, a real retouched and refurbished in 'a hallucinatory resemblance' with itself" (*ibid* cite Baudrillard 1983). Baudrillard uses Marshall McLuhan's concept of implosion to describe a world in which the divisions between image or simulation and reality implodes, and the 'real' disappears (Best & Kellner 1991:119).

> The dissemination of media images and semiurgy saturates the social field, and meaning and messages flatten each other out in a neutralized flow of information, entertainment, advertising, and politics (Best and Kellner 1991:121).

It is necessary to take note of Baudrillard's "universe of simulacra" (Best & Kellner 1991:121) in trying to ascribe meanings to the Nelson Mandela Bridge. What has appeared for Baudrillard is, "[an universe] without boundaries and in a vertiginous flux where all the old boundaries and distinctions of philosophy, social and political theory, and capitalist society are imploded into an undifferentiated flux of simulacra" (Best & Kellner 1991: 121). Baudrillard "illuminates some of the development of contemporary techno-capitalist societies" especially in terms of media and cultural trends (*ibid* 143). The NMB in this way appears as a simulacrum with its meanings blurred as, to quote Michel Foucault, "we have yet to fully comprehend the nature of power" (Foucault 1977: 213 cited in Best & Kellner 1991:48).

Both Foucault and Baudrillard maintain that people in positions of power are able to orchestrate the general public's experiences through processes of inventing or, in the case of the NMB, suggesting particular frames of movement to the city-centre. The manufacturing or ordering of experiences in urban space, mostly aided through mass communication technology, allows people in positions of power to invent the kinds of urban scenarios they deem necessary for social interaction and inner-city regeneration. City managers and urban developers and economists act as the agents to propagate simulated experiences and have an affect on peoples lived experiences. In

[173] See here Blue IQ's use of the new media to promote the urban regeneration.

Johannesburg, for example, the NMB offers city-dwellers and visitors predetermined experiences with the inner-city as a destination that ignores the ordinariness of everyday life[174] there. These engineered experiences are understood in terms of what Foucault sees as power "[as] a purely structural activity for which subjects are anonymous conduits[175] or by-products" (Best & Kellner 1991:52).

Peoples' future experiences are translated and negotiated through processes of memory and heritage creation that involve the state (cf. Werbner 1998). These also present a moral dilemma (cf. Werbner *ibid* 1). For Werbner, "the efflorescence of state memorialism and popular counter-memory" (*ibid*; also cf. Fabian 2004) that dominate heritage policies emerge as "[possible instruments of] state cultural policy." Werbner writes:

> [That the state acts as an] agent for nostalgia, for the sake of nation building (Werbner 1998:1).

In these terms, the Bridge appears to occupy a space between the clashing interests of the state and that of individuals. In terms of Werbner (1998) and Fabian (2004), state processes of 'memorialisation' also imply the creation of political subjectivity. The Johannesburg scenario, in this respect, is complex not least because 'memorialisation' implies the city's multiple socio-cultural rootedness. The Johannesburg scene, "[a] cauldron of diverse peoples and agendas" (cf. Gotz and Simone 2003:128) is more complicated than efforts make it seems. The post-apartheid narrative over-simplifies a complex situation. It appears that multiple past references are condensed into a single post-apartheid popular and counter-memory (cf.Werbner 1998; also Fabian 2004).

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[174] Many interpretations to space exist outside the official intentions that can be seen from the way in which taxi-drivers (the local mini-busses) interpret the meaning of the Bridge (in conversation with anthropologist David Coplan, April 2004). On route to Johannesburg's downtown, a taxi driver told him that the Bridge was for taxies: "Just look where it stands and look at where our route begins and ends" (*ibid*). Implied in this is that people are not bound by inscribed or intended meanings of places and spaces, but adopt meanings for themselves. The formal orderings of space, as much as informal ones, are subject to participation through group adherence. A common understanding of space or place grows from its users and in the face of implied official ordering, these are more remote, less first-hand, and even too controlling. The orderings of spaces thereof necessarily imply prior agreement, however the users of space have their own (cf. Nigel Rapoport 1994) and, as mini-bus drivers believe, the Bridge is therefore for them. The latter flies in the face of official intentions and the marketing of the Bridge as the 'gate-way' into the Newtown's cultural precinct. Also, the R85million Bridge appears as an extravagant gesture in terms of linking the northern suburbs of Johannesburg to the New Metro Mall minibus rank in Newtown.

[175] 'Conduits' imply "forms of consciousness [which are, for example] the substance of ideology" (cf. Payne 1996:3).

An interesting development in trends towards counter-memory production today relies on technology's ability to deliver mass-mediated messages especially regarding the advancement of economic, social, cultural, environmental and physical transformations in advanced industrial cities (Graham & Marvin 1996). Telecommunications in its connection to the city has emerged from being "[a] virtual invisibility" (cf. Graham & Marvin 1996:50) to becoming "the complex interactions between urban places and electronic spaces" (Graham & Marvin 1996:180; see also role of Blue IQ and Simeka). In this respect, Graham and Marvin deplore the demise or "dissolution of cities," writing:

> Urban places remain the unique arenas [to] bring together [in] the webs of relations and 'externalities' that sustain global capitalism (Graham & Marvin 1996:377).

Graham and Marvin contend that cities "house the vast majority of our populations [and are fundamental to social and cultural life as] the key economic, social, physical, cultural and political concentrations of advanced capitalist society"(Graham & Marvin 1996:377). Electronic spaces "are [increasingly] interwoven into the built environments of cities [and] filling the corridors between them as key infrastructures to underpin the shift to global urban and infrastructural networks" (Graham & Marvin 1996:377). Graham and Marvin (1996:380) remark on discrepancies in urban living such as "[the] 'information black holes' and electronic ghettos' where the poor remain confined to [a] traditional marginalized life [and] the infrastructure of in the city centres and elite suburbs [support] the corporate classes and the transnational corporations" (Graham & Marvin 1996:380). The latter suggests possible interpretations in terms of the meanings of the Nelson Mandela Bridge especially with regard to the city's propensity to market itself as a so-called 'world city'. Graham and Marvin (1996) comment in general on the diverse and complex landscapes and life in actual cities and write:

> As with geographical landscapes, the [technological] results can be 'read' as reflections of complex processes whereby social, ethnic, gender and power relations play out against the backdrop of the globalising political economy of capitalism (1996:380).

An important point stressed by Graham and Marvin (1996:380) is that "[the standardised, rigid, hierarchical and rhythmic world of the industrial age [is moving] to new and much more fluid societal processes" (1996:380). The latter is implicit in what Graham and Marvin (1996) refer to as "[the] bewildering processes of time-

space compression [and also that] new telecommunications technologies bring new options and capabilities within which urban processes can be shaped" (1996: 381-82).

> Just as political and social influences can redirect the shaping of urban politics and the built environments of urban places [so too can] technologies (1996:381-82).

The bridge, as a vital part of the city's urban reinvention (see Sections on Blue IQ, Simeka and City Vision 2030), falls within the scope of the city's regeneration programme and its presence is marketed through the media as vital in terms of both the local and the supra-narratives of the global. The Bridge is also part of processes that claim the commodification[176] of experiences, especially those that aim to popularise heritage (cf. Lowenthall 1999 105-115). For Fabian the latter has become known as *Errinerungskultur* (cf. Fabian 2004; see Conclusion), a class of phenomenon that Fabian (*ibid*) roughly translates as: "cultures of memory" or "memory cultures". The For Fabian 'memory cultures' form part of processes of "culture-packaging", specific forms of heritage configuration that have become increasingly popularity worldwide with the technological shrinking of time-space dimensions. Heritage is now packaged as a marketable commodity in an increasingly globalised, profit-driven tourist-orientated world (in conversation with Fabian 2004[177]; see also Lowenthall 1998).

The Bridge therefore is more than what its mere transport potential suggests, as it slots into narratives that inform the experiences of people on the level of the nation and also as international corporate investor and visitor[178]. It is difficult to separate what exact part(s) of the Bridge refers to the city's reinvention of its divided past, and what to its role as an important structure in the rethinking of the disused and problematic city-centre, the latter as a talisman. The presence of the bridge therefore has socio-cultural implications as well as economic, for: What happens in the city through it being there will affect peoples' lives and perceptions, especially the daily routines of ordinary citizens (see Chapter 5).

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[176] Don McQuail (2000:308) argues that the "commodification of culture" implies that something is being taken away by "commercial consciousness industry" and then sold back to people. HE describes this as an alienating process "whereby we loose touch with our nature (and culture)" (*ibid*).
[177] At the end of a talk entitled 'Memory and Counter-Memory' (Wiser, 2004).
[178] I have learned that the Johannesburg Tourism Agency is using the Nelson Mandela Bridge as their logo.

The Bridge has different meanings that appear to range from being a tool for the manipulation of public consensus to that of local memorial or national symbol; it extends into being an emblem for urban regeneration and acts as a locus for the attraction of global investment, etc. (cf. Hopkins 2003). It appears that local efforts at connecting the Bridge to the experiences of apartheid rely on acts of memory making (cf. Hopkins 2003). The making of memory appears as the transcendence of the publics' broader, intangible and symbolic values[179] into a space for the reassembling and making graspable of apartheid through the invention of postapartheid experiences. Here, the media as instruments of the imagineers aided the mass-dissemination of re-addressed urban 'truths' and packaged these associations and memories in news-bites (see Chapters 4; 5; also Beavon 2004:274).

New spaces for symbolic interaction appear to have been established in order to negotiate past experiences, and this is grist for the advertiser's mill judging by a proliferation of images in support the city's urban regeneration programme (see role of Simeka and image-making in this Chapter) and especially the marketing of the Bridge as "[an] emblem of the African renaissance" (cf. Hopkins 2003)[180].

Regeneration processes inevitably also lay bare the city's underlying development mechanisms[181]: the emergent clashing spaces of official and privatised initiatives and the civic and public needs. The Bridge stands in Newtown where ongoing planning debates were argued between private and public interests "[since] the darkest apartheid days" (Conrad Berge, in conversation, 2004). The Johannesburg ratepayers' organisation (Jomag) led the action against Council-led proposals to sell off Newtown to private developers. Jomag saw the Council's actions as "opportunism" that favoured large business and therefore ignored public and civic rights especially, at the time, the Indian and black traders in the area (Conrad Berge, in conversation, 2004).

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[179] At a public lecture (Grahamstown Arts Festival, 1999) an urban planner Dr Wallace van Zyl cautioned against urban planning's move away from being its reform and welfare policies against health hazards of the Industrial Revolution to one in which public interest and social welfare was ignored. For him the city planners were now "leap[ing] on the wagon of economic competition [and building cities on] private profit alone [and ignoring] intangible and symbolic values" (*ibid*).

[180] Also the NMB bridge site and www.blueiq.co.za.

[181] Wallace Van Zyl (1999) saw urban elites and the power structures marginalizing the poor (street people) who, he said, must fend for themselves in a squatter camps or ghettoes. He was of the opinion that the rich could afford to 'internalise' their private compounds and private transport and profit from the 'privatisation' of public squares and parks in the city.

The ratepayers' forum agitated for public participation in decision-making processes regarding the open land in Newtown and were opposed to council control of the area, also that of powerful financial institutions that, Jomag protested, were self-interested and worked to the exclusion of ordinary citizens.

Today, the demise of most of the pre-1994 civic organisations, as well as the absorption and consolidation of many of these into the ANC, may have brought about a loss of public participation. There appears an absence of consultation with the wider public over recent local development projects. Jomag's agitation in the eighties to include the people of Johannesburg in planning decisions was a form of public protest action against high-handed municipal decision taking and control of Newtown. Efforts were instead made to promote the rights of ordinary citizens, especially the informal sector. Today, these are contentious issues as the fate of the informal trader and street entrepreneur hang in the balance between practical existence and the elusive dream of a world city.

As way of illustrating past conflicts between the public and private realms of civic activity, extracts that reflect on the workings of a progressive rate-payers' organisation in Johannesburg almost two decades ago, are included in the sections on Newtown in the seventies and the eighties in this Chapter. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Action Group (Jomag) through the correspondences of the group's secretary, Conrad Berge, urged for people-centred approaches to public space and also agitated for public participation, not hierarchical decision-making, in the planning of urban space. These and other issues favouring public rights and participation were also reported in the writings/musings of environmental journalist James Clarke (*The Star* 1984-85) and are included here. Such a lack of public involvement still appears to be neglected in planning and development issues as seen in the behind-the-scenes pre-planning of the NMB (see Chapter 4). The next section looks at Newtown, a space in the inner city of Johannesburg that appears to have been the victim of urban developers and managers whims right from its start.

NEWTOWN'S EARLY HISTORY

Newtown's redevelopment sometimes appears as part and parcel of a chronic process of reinterpretation and opportunism, from its rickety start shortly after gold mining started on the Reef. This inner-city space also seems to have been sidelined by municipal authorities. On the east side of Johannesburg, the area was dubbed '[the] Coolie location' in 1887, just a year after gold mining started on the Witwatersrand (Itzken 2000:50). By March 1904 the area was a "mixed settlement" with 1 642 Indians, 1 420 'Africans' and 146 'Cape Coloureds' (Itzken 2000:50). Itzken writes: "[people were] densely packed together [and there was] no proper roads, lighting or sanitation[182], [among the] dilapidated buildings [made from] mostly of wood and iron" (Itzken 2000:50). The residents acquired their plots through leases of ninety-nine years (Itzken 2000:50).

In 1904 the district bound by Carr Street in the north, Malherbe Street to the west, Gogh Street (east under the M1 highway) and Pim Street (to the south)[183] officially became known as Newtown with its redevelopment as a commercial zone as authorities saw there were prospects of "[making] vast fortunes [from] milling, produce, sugar and food merchandising" (Itzken 2000:51). Most importantly, Newtown's naming and redevelopment followed what was considered to be "the worst epidemic of bubonic plague" in Johannesburg (Itzken 2000:51) to date. The settlement had to be burnt to the ground and the "entire population removed to an emergency camp near the sewerage works at Klipspruit (later Pimville) - thirteen miles south of Johannesburg" (Itzken 2000:51). The evacuation camp at Klipspruit was the origins of the Southwestern Townships (Soweto), Johannesburg's "sprawling dormitory township for Africans"(Itzken 2000:50).

Prior to the outbreak of bubonic plague, Mahatma Ghandi warned municipal authorities to act quickly as he feared the overcrowding in the east end of Johannesburg "would lead to such an epidemic" (Itzken 2000:50). Ghandi was ignored and Itzken writes: "the entire location was put to flame [March 31 1904] by the Council". Itzken also mentions that Ghandi believed the Council ignored his pleas

[182] Itzken writes: "…beyond arranging to clear the latrines in a haphazard way, the municipality did nothing to provide any sanitation" (*ibid* 50).
[183] Today the street names have been changed to the names of notable singers and struggle artists.

and engineered the destruction of the 'location'[184] as "the unsanitary conditions caused by their neglect [could be used] as a pretext for removing [the] unwanted residential area" (Itzken 2000:51).[185] What appears in retrospect, therefore, is that a strategy of civic neglect was used as a basis to enforce municipal policies.

Urban geographer Keith Beavon (Decorative Arts lecture, Johannesburg: May 2003) confirms that the Slums Act of the Cape Town City Council (1934) was also applied to Johannesburg's overcrowded shack neighbourhoods. The Act allowed for people to be moved from areas without providing alternative accommodation. According to Beavon the enforced evictions of people from slum areas necessarily compounded unsanitary situations in areas people were moved to as these became "even more grim and unsanitary" (Beavon – 2003 lecture *ibid*). In "an extreme case" of removal 21 shack rooms were constructed on a 496sq metre property. Beavon adds, "[this] meant] that at least 121 but rather more than two hundred people were served by one tap and two public toilets" (Beavon – 2003 lecture *ibid*). These were the conditions under which forced removals were done.

The Black, Indian and Coloured slums differed from the white ones as white urban politics in the 1930s favoured the poor white Afrikaner farmers who moved into existing slums like the 'Coolie Location' (Johannesburg's Newtown) after the crippling effects of the Great Depression and periodic droughts of the time (Beavon- 2003 lecture *ibid*). Beavon has said that as the "poor whites" had the vote when the Nationalist Party "cleared the slums", urban policy's made provision for the building of houses for "[that] lowest end of the white working class" (Beavon- 2003 lecture *ibid*). The dwellings were built on the eastside of downtown Johannesburg bordering Newtown, for only Afrikaner whites and, at that stage Newtown was known as 'Veldskoenville' (Beavon- 2003 lecture *ibid*).

For the larger part of its existence, Newtown was a retail and industrial district and only in the seventies, after industries such as meat processing factories, an abattoir

[184] Slums were a feature of the east and west ends of Johannesburg from the earliest days – "sites of disease and moral degeneration … a threat to racial mixing and the consequent weakening of white supremacy" (ApartheidMusuem). "Slums were seen by many in white society as giving rise to a multitude of evils. The 'detribalised' black people, and denationalised and 'de-racialised' the white population. For whites, racial mixing was supposed to lead to physical, moral and mental degeneration, of which the spread of venereal disease was a visible sign" (*ibid*).
[185] from Ghandi's *Autobiography* 1948:351.

and the fresh produce market were moved to the south of Johannesburg, did the character of this area change once again. The removal of the industries prompted a social vacuum and in the seventies the old vegetable market became a performing arts theatre. It has remained a theatre and recently was officially renamed The African Bank Market Theatre: a commercial complex poised to play an important part in Newtown's redevelopment as a cultural node and also for tourism purposes.

NEWTOWN – 1970 ONWARDS

The construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge at the lower end of Bertha Street in Braamfontein across the railway yards into Newtown brings to fruition the dreams of many an urban planner and developer. For decades, this area was part of a continuing saga to make economic sense of the east end of the city. From the perspective in the eighties of the polemical writings of Conrad Berge – secretary of the city rate-payers' group, Johannesburg Metropolitan Action group or Jomag – the Newtown redevelopments were Council-driven and lacked public participation. Promoting civic participation in redevelopments, the group also gained the support of an influential columnist James Clarke, who published articles in *The Star* urging for a distinct space for the public in the midst of contemporary development projects. Today, the opposite appears to be happening with urban developments- promoted *to* the public rather than by them.

For Jomag, the concern was that the developments in Newtown ignored the needs of ordinary peoples. Jomag defended themselves against expressions by large business to monopolise the area. Jomag's most heated publicity campaigns was initiated after the lifting of municipal restrictions on urban trading that previously forbade people of all races to set up business in the inner city and especially in Newtown. Jomag wanted Newtown to be a multicultural area – with the space opened to all 'races', both in terms of work and living. Jomag deplored the apartheid council's narrow-mindedness and shortsighted attitude towards development especially as these favoured big business and ignored opportunities to integrate all.

From the aforementioned it is clear that drives to create a multicultural space in Newtown had its origins well before the 1994-elections, but that these failed as public participation in planning and development was constantly ignored. Jomag pushed for public support of projects as the lack thereof could destroy forms of civic life. Council opportunism was criticised as it destroyed civic involvement in Newtown's redevelopment[186]. Jomag contended that big and small business should be integrated rather than having a dominant sector suppress an emerging or less formal one. The clashing of interests between Jomag and the City Council grew with the former defending civic rights in the development of Newtown and suspecting the latter of opportunism in development issues. This is an overview of happenings in Newtown in the seventies and, as the following sections demonstrate, a need for public involvement in municipal and civic issues is essential, especially in terms of what a lack thereof means to Johannesburg today.

DREAMING ABOUT A NEW-NEWTOWN

The mid-seventies' planning of a bridge across the railway line into Newton to make this part of the city economically viable was not unlike planning ideas today. In the mid-eighties, however, these plans were opposed by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Action Group (Jomag), who designed a counter-scheme that would involve the people who were trading and living in Newtown. Jomag felt that Newtown's "established infrastructure and marvellous position [and accessibility] to a wide arc of residential areas from Lenasia to Randburg" called for such planning (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Curiously, similar reasons for developing Newtown are still voiced today.

Jomag's plans in the '80s mentioned that Newtown was "poised in time to channel [a] new wave [of] political feeling in South Africa [as] an inner city environment in which traditional racial attitudes disappear before the wholesome energies of commerce and trade" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Again, these are sentiments

[186] This feeling is echoed 20 years later in a leader page editorial in which 'transformation' in Johannesburg is described as "[happening] on the lofty rather than human scale. It will flatter the vanity of government" (*The Sunday Independent* February 1 2004).

expressed in the writing and thinking of Newtown today, especially as far as the implementation of projects by proponents of urban renewal[187] are concerned.

The changes in political decision-making of the eighties opened trade to all races in Johannesburg, and prompted Jomag to plan developments "[to reflect] political change" (Jomag Newssheet 1984). The group lobbied to make Newtown the anchor of Johannesburg's "multicultural arts quarter" (Jomag Newssheet 1984) as:

> [a] physical planning approach [was needed] which translates this political decision into [an] environmental language.

A year later, *The Sunday Star* carried the headline: Newtown: the heart of our city of tomorrow. The report by environmental journalist James Clarke, read: "Newtown … where South Africa could change its image" (May 5 1985 pp. 16-17). Newtown had grabbed the imagination of planners and architects alike as a space for dreaming of urban change. Much like today, city planners looked at ways in which to use space and place and alter urban dynamics. Today, however, people in power additionally stress notions of nation building: building spaces in which the nation and the city become one[188].

The Nelson Mandela Bridge in Newton is a particular example of the built environment expressing the aspirations of the nation (see this Chapter; also Chapter 3 and 4). Of significance is the naming of the Bridge and its strategic entry-point into the heart of the city. Also, there is its primary association with Nelson Mandela as the iconic 'bridge-builder' in national reconciliation[189]. The naming of places has a certain property right or value especially in terms of nationalism (Yalouri 2001: 91 cites Sutton 1997; 1998: 181-193; see also section in this chapter on the naming of the Bridge). The Newtown developments today reveal nationalist tendencies combined with others that influence the making and perhaps most importantly the marketing of space.

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[187] When Conrad Berge saw the bridge in early 2003 he reacted enthusiastically to the idea of multicultural and multifunctional area in Newtown. The bridge, he said, "added a carnivalesque quality to the developments".

[188] On the front page of *The Star* (June 22 2004) President Thabo Mbeki stated that the permission to host the Soccer World Cup in South Africa "could unite the nation and the city".

[189] Naming systems "work to establish continuity between the present and the past" (Yalouri 2001:91).

The eighties dreaming of Newtown found expression in a feasibility scenario printed in *The Star* (May 1985) in which Clarke invented what urban planners saw "[as] the most exciting mid-city opportunity left in South Africa" (*The Star* May 1985). The concept plan introduced a Newtown scene seen four years hence and read: "It's 1989. Johannesburg's central core is booming again after the city's high noon in 1985". The plan was based on interviews with local architects and planners; Glynton Le Roux, Nigel Mandy (chairman of the Central Business District), Caroline Heydenryk and Conrad Berge of Jomag. Clarke wrote that the "new Newtown" had "[an] artistic, sartorial and sometimes behavioural radicalism that appals conservative plattelanders, but its cheeky reputation draws them like a magnet when they come to town …" (*The Star* - May 1985). The article ended by noting that: "Johannesburg's buzzing again. Newtown is where South Africa changes its image" (*The Star* - May 1985). Clarke's utopian vision for Newtown two decades ago contrasts with attempts today to convert the dream of a transformed Newtown into reality. The media promote Newtown today as the vibrant cultural centre of the city (see Chapter 4). As the blueprint for Newtown takes effect, a question remains: will it be a space for all?

Ironically, Clarke's article appeared alongside an opinion piece with this heading, 'Crossing the big divide'. The opinion was that "South Africa's people are no closer, politically, than they ever were [as] President Botha has failed in his attempt to get 'consensus' between whites; let alone white, coloured and Indian. The real issue is finding areas of agreement between black and white; crossing that huge political, social and economic divide". The latter again appears as the abiding preoccupations of today's urban strategists in search of ways to reduce such a divide. Attempts are directed at finding unitary symbolic expressions to transcend these. The construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge coincides with these ideas and appears to be directed at straddling a socio-political divide. However, it is hard to know what the Bridge's significance is in the face of looming socio-economic disparities (re Chapter 4).

In contrast to today's efforts at uniting a nation, the eighties' racial polarisation that ripped at the seams of Newtown made developments for integration impossible. Reporter Melanie Gosling (*The Star* June 9th 1984) reported that the architects Glynton Le Roux and Patrick Jones wanted to get Newtown developments off the ground and slated what they saw as "[a] controversial" plan for Newtown by

developers Mallows/Kirchoffer (submitted to the council in 1977). Criticising and condemning the Section 59 committee formed to advise the Council on redevelopment, the architects wanted Newtown's redevelopments to be managed by a profit-making company[190]. "That's the way America and Europe did it"(*The Star* June 9th 1984). The architects sourced an outside model for local issues as suitable, correct, and worthy. Emulating ideas from other parts of the world however is a way of imposing rather than dealing with issues on the ground. The logic that applies is that of the opinions of experts to direct issues, especially Johannesburg's inner-city problems. The thinking that drives the city's inner-city regeneration are conceived and implemented by experts who draw on their experiences elsewhere. Projects are presented, not for public discussion, but as a *fait accompli.* This is the 'best practices' model, and mostly these are unconnected to what is happening in an area of actual social activity.

In the eighties the Section 59 committee was condemned as the committee which "operated in secret and lacked clout – it could only advise the council, not implement the plans itself"(*The Star* June 9th 1984). It was argued that bureaucratic officials did not consider ordinary people. Curiously the architects then proposed to the establishment of a profit-making company to manage the developments. They also suggested that the City of Johannesburg be a shareholder in the company. The company needed to appoint planners to lead schemes that would financially satisfy the interested parties and shareholders – the latter considered to be the members of the public (*The Star* June 9th 1984). It appears that there are similarities (not gone into depth in this research) between the proposals of the eighties and the role of the local and national government through Blue IQ and the Johannesburg Development Agency in the development of Newtown and the planning of Newtown. In the 80s the Johannesburg city council did not accept this proposal as the management committee chairman Mr Francois Oberholzer said that the city's laws could not be amended to allow for such a separate body. Gosling quoted the architects' response: "Well then change the city laws. The city makes them and can change them"(*The Star* June 9th 1984).

[190] LeRoux and Jones suggested the appointment of a profit-making company as the answer for the redevelopment of Newtown as "this was a chance for the people of Johannesburg to revitalise the city – to discover a new way of life and present a thoroughly integrated face to the rest of the country"

Today, the planning and future directions of developments in Newtown have Blue IQ at the helm. The latter, a virtual office[191], is not unconnected to the Johannesburg city council, the Province, and the National government. An initiative of the Gauteng Provincial Government's financial department, Blue IQ's chief executive officer Mr Pradeep Maharaj also heads Gauteng Finance. Decisions, planning, etc., resides with Blue IQ: a complicated issue in terms of ordinary citizen rights and especially in terms of what constitutes the rights of people in positions of power who promote change by decree.

AGITATION FOR PEOPLES' SPACE IN NEWTOWN

The correspondences of Jomag secretary, Conrad Berge and the news articles by James Clarke and others in the eighties all agitated for a people-centred development of Newtown. Oft-quoted Berge became embattled with Council-led development proposals as, he argued, these left Newtown "sterile, slick and soulless". Crucial for Jomag was that the development plans in Newtown needed public participation, especially in the country's changing political climate, as Newtown offered a space to present the changing attitudes[192]. The importance of people being involved in issues of space and place was stressed in terms of the changing attitudes and especially as these would affect the future of these urban spaces.

Place, that is space, affects people's thinking and in terms of identity making, the notions of space and place connect with notions of nation building[193]. For Berge – and therefore Jomag – public support in issues around Newtown's development would guarantee not only people involvement but also foster interpersonal relations. In a recent interview with Berge, he felt just the same. He pointed out that the Johannesburg City Council's attitude did not support Jomag's protestations (in

[191] The meaning of virtual is used to describe the small group of executives that organise the outsourcing of work to a network of Black Empowerment Enterprises (BEE).
[192] "We feel that the finding of such expression will add greatly to the overall security of our society [and] influence the attitude of people to each other" (Clarke quotes Jomag: *ibid*).
[193] The nation has been discussed as "[a] social imaginary institution" (Yalouri 2001:49 cf. Stathis Gourgouris (1993; 1996)). As such, the nation demarcates sites and "[becomes] a symbol of history [which can] legitimise [particular] national territorial space[s and transform these] into a symbol of [a specific] territory" (Yalouri 2001:54).

conversation March 2004). Jomag fought a lonely battle for the land in Newtown as they maintained the land belonged to the people of Johannesburg. Jomag clashed with council development proposals that were both self-interested and forwarded the interests of large businesses, thus neglecting the ordinary citizens – as well as the entrepreneurial informal trade that was predominantly in the area (in conversation March 2004). The latter refers to what Sennett depicts as a shrinking of the public realm in the face of private development (cf. Sennett 1992[1974]). Back in the 1950's David Riesman (1961:276) saw the latter progressive movements by business as forms of "enforced privatisation". He writes that these movements were established by "a middle-class world of work and play" (1961:304). Riesman also noted how leisure was "historically new" (1961:276) and later Lewis Lapham (1988[1989]) writes about 'money and class' as a new 'civic religion'.

Much the same issues are still present today, as the developments in Newtown are questioned and negotiated in terms of who belongs where, and what is for whom. The concerns are that the current regeneration planning is carried out without sufficient public consultation and then simply presented for approval. A reoccurring question is: what is *it*[194] all about? Projected against the backdrop of the eighties' key concerns, this question grows even larger in insignificance.

In the eighties, Jomag maintained that the city council wished to embark on development planning for Newtown as "[a way of] rais[ing] the value of its land prior to selling it lucratively to private sector developers" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Jomag made no bones about their suspicion that the Council was holding onto the land "[in the hope that] high land values will generate revenue" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Berge, as secretary for Jomag, even wrote that the council action "[was] short-sighted and narrow" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984) and the public were advised against the council's development plans "[to prevent Newtown being] silently led by planners into the mould that casts the soulless and brittle city"(Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). For Berge the plight of ordinary citizens took precedence, especially those of victims of indiscriminate racial indignation (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Promoting urban developments that favoured the ordinary

[194] The 'it' referring to Blue IQ's 'it's happening' on the large billboard alongside the M1 motorway.

citizens of Johannesburg and not council or big business, Berge called for the abolition of "[the] distinctive division along the lines of skin colour between property owners and contracted tenants and employees, customers and general street users". He wrote:

> [spaces needed to be developed as] tools for achieving a secure society by softening racial attitudes (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984).

At the time that Berge wrote, Newtown appeared administratively biased towards the owners and contracted tenants before the lifting of trade regulations and, as such, these developments failed to include all citizens (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Preferential treatment of former tenants above the needs of ordinary citizens, Jomag maintained was the consequence of "the planning 'client', the City Council, [being] a principal landowner" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). For Jomag the planning of Newtown needed to be sensitive as environments "profoundly influence the way in which people react to each other". Jomag urged that Newtown be developed to encourage "directly and simultaneously [forms of interaction] shared by [all] its users" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984).

Of concern at the time was the plight of a 'new' informal sector: the band of traders previously forbad on racial grounds from trading in Newtown and now in desperate need to be included in the plans for the area especially in as far as they would be allowed to trade and live in the same area (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Jomag campaigned for these ordinary citizens in ways that ran counter to political and racial attitudes of the eighties. Jomag argued that "[the redevelopments needed to ensure] first-hand participation of 'non-Whites' in the economic activity of the city [and satisfy their] attendant pursuit of cheap accommodation". A chief concern therefore was the development of:

> … islands of expensive, prestige accommodation [that was] immune to the decline of surrounding areas (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984)

Ordinary citizens' needed to be considered in developments "precisely <u>because</u> the Council is the dominant landowner [in Newtown]"(Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). Developments need to be in line with all peoples' needs (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). The preservation of public space and especially a public voice is essential for public participation as this realm for decision-making opens up all developments for

scrutiny, criticisms as well as suggestions (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). A recent conversation (March 2004) revealed that Berge still felt the same as he did then. Jomag disbanded in the early nineties as there appeared no need for it with a changing political climate and also because the civic organisation that was fronting for the ANC at the time, appeared "sceptical towards a white civic organisation" (Berge, in conversation March 2004). Simply said, the problem was that Jomag could not get the different civil societies to work together (Berge, in conversation March 2004).

Back in the eighties Jomag opposed the proposed indiscriminate developments in Newtown that favoured large business and corporate interests like the Johannesburg Stock Exchange building in Diagonal Street. The scale and type of environment created was "slick, sterile and almost devoid of shelter, interest and utility"(Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984). The Stock Exchange development was a development "bent upon building monuments to financial corporations and government departments" (Jomag Newsletter May 10 1984) and had little to do with the ordinary everyday activities of ordinary citizens, especially the informal sector.

Ironically today the informal trader is still either ignored[195] or dwarfed by progressive urban planning, despite local expansion of the informal sector[196]. For many people, who operate on the streets, affordable housing in the area they trade is impossible. What then is the meaning of the Nelson Mandela Bridge? Will the NMB and the redevelopment of Newtown today serve the interests of all?

PEOPLE'S VERSUS OFFICIAL INTEREST

The fate of Newtown has historically been subject to the whims of people in power and the official narratives for developments have taken precedence over the commonplace, everyday needs of ordinary people. On one occasion, Clarke reiterated

[195] A 'manager' of informal traders' goods at a store near the Nelson Mandela Bridge Daniel Madzivhandila on many occasions has told me of his concerns "[that] traders feel there needs are not seen". He said: "I am worried as I hear a man from England is in charge of the city. Does he know Africa is not London?" I contacted the Johannesburg City Council and a spokesperson said: "[we] hold meetings but battle to get the informal sector to speak with a collective voice … this makes things difficult. At the moment we are trying to organise them to do so". There appears to be something contradictory in what he said as I agree with Ruth First fellow Pregs Govender that the 'collective voice' is not a 'group' one as the latter implies a leader whereas with the former "every voice is important" (Graduate School, University for Witwatersrand, April 2004).

[196] Mayhem broke out when hawkers took to Johannesburg's streets in defiance of legislation to trade in the inner city (*The Star* September 2 2004:3).

a central belief of Jomag, that the "city centres are the tools for achieving a secure society by softening racial attitudes in general" (The Star June 25 1985). In line with Jomag, Clarke stressed that Newtown developments lacked public awareness, participation and support "[to] save our dying city" (The Star June 25 1985). Clarke agitated against the high-handed handling of intended development projects. Ratepayers and landowners also were urged to oppose the redevelopments in Newtown as these favoured the Council rather than the people who used the city (The Star June 25 1985). Clarke quoted a strongly worded statement by Berge that " … the council is quite capable of blowing the ratepayers' inheritance" (The Star June 25 1985). Berge based his assertion on the Council's failure to accommodate people of different races in Newtown, especially as "the small entrepreneur [had not been given] a chance of getting a toehold [in Newtown]" (*The Star* June 25 1985).

Clarke joined Jomag protestations against the approved Newtown Redevelopment Plan Revised Planning Proposal (1984) as these had no public approval. The plans detailed "a new bridge to bring cars from Yale road across the marshalling yards to the heart of Newtown", covered parking for 2 000 cars (500 beneath Mary Fitzgerald Square) and plans for the square to "become the Trafalgar Square of Johannesburg, with its expensive offices on its east and south sides and the Market Hall entertainment area on the north" (*The Star* June 25 1985). The approved long-term plans also mentioned an underground rail system (*The Star* June 25 1985). Parallel to those proposals, an outcry followed as public interests and needs, especially not that of the small-scale traders or the pedestrians, were not considered.

A contemporary opinion piece in *The Star* (December 6 1984:14) focussed on the need for public participation in developments. The tenor of the report was that council plans failed to elicit public support and therefore was "[a] perversion of 'public participation'" (*The Star* December 6 1984:14). It stated: "black people [are] the biggest users of Newtown and yet they are not to be consulted" (*The Star* December 6 1984:14). The Johannesburg public owned Newtown and therefore "[needed to] demand a say [in developments]" (*The Star* December 6 1984:14). Public comment was a necessary must (*The Star* December 6 1984:14). Berge commended the article and added that the council's handling of development issues in Newtown was typified by the patterns of behaviour in the private sector "[that] builds subways and skywalks

for public use and, then only, when these serve intensive retail activity" (Jomag Newssheet 1984). Council developments left Newtown as "no longer an integral part of the inner city but as a downtown reserve for daytime use of executives from the north" (Jomag Newssheet 1984). Berge noted that the council acted as "a short-sighted accountant" as

> [it] has lost sight of its role in society [and] appropriated land … it holds in trust for the benefit of all its citizens [to sell at] the highest price it can manipulate (*Jomag Newssheet* 1984).

From what was written in the Eighties, it is now possible to consider the meanings of the NMB: first as the completion of a long-time dream to make Newtown a culturally alive space, and second, to look at the NMB as an expression of the city. In the past, developments were hindered by a lack of initiative to consolidate plans. Today the African Nationalist Congress (ANC) heading the city council appears to have not only built a new access road into Newtown but also constructed the Nelson Mandela Bridge as a signature structure of such access.

A critical question concerning the relationship between the Bridge and the public is: Who is the Bridge for? This question must be asked in the light of Blue IQ's and the Johannesburg Development Agency's (JDA) efforts to tie the Newtown area into the city's regeneration project by developing this part of Johannesburg specifically as a cultural precinct. Also, there appears to be similarities between who the proposed agents of change were in the eighties and those now (see section on Simeka in Chapter 4).

Blue IQ and the JDA's planned creation of a cultural space in Newtown is addressing a problem of at least 20 years standing that arose after the food-packaging and meat industries relocated to Johannesburg South (City Deep). Another question one might ask today is: to what extent are today's regeneration ideals an attempt to sanitise the area and rid it of signs of dereliction and not about alternative ways of living for people whose home and business have become ensconced there for more than a decade?

The next Chapter focuses on the launch of the NMB project as part of the city's urban regeneration programme. It appears against the backdrop of Jomag's campaigning for civic rights and public participation in the designs of public environments. What

follows is then, the official presentation of the project for public approval, that of the dreams of experts for the future of the city (see also Tomlinson *et al* 2003: xiv; Beavon 2004:274).

CHAPTER FOUR: Regeneration – The Story of the Bridge

THE NELSON MANDELA BRIDGE PROJECT

The city's dramatic R85-million bridge structure supports a greater construction: the making of public memory from the *petite histories* of ordinary peoples' struggle for individual freedom (cf.Hopkins 2003). The symbolism embedded in the Mandela name of the bridge and the fact that it spans a man-made rather than natural divide elevates the ordinary into a grander, albeit contrived, narrative for both local and global audiences (cf.Hopkins 2003). Selected bits of the city's past are edited into a new narrative through the negotiation and reintegration of its reinterpreted past into a present mould for collective remembering (cf.Hopkins 2003). The Bridge thereby acts as a form in the built environment in which collective memory is made visible.

Newtown's future has for some time had a kind of uncertainty about it and the Nelson Mandela Bridge project appears to now tie up the loose[197] urban threads by promoting the district as the main cultural node for the metropolitan region as a whole. Attempts to make Newtown safe are conducted through the installation of surveillance security cameras. Also, there is a belief that leisure-orientated visits to this part of the inner-city as well as an influx of business people into the area eventually will wipe away the dereliction of its space. Moves to keep "decay at bay"[198] by the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) as early as June 1994 also suggested that Johannesburg becomes the provincial capital of the Gauteng province. In a report published in *The Star* by the CJP (*ibid*) pictures "a robust CBD [that] can act as a platform from which the redevelopment process so desperately needed in the south [Soweto etc] can be launched". Jo-Anne Collinge reports that the proposal by the CJP also highlighted the "political importance of destroying apartheid's geographic legacy" (*ibid*) in:

> [the] most well-known urban complex in the country, that is the Johannesburg/Soweto division (*ibid*).

Collinge (*The Star* June 1994) reported that the CJP's proposal was "not shy at spelling out the probable social costs of this". The CJP recorded the problems in the inner city, that of: poverty due to unemployment, declining services, crime and "an

[197] Since the early 1900s, Newtown has been a place where workers lived, worked and protested – from the 'Celebrate Democracy: the Freedom of our people" Gauteng Tourism Authority 'Travel into History' brochure (2004).
[198] Jo-Ann Collinge in *The Star* June 5 1994.

outward migration of the [more skilled] population …" (*The Star* June 1996). Collinge writes that CJP proposed " 'a new equal exchange between' the established islands of advantage amid a sea of disadvantage" (*The Star* June 1996). Ten or more years later, the CJP's proposed link between Johannesburg's inner city and Braamfontein and also with Soweto (*The Star* June 1996) sports the grandiose Nelson Mandela Bridge. Also part of the reclaiming of this abandoned and run-down part of town now sees the sanitising of streets and the promotion of Newtown as a viable part of the city. The latter is evident from the city's imagineers, Blue IQ, setting the scene for a changing city by rolling out their optimistic slogan: "it's happening"[199].

The Nelson Mandela Project was already fully conceived and planned[200] when it was announced to a select group of dignitaries at a private function and reported in the local press as a project to "revitalise" Johannesburg's inner city (*City Press* July 5, 2000). The media became the mouthpiece of the official narrative on the city's redevelopment plans and, in effect, the media thereby acted to whip up public support by proxy[201]. The newspapers followed the official line on the redevelopment of Newtown and the following quotes from dailies illustrate the gradual crystallisation of a future narrative for Newtown. The reports carry the messages of official attitudes towards incumbent issues, especially those that have haunted the history of Newtown (see comments in section 'Coolie location') and expose the attitudes of the official powers towards the various, inconvenient, populations' futures.

After the launch of the project, the *City Press* (July 5, 2000) reported that Mr Ketso Ghordon, the then city manager of Johannesburg, said that Newtown had been earmarked as:

> [a] priority intervention zone [with] potential to attract major investment and to contribute to the revitalisation of the central business district (*City Press* July 5, 2000).

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[199] Cf. Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of the Self* (1969).

[200] Gauteng provincial government 'seeded' R3,5billion to Blue IQ, Johannesburg Development Agency and the Gauteng Tourism Authority in 1995 to implement its 2030 Vision of Johannesburg as "safe, economically productive and efficient city" (*Mail&Guardian* July 18-24, 2003:10) of which the Nelson Mandela Bridge is "a symbol of revitalisation … in terms of [the city's] aspirations as a world-class city" (*ibid*).

[201] Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) emphasised the media's role in "promoting the country' stature in the world as the leader of a peaceful transformation [and not as a] sycophantic government machine" (GTA report in *Tourism Talk* (3rd Quarter 2003: 2). Also, the head of GTA's Tourism Marketing integration Business Unit, Ms Lindelwa Isabelle sees the media as a principle role-player "[in] positioning Gauteng as a premier African tourist destination [by] countering crime perceptions with positive tourism coverage" (*ibid* 4).

This official line has since become the primary way in which the bridge has been spoken about. The reporter Rapule Tabane (*City Press* July 5, 2000) quoted the then inner-city manager of Johannesburg, Graeme Reid (now the CEO of Johannesburg Development Agency) as saying the NMB (and Newtown project) was:

> [to] create a safe and secure environment that could truly be a cultural hub where people could come and have fun. We first want to stabilise the area and then secure funding to deal with other derelict buildings which need to be repaired or demolished (*City Press* July 5, 2000).

These comments epitomise today's official attitudes towards the redevelopment of Newtown of which the NMB is the centre stage development. However the development is a polarised space in which outsider patronage and spending guarantees its future. Today the character of the changing Newtown is understood as being developed as a playground for the moneyed and the bridge serves as the link into this formerly unattractive area (see Chapter 6; also cf. Rykwert 2000:132-159). Thinking about Newtown did not grow from the streets to the drawing boards, but rather is a product of drawing boards and boardrooms[202] to be launched on the streets. For Paul Arnott-Job of the JDA, the city council's intentions to revamp facilities into Newtown was on the card in the late nineties, however this was not public knowledge (cf. Tabane - *City Press* July 5 2000). Tabane (*City Press* July 5 2000) reports that:

> [these] plans [were] to remove hawkers from the streets where they had become a nuisance.

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) councillor Oscar Maseko said the changes to Johannesburg's Newtown, especially the building of the bridge "[was to] reclaim our town from the lawless and bring it back to its former glory" (Tabane *City Press* July 5, 2000). This was then the early reporting on why the Bridge was built: the official side of the story. No one Tabane quoted in the news report, however, mentioned the fate of the people who were occupying the massive shack town on the Newtown side of the railway line where the south-end of the Nelson Mandela Bridge is today (see reference to this in this Chapter, section '2030: City Vision').

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[202] Jonathan Raban in *Soft City* (1975) writes that "cities … are plastic by nature" (*ibid* 10) and that urban identity develops "… like a position on a map fixed by triangulation" (*ibid*). For Raban the designing of everyday life entails "styles of living and thinking and feeling" (*ibid* 16) which Low & Lawrence-Zuniga takes as peoples' embodied experiences that are scripted and inscribed in the urban-scape (2003).

Mostly, the building of the Bridge was hailed as rescuing the city from urban decay. In *Gauteng News* (December 2000) the Bridge was announced as "[a] major step towards the regeneration and transformation of Johannesburg" (*Gauteng News* (December 2000). Under the heading, 'Reviving the City', the newspaper (*Gauteng News* December 2000) quoted the then MEC for Housing, Mr Paul Mashatile, on the Newtown Access Plan (November 16th 2000) as saying:

> The planned new bridge will become a landmark of the new South Africa. Today we are making a small step on a long journey that will change Johannesburg forever (*Gauteng News* (December 2000).

Within months of the announcement of the Bridge project and only days before Nelson Mandela's 83rd birthday in 2001, *Sowetan* reporter Joshua Raboroko wrote that the rejuvenation of the Johannesburg's inner city was set to happen through the building of the Nelson Mandela Bridge (*Sowetan* July 18 2001:4). The project would create employment and "help boost the economy through music and tourism" (*Sowetan* July 18 2001:4). Having spoken to Nelson Mandela, Raboroko wrote:

> [Mandela] appealed to local and international communities to invest in the centre [and urged] the private sector to form partnerships with the Government to boost the economy of the country (*Sowetan* July 18 2001:4).

This appeal still drives the energy behind the inner-city initiatives – a process started in 2001 when the Gauteng premier, Sam Shilowa, announced that Blue IQ[203] was investing R258million in Newtown "to create a necessary environment for job creation and to battle [sic] poverty" (*Sowetan* July 18 2001:4). At the time the City of Johannesburg's executive mayor, Mr Amos Masondo[204], saw the Bridge project as "[leading to] a cleaner and safer environment" (*Sowetan* July 18 2001:4) and he said:

> [the] bridge [is] a boost for Joburg inner city [as] the council is striving to transform Johannesburg into a "world class African city" that would compete with other cities of the world.

The city's municipal council now embarks on programmes to assert itself on a par with other international cities and to break with notions of being a lesser[205] city. What is implied in the latter is the stereotypical western notion of Africa as backward (cf.

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[203] An initiative of the Gauteng Province's financial sector.
[204] Masondo, like Mandela, was incarcerated on Robben Island during Apartheid.
[205] Achille Mbembe in *On the Postcolony* writes that the "colonized people … have a rich and complex consciousness" (*ibid* 4). The nature of social reality in Africa is based on Western assumptions and desires to "assert its difference from the rest of the world [and as such] African social formations [belong to that of] simple societies or of traditional societies" (*ibid* 2-3).

Mbembe 2001). The city focuses on becoming equal to others[206] in the world (see City 2030 Vision in this Chapter). The Nelson Mandela Bridge project was aimed at getting the public support needed in the form of publicity campaigns. In July 2001 – on the eve of Mandela's 83rd birthday – Nelson Mandela and the Gauteng Premier, Mbhazima Shilowa unveiled a model of the bridge that was subsequently announced in the media. The planning of the openings event for the NMB was done then[207] and less than a year later, a model of the NMB was unveiled and building operations began.

News reports of the unveiling of the model hit the streets at almost the same time as the announcement for the start of the building operations on the Bridge project that September (*Gauteng News* August 2001). Also, newspapers reported that Mandela and Shilowa "unequivocally called for the international community and business to see the project as an opportunity to create jobs and build a better life for the people of our country" (*Gauteng News* August 2001). The following quote appeared:

> Newtown has a significant role to play in the rejuvenation of Johannesburg, which is the largest employment base and business centre in the country. The challenge now lies with not only using our creativity to make Newtown vibrant, but to attract investment into the inner city so that more jobs can be created to better the lives of our people (Mandela *Gauteng News* August 2001).

At the time of the launching and construction of the NMB a majority of news reports concerned experts' opinions on stabilising the decaying city-centre. Articles emphasised the official versions for the regeneration of the city and daily interpreted it as the official panacea to revitalise Newtown. Also, the newspapers did not mention that the official vision for city's urban wasteland lacked broader public participation. Not surprisingly given the historical precedents, the plans for the NMB project were presented as a *fait accompli.* The official vision was presented to entice the public to buy into it and, mostly plans appeared not to include the people who where already in Newtown. The official planning of developments through the responses of the Gauteng Province, Johannesburg Council and management committees and dignitaries, such as Nelson Mandela himself[208], sanctioned the project. A critical

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[206] "Paris has the Eiffel Tower, New York its Statue of Liberty and Sydney its Harbour Bridge – all internationally recognised structures which have helped put these cities on the map. It is envisaged that the new Nelson Mandela Bridge will do the same for Johannesburg" (the Mandela Bridge website).
[207] From interview with Dominic Dempers of Simeka in charge of the marketing the Bridge project.
[208] The Markinor-Sunday Times Top Brands survey (*The Sunday Times* October 5 2003) mentioned Nelson Mandela as a possible brand as: "[for the man on the street] famous people enter into

interrogation of the latter reveals that the official scene-setting mechanisms imply forms of agenda-setting (cf. Charles Rutheiser 1996).

BLUE IQ AND THE BRIDGE[209]

This section deals with Blue IQ's role in imagineering Johannesburg's downtown, the setting of the stage for the redevelopment of the inner city with the building of the Nelson Mandela Bridge[210]. Uncanny similarities exist between Johannesburg and Atlanta's urban reinvention[211]. Both cities are relatively recent and racially polarised and for Atlanta, a railroad city, opportunism drives its constant reinvention (cf. Rutheiser 1996)[212]. A likeness appears in terms of Blue IQ, as the impresario, setting the scene to sell its creation via the modern media to an applauding public (cf. Rutheiser 1996)[213].

The meanings in the making of the NMB and its relation to the inner-city's redevelopment appears not unlike those in other cities around the world. Johannesburg's regeneration or re-creation can therefore be seen as moulded in the image that the Gauteng Province and Big Business hold for a city, especially one that finds official expression in the institutional mind of Blue IQ to create a "smart"[214] city. The latter connects to an article in the newspaper *The Star* (December 8 2000) in which Clem Sunter[215] writes: "… a fundamental change in mindset is needed if Johannesburg is to become a vibrant African city". A "smart" city, he says, is one that

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merchandising relationships. [So too] charities, museums, government departments, cities and even countries …" (*ibid*).

[209] The bridge is one of the eleven Blue IQ projects by Gauteng provincial government, "[a] piece of road infrastructure [and] symbol for the whole of Johannesburg [as] a world-class African city" (Blue IQ website).

[210] Rutheiser (1996) comments on Atlanta's "aggressive promotional efforts" (*ibid* 1) which were directed towards "[crafting] a distinctive, appealing image for the city … a *new* New South" (*ibid* 2-3). The similarities between Atlanta and Johannesburg lie in the mechanisms used for their imagineering through struggle protagonists Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King and what he calls "[the promulgation of an] 'official' mythology … based on the efforts of native son Martin Luther King Jnr., the cradle of the modern human rights movement" (*ibid*). Atlanta is promoted as "a bright and shiny city of the future" (*ibid* 1).

[211] In the early nineties in preparation for the Olympic Games there.

[212] Parallels exist between Atlanta and Johannesburg's 2030 Vision

[213] Rutheiser writes about Atlanta's "many collaborators … [produced a] densely layered array of cultural constructions" (1996:10). The city has always been "[an] unsupervised playground for private capital" (*ibid* 6).

[214] The branding of the inner city as a space for economic growth is based on acquired business acumen.

[215] Sunter commonly known as an inspirational writer is the chairman of Anglo American's Chairman's Fund.

is: "industrious, clean, safe …[and] exciting". Sunter describes the inner city as a space in which, "despite the commuters, you feel the emptiness" (*The Star* December 8 2000). He maintains that "…just as the businesses that recently moved out were different to the original gold mines, so the next generation of businesses will be different again – and far more African (*The Star* (December 8 2000).[216] The "smart" city is:

> full of smart people who do not need advice on how to improve their own prospects. The combination of their action will automatically raise the prospects for the community as a whole. Just get them there, set them loose and they will do the rest[217]

Blue IQ, the Gauteng Province and the Johannesburg Development Agency work hand-in-hand with business and throughout my research on the streets of Johannesburg, I found that these names are more commonly associated (in the minds of residents) with billboards than with the people of Johannesburg themselves.

At the time of my research, Blue IQ's association with the 294m Nelson Mandela Bridge, the longest cable-stayed bridge in southern Africa was intimated though concentrated billboard advertising and also present in new media such as the world wide web. However, few of the people I spoke to on the streets of Newtown and in the vicinity of the Bridge, those who made their way to and from work across the Nelson Mandela Bridge, actually knew who or even what Blue IQ was. Some said: "They did all this and that [pointing to the Bridge and the New Metro Mall]". Others said they knew nothing about Blue IQ other than the name brandished on billboards.

Now and again, a person would point in the direction of the African Bank Market Theatre in Newtown to where, they said Blue IQ's offices where. Asked whether they had gone there to see what Blue IQ was doing, many said no. One man shook his head, and asked: "Can *I* go there?" This then is a common response from ordinary people who still try to eek out a livelihood on the inner-city streets, vastly unsophisticated in terms of the slickness of corporate business.

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[216] Sunter (*The Star* December 8 2000) says "venture capitalists [are needed] to create a feature of the CBD as powerful as the Waterfront in Cape Town which brings the public back into the city with the tourists". See also reports: Shirley Woodgate 'Soullless city can rise from the dumps' (*The Star* September 12 1996); Neil Fraser 'Smart growth may solve CBD problems' (*The Star* January 15 1999:9); Jo-Anne Collinge "'City centre no longer a 'no-go- area'"(*The Star* April 26 2001) and

[217] Sunter in 'What Price a 'smart' city?' - *The Star* December 8 2000

In the many months, even years that I have been walking around town I have noticed peoples' attitudes towards the inner-city developments as that which they have no control over. A street vendor David Cement told me that he cells "cooldrinks, cigarettes and sweets" in the inner city. "Everyday I do not know when I'll not be working. Any day is a good time to stop my business. I do not know who I can speak to. I want to do business. I am doing business. But my business is not big. I keep on coming here to sell these things to live".

He is one of the many people I spoke to who have never heard of Blue IQ. They were amazed when I pointed to the large billboard alongside the M1 that is visible from Newtown. The board, with the slogan: "Its happening …" and a promise, "… we're putting millions into your future" had not been associated with the Bridge at all. When I pointed out that that was an advertisement for Blue IQ, some nodded politely and thanked me for pointing it out. The billboard itself sports a large picture of a little girl in a pretty smocked dress running with outstretched arms against a backdrop of a clear blue sky[218]. Perhaps the most significant aspect here is the relation between the little girl in the advertisement and the inner-city implied "future" through the regeneration process – not about now as much as a stage in future (see also Hopkins 2003).

The marketing of the Blue IQ projects – 11 in total in Gauteng – is also done on an official website that links the Nelson Mandela Bridge to other projects and to the initiative as a whole. Ironically, not one of the people I spoke to had direct access to computer technology and could not access this information. Blue IQ's use of modern forms of advertising and communication such as the 'new media' appears "[to be] more equal [among more technologically] liberated society [as access is limited by] social stratification" (cf. McQuail 2000:139). This illustrates who Blue IQ's audience is, one with access to new media. McQuail (2000:139) the latter as:

[218] This kind of advertising billboard is often used by theme park 'imagineers' to elicit public support, and the Blue IQ one appears similar to that on the outskirts of Celebration, a Disney-town in Florida (Ross 1999:3). Ross quotes architectural historian Vincent Scully on the "merchandizing of the semi-real" (as depicted on advertising boards) as "unacceptably optimistic" (*ibid*). Ross writes: "a climate of warm expectations has been oversold by bogus assurances" (*ibid*). The slogan on the giant board outside Celebration reads: 'Isn't this reason enough for Celebration?'. To promote the 'new town', there is "an image of two girls savoring their go on a playground swing seat" (*ibid*). For Ross "their fresh gusto was bathed in radiant sunlight as they rose into a blue-sky future" (*ibid*). Blue IQ's marketing campaign of Johannesburg's Newtown has a similar tone: the carefree little girl against the blue sky backdrop, et cetera.

> …the better off [that] are ahead of the poor [and that] social and information gaps widen rather than narrow [with an inevitable] 'information underclass' [developing alongside] a social underclass.

McQuail's comments are important in terms of the way in which Blue IQ targets its audience: markets its projects, especially as the website links the projects across the wide spectrum of the world wide web. Blue IQ's operations as well as those of the local and provincial government are directed towards gaining a foothold into society (including a global one) through the new media[219]. A critical perspective on the latter also reveals a link between these operations and that of politics (cf. James Carey 1998 in McQuail 2000: 140)[220]. The positioning of the NMB in downtown Johannesburg needs to be looked at as a potent symbol for the city and especially in terms of anthropologist Hilda Kuper's observations that:

> … social space is never neutral … (cf. Rotenberg 1995:23)

The large billboard and the website that advertises the various developments in the inner city. However these billboards provide little information to the awareness of large numbers of people on the inner-city streets; they are unable to 'experience' the impact of 'what's happening' in the inner city. Many see the billboard on a daily basis, but they tell me that they do not know how to interpret it. For some it just became part of the growing billboard advertising landscape of the city. Most of the people I spoke to did not have private access to elementary forms of electronic communication – let alone the Internet.

Amongst my informants, some knew something about the urban regeneration from what was printed in the free weekly supplement, *Jozi News*[221], started up by Independent Newspapers in Johannesburg shortly after the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge (July 2003). *Jozi News* is handed out to commuters at minibus and

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[219] Rutheiser (1996:9) observes in the modern cities a trend for "[cities to] float freely within the placeless world of the mass media". He writes:"[these] imaginary cities allow one to visit and 'know' a place … without *actually* having been there" (*ibid*). In the case of the NMB this project appears to "[be] produced by and through an organised field of social activities that leave very material fact on the ground" (cf. *ibid* 9).

[220] Parallels exist between Johannesburg's urban configuration in the media and what Charles Rutheiser describes as Atlanta's, that of: "… multi-mediated venues of programmed communication, key nodes in what Sharon Zukin has termed "the critical infrastructure" that shapes the public's hunger for information and other consuming desires" (*ibid* 12).

[221] Shortly after the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge in July 2003 Gauteng Daily, *The Star,* printed this newssheet which is distributed free of charge at bus terminuses and stations in Gauteng. The masthead of the paper reads: 'Let's rebuild Johannesburg'. The CEO of Blue IQ Pradeep Maharaj writes a weekly column to inform readers of 'what's happening' downtown. It no longer circulates.

train station in the inner city on a Thursday. A woman said that she had gained 'bits' of information about Blue IQ and repeated that it was:

> an initiative connected with the Mandela Bridge and other developments in town.

It was interesting to note that she used the same language that Blue IQ uses to promote itself, that is of being 'an initiative'. However, she said that she did not know how Blue IQ fitted into her everyday life, only that which she read in the paper on how Blue IQ was "changing Johannesburg". The woman explained Pradeep Maharaj, Blue IQ CEO, wrote about "what is going on over here". She knew many people who read *Jozi News* as "it was free and about rebuilding Johannesburg". People, she said, were curious over happenings in the inner city, as they knew very little. The construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, as an emblem for the city and the most important infra-structural part of the city's 2030 vision and the role of Blue IQs[222] was hardly known about on the streets.

From newly renovated premises in Newtown, Blue IQ, through a virtual office of six, masterminds the Gauteng Province's eleven "mega projects [that are aimed at making] a significant impact on the economy of [the province]" (cf. Blue IQ – company information profile). Blue IQ originally referred to itself as "[a] highly skilled, professional, strategic task force [that is] accountable to the government for delivering specific results on these [eleven] projects by 2004". The latter came about with the acceptance of a tender in 1999 by the Gauteng Provincial Government whereby Blue IQ officially became "an initiative" to provide skills-development and public relations campaigning of the large-scale projects of the Province. Since 2000, Blue IQ has been the central body in charge of conceiving the eleven projects "to better" the Gauteng Province, of which the Nelson Mandela Bridge is the most important infra-structural one (www.blueiq.co.za).

Johannesburg local council and the Gauteng Provincial government have entrusted Blue IQ with funds to develop public spaces and, in terms of this research, the most

[222] Gauteng MEC for Finance and Economic Affairs, Jaby Moleketi, writes in Blue IQ Annual Report (2001:3): "Blue IQ is fully committed to the delivery of strategic economic infrastructure to boost the competitiveness of key sectors of the Gauteng economy. It aims to mobilise private sector investment to act as the engine for higher growth and job creation through 11 key projects that will optimise the impact on socio-economic development. It has set a target of attracting R100billion of investment over a ten year period to produce more than 100 000 new permanent jobs in the province".

critical aspect of which are the opinions of development experts and officials that dictate urban projects without public consultation. The 'initiative' appears to operate outside the public domain as an autonomous and authoritative body and, people on the street, the ordinary members of the public and citizens, know little about either Blue IQ or the city projects it seems to be in charge of.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

I first stumbled upon a booklet profiling Blue IQ shortly before an estimated 60 000 delegates from all over the world descended on Johannesburg for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August-September 2002. At the Blue IQ offices in Newtown[223], the architectural model of the Nelson Mandela Bridge was exhibited and I became interested in the socio-cultural as well as the political implications of this development in as far as the inner-city urban dynamics were concerned. The glossy booklet profiled Blue IQ's involvement in transforming Johannesburg into a "vital node" for public and private partnerships on national, provincial and local government levels. Also, it mentioned that Blue IQ works closely with the Gauteng Economic Development Agency (GEDA)[224] and aims to attract investors to the city as a way of rebuilding the inner city. It made no mention of how ordinary citizens would be accommodated, many of them entrepreneurs in the informal sector and many poor. What was however emphasised was the need for the inner city's reinvention to be supported from the 'outside'.

With the Gauteng[225] Provincial Government's acceptance of Blue IQ as its "financial arm", the initiative aids and abets the eleven provincial projects totalling more than R3,5billion foreign investment and tax payers' money. Ultimately the various projects

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[223] Blue IQ's Newtown project leader Xoliswa Ngema (*Financial Mail* July 19th 2002:75): "Newtown is a tourism project. What's important is to regain the city and bring in the people [to promote Newtown as the creative centre of the city]. To do that [you] need the right product, the right infrastructure, we have to address accessibility and safety and security. Once we have done all that, we hope to have even more people coming from all over to get a taste of our culture, relax and enjoy some good entertainment and have fun ". The report states "the province, along with the city of Johannesburg and the South African National Roads Agency is putting huge effort into improved access into the city. This includes the impressive Nelson Mandela Bridge".

[224] GEDA – the province's official economic investment and trade promotions organisation.

[225] Gauteng is South Africa's smallest province is "the economic powerhouse" (profile on Blue IQ) and "accounts for 40% of South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and generates 9% of Africa's entire GDP" (*ibid*).

aim to boost the province's strategic economic infrastructure. The Gauteng Province's head of finance Pradeep Maharaj, who is also Blue IQ's CEO says that the projects are directed towards the creation of "smart industries, high value-added manufacturing and tourism[226]", all to revitalise the inner-city. Of all the projects, the Nelson Mandela Bridge is the most costly and the key infra-structural project.

Blue IQ's mandate features the development of a world-class infrastructure for the city in a globally competitive investment market. Therefore, Blue IQ's use of strategic marketing techniques and specific investment initiatives endeavour to attract both foreign and local investors into Gauteng. This idea, of the redevelopment of Johannesburg, therefore largely entails attracting people and investment rather than dealing with the main problems on the ground, the urban poverty of the city. It is curious to see that the responsibilities of Blue IQ include ways to reduce bureaucratic delays for investors and to stimulate business partnerships. However, as far as encouraging skills training and resource building[227], these opportunities do not appear to benefit people on the streets. Blue IQ markets itself as:

> [an agent for] growing the economy, creating jobs and changing the composition of provincial GGP [that is] increas[ing] the economic activity on the real side of the economy (cf. Blue IQ company profile).

The profile hardly mentions the lives of ordinary citizens as an insert states that Blue IQ and the Gauteng Provincial Government "[offer] a robust and dynamic product [for] the local and international market" (cf. Blue IQ company profile). It appears that Blue IQ sets out to sell something, to entice investment with little direct mentioning of the future of the urban poor.

For Blue IQ the NMB project is a prime strategic manoeuvre to attract regional, national and global attention (cf. Blue IQ company profile). The project's meanings are part of Blue IQ's efforts to regenerate the inner city as a global tourist destination (cf. Blue IQ company profile). An intricate situation arises with Blue IQ holding out the NMB to promote the inner city and gaining attention as *the* project initiators (cf.

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[226] CEO Blue IQ Pradeep Maharaj says projects are aimed at the "business tourist [who] spends seven times more than a leisure tourist. We want to encourage people to spend more time and more money in Gauteng" (*Financial Mail* July 19th 2002: 76).

[227] Blue IQ's CEO Pradeep Maharaj says the projects are in line with "the Government's social equalisation objectives" (Blue IQ Annual Report 2001: 8).

Blue IQ company profile). The position of Blue IQ is to act on the inner city's arrangements and to project these efforts to stimulate:

> strategic economic infrastructure development [to] catalyse the economic activity of the province (cf. Blue IQ company profile).

The success of the NMB project in terms of the inner-city regeneration is important not only for the city and its inhabitants, but it appears for Blue IQ too. The initiative's three-pronged "commercialisation strategy" (announced and circulated during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2000) is contained in a glossy booklet, available in the entrance foyer of the group's offices in Newtown and also at the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) in Rosebank, Johannesburg. In the booklet the main strategic aim appears to be to attract investment to Gauteng, especially to Johannesburg and to:

> create knowledge [to] target the correct investors [and also] will assist in the time-frames for decision-making (cf. Blue IQ profile).

The acts of "creating knowledge" suggested in the booklet imply not ordinary or informal participation, but also a need for the skilled kind. The city's regeneration programme appears single-mindedly concerned with attracting investment through the building of the Nelson Mandela Bridge. The Blue IQ profile reads like a manual for success:

> [and as promoter of the NMB project aims to attract] interests and enquiries [that would] stimulate the desire [for investment and] reduce the perceived risks of doing business in South Africa

Blue IQ's aims are to conjure a particular image for the city: a kind of clean slate for future investment and developments. Such a slate necessarily ignores the untidy realities of the city – the crime, grime and social instability. The imposing design of the bridge and its name is the image Blue IQ uses to convince investors of their story. The bridge is therefore the commodity used by Blue IQ to convince future investors of the veracity of their story not least because:

> Successful investment promotion strategies around the world have succeeded or failed on the selling agent's ability to deliver the goods (Blue IQ profile; see also section: Simeka).

This quotation reveals the lengths Blue IQ will go "to ensure that directly or indirectly all possible constraints that might face a potential investor are removed or ameliorated as effectively as possible" (cf. Blue IQ company profile). The latter, of course, has complicated repercussions for people who do not fit the necessary profile of what

Blue IQ envisages as the appropriate face of the city in the future. Blue IQs 'commercialisation strategy' "[provides] incentives [to people] for joining the Blue IQ family" (from Blue IQ profile) that implies: "… useful and concrete support [to] new investors."[228]

The Nelson Mandela Bridge fits the bill of what Blue IQ sets out to promote; a core of infra-structural development in symbolic Newtown. Described as "an architecturally unique" (Blue IQ profile). The ostensible purpose of the NMB is to aid the traffic flow into Newtown and also this part of the city's "rebirth" (cf. Blue IQ company profile). The Bridge is being flaunted as "[a] vibrant emblem of the African Renaissance"[229] with implied connotations that *this* pilot initiative for the inner city regeneration, in the name of Mandela and his contribution to the nation, will profit the cultural industries in Newtown in the future. Blue IQ further maintains that:

> This historic area of Johannesburg[230], already rich in museums, theatres and memorable buildings, will become the creative capital of South Africa" (cf. Blue IQ company profile).

Blue IQ, in conjunction with the Johannesburg Development Agency's visionary requirements, therefore constructed the Nelson Mandela Bridge as "[a bridge with] exceptional architectural merit and [of] a high class, an original and a notable structure to fit the upliftment of the city. The bridge [needed to be] a worthy gift to prosperity" (cf. *Concrete* August 2003).

TENDERS AND CONTRACTORS

A description of the Bridge, it's planning, look and intended emblematic presence foregrounds what is happening in a postapartheid Johannesburg. The several main engineering firms contracted to build the Nelson Mandela Bridge project and its design was assigned to a Danish firm of architects. The South African National Roads Agency and the National Department of Transport were also involved. The team that

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[228] In 2003 Blue IQ held a campaign in Johannesburg for developing what they called "smart industries" under the banner of: "Come to where smart is …" (cf. SAFM October 2003).
[229] After President Thabo Mbeki's idea of a 'rebirth' in Africa and here used to further the notion of such rebirthing or awakening of Africa after colonialism and apartheid. In July 1991 the then deputy president Thabo Mbeki launched Johannesburg *Mayivuke* (or 'Johannesburg Awake'), a forerunner of the city's 2030 Vision to be a world-class one (cf. Beavon 2004: 267-2030 Vision).
[230] The city has a population of 2,8million people and produces 11% of the country's wealth.

concluded the contract was the LBA Consortium made up of various South African companies[231].

Within two months of the tender for the construction of the Bridge being awarded in July 2001, the piling for the sub-structure began. ARQ was responsible for the geo-technical aspect of the construction and the substructure of the bridge. In conversation with the project manager on the Bridge, Werner Jerling, he explained that the project was "an intricate one" as soil variation ('graben') made the undertaking difficult and expensive. Jerling said in a conversation to me in 2003:

> The bridge had to be supported on 20 and 30m piles. The site was not a straightforward one and [the building of the bridge commanded] expertise. Here, in the team, from the everyday workers to the specialists, the engineers, all have worked hard and only given their best. It is difficult – the rain and trains – but everyone has given what they could to create an impressive landmark for Johannesburg.

Jerling said that he thought the "greatest challenge" in constructing the bridge was working over the continually active main Braamfontein railway lines and the marshalling yards and explained that the NMB crosses:

> … the railway yard, a catering yard … the trains arrive in the morning, have to be kitted out with food. There are 45 railway lines. This required intensive cooperation and coordination with Transnet and Metro Rail to ensure all safety aspects were addressed while keeping the project on track. It is an exciting project with plenty of engineering challenges[232].

Jerling also said that working on the project was "quite daunting, especially late at night, as I feared being in this crime-ridden[233] area". However, as the project progressed, he "felt more at home". In June (2003), when I spoke to him again, he said that he "enjoyed the view of the city and especially the dramatic qualities of the Bridge". He pointed to the city skyline beyond the dramatic pylons and cable-stays that held the bridge in position and said:

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[231] Grinaker-LTA-Bafokeng Civil Works joint Venture and the Nelson Mandela Bridge Consultants Consortium (NMBCC). THE NMBCC was formed between BKS and ARQ. The design contract was awarded to two Danish firms: Structural engineers, COWI A/S and architects Dissing & Weitling A/S and a local company PD Naidoo & Associted then took over responsibilities for service relocations and site supervision. The other companies that worked with Grinker LTA were: GEL, DSE, Steele Fixing Services (SFS) and Reinforcing Fixing Services and also Alpha cement, BRI Railway Engineers, Corrolec, Ditshaba Construction, Dry Air Solutions and Duhva Security (the company is still in charged of 24 hour security arrangements on the bridge).

[232] These are extracts from conversation with Jerling during the construction of the Bridge.

[233] The perception of the city as "no-go" area (cf. Czeglédy 2003; also *The StarSurvey* (April 26 2001) resulted from peoples experiences of mugging and perceptions of the city as "unsafe" (*ibid*). In 2001 200 CCTV cameras were installed in the inner city "to create pockets of virtually crime-free zones" (*The Star Survey* April 26 2001). See also Lindsay Bremner 'Crime and the emerging landscape of post-apartheid Johannesburg' in H. Judin and I.1999 Vladislavic, *blanc_architecture: apartheid and after*.

> Things are happening … the city is turning around.

The impressions conveyed by the workers, contractors (technicians), engineers and the foremen I spoke to was that they felt being part of the construction team was being part of the bridge, and that the bridge inspired pride in them. The workers said that they saw the building of the bridge as a step forward in the process of national reconciliation. They had pride in what they were doing as it was not "just an ordinary job", but one in which they could celebrate a change. One workman told me in an enthusiastic tone:

> This bridge is new, it looks good and things will start to improve.

I spoke to many workers on the bridge and shift bosses who said that their subordinates "worked hard and long". Many of whom said they were "honoured" to be part of the Mandela project. It was something, they said, that in future they would be proud to be associated with "[as] it's Mandela's".

However, more than the Mandela name of the project, many of the bridge workers felt that the fact that they had employment – mostly only for as long as the project lasted – was of chief importance. "It's the job that the bridge has given me", said one, to which another added: "Mandela is good. I have a job". People's associations with their work on what they deemed 'a very important project' stood in stark contrast with what their future prospects would be once the construction of the NMB was over. For some it was about pride and nation building, a clean and prosperous future and for others, it was about Mandela but more so, about a sense of relief from dire unemployment and homelessness. Many were thankful for the employment and said that they prayed that something else would crop up when "[this] job was finished".

The different groups of workers I chatted to during their lunch hours spoke about the long hours that were rewarded "as this bridge is going to change things". In early February (2003), a site foreman for the casting of the concrete slab across the railway lines, Goodman Qwabe, said that the sixty men who worked under him had been working "very long hours. It was as if we worked day and night. We never stopped. But it is *all* very good. The bridge is going to be a good thing". Some workers who were standing nearby said: "It is us, we have built it. It is ours. Madiba gave it to us. We have jobs, we have food". Another man said: "But after this, not all of us will have jobs".

From the bits of conversation gathered around the construction site, I was able to draw inferences that, I feel, revealed the workers' views on being part of the project. The most important aspect was that they showed a sense of pride in the project because of its 'Mandela' name. Some felt thankful for having a job, praising Mandela himself for "the food on the table and a place to stay" since they started working on the construction site. A group of 2002 high school matriculants who were employed to sweep the site said that they too were proud to have "at least this job" as they have not been able to find any other employment since coming to Johannesburg from Pietersburg three months before. It was clear that many felt that "Madiba gave it [the bridge and the employment] to us" and this, I feel, implied not only pride and involvement with what was happening, but also showed a feeling of belonging. Lovell (1998:1) equates the notion of 'belonging' as "[a kind of] loyalty to place" which I extend to include a sense of purpose and pride. Since the people I had spoken to associate their employment with the figure of Nelson Mandela through the naming of the Bridge, I feel that it may have become an extended sense of belonging. Lovell (1998:1) writes that belonging can be " defined through a sense of experience, a phenomenology of locality …" (1998:1). I suggest that this is one way of presenting the project – an act whereby people involvement in a project creates a sense of importance, especially when symbolic value and purpose has been ascribed to it and through such involvement a collective sense of belonging is engendered.

I am interested in what Francis Nyamnjoh (2005:3) describes as a politics of belonging "[through] efforts at democratisation". Nyamnjoh (2005:4) explores the role of the media in promoting "democratisation" processes that controversially promote a politics of belonging (2005:7). He sees the latter as the media's uncritical role as vehicle for "uncritical assumptions, beliefs, stereotypes … [that do not allow communities] to publicly scrutinise and contest decisions made in their name by the most powerful members and institutions of society (Nyamnjoh 2005:2 cites Lee 1995 2-7).

Different people had different things to say about the Bridge. For engineer Tom Monahan of Grinaker-LTA, the bridge epitomised the kind of regeneration projects that cities have to embark as "one of the biggest problem cities go through to date is

when people move out – [here it was the] move to Sandton [and the fact that] the city [got] run down". He explained:

> Blue IQ and the City fathers put together the concepts of precincts in order to upgrade the city. Four sections where identified: the mining, banking – bank city and Standard bank, retail [regional] section lead to the cleaning up of sidewalks, putting security guards. And the emphasis moved to Newtown – MuseumAfrica, Market theatre … [it] needed access, a way of getting in and out. So, this project aims to improve access dramatically. Previously, [the road] across Queen Elizabeth bridge [is] a little bit dodgy. Hopefully this new project will give this area a new life back.

Monahan explained that the concept of the Bridge was a specific one: "The architect had to come up with an asymmetrical cable stay bridge design. We [Grinaker LTA] created a digital image of what we wanted to create – we superimposed it onto a photograph of Johannesburg. A novel idea and, I think, it is one of the ideas why we actually won the job. We could predict to the client exactly what he was going to get and this was done way back in 1999. And the bridge [on the photograph] looks, obviously, remarkably the same as what we built". Curiously though, plans were already being tendered in 1999, although the public was not informed until Mandela's 83rd birthday in 2001. Also, there appears to have been no open competition for the design of the NMB, which is ironic given South Africa's new democracy and its transparency! How far does democracy really go in South Africa?[234]

Though Monahan describes the Bridge as "an engineering feat" it is strange that no opportunity was given to local design talent. However, engineers were able to show off their talent especially, Monahan explained, in terms of the manufacturing and installation of the recess pipes for the cables - the former needed to be lined up to meet up with the pylons.

> That was when the pylons were not even there yet, so it was pretty intricate surveying. Interestingly, lining them up on paper is one thing, but when you had to do it on site, there were some very serious calculations (Monahan in conversation 2003).

Monahan said that Grinaker-LTA was proud of being involved with the NMB as the latter was the embodiment of: "bringing first world infrastructure to the developing world" (in conversation 2003). Monahan praised the engineering team's skills and emphasised their contribution to realising the dream of Johannesburg as a 'world

[234] See Francis Nyamjoh *Africa's Media: Democracy and the politics of belonging* (2005); Abdoumaliz Simone & Abdelghani Abouhani (eds) *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City* (2005) and Naomi Klein *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the frontlines of the globalisation debate* (2002).

city'. In the late eighties Edward Soja wrote about the meanings of the notion 'world city' and pointed out that it was the result of "urban condensation of the restructured international division of labour (Soja 1989: 188 cf. Friedman and Wolff, 1982). Soja writes that cities "enigmatically" become part of global spatial planning programmes as well as '[being] cognizant of the powerful mediating role of the national state" (1989: 189) [235].

In speaking to people, from the Bridge's project manager Jerling, the site foreman Qwabe and many others associated with the project, it was notable that they saw the significance of the project as extending beyond their professional involvement to incorporate feelings of nationhood. It also was clear from conversations that the Bridge's dramatic structure, its physical and symbolic denotations, implied a particular space – one of magnitude and iconoclasm. The latter perhaps makes sense in terms of Eleana Yalouri's discussion of the Acroplis (2001:56) in which a territory or place not only exists in peoples' minds but becomes reproduced in terms of the specific social relations that inform peoples' perceptions of their selves "[and also that of] the national self" (Yalouri 2001: 56). Yalouri (*ibid*) refers to Roland Barthes (1974) notion of the nation as a historical and cultural construct that "tries to naturalize itself through 'myth'" (Yalouri 2001:56). She also cites Michel Foucault on the notion of 'the gaze' in which knowledge, power and truth link to inform peoples' perceptions (*ibid*). The NMB has been engrained on peoples' consciousness through the anti-Apartheid struggle for liberation that culminated in the release of Nelson Mandela.

Another perspective on the Bridge was that of bridge engineer Pankaj Bullah of PD Naidoo and Associates who saw the bridge as more than just symbolic as "[it] transfers knowledge and experience from skilled and talented engineers to people who are in need of training, who perhaps may become leaders and teachers too". For him the engineering feat aspect was of great importance as:

> It is this gap that should be bridged [especially in terms of] the training of individuals [the] junior graduates [it] is an absolute necessity not forgetting many hands that built this bridge.

[235] In this sense, contemporary urban arrangements rest on what Soja's identifies as post-Fordism, postmodernism and post-historicists (1989:189).

Bullah stressed that it was "the South African workman's pride and skill that produced this world quality cable-stayed bridge structure" and that for him this was the meaning of the bridge. He also saw a need to "[provide] continued development [of this engineering expertise]"[236].

It is important to note that the Bridge, constructed by a consortium of South African engineering firms, was designed by a Danish[237] engineering firm, COWI, and that the latter was commissioned by Blue IQ. The firm specialises in bridges and tunnels such as the impressive Oresund Bridge[238] and the Great Belt Tunnel and, now also include the Nelson Mandela Bridge on their website. The overseas architectural design team, Dissing and Weitling (D+K arkitekfirma)[239], also appointed by Blue IQ, was chosen because of their international project experience[240].

A spokesman for the architectural design team said that the NMB design "[strived] to resolve functional and aesthetic requirements [and had to respond] to the site". The design also was in line with project requirements for a landmark structure. This was made descriptively explicit as follows:

> [A] unique structure with expressed landmark qualities [and therefore] the bridge has the excitement of a cable stayed structure. The asymmetrical disposition responds to the operation of the railways [and has resulted] in towers of different heights. The cylindrical pylons and cross bracing ensures two equally harmonious towers, related in properties and geometry. A unity in detail of the stay anchorage at deck and pylons is achieved with simple steel wedge plates.

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[236] PDNA has worked in and around Johannesburg, for example the lion enclosure at the Johannesburg Zoo, the Vodacom Phase four building in Midrand, the Johannesburg Airport, the Mary Fitzgerald Square, the Gold Reef City Steel Arch bridge, the Xai-Xai bridge in Mozambique.

[237] In conversation with Denmark's Ambassador to South Africa H.E.Torben Brylle (April 28 2004) he mentioned "there are similarities" between his country and South Africa's liberation struggle adding: "[the Danes] took a brave stand against the Nazi's". He did not comment on the design of the Bridge or its connection with Denmark.

[238] Alla Kjoer in *Concrete Trends* 5(2)2002 wrote an article entitled 'Bringing Nations Together' featuring the Oresund Link and mentioned that it was an effort of the Danish and Swedish government "to join two nations together". Similarities between this bridge and the NMB are not only the emphasisi of 'healing' a divide, but also the construction had similar references – "[that of a] cable-stayed bridge [and also] the pylons [were] cast in situ". Kjoer mentions that the Oversund bridge was "opened with pomp and ceremony [on July 1 2000]" (*ibid*).

[239] The D+K architect is Poul Ove Jensen from Denmark.

[240] Established in 1971, the firm was also involved in the Great Belt link in Denmark. As leading Danish firm, D+K also has significant international experience in town and landscape planning. The latest is the Stonecutters Bridge in Hong Kong currently under construction.

This statement confirms that for the Danish architects' firm it was the notion of 'beauty of form following function', which created the excitement around the project[241]. The following is how the bridge was described:

> The robust piers below the bridge deck are a direct response to the environment emphasising the elegance and slenderness of the pylon. The abutments at the north and south ends, although addressing different requirements in terms of connecting roadways and landscape conditions are of a clearly related design. The use of clear glass and the slight lowering of the pedestrian walkways makes a prominent feature of the pedestrian protective rails, further enhanced by a top rail with built-in lighting, all adding to the security of pedestrians. The pylons are underscored by architectural lighting at deck level and finished off by the cylindrical glass enclosed top lights. The lighting scheme clearly picks out the landmark qualities of the scheme (cf. architect: Poul Ove Jensen).

This sort of statement appears to be about the grand design concept and little or nothing about the experience of a pedestrian walking across the Bridge, especially as the lowered walkway is exposed to exhaust fumes (see Chapter 6). The structural elements that amount to the making of a landmark are therefore chiefly about making an impression on the landscape rather than enlivening the daily experience of the pedestrian. It appears that in the face of what the architects and engineers express, the "power of imagineering" as aptly described by Rowan Moore (1999:14) comes to mind, especially in as far as:

> [Architecture as the creator of] images … large scale attempts to assert local and national identity and to create alternatives to generic space, manifest in the urge of many government bodies to employ famous architects to build cultural institutions to adorn their cities (Moore 1999:37).

For Moore, today's city centres are threatened by the growth of substitute cities. Simultaneously they "[also express a] need to reinforce the presence of a traditional city" (1999:37). The Bridge therefore fits into what Moore sees as the reinvention of city centres, as something else, and also as "one centre among many, offering [the] diversity and complexity [that a] substitute cities cannot give" (Moore 1999:37). The Bridge, as viewed against Moore's description of 'imagineers' (the 1980s creators of

[241] Architectural critic Alan Lipman wrote in the early nineties that a bridge had been proposed into Newtown as suggested by the Community Design Service of Cardiff in which "a Mandela crossing … [for] the city centre that was fast expiring" (*Sunday Independent* August 21 2001). Lipman wrote that the proposals were for a bridge for all city users, not only cars – "[something like] Callatravo's designs …[which are more pedestrian-friendly]" (*ibid*). Lipman wrote: "It must integrate the movement of all city users" (*ibid*). I was told that at the unveiling of the model of the NMB Nelson Mandela commenting in passing that said he was concerned about the bridge's design emphasising cars and buses and not enough space for city dwellers "to promenade".

Disney's fantasy landscapes), therefore suggests something new and different for the city, almost as if it is:

> subject to change, and as amenable to carrying changing images, as a television set (Moore: 1999:12)[242]

The Bridge, a large and dominant structure, is therefore an architectural expression that is "[synonymous with the] making [of public] spaces and [then also] determining their quality" (cf. Moore 1999:12). It appears as a contemporary expression of the kinds of architecture that is "[likely] to be appropriated as an image [and] reduced to a common value" (cf. Moore 1999:12). Its naming also significantly contributes to peoples' understanding of this specific space, and where people fit into the future urban narratives.

THE BRIDGE AND ITS NAME

The name 'Nelson Mandela' added to the Bridge is central to the need for an inscribed meaning, especially in terms of the affect such an inscriptions has on what and how people think (cf. Low and Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003). Peoples' identification with the bridge can therefore be interrogated in terms of discussions about the Acropolis, especially in as far as "social relations [with reference to the Acropolis are] constructed and [then] experienced" (cf. Yalouri 2001: 91-92 cf. Michael Herzfeld 1982b). A place's name and structure is "[therefore an] evocative [category]"which for Yalouri:

> demonstrates the strength, the power and certain qualities of a group which conveys this name, and it submerges the individual in group identity (2001:99).

Through its name, a structure or place gains associative meanings, that is a place or space connects with individuals and the connection invariably extends through association to include large groups, even communities or nations (Yalouri 2001:99). Potentially, a place emerges through a series of associations that connect it on both local and global levels. For De Certeau (1986:94) the meanings invested in names, especially the attribution of proper names, "[provide ways] of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable and

[242] See also Sorkin 1992.

interconnected properties" (cf. Yalouri 2001:99)[243]. Yalouri maintains that the naming of places and "[especially] claims over names" are ways of writing history (Yalouri 2001: 100) and that history of such a kind has more than local significance:

> insisting on the use of a name [especially] on a global level [means seeking] to establish certain qualities on global level (Yalouri 2001:99).

The latter, in terms of Johannesburg's regeneration efforts, appears to be largely the case (www.blueiq.co.za). The naming of the Bridge, in De Certeau's thinking (1986), appears to refer to a specific person, place, and moment in time and, as such, connects "[the] place that they clothe with a word; they recall or suggest phantoms that still move about" (cf. De Certeau 1986:105 in Yalouri 2001:99). The Mandela name is shrouded in significance and meanings and, amongst the many, it is a name held in world regard, one associated with decades of incarceration and political struggle, that of liberator, a national leader and international reconciler, and so forth.

What has been written so far represent peoples' associations with the simulated meanings of the person Nelson Mandela and his activities. The attributions of these to the Bridge appear to also directly influence peoples' responses (see Chapter 3). Yet another layer is added by Nelson Mandela's own responses to the use of his name. What then is the relation between the branding of Mandela's name by the makers of places and Nelson Mandela's own personal feelings?

At the unveiling of the model of the bridge, Nelson Mandela felt "[his] name was over used in the naming of structures around the country" (*City Vision* July 20 2001). Mandela said that he did not wish to appear singled out as "[other people] equally contributed to the fight against apartheid [and that their names] might disappear in history as they were not being mentioned in the naming of monuments and structures" (*City Vision* July 20 2001). Mandela was quoted saying that:

> [he was 'worried' that] people approach me alone and request to name a structure after me, as if I was alone in the struggle" (*City Vision* July 20 2001).

The article, in which Mandela's responses were recorded, appeared under the headline: "Mandela says all must be honoured" and accompanying it, was a

[243] Yalouri (2001:98) uses Marilyn Strathern (1979) discussion of body decoration as a "point of contact" between the person and the world. So too, the bridge, as urban decoration, constitutes and identity

photograph of Mandela with Ali Nazir, the CEO of the National Road Agency. At the occasion, the LBA Consortium (comprising Grinaker-LTA Limited and Bafokeng Works) was appointed as the main contractors on the Bridge project.
The report also mentioned that since Mandela's release after 27 years in prison, many structures, informal settlements and streets "have been named after the icon of South African liberation" (*City Vision* July 20 2001). Referring to the name of the new Bridge into Newtown, the Gauteng premier, Mr Mbhazima Shilowa said: "The naming of the bridge after Mandela was not just an honour, but [about] the rebuilding of the nation" (*City Vision* July 20 2001). The end of racial apartheid signalled the "['collapse' of] city planning principles (specifically zoning) to produce separate races, and the fascination with a "pure" national identity" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:x). Also, Mandela's release and presidency was connected to efforts to dispel the apartheid legacy and "change how South Africa was perceived across the world" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii). The editors (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii) write:

> The replacement of tainted modernist institutions, though, particularly in the face of pressure to solidify political power and remove racial inequalities, was an even more formidable task.

It appears from the latter that urban policy models presented by the Habitat Agenda and World Bank documents suppressed "more indigenous alternatives" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xii). The editors (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003) pointed out that the Johannesburg urban regeneration project needed to include transformation structures "from above … [combined with] the legitimacy engendered by building from below" (*ibid*). The context for re-imagining the city writes the editors of *Emerging Johannesburg* (2003) is, that of remembering the past and "[resisting] the modernist logics of states and capitalist markets" (Tomlinson *et al* eds. 2003:xi). In this sense, Shilowa's national project refers to what Tomlinson *et al* (2003:x–xi) see as "[serving] at least three masters … [their] visions as different as the means to achieve them." They write:

> Previously oppressed blacks view it as a test of the country's commitment to social justice and democracy and as a measure of [central government's] ability to govern. Once-protected whites need reassurance that they are still important. And the international investors and corporate leaders view the dismantling of apartheid in the light of the government's commitment to a neoliberal global agenda (2003:x-xi).

During this research, attempts to get a first hand response from Mr Mandela on the building of the Bridge and the use of his name proved bedevilled with bureaucratic procedures. The secretary of his personal assistant, Zelda le Grange, operating from

the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Central Road, Houghton explained to me that: "Any request for information around Mr Mandela are made in writing – it is an official policy [and, she added that] not all correspondence or requests are necessarily granted. You have to state the reasons for the inquiry. On average there are 3 000 request monthly. The correspondence is dealt with by a group of people who will either decline or accept it".

THE BRIDGE AS LANDMARK

With the NMB named, designed and the engineering work started, Blue IQ's next project involved a form of brand architecture that was managed by Simeka[244]. Simeka was appointed as the strategic marketing campaigner of the Nelson Mandela Bridge project. Simeka also markets Blue IQ's other eleven Gauteng Province projects as it specialises in both strategic communication and perception management (Dempers interview September 2003). The company operates from plush headquarters in the Adcorp Building in Melville, Johannesburg.

The company's accounts director on the NMB project Dominic Dempers explained his part in the strategic marketing of the Bridge as focused on gaining public support and involvement. In an interview in September 2003[245], he explained to me that he was the mastermind behind the promotion of the Nelson Mandela Bridge (as well as the 10 other Blue IQ projects). In short, Dempers has "to build an empire" for the Gauteng Province through the eleven Blue IQ projects (Dempers September 2003). Simeka specialises in brand development, communication and perception management. Demper's work includes:

> [working with Blue IQ] from the time they come up with the initial concept through to the time that the product is finished and handed over (interview: September 16 2003).

[244] Simeka also "embodies the direct economic interests of previously disadvantaged groups" (Company Profile: 2003). The group's Tsonga name means "to plant a seedling in such a way that it will grow and thrive and fulfil its purpose" and its logo is a tree "symbolising the traditional area where people would go for counselling" (*ibid*). Owned by Adcorp Holding's Simeka supports Black Economic Empowerment (BEE Commitment) and has a 13% black empowerment investment (including SARHWU and NEHAWU) (*ibid*).

[245] The interview with Dominic Dempers took place on August 16 2003 – about a month after the opening of the Bridge, especially as I was interested in his reflection on the 'success' of the marketing campaign rather than his views on how he was going to set out doing it. His response after the event appeared important in terms of evaluating the ways in which the bridge's meanings were implanted on people's minds through the media.

Dempers explained that the bridge was marketed in a way that was similar to the marketing of any product as "[it took] the same kind of product management" (Dempers September 2003). He explained that as the account director he built an initial profile for the Bridge in consultation with Blue IQ and only afterwards did he embark on forms of strategic advertising with the latter being followed through via the media "[and] culminating in the opening event" (Dempers September 2003). Since the Bridge was open, "[the City] looks after it, they market it and they build it as part of their Joburg brand" (Dempers September 2003). Dempers explained to me that the most crucial part of the marketing campaign was to established the Bridge in the public domain, after which:

> Whoever manages it, have the ground work done for local and global marketing (interview 2003).

Dempers' role in the marketing of the Bridge is largely understood as managing peoples' perceptions to motivate behaviours and "create positive business results" (from Company Profile 2003:7). For the Nelson Mandela Bridge project, Dempers said that he relied on sound media relations "to put [the Bridge] on the map" (from Company Profile 2003:7)[246]. The NMB had to be marketed in the same way as any product, that is:

> [To create] awareness, understanding and support for social and economic innovations geared towards long-term societal change (from Company Profile 2003:7).

From the interview[247] it was clear that Simeka's marketing philosophy was that "… icons [are] the shorthand of modern business in the 21st century and [to produce 'corporate material' that] ensures instant brand recognition"(from Company Profile 2003:10). The latter comment is crucial to bear in mind in terms of: Who is the NMB for? How does the NMB connect with the city's urban regeneration programmes? How does the Bridge connect the city and its people? What is the significance of the strategic marketing company and its relation to Blue IQ?

One important aspect that Simeka's part in the marketing of the Bridge does highlight is that of contemporary public relations strategies in the management of public

[246] The company, Simeka, has varied interests such as organising multinational and local business, consumer technology and offers "strategic counselling and market intelligence [as part of its] directed communication programme" (Company Profile 2003:8).

[247] The interview and extracts from the Simeka company profile indicated how the Bridge was presented to the media to influence peoples' perceptions and thinking about Johannesburg's downtown regeneration.

opinion. Most important is the fact that Simeka primarily needs a story to 'give' to the media as messengers of the public (interview - Dempers September 2003). From what Dempers told me and from what I gathered through analysis of Simeka's strategic marketing, it is clear that the news aspect of the bridge lies behind the fact that the NMB's story has no organic origin, the kind that would originate in a community. Instead, the NMB's tale is created through:

> The process of attempting to influence [people and, as such its] news has accelerated in line with modern techniques of campaigning and [other forms of] opinion measurement (cf. McQuail 2000: 290; also cf. Swanson and Mancini 1996).

Simeka therefore appears to act as the image broker that knowingly takes advantage of "news managers and 'spin doctors' whose task it is to maximise the favourable presentation of policy and action and minimize any negative aspect" (cf. McQuail 2000: 290). In this respect McQuail's generalised comments are especially insightful as these offer a critical perspective on the workings of the media and public relations consultancies.

McQuail also suggests that the instantaneous production of spaces today does not allow for these places to acquire meanings naturally nor develop any depth or patina out of their own, but rather it appears that the meanings are supply driven and created at rapid speed by people in the business of 'strategic communication' (McQuail 2000: 290 cf. Manheim 1998)[248]. For Manheim, the practice of strategic communication is that of "[a] third force in news making" (McQuail 2000: 290)[249]. Both McQuail and Manheim's comments interrogate the workings of the media and related publicity campaigning imply a kind of complicity in planned developments and, as such, leaves little room for public opinion or the public sphere (cf. Jurgen Habermass 1962/1989). The latter is important in terms of how public involvement has (or has not) articulated the planning of the Bridge.

The action of marketing agents highlights essential differences between "historical utopias [where a] community was an intentional goal shared by individuals with allegiances to commonly held beliefs" (Ross 1999:238) as well as latter-day planned

[248] See also Charles Rutheiser (1996:12) on the role of the media in making places, that of: "[physical spaces] themselves [becoming] multi-mediated venues of programmed communication, key nodes in what Sharon Zukin has termed "the critical infrastructure" that shapes the public's hunger for information and other consuming desires".
[249] *Ibid.*

developments by officials and 'experts' for whom "community [is] mostly a marketing term"(Ross 1999:238). This is then particularly so in terms of Blue IQ's role in planning and marketing, and then the soliciting of the services of Simeka. What appears to have happened is:

> [a drive towards] a consumer niche to be attracted and recruited through effective advertising (Ross 1999:238).

Simeka and Blue IQ's role appear to emulate a description by Andrew Ross of the lived experiences of the Disney town, Celebration, "[and its staking of a] brand name on the premise that residents would forge common bonds that exceeded the mere 'sense of community' featured in the advertising" (Ross 1999:238; also refer to the 'Blue IQ family', Chapter 2:36). Ross's scanning of Celebration shows that "[the] genius of the marketing concept [overrides any threat to] community building" (Ross 1999:238) and that the planned Celebration community becomes "[a] picture-perfect town [for] 20 000 people in the swamp and scrub of central Florida" (Ross Ross 1999:238). The latter is included as the description of the marketing of Celebration and 'community-building' ironically resonates with the way in which events are scripted in Newtown. The latter however is not necessarily the only end goal in Newtown as other issues such as the interplay between the global and the local increasingly dictate the parameters of an ever-globalising world (cf. Yalouri 2001:4; also Appadurai 1990).

Johannesburg's regeneration therefore is not only an emulation of urban renewal practices elsewhere (cf. Rutheiser 1996: 6) but it also anticipates the growing field of global participation. It is then necessary to view the city's projects in terms of what Ruthheiser describes cities' concerns

> with the artful design of secure, simulated, and resegregated environments … [rather than] confronting the more deep-rooted and intractable issues of poverty, unemployment, crime and racism (Rutheiser 1996:6).

In a study of Atlanta's re-envisioning, Rutheiser (1996) remarks that the city's reinvention is "no more than a not so ingenious array of facades, propos, smoke and mirrors designed to present the image of a healthy, vital, and integrated city" (*ibid* 6). These insights are essential to deconstructing the meanings of the promotional 'truths' around projects such as the Nelson Mandela Bridge, especially as the slogan of the Newtown developments read: "it's happening …". A possible conclusion lies in an analysis of the meanings of the contrived image-making processes. The NMB appears

within the context of modern image-making process such as an advertisement and in this way, its importance appears to be in its instantaneous production for the sake of brand recognition and, like any icons, the NMB too is easily marketable (see Simeka profile; also McQuail 2000).

The Dempers interview revealed to me how Simeka as a Black Empowerment Enterprise (BEE) intervenes as behavioural engineers on Blue IQ projects. For Dempers, the opening event was all about "handling" it: a kind of advertising 'speak' used for product launching. The interview with Dempers was informative in terms of illustrating that the Bridge's openings event was a contrived, public spectacle, and that it was specifically planned "[to gain] as much media-coverage as possible" (Dempers interview -September 2003). The road race drew the crowds and so too, most importantly, did Mandela's presence (Dempers interview -September 2003). Also, Mandela himself lent the official sanctioning needed for the opening of the Bridge in terms of what he represents (Dempers interview -September 2003; also Chapter 5: Daniel Sithole - interview).

The brief from Blue IQ for the opening of the Bridge was to arrange an event at which officials and the public could 'rub shoulders' (Dempers – September 2003 interview). Dempers told me that the event was planned as a fun, large-scale event "[at which] everyone was present". The opening event thus differed from previous occasions concerning the Bridge when only dignitaries and the press were present; for example the announcement of a Bridge into Newtown, its naming, and also the unveiling of a model and contractors for the project (see also earlier section in this Chapter). Of importance here is the fact that the planning of the opening event was done "back in 2001- even before the construction started" (Dempers –September 2003 interview). At that stage it was decided to open the bridge around Mandela's 85th birthday because Simeka could take advantage of the local and international media's attention on his birthday (Dempers – September 2003 interview). Dempers explained:

> We wanted – I mean, because his name is given, he has given his name to the bridge, we wanted him to open it and it was fortunate that it coincided with his 85th birthday (Dempers – 2003 interview).

Dempers said that the choice of the opening date was important in terms of his marketing strategies. He said that the bridge "[was intended as a] 85th birthday present

from the council [and that Mandela's] participation in the event [was important]" (Dempers – September 2003 interview). It was "quite a major birthday celebration as opposed to his 83rd or so, [and the planning therefore was done to cash in on] a huge amount of coverage, you know, internationally" (Dempers – September 2003 interview).

> [Mandela] had this massive party here, invited a number of presidents and ministers from around the world, and royal families and things like that and there were a whole lot of events around the 85th birthday celebrations, besides the bridge. So that we managed to take advantage of that publicity by letting everyone know that this [the opening] was part of his birthday celebrations. So we got a lot of added publicity (2003 interview).

I was struck by Dempers unselfconscious way of revealing his role as strategic planner for the opening of the Bridge: the consultancy's strategic manoeuvrings to use Mandela's birthday to peg the opening of the NMB for a local and global audience. I some weeks later spoke to Trish Lockwood at Simeka about the 'future' of the NMB (October 27th 2003) and she explained:

> There is now a general comfort around the bridge … it is the natural life of a story – there's a full-blown strong line. Now the media have it (Lockwood 2003).

True to its Tsonga origin, Simeka "[planted] a seedling in such a way that it will grow and thrive and fulfil its purpose" (Simeka company profile) and, as Lockwwod said, it was then over to the media. Lockwood said that Simeka's attentions had shifted away from the Bridge project to other Blue IQ projects.

> [First there was] Mary Fitzgerald [square] … [then] the bridge [and] next [is] Constitutional Hill – that is where our energies are now, planning the opening in March 2004. We are also looking at the opening of a square in Kliptown[250] to commemorate 50 years of the Freedom Charter, and then also, the opening of an interpretation centre at Sterkfontein to enhance visitors experience. [The aim is to] make the experiences exciting for schoolchildren and other visitors (Lockwood 2003).

Simeka, as the maker of the material resemblances for places and spaces actors to stimulate public consumption, also construct "social contexts" (cf. Yalouri 2001:16 citing Appadurai 1986). From Yalouri's understanding it is possible to see how places acquire a social context or 'reality' that convey memories and experiences and "[become] the medium for people to construct their identities" (cf. Yalouri 2001:16). In terms of postapartheid Johannesburg, Yalouri's understanding of the processes involved in identity making is also those of nation-building (cf. Yalouri 2001:16). The

[250] Blue IQ's 11th project is to develop Kliptown into a major heritage site and tourism destination. The site was once the meeting place of the Congress of People. It is also the space of the signing of the Freedom Charter in 1955. Blue IQ's CEO Pradeep Maharaj writes: "This is the symbolic birthplace of South Africa's democracy".

position of the Bridge is an important interstice that links people and the place or space and also progressive acts of memory making and nation building – especially in terms of its global context.

2030: CITY VISION[251]

The city of Johannesburg's vision is that of a world-class city by 2030 in which "all our citizens will be able to enjoy increased prosperity and quality of life" (Joburg 2030 – February 2002 short version of Executive Summary). A note of apprehension however clouds another part of the Summary, which reads: "… in order to make this Vision a reality, we need to put Johannesburg on the road to a high level of sustainable economic growth" (Joburg 2030 – February 2002 short version of Executive Summary).

Throughout the summary of the 'Joburg 2030' plan quoted above, the emphasis is on *all* who live in Joburg, and specific mention is made of "[the] poor and sick. Some have no homes of their own. Criminals walk the streets and enter our homes. Too many people are out of work" (Joburg 2030 – February 2002 short version of Executive Summary: 2). The year 2030 is earmarked as "[the] realistic goal [time]" to achieve the City's vision through "[the use of] combined resources of the City to build the skills, literacy and productivity of the citizenry" (Joburg 2030 – February 2002 short version of Executive Summary: 2). The complexity of the task, however, appears to be understated on paper, especially in terms of the urban poor and the city's informal, entrepreneurial traders[252] who, most noticeably contrast in the grand scheming and planning of the city, especially also as far the significance of the Nelson Mandela Bridge project is concerned.

With regard to informal trading, the City 2030 vision states: "[People] will do so because they want to rather than because they cannot make a living any other way.

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[251] Anthropologist Charles Rutheiser (1996) describes the re-imagineering of Atlanta in the early nineties as not only around the symbolism attached to Martin Luther King Jnr., but also in terms of a city *vision* and plan similar to that in Johannesburg.

[252] Ruth First Journalism Fellow Pregs Govender in a short address noted the confusion that reigns between the 'collective' and the 'group voice' saying the former implies 'everyone's' voice and the latter that of a leader (Wits University: April 21 2004). From my field experience, the informal trade appears neglected as officials confuse the 'collective' with the 'group' and they are seen as "a problem and not organised enough".

They will play an important cultural role in maintaining the African essence of our City" (Joburg 2030 – February 2002 short version of Executive Summary:5). From the latter, one is able to connote that the building of the Bridge supposedly is the starting point for the realisation of this dream; however, it is a dream yet to be realised (see Chapter 6).

The City's 2030 vision and drive towards being an aspirant world-class city therefore appears as a dream of the officials and their agencies: a dream that lacks public consultation and inclusiveness as its planning appears to have overlooked civil, political and social rights by favouring "well-organised, financially strong developers" (cf. Emdon 2003: 219-220). A lawyer specialising in the facilitation of urban transformation and regeneration programmes, Erica Emdon maintains that the urban "broader political and social transformations" are divorced from the social reality "[of] urban poverty and struggle" (Emdon 2003: 219-220). She notes that the urban poor "mainly black, still [are] in ghettoes and shack settlements [and that] the rich [live] in the leafy suburbs" (Emdon 2003:221).

> All that has happened [in the inner-city] is that as the area has become overcrowded and poorer and the wealthier white population has left (Emdon 2003:221).

Emdon notes that Johannesburg in 2030 will have a new City boundary with two main movement corridors to create a more efficient working city (Emdon 2003:221) and that the historical black townships will be redeveloped and upgraded to resemble "historically white [ones]" (Emdon 2003:221).

The City 2030 vision mentions further aims towards the relief of "poorer communities [by concentrating on] their special needs [and to have these met]" (City 2030 2002:Vision). Aims are to provide housing "[that] will be closer to business opportunities, shopping and public transport. Outdoor life will be more pleasant and there will be rivers, dams, parks and world-class outdoor relaxation" (City 2030 Vision 2002:6). The 2030 Vision reads:

> *Joburg* 2030 has a message of hope for Johannesburg. It offers a vision for a world-class city in which citizens will live in increased prosperity and quality of life … it offers a better life for all. A Johannesburg in which, by the year 2030, we will be happy to have our children and grandchildren live (City Vision 2002:6).

It is against the backdrop of the 2030 City Vision that the initiatives by Blue IQ become the first concrete steps in the realisation of this official dream. A tricky aspect

in terms of this official envisioning of the city in the future is that of the proverbial, alluring carrot that is held out, and which does not meet the experiences and everyday life exchanges of ordinary people on the streets of the city. The publicity campaigning fostered the raising of public expectations with media reports in the days running up to the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge reporting on the event as some sort of national panacea, an instant redressing of the past ills of the city.

Amongst the much heightened reporting on the opening of the Bridge, Johannesburg-based *The Star* carried a report "Bridge over troubled quarter" in which they wrote: "They feared crime, they didn't have anywhere to park. But those art lovers who fled town should take note: the **Nelson Mandela Bridge** [sic] brings into focus the many positive changes occurring in Newtown" (July 17 2003: 6). The report stated, in collective plural: "We love Joburg! And on Sunday we'll be among the thousands expected to gather for the long-anticipated opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge and the rightful return of our city as the country's arts, culture and entertainment capital. The bridge is set to become a timeless signifier for Joburg" (*The Star* July 17 2003: 6). Also, the Johannesburg-based Afrikaans daily, *Beeld,* reported (this is a translation): "There is hope that the Madiba 'magic' would bring new cultural life to Newtown"(*Beeld* July 21 2003).

Curiously, the space where the NMB was being constructed had since the mid-nineties been a large informal settlement in the inner city. More than 200 people lived there informally in shacks until June 25 1998 when "50 red-clad security guards [pull] down shacks and set them alight" (Bunty West in *The Star* June 26 1998)[253]. At the time of the construction of the NMB started, there was still a small pocket of people living not far from the construction site and their fate was to remain unknown until three days before the opening of the NMB when their living quarters were bulldozed to the ground (see Chapter 5).

None of the news reports, however, mentioned the destruction of this informal, shack settlement in Newtown that lay on the south-end of the new Bridge only the week before the NMB's grand opening. At midnight of the 16th of July 2003, four days

[253] At the time Metro Council spokesman Kenny Fihla said the shack-dwellers "[were] not destitute … they are there to pursue business interests" (cf. West reporting in *The Star* June 26:1998). West reported that Fihla would not comment on why the shacks were set alight, other than the erecting of shacks being illegal "and devastating to the city's economy… [it] drives business away" (*ibid*).

before the Bridge was opened, the police raided the 'shacks', the last of many that were built after 1994. For three days, a bulldozer worked to flatten the area[254]. While this was happening, I spoke to a group of young women who said that they had "lost everything". They had been staying on the site for more than three years. "We were here before the construction on the bridge started. We watched it from start to end", one said and the others shook their heads. "We have nothing now. Our boyfriends park cars in Braamfontein. We have nowhere to stay. We have no parents and no IDs".

I noticed a young man, walking up and down on the spot where the bulldozers were working. The previous day the young women I spoke to told me that he was "very upset. He was looking for his belongings". After the opening event, I again noticed him sitting on a large stone at the place he was evicted from. When I told the story to people, someone commented: "I thought that is what they did in Apartheid time, you know, the bulldozers-bit and kinds of forced removals"[255].

The Bridge's "territorial structuring" reveals its political, social and economic organization (cf. Radcliff-Brown in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940:xiv) and also its complicated and different meanings in terms of what is meant by "users" and what by "designers" meaning (Rapoport 1982:15). The contrast between the latter meanings is the contested "spatial aspects of [the Bridge's] social structure" (Kuper 2003: 248) and reveals a re-occurring need in Newtown for civic involvement. This Chapter suggests that the latter has been endemically overlooked and that historically Newtown planning has borne the imprint of the city-planners and not the citizens, even 100 years ago when it started.

Urban power politics again have rule without public scrutiny and participation and the conceptualisation of the Nelson Mandela Bridge appears as not directly connected to the post-apartheid city but rather as part of an ongoing saga to create a multi-cultural area in the Newtown wasteland: the issues being profit versus public interest. The area

[254] Now, eight months after the opening of the Bridge, the place is overgrown by weeds.
[255] A reference to Apartheid Prime Minister Hendrik French Verwoerd's policy of forced removals where "bulldozers flattened black residential areas deemed too close to the 'white' city [and] dumped [the people] in a new conglomerate to be called South Western Townships – Soweto" (Sparks 2003:40). Between 1960 and 1994 more than 3,5million people were "deliberately uprooted from their homes and livelihoods and plunged into poverty and hopelessness" (*Understanding Apartheid* 2003(3): 7).

appears at the confluence of much planning for decades and in the light of today's politics, the claiming of this space is of importance[256]. What has happened in Newtown is the unleashing of a dynamic interplay between the material aspects of the Bridge, its associated meanings and the affect these have on people. As part of the built environment, the Bridge projects specific meanings through its design, location as forms of communication at a particular time (Rapoport 1994:465).

In this chapter is consolidated the discussion of the preceding chapters on life in apartheid Johannesburg and the city socio-economic disparities evident in the inner-city's "abandonment"[257] by its flourishing 'edges'[258], as well as the history of Newtown's particular 'restlessness'[259]. The chapter, in terms of Erving Goffman's notion of the 'back stage' in the presentation of any given moment (cf. 1969) suggests the backdrop for the analysis of the ethnographic details in the next two chapters. The building of the bridge reflects a dream[260] to heal the past socio-political disparities associated with the apartheid inner city. It also spans a spatial and socio-economic gap left after large business moved out of the inner city to the north (predominantly to Sandton)[261]. The latter process which started in the mid-eighties left the city centre abandoned as it gave rise to forms of edge developments akin to the American model of living on the "edges" (Garreau 1991: 429). For Garreau:

> the cities' new frontiers [as the] centres of civilisation [have been deserted in favour of new patterns of urbanisation] that have left a trial of pervasive feelings of dislocation, alienation … loss (1991: 363).

To conclude this Chapter it is important to note that contemporary urban planning and the making of urban meaning involves both the city and national ideals and that people's perceptions are managed through publicity campaigns, agenda setting and

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[256] Especially in the light of what authors David Anderson and Richard Rathbone in *Africa's Urban Past* (2000) write in terms of 'becoming urban'. They see the city as the "cultural brokers [and trends of] rapid and dramatic urbanisation [as so significant that in 2020] Africa's main conurbations will be amongst the world's largest cities".

[257] The abandonment of central Johannesburg has similar effects to those in other post-industrial cities elsewhere in the world. In the eighties Johannesburg too became rundown as result of "[this] dichotomy between inner city center and the outlying suburban areas" (Czeglédy 2003:21).

[258] Cf. Garreau 1991.

[259] The clashing interests in what anthropologist Tim Ingold detects as two perspectives on the built environment, that of the built and the dwelt (1995).

[260] Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo launched the city's Jo'burg 2030 vision in 2002 which is the foundation for a world-class city (*Homeless Talk* 2004:3). Reporter Peter Kgomo writes: "we're delivering Masondo" as he reports on Masondo's optimism with urban regeneration.

[261] Cf. Czeglédy 2003:21.

the media. Modern, or even post-modern but definitely post-industrial communities are therefore the products of ever-increasing speeds of change in the globalised and networked world of capitalism. The Bridge project too is dependent on public support through aggressive marketing, public relations campaigning (see Simeka) and media involvement such as new reports, banners and leaflets as well as that from local businesses[262].

For these publicity campaigns there are specific audiences and, in the case of the city, such marketing is all about future investment[263]. What is currently happening in the inner city relies on its redefinition and people appeared to be modelled to fit its reinvention. Peoples' everyday expectations are mediated through a contested zone in which public interests clash with the private and corporate regeneration projects and these expose the role of the media in massaging public opinion. However, the Bridge project represents the ideals of officials and experts and therefore does not necessarily represent the popular or everyday needs and desires of all citizens. The Bridge is the dream of officials and experts and tossed into the public realm to kindle support by communications consultants who see to its broadcast in local and foreign media and also the new media, the Internet[264].

The 'management' of the Bridge project, its specific profiling, reveals the efforts of officials in terms of gaining public support as well as redirecting peoples gaze to Johannesburg's down-town where new patterns of mobility and senses of place and identity[265] are created. This Chapter has juxtaposed the official attitudes towards public space and that of the needs of the public[266] in order to ask a critical question: Can the Bridge become the literal and metaphorical link to unite a 'divided'[267] city?

The next Chapter deals with the opening of the Bridge as a planned event, that of a 'city tableau' (cf.Boyer 1992; cf. Rydell 1987).

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[262] Sappi and Liberty Life
[263] From Blue IQ billboard "… we're putting millions into your future" (Ben Schoeman Highway – 2003).
[264] Websites advertise the inner-city developments.
[265] The kind of space I speak about here is that which Hilda Kuper refers to as "social space" – from the work of Durkheim and Mauss (Kuper 2003:247).
[266] A tricky notion perhaps best understood in terms of what Benedict Anderson wrote when he referred to the nation "as an imagined state'.
[267] From *Emerging Johannesburg – Perspectives on the Postapartheid City* (edited by Richard Tomlinson *et al* 2003: 274-77).

CHAPTER FIVE: The Opening Of The Bridge

THE BRIDGE AS METAPHOR

> … the fabric of the city is a metaphor for society which you and he or she want to bring about
> -Rykwert 2000:266

The opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge appears as a self-conscious expression by officials in power and 'experts'[268] who are redirecting the city's socio-political gaze inwards, and back towards its troubled downtown urban centre[269]. The ideals of the officials are not exclusively local but reflect economic recovery trends elsewhere in the world and are the product of local and global consultants who specialise in engineering spaces, especially the rejuvenation of industrial districts[270]. It still needs to be seen how so-called "planners and Gauteng's political drivers" (Robinson 2003)[271] envision the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, an opening:

> symbolising the bridging of the schism between the street vendors, slum lords and barefoot children of Johannesburg's inner-city and the air-conditioned offices, white-washed haunts and stiletto heels of Sandton City (Robinson 2003)

The reinvention of Johannesburg's downtown uses common local narratives - although the mechanisms employed are not uniquely local but ride on the successes of urban programming in capitalist cities of the western world. In Johannesburg, the city's reinvention depends on creating integrated urban experiences by offering a new slate for socio-cultural interaction on both the local and global scales. Historian Elsabe Brink sees the NMB as "[linking] the inner-city [to the] northern suburbs" and she was quoted saying:

> There is poetic justice in this bridge. It is indicative of the 21st century [and] we can start layering our history again.[272]

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[268] Consultants on the Newcastle-on-Tyne Gateshead project meet with the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) and a spokesperson for the former says the 'success' of Gateshead has been the multi-million rand massive 'Angel' sculpture by Anthony Gormley on the city's outskirts - '[to which Londoners] flock and then visit Gateshead" (Public Culture Lecture 2003 University of the Witwatersrand by NewCastle consultant Chris Bailey, Wits (2003). For Bailey, "the whole idea of making urban centres work has been about encouraging people to enjoy public space … start walking and greeting people" (*ibid*).

[269] Bailey (*ibid*) mentioned that Gateshead previously industrialised context had been reinvented "[by] levering up [its] quality and making it a more attractive place to stay" (*ibid*). Similarities exist between the 'speak' about Gateshead and that in Johannesburg's Newtown (ibid).

[270] For Chris Bailey (*ibid*) "the whole idea of making urban centres work has been about encouraging people to enjoy public space … start walking and greeting people" (*ibid*). Ironically Johannesburg's inner-city regeneration implies a different scenario first, that of: "gentrification" (in conversation JDA CEO Graeme Reid at Witwatersrand Institute of Social and Scientific Research, May 20 2004).

[271] Reporter Vicky Robinson (*Mail&Guardian* July 18-24 2003:10).

[272] *ibid*

The city's urban regeneration initiatives are structured around a fixed and common theme. The city as a public space is bounded by the structured re-enactment of its complicated past. Peoples' struggle for freedom, the embodied experiences of the past that are mostly memories, all intertwine with the city's regeneration to set up spaces for 'new' experiences. The implications of such orderings are critical to my analysis, as these necessarily refer to the inscribed meanings of the Bridge and the lived experiences of people. The official meanings appear as socio-political affirmations and these drive the urban initiatives to prepare alternative spaces in the city for the enactment of specific socio-cultural and socio-economic experiences. It is what happens in the socio-economic realm, especially the predicament of the urban poor that becomes unsettling. How is the imbalance[273] to be corrected?

This Chapter looks at the contrived manoeuvrings and orchestration planned for the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge (cf. Chapter 4: Blue IQ, Simeka and City 2030 Vision) and looks at the event as a specific performance (cf. Boyer 1992)[274] aimed at placing the bridge on the map (cf. Hopkins; also cf. Boyer 1992). The opening of the Bridge is seen as a strategic manoeuvre involving specific politics of space and is best understood in terms of what Ferguson and Gupta (1997) refer to as:

> [The] establishment of spatial meaning – the making of spaces into places –[one which] is always implicated in hegemonic configurations of power (*ibid* 1997:8 refers to Kristin Koptiuch).

The making of an integrated post-apartheid inner-city is problematic, as *all* appears to be projected into a realm occupied by the city's apartheid past. Worked around a specific theme, that of liberation, the NMB has come to symbolise freedom from a lack of mobility in the past and also 'bridging' previous connotations of the city's downtown area as a dangerous 'no-go' area (cf. Czegledy 2003). The multiple levels of interpretation attached to the Bridge appear to include global competitiveness as a

[273] Chapter 6 presents some glaring urban contradictions that have become especially visible since constructions of the NMB in this run-down part of town through the juxtaposition of the one on the other.

[274] Editors James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (1997) stress the importance of "[the] intertwined processes of place making and people making in the complex cultural politics of the nation state" as anthropological site. Refer also to Erving Goffman's work on performance and impression management.

stimulus to boost the connections between the city and the nation (cf. Tomlinson 2003).

The Bridge is the most costly structure[275] in the city's reinvention and its symbolic connection between place and people reveals how the making of places reflect the aspirations of people in positions of power (cf. Ferguson and Gupta 1997). The inner-city's regeneration is the expression of the ideals of people in power (see Chapter 3 and 4) and the Nelson Mandela Bridge symbolises the implosion of past racial boundaries. It is however difficult to know if and how the urban poor would benefit from the presence of the NMB (cf. Robinson 2003). The building of the NMB suggests the dissolution of all divisions. As a manmade structure and also a 'man-made' link, the Bridge symbolises the bringing together of *all* across another man-made division, the railway lines, and in so doing joining different communities on a spatial and social basis. The NMB creates ingress for the affluent citizens of the north[276]. But it is hard to know whether the reverse movement of people, from the inner city to the north, is as an accessible option[277]. The reconstruction of Johannesburg's downtown reveals what Jean Baudrillard (1998, see Preface) sees as: "[a] social logic of consumption… "[278]. The city's reinvention and the building of the NMB are therefore no different to urban regeneration expressions elsewhere where late capitalism dictates (cf. Rykwert 2000).

The opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge in the tenth year of the country's democracy represents the material expressions of particular ideological[279] efforts to

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[275] www.blueiq.co.za

[276] "It was conceived by the Gauteng provincial government in 1995 to bring the shine back to the City of Gold" (Robinson *Mail&Guardian ibid*). Robinson writes that Blue IQ, Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) and the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) "were given R3,5-billion in seed money by the government [to implement] the 2030 vision of Johannesburg as a 'safe, economically productive and efficient city'" (*ibid*).

[277] CEO of Johannesburg Tourism Company (a public-private company with the City of Johannesburg as shareholder) see the Nelson Mandela Bridge as a "link between old and new; rich and poor" and uses it as a logo on corporate brochures "as added value to business people in Johannesburg" (telephone conversation, May 5 2004).

[278] This is also part of Rykwert's (2000) argument that cities today exits as a community that is driven by the seduction of what spaces have on offer and as spaces of consumption (*ibid* 264 - 266).

[279] The Frankfurt School of social theorists criticise ideology "[as] forms of consciousness [which turn people into] conduits" (Payne 1996:3). For Althusser (1971) the function of ideology is that of "constituting individuals as subjects" (McQuail 2000:308). Ideology, as intended here, refers to the inter-connective affects of structuring of economics into society and the influences of such on social relations. The backdrop is that ideologies represent "[the] ruling ideas of an age … the idealisation of [a] dominant economic class relationships" (Payne 1996:3). The latter refers to a kind of hegemonic

transcend the city's past urban environment and produce a new socio-cultural landscape (cf. Hopkins 2003). The city's racially torn past[280] that epitomised the country's socio-political disparities holds local and global participants in balance; however, economic disparities loom large (cf. Beavon 2004: 245). The NMB, in terms of the city's history and that of a nation-in-the-making, appears at a critical juncture and as a permanent structure in the city: it reflects the city's socio-political past, a representative space in transformation, and that of an official dream and permanent structure to connect the city to the nation and vice versa (pace Tomlinson *et al* 2003).

The identity of Johannesburg's downtown appears to have been reinvented by adding "another dimension to the African Renaissance" (Nazir in Hopkins 2003:67)[281]. The Blue IQ revitalisation initiatives (see Chapter 4) and especially the building of the Nelson Mandela Bridge provide a new context for inter-connective meaning-making; the kind that links space, place and people[282]. The opening of the Bridge officially marks the symbolic entry point into the city's future just as Mandela fight for freedom culminated in his release from prison (cf. Hopkins 2003). The Bridge personifies[283] that which Mandela stands for and its significance is in the minds of people who use the city – from the ordinary everyday commuters to the global tourists (cf. Hopkins 2003).

The Bridge, as part of the city's urban regeneration text, has its meanings embedded in people's actions as well as their associations. The official narratives connect the city to the nation (cf. Tomlinson (eds.) 2003)[284], the nation to the NMB and its distinctive position in the rebuilding of the inner city through symbolic means. The people are the nation. In the previous Chapters the past orderings of space were

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structuring (cf. Gramsci) of ideas "[into a] network of ideologies [to be] transmitted [by] the ruling class" (*ibid*). As such, the latter suggests a polysemy of meanings to the Nelson Mandela Bridge.

[280] Only 'whites' had access to "all major facilities" (cf. Beavon 2004:279).

[281] Ali Nazir is the CEO of The South African National Roads Agency (SANRA) that now 'owns' the NMB. Nazir comment on the NMB is: "[a conceptualisation] as worthy of and distinctive as the legend himself [Mandela]… [of importance in] form and shape [to capture] the essence of the man" (Nazir in Hopkins 2003:8). Nazir describes Nelson Mandela "[as] our beacon, guiding us on the path to harmony and joining together all South African in building a strong foundation …" (*ibid*).

[282] *ibid.*

[283] Pat Hopkins, the author of a book *The Nelson Mandela Bridge* (2003) depicts "[the NMB's] deeper meanings [as located in] architectural wonders that through the ages have come to symbolise the heroic overcoming of incredible obstacles to bring people together – as former President Nelson Mandela has done throughout his life" (*ibid*).

[284] Cf. previous references (13 and 14) by Hopkins and Nazir.

discussed as part of the city's racially divided character and also in terms of the reversal of these restrictions on personal/individual mobility post-1994 and the emerging class divisions. The opening event appears as a culmination point for the collision of past and present city narratives, a meeting of the private and public domains however not devoid of tensions around the city and the identity it is carving of itself. The ideas associated with public space have been overlooked in the orchestration of the Newtown environment where Nelson Mandela Bridge stands. The emphasis with the Nelson Mandela Bridge is to create a visual landmark structure with past memories informing the present.

The story of the NMB is therefore that of the people and the nation, a collaborative affair by experts to create a semblance where the real and the invented coexist (cf. Baudrillard in Best & Kellner 1991:118-122). On the surface, the postapartheid city appears to be for all people, but underneath the socio-economic alignments are skewed (cf. Sparks 2003; Emdon 2003; Beavon 2004; also Chapter 2 of this research). The city's aspiration to trade as a 'world city' has an unfortunate underside as seen in the embodiment of its growing middle-class and a massive poor underclass (cf. Sparks 2003)[285].

Trapped in progressive attitudes towards inner-city reinvention the city is reliant on a single narrative – the particularly 'present' sense making of Apartheid through processes known as 'memory culture' (cf. Fabian 2004). The latter involves a specific form of subject making with the NMB as visual aid to enlist patterns of urban behaviour that encourage elitist participation (see Chapter 6). Based on a transcendence of past senses of exclusion, inner-city experiences through the presence of the NMB are themed and even commodified (cf. Sorkin 1992; also Boyer 1992 and Crawford 1992).

[285] Alister Sparks' depiction of Johannesburg' inner city as an African city juxtaposes what he describes as an emerging 'new' multi-racial middle class that "[overlays] the old distinctions based purely on race [and where this 'new' class is] growing socially more distinct from the black working class and the huge underclass" (2003:44). He depicts this as an endemic "fault line" of the post-apartheid society (*ibid*).

MAKING A LINK

The opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge on July 20th 2003, suggests the Bridge's importance in terms of the city's reinvention and also as an expression of nation-building (cf. Hopkins 2003)[286] as the event specifically deals with the token presence of an iconic Nelson Mandela. In order to understand this it is necessary to examine extracts from Mandela's opening speech as well as that of other dignitaries. These are included as part of the official[287] story of the Bridge, especially the implied official sanctioning of the event. The latter stressed issues of 'uniting a nation', specifically in terms of the celebration from bondage and the victory of the struggle over the Apartheid segregated society (cf. Chapter 1). The spectacle event[288] therefore presented a space in which national identity could be negotiated (cf. Hopkins 2003). The NMB, Mandela, and an international running marathon combined to draw people across all fields and from far and near. The feeling invoked was that of honouring Mandela: it was his Bridge as well as concretising the historic role of Mandela as a societal bridge, the socio-cultural and political quintessential link to post-apartheid transformation. As national reconciler and healer of a divided society[289], Mandela's presence was something of a mascot as well as icon. The latter refers to a superstitious attachment to Mandela as person that invokes particular responses: the person as talisman or bringer of luck and everyday attachment through a symbolism of freedom.

However, a crucial issue remains when considering economic disparities, for the opening of the NMB sets the scene for the interaction of a variety of interpretations, which are presented as official narrations. These also include accounts from ordinary people on why they came to the opening day, what their feelings where about the

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[286] Also Tomlinson *et al* (2003) for correlation between nation and city building in post-apartheid Johannesburg.

[287] The opening event is part of a bureaucratic manoeuvre to entice private investment to buy into Newtown (see Simeka and Blue IQ in Chapter 2). In terms of what Ferguson and Gupta (1997) wrote, it is a place making exercise that involves power. For Jean Baudrillard (*The Consumer Society*) there are modes of domination in society in the form of bureaucracies and consumer capitalism. I argue that these forms of domination are instrumental in the making of the Bridge, defining its place in urban narrations and its space in national politics. Such place making refers to what Henri Lefebvre (1969; 1971) called new forms of control that dominated the everyday life experiences of people in the capitalist-rich consumer society. The point that is made is that the manoeuvrings of bureaucrats underpin the meaning of the Bridge.

[288] Boyer 1992. Christene Boyer in 'Cities for sale' (1992) explores cities as "artfully composed … a proliferation of fiction and simulation" to produce what she calls: "[the 'manipulative character of the] city tableaux …" (*ibid*).

[289] Cf. Hopkins 2003.

meanings of the Bridge[290]. The impressions and interpretations gleaned from runners and onlookers at the event are presented to gain an understanding of what appears to be the official and that of the unofficial associations with the Bridge as these are a departure point for the unravelling of the meanings of the Bridge.

The chapter deals with my role as participant observer and noting how the event was propagated through the prism of the media[291]. Included in this Chapter is an interview with a Braamfontein janitor, Daniel Sithole, who lives and works in a building overlooking the Bridge. Extracts from the interview is being included as Sithole's opinions on the NMB are not only informed by his own observations, but stem from media reports. Sithole represents the essential, 'interested everyman' for this chapter.

BRIDGE TO FREEDOM

> [Cities are] complex objects, which include both realities and their descriptions
> - Italo Calvino quoted in Rutheiser 1996:10.

Today's technologically enhanced and mediated city landscape presents a complex set of alternative realities which, quite independently of the actual built environment, are elaborated on in the words and images refracted by the media (Rutheiser 1996)[292]. Calvino's notion of the city as a complex object juxtaposes the built environment with another one, an environment that is described and not necessarily lived. The reliance on description in place making becomes the feeding ground of the media and today places aspire towards their described likenesses (cf. Rutheiser 1996). Experiences of the city are therefore not necessarily authentic, but can be composed of made-up or fabricated images conjured up by the media and the imagineers. Modern cities are made to resemble other cities with the experiences in the former quite divorced from the city's concrete reality: filtered experiences through the mass media pre-empt experiences that are more easily described than lived (cf. Calvino in Rutheiser 1996:10).

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[290] Ferguson and Gupta (1997) cite Kristin Koptiuch on the establishment of spatial meaning as synonymous with "hegemonic configurations of power" (1997:8).

[291] The media as accomplices to the process of urban regeneration in Johannesburg are "active social agents" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997:5) and looking in from the authors critical vantage point on culture, the role of space and power is exposed in the way places come about, as well as identity making and also the resistance to these (*ibid*). In the case of the Johannesburg regeneration narrative, the media fulfil a place and people making function – one described by Ferguson and Gupta (1997).

[292] Charles Rutheiser (1996) wrote: "… scholars, travellers and residents alike face the occupational hazard of confusing cities with words (and images) used to describe them (1996).

For Calvino, the city "may really be, beneath this thick coating of signs, whatever it may contain or conceal [and sometimes one can leave it] without having discovered it" (Calvino 1972: 14) [293]. Today, the media contribute to the formation of a vernacular description of places which, in turn, prompts people to respond in particular ways. The media-enriched experiences of people are the associated realities of places and are not unlike the other ways in which spaces acquire specific characteristics. These characteristics can include embodiment, gender, inscription, contestations and aspects associated with transnationalism depending on the specific spatial tactics[294] employed in these.

In the case of the Bridge, it is a 'place-in-the-making' brought about by elements of being an inscribed[295] space. However, the Bridge is also dominated by specific acts, which are part of a process of place making and which involve a set of calculated spatial tactics[296]. As far as the politics of power are concerned, it is interesting to take note of the specific timing of the opening event for reflected publicity[297] during the week of Mandela's 85th birthday celebrations[298] - an important birthday in the life of ordinary people, but more so, an important celebration for a leader of world

[293] Italo Calvino (1972) wrote: "[the city consists of] relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets …" (10-11).
[294] From the book *Locating culture: The anthropology of space and place* edited by Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúniga (2003).
[295] In Editors Low and Lawrence-Zúniga's (*ibid*) use of 'inscribed spaces' refers to the "meaningful" relationship people have with the locales they occupy and also to the meaning they attach to space, and the action by which 'space' becomes 'place' (185). The experience embedded in place becomes a space that yields people's memories about events (*ibid*). In the case of the Bridge it is not a lived-in space, but rather a space set out to become part of people's living memory.
[296] Editors Low and Lawrence-Zúniga (2003) refer to the use of space as a strategy and/or technique of power and social production. Paul Rabinow (2003) writes that the city is a "social and aesthetic laboratory [and as such cities] test political effectiveness" (*ibid* 353). Blue IQ and Simeka (Chapter 2) see the Bridge and new access into Newtown as the basis of establishing the Newtown cultural precinct and stimulating the growth of business in the area.
[297] Newspapers and the electronic media from across the world were already in the country to film Mandela's birthday celebrations (Dempers 2003: in conversation with me).
[298] The weeklong media coverage of Mandela's birthday celebrations profiled Mandela as person, as struggle hero, as national and international peace hero, and also mentioned the opening of the Bridge as the culmination of the celebrations. The bridge and Mandela's birthday became interconnected and Mandela as builder of human relations was stressed. At the opening of the bridge, 85 – Mandela's age - white doves and 85 balloons were released. The bridge opening was staged as the continuation of Mandela's birthday celebrations (the public expression thereof).

standing[299]. The occasion was chosen to promote the city at the same time by filming the road-race along a planned route through a spruced up part of downtown Johannesburg.

The importance of mentioning the above is to illustrate the carefully planned and contrived nature of the opening event, an event planned even before the construction of the Bridge was started 2001 (Dempers *ibid*). From the time that the plans for the Bridge were approved and it was named, the importance of the opening event was realised as a moment to gain not only public awareness but actual public involvement as the Bridge purported to span a socio-cultural divide (cf. Hopkins 2003). Public participation was important at the opening of this grand[300] access route into Newtown and Mandela's presence there was equally important (Dempers conversation 2003).

Mandela, dressed in a Blue IQ tracksuit top[301], was with his wife Gracia, President Thabo Mbeki, Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa and Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo[302]. At the opening, Mandela said:

> It makes me very humble indeed because I know many members of the ANC who have suffered far more than I did. The President (Thabo Mbeki) himself never knew what youth was, because from an early age he was mobilising countries to call for sanctions against South Africa … although he is my senior, he is also still my child.

In his address, Mandela emphasised the divisions in the past in the nation and how the nation needs to stand together now[303], and especially to promote the social and economic growth of the city. Shilowa[304] praised Mandela and Mbeki as "he hoped the

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[299] Dempers told me (September 16 2003) during an interview that the timing of the opening event was critical in terms of a marketing perspective – that of Mandela's 85th birthday and the presence of foreign media in the country. See footnote above.

[300] A discrepancy of the cost of the Bridge exists as JDA's Veejay Moodley told me it was R85million – "the same age as Mandela" – and *Mail&Guardian* reporter Vicky Robinson writes the bridge cost R115 million (July 18-24:10).

[301] Mandela presence, his attire and speech aligned himself with the event organised by the Johannesburg Development Agency and Blue IQ. With Gracia on his side and the political entourage the scene was set for "careful impression management" (cf. Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*).

[302] Masondo said that he was "grateful to Madiba for allowing his name to be given to the bridge" (*Sowetan* July 21 2003).

[303] Hopkins (2003:87) quotes Nelson Mandela in the epilogue of the book 'bridged' as saying: "No doubt Africa's renaissance is at hand – and our challenge is to steer the continent through the tide of history".

[304] "We are hoping that this bridge will bring people like you [Mandela] who love culture to the city. We want it to be the Mecca of culture. It symbolises Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki. Without them moulding Mandela into what he is today, I wouldn't have been a city boy like I am, knowing what I do" (Shilowa, *The Star* 21 2003).

bridge would bring more people into the inner city"[305] (*The Star* July 21 2003). Shilowa's hopes for a better future for the city was echoed in the address of Jabu Moleketi, the Gauteng MEC for finance and economic affairs, who said:

> This race is for everyone … an opportunity to draw back thousands of Gauteng citizens to the inner city to showcase the visible differences we have made to rejuvenate the area. It is an achievement we can be proud of[306]

The political overtone of the speeches urged for the redevelopment of the inner-city, the bringing in of new energy to balance the unstable inner-city dynamics and stressed the important role Mandela had already played as national bridge builder across a socio-political divide (cf. Hopkins 2003). The very next day, *The Star* (July July 21 2003) carried a front-page banner: Madiba's Bridge to Freedom[307]. It reported that: "Among many of his remarkable achievements, Nelson Mandela has now bridged the cultural divide and contributed to the upliftment of Joburg".

The building of the NMB, and especially its opening, exposes the dominant role of officials in the planning of the future of Newtown and especially the significance of a spectacle event (cf. Boyer 1992). The NMB project also shows the absence of public involvement in active decision-making processes that involve grand-scale urban planning. In the case of the NMB, the official planning models and private interests clash with public needs. Newtown's redevelopment plans evolve around the positioning of the Bridge as a link there, and as far as its planning and the development of the district are concerned, these are officially orchestrated and, link with specific notions directed to the importance of claiming urban space[308].

What appears to be happening in Newtown, with specific reference to the Nelson Mandela Bridge, seems to be the unleashing of a dynamic interplay between the material aspects of the Bridge, its associated meanings and, how these might affect

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[305] *Sowetan* (July 21 2003, front page) reported: "A powerful theme of racial and tribal reconciliation and hope for a better world – free of poverty, illness, war – ran through the events marking the 85th birthday celebrations of Nelson Mandela … [ending] with the opening of a state-of-the art bridge in the centre of Johannesburg. It is symbolic of the bridges that Mandela has built between so many people"
[306] This extract of the address by Moleketi was taken from Hopkins 2003:76.
[307] "He spoke about the humbling honour of having the bridge named after him and declared the bridge a symbol of freedom" (*The Star* July 21 2003).
[308] Especially in the light of what authors David Anderson and Richard Rathbone in *Africa's Urban Past* (2000) write in terms of 'becoming urban'. They see the city as a space for cultural 'brokering' at a time of dramatically increased patterns of urbanisation. The authors maintain that in 2020 Africa's main conurbations will be amongst the world's largest cities.

people, both locally and globally, in their thinking of Johannesburg. The NMB as the dramatic focal point in the inner city purports to attract specific meanings. Rapoport's analysis of the built environment is that meanings are not only layered its design, location or the communication centred around the built, but more so a project's importance is that it is an expression of those in power at a particular time (cf. Rapoport 1994:465). Rapoport's (1994:465) understanding of the significance and meanings of structures in the built environment, in terms of the time in which they 'emerge', finds resonance in Paul Ricouer's understanding of phenomenon in terms of "the way [these] appear" (cf. Mbembe 2004). This perspective implies a need for a critical contemplation of events such as the building of the NMB in the inner city - a critical juncture in building of a city and that of a nation (cf. Tomlinson 2003).

It is equally important to note the role that the media acts as a propagator of public images. This role invariably leads to setting the stage for "[people's] cultural and informational choices" (cf. McQuail 2000: 11). McQuail writes that the media play a part in the transmission of images "[that blur] the line between public and private communication" (McQuail 2000: 9). In effect, the media add "[to peoples] social life" (McQuail 2000: 11). The pervasiveness of media images and messages lies in their ability to:

> [ignore] national frontiers [and to satisfy] communication needs outside their own society and their immediate social environments (McQuail 2000: 11).

The above points to the way in which the re-imagining of Johannesburg's inner city and especially the opening of the NMB is carried by the media across the world. The media is the instrument that: "disseminates symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences" (McQuail 2000: 11). The strategic marketing of the NMB potentially reached across national boundaries to spread 'knowledge' about the inner city's regeneration and even "[dictate] the degree and form of development" (cf. McQuail 2000 140 cites Winston 1986). In this way the events surrounding the opening of the NMB in Johannesburg's downtown (through a network of interconnected media) becomes immediately available to anyone interested, whether they live locally or abroad, instantly accessible across the world.

The media reported the opening of the Bridge with President Thabo Mbeki thanking the Gauteng Provincial Government for its efforts at trying to rebuild Johannesburg.

He added that he was happy that the bridge was named after Mandela (*Sowetan* July 21 2003). The NMB for Mbeki "[is] a symbol of the closing of divisions in the nation [so that] we must stand together as one nation" (*Sowetan* July 21 2003). This statement resonated with notions that nation building without city building is a senseless task (pace Tomlinson *et al* 2003). The opening of the NMB thus is closely connected to efforts of nation building. The event filmed by local and international media and transmitted across boarders carried messages of the symbolic significance of the NMB as a uniting force (see also Hopkins 2003). The Bridge is a specific object in the unfolding of a new urban narrative[309] that promotes the commercialisation the country's national psyche:

> As gateway into the city, the Bridge will attract trade into the metropolis's commercial hub and its splendour will appeal to tourists, providing Johannesburg with a matchless and recognizable signature[310]

The NMB appears as an object from a new social reality for the city of Johannesburg[311]. The best way to view this is from a perspective in the late nineties by the CEO of the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) Neil Fraser[312]. Fraser cites Richard Rogers' *Cities For A Small Planet* as spaces that provide a framework for urban communities: "… the seedbeds of our cultural development" (Rogers cited by Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999: 9). The suggestions that Fraser made then, that of a Section 59 inner-city development finance company to drive the inner-city's regeneration, today can be seen in the work of the Johannesburg Development Agency and that of Blue IQ. Fraser at the time wrote of the importance of what he termed "smart growth" to turn the city around. The latter is derived from the "Growing Smarter Act" adopted by the Arizona legislature in 1998 (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999: 9). Adopting this "intervention strategy", Fraser writes will make it possible for local government to "manage" the inner-city and encourage investment there (in *Business Day* January 15 1999: 9). The NMB

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[309] Cf. Mandy Jean Woods (Chapter 1) mentions that the Nelson Mandela Bridge is a "major draw card for visitors to Gauteng" (*The Sunday Times Metro* October 12 2003:10).
[310] Nelson Mandela cited in Hopkins 2003:7. Mandela added: "to be a world-class nation, South Africa needs to have a world-class road system…. My vision for the future is that the Bridge will generate good fortune for the City of Johannesburg, and for South Africa [on 'the African continent']" (*ibid*).
[311] Yalouri clarified the meaning of the Acropolis as a historical site and a powerful agent in the managing global influences and preserving the local. As a marketable commodity, the Bridge represents the aspirations of the imagineers and these invariably shape future understandings of or association with the Bridge as entity that is object in people's lives.
[312] Fraser 'Smart Growth may solve CBD problems' in Business Day, January 15 1999:9.

subsequently has become the well-advertised catalyst for the inner city's regeneration – a spark for 'smart growth' (in *Business Day* January 15 1999: 9)[313].

The aforementioned also resonates with Eleana Yalouri's study on the object nature of the Acropolis as a heritage site created by human action and that, as an object, it produces a specific social reality (Yalouri 2001: 16). For Yalouri, Alfred Gell's 'theory of agency' (Yalouri 2001: 16) describes an object's roles in the creation of social environments and that places acquire and project that which they have come to be associated with (Yalouri 2001: 16 cites Gell 1998). Yalouri's study shows that:

> [people use objects to] construct and redefine themselves and their roles within a certain social setting (Yalouri 2001:16 cf. Bender 1993b; Tilley 1994; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Lovell 1998).

Theorising about objects, places and people's identities offers explanations on the possible roles of the NMB in future urban narratives. The spectacle opening of the NMB[314] with its scale and timing is also indicative of the importance of the NMB in transforming the city (cf. Dempers interview 2003). Linking the NMB to efforts to re-imagine the inner city and also through the availability of mediated messages on the presence of the NMB in the inner city, it is possible to denote the contrived format of the inner city's reconstruction. The latter also is evident in the perspective taken by Neil Fraser of the CJP on making a "smart" inner city. These contrivances associated with the remaking of the inner city therefore can be understood as a process of "place [and] people making" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997:6) in which political processes play an important role[315].

THE MARATHON

The opening of the Bridge, as a carefully planned and contrived event, took the form of a road race or rather "[a] city tableaux" (cf. Boyer 1992). The event was part of a larger package – the road-race, the official opening of the Bridge as a road, and Mandela's presence at a time he was celebrating his 85th birthday. Not only was the

[313] Joburg.org.za website; BlueIO's website
[314] See the work of Christine Boyer (1992) on the 'city tableau' as form of advertisement.
[315] As illustration, Ferguson and Gupta cite Lisa Malkki's on locality or community which, she wrote, superficially appeared unproblematic. However, the authors point out, experiences are constituted by "a wider set of social and spatial arrangements" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997: 7).

Bridge opened on that important day but, '[a] festival of running' was launched and officials expressed the hope that this race across the Nelson Mandela Bridge would become an annual event for the city. The latter then annually acts as a form of re-inscription of not only the event, but also the meanings in the making of the NMB itself.

Invitations to partake in the road race - with high prize stakes - were extended to businesses and running clubs in Gauteng. From my own perspective as participant-observer this illustrated the contrived nature of the event. It was as if the number of people who attended the event was most important and therefore the choice of a road race had certain guarantees, especially in light of the fact that people were enrolled before the opening day, and the organisers knew how many were coming. The event needed strong public participation to complement what the imagineers of the NMB had hoped for: a crowd at the launch the bridge as a landmark structure in Johannesburg. The decision to stage the event at the time of Mandela's birthday therefore was carefully considered to gain as much publicity as possible for the opening event through the local and international media (see Chapter 4).

More than 19 000 people took part in the race – the city's first half marathon and (by prize money) the richest one on the African continent[316]. The starting point of the race was congested with runners when an estimated 10 000 participants that were not expected arrived and "demanded to be accommodated" according to Vijay Moodley, the assistant manager of the Nelson Mandela project who was helping out on the opening day. What I gathered from speaking to Moodley afterwards was that Blue IQ had not catered for the stampede as they had pre-entered around 9 000 runners from running clubs and surrounding businesses around Gauteng. The chaos that ensued when more than the expected number arrived "[had] bowled us over. We really did not expect such a crowd", as Moodley put it. She said that the added number of people "[made the event] a tremendous success" (Interview with Vijay Moodley at JDA:2003). The fact that thousands of runners were invited indicates the calculated actions of the organisers during the initially planning of the event.

[316] There were different races catering for professional runners, walkers, children and paraplegics in wheelchairs. The half-marathon prizes were: first, R175 000 (for both men and women), a second R75 000, then R50 000, R25 000 and a fifth R10 000.

Pictures in the media the next day and week showed a mass of people on the Nelson Mandela Bridge and commentary on the opening itself emphasised the crowds by mentioning that the race started in relays that took more than forty minutes. No mention was made of an estimated 9000 invited participants against the 10 000 un-invited ones. Shortly before the race, busloads of people were driven into Newtown. Curiously, unlike the crowds in Newtown, the route through Johannesburg was along freshly cleaned streets, almost empty of people. Except for a few onlookers in the city centre, the crowds were all at the Bridge. I noted that people appeared to be arriving in busloads, that they had come from elsewhere for the day and gathered at the NMB where they were entertained with community theatre, drumming and dance displays. The following section is made up of a series of vignettes on my impressions of the opening day. These illustrate the superimposition of the opening event on the ordinary everyday landscape of Braamfontein. I have entitled this section: 'First Impressions',

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

My initial impressions start off with my arrival, shortly after 6am, on the day of the opening. The atmosphere on that day was a blend of festivity and a far cry from the mundane everyday bustling on the streets. The bridge was decked in sky-blue and white balloons, the colours of Blue IQs corporate colours[317]. I realised that as well as being a day of festivity, it was also one in which the efforts of Blue IQ were given a public airing. I was also aware that the day was organised to prevent negative publicity and in anticipation of crowds of people arriving, I noticed a group of guards in camouflaged uniform on the corner of Ameshof and Bertha Street, on the Braamfontein side of the Bridge. They told me that they were 'needed' there that day as: "Madiba is coming there today". One said that they were also there to see after the safety and security of people who were expected to attend the event. Usually two guards monitor activities in Bertha Street for the protection of students as bag snatching and cell phone robbing is a common occurrence there and today reinforcements were brought in as crowds were expected to attend.

[317] The 'blue' represents professionalism, infrastructure, technology and also, "blue sky" which connotes vision (from *joburg* November 2002 [1]1).

Early that morning[318], the streets of Braamfontein were deserted save for the guards and a group of people stashing their bedding – a few blankets, a cast-out cotton duvet in a greyish-pink floral and bits of clothing – into the entrance to a disused shop next to the former Pop's Café, a greasy hamburger den much favoured by Wits students of a bygone generation. I noticed that the young people were up earlier than previously when I had often seen them lying asleep on the concrete flagstone sidewalk. They sleep inside the recessed opening to the shop and flank the sides of the entrance. Today, two or three of them are warming their hands over the flames of a small fire in a metal brazier. Others stood around looking towards the street.

I have spoken to the group of people on many an occasion and when we met a couple of months ago they introduced themselves as "street-children." When I asked their age, one replied that he was twenty-seven. He said they "were fed at the church" [the Catholic church is less than a hundred meters away]. Having spoken to the priest there, he said they were "feral kids". He also explained that the Church and the Council "were at odds" as "the council feels we should not feed them as we encourage their presence", he said. These young people live less than 300 meters from the Bridge, but felt no connection with it or the city they lived in. They are seen as an inconvenience by the municipal authorities.

In conversation, Reverend Lewis said that the young people were "fed" together with other "needy people" at a soup kitchen arranged by his congregation. The battle between him and the City Council was over the support he lent to "these people who were out of jobs. They had nothing – no food and often no place to stay". He said that the City Council "did not want us to do this. They want the people out. And as long as we feed them, they will always be here, they say". He also told me that the group of young people I referred to earlier on, the ones sleeping and living on the pavement across the road from the church, had "recently lost their home". He pointed to where the pedestrian bridge that ran across the top end of Bertha Street, where Bertha meets Jan Smuts Avenue, had been taken down[319]. Lewis said: "To many it [the crossing] was an eyesore, but they were able to take shelter there. It was their home".

[318] July 20 2003.
[319] This is the unused Absa pedestrian crossing.

On the day of the opening of the Bridge, I heard a voice greeting me: “Hallo ma’am”; I looked back and saw one of the young men who ‘live’ on the pavement. He waved; I greeted and walked over to him. “Are you going today?” I asked. He shook his head, “No ma’am, we have no invitations”. Another young man says that he was getting ready to park cars, “I need money – I am working today” and with that he stepped aside, turned his waist and with simulated gestures, his hands beckoning an imagery driver of a car into a parking bay. He smiled.

FIRST ARRIVALS

From around seven that morning, people started to arrive by car, to park and then walk along the Braamfontein streets towards the Nelson Mandela Bridge. On the Newtown (southern) side of the Bridge, the same was happening, with cars and busses bringing people to the opening of the Bridge. I was struck by how different this Sunday was – I had been there before and usually the streets are deserted. The streets and pavements were clean and I was reminded of the sudden cleaning up operations in Newtown and Braamfontein the week before. Cleaning contractors told me: “All must be clean and neat for the opening day”. Most of the people cleaning the streets said that they would not be able to attend the opening of the NMB as they were tired after “working extra long hours”. Others just did not have the money to attend the celebration. They had just enough to come to work and earn money, but not for the luxury of such recreation.

Standing on the pavement nearest Braamfontein Centre, I eavesdropped on the conversations of people who come around from Stiemens Street into Bertha Street[320]. I heard them say: “The bridge is so beautiful, it shines! Sparkling new!” I was interested in these comments as they highlighted popular conceptions and connotations of the inner city being old, rundown, dirty and grimy. I heard another say: “The place looks so clean and neat. I could never have imagined this”. Again, these comments confirmed generalised ideas about the city and its centre. It indicated people’s relations to the surroundings, the effects that the built form has on people’s sense experiences.

[320] See map in Appendix.

I decided to speak to people and find out whether they often came here. Mostly, they replied, no. Some said they worked in Braamfontein, but mostly they seem to have come there for this day. One group said: "We're from the East Rand, Germiston. We belong to a [running] club, and were invited to come and take part in the race. We are excited to be able to take part in a city race so close to where we live". About the bridge, they said: "This is a great day. It is a great one for running and also to attend the opening of the bridge. Mandela has done so much for the country. He is a great man. We are proud to be here – to take part in the race". However, they added that they were there "to run and have fun" and but would not stay for the day. They indicated that they were not involved in the city – they were outsiders and did not feel any sense of connection with the city itself.

An irony here is that, at this same spot, the day before, I sat down and talked to workers waiting for their shift supervisor to arrive. These men worked long hours and travelled long distances, in some cases even taking up to three different taxies to get home.[321] They arrive at their shelters late at night and leave in the dark hours of the morning to start their respective shifts. It was shortly before six am that morning and I sat warming my hands which they kept going with bits of urban waste which they took turns to feed into the heart of the open fire on the pavement. They improvised in this matter to stay warm. They had been employed for the past couple of months as temporary workers on the Nelson Mandela project. Mostly they did not know what would happen to them once the 'job was over'. The workers said that they felt a sense of connection with the NMB and especially with its opening. They were working hard to have the paving done. It was important for them as much as one said: "It was for Mandela." But they did not live nearby, instead relying on public transport to get there, and it was too expensive to be there again on the opening day and run in the race, they said. They too would have liked to come to see Mandela, but: "It is too far – some of us live in Vosloorus, others in Orange Farm". Also, they said that they have been working long hours in the weeks leading up to that day, "at times into the night to get finished". They were looking forward to "a bit of rest. We are tired." Their connection to the event that day was part of their inscribed memories of life before

[321] Organised yet privately owned means of transportation between the inner city and its outlying edges.

Mandela's release. But sadly they could not join in as they earned enough to support their own needs only.

Most of them said that they would be watching the opening of the bridge on television. There was a sense of pride among the workers that, I ascertained, was about the way they felt about Mandela. They knew that the bridge was named after Mandela and that he would be there at the opening, and they had done their best to get the work done. Their feelings of wanting and yet not being able to be at the opening of the bridge contrasts with the many others who came to the opening event as representatives of either athletics clubs, or businesses such as firms and institutions who were told to invite their employees.

Amongst the people I spoke to on that day, many were employed in offices in Braamfontein and their companies had been asked to support the day. I also spoke to staff members from the nearby Kenridge Hospital who told me they had been specially invited to this "historic opening". I was interested in hearing that they had been told that it was going to be a 'historic' one. The general impression I got was that people where there because they either knew someone who was working on the project, or that they had heard about the opening from their workplace or in the media. Some came via buses and taxies. Few arrived on foot, most coming by car to the general vicinity.

STREET SCENES

From around seven that morning there were many people on the streets – several streets were cordoned off for cars to park in Braamfontein and people then walked into Newtown across the Queen Elizabeth Bridge. People came with all intentions - on a sidewalk near the corner of Smit Street and Bertha Street, just at the on ramp to the new bridge, a family were placing segments of 'boerewors' sausage on a weld-mesh grid attached to a barbeque 'braai' made out of a 100gallon oil-drum cut in half and welded onto a metal frame. A street block eastwards from Bertha Street on the corner of De Korte and Juta Street another group of people were "braai-ing" on 'Weber's' (kettle-braai) and on the pavement there where two large zinc-metal baths filled with cold drinks immersed in ice. They said they were selling "food and drink".

I was quickly able to obtain several responses from passers-by and to note down a variety of reasons. People were there to either run, walk, to look, or out of a sense of mixed curiosity – sense to be there, to see what was going on there and also to see the "new Bridge". The sense was that people wanted to be "[part of] it. This is a historic day". These were the things people said. They wanted to be present as "Mandela is a great man and we feel honoured to be part of today. We respect and honour him and feel he deserves to have the bridge named after him"(The comment made by an advertising executive who said that he was "from the north"). Many said they came the opening with apprehension. The told me that they did not feel "safe in town" and, some said: "We will be taking part in the race, and then, that's it, we'll go back home". I reiterate this here as this was the upfront comment from many people who saw their attendance there as a duty. This then ironically, as mentioned before, contrasts with the responses from workers on the project who would have cared to be there and could not afford the transport to be there.

The morning of the opening of the NMB, the podium was flanked by a thicket of journalists, reporters, and among them a SABC tv2 camera man, who was setting up a video-cam to film the opening event, and said that he had chosen that "[a] strategic position" to film from. He said his news-editor's brief was to "document this historic opening". He also told me that SABC tv2 had placed cameras all along the route and that there was a camera attached to a motorbike to film the runners "all the way".

There were plenty of news photographers and journalist around and I spoke to a *New York Times* freelance photographer who told me that he thought the bridge was a "symbolic claiming back of the village". I asked him what he meant, and he said, he thought it was time for black South Africans to feel at home in a country, and that includes the city in which they had for so long been denied simple human rights. He said that that was why he thought of the event as a historic one. He told me: "there's plenty news guys here – local and foreign … it's a great news event … there's Mandela, the city. The people's liberation struggle … the day symbolises people's freedom … this place is theirs".

I was aware from speaking to him how this single opening event, with the aid of the media and technology, was instantly capable of infinite replication and how images would be transmitted across the world. The event would hardly go unnoticed with so much media attention, and people across the world would perhaps be able to say: Johannesburg is changing, because that is what the news reporters were saying. None commented on the strategic manoeuvrings involved in having a marathon at the opening event, not a word about this draw card or the fact that the Bridge was opened in the week of his 85th birthday - on the mechanism employed to attract the crowds. Just a day or so before, I picked up a weekly and read: 'Bridging the great divide'; 'Nelson Mandela's birthday present is intended to bridge the gap between poverty and affluence' (*Mail&Guardian* July 18-24 2003:10). This corresponds to how the media are able to create a moment and give it reality (cf. McQuail 2000: 87) and:

> [are] instruments for achieving and maintaining mass society [with their perspective]- (*ibid* 499).

It was not long after seven o'clock and people were arriving in the hundreds, there were thousands, busloads of them disembarking in Newtown. They had come from all over Gauteng, many more than expected – more than half of the people were not part of the nine thousand expected to take part in the race.

From the moment that the first crowds parked their cars and started edging their way towards the south side of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, across the parallel Queen Elizabeth Bridge, there was a sense of excitement. In order to get an idea of who came, why, and how they felt about being there I walked with people across the Queen Elizabeth Bridge[322] into Newtown, jotting down anecdotes and taking notes. I did this for a couple of hours, all the time collecting bits of conversation and noting the air of expectation, the excitement over the Bridge, especially the anticipation surrounding Mandela's ribbon cutting involvement. I was also aware that most people I spoke to saw the event as a historic one – some admitted that this was how they were told to think about it, their work informed them that 'it' was an historic event and they

[322] There are three bridges in close proximity; the Van Riebeeck, the Queen Elizabeth and the Mandela Bridge and "[the three] represent distinct periods in the history of South Africa" (*Beeld* reporter Stephanie Niewoudt quoted the head of the South African Heritage and Resource Agency (Sahra), Pumla Madiba. Madiba said that the bridges carried specific symbolism: former two bridges were traditional styles and the Nelson Mandela Bridge was "modern and innovative" (*ibid*).

felt a sense of pride in attending the opening in dual capacity – as representatives of particular industries as well as members of society who see this as emblematic of changes in Johannesburg. Mandela's presence at the opening also lent a sense of nationally embodied pride, I gathered, as people said it was a way "of honouring the old man by being here".

I was curious about how changed the inner city was that day. It was as if the people who normally loitered around had left the area. Or was it that they just blended into the crowds of people that I saw around me? I was intrigued to see how the influx of people that morning transformed Braamfontein's everyday-ness into what outwardly appeared as a dynamic and prosperous, bustling metropolis. On closer inspection, however, the people were arriving to be *there* and wearing sports gear – the activity of a busy city was an illusion. People were unwittingly or even wittingly subjecting themselves to the gaze of the media, part of what Christine Boyer (1992) describes as "[the city made up of] stage sets [in the form of a] city tableaux …" (*ibid* 204). These opening scenes resembled:

> … [the] bracketed moment [of a spectacle], a play within a play … when the act of putting on the show becomes the performance [to] immobilize our attention [by] 'just looking' (*ibid* 192)[323].

Upon reflection, the streets and pavements were congested with people to resemble a normal city scene but in this case it lasted for just that day, perhaps even no longer than a few hours. These moments were captured on film as the hustle and bustle of a busy urban scene in downtown Johannesburg - documented by media through processes that "['transfigure the space in a] technically perfect way" (Sontag 1980[1977]:107 cites Walter Benjamin 1934). What comes to mind was that this "[momentary] urbane disguise" (cf. Sorkin 1992:xiv) was part of "[an] elaborate apparatus [to 'obliterate'] city life" (cf.Sorkin 1992:xiv). People had travelled to be there, all ages and many of them parents with their young children- there were also busloads of schoolchildren.

[323] I am fascinated by Boyer's depiction (1992:192) of "[the 'fragmentary' nature of] the contemporary spectator" in the today's privatised public spaces and especially in how "[urbanites are] increasingly manipulated by stage sets and the city tableaux …" (*ibid* 204).

Curiously, though many people I spoke to said that the NMB was significant in "giving a new life to the city", but not one expressed a keenness of actually moving to its direct vicinity or conducting business there. But, some said, they would be watching what would happen there in the future. The most common comment I jotted down was that the opening of the bridge was "a historical event". Most of the people I spoke said they would not have missed it. Some went as far as to say:

> *this* day will go down in history as one when things started to change in South Africa[324].

I jotted down comments like the abovementioned one and other on my own perceptions, that of yet another layer to the evolving city. I noted down my feelings about the day as part of the creation of an urban fantasy. I questioned the role of the urban imagineers' in the making of this vision. What was the meaning of this world-class city after all? I was intrigued by what I observed, that which Christine Boyer (1992) describes as: "[an emergent city space] designed explicitly for escape and gratification" (1992:192). People had arrived from all over the place, walking towards the NMB. Mostly they spoke in elevated tone of pride for Mandela, and gesticulated with a smile or a nod that they had come to honour him. Some even said that in being there, they expressed a need for "unity", that is to share what they saw as: "[an act of] being together as one nation". They were there because they wanted to be there, as they put it, "as a nation with Mandela".

All along, I noted different responses to questions about the NMB. For some, coming was an act of curiosity: others "came for the fun of it" but most said that they were there as they felt that the opening of the bridge marked "a change in the city". I met two young women wearing T-shirts inscribed with the name of a youth movement who said they were at the opening to "celebrate freedom. We were the youth in 1976 – we were part of the struggle and today's a day of celebration. We are proud to be here. This is our history. Our freedom. The bridge is about us being free."

On the Bridge, cameras were clicking as people were either being photographed or photographing their family and friends with the Bridge in the background. Someone

[324] The manager of the Nelson Mandela Bridge project at the Johannesburg Development Agency Paul Arnott-Job said the opening of the NMB was a success adding: "We did not think the media would run with it to this extent …" (From a telephone conversation after the opening of the NMB to request an interview with him).

said playfully: “It’s like being part of history in the making”. I spoke to a young woman, an aspirant fashion designer, wearing a costume inspired by the Ndebele tradition and took a picture of her. She said she was a “MoSotho” but believed in “celebrating the rich variety of our different cultures. I specially designed this for the day – see the beads are Zulu, the blanket Ndebele, and here, the under dress, it is from my Sotho culture. This is the kind of fashion I want to bring out – a design of diversity – for the public. Not just one culture, but all the cultures, aspects of these in one”.

Other comments I noted were that people came to see Mandela - “just to get a glimpse of him, that’s enough!” For many the opening of the NMB was therefore about “being there with Madiba”. I noted that many people felt that the opening was “the beginning of a new experience”. According to newspaper reports, amongst the veteran runners were octogenarian Allen Ferguson and Harry Mallet-Veale, 74. A couple of days before the event, Ferguson was quoted saying: “the race was the most prestigious race for him to run” (*Rosebank Killarney Gazette* week-ending July 11 2003: 20). He said: “I have read Nelson Mandela’s biography and when I looked back at what he has gone through for this country, I took a decision to honour him”. For Mallet-Veale, Mandela is “a special man and that makes this race very important for me” (*ibid).*

A young mother with a baby in a pram and a toddler walking beside it, said: “One day, I have told my daughter, this will all be part of our history and I wanted her to be here today. She is five now, and the little one is 15 months, but I wanted them to remember this day. They would be able to say that they were here when Mandela opened this bridge”. Another person said: “Johannesburg has always changed itself but the bridge suggests some kind of permanence. It is a way of connecting bits of the city that were previously unconnected. Symbolically this gives the city a new way of looking at itself”. And someone else felt that “one needs to legitimate history and the building of the bridge, especially the naming of it, does just that … it gives this space an identity”. A lot of people referred to the Bridge as being “his [Mandela’s] Bridge”.

The responses to my question of why people had decided to join in to the celebrations that day were mixed. A woman from Strubens Valley said she was in the city “for the first time in several years”. Dressed in running gear, she said she “was happy about

the bridge [but, she added] it could have been bolder, bigger – it could have stood taller … like Mandela". Her friend added: "Mandela is such a remarkable man [and] for me the bridge means peace".

I spoke to a Sandton businessman who said that the NMB was perhaps the most exciting urban development project in the city since the Carlton Centre[325] was built in the sixties in the centre of Johannesburg. The man who was there with his family, two teenage daughters and his aging mother, said they remembered "[the] good old days when there still was a city…". He had run an office near the Carlton Centre until the late eighties when he relocated north "like so many others did". He also said that he loved coming to the inner city, though he had not done so for close on ten years.

Amongst the many exclamations such as "magnificent," et cetera, someone said that she thought the meaning of the bridge was the city's search for something to define itself by, something other than all the bad publicity about "grime and crime". Hearing this, a runner said that he did not think that the publicity the city received was "necessarily bad". He added though that he did not think "all is actually kosher in town". A relation of his who works in town does not enjoy going there. A colleague of this relation had her car window smashed on the Queen Elizabeth Bridge "a number of times" and said that the police were doing nothing about it. He added that a lot more needed to be done "before money returns here". He was running in the race for his company, he said and liked the idea of a festival of running. However, he also thought the construction of the Bridge was "much too expensive. The money could better have been spent on housing for the poor. But as the bridge is here now, there is nothing we could do."

[325] The Carlton Centre, Jim Morgan writes in *Architecture Plus* is "an American building … of the American way of life" (July/Aug 1974 vol. 2(4)48). Anglo-American Corp as the client/owner commissioned New York firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill to add "the American Way of life[to the inner-city]" (*ibid*). The Carlton Centre built as the city's "first superblock" (Beavon 2004:168) was to "[generate] real estate developments" (Morgan *ibid*). The Carlton had "pushed speculative land values steeply upward in adjacent city blocks… (cf. Beavon 2004:172), however Morgan writes that the Carlton "[really] symbolises 'architectural imperialism' … overlayed with economic and political meanings" (*ibid* 52). Ironically the NMB is again produced by private partnerships of big business in the inner-city to stimulate inner-city growth. The collapse of the Carlton Centre in the mid-seventies was because it did not "contribute to the urban fabric … [but instead] emphasised inequities of income distribution" (*ibid*). Its scale, Morgan wrote, "brutalised the exiting urban form" (*ibid* 50-51).

A small percentage of the people I spoke to said that they were "somewhat concerned" that the NMB was constructed without much "public involvement" and even "without one really knowing it was happening…." Some of the people said that they had only heard about the NMB when they were invited to run in the marathon. Others had read seen it on television and in the newspapers and connected it to Mandela's birthday: "a birthday gift … or way of honouring Mandela". The NMB's significance, for most of the people I spoke to, lay in what they saw as "a commemoration" of what Mandela did for the country.

GRIM REALITY

Standing amongst thousands of onlookers and athletes, some thronging together to get a glimpse of Mandela and others to start the race, I thought about how different the place looked with so many people. Standing on the Queen Elizabeth bridge looking towards the thronging crowds – athletes and onlookers – on the ramp leading up the Mandela Bridge, I remembered my experiences of the previous day, my thoughts about the city, a city marked by contrasts – a space which tells many different stories, stories of peoples lives, struggles, hardships – different ones. I remembered watching the bulldozer early morning relentlessly flattening the earth, a space where people had been living for a couple of years until three days before the very opening of the bridge. I recalled watching as the determined driver manoeuvred the caterpillar's blade, razing the black PVC structures to the ground. Standing nearby was Precious Khumalo (19) Cindy Zwane (from Natal), they were sucking on 'fizzpops' (lollipops), and shook their heads: "It was us, we were watching the building of the bridge from start until end … he [Mandela] is trying to make something with us. We are suffering, where are we going to stay … we need a place to stay" said Precious Khumalo.

She explained that they came there three and a half years ago. "… this place was called Rave City then. It was an open space [and] we found a place to stay in an old butchery [in] a big fridge. [We] stayed in there … the fridge was not working." Now, she said, they were looking for a place to stay as their "boyfriends park cars in [nearby] Braamfontein". A security guard working for Duhva Security on the Nelson Mandela Bridge, Maruluba Lindikhaya, told me that "on Wednesday night the police raided and Thursday, they started to break down the place. The people have no ID's,

sell bananas and oranges, cigarettes, beans – even had babies there …". He added that they "do not rob us [security guards] as we cannot be robbed".

From where I was standing I caught sight of the young man I had noticed the day before who was walking to and fro looking for bits of his belongings after the destruction of his 'home' – sitting on a stone outside the crowds. There was a woman, at a brick building at the foot of the bridge on the Newtown side, doing laundry, washing and hanging clothes and sheets out to dry. A runner pointed this out to me. "What a contrast", he said. He had come to the inner city that morning with some apprehension, not quite certain of what to expect as the city had for years been understood to be a no-go zone (cf. Czeglédy 2003). He parked in Braamfontein and followed the crowds over the Queen Elizabeth Bridge into Newtown towards the south side of the NMB. He commented on how 'clean' the city looked in contrast to the informal lives of people who were sitting not far from where the woman was washing her clothes.

Looking in the direction of the woman who he was pointing to I also noticed the parked bulldozer just below and on the eastside of the NMB. I thought how unaware people who filed over the Queen Elizabeth bridge into Newtown to the West Street off-ramp of the bridge were of the days' before. They walked across the informal taxi rank and across a freshly bulldozed terrain that looked landscaped rather than like that which it really was: the flattened 'homes' of people, families. On July 16 2003, at midnight the police raided this area - four days before the opening event. The following day, at dawn, a bulldozer started to flatten this space. For three days, the driver of the bulldozer worked to level the area – raising the homes to the ground. Today the bulldozer stood ominously silent, parked on the Newtown side of the bridge, closer to the railway lines, but not far away enough to be entirely out of sight.

As I was aware of the eviction and the destruction of the 'homes', I informed the people I was standing with about it. I told them that I had spoken to some of the people who had lived there. They had been staying there for the past two years and for more than five years in the area where the NMB now stood. Most of the people I spoke to were disinterested and said nothing. Someone felt that removing the people was "the best thing to do … the city needs to be cleaner. These people are dirty – they

are dangerous. They have no money. They steal and rob. People should not be allowed to just live anywhere". I was reminded of the response of a Metropolitan Council spokesman Kenny Fihla (see Chapter 1)[326] after the setting alight of informal "homes" where the Nelson Mandela Bridge stood as saying: "… people building shacks in the inner-city were doing so in the full knowledge that their actions were illegal."

Being in amongst the crowds was one of the many ways in which I participated as an observer in the day's events. Another was to view the proceedings from the top floor of a Braamfontein building with the janitor there who I interviewed. What follows in the next section is that of an "everyman's opinion" – "the ordinary or common person, anybody …" (cf. Chambers 21st Century Dictionary).

EVERYMAN'S OPINION

I had decided to cover the opening of the bridge as a participant in the crowds and general observer – but also to see the event through the eyes of a man who had lived in Braamfontein for the past nine years or so, a man whose excitement about the bridge, the changes in the city, was hard to ignore. At nine o'clock I was on top of Profurn House in Braamfontein with Daniel Sithole, a janitor, who was dressed in a cream-collared jacket buttoned to the top and a pair of black trousers. His shoes gleamed and he said in accordance: "This is a smart occasion … a very special one." There was Sithole, dressed for the occasion, even thought he was only watching it from the top service floor of the building where he lives and works.

I met Sithole when I just started my research and was looking for a high building to take aerial pictures of the construction of the bridge. I met with him on a couple of occasions and when he suggested that I come to view the opening from this high vantage point, I quickly accepted. At the same time I asked him whether he would

[326] From Chapter 1 – article in *The Star* (June 26 1998): 'Shack people watch in tears as their homes are set alight' of a previous fate of people living where the Nelson Mandela Bridge stood. I repeat what Metro Council spokesman Kenny Fihla said: "… people building shacks in the inner-city were doing so in the full knowledge that their actions were illegal. These are not destitute people. They are here to pursue business interests. The council cannot accept the erection of shacks in the inner-city as the impact of this development would be devastating to the city's economy as it tends to drive business away… against the council and health bylaws" (Fihla *ibid*).

agree to be interviewed about how he felt about what was happening there. He consented; so I reserved the interview for the opening day. I was interested in Sithole's opinions and feelings about the meaning of the bridge as his interest in the bridge caused him to befriend some of the construction workers. His comments revealed the role the media play in formulising peoples' perceptions – propagating 'popular' opinion (cf. McQuail 2000:43 cites Fiske 1987). McQuail (*ibid* 44 citing Benjamin) writes:

> [popular opinions in the media] deprive respondents from being separate from the causes and effects of mass culture [and also aid the standardisation of] cultural [and symbolic] production

Sithole is a keen observer of the developments in the inner-city and on a number of occasions commented: "It [the city] is changing again". He explained that the city "got messy, there is too much crime" and that he was of the opinion that the opening of the Bridge would get people to "work together". "We must learn from each other [and the Bridge] is something for all the people to be proud of".

Sitting and talking to him, I realise that he too felt that the presence of Mandela lent significance to the event commenting: "There are so many people here to see Mr Mandela". He said that he too was excited and that he had been looking forward to this day "for a long time … almost since the construction started". That day Sithole and I were on the roof, looking down at the proceedings, and I was struck by his wife sitting in the room they shared, just a couple of metres away, watching the opening proceedings on television. "She preferred to watch what was happening on television rather than stand here and see them down there" Sithole said dryly later. He preferred to watch the event from the rooftop, "to see it lively. I wanted to see what it is going to be for us, what day it is going to be. We won't forget this day because – as you can see – it is a first time to happen in Johannesburg. This is a celebration … this is the first time that so many people have come together to celebrate such a man"[327].

I was interested in how he viewed the Bridge and how it was significance for him. He replied:

> If I look, this bridge shows me, this is a sort of big development which is happening in Johannesburg because, if you can see, this bridge cannot be placed on a place which does not

[327] These are extracts from the interview with Sithole.

> look nice. And if you can see, the way it is smart, and also the town there [he points to the new Metro Mall taxi rank] where it is going there, where they are developing there, they are developing there to make sure it must match the image of the bridge. The bridge, really it shows you, you are overseas, not here. If you can check the whole of South Africa, this is the best wonderful and best beautiful bridge that I have ever seen. So it shows me that there is a big development that is happening in Johannesburg now. And, of course, if it keeps on like this, I think, we are going to have also London in Johannesburg [*laughter from us both*] … yes it is going to happen very soon". *He explained that Johannesburg will be no different from London and that you would not need to go to London, but that being in Johannesburg would be enough.* "Even London will want to be here. It is going to invite some tourists to come here – people will come. It is happening in newspapers, TV, so all the people are keen to come and see it physical. Which means, that one, that is one thing which was included – we people, we must work together, we must slow down crime, so that, of we have people coming here, the visitors, they come back here – the tourists – the spend their weekend/days here and go back happily, without any problem. Which means that they are going to spread the news that Johannesburg we are decent people, we are human beings – we take care of ourselves. Then it will invite also some money, we get some money, people come and invest because all these people, as you can see what is happening here in Braamfontein today, all these shops are open today because there is a big market today. Everyone is walking about; most of these people they have cleaned their shops, they want to have a good image. Anyone who passes here, all these athletes, even if you do not want to buy something, you could just end up buying something because it is clean … because of the cleanness of the area.

This interview excerpt with Sithole confirms the role of the media in propagating messages about the city and, especially, around the construction of the NMB. I realize that many other people might have been similarly affected by the recent media enthusiasm. The media's emphasis on the event's symbolic significance had an important impact on Sithole, expressed in what he saw as the relation between the crowds and Mandela's presence. He said:

> There is a whole nation here and it is because of Mr Mandela's name … they have to come to see exactly where is his landmark. His name is on the maps.

Sithole scanned the crowds and said that he had never seen so many people in Johannesburg. He felt that they had come from far and wide as Mandela was going to be there and also to "see his Bridge".

> Everyone is here … see that man with one leg, walking with crutches [and] those carrying banners: Happy Birthday Mandela 85.

For Sithole the opening of the bridge was "a world event [as] Mr Mandela is recognised world wide". He was aware that the majority of people who were attending did not live in the city-centre, but came from "all over [as] everyone wants Johannesburg to work". I thought about what Sithole said and it seemed as if he was mimicking the hopes and aspirations of Blue IQ itself. He clearly believed that an epiphenomenona was set in motion and that, if taken advantage of, would only lead to

Johannesburg becoming, as he says, “lovely”. Such transformation of the city seems in line with what Blue IQ has set out to achieve.

The choice of the name for the Bridge appeals to the national psyche and this was demonstrated in what Sithole said about the people who came to the opening event. He was adamant that the people who were thronging the on-ramp to the Bridge in Newtown, the people who stood for more than half an hour on the bridge that “did not empty” (Sithole) so that they could cross the bridge and start the different races, were there to see Mandela. While we were talking Sithole, received a phone-call from a friend who was in the crowd and who had just seen Madiba. Sithole said: “He was about five meters away from him … he was happy to see him. He decided to phone, to tell me. Mandela is a proud man and you see all these people, they just come here because of Mandela. It is just another opening of a bridge without Mandela. You would not see such people”. He said that he thought people were there to “come close to him, not just to see him on TV. They want to see him close. To say, No! this is the hero who gave us freedom and democracy in South Africa … those things … people are very keen to come to see him … he has played a big role and he is somebody who is full of forgiveness, you know – somebody, a democratic person”. Before I left, I asked Sithole what he though was going to happen once the Bridge was open. He replied by holding his head upright:

> This is a bridge for the people … a landmark. This is our president, our former president’s name project.

For Sithole, the fact that the NMB has Mandela’s name means that it belongs “to the people”. He said: “It is now our duty to take care of it”. Sithole’s pride in the Bridge’s ‘beauty’ was also how he felt about Mandela and when he said: “He has done, he has gave it to us” he believed in what he was saying. The Bridge for him had the same significance as when “you buy someone a shirt, you do not expect that person to come and wash it for you again”. For Sithole, Mandela “gave it to us, it is up to us now to care for it”. Again, it was interesting to note the relation between the built and, in this case, Sithole’s connection with it to the extent of being part of him. He said:

> We must look after it – make sure we maintain it.

Sithole noted that the Bridge was a cultural asset and that it also was a heritage site, “[that] people [will] come from overseas, from all over the world to come and watch this bridge”. The Bridge epitomised the history of Mandela and therefore “you are

going to have the feeling of wanting to see his bridge. How does it look like … the image that it shows …". And then he said: "It looks like him". Sithole's devotion was hard to ignore and the way in which he 'took possession' of the Bridge showed what Mandela's role in the liberation struggle meant to him. With pride he said: "It is no more Mandela's bridge … he gave it to us today [and] it is now in our hands …". It appeared to me that if the Bridge had been named anything other than the Nelson Mandela Bridge, it would not have as significant to someone like Sithole. He felt a sense of duty and honour and ended the conversation:

> [we must] maintain it to thank him [Mandela] for what he has done. It is a lot of money he has spent.

I walked away thinking of the many, layered meanings embedded in the Bridge – the connotations and denotations, the many different ways in which people interpreted its presence and the many different ways in which the Bridge was part of the city, its search for an identity. I walked down Bertha Street on to the NMB. I stood on the Bridge, there were many people, children and older people, talking and taking photos, some were sitting on the balustrades. The mood was convivial. It was as if the Bridge, which was now open to pedestrian traffic but not to vehicles as yet, had the character of a public square with people talking to one another. At this stage, the race was over and Mandela and the official entourage had left. Now people spoke about the Bridge, they wanted to know who designed it and why it was built. Someone said that there should be a plaque with all this information. Others were disgusted that the design was not by South Africans.

Later, my family and friends arrived with a picnic hamper and we set off in search of a place to have a picnic, just to realise the impossibility of doing so. The packed Mary Fitzgerald Square had live music relayed on a large electronic screen which had been erected a year before by Blue IQ to serve as an electronic notice board for events in the city, we did not feel like sitting down on the concreted square. We eventually decided to go to what has been called the city's latest and most exotic restaurant specialising in "traditional African Cuisine", *Moyo*, in the African Bank Theatre Complex just cross the road from the Mary Fitzgerald Square. We had our own wine and were billed R65 for corkage. Shocked, a friend exclaimed: "this is not Melrose Arch, nor are we tourists". The bill was reduced by R40.

Not far from where we sat down at the restaurant, on our walk back to the NMB along Bree Street we saw, at a fresh meat wholesalers, a notice for sheep's heads and trotters, that read: Sheeps heads: black R6; white R6-50. Someone told us: "Sheep' heads are a delicacy called 'smileys'. It is a delicacy in the rural areas and now popular in cities. Half a boiled head sells for R9 and a full head for double the cost…" Curiously this was not on the menu of the restaurant we had just left. I thought about how fickle the palettes and even squeamish the patronage at *Moyo* would be at receiving a boiled sheep's head.

By the time we got back to the Bridge, around 3pm, there were far less people there, but what I did notice was that people still were sitting on the cemented strips that separate the pedestrian walkway from the cars, informally chatting to one another and admiring what some one said was "Johannesburg's impressive skyline". It was comforting to be there and I thought how deprived people in Johannesburg were as they lacked public space – a space in which they did not need to be entertained, a space in which they could just mill around and socialise, an un-commercialised space. I wondered how different this space would be when it was not this impromptu public space anymore, but a vehicular road.

The circular walk we did from the NMB through Newtown and then back again revealed multiple layers of this part of Johannesburg's urban fabric. Back at the NMB I was introduced to CEO of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) Graeme Reid and the JDA's manager of the NMB project Paul Arnott-Job. During this brief encounter Reid said: "The bridge will pay for itself in seven years …[328]". When I asked him what he meant, he said I should contact the JDA for information. Of course seven years hence meant 2010 – the date set for the Soccer World Cup.

Graeme Reid's remark made me feel that he had missed the point. Was he not aware of the convivial gathering of people on the bridge, something greatly valued in the Athenian democracy? (Sennett 1994:33) Sennett writes that the Athenians built places

[328] Reid quoted before the opening saying that "[the bridge] addresses north-south linkages …[and is] as symbol of the revitalisation of the city centre …[one] for the whole of Johannesburg in terms of its aspirations as a world-class city" (Vicky Robinson in *Mail&Guardian* July 18-24 2003: 10).

on prominent spots with a panoptic view of the city and as a place for the all citizens to meet – rich and poor (Sennett 1994:33).

The opening ceremony of the Bridge was as much about its location in downtown Johannesburg with all its connotations (cf. Chapters 2 and 3) and as being part of a particular historical framework: postapartheid Johannesburg re-conceptualised as a 'world-class city' in a democratic[329] South Africa (cf. Chapter 4). The city, as microcosm, thereby potentially becomes the metaphor demonstrating the democratic principles of the country, but does it really serve the interests of *all* its citizens?

That day I was struck by the multiple meanings attached to the NMB primarily through peoples' responses to the event that day as an epoch-making one. I observed the artificiality or rather the contrived nature of that mass gathering, the efforts directed at setting the scene (after Goffman's notion of "impression management") to connect the bridge, as object, with the people. I based this on what Yalouri (2001) detects as the relation between objects and people as not that of "mere 'containers of action'" (Yalouri cites Tilley 1994), but rather,

> 'humanised', dynamic sites, witnessing and producing socio-political action [and] cultural activity (*ibid*).

Places and objects, therefore, become a basis for the way in which people live and act and these then "contribute to the construction of identities and social relationships" (Yalouri 2001:17)[330]. In the case of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, the bridge is given meaning and stature through its impressive structure, the process of naming it, the opening event and then, afterwards, the way in which it is fixed in the minds and imaginations of people with the aid of the media and tourist hand-outs[331]. The naming of the Bridge influences people's responses[332]. The space where the NMB stands also

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[329] With the African Nationalists coming into power in 1994, the country's constitution was developed to secure basic democratic rights of each person.

[330] Places "have biographies, histories enriched by consequent layers of meaning produced through human action and practices and recalled through social and individual memories" (Yalouri 2001:17 cites Tilley 1994). For Yalouri the presence of monuments becomes "the meeting place of space and time" (*ibid*).

[331] See also Soja 1996 & 2000 on the notion of *third space*.

[332] French historian, Pierre Norra (1998) introduced the idea of 'lieux de mémoire' to study national senses of belonging in his analysis of places where the French collective heritage was 'crystallised' (Yalouri 2001:17). Such 'lieux de mémoire' suggested that there were multiple references to the understanding of cultural myths and that these can be appropriated for different ideological or political purposes (*ibid*). In her study of the famous heritage site, the Acropolis, Eleana Yalouri referred to the

carries many messages – a space that lies at the juncture of several realities. What comes to minds is NMB's position in the unfolding narrative of the inner city's reconstruction (cf. Rutheiser 1996). The meanings of the NMB are looked at in terms of what Edward Soja (2000:12) detects "[as] the infinite complexity of life through its intrinsic spatial, social and historical dimensions, its interrelated spatiality, sociality and historicality".

Rutheiser is of the opinion that people do not simple-mindedly "consume" such images but rather "adapt, resist, and revise these images and interpretations in crafting their own vernacular responses to them" (cf. Rutheiser 1996). In the case of the Bridge, the Johannesburg narrative is an unfolding one. The process of building meaning is intricate and the crafting of urban space appears to be as much about people's responses to the expressions of the imaginers as the intentions of the imagineers themselves.

The presence of the poor and disadvantaged in downtown Johannesburg is merely a symptom of an overall malaise, a localised efflorescence of the squatter settlements which hold the city to ransom but are never mentioned because their implications are simply too uncomfortable to contemplate[333]. In similar fashion, the problem in Newtown has been glossed over as too awkward to address in the context of what Blue IQ is attempting to achieve that is, in marketing the city[334].

BRIDGE AS REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE

The significance of the NMB falls within the notions held out by Henri Lefebvre (1974) and Edward Soja (1996; 2000) on the production of urban space. The latter is

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site as ''[a] lieux de mémoire'. The site, Yalouri wrote, has become invested with 'surplus of meaning' (Yalouri *ibid* cites Paul Ricoeur 1976) and yields a 'reservoir of meanings' (Yalouri *ibid* cited Connerton 1989: 56-7).

[333] Iain Chambers in *Popular culture: The Metropolitan Experience* (1986) writes that the city "exists as a series of doubles; it has an official and hidden culture, it is a real place and a site of imagination" (cf. Soja 2000:324).

[334] For Soja (2000:324) the city is subtly directed by "forms of social and spatial regulation [that] 'plays on the mind', manipulating civic consciousness and popular images of cityspace and urban life to maintain order" (*ibid*). Soja cites Chambers (1990:53) on the emergence of "aestheticized cityscapes" in which urban populations that have no role to play in the latter "are inserted into other discourses: ethnic communities, urban povery, inner-city decay, industrial decline, drugs, organized crime …[that is outside the city's] symbolic zone" (cf. Soja 2000:149). See also concluding remarks of this research project.

not only "[that of] *perceived* space [and/or] *conceived* space of the imagination[335]" but involves the sense of "*lived space*" (Soja 2000:10-11). The meaning of space as "conceived" reflects those associated with the "representations of city space". For Soja such 'conceived' space "[the]'mental map' we carry with us as an active part of how we experience the city" (2000:11). These are the "more subjective 'thoughts [we have] about space'". Soja (2000) writes:

> … [the latter is] an outcome or product of essentially social action and intention … a dynamic process of (social) spatial construction, as *a source of explanation in itself* (Soja 2000:11).

From Soja's depiction of a '*thirdspace*' which is part of the way in which experience our surrounding, it is possible to detect the influence of specific social actions on defining human spatiality. Soja (2000:11) defines the latter as part of an evolving concept of "*lived space*" (2000:11). This kind of "spatial specificity" is also present in the location – physically and symbolically - of the NMB in Johannesburg's inner city. In terms of what Soja (2000:11) detects as the creation of meaning through urban action, the NMB too is

> … simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual and virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency (cf. Soja 2000:11).

In Johannesburg's downtown the NMB project is linked to an evolving urban consciousness that is directly connected to the inner city regeneration programme. The NMB project's significance, especially through its naming, is thereby part of what Soja (2000:11) refers to as "the complexity of the geographical and spatial imagination". The meanings of the NMB are related to processes that produce urban space in the same way as:

> … the writing of a biography, an interpretation of the lived time of an individual; or more generally to historiography, the attempt to describe and understand the lived time of human collectives and societies (*ibid*).

For the majority of South Africans the city's past lies embedded in everyday experiences in Johannesburg as an Apartheid City (cf. Czegledy 2003; Beavon 2004, see also Chapter 2) as result of life in the segregatist city based on peoples' skin tone[336]. Drawing on the work of Low and Lawrence-Zûniga (2003), Johannesburg's built environment became peoples' everyday 'embodied space' through "[a] creation

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[335] For Soja (2000:11) '*conceived'* space is that of the "urban imaginary" which he also

[336] The impact of the Group Areas Act on peoples lives is part of a photographic exhibition entitled 'Jo'burg City, Whose City' shown 1990 as part of an oral history project. The news photographs between 1970 between 1990 is part of the South African History Archives collection (SAHA Collection: Cullen Library).

of place through [its] spatial orientation, movement and language" (2003:2). This model of embodied space is therefore useful in interrogating the meanings of the Nelson Mandela Bridge where, just as in the Apartheid City, the body "[again becomes a] common frontier of society [and prepares a] symbolic stage [for] the drama of socialisation" (Low and Lawrence-Zûniga cites T. Turner 1980: 112).

Today, Johannesburg's regeneration again draws attention to the role that people – both in power and as ordinary citizens – play (see also Chapters 3: Simeka). The latter is reflected in terms of: "the lived time of human collectives or societies" (cf. Soja 2000:11). People and places/spaces are connected to one another as "individual organisms [and] social beings" (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:3). People of and in the city connect with the Bridge as "representational space" (cf. Low and Lawrence 2003: 3)[337] and therefore its meanings are embedded in the movements of people (see Munn 1996; also Chapter 3 and 4). Soja (2000:11) writes:

> In all these 'life stories', perfect or complete knowledge is impossible. There is too much that lies beneath the surface, unknown and perhaps unknowable, for a complete story to be told

Consequently, this research is "[a] selective [attempt]" (Soja 2000:12) at making sense of: "… the infinite complexity of life [through the presence of the NMB] … a potentially endless variety of exemplifications and interpretations" (*ibid*). The NMB's significance as an emblem of inner-city regeneration is another part of peoples' everyday experiences, their senses of mobility, that is: a flow across the NMB that reveals a sense of locality and influences experiences (cf. Rockefeller 2002). Soja (2000:12) similarly detects that human spatiality through 'life stories' reflect a complex interrelation of "intrinsic spatial, social and historical dimensions". The NMB's meanings reflect a passage of time, a trajectory of human experience from a specific historical point, that of: Apartheid.

The symbolism of the NMB project as product of official urban narratives associated with its naming creates an urban monument to reflect peoples' past experiences in the inner-city. However, the project's positioning in the inner-city today also reflects ordinary peoples' movements there today. In terms of Stuart Rockefeller's theory on

[337] The kind of space Low and Lawrence-Zûniga (2003) refer to here is that of the gender inscribed spaces and I suggest that these forms of inscription can be adapted to incorporate forms of inscribed meaning like that of the nation and nationalism.

public space the significance of the NMB can then be seen as: "[existing] simultaneously in [its locality and in] peoples' minds, customs and bodily practices" (Low and Lawrence-Zûniga 2003:6). Besides the city's official urban regeneration agenda, the positioning of the NMB reflects "[peoples'] *lived* [experiences]" (cf. Soja 2000:11). Rockefeller's depiction of space and people as subjects in the built environment highlights peoples' sense of being in the moment with their own sense of place and the influence, in this instance the NMB, on their spatial as well as emotional orientation. The importance of the NMB is not singular in meaning, but results from "[an] interconnectedness of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces" (cf. Soja 2000:12). The project's significance is that of a particular phenomenon relates to its occurrence at a specific moment, "the moment of [its] 'erupture'" (Mbembe 2004[338]: 'On Ricouer'). The NMB's significance is thus intertwined with its planning, building, opening: its timing which lies at the confluence of multiple strands of history especially ones associated with the prefix *post* which denotes 'after' (Chambers 21st century dictionary). In this respect, Soja detects what he calls "a stimulus for urban agglomoration [that of *synekism*]" and writes:

> …[synekistic agglomorations] play a powerful and enduring role in human historical and societal development … a vital part of the DNA of urbanism, a kind of presuppositional code for the generation, growth, and development of city-space and its metropolitan regionalilty (Soja 2000:13-17).

The role of "socio-spatial-historical processes that shape our lives [not necessarily '*in* and *on* cities' but] emanate *from* cities" (cf. Soja 2000:18). The next section explores the meanings of the NMB through "complex specificities and stimulations of urban life", those that relate to the organisation of space (cf. Soja 2000:18) and especially that which is often ignored.

ORGANISING SPACES – POWER/CULTURE RELATIONS

The previous section delineates the influence of socio-spatial-historical processes in shaping everyday life (cf. Soja 2000:18) with this section looking specifically at the power relations that organise and define space. Soja (2000) reflects on the latter as:

> [a] hidden dimension [to spatial specificities] (2000:18).

[338] Wiser April 2004: from Theory Lectures on "The Subject".

This section then both introduces the next chapter as well as reveals an underlying and connecting thread throughout the history of Johannesburg. It is especially visible again as power and culture manifest as interwoven aspects in the ordering of place (and space) whether power masquerades as culture or culture as power. The NMB, as a potent symbol for Johannesburg, fits into what anthropologist Hilda Kuper describes as social space being "never neutral …" (as cited in Rotenberg 1995: 23). The meanings in the making of the NMB too are tied into the inner-city's regeneration project. The critical question is now: Whose City? Or, a city for whom?

The context for the abovementioned lies in the notion of power being "central [to] the localisation and operation [of space]" (Rabinow 2003:356). There is a connection between decision makers, the making of spaces/places and peoples' senses of identity that is evident in the manufacturing of the NMB's significance, especially those associated with the personhood of Mandela. Belonging becomes a cultural expression as "[power relations] permeate all levels of society" (Ferguson & Gupta 1997:5 cites Foucault [1978]1980). The latter necessarily formalises the built environment into spaces for social production (Low and Lawrence-Zûniga 2003: 351). Low and Lawrence-Zûniga note that spatial forms "[are] means to exercise political control" (*ibid*).

> The use of space as a strategy and/or technique of power and social control [also provides] the illusory transparency of space [and] conceal contradictions of its social production (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:351).

The aforementioned introduces the possibility that created material or representational forms in the built environment are constructed to elicit peoples' participation, especially in as far as their lived experiences and social memory is concerned. The organising powers of place and space thus lie embedded in the "active practices of social agents [who not only] enact culture but reinterpret and re-appropriate it in their own ways" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997:5 cf. Bourdieu (1977); de Certeau (1948)). Additionally, the hegemonic structuring of place (and space) is not static as power appears to be suspended in "[an] eternally incomplete" process of place-making in which various elements constantly war for position (Ferguson and Gupta 1997:5 cf. Gramsci 1977; Raymond Williams 1977 and Hall 1986).

Power and culture structure the place-making process and invariably add to the altering of the socio status quo of a place and as co-joined force alter the classical notion of culture as "shared, agreed upon and orderly" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997). The making of places becomes a complex expression of power and culture (and, in cases, that of resistance) (*ibid* 1997). Also, places are not necessarily the expressions of localised ideas but form part of the power/culture dictates of a globalising world: the 'local' is now an aspect of "[an] accelerating global cultural ecumene" (Ferguson and Gupta 1999:5 cf. Ulf Hannerz)[339]. In terms of place-making and people-making (Ferguson and Gupta 1997), the local and the global play as important a role as past and present narratives in the creation of a sense of belonging - "[a] domain of sharing and commonality" (cf. Ferguson and Gupta 1997:5).

Ferguson and Gupta (1997:3) write that the "spatialisation" of culture has given rise to contested meanings of difference and identity and also to the spatial manifestation of power (1997:3). No longer a functionalist attribute in terms of its "glue making social cohesion" properties (*ibid* cf. Durkheim), culture has also evolved beyond structuralism's emphasis on the importance of "societal communication" in the cohesion of societies. The notion of culture, writes Ferguson and Gupta (1997) extends its "domain of shared, inter-subjective meanings" (the Weberian/Geertzian version of culture as symbolic social interaction) to include "contemporary processes of cultural globalisation and transnational culture flows" (Ferguson and Gupta 1997: 5). Drawing on Marxist and Feminist politicising of the culture concept in the 1960s and '70s, Ferguson and Gupta (1997) explain the relation between culture and power and place-making not in terms of the making of the "rules of the game", but rather through the importance of who makes these and for whom (Ferguson and Gupta 1997: 4). The latter confers a critical perspective on the embodied relation between culture, power and society.

[339] In *Exploring the City* (1980) Ulf Hannerz views urbanism by citing Oscar Lewis (1951, 1965) on the nature of social life in the city as "[made up out of] smaller universes rather than a priori statements about the city as a whole" (1980:71). This is an underlying argument of this paper that surfaces in questions relating to the regeneration programme and especially in terms of in whose interests these are carried out. Hannerz writes that urbanism as a social order is intertwined with "the politics and the economics of the city" (1980:72). The city is therefore a space of "human interdependency" (*ibid* 80). Today it is an integral part of the global economy, which functions as "[a] network of networks" (Hannerz 1992: 34-56).

These are critical notions in the interrogation of the meanings of the NMB, especially in terms of culture and power as agents in place and space making[340] as well as in defining people – people-making (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1997). The power-culture relations influence decisions about identity and belonging and therefore the structuring of spaces (cf. Ferguson & Gupta 1997) in which 'locality' and 'community' becomes contentious notions. Power and culture are notions stressed in terms of their influences on space and social construction and the development of collective identity (*ibid*). For Ferguson and Gupta dominant cultural forms are "imposed, invented, reworked, and transformed" and as such:

> The sense of culture as a space of order and agreed-on meaning, meanwhile, undergoes a transformation of its own in the process (Ferguson & Gupta 1997:5).

The next chapter also draws on ethnographic data gathered on the Newtown side of the NMB, the space that connects to the heart of the city's transformation. The data reveals peoples uncertainties in the face of grand urban development planning, especially as most of the people I spoke to have been trading in that area for at least a decade. Presented in this chapter are the forms of urban imperialism that drive the marketing of Johannesburg urban centre through real estate development, a city that is, virtually "for sale" (cf. Boyer 1992).

[340] See also Low and Lawrence-Zûniga (2003) on the spatial tactics involved in the making of space – the "political economy of space" (2003:36-37). Their interest is capitalist transformation of the built environment.

CHAPTER SIX: Urban Contradictions

CONTRADICTORY EXPERIENCES

> … while cities may come to stand for or symbolize nations, they are also imagined in a manner quite differently from these larger collectivities
>
> - Charles Rutheiser 1996:10

Charles Rutheiser's assertion that links cities to "larger collectivities" such as the nation itself resonates with the views expressed by urban scholar Edgar Pieterse on trends in South African cities (2005:138). Cities, Pieterse notes, "are slowly but surely rising to the surface [as part of the country's] political landscape" (2005:138). He contends that the 'new' institutional initiatives that direct urban developments promote inequalities, a lack of distributive justice and forms of elitist cosmopolitanism (2005:138). The latter assertions underlie the direction taken in this research in terms of the meanings in the making of the NMB and, especially, in what Pieterse sees as:

> South African cities are being remade and reimagined at a ferocious pace and with worrying consequences from radical democratic and redistributive perspectives (Pieterse 2005:139 paraphrases Mabin 2000).

The meanings of the NMB are connected to the city and the nation through the gaps between democratic political ideals and ordinary concerns for social justice and equity (Pieterse 2005:139). This chapter looks at a curious anomaly highlighted by the construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge. The NMB's construction as catalytic project for Johannesburg's inner-city regeneration programme stems from what Neil Fraser of the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) sees as: "[the city's] historic lack of focus [that caused] the inner-city to deteriorate" (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999). In the *Business Day* (January 15 1999), Fraser notes that the exodus of large corporations and businesses from the inner-city to the city's urban edges brought about "[a] high crime rate, poorly maintained public space, unmanaged pavements and roads and a general deterioration into the unattractive urban environment we are faced with today" (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999).

Fraser (*Business Day* January 15 1999) who heads the CJP and manages the Johannesburg Inner City Business Coalition suggests that Johannesburg's inner city

lacks 'smart growth' (after the Arizona 'Growing Smarter Act')[341](Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999). Such "smart growth" strategies will stop the inner-city from becoming dislocated from the out-lying wealthier edge-cities (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999; see also Garreau 1990). City managers' need to embark on intervention strategies to protect and regenerate the inner city (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999) which, Fraser writes:

> … [deals with] the 'on the ground' problems [through] combined efforts of council, business, community and labour via a Section 59 committee and encouraging provincial government to play its part through province-wide intervention (*ibid*).

This indirect way of referring to ordinary peoples' activities as "[problems] on the ground" in this research highlights the official attitude towards everyday informal trading on the streets of the inner city. Ironically Fraser sees the city's neglectful attitudes towards urban interventions "[as not] just the demise of the city centre but … the creation of disastrous social instability and a dangerous dichotomy between city and its northern nodal developments" (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999). The city's revival and its survival depend on the pursuit of 'smart' business enterprises (Fraser in *Business Day* January 15 1999). Fraser quotes NationsBank CEO Hugh L McColl Jr on the pursuit of 'smart' business in Johannesburg's inner city as saying: "… business should be in cities". For McColl Jr the latter means:

> … there is no workable alternative. In other words we can run, but we cannot hide from the cost of urban neglect. The question for every business leader is: do we want to pay now to solve our problems or pay later for problems that will never be solved?

I argue that the abovementioned comment is a narrow representation of the complex urban dynamics in Johannesburg's inner city. Pieterse's (2005:139) describes how city's "neo-corporatist tendency ['crowds' out] equally legitimate forms of political engagement". The kinds of "direct action and symbolic contestation in the public sphere" described by Pieterse (2005:139) has particular relevance on Johannesburg's long-range strategic plans for the inner city and the city's *Joburg 2030 Vision.*

[341] In the article Neil Fraser (1999) writes that Arizona legislature has adopted a policy of 'smart growth' recognised by the community, business and governance as a "proactive, balanced solution [to] manage growth" (*ibid*). He also mentions the benefits of the latter economic growth policies for the resuscitation of Johannesburg's inner city.

In the mid-nineties geographer Keith Beavon looked critically at what he noted as the contested meaning of an African City in world terms. For Beavon (*Sunday Independent* August 17 1997) Johannesburg's "grand vision … as Africa's representative in the ranks of world cities" (Beavon in *Sunday Independent* August 17 1997) is not about narrow understandings of an "Africanisation of Johannesburg". He warns against notions that might suggest that:

> People want to live in dirt and squalor [and say] that's Africanisation [as this] is an insult to everybody (*ibid* Beavon 1997).

Beavon shows indignation at the above attitude and the implied creation of spaces of exclusion as the inner city is imagined as a 'smart' space. His attitudes and others mentioned in this section allow for the interrogation of the meaning of the NMB: a slick structure superimposed on rundown Newtown. The inner-city's changing scenery has created a new space in a place in which parallel lives are brought into contact – the rich with their new playground and the poor eking out a meagre existence collecting newspapers, cardboard and other paper wastes for a couple of rands. Now this place that was for a decade or more was seen as a no-go[342] area is chosen, in a 2003 readers' poll carried out by the *Rosebank Killarney Gazette*, as their favourite place. It is described as follows:

> Awesome energy. Diversity of culture. Nelson Mandela Bridge. Gorgeous Newtown. Successful bachelors. It's a rush, a rave, an adventure[343].

Further comments in the survey describe Newtown in terms of: "the sunshine, the sunsets and thunderstorms, the money, the speed and the clubbing …". Readers also refer to Newtown as a place where: "a dining experience [is] worth travelling for – just over the Nelson Mandela Bridge". I am intrigued by the far from neutral "operational strategies" employed by the media (cf. McQuail 2000:50). Between the lines in the responses it is possible to detect reservations, including depictions of Newtown as:

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[342] Neil Fraser (1999) writes that Johannesburg's inner city was "allowed to deteriorate … through a historic lack of focus" (*Business Day* January 15 1999). The ensuing exodus of businesses from the inner city left a space in which high crime stopped people from entering there.

[343] Rosebank Killarney Gazette Leisure Options Readers choice Awards (October 2003).

> [a place of exhilaration for those] driving in a bullet-proof car, [it has a] thriving drug market [and] you can get away with murder! [A witty response read:] Ummmm [its like] living on the edge?[344]

Ironically, these descriptive interjections on life in Newtown manufacture an ambience that is remote, one that entices rather than represents and one that equates cultural merit with social mobility (cf. McQuail 2000:44). Pieterse (2005:139) suggest that metropolitan authorities in the planning of urban space look "uncritically" at mainstream ideals, such as to be "'world-class', 'competitive' and globally integrated at all cost" (Pieterse 2005:139 cites Robinson 2002). Within such pursuit lies the development of cultural attitudes that are "constitutive of the social, alongside the economic and political" (Pieterse (2005:139). What appears to be taking place in such single-minded pursuit is what McQuail contends is:

> [the] possession of economic capital [that] has usually gone hand in hand with possession of 'cultural capital' which in class societies can also be 'encashed' for material advantages (2000:44).

Symbolic meanings are thus critical to the processes involved in the construction of identities (Pieterse 2005:140). Media messages invariably effect peoples' perceptions through the construction of meanings (McQuail 2000:427) and the *Rosebank Killarney Gazette* opinion poll therefore necessarily directs peoples attitudes and influences their values (cf. McQuail 2000:425). I contend that the role of the media in managing peoples' perceptions stem from what Pieterse (2005:145) sees as "the structuring effects of the economy, bureaucracy and discursive diagrams of power … and agency [to inscribe meaning to everyday events/experiences]" (Pieterse 2005:145). McQuail too suggests that the media play a vital role in the "socialisation" of groups that, for him are part of: "the informal contribution of the media to the learning and adoption of norm, values and expectations of behaviours in particular social roles and situations" (McQuail 2000:425). As such, institutional change as well as cultural change comes about through developments specifically mooted in the media (McQuail 2000:428).

In terms of the inner city's regeneration and the marketing of the NMB as emblem, the role of the media corresponds directly to the kinds of cultural change needed in

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[344] *Ibid.*

Newtown (McQuail 2000:428). McQuail maintains that the media bring about shifts in an "overall pattern of values, behaviours and symbolic forms [that characterise] a sector of society … a whole society or a set of societies" (McQuail 2000:428). This research also stresses the role of the media in the promotion of Newtown and the essentially mediated establishment of NMB as a landmark structure. The latter form of mediated marketing is however not inclusive, but (in Africa) the "preserve of a relative few" (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005:22). This is the case in Johannesburg too where a specific audience is targeted for direct impact.

The promotion of the NMB as inner city regeneration emblem therefore cannot target the needs of all or the city as a whole. But highlights a critical dimension between the media, peoples' perceptions and "belonging and democratisation in Africa" (see Nyamjoh 2005:23). Francis Nyamjoh suggests that journalists and editors' who have fallen prey to liberal democracy's political developments and debates (*ibid* 23) need to break with what he regards as:

> … face-powder democracy [and instead embrace] the institutionalisation of a culture of democracy in Africa [that promotes] public control [rather than] excel in callous indifference to the predicaments of their people (Nyamjoh 2005:24).

The media's potent role in the propagation of symbols, and especially communication campaigns, lies in what McQuail sees as: "[a politics of advertising in which] the use of potent symbols, latent appeals to cultural values, togetherness, myths, traditions…[connects the media and culture]" (McQuail 2000:54). In Johannesburg's bridge building it is curious that no mention is made of who actually lives in the inner-city. The ideas, images and information disseminated instead build a particular picture of where the NMB is located (cf. McQuail 2000:61). In this sense, the role of the media can be seen as none other than:

> [Disseminators of news that] can serve to repress as well as to liberate, it unites as well as fragment society, both to promote and hold back change (McQuail 2000:62).

The presence of the NMB in the inner city is part of an evolving narrative carried forth by the media – a projection of the grand ideals for the city as opposed to the oft-suppressed ordinary needs of people. The next sections present diverse opinions from

impromptu conversations and observations in the inner city with reference to the presence of the NMB in Newtown.

CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVES

> The Nelson Mandela Bridge, a striking emblem for the African Renaissance, is giving Newtown a new lease on life and has made its indelible mark on the Johannesburg skyline[345].

The above-quoted words are from a 12-minute video screened at the Mandela Bridge Expo attended by a large, select group of (local and foreign) celebrities, and held during the week of July 12th 2003 (the week before the official birthday celebration of Nelson Mandela which ended with the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge on July 20th). Present at the video-screenings were journalists representing the local and foreign media worldwide and groups of learners selected from city schools, local technical colleges and universities. At night there were sumptuous dinners on the NMB for dignitaries from various business-sectors, the service industries and city management teams and members of the Provincial Legislature.

The idea of the Bridge being in Africa, its emblematic character and its enhancement of the Johannesburg skyline was stressed throughout conversations with delegates and especially in the documentary screening of the construction of the NMB. An obvious publicity stunt, I thought, as I was reminded of what media theorist Denis McQuail's observed as peoples' minds were filled "with media-derived information and impressions"(2000:416). Commenting on the role between commerce and the media, he writes that the effectiveness of a proliferation of media images that infiltrate our mind-space is evident from the amounts of money spent on achieving such effects (McQuail 2000:416). He writes:

> …there can be little doubt that media, whether moulders or mirrors of society, are the main messengers *about* society (McQuail 2000:63).

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[345] This is an extract from a recording to the promotional video made to document the building of the bridge which was screened to gatherings of selected audiences from the business, the building and engineering fields, both local and from overseas, in the pre-opening stage of the bridge (week ending July 12 2003). The media, foreign and local, also attended together with handpicked representatives from schools, colleges and universities around Gauteng. The video was screened in the mornings, afternoons to audiences of at least 80 people over a four-day period. In the evenings it was shown to guest attending plush dinners, arriving afoot a red-carpeted entrance, themed events (each night a different theme) in tents pitched on the bridge. For the City of Johannesburg, the theme colour was ice-blue and a large ice-sculpture was imported for the evening – from conversations with events-coordinator: Jan Basset.

Similarly, McQuail stresses that information, images and ideas promoted by the media are, "… for most people [a] main source of an awareness of shared past time (history) and of a present social location" (cf. McQuail 2000:64). He (*ibid*) stresses the importance of the media "[as] a store of memories" and also:

> … a map of where we are (identity) and may also provide the material for orientation to the future.

It is therefore important to note that the media "to a large extent serve to constitute our perceptions and definitions of social reality and normality for purposes of a public, shared social life, and are a key source of standards, models and norms"(McQuail 2000:64). The latter needs to be seen within the context of the city's aspirations for world-classness and also the promotion of urban projects like the NMB with the media "[interposing] themselves between ourselves and any experience of the world beyond our immediate personal environment and our direct sense of observation" (*ibid* 64). McQuail writes:

> We are consequently very dependent on the media for a large part of our wider 'symbolic environment' (the 'pictures in our heads') however much we may be able to shape our own personal version. It is the media which are likely to forge the elements which are held in common with others, since we tend to share much the same media sources and 'media culture' (*ibid* 64).

The purpose and logic of the media is to provide information, images, stories and impressions as well as pre-empt needs which in some cases are not for the sake of the people but that of "social institutions (e.g. advertising, making propaganda, projecting favourable images, sending information)" (cf. McQuail 2000:7). As such the 'images of reality' are selective and "'reality' will always be some extent selected and constructed and there will be certain consistent biases" (McQuail 2000:7).

At the time of the screening of the documentary, the organisers of the Expo stressed the fact that attendees' safety was 'guaranteed' by security arrangements. This must have been a somewhat disquieting piece of intelligence since the event being staged was to promote a new, safe and prosperous city. Guests to the evening's events were ferried 150 meters from the base of the bridge in Newtown, to the top in order to attend the functions. "Care is taken so that they are safe", said a security guard. An engineer "from the north" - as he put it – attended the Mandela Bridge Expo on the Thursday afternoon and said that his firm were told that there were "strict security measures taken to ensure safety". He laughed and said: "it was not about falling off

the bridge, but about coming into town". These precautions were taken to avoid incidents that could have negatively impacted on the image of the NMB. At the time, it appeared that the image created for the Bridge as emblem of the African Renaissance[346] and as a symbol for the resurgence of Johannesburg, did not need negative publicity.

I later learnt from a conversation with Vijay Moodley, JDA's Assistant Development Manager on the Mandela Bridge project, that four days before the opening of the bridge, a group of people (referred to in Chapter 4) were "threatening the workers who were busy fixing the lights on the Newtown side of the bridge". She had reported this to the police and they raided the "squatter camp" [sic]. Moodley said: "The people living there were not from South Africa. They were foreigners. The police found that they had AK47s with them". She said she had taken the decision to evict the people who lived there. Early morning, the day after the police raided the settlement[347], the bulldozers moved in. It occurs to me that with reference to Edward Said's work on the 'other' the decision to evict the people was that they were "foreigners …[and had] AK47s". Moodley however made no mention of the evicted people being charged and what jumps to mind is the form of action that was taken rests on commonplace understandings of the term xenophobia. With regards to the latter, I refer to Nyamjoh (2005:233) on developments in Africa since the 80s. Such developments, he notes are locked into "identity politics [which are] central to the political processes ". What Nyamjoh (2005:233) detects is "[a] clamour for status" amongst ethnic groupings with elements he refers to as xenophobia. The latter, he writes, is the result of: "often aggressive reaffirmation of age-old exclusions informed by colonial registers of inequalities among the subjected" (Nyamjoh 2005:233). He notes that:

> Intensified globalisation [and its] glorification of multinational capital … [at the same time as] bringing about a greater obsession with citizenship, belonging, and the building or re-

[346] In other cities across the world, Soja (1989: 188) remarks: "[the] sprawling suburbanization/metropolitanization continues [alongside developments in] downtown centres [and that] carefully orchestrated downtown 'renaissance' is occurring in both booming and declining metropolitan regions". However, Johannesburg is the bearer of the African label too – that is its uniqueness, its distinctive otherness. For Soja, this 'internationalisation process' has spawned other paradoxes such as the urban reaching out to the global and 'in' from the global to transform the urban locale, to give 'new meaning' to the notion of the 'world city' (*ibid*).

[347] This is the group of young people I spoke to in Chapter 3 who said that their "homes and belonging" were destroyed when the area they were living in was bulldozed.

> actualisation of boundaries and differences through xenophobia and related intolerances (Nyamjoh 2005:18).

From my conversations with the people who lived there and those whose lodgings were bulldozed to the very ground, this group of people were the remnant of a much larger group of people who had been there since the mid-nineties. An informant told me that the area was crowded with slum dwellings since then – people living in abandoned buildings – and today some of the people still live there, on the pavements outside derelict Pim Street premises. Their habitat has a curious history, as this place used to be the very stomach of Johannesburg – the abode of the city abattoir, meat-packing factories, and the fresh produce market – criss-crossed by the railway sidings which brought in the needed provender.

Since 1994, on the open lot at the base of the Bridge on Newtown-side, hundreds of families took refuge in flimsy structures constructed of corrugated iron and industrial plastic sheeting, from where they set off daily to find employment. In June 1998 these informal settlements were set alight[348]. People took refuge elsewhere and for many even today their life circumstances appear dire – homeless and mostly unemployed. Also, shortly before the delegates arrived for the Urban Futures Conference in 2000 many people who took temporary shelter elsewhere in the Newtown were removed. In fact, the electric warehouse in Newtown was bricked up just before the conference delegates arrived.

An artist friend who works in Newtown told me about the "poor conditions the people were living under" in the area, and how when the construction of the Bridge started, they were "cleaned out" and now "live not far away, between Queen Elizabeth Bridge and the Johannesburg Station". She gave an explanation as to what she knew about people who came to Johannesburg from all over the country, and even from "outside" after the 1994 election "in search of promises of work". She said:

> They left the homelands and came to Joburg. They, I can say, ran away from home. Now, they did not find any work here. They are, I can say, too embarrassed to go back to where they come from. They are still hoping to find just something to do. Others who did find jobs, and

[348] Bunty West in *The Star* (June 261998) reported: " … fifty red-clad security guards moved in…pulled down shacks and set them alight". The report mentioned: "shocked residents watched helplessly…". Also that a council spokesman said: "These are not destitute people. They are here to pursue business interests" (*ibid*).

> did have a place to stay, did not always send money home. Now they do not have jobs here, they cannot go home. Their families would not accept them. It is difficult to tell you exactly what is happening. Even I, these people would not speak to me freely about what is happening. I am just telling you what I know."

What I gathered from what she was saying is that Johannesburg has always been the 'big' city with lots of opportunity even in the days when it was a totally divided society under apartheid. The city's name *egoli* is an Nguni word derived from the root word 'gold'[349] and this has always been the way in which the city has been thought of. According to my informant, people think of this gold as coming out of the bowels of the earth and being there for everyone. The city is associated with this wealth and people believe they can always find money in the city. Many, she said, thought that the African National Congress's triumphant win in 1994 would bring a change for people previously disadvantaged and that, if anywhere, the City of Gold would be where they would be able to live and earn money. She explained that where they mostly were from there was no work at all.

The latter has bothered me during my research and even before and especially in terms of the grand-scale urban developments in the inner city. I daily encountered people who said that they were sidelined by the inner-city developments and at the same are in the city in the hope of making a living. They explained that rural South Africa offered little in the way of earning a living or even being schooled. Ironically a city council spokesman (June 26 1998) commenting on the setting alight in the late nineties of an informal settlement close to where the NMB stands today, was quoted saying: "These are not destitute people. They are here to pursue business interests". Quite often squatting precedes people finding employment and a legitimate place to stay yet, the process is not tolerated by city officials. However people have little choice over the former in looking for employment to afford even the most basic accommodation.

Against the backdrop of the aforementioned and in some contrast to them, the news reports on the presence of the NMB in the inner city are filled with enthusiasm. I am aware of the way in which the media had fuelled the enthusiasm many people felt during the weeks leading up to the opening event. The opening of the Bridge was also

[349] Czeglédy 2003: 23.

given front-page space and the photographs pictured a stampede of joyful runners crossing the bridge, with headlines exclaiming: "Madiba's Bridge to Freedom[350]". Nelson Mandela was photographed with his wife, Gracia, and an entourage of politicians – President Thabo Mbeki, Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa and Johannesburg mayor Amos Masondo – whose presences lent a sense of national importance to the event and confirming: "this is no ordinary bridge, *this is* the Nelson Mandela bridge"[351]. Mandela pronounced the bridge " … a bridge to Freedom[352]", cut the ribbon spanning the breadth of the bridge and set the runners off on their race through town, which was filmed by the media and screened on television channels worldwide, including BBC's Africa Channel programme.

MEDIATED EXPERIENCES

In the week leading up to the opening of the NMB, there were souvenir supplements in the media to commemorate Nelson Mandela's 85th birthday and also to punt the Bridge as catalyst for the inner city's revitalisation. I wondered about the following, what exactly was meant by it: "Nelson Mandela has now bridged the cultural divide and contributed to the upliftment of Joburg" (*The Star* July 21 2003). To me, this stresses the politico-historical significance of the bridge only, its significance at a particular time in the history of the city. However, it has not much to do with the daily lives of thousands of people who feel they do not benefit from such an extravagance as the Bridge. The Bridge is synonymous with not only urban regeneration, the embodiment of a city's desire to invent itself, or even re-invent itself, but rather it is the way in which politicians are using the bridge in the making of people as a nation. It is possible to apply the Benedict Anderson (1983) axiom, that the "the nation is an imagined community" to what is happening here. In this sense, the bridge is an important adjunct to stimulate the inner-city's revitalisation: from the perspective of the drawing board it is even understood to be a catalyst for unleashing national

[350] I find it appropriate to cite here Nelson Mandela's famous words: "to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others" – scribbled down from a plaque at the entrance to the African Bank Market Theatre
[351] Text from promotional video on the construction of the bridge screened pre-opening to a select group of people as mentioned in 1.
[352] "The bridge is a symbol of freedom" (*The Star* July 21 2003).

pride[353]. The processes within the inner city's regeneration link to an "imagined" community (cf. Anderson 1983) by drawing on common threads of experiences to project an overarching and yet particular sense of belonging - an imagined one. For me the limits of being are developed from within a fixed mindset or a closed set of parameters derived from the urban imagineers' imagination.

Not surprisingly, the media have homed in on the Bridge as an emblem of the city and symbol of a post-apartheid society. It is therefore necessary not to underplay but fully explicate the role the media played in managing public's perceptions, especially in terms of their complicity in 'agenda setting'[354], 'framing'[355] and 'spin-doctoring.'[356] Gauging from the comments I collected at the opening of the bridge, many people saw the same picture as that disseminated in the press. For them the event was of historic significance for the people of Johannesburg and the country as a whole. Many saw the bridge's perpendicular structure as symbolic of the country's national aspirations and dreams. Others, however, saw it as the sign of a city in desperate search of an identity, especially pre-2004 general elections.

It is therefore not surprising that the opening of the bridge had to be done in a "unique way rather than simply a function with a group of dignitaries, cabinet ministers and things like that"[357]. The event happened to be "a draw-card to try and attract people back into the inner-city" (Dempers interview – September 2003). The bridge was established as "a positive landmark in Johannesburg" (Dempers interview – September 2003).

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[353] At the opening, President Mbeki expressed his appreciation to the Gauteng Provincial Government for rebuilding the latter Johannesburg and said he was happy that the bridge was named after Mandela as, he said, "[the bridge] was a symbol of the closing of divisions in the nation" (*Sowetan* July 21 2003). Mbeki took the opportunity to say: "We must stand together as one nation".

[354] "A process of media influence (intended or unintended) … applied to political communication" (McQuail 2000:491)

[355] There are two meanings to the term, writes McQuail, the one pertains to " … news content shaped and contextualized by journalists" and I am here more interested in the other. "The audience is thought to adopt the frames of reference offered by journalists and see the world in a similar way" (ibid).

[356] "Contemporary expression [for those] who have the job of managing (or massaging) the public presentation of information or ideas (especially on behalf of politicians) to maximum advantage. Their work results in the manipulation of news and is related to public relations and propaganda … enhanced political marketing and professional management of campaigns [rather than substantive reporting on politics]" (McQuail 2000: 503).

[357] Dempers September 16 2003: interview

Since the opening, Blue IQ in its endeavour to market the city has enlisted the support of a prominent communications and strategic marketing consultancy and therefore one looks sceptically at the conjuring up of spectacles when it comes to the promotion of events, especially events of grand-scale significance. It is therefore apt to look at the powerful role of the media in today mass-media saturated world, especially in as far as the media have the power to influence peoples mind by defining specific 'media realities'. I note with interest what Nyamjoh (2005:23) sees as:

> the liberating, mobilising and empowering *potential* of the media …in a world caught in the web of ever increasing circles of commodification and privatisation of knowledge …

The latter is best understood in terms of what communications theorist, Don McQuail, describes as: "[a] process of 'agenda-setting' [in which] a frame of reference for viewing the world is constructed" (McQuail 2000: 461). McQuail argues that the media play an important role in "wider opinion-forming … 'defining the situation'" to the extent of creating 'a symbolic environment' (McQuail *ibid* cites Lang and Lang, 1981). He further adds that television has "acquired a central place in daily life that dominates our 'symbolic environment'" (McQuail 2000: 464). In this way, he writes, the media act "non-purposively to support values dominant in a community or nation" (*ibid* 467). The role of the media at the opening event, Simeka communications strategist[358] emphatically stated was of necessary importance. The media had to fill in for people who were not at the event and suggest to people – locally and internationally – that 'things were happening' in Johannesburg. It is no coincidence that the bridge was to be opened by Nelson Mandela on his 85th birthday and that both the presence of Mandela and the thousands of road-race runners would contribute to a well-publicised opening day. The carefully constructed way of agenda setting[359], which could be seen as a massive publicity stunt to gain national and international attention through a series of Blue IQ projects which is about promoting the province[360].

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[358] Dominic Dempers – interview September 16 2003.

[359] A term coined by McCombs and Shaw (1972, 1993) to electioneering campaigns and later Dearing and Rogers (1996) defines it as: "[the process of] an ongoing competition among protagonists to gain attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites" (McQuail 2000:455). "It is an essential part of advocacy and attempts at influencing public opinion" (*ibid*).

[360] Then Blue IQ CEO Pradeep Maharaj who was also the Gauteng Province HOD of Finance.

A question that comes to mind is: What is the role of the media in a democratic country? As Nyamjoh (2005:23) writes: "There is still too much politics [with inadequate media] the final nail in the coffin of a characteristically narrow and undemocratic communication structure". The media's role as promoters of democracy have "[both] shaped and been shaped by political developments and debates" (*ibid*). The latter is important in taking a critical perspective on the "successful" opening of the bridge. I note with interest that marketer of the event Dominic Dempers of Simeka mention that there was a "political function" in having Mandela himself cut the ribbon on his 85th birthday. Mandela's name for the Bridge and his presence at the opening events were planned "long before the construction of the bridge started in 2001", Dempers said, and the communications consultancy, Simeka, made full use of media coverage from across the world for the birthday celebrations to further boost advertising the Bridge. Dempers said: "So we managed to take advantage of that publicity by letting everyone know that this [the opening] was part of his birthday celebrations. So we got a lot of added publicity".

The role of the media in the marketing of large-scale events such as the opening of the NMB is evident in the publicity it attracted. Also, shortly after the NMB was opened a newssheet *Jozi News* with a slogan The Star launched: 'Lets rebuild Joburg'. The newssheet was handed out free of charge to people on the inner-city street, at taxi ranks and the Johannesburg Park Station. The CEO of Blue IQ, Pradeep Maharaj wrote a weekly column on inner-city developments. In an earlier chapter I made reference to the influence of this column on the propagation of knowledge on inner-city developments. Indeed, the voice of Maharaj quickly became a quotable source amongst ordinary commuters moving into and through the inner city.

INHERENT CONTRADICTIONS

On the day the Bridge was opened many people who eke out meagre existences on the streets in and around Newtown were sidelined onlookers. It was as if these people had been sidestepped by progress. They watched as thousands of people – athletes, Nelson Mandela fans and city watchers[361] - came to the opening. There is an obvious contrast

[361] People with enthusiasm for urban change.

between people who have the leisure to travel and attend an event such as the opening of the Nelson Mandela Bridge, and those who live in the vicinity yet do not feel themselves to be part of such a momentous occasion – who are, in effect, excluded from sharing in the optimism of progress and who become onlookers only. For me, the Bridge has exposed aspects of the Johannesburg socio-cultural landscape that were never so obvious beforehand. Simply put, located where it is, it emphasises the existence of these parallel lives and the divisions between the have and the have-nots.

That day, most of the people who lived in Newtown went on with their usual daily round – collecting bits of cardboard, others hawking their sparse commodities on street corners. The storeroom for traders on that day was empty, as usual, as people went about their trading like every other day. They had left early morning, as usual, and when I spoke to the caretaker Daniel Madzivhandila at the West Street storage room, just after four in the afternoon, he said that they would be returning soon. He had been the 'watchman' over informal traders goods – supermarket trolleys, iron chests on wheels, folding tables and cauldrons - since the mid-nineties. He had started that business when traders on the streets of Johannesburg needed a place for their goods 'after-hours'. The store he 'managed' before this one – in West Street - was in the centre of the city outside the Johannesburg Post Office. He said that the Council moved the 'store-room' to West Street last year. He again did not know for how long he would be able to remain in the abandoned warehouse as, "the council is still looking to see what can be done here. I am worried; they say a man from London is doing all this. I am worried because does he know about Africa?" (Madzivhandila November 2003).

But for Madzivhandila, cashing in on the moment was equally important. Shortly after the NMB was opened he told me: "It is official now – this is the Nelson Mandela Bridge Store". He explained that he decided to use the Bridge's name now. He had waited until the opening day, and: "Now that the bridge is open, I can have the name". I did not quite know what he meant by "I can have the name now". I said to him that I suppose that he felt that the Bridge only became known as the Nelson Mandela Bridge on the day it was opened by Nelson Mandela. He said this was true in part. But actually, he added it was out of respect for "for the old man [Mandela]" that he waited until the Bridge was open.

The storeroom and the daily lives of hundreds of traders appear in stark contrast with the high-tech Bridge. The traders do not use the Bridge to wheel their homemade and basic trolleys to the places where they conduct business from – most of their business is around the Johannesburg train station and on some street corners and down alleyways like one adjacent to the Home Affairs Offices in Harrison Street.

DISSIPATED NEWS

Despite the frenetic news coverage, not everyone I spoke to felt enamoured with the Bridge. In the weeks that followed the opening, it became clear that there were strong differences of opinion. It was not that people did not recognise it as a cause for pride, a way of paying tribute to the social stature of Nelson Mandela - but questions were being asked about the purpose and meaning of the bridge, nevertheless. I found that the previous euphoria soon dissipated and in the weeks and months after the opening of the bridge, people wanted to know: "What *is* this bridge *really* about, was it *really* a 'gift to the people' of Johannesburg, *What is it?*

Informal traders in the informal taxi depot at the foot of the NMB were asking: "Where will we go to from here – we cannot afford 'being inside' [referring to the official Metro-Mall transport terminus][362]". It seemed as if once the two sides of Johannesburg were connected, the realities of people sleeping on the streets could not be ignored. These people spend their days, from early morning till late, collecting cardboard and other paper wastes from offices and shops in downtown Johannesburg and wheeling these on self-made trolleys – ingenuously constructed from the base of 'spring-mattress' beds with welded-on super-market trolley wheels and a handle-bar,

[362] Two mechanics said they have been working in the area servicing taxies for more than three years – they explained that as the construction on the bridge developed, they would move their business, until their present day spot, under a tree, next to West Street, next to the Newtown bridge off-ramp. They explained that they were self-trained but did not do enough business to 'buy space inside the Metro Mall to do their job' but that they earned enough to pay for accommodation and food. So too, Nana from Vosloorus runs a small informal 'kitchen' catering for the food needs of taxi drivers who park in an area adjacent to the formalised Metro Mall parking. She earns enough in a day to pay for her transport to and fro from Vosloorus and for the care of her children. Without this job, she says, "I'll suffer". She says that she look with pride at the bridge, but does not know with all the changes around what her future holds.

usually from a scrapped, ironing stand. The feeling of these people is: If the City Council has built this Bridge for the people, why is their future not secure?

This is the chief concern among the traders who have been in the area for years. It prompts me to wonder what Graeme Reid, the manager of the Johannesburg Development Agency, meant when he excitedly said on the opening day: "The bridge will pay for itself in seven years" and referred me to his assistant Mr Paul Arnott-Job at the JDA offices in Johannesburg. After many attempts to set up an appointment with Arnoldt-Job, and finally, having him not keep to the appointment, I spoke to assistant development manager on the Mandela Bridge project, Mrs Vijay Moodley. She said: "… the bridge will pay for itself in seven years? … That is a difficult one. Perhaps he meant road usage on that, traffic considerations and a signature bridge and the prestige of the Nelson Mandela name. I do not think the commercial viability was ever considered. Now that you mention it, it is actually something we should look at. Maybe the marketing department could fill you in"[363].

This kind of comment prompts a deeper interrogation into what seems the exaggerated significance of the NMB through the many reports in the media. What comes to mind is Marshall McLuhan's treatise on advertising, that of: *The Mechanical Bride: folklore of the industrial man* (1967). In this discussion of advertising and other forms of communication, McLuhan writes that "[people] mindlessly and automatically [contribute] to the huge technical panorama …" (*ibid* 4). He notes this is the first age in which "many thousands of the best-trained minds [massage] the collective public mind (*ibid* v). Everyday experiences dissolve into a "world of social myths" (*ibid*). He cites anthropologist C B Lewis as saying: "the folk has neither part nor lot in the making of folklore" (McLuhen 1967:v). McLuhan likens the latter to the "folklore of industrial man … from the laboratory, the studio, and the advertising agencies [to that of directing] cohesion and unity" (*ibid*). McLuhan notes that:

> The consistency is not conscious in origin or effect and seems to arise from a sort of collective dream (*ibid*).

[363] Vijay Moodley, JDA's assistant development manager on Mandela Bridge project, in JDA offices (October 2003).

I too tend to think of the NMB as part of the folklore of the inner-city's regeneration programme: "a whirling phantasmagoria [that] can be grasped only when arrested for contemplation" (cf. McLuhan 1967:v). The next section looks at post-opening responses from people who either marvel at its aesthetic appeal[364] or question it.

PUBLIC POLL

Sceptics say that the naming and structure of the bridge was a large billboard for luring business back into town, and a friend who is of this opinion, added: "it was an immensely extravagant one". He said:

> It's a massive publicity stunt – the opening day, everything. The road-race is a sure way of attracting thousands of runners. For the sake of getting business back into town, the event had to be well publicised. It had to look successful, so there had to be many people. The media look at the global picture, see all the people and capitalise on that. It did not matter to the media that the people who were there, were bussed in. As long as there was a mass of people, the event was well attended, in the media eyes, and it made a powerful story. There had to be thousands of people there for the sake of the television cameras and other journalists who were covering the event.

Another cynical point of view is expressed in *Emerging Johannesburg* (2003) where the editors writes that Johannesburg's *iGoli 2030* strategy and the Gauteng Province's Blue IQ growth strategy "[are] likely to reinforce economic, social, and spatial separation" by overlooking critical needs (Tomlinson *et al* 2003: 18). The editors write that the likelihood of a postapartheid Johannesburg, which is "[more] integrated than its apartheid predecessor", remains to be seen (Tomlinson *et al* 2003: 18). "Johannesburg has and will continue to change in significant ways. Yet, the divisions of race, class and space continue to haunt it" (Tomlinson *et al* 2003: 18).

I spoke to pedestrians who used public transport from Soweto and other outlying areas to the Metro Mall transportation terminus at the eastern edge of Newtown and then walked across the Bridge into Braamfontein. When I was on the Bridge, I noted what vehicles passed over the Bridge as an index of who was coming into the city. There were mostly taxies in the day time and in the evenings, on Sundays and public holidays, there were expensive, luxury cars and four-wheel drives, heading into

[364] A winner of the 2005 Fulton Awards, the NMB is described as: "of exceptional architectural merit and distinction … as a tribute to a great leader, our Madiba" *Concrete* Special Fulton Award edition (-concrete society website).

Newtown[365]. The Newtown precinct is obviously a destination of the moneyed and privileged in the evenings.

Some of the people I spoke to felt that the Bridge was an extravagant structure and out of place in Newtown. One man said: "It belongs in Melrose Arch". He was on his way to work over the Bridge from the Metro Mall taxi rank to Braamfontein and said: "I don't know why this bridge is here. It is *so* beautiful and, look there [he pointed towards Pim Street] all that mess. No man! This bridge needs to be in Rosebank or Sandton, or even Melrose Arch". This illustrates a perception that the Bridge is an overstatement. The man said he though the extravagant NMB did not fit into the run-down inner city. He felt unworthy of so much money spent on his mundane trip to work. I pick up his pessimism about the city and that he feels that any money spent there is wasted.

I spoke to many other people on the Bridge in the weeks that followed. Notable for their forthright opinions were students at nearby educational colleges and the Wits University. The students in their late teens and early twenties appreciated the shorter route to the Metro Mall and town but thought that the money spent was "a hellavu lot" for a what had been achieved. They seemed to have a commonsensical approach to the disproportion between ends and means. To my amazement, some did not even know it was called the Nelson Mandela Bridge and when told, they responded: "that's cool". Often when I struck an agreement with someone, they would tell me what they thought was wrong with the Bridge and the complaints would be anything from the long hot walk without shade on the Bridge to the smell of exhaust fumes. Mostly, people felt that it was ridiculous that they could not sit down on the Bridge as the guards moved them on. I discussed this with someone, who said:

> I was just moved on. I've been told it is not safe. Or perhaps, they [the guards] meant to say if I sat on the Bridge, I could be an attacker. I think that is it: The guards move people on, not because they fear that these people could become sitting ducks for criminals, but rather as they fear that loiterers could *be* potential criminals.

A group of young people studying at a Braamfontein college told me that they were excited about the Bridge. "This Bridge is our legacy … it is something to remember

[365] Newtown voted as "the best place in Joburg" (Rosebank Killarney gazette: October 2003: Leisure Options Readers Choice Awards).

Mandela by". Another student said that she did not want the bridge to become "dirty like town. We must look after it, keep it clean, for Mandela's sake. It is our heritage." On the same day two young people said that they were not here for the opening event. "We came to see the Bridge for the first time today – we saw it on television and wanted to come here in person. We came to worship the bridge as it is dedicated to Mandela. We see it as something to have even when Mandela is not here anymore. Something to reminds us of him, the kind of person he is". The two, Wandi Magubani and Lwando Jonas, said that they were disappointed that the guard had told them that they were not allowed to sit on the raised area next to the pedestrian walk. "We were told to leave", said Magubani. She said: "We are from church and came here as a couple, just to sit here and look at the city. The guard mentioned something about robbery. We do not believe we can be robbed here – this seems to be a place for the people".

They left and I walked over to the guard. He told me that there were two guards on duty on the bridge, "twenty fours. I work two day shifts and then three night shifts of 12 hours each". He said that he was there "to guard the aluminium and glass on the Bridge" and also, "people must not be robbed on the bridge. We patrol for 12 hours, we are not here to sleep, and we are here to safeguard the bridge". He had been working for the security firm Duvha for two years (since 2001) and, giving a description of what he was hired to do, he said: "When I am walking here, I am busy checking people, their hands and their feet. I am busy looking for any other action – they have to keep moving". It struck me that this Bridge that is being advertised in the media as built for the people of the city also stands in an area where it needs to be guarded day and night against theft – bits of the Bridge could be sold for cash at scrap metal dealers not far from the Bridge[366].

The guard I spoke to on the Bridge said that he was proud of "looking after the Bridge". He was on duty during the opening ceremony. "I'll never forget that day in my life", he said. He comes from the Eastern Cape and now lives in Soweto. He says: "People are proud of this bridge - there is poverty in the country, but when they see

[366] I took this up with JDA assistant manager on the Mandela Bridge project, Vijay Moodley, who said that expensive lighting on Mary Fitzgerald Square had been vandalised. In case of wanting to report vandalism, the electronic advertising board on the square now displays the JDA's telephone number.

the development in Johannesburg, they see the changes in South Africa. Others are blaming and complaining, they say they are suffering. Also some complain about the money spent on the bridge. For me it is very nice to work here. Only thing, I am unhappy, we have no guards' room. In the cold and the rain, we have to be here. No one has talked about giving us such a place. We eat like you are standing here. There are two of us [and for ablutions] we go – one only at a time - to the Metro Mall. There is a toilet there. As guards we share this bridge half-half. We do not allow people to just [be] standing still … we are afraid of robberies. You can't allow them to sit [either]. They could be robbers or if people sit the robbers can get a chance to rob them. We need people walking or running - but action must be done. Our instructions are … according to our job and site description these are the rules and regulations of our company." He said he works 21 shifts a month and earns a rate of R51 a shift.

During the 2003 September Heritage weekend, I joined an excursion arranged by the Parktown-Westcliff Heritage Trust across the Nelson Mandela Bridge into Newtown and in Braamfontein the bus stopped. The guide said the Bridge cost R85million and there were gasps of incredulity from the sightseers. He went on to say that the lights on the Bridge changed colour – "from Arbour Day green to red for Aids Day". The bus proceeded slowly across the Bridge while he informed the passengers: "This is the magnificent Mandela Bridge – and from here you see the impressive city sky-line …". I realised that the guide saw the role of the Bridge as a tool for impressing those who see it, recognising that he too could not distinguish between the bridge as manufactured image and its place in the reality of the city's poorer residents nearby. I thought: he has obviously swallowed the line put out by the imagineers of the new city.

On the Newtown side of the Bridge, he mentioned approvingly of the new developments at Brickfields housing complex and carefully avoided any comment on the human flotsam in Pim Street. I noticed people looking uneasily at this spectacle. The person sitting next to me said: "So much filth and dirt!" The guide merely continued: "This is Newtown – so named after the old *Coolie* location burnt down after thousands succumbed to bubonic plague in the early 1900s". There was some sniggering as someone on the bus remarked, "Looking at the people out there, it is surprising that another plague has not broken out".

EMBLEM AS MESSAGE

One Sunday morning, when I was walking on the Bridge, I met a student – Ariel Cohen - in development studies at the University of Witwatersand who said he was from Ethiopia and had grown up in Soweto. I asked him for his comments on the Bridge and he said: "… like the bridge in San Francisco, this is a way to put Johannesburg on the map, of course". His comment affirms the emblematic message of the Bridge and the ensuing complex narratives generated by this dramatic urban intervention when he says that he thinks that the city has had the Hillbrow Tower and the SABC (Herzog Tower) as landmarks, but that, "now it [the city] needs a new landmark. It has to move away from the Hillbrow image … it is a rotten one. It is no great symbol anymore, especially not now". With this in mind it is possible to suggest that the Bridge is no longer just a bridge but takes on another layering which is perhaps best understood in terms of what Rapoport sees as: the socio-cultural "orderings and organisations" and that these give environments their definition (1994: 488). For Rapoport, "built environments are thought before they are built" (Rapoport 1994: 488).

Cohen thought: "Mandela's name and his charisma adds stature to the bridge. It is of course about the structure and also the name, a psychological phenomenon". He said: "Mandela is being used as the pioneer in the development of Joburg". This suggests that the Mandela name of the bridge is not only a totem (Erikson 2001: 237; *ibid* cites Levi-Strauss 1963, 1966 [1962]; Radcliff-Brown 1952[1929]) for posterity but rather has further symbolic expression. This perhaps corresponds more with Radcliff-Brown's understanding of a totem as symbolic expression with an "ultimate function" to maintain society (Radcliff-Brown *ibid* 237*)*. In terms of Radcliff-Brown's reference to a totem, and as suggested by the student, the Bridge becomes an identity marker (*ibid* 237). Similarly Emile Durkheim's notes on religion with solidarity and integration expressed as "collective representations" (Eriksen 2001:211) then becomes part of this analysis of the meanings in the making of the NMB: a mixture of emotion and morality.

Cohen said: “It is about politics - with the name Mandela attached to it, the bridge could be used for the regeneration of the city”. He himself was apprehensive about what was happening in Newtown, and said: “It’s useless renovating the place with glamour if it is not the people who benefit, those who voted for the government … those in ghettos”. He added that he disapproves of the politics. “Nothing really has changed, only the faces … it is still only a few that benefit. Now it is about bringing tourists here, moneyed visitors, but it is useless not to invests in the people who put you in power”. He added that he thought the NMB was part of the “city’s many identities and many misconceptions and deceptions. It is about power, political power”.

It is interesting how varied are peoples opinions on the Bridge. Two students of architecture at University of the Witwatersrand, Mike Rayne and Beert Kuiken gave me theirs. They were out on the Bridge one morning, documenting and photographing Newtown and were especially interested in the Victorian structure, the original Park [Johannesburg] Station – just adjacent to the Bridge. I noted their responses to the Bridge. Mike Rayne said: “It’s an amazing connection for tourism. There are now new movement routes [into the city and these] change the feel and feelings about the city. It is amazing, anyway, the place [Johannesburg after the gold rush] was only meant to last 30 years. It was always just meant to be a tent-town. No-one thought that the gold would last”.

For them, the city now had to change the negative perceptions that had been part of the city narrative for more than a decade. The Bridge “lent a new perspective to the city. It is part of the Jozi-gaze … about looking at the city from a different view … a change is needed in the way in which people perceive the place”. Rayner referred to John Urry’s work on urban tourism and especially that of the tourist gaze, saying: “People need to know that you can live in South Africa, in Johannesburg”. He said that his parents[367] who live in Bryanston “fear coming to the city because of what they read in the media. So they have created enclaves for themselves in Sandton, and especially Dairnfern with a false sense of security.” The two students agreed that the

[367] His father had not been to the city for 10 years and his mother not for 20 or so. They drive around in sealed air-conditioned cars.

bridge was about "breaking perceptions". "It is about creating a Joburg folly - creating memory".

'BRIDGE IN LIMBO'

In a telephone conversation development manager at the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), Paul Arnott-Job (September 2003) said that the Bridge was giving him "many sleepless nights". He said that: "we [the JDA] did not know the media will run with the event in this way … we could not have foreseen all the media attention". He explained that "suddenly" everyone wanted to "use" the bridge. He did not elaborate as we were setting up an appointment for an interview the next week[368].

When I telephoned the Johannesburg Development Agency's marketing department (September 17th 2003) I spoke to marketing manager Elsabe Booysens who said that as far as ownership of the bridge was concerned, "the bridge is in limbo … we had hoped to hand it over [to the city]. At the moment the bridge is in limbo. We are looking at ways in which to institutionalise it"[369]. She explained:

> It is a landmark for the city … a landmark in the city. It lies with us, we built it, but it has to be handed over to the City of Johannesburg (Mandy Woods) to position it as a city icon and to decide over the branding.

The brand was a complicated issue – with the NMB built and branded, its marketing was the next step. The latter, she explained was what she meant by "institutionalising" the NMB. The brand associated with the NMB is that of Mandela – as person and as bridge builder, she explained. She said: "We need to plan what to do now to protect the bridge in the spirit of the man whose name it has. There are wider reasons – to protect it from advertising – people wanting to advertise on it. There is a high price-tag on the bridge – R45 000 a day which goes to the Newtown precinct development [to] generate an income stream". She told me that, "… it has become an icon [and] people want to use it. I want to manage it properly". She mentioned that an American

[368] Unfortunately he did not manage to keep to the appointment.
[369] The NMB has subsequently been handed over to the National Roads Agency as it has a road running over it.

filming company had been shooting a commercial for Kellogg[370]'s Cereals on the Bridge and that "the wrong people had handled the Kellogg's ad[371]".

In asking the filming company, Velocity-Africa, why they choose the Nelson Mandela Bridge, I was informed that Johannesburg "resembles some American cities". However, I was also told that the real reason for the choice of location was because it was a "cheap to hire" site and that paying the extras on set in Johannesburg was cheaper too. It was cheaper to film in South Africa than it was in America.

A public relations friend of mine, at the Gauteng government's offices, told me something else. She said: "the Mother City [Cape Town] has fallen out of favour with filmmakers [and] Joburg and Cape Town are now competing as film locations".
I spoke to filmmaker Neil van der Linde who makes films for German consumers. While he was filming an advertisement for Heinekin beer on the Bridge at midnight, he said: "The Nelson Mandela Bridge is a new toy to play with". This also seems to be an unintended but very lucrative spin-off for the city or JDA. The Bridge cost R45 000 a day to rent and filmmakers scrambling amongst themselves to use it. That night there had been two shoots there, Van der Linde said.

CITY STAGE

I was there when a Kellogg's commercial for the American market was being shot. I was intrigued to see the creation of a simulated city-scene on the Nelson Mandela Bridge and its surroundings. The city scene created for television with extras in business suits were superimposed on the real everyday events, which were obviously not real enough or everyday enough for their purposes. A troupe of extras complaining about being exhausted and how hard they had to work for their R750s a day contrasted with a man struggling to push a one-and–half metre long, red metal-chest on small super-market wheels up an embankment from the informal taxi rank

[370] I attended the shooting and spoke to extras who were paid R750 a day to run across the Nelson Mandela bridge. The Kellogg's Nutribar commercial featured a group of business people running to work.
[371] Vijay Moodley at JDA told the Agency's marketing department handled it – the one Booysens represented.

towards town. He was a cold-drink seller[372] on his way to work in Plein Street. He probably would not earn that much in a month. Like the man – David Cement - Nana from Vosloorus too is struggling to make ends meet. She runs an informal 'kitchen' - a large cardboard box with a three 'primus stoves' – and sells plates of 'pap and stew' or 'rice and chicken stew' for R12. She is up at six in the mornings and pays R13 a day for her transport. She is cheerful and says: "This life I enjoy because I am paid". She too does not know when what she sees as lucrative now and enough to provide her a sense of being self-sufficient, "dries up". I mention these ordinary stories as a way of looking at the many layers to the city. I also intend showing how the official narratives, that of the world-class city, deafens all others. This is especially obvious in the happenings at the NMB that morning.

The presence of this international film company only benefits those who are able to take advantage of their bounty but makes no difference to the struggle for existence of the cold drink seller and Nana in her informal 'kitchen'. This is the anomaly accentuated by the building of the Bridge in which self-interested international capital does not take account of the struggles of the urban poor.

As I walked away, a taxi driver asked me what was happening on the Bridge. He smiled when he heard it was a television commercial for Americans, and said: "For America, not for Madiba". He was questioning the presence of the Americans on a Bridge that was supposedly for South Africans – a legitimate enough cause for incomprehension, I suppose.

Under a tree, next to the Bridge, in the bare dust of the informal taxi rank, two men greeted each other. Gibbons Mathuthu and his cousin Sindiso Khumalo are "semi-skilled" mechanics who have been fixing taxis in the area since 2000. They said: "We can smell it is a different day today": the film crew were having breakfast. On an open piece of land – the space where Brickfields is being built – under the surveillance of three guards stood a large catering van. The fresh small of bacon and eggs wafted in the air. People – the extras in the shoot – huddled closely together.

[372] I have subsequently met up and spoken to him. He gave me his name – David Cement. For Cement, trading is: "… the only thing I know. Business is good, but they [the Metro police] say this is not what is needed here". He told me that each month he added something more to his basic stock. "I am worried. I never know when I'll be moved away" (extracts from short conversation September 2005).

These two men I were speaking to have mixed feelings about the Bridge as on the one hand it is a landmark for their business, "people now know where we are", and on the other, it is a threat. Since the construction on the Bridge started they were moved a number of times and now they feel they would be moved out of the area altogether. Khumalo said: "Since the Bridge is open, we are contemplating our future – waiting to see when the Council will close us down, and then we will not know where to go". He said that he loved "Joburg [as], if you say you come from Joburg, it means you are a person from paradise. Something from heaven. From heaven or whatever. People are proud of you". Just then a friend of theirs came by and as we were talking about the Bridge, he said: "Everybody is talking about the bridge … they talk about the bridge and him as a leader. It is about his involvement in changing people, he is a history man."

The question that one inadvertently asks is: To what extent are the changes in Johannesburg on the eve of the country's tenth year of democracy an attempt at vote-catching and to what extent is it a genuine attempt at alleviating the condition of the urban poor? In the course of my research I have seen people living in Newtown, on the streets and even under the Nelson Mandela Bridge. They scavenge in litterbins, sleep in the open on the 'stoeps' of condemned buildings, making fires on sidewalks. I have even seen people carrying water in plastic containers from the Mary Fitzgerald Square. At sunset, a group of young men arrived at the Square, and took turns to fill 10 and 20 litre plastic containers with water from the taps on the square. A security guard reminded me: "… these people are out of work. They have been living where the Bridge is now since before 2001. The place was called Rave City. When they start to build the bridge there, the people moved. Now they sleep on the street. They come to fetch water here everyday". Two weeks later when I revisited the Square another guard informed me that the taps have been shut to discourage the people from living in near-by derelict buildings.

The next Chapter attempts to draw together the many strands that make up the weft and warp of Johannesburg's complex inner city urban fabric. Throughout this research I was made aware of the many meanings attached to the presence of the NMB. Attempts to tie together these are slippery in the face of the city's evolving narratives,

those concerned with its remaking. This research reveals an inter-connective relation between power and culture (cf. Tsing 1993; also Ferguson & Gupta 1999). The latter relation is evident in the meanings of the NMB through the institutionalisation of its symbolic importance: a structure that commemorated the spanning of a socio-political divide and implied notions of the nation in transition. However, this research delves into the underside of the latter as seen in the contrasting everyday circumstances that befell ordinary people who live meagrely in the inner city.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Concluding thoughts

CONNECTING THREADS

> … the establishment of spatial meaning – the making of spaces into places – is always implicated in hegemonic configurations of power
>
> – Ferguson & Gupta 1997:8

This anthropological inquiry views the meanings in the making of the NMB as emphasising the significant relationship between the built environment and peoples' experiences of it.[373] The latter includes the effects of urban formations on peoples' senses of belonging and identity. The context is Johannesburg's position as economic hub of South Africa; an evolving space that simultaneously deals with the implementation of relatively recent socio-political and democratic ideals as with the demands of a globally competitive world. This research however highlights a clash between peoples' recent socio-political emancipation and now their everyday socio-economic entrapment in the city's elitist striving for world-class recognition. What emerges is a clash between elitist aspirations and ordinary expectation on Johannesburg's inner-city streets with the NMB spearheading the change.

The Johannesburg inner city's regeneration programme is considerably the product of the media's role as the aid and abettor of urban imagineers (see also Pieterse 2005:139 citing Robinson 2002). The media's promotion of the inner city's rejuvenation as a re-imagined world-class urban space also develops mainstream ideas of what life in a world-class city means. I agree with Edgar Pieterse (2005:139) on the latter by noting that the world-class city implies that the city will be "competitive and globally integrated at any cost" (2005:139). In the context of the Johannesburg's inner city reconstruction, neo-liberal democratic processes are unleashed through "privatisation and corporatization" (cf. Pieterse 2005:139; also McDonald 2002a). This research pinpoints the latter's involvement in Johannesburg's post-1994 reconstruction to the extent of this space becoming one that reminds and commemorates at the same time as promoting new encounters: encounters more of and in the world than of the place (the city) itself. An especially contentious situation arises with ordinary peoples' everyday experiences in and of the city, their everyday rights to the city, contested.

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[373] Plans to revitalise "or 'save'" the inner city of Johannesburg from 'decay' has been ongoing (cf. Beavon 2004:267). These peaked with then vice-president Thabo Mbeki's announcement of the Johannesburg *Mayivuke* ('Johannesburg Awake') plan in July 1997.

Twin questions arise: Whose city? A city for whom? The backdrop for the latter is the city as stark reminder: "an unequal city" (Beall *et al* 2002:7; see also Simone 2004).

This research that looks at Johannesburg's inner city's regeneration foregrounds the NMB as the primary motif in the recasting of this urban space for world-class interactions. The presence of the NMB also exposes the relation between liberal democratic ideals and peoples' ordinary expectations. Contained in the latter is the impact of globalisation and that of consumption and its relation to everyday experiences in the city. I contend that decisions made on the regeneration of Johannesburg's inner city, especially that of the construction of the NMB, follow a socio-economic trajectory that emphasises world-class aspirations over a majority of peoples' ordinary expectations – a model *in* and *of* the world. Highlighted in this research are the challenges within the latter and especially those of balancing socio-political democratic ideals with top-down decision-making. The latter processes are rooted in neo-liberal notions of economic liberation and empowerment to the detriment of the majority of the population. In support of the latter, I must defer to Naomi Klein's critical perspective (2002:47) on this kind of neo-liberalism democratic model for economic sustainability, that of economic empowerment for all through the 'trickle-down' affect. Klein writes:

> [The] the trickle-down democracy argument [is a] dishonour [to] all the people who fought, and still fight, for genuine democratic change…. Democracy isn't the work of the market's invisible hand; it is the work of real hands (*ibid*).

With respect to Abdoumaliq Simone's (2005:1) observations on cities in Africa, I include Johannesburg among the "laboratories of change [in] a period of economic and political crises". These observations mentioned here by Simone (2005:1) and Klein (2002:47) underpin my own analysis of Johannesburg's rising socio-economic disparities: a city made visible in the processes that drive the city's urban regeneration. Concerns are an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in the city and which characterise and demarcates experiences in Johannesburg's inner city. What appears is an urban space made-up of ordinary everyday encounters experienced in walking on the streets of the inner city and talking to people and others that resonate with the city as imagined space. For Simone (2005:1) Johannesburg's inner city today is a space in which everyday "livelihoods" are brought face-to-face with a global economic onslaught, which he writes:

> [fails] to valorise urban Africa's own agency, its own constructive powers (*ibid* 1).

The remaking of Johannesburg's inner city therefore has at its disposal the elements that drive an elitist form of spatial re-organisation, a space that develops specific albeit arbitrary ideals, to ultimately promote the inner city under the ubiquitous label of being world-class. Paradoxically the latter implies the inclusion of all at the same time as creating spaces of exclusion. This research into the significance of the NMB views the inner city of Johannesburg's rejuvenation through the establishment of an emblem, that of the NMB, as inner-city icon and as catalyst for world-class aspirations. The NMB's presence juxtaposes the elitist aspirations associated with change with the ordinary expectations of peoples living and trading in the inner city. The latter is especially contentious in terms of the country's recent history and socio-political landscape. A question that repeats itself throughout this research is: What happens now? Who benefits now?

Ferguson and Gupta (1997:8) argue that the meanings of spaces are linked to constellations of power and hegemony (ibid). In this sense, from the start of apartheid planning to contemporary inner city restructuring, peoples' experiences in Johannesburg are produced through processes of territorialisation (cf. Caftanzoglou 2001:24)[374]. The processes that define urban space are the result of significant and powerful decision-making (cf. Ferguson &Gupta 1997).

As anchor for the development of the previously disused Newtown, the NMB directs emerging narratives especially those centring on urban managers' grand ideals, such as: Johannesburg's world-class city status[375]. The research views "complicated [notions] of 'locality' and 'community'" (Ferguson & Gupta 1997:7 cf. Mallki) and especially that of peoples' "mobility" and senses of "displacement" in the inner city. For Ferguson and Gupta (1997:7) the latter notions of mobility and subsequently also that of displacement or belonging are:

> … inevitably constituted by a wider set of social and spatial relations

[374] Geographer Keith Beavon (2004:278) writes about "geographical imprint racism had created and left on the cityscape of Johannesburg" and the effects of such on peoples' lives.
[375] CEO of the Johannesburg Development Agency Graeme Reid describes the NMB as an important "north-south" link that is also "a symbol for the whole of Johannesburg in terms of aspirations as a world-class African city" (cf. *Mail & Guardian* July 18-24 2003:10).

The NMB's grand symbolism is reflected against the backdrop of a changing socio-cultural and political urbanscape but not to the exclusion of growing socio-economic uncertainties in the face of grand-scale urban planning models and the attendant worldwide trends in real estate development. The latter is somewhat similar to the greed that marked of the city's early origins (cf. Beacon 2004:xvii). Today the NMB, as gateway into the heart of the city, is part of the inner city's economic reconstruction as well as emerging contestations around housing and unemployment override issues that benefit 'all' (cf. Emdon 2003).

The changing character of the inner city as motivated by public-private investments[376] is part of a critical juncture in the history of the city of which the NMB is *the* regeneration emblem[377]. The context for the latter is decisions in 2002 by the Centre for development and Enterprise (CDE) and proposals that the Council alone could not 'rescue' the inner city from decay. A national partnership was proposed "[with] a coalition of interests and including three senior cabinet ministers, the president's economic advisor, the provincial premier, the executive mayor, two newspaper editors, two trade union leaders, two heads of tertiary education institutions, and the governor (or deputy) of the Reserve Bank" (cf. Beavon 2004:274 from CDE policy report: *Johannesburg Africa's World City* 2002).

It was only in the weeks after the opening of the Bridge, and standing in Newtown, looking up at the Bridge, that I felt none of the euphoria of the opening day. I kept on speaking to people, asking them what they are thinking, and I noticed that even though people still have a sense of pride when they look at the Bridge, they mostly told me about their hardship. Living in the city is not easy, they say. It is expensive and there are not many 'jobs' and they find it hard to find accommodation. I realise, thinking about the wonderful day when the Bridge was officially opened, when most of the people I spoke to did not actually come from Johannesburg – they did not live in the city and had no intention of doing so (refer to Chapter 4). They had come from elsewhere, for that day only, and many were bussed in. It appeared to me just how

[376] In 2002 *Joburg 2030* was announced and shortly afterwards a "private sector think-tank", the Centre for Development and Enterprise [CDE] brought out a document for Johannesburg as "Africa's World City" (Beavon 2004:270).
[377] Johannesburg Tourism Agency has adopted the Bridge as its logo.

artificial the thronging mass was; how it was a carefully contrived public relations exercise - confirmed in the interview with Dominic Dempers of Simeka (Chapter 3).

The city today emerges in line with cities across the world and especially in as far as inner city developments reflect grand-scale urban planning and imperialism to market, in the case of Johannesburg, the city to potential investors across the world. In terms of such thinking, I find relevant here what Christine Boyer detects as the positioning of cities both locally and globally as a space offered "for sale" (cf. Boyer 1992) and the effects of such global competitiveness on local groupings in Johannesburg's inner-city. Such commercialism is, of course, often a matter of superficial gloss. The research has been based on observations and data gathered from conversations with people on the streets around the NMB and also from the way in which news media promoted inner-city developments – it too remains only an act of skimming of surfaces. The key questions, however, remain: A city, for whom? And in terms of the marketing of the NMB, who is the audience?

Throughout this research, the "power of imagineering" (cf. Moore 1999:14) becomes evident in the ways in which the city managers, developers, architects and engineers – a cadre of specialists and their imagery ideals for the city - incorporate local and national identity into "a generic space …" (cf. Moore 1999:37). Rowan Moore regards the latter processes as "[the setting up of] cultural institutions to adorn their cities" (cf. Moore 1999:37). In this sense, the creation of "substitute [cities]" (*ibid*) is part of these processes and in Johannesburg such processes underlie the meanings of the NMB. This is part of the project's well-advertised presence as catalyst for the inner-city's regeneration. The NMB is now a destination on a tourist map.

This anthropological enquiry however points to the underside of the making of a homogenous and contrived city. It points to the simplification of the city's urban complexity and a failure to represent the city's diversity (see also Moore 1999:37). The argument that develops is that the city appears as a backdrop for the aspirations of people in power to achieve a single recognition only, that of world-class inclusion. The latter denies the complexities of the inner city's urban politics (see also Simone 2005: 24). By way of illustration, I reiterate questions posed by Simone (2005: 24) on

the official strategies employed to achieve global acceptance and the ordinary aspirations of people amidst such grand-scale planning. Simone (2005: 24) asks:

> What happens within the domain of the city itself that allows urban actors, often highly rooted in specific places and ascription, to operate outside these confines? How are apparent realities of social coherence and cohesion maintained while opportunities, which would apparently demand behaviours and attitudes antithetical to the sustainability of such cohesion, are pursued?

I ask these questions to illustrate the importance for critical perspectives on urban regeneration programmes in cities in South Africa now, taking into the country's divisive urban landscape in terms of space, place, property and mobility.

MEDIATED DEMOCRACY

A mediated democracy and where to now? What are the effects of intensified processes of globalisation propagated in the public domain by the media – which eventually take the form of official narratives that connect democracy to economic development? (cf. Nyamjoh (2005:18). These critical questions pertain to the scale of Johannesburg's inner-city regeneration project especially through the construction of the NMB and that of its well-advertised and mediated meanings as a metaphysically crossing of a major chasm. This kind of hyper-realism (cf. Best & Kellner 1991: 119 cite Jean Baudrillard)[378] that contributes to positioning the NMB in the inner-city necessarily also leads to the making of "an ageographical [space]" (cf. Sorkin1992 xi). The NMB marks what Horkheimer & Adorno (1972:xiv in Best & Kellner 1991:217) refer to as the consequence of "social progress" in which:

> The individual is wholly devalued in reaction to the economic powers, which at the same time press the control of society over nature to hitherto unexpected heights (*ibid*).

These forms of "organised capitalism" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:217 cite Hilferding) propagated through mass-disseminated media messages are also part of what Michael Sorkin detects as the role that the media play in setting up "cultural tropes [that include those of a] Fantasyland, Frontierland, Tomorrow Land" (Sorkin 1992:217). For Sorkin (1992:217) these spaces have little or no reference to the place itself. The

[378] For Baudrillard 'hyper' in 'hyper-real' signifies "more real than real [and] produced according to a model" (cf. Best and Kellner 1991:119). For Baudrillard "the real vanishes altogether in a haze of images and signs…" (*ibid* 122). I am interested in Baudrillard's semiotic theories on signs and images as "mechanisms of control within contemporary culture" and the production of what he calls Disneyfied experiences (*ibid* 123).

NMB project too forms part of the inner-city's narrow and themed urban regeneration agenda (see also Sorkin 1992:217 references to 'themeparks'): a fabrication based on the city's past social and geographical injustices to promote the city as a global entity. Critical to this kind of analysis is the position of ordinary peoples' pursuit of democratic rights and especially "the effort to reclaim the city is the struggle of democracy itself" (cf. Sorkin 1992:xv). What then emerges is the need for the reassessment of the media and especially to promote a critical assessment of the latter in terms of achieving the gaols of participatory democracy (cf. Nyamjoh 2005:2). Nyamjoh (2005:2) writes:

> [There is] a need for more domesticated understandings of democracy as mediated by the quest for conviviality between individual and community interests …

The effect of liberal democratic rhetoric (Nyamjoh 2005:20) and especially the latter's partnership with multinational capital finds embodiment in a yet uncompleted struggle for democracy (cf. Nyamjoh 2005:20 citing Abrahamsen 2000). This is then especially evident in this research where a tension between official narratives and ordinary experiences in Johannesburg's inner city as highlighted by the inner city regeneration project and especially that of the presence of the NMB.

Tracing the meanings of the project is a complex process tied to the evolving inner city[379] as a "radical" space that offers only one alternative – the official one (cf. Pieterse 2005:160). Of importance here are implied assumptions on the nature of cultural identities and practices "[as] constitutively porous, relational and marked by dissensus within some aspiration for consensus" (Pieterse 2005:161). The context for the unravelling of the meanings in the making of the NMB, I argue, lies in modes of political agency that affects urban politics. The context of the NMB in a reorganised Johannesburg inner city is that of a newly imagined, albeit generic form of 'city-ness'. This then also is an illustration of the "the short-comings of liberal democracy [as aided by the media]" (cf. Nyamjoh 2005:22). Nyamjoh writes:

> [the media are] too parochial for Africa's sociality, negotiability, conviviality and dynamic sense of community … a democracy [that needs to refuse] to celebrate success until the success is sufficiently inclusive" (2005:22).

[379] The research itself has been complicated by exactly the continuously shifting nature of the city – the widely publicised product of image brokers especially that of the city's 'branding' as a destination that contrasts with ordinary lives.

This research has pinpointed the experiences of ordinary people in Johannesburg's changing inner city as well as their uncertain futures in the face of official narratives in the media that support an urban rejuvenation programme of world-class nature. Inevitably the schism between the have and the 'have-nots' are exacerbated by inner-city managers' emphasis on regeneration programmes like the construction of the NMB, a catalyst intended to reverse urban decay. I am cynical about the use of regeneration agendas as referred to by Pieterse (2005:164) as:

> Reconstructing the past through symbolic political gestures of memorialization is indispensable to demonstrate the interdependencies of groups and the historically constructed nature of boundaries and identities in the city.

Between the actions of people in power that imagine urban spaces and a portrayal of the latter in the media, there are forms of "cultural industries" specifically developing from "[a] routinisation, standardisation and homogenisation of media content" (cf. Nyamnjoh 2005:2). These 'industries' link to what anthropologist Johannes Fabian (2004) sees as the acts of memory making and also that of counter-memory making as part of "a ['power'] politics of memory [to] fix memory and use memory for its purposes" (Fabian 2004:3). The meanings of the NMB arise from a blurring of distinctions between "collective memory [as that which is a] bounded and closed territory" (Fabian 2004:3) and public memory's preserved state that "announces itself to an outside arena [at the same time as 'documenting'] itself" (Fabian 2004:8).

The NMB is part of meaning-making processes that involve the making of memory from a collective to that of public memory (cf. Fabian 2004:3). The NMB as "condensed" memory image (cf. Fabian 2004:7) implies that: "… behind a well-ordered culture of memory there may lurk a 'culture of amnesia'" (Fabian 2004:9). The processes of meaning-making that surround the presence of the NMB in the inner city involves the recasting of specific and selected memories. For Fabian such processes are:

> [the making of counter-memory as] an indisputable necessity for South Africa and other African nation states who may not want to forget their past but cannot do with out (Fabian 2004 10)

The inscribed meanings of the NMB are directly connected to the ideals of the urban imagineers to not only project a future geographical landscape of the inner-city but to forge a particular politics of belonging (cf. Fabian 2004:10). Such belonging resonates

with what Jane Rendell who, in 'Imagination is the root of all change' refers to the "powerful metaphoric role bridges play" (2002:36). Rendell writes:

> Bridges resemble a certain kind of psychological state, they speak of meeting and separations between people. They are physic architecture – encounters in built form (*ibid*).

Rendell depicts the feeling of standing or being in the middle of a bridge as: "… [placing] us like angles in-between, offering us a moment for contemplation and self-reflection" (Rendell 2002:36). The power of bridges for Rendell "… intensify the feeling of 'being in the moment', that brief instance of unpredictability, when we are still undecided what will happen next … [the] moment before history moves in to tie up all the loose ends, when all kinds of futures are still possible" (Rendell 2002:37).

This is also true of the official agenda for the inner-city of Johannesburg's agenda: a space suspended by the ambiguities of post-industrial urban planning in its capitalist-rich settings and a new urbanism trends to disregard public ownership of land. The arbitrariness of official urban planning and decision-making processes through Johannesburg's inner-city urban regeneration mascot, the Nelson Mandela Bridge (NMB) is complicated by the project's slogan: '*we* are putting billions into *your* future' (italics added by the researcher)[380]. Of importance here is how latter-day planning by officials of urban environments loose sight of actual communities in favour of ones that fit a marketing model (cf. Ross 1999:238).

Lewis Lapham in *Money and Class in America – notes on the new civil religion* (1988)1989 writes about the "illusions of meaning [in a moneyed world]" (Lapham (1988)1989:211) and deplores the "playing of charades" (*ibid*). The organisation of space in contemporary cities, he writes:

> [has become] a task of the imagination. It has less to do with economics than it does with metaphor, less to do with the making of laws than with the making of words that allow men to see their immortality, not in their monuments or their weapons, but in their children (*ibid* 303).

Deploring the "value" attached to money, that as "votive ritual and pagan ornament" (Lapham (1988) 1989:304), Lapham writes that the capitalist system and money is: [an] attack on self, on culture, on country, on time past and time future … [a deprived state of] our confinement in a gilded cage" (Lapham (1988) 1989:304). The

[380] This banner has been updated from 'On the road to economic recovery' to the latest: 'innovative economic thinking' (February 2005).

significance of quoting Lapham here is to highlight what I too see as the building of the NMB akin to those "sterile monuments dedicated to the majesty of wealth … " (cf. Lapham (1988) 1989:304).

I too denounce models based on urban gentrification in favour of what editors Viveca Berntsson & Mirja Ranesköld (eds.2004) describe as "holistic and sustainable planning" (*ibid* 2004:7). This, for me, resonates with Tim Ingold's notion of a much-needed 'dwelling perspective' in urban development programmes. Berntsson & Ranesköld suggest that the town or city itself is "[the] starting point [in planning, that is] the people who live in it and are present there" (*ibid* 2004:21). Essentially this means a plan that allows all citizens to participate (*ibid* 2004:21-22). To me the implementation of a gentrification model as a first step in planning appears shortsighted and in disregard of what I see as general sustainability in the city.

The city as a contemporary imagined space is but of the moment. In the terms of Christine Boyer, it is "a bracketed [one]" promoted by manoeuvres in real estate speculation in which cities literally are offered "for sale" (Boyer 1992: 180-204). Such speculation happens at the expense of the ordinary expectations of the masses on the extreme edges of possible ripple or trickle-down benefits from real estate trading in urban space.

Strategies to enhance the marketability of cities through processes produced by "a proliferation of fiction and simulation" (Boyer 1992:187) that is now also part of Johannesburg's reconstruction and especially that of the construction of the NMB. This analysis of the meanings of the NMB is revealed in the role of the "image spectacle" used to frame Johannesburg's urban reality (Boyer 1992:187). At the same time contradictory elements of Johannesburg's urban reality are revealed. This analysis has therefore sought to critically evaluate the more narrow representations of the urban imagineers working through the city as imaginary space (cf. Herzog 1999:7). It has also looked at what architectural critic Rowan Moore (1999:12) refers to as the role of the imagineer to "[create] fantasy landscapes", that of:

> [The city and its buildings/structures are] as subject to change, and as amenable to carrying changing images, as a television set … [occupying] the territory that architecture holds most dear, making spaces and determining their quality (Moore 1999:12)

The meanings of the NMB project are contained in the urban imagineers' official marketing of the project, that is: the official processes that appear to overshadow everyday expectations of ordinary people in the inner-city in producing a space of world-class attraction with exclusive local and global participation. The implications of the latter are reflected in the city's changing dynamics and especially in the clash between the grand ideals and the ordinary expectations of people in the inner city. A critical perspective is thus taken of the meanings of the NMB project in terms of its references to citiness and especially the latter's global context as driven by popular architectural expression: New Urbanism.

I refer specifically to what Joseph Rykwert sees as new urbanism's "urgent works" with financiers and local officials (cf. 2000 241) in the re-development of other inner cities. I am concerned about the underside of such a project as that which is manifest in the uncertain futures of ordinary people in Johannesburg's urban centre. I therefore support projects that complement progressive urban planning models like those in Johannesburg, but also urge for "[the involvement of] all citizens in the city … as a continuous project, in the modelling and changing of its fabric" (Rykwert 2000:242). The latter refers to what Edward Soja (2002:406) regards as: "a progressive cultural politics of place" and specifically that of a right to the city. Of vital importance, I suggest is the continuation of Henri Lefebvre's project: *le driot à ville*. This then refers to the re-empowerment of civil society (Soja 2002:409). The latter is also a counter-measure to the meanings of the NMB project as a product of "hyper-realisation" which, for Edward Soja (2002:406) has:

> … relative little effect on the vast majority of the population.

The media's promotion of NMB as catalyst for the inner city's regeneration reveals the part the media plays in negotiating spaces for public participation (cf. Nyamjoh 2005:3). The media contribute to inscribing specific messages for particular socio-economic realities (cf. Nyamjoh 2005:3). The latter is part of what Nyamjoh sees as a politics of belonging promoted by democracy and carried forth by the media (Nyamjoh 2005:3). In Johannesburg the NMB drives the inner city's programme for economic development through the media as a liberal democratic project in the interests of all. The media facilitates in the democratisation and the making of cultural identities within this larger framework of democracy (Nyamjoh 2005:3). The NMB as

a public project is part of a wider neo-liberal democratic agenda that is promotes total inclusiveness - but through a masked 'trickle-down' process.

MANUFACTURED SUBJECTIVITIES

Johannes Fabian's (2004) notes that in memory-making processes counter-memory agendas develop and that these are part of memory and constitutive of culture (cf. Fabian 2004:5). The processes Fabian describes are about "taking-in, appropriating, concentrating or seeking a centre" from where to start imagining a future based on the past in the present (cf.Fabian 2004:5). The meanings of the NMB too relate broadly to the mass media's "manufactured subjectivities" (cf. Stallabras 1996:185); meanings that are part of "[a] commodity culture … bound by rigid exclusions" (cf. Stallabras 1996:185). The NMB's meanings are contained in a commodified, public culture package which, in commemorating the past, is repackaged together with capitalism to produces states of belonging and identity in line with mass-mediated capitalist thinking (Stallabras 1996:185; see also Nyamnjoh 2005).

The NMB forms part of peoples' everyday experiences whether on the edges or in the centre of grand-scale planning - but mostly because of the development of patterns of exclusion (cf. Stallabras 1996:185; Nyamjoh 2005). The NMB is as much a product of official narratives as developing senses of belonging associated with capitalism and the mass media's "power … to mystify the masses" (cf. Stallabras 1996:230 cites Baudrillard). The NMB forms part of urban elites and powerful commercial institution formulation/manufacturing of identities within "[a] hypertrophic commerce [structure within the] official culture of capital" (Stallabras 1996:231).

Outside the realm of the everyday, the official meanings of the NMB derive from an overlapping of the city's grand local and global policies for economic development and the prosperity of the city. Its name and extravagant structure draws attention to the inner-city, referencing the city's complicated past; the intricate Apartheid urban narratives, the socio-political and cultural and racial exclusions, all of which seem to be included in the promotion of the inner-city for economic prosperity through the construction of the NMB and especially in line with associations attached to the name of Nelson Mandela as national bridge builder. In the process of re-casting the city, its

contentious past makes way for local and global spectatorship and the promotion of elitist economic participation; a triumph over the growing uncertainties over a place in the future city for a majority of its inhabitants who are poor. The NMB is therefore part of emerging inner city narratives based on recasting senses of belonging rooted especially through the commonplace associations with the name Nelson Mandela. The latter functions on various levels as the ideals for a changed and better life for all falls short of providing for a struggling poor majority's on the inner-city streets.

A reformulation of patterns of movement in Johannesburg's inner-city through the presence of the NMB produces specific urban narratives that frame new identities and demarcate new associations or notions of belonging (cf. Stallabras 1996; cf. Nyamjoh 2005). These processes are complicated as the majority of the inner-city's inhabitants are poor and struggle to shake off the cumulative impact of the injustices of Apartheid. The meanings of the NMB through the official narratives appear to ignore the majority demands of peoples who came to live in this formerly industrialised then urban wasteland and now face escalating uncertainties over their future as manoeuvres in real estate development dictate.

The NMB's construction provides a specific entry point to the city as a well-advertised 'gate-way' into an imagined world-class African city. The presence of the NMB in a former inner-city wasteland as product of formulaic processes used elsewhere in the western world now symbolises the re-imagining of this urban space for the development of commercial interests and tourism (cf. Hatton 1999:88). Using 'imagined' here denotes that the work of the urban planners on their drawing boards alone cannot contain actual everyday experiences in the city. Stallabras (1996) cites George Lukás on the fluidity of identity what he sees as:

> [identity as] constantly remade for us, and presented to us as a natural, exterior force ['intensified'] because of economic competition' (Stallabras 1996:9)

In Johannesburg's inner-city around Newtown where the NMB now stands, the arguments put forward by Stallabras's on how "the very poor [are] subject to the culture of the rich" (Stallabras 1996:9) also surface. These are complex and further complicated by Johannesburg's inner-city regeneration slogan: "we're putting millions in your future." Here, the use of 'we' and 'us' appears to be more about

binding people together than to favour all. It is worthwhile noting that a city's "personality and changing moods [are the products of the] invisible hand(s) that write the urban text" (Rutheiser 1996:10). The scripting of urban texts by people in power that are disseminated by the media (Rutheiser 1996:10) are the "mediated images" that:

> [inform an] observer [of] the 'pattern languages' employed by planners and urban designers [who kowtow to] market forces (1996:10)

The NMB's official marketing and positioning in the inner city directs national and transnational interest in the Bridge as a "fabricated artefact" (cf. Sudjic 1999: 160).[381] As a symbol for the city's regeneration, the NMB subsequently acts as a conveyor of meanings to tempt the moneyed into the inner city. Ironically such elaborate an attempt disregards the existence of poorer people living there. The NMB is an artificial adjunct in the inner city to stimulate smart economic growth that is beyond the needs of the city's ordinary inhabitants. The city today is a bustling pavement-trading metropolis - activities on the pavement range from butcheries/eateries, sweet and shoelace sellers, fruit and vegetable sellers, drug dealers to hawkers of stolen watches and jewellery.

BRIDGE AS URBAN SCULPTURE

Robert Rotenberg (2001) notes that there is "a complex relationship between the city as place and [that of] imaginary" (Rotenberg 2001:7). This relationship also underlies the significance of the NMB. For Rotenberg (2001:7) the latter is contained in what he sees as: "[a] bourgeois metropolitanism [that] distorts our construct of the urban" (*ibid*). The NMB adds it's exaggerated, three dimensional, functional and sculptural qualities to the inner city – through its physical and symbolic location in the inner city. The NMB imaginary dimensions contribute to what Margaret Crawford (1992) sees as the commodity value of contemporary cities. Crawford (1992) writes that cities are able to package their local culture for global consumption. In Johannesburg the city's re-scripted text promotes the NMB as gateway into its centre: a space packaged for consumption rather than providing place for everyday living.

[381] Deyan Sudjic (1999:160) writes on the significance of London's Millennium Dome in terms of defining national identity.

The NMB in the inner city is part of an overall strategy to tidy up, align and market the city in a way that Crawford describes as: resembling a shopping mall (cf. Margaret Crawford: 1992:6). The latter is also part of what Michael Sorkin (1992) sees as an "elaborate apparatus" to create at the same time as "obliterating" city life (1992:xiv). The NMB too is part of the redesign of Johannesburg inner city, a space

> preoccupied with reproduction, with the creation of urbane disguises [to reduce the city to the status of a] theme park (Sorkin 1992:xiv).

The positioning of the NMB in the inner-city and the processes that drive the making of *new* urban experiences are reminiscent of what Disney imagineer James Rouse said: "Profit ['hauls'] dreams into focus" (Crawford 1992:11). Johannesburg's *newly* imagined and scripted context with the NMB at its centre is a veneer based on the vision to promote the city in a way "designed explicitly for escape and gratification" (cf. Boyer 1992:192). The NMB provides a backdrop for what Boyer's (1992:192) calls the "contemporary spectator" whose presence in a privatised public space "[is] increasingly manipulated by stage sets and the city tableaux … " (Boyer 1992:204). The NMB's sculptural form is part of the city's scripted urban agenda – a series of messages more than facilitating the flow of traffic. The NMB's presence is part of a current process in cities which for Christine Boyer (1992):

> immobilize our attention in the act of 'just looking'" (Boyer 1992:192).

The promotion of Johannesburg as a world-class city appears to be a ruse to draw attention away from the fact that all citizens' needs are not being considered. Such a catch-all strategy absorbs rather than deals with pressing social and economic issues. The meanings of the NMB project lie in its making through the marketing of official narratives that ignore the expectations of ordinary people in the inner-city. Yet striving after world-class status is an illusory concept that:

> [has] relative little effect on the vast majority of the population (cf. Soya 2002: 406).

This ethnographic research has therefore offered a critical perspective on the inner city's restructuring by highlighting certain side issues related primarily to the employment of a development structure oriented towards the New Urbanism. A key concern here has been what Edward Soja (2002:406) detects as peoples' rights to the city (see Simone 2004; Pieterse 2005: 158). Such concern resides in the one-dimensional character of becoming 'world-class' and/or 'globally competitive' space (cf. Robinson 2002 in Pieterse 2005:158). Pieterse sees the collapse of the public

sphere and civil society to the extent of "effectively asphyxiating citizenship" (Pieterse 2005:162). For Naomi Klein today's neo-liberalist responses to globalisation, the manipulation of world economies, is none other than "a cookie-cutter free trade program" (Klein 2002: 108).

The construction of the NMB, the project's arbitrary inception, its branding and official marketing, reflect the elitist aspirations of the urban developers to promote the inner-city beyond the local interests and concerns into a national and international arena. The NMB is a product of specific inner-city manoeuvres, the expressions of the urban imagineers and the canvases on which they draw the city as imaginary space (cf. Herzog 1999:7). The city and the nation as imaginary entities (cf. Anderson 1983; also Herzog 1999) also are drawn into a competitive global arena with the city as tradable commodity – its use value lies in what it has to offer.

Renewal projects bring about transformations in cities of economic, social and cultural and symbolic dimensions (cf. Källtrop 1998: 389). The decision-making processes are ways of exerting power, forms of agenda control with ideological influence (cf. Källtrop 1998: 390). Much has been published about cities both in transformation and transformation in cities (cf. Källtrop *et al* eds. 1998; also Källtrop 1998). The NMB too is part of the promotion of particular urban experiences through what urban sociologist Sharon Zukin (1997) sees as the remaking of public space through cultural strategies in the planning with the use "the power of visual symbols" (Zukin 1997:205). 'Upscale' built environment sports 'images' that counts (Zukin 1997:205); "words call places into being" (cf. Herzfield 1997:29). Herzfield (1997) and Zukin (1997) note that for spaces to develop into places patterns of identity formation happens (see also Raban 1975). Zukin (1997:205) notes that in New York "[the] aestheticizing of the city [happens through] cultural attractions [that are] safer, cleaner, more 'interesting' … " (Zukin 1997:205). The meaning of public space has become "more restrictive-privatised in use, although not in law" (Zukin 1997:206). Zukin (1997:206) writes:

> [New York has] willing disciples of Disneyfication and Sonyconstruction, handing over important public spaces to the control of private business groups and culture industries

With the construction of the NMB in Johannesburg's inner-city the city's historically divided socio-political make-up again surfaces: on the one side with the hope of bridging past disparities and, on the other, emerging complexities. The latter are similar to what Zukin (1997:207) sees as socio-economic complexities in the making of "an instant 'identity'" and especially through public-private partnerships in urban redevelopment (cf. Zukin *ibid*). The latter is tied into developments that spearhead tourism (cf. Zukin *ibid*) and "[provide] quality of life [through] cultural strategies [with a] focus on visual images …" (Zukin *ibid*). Johannesburg's re-development of the inner-city with the construction of the NMB also reveals an underside similar to what Zukin (1997:215) detects in New York, that of:

> [a city where] street peddlers are judged to be nuisances because they are *aesthetically* offensive. They contradict a desired image of civility that is deemed necessary to attract cultural consumption

Zukin's research importantly suggests that in the making of the NMB there is a politics of cultural representation that intertwines with economic interests (cf. Zukin 1997:216). A "claiming" of public space or "the identity of the street" (Zukin 1997:216) Zukin writes is determined by these public-private partnerships. The NMB's presence is important too in terms of its construction redefines the parameters of what was once the inner city. In this research I include the NMB within a larger 'cultural arch' (promoted by a range of local community agents) that stretches from Newtown to Constitution Hill at the top of Braamfontein and even borders the decaying suburb of Hillbrow. In reference to this formation, I agree with Zukin, who emphasizes the prospect of culture that is used to connect urban space and also validate the building of structure (Zukin 1997).

The parameters of the city have been artificially stretched with the presence of the NMB. Newtown was not always part of the inner city but has become so through specific socio-political developments (cf. Czeglédy 2005). In a recent article 'Looking at Downtown in the Post-Apartheid City: Urban Cores at the Margins in South Africa' Czeglédy (2005:1) describes how "the power of social imagination … [has brought about] shifts [in the inner-city's urban core]". In parallel with my own analysis, such an observation emphasizes how artificially imposed social demarcations are indeed the products of those in power. Sadly such power relations ignore the ordinary citizen's desire for civility and especially the promotion of urban cultures that are the

essential ingredients of the public sphere itself (cf. Zukin 1997: 217; Best & Kellner 1991: 234 cites Habermas). In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* 1989[1962] Jürgen Habermas detects the rise of "[a] bourgeois public sphere" (Best & Kellner 1991: 234 cites Habermas) dominated by:

> …giant corporations [who] enter the public sphere and transform individuals from citizens and discussants of political and cultural events to culture-consuming spectators of political and media spectacles (Best and Kellner 1994: 235-236)

Habermas's views are a "replication" of the Frankfurt School's analyses of an entrapment of the public sphere through "[a rise of] private corporations [and the] tremendous power [these assume]" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:236). These findings also explain Johannesburg's inner city's reorganisation. In order to understand how the urban built form influences the making of urban experiences one must take note of the role of that "experts and specialists" play (cf. Best and Kellner 1991: 237 citing Habermas 1989[1962]). It is the expert and specialist efforts that lead to:

> the colonization of the life-world (Best and Kellner 1991:235)

The NMB is both a product of " [the] culture industries [that remake] contemporary life" (cf. Best & Kellner 1991:236) and the pressures of "[the] capitalist state and [the] media [that] control ever more realms of contemporary life" (Best & Kellner 1991:236). The NMB appears as a simulacrum or urban sculpture to provides a specific entry point for contrived urban experiences: an advertisement for an African world-class city. The city today presents a new urban frontier, a packaged urban encounters with what is local marketed to a larger even global audience. The significance of the NMB lies in its marketability, its commodity value in a networked and capitalist world.

The NMB as an inner city development project therefore also highlights a clash between public and private interest. Such a clash is the consequence of modes of production through "cultural resignification" (cf. Pieterse 2005:160). As part of the inner city's changing milieu, the propagation in the media of specific "symbolic politics" (cf. Pieterse 2005:160), the presence of the NMB too suggests a loss or absence of public opinion and participation in decisions making under the banner of democracy. What appears is that the development ideals for a 'functional' world-class

city have taken precedence over the needs of everyday life. These aspects are not in and of themselves new. They are but the concrete reality of an enduring confrontation between forces of capitalist and socialist democratic forms. Abdoumaliq Simone (2004:11) observes:

> The right to the city is not in the end reduced to the right to be maintained in the city …[but rather] the right to use the city as an arena of mutable aspirations, to varying degrees of realisation.

What then in the light of anthropologist Paul Gilroy's call (2004:3) for a "new cosmoplitanism" will give rise to forms of "democratic humanitarianism"?

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